

A MEDIEVAL FARMSTEAD AT DAYS ROAD, CAPEL ST MARY

by JONATHAN TABOR

with contributions by Sue Anderson, Anthony Breen, Andrew Hall, Edward Martin,
Vida Rajkovača, Simon Timberlake *and* Anne de Vareilles

INTRODUCTION

THE EXCAVATION OF a significant later prehistoric and medieval settlement site at Days Road, Capel St Mary, recorded episodic occupation spanning over a millennium and yielded artefactual assemblages which have provided insights into the changing character and economy of rural settlement over this period. The site's later prehistoric remains have been detailed in a previous paper,¹ allowing this paper to focus on the twelfth- to fourteenth-century farmstead which occupied the site following a settlement hiatus of over 1000 years. One of the few excavated medieval farmsteads in the region, the site and its finds assemblage, together with the associated documentary evidence, provides an important insight into the character of rural medieval settlement in Suffolk.

The excavation was undertaken in 2009 by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on behalf of Orwell Housing Ltd, in advance of a residential development. The development area (centred on TM 0875 3855) comprised 1.2ha of former agricultural land to the east of Days Road and was located approximately 300m to the north-east of the historic core of Capel St Mary, some 9km to the south-west of Ipswich (Fig. 205). Situated at a height of around 47m OD, the site lies on the transition between two topographical zones determined by geology: the central Suffolk clay uplands and the glacial and river terrace gravels of coastal Suffolk. The underlying geology is London Clay, overlain by drift deposits of Till.²

Archaeological background

Archaeological evidence for the medieval period in the locality is, to date, surprisingly scarce and largely limited to sherds of unstratified pottery and stray metal finds. As such, the majority of evidence of Capel St Mary's medieval history comprises standing historic buildings. Twelve medieval and Tudor buildings are recorded in the vicinity of Capel St Mary and nearby Little Wenham, of which most are timber framed and date to the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries. The historic core of the village is located to the south-west of Days Road around the church of St Mary (Fig. 206), which dates back to at least the fourteenth century, although possible Norman elements are also present.³ To the north-west of Days Road, Little Wenham Hall is a fortified manor house dating to c. 1270–80 and is one of the earliest brick buildings in East Anglia. The church of St Lawrence in Little Wenham also has thirteenth-century origins.⁴

The post-medieval period is also well represented in the historic buildings record. Within close proximity to the Days Road site are 'Ladysmead', a timber framed cottage dating to c. 1600 which stands on the west side of Days Road, and a sixteenth–seventeenth-century rectory.⁵



FIG. 205 – Site location and site plan.

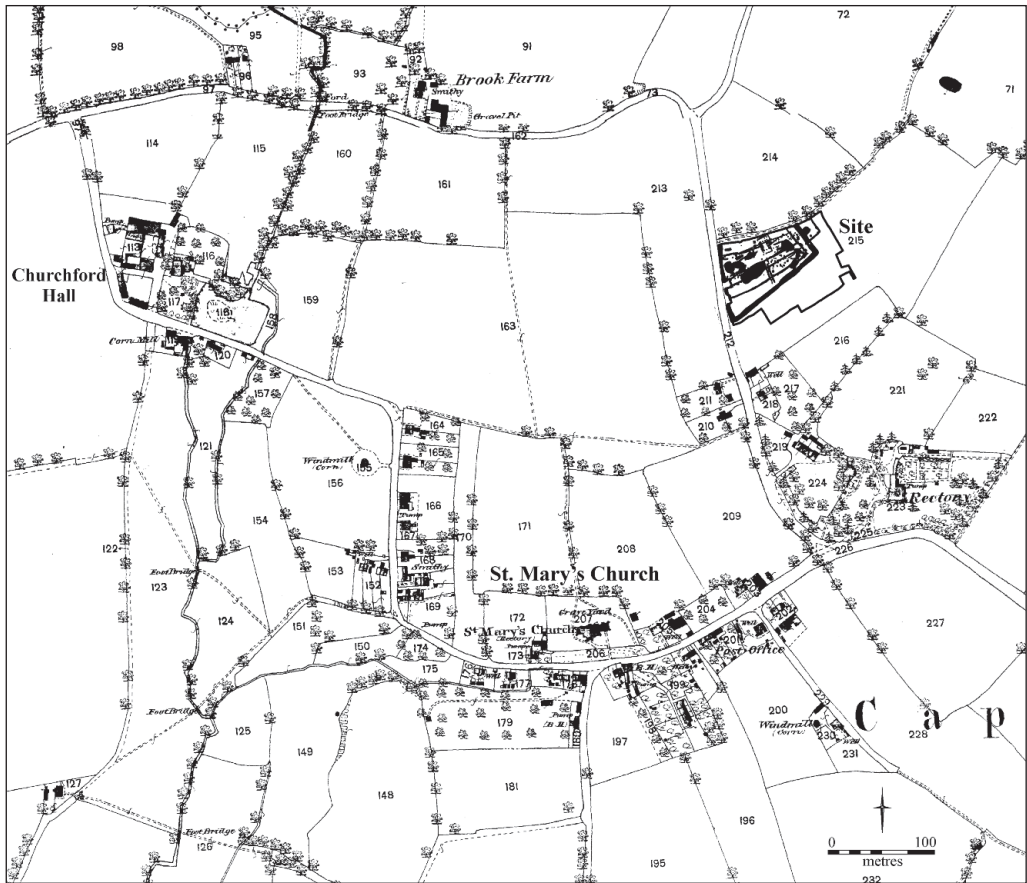


FIG. 206 – First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 (1:2500) showing the historic core of Capel St. Mary.

THE EXCAVATION

Although a small quantity of residual tenth- to eleventh-century pottery (70 sherds) was recovered during the excavation, Late Saxon activity at Days Road appears to have been limited, and the main medieval occupation of the site belongs to a period between the twelfth and early fourteenth centuries, probably peaking in the thirteenth century. The excavated evidence suggests that the focus of settlement during this period was a large aisled building (Structure 4), which was associated with up to five possible ancillary structures and features including numerous pits, a well, at least two possible ovens, and cobbled/metalled surfaces (Fig. 207). All of the medieval remains were located 'inside' a ditched enclosure, which was the culmination of a sequence of at least three separate phases of enclosure marked by boundary ditches.

Settlement enclosures

The three phases of enclosure were all aligned north-west by south-east and clearly respected the earlier Early Roman field layout.⁶ All of the enclosures, which have been labelled chronologically A, B and C (Fig. 208), extended beyond the excavation area to the north; as

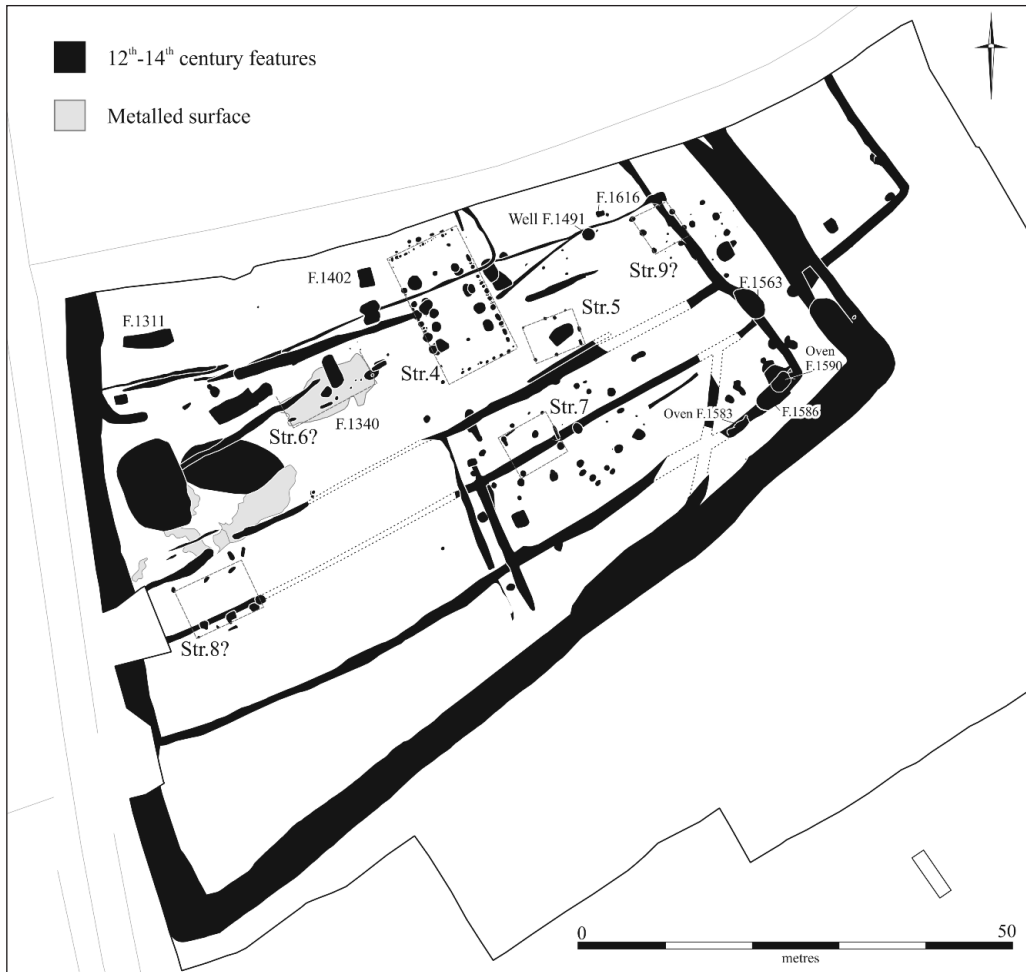


FIG. 207 – The medieval farmstead.

a result their actual size, and indeed the extent of the medieval site as a whole, remains unknown.

Enclosure A comprised the south-east corner of a ditched enclosure with a probable entrance to the south-east. The enclosure ditch, which produced a small assemblage of twelfth–thirteenth and thirteenth–fourteenth-century pottery, was truncated by elements of both Enclosures B and C and is clearly the earliest in the sequence.

Enclosure B marked a slight shift of the settlement enclosure southwards and westwards. The southern part of the enclosure was also subdivided to create two internal ‘sub-enclosures’ or paddocks. The various ditch fills once again yielded twelfth–thirteenth and thirteenth–fourteenth-century pottery.

Enclosure C marked a final phase of enlargement. It is interpreted as the final phase of enclosure, based largely on the fact that the southern and western ditches continued to function as property boundaries into the nineteenth century and are marked on the tithe map of 1838.⁷ As a result only the eastern side of the enclosure survives as an untruncated medieval feature, while the

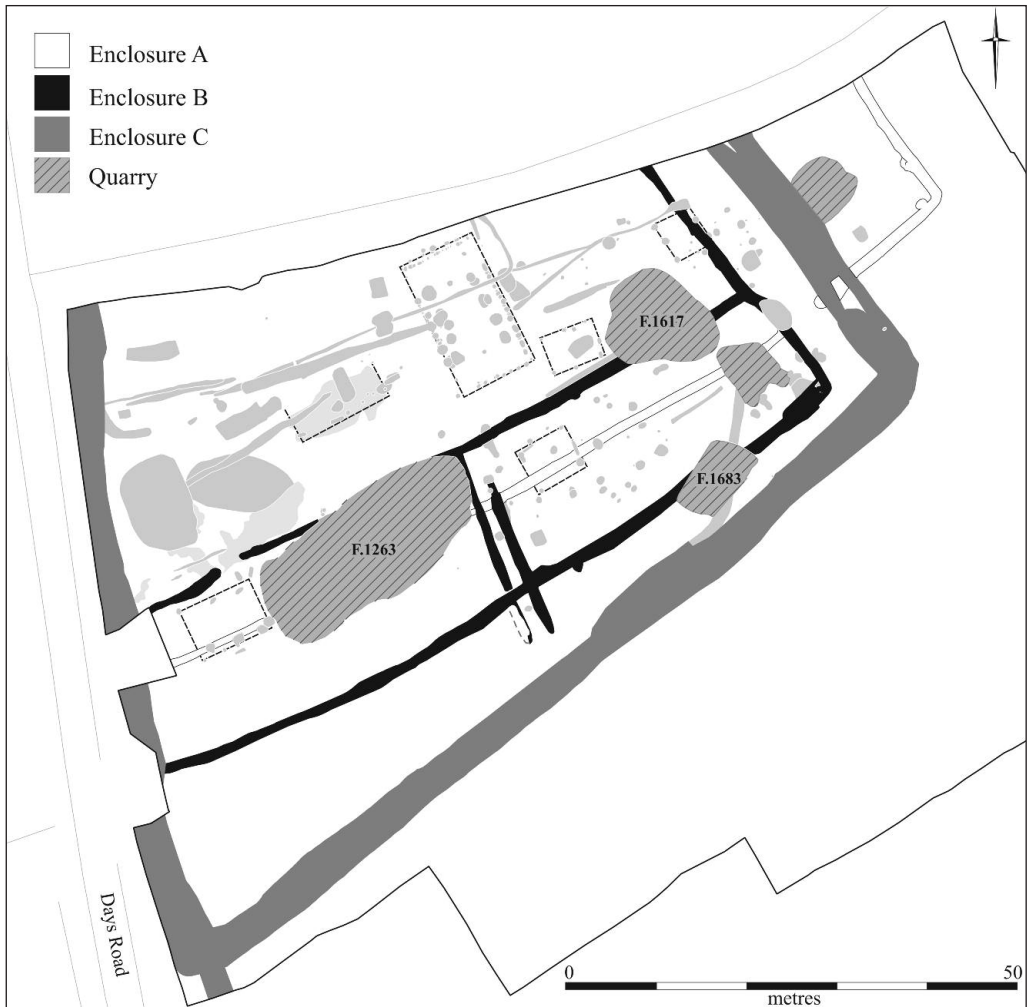


FIG. 208 – Medieval settlement enclosure sequence and quarrying.

southern and western boundaries were almost entirely truncated by the subsequent post-medieval boundary ditch (although earlier ditch cuts visible in section did confirm its medieval origins). The untruncated eastern side of the enclosure was marked by two parallel ditches representing successive boundaries. Both ditches yielded broadly twelfth–fourteenth-century pottery.

The aisled building (Structure 4)

The remains of Structure 4, a rectangular building, were aligned on a south-east to north-west axis and measured some 15m long by 8.5m wide (Figs 209 and 210). The outer walls of the building were marked by lines of post-holes/post settings. Disturbance, probably caused by post removal, made individual post-holes difficult to identify, but slightly less disturbed sections of wall suggest that posts were spaced approximately 0.5m apart, with daub or cob presumably filling the gaps. Inside the building, settings for two rows of four aisle posts between 1m and 1.5m apart were recorded. Two further post-holes located on the central axis of the structure, approximately 3m from the north-western and south-eastern outer walls



FIG. 209 – The 12th–14th-century aisled building (Structure 4).



FIG. 210 – The 12th–14th-century aisled building (Structure 4) from the SE.

respectively, appear to be associated with the building, but have no clear structural function; it is possible that they represent temporary posts or props associated with the construction or dismantling of the building.

Pottery from the structural post-holes and other associated features suggests that the building was occupied during the thirteenth century. It appears to have been constructed entirely of timber and cob/daub – the site's ceramic building material assemblage not being derived from the on-site structures (see Anderson, below) – and probably had a thatched roof. In terms of building layout, two possible entrances, perhaps representing opposing doorways, were located at the north-western end of the building, with a possible alternative entrance also identified in the south-west corner. No internal divisions were recorded, although this is to be expected given the truncation of the site by ploughing. No clear evidence of the function of the building – specifically whether or not it can be considered to be a dwelling – survived, and unfortunately, due to the degree of truncation, interpretation must be somewhat limited. As such the absence of clearly domestic features such as a hearth is not necessarily meaningful.

Ancillary buildings

Post-holes representing up to five additional potential medieval structures (Structures 5–9) were recorded within the settlement enclosure. Based on associated pottery assemblages recovered

from the post-holes, all probably dated to around the thirteenth century and were therefore broadly contemporary to Structure 4. It should be noted that while the identification of Structure 4 is beyond doubt, the identification of Structures 5–9, and particularly their suggested building plans (see Fig. 207), is to some extent conjectural.

Structure 5 comprised a rectangular arrangement of six post-holes measuring c. 5.5m by c. 4m. A hollow on the interior of the building, which possibly resulted from activity within the structure, yielded a small quantity of thirteenth-century pottery.

Structure 6 comprised little more than a compacted metallised surface and a number of possibly associated post-holes. While the metallised surface (F.1340) may well form part of the ‘yard surface’ detailed below, it could equally represent a floor surface, especially given that if the structure were built on sill beams it would potentially leave little surviving trace other than possibly a floor surface.⁸ Artefacts recovered from the metallised surface include a large number of iron tacks and nails – further evidence of a possible structure – as well as twelfth–fourteenth-century pottery, medieval tile, oyster shell, animal bone, and a number of iron horseshoes.

Structure 7 was located within the south-eastern ‘sub-enclosure’ of Enclosure B. The area of the structure was cluttered with post-holes, pits and possible post trenches (totalling 32 in number) and a number of possible building plans can be proposed. Indeed it is possible that multiple structures are represented within the post-hole pattern. The most convincing possible building plan, representing a square or rectangular structure, measured a minimum of c. 6m by c. 6m.

Structure 8 measured c. 5m in length by c. 4m wide and comprised six post-holes. The structure was located to the north-east of Structure 4 and truncated Enclosure B’s north-eastern boundary.

Structure 9 is perhaps the least convincing of the proposed structures. Comprising ten post-holes and measuring 8m by 6m, the possible rectangular structure appeared to be situated within the south-western ‘sub-enclosure’ of Enclosure B. However, while this suggests the structure is contemporary with Enclosure B, the mixed assemblage of Middle Iron Age, Early Roman and twelfth–fourteenth century pottery recovered from the structural post-holes appears to be largely residual, and any suggestion of date must be tentative.

It seems likely that these additional structures represent a complex of buildings around Structure 4. However, it is also clear that a number of the buildings were associated with individual phases of enclosure and it seems that they were not all necessarily contemporary. Certainly, it appears they were not all constructed at the same time. For example, whereas Structures 6 and 8 were clearly located within ‘sub-enclosures’ of Enclosure B, Structure 7 overlies/truncates the eastern boundary of the same enclosure.

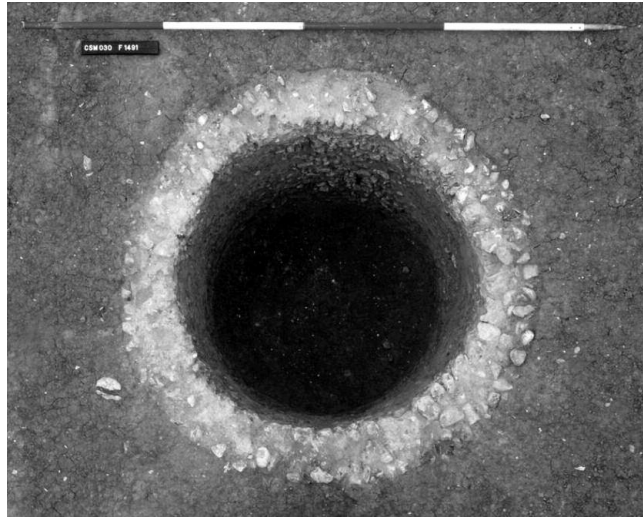


FIG. 211 – The well (F.1491).

General site usage

Within the boundaries of Enclosure C, features including pits, metallised surfaces, a well and the remains of two possible ovens hint at a range of activities undertaken at the site during the medieval period (Fig. 207).

Patches of metallised surface occurred sporadically across much of the area – sometimes ‘sunken’ into the top of a number of earlier features – to the west and south-west of Structure 4, and would appear to represent remnants of a formerly more extensive yard surface which has been lost to ploughing. The composition of the surfaces was variable with some areas constructed of large cobbles, including flint nodules, contrasting with other areas where surfaces comprised compacted gravel and small pebbles.

A range of pits were recorded within the enclosure, 23 of which can be confidently attributed to the twelfth–fourteenth-century occupation. Seven of these pits (e.g. F.1311 and F.1586) were substantial, steep-sided features measuring up to 5.6m in length by up to 1.6m in depth. That these were utilised as ‘tanks’ is perhaps most likely – although this interpretation presupposes the existence of a waterproof lining (probably timber), no trace of which remained. Of these, Pit F.1586 was notable for its finds and plant remains assemblage, which included over 100 sherds of largely thirteenth-century pottery, along with large quantities of charred grain. The majority of the ‘tanks’, however, contained relatively mixed finds assemblages, often including large amounts of burnt clay/daub and ceramic building material, which suggests the material is most likely to be associated with the infilling of the features and the abandonment of the site (see below), rather than their use.

The remaining pits were shallower, and lacked the ‘neat’ edges and bases of the ‘tanks’. Given that a number contained substantial finds assemblages, it is clear that many were utilised as rubbish pits, although it is unlikely that this was their original function. Three pits in close proximity to Structure 4 are of particular note:

Pits F.1334 and F.1569 were located immediately to the east of the eastern wall of Structure 4 and seem highly likely to be contemporary with the building. Some 366 sherds of largely thirteenth–fourteenth-century pottery were recovered from F.1334, along with relatively large amounts of animal bone and oyster shell, while F.1569 produced 92 sherds of early–mid thirteenth-century pottery. The fact that F.1569 truncated F.1334 suggests both features belong to the early–mid thirteenth century.

Pit F.1616 was located 15m to the east of Structure 4 and yielded one of the most significant finds recovered from the Days Road site, a cast lead seal matrix (see Hall, below) inscribed “S’ ALBRED’ RELT’ ROB’ D’ BRAhA” (Seal of Albreda widow of Robert de Braham). Documentary research has identified several references to a Robert de Braham, suggesting that he lived in Capel St Mary in the mid thirteenth century, although no reference to his widow Albreda has been found (see below). A small assemblage of largely thirteenth-century pottery was also recovered from the pit (including a sherd from a possible Flemish jug, the only medieval import present at Days Road).

The remains of at least two potential ovens/kilns were also recorded. Both were heavily truncated and comprised scorched oven bases, with no trace of any surviving above-ground superstructure. The most convincing of the two potential ovens was roughly linear in form and comprised a scorched base (F.1583) accompanied by a possible stoke hole to the west. Subsequent layers of scorching and ‘ashy’ deposits suggest the oven was cleaned out and reused over a period of time. A very limited finds assemblage comprising only a few sherds of pottery suggests a broadly thirteenth century date. The second oven (F.1590), which was situated above an earlier pit (F.1586), comprised a sub-square deposit of fired clay, possibly

an oven floor, overlying a sequence of 'ashy' deposits. Given a lack of evidence to suggest otherwise, it must be assumed that both represent relatively simple domestic ovens, probably bread ovens. Both features – along with a number of the 'tanks' – truncated the southern boundary ditch of Enclosure B and suggest that Enclosure C may have marked the site boundary during the peak of medieval activity. The fact that both ovens were dug into earlier features is in itself interesting and may well represent deliberate utilisation of existing hollows or targeting of softer ground.

Finally, a fine flint-lined well (Fig. 211) was located to the east of Structure 4. The well (F.1491) was circular in plan and had an internal diameter of 1.06m and an overall diameter of 1.48m. The well lining was constructed largely of unworked flint nodules, which occur naturally within the underlying clay subsoil, bonded with a sandy mortar. The well-shaft interior was also evidently once rendered with the same sandy mortar, although only traces of it remained. The uppermost deposits infilling the well were hand excavated to a maximum safe depth of 1.2m and yielded largely sixteenth- to eighteenth-century pottery, suggesting that the well was not completely backfilled until well into the post-medieval period. Having established that the well would be preserved *in situ*, no further excavation took place, although using a hand auger it was possible to determine that the well was at least 3.9m deep. Despite the relatively late pottery from the upper fills, given the lack of post-medieval occupation evident at the Days Road site, the feature is interpreted as contemporary with the medieval occupation.

Fourteenth-century abandonment

A decline in pottery use suggests that the site was abandoned at some point in the fourteenth century. It is proposed that this abandonment coincided with the excavation of a number of relatively large quarries within Enclosure C, followed by the 'flattening' of the site and demolition of the structures.

Five large pits, interpreted as quarry pits, were recorded, the largest of which (F.1263) measured 27m in length by 10.5m wide by 1.98m deep. The remaining four quarry pits ranged in size from 7.5m to 12.5m in diameter and from 1.25m to 2.04m deep. The size of quarry F.1263, in particular, indicates relatively large-scale extraction was taking place, with presumably the export of material to a construction site nearby. The mix of silty clay and chalky subsoil with frequent chalk and flint nodules, which was extracted from the quarries, evidently had a number of potential uses. The silty clay may well have been used to produce daub/cob, for example, whilst utilisation of the chalk and flint nodules as a building material is clearly demonstrated in the construction of the cobbled surfaces and the well-lining recorded at the site.

Pottery assemblages recovered from the quarry pits date broadly to the thirteenth century, although obviously by their very nature the quarries are likely to have contained a mixed assemblage of both residual material and material incorporated into the upper quarry fills at a much later date. The presence of sixteenth-century pottery in the upper fills of F.1263, for example, indicates that this feature remained, to some extent 'open', into at least the sixteenth century. Other finds from the quarry pits included animal bone, metalwork (largely iron nails), large quantities of burnt clay/daub, and Roman, medieval and post-medieval brick and tile.

It seems highly likely that most if not all of the quarry pits – which truncated large areas within the southern part of Enclosure C – were excavated following the likely abandonment of the settlement, or at least the relocation of the 'domestic area'. Indeed, following the excavation of the quarry pits, it would appear that the site was 'flattened', with structures demolished and any 'open' features infilled; only well F.1491 appears to have remained extant.

The presence of large amounts of burnt clay/daub and ceramic building material in quarry pit F.1617, as well as in other features such as F.1563, to the east/south-east of Structure 4, seems to reflect this process, and much of the residual building material in these features may derive from the building itself.

Later medieval and post-medieval activity

As has been noted above, following the abandonment of the medieval settlement, Enclosure C continued to function as a boundary and was integrated into the post-medieval field layout. The general paucity of later medieval and post-medieval finds indicates that the site did not see significant activity during this period and was almost certainly turned over to agriculture; the limited assemblage of post-medieval pottery and ceramic building material probably arrived at the site through manuring. However, evidence suggests that the well (F.1491) potentially did continue to be used, and was certainly a visible feature until at least the sixteenth century. Firstly, the presence of sixteenth–eighteenth century pottery within the upper fills of the well indicates that it was not completely backfilled before this period. Secondly, Hall (below) suggests that the distribution of a number of the more significant later medieval and early post-medieval metal finds recovered from the site potentially reveals the route of a pathway from Days Road to the well, along which artefacts could have been discarded or lost.

THE FINDS

Medieval and later pottery (Sue Anderson)

A total of 2559 sherds of pottery weighing 23,920g were collected from 253 contexts in 173 features. Table 1 shows the quantities of pottery by period. Full details of fabrics and their quantities are available in the archive report.

Period	Date (century)	No.	Wt (g)
Late Saxon	c.10th-11th	70	328
Early medieval	c.11th-13th	690	4803
Medieval	c.12th-14th	1723	18132
Late medieval	c.15th	24	197
Post-medieval	c.16th-18th	28	367
Modern	c.19th+	22	86
Unidentified		2	7
Total		2559	23920

TABLE 1 – Medieval and later pottery quantification by period.

Late Saxon

A small quantity of Thetford-type ware, and the related ‘early medieval’ sandwich ware, was recovered. The majority of sherds were residual in medieval and later features and most showed some signs of abrasion. Only four rims were present, representing small, medium and large jar forms with late rim types.⁹ The rims were all typical of the ware, and a few body sherds showed signs of the ‘girth grooving’ commonly seen on Ipswich Thetford Ware. However, most sherds were in relatively soft, fine fabrics with moderate or common mica inclusions. The same fabric was in use in the Roman period and, given the similarity of greyware forms in use during the two periods, it is possible that some of the sherds recorded as Thetford-type ware have been wrongly assigned.

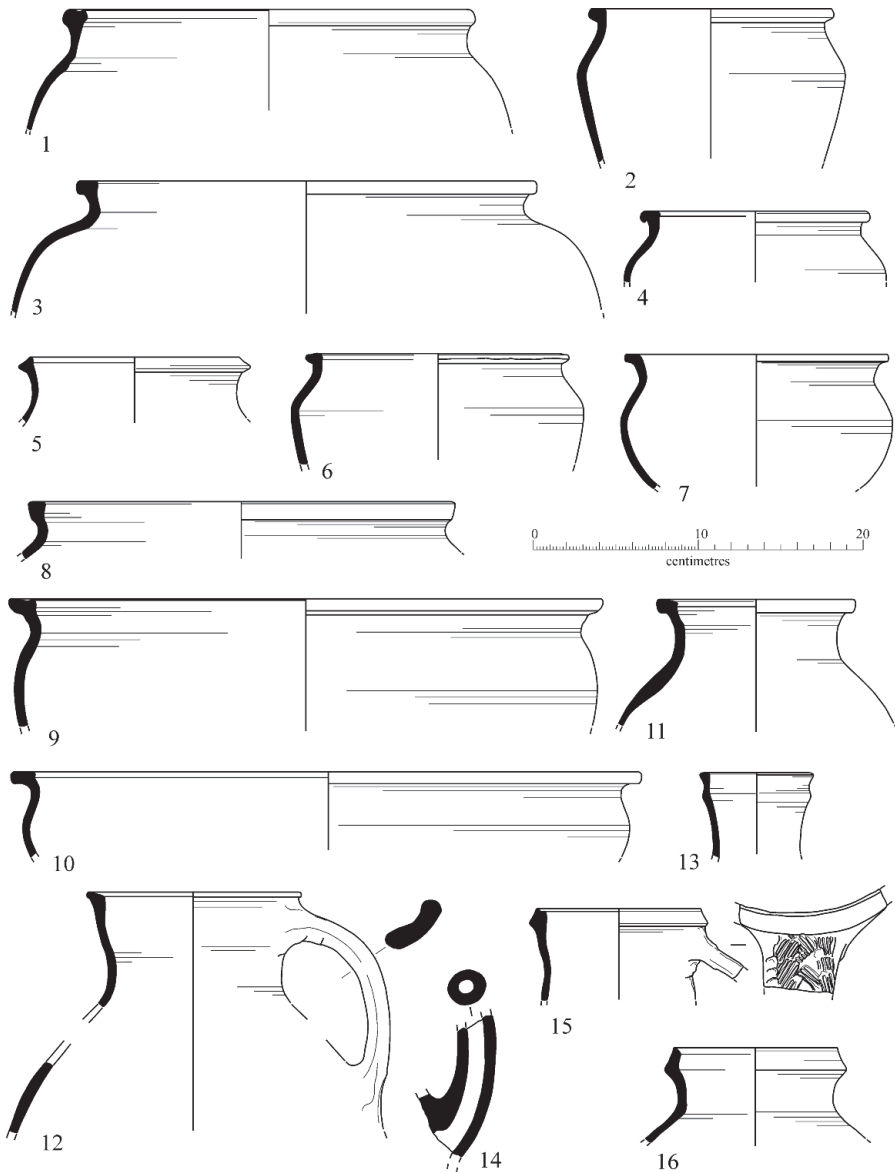


FIG. 212 – Medieval pottery.

Much of the Late Saxon pottery was recovered from features in the northern half of the site, and finds were scattered across a wide area. A few concentrations were seen in the central area, particularly in the metalled surface F.1340, and the ditch of Enclosure B.

Early medieval

Early medieval wares are handmade wares which first appeared in the eleventh century and continued to be made into the thirteenth century in rural parts of East Anglia. Sometimes pots were finished on a turntable, and many have wheelmade rims luted onto handmade bodies.

These handmade wares were transitional between the Late Saxon and medieval wheelmade traditions, and their use overlapped with both period groups.

Several coarsewares were identifiable, although most contained a similar range of inclusions. The group is dominated by handmade sandy early medieval wares of both Suffolk and Essex types. Only a small proportion were shelly wares.

Of the early medieval coarsewares, nineteen rims were identifiable as jars (e.g. Fig. 212: 1). There was also a jar in Pingsdorf Ware. No other forms were identified. Rim forms were varied, although thickened everted types were by far the most frequent. Decoration was infrequent: eight rims were thumbbed, and there was one example each of applied thumbbed strips, finger-tip impressions, and shell-dusting.

Most of the pottery in this group was recovered from medieval features. The largest single groups of sherds were from Enclosure B's ditch (82 sherds) and pit F.1334 (73 sherds). In both these groups, early medieval wares were found in association with wheelmade high medieval vessels, suggesting that the features were in use during the overlap period (twelfth–thirteenth centuries). Early medieval wares were distributed across much of the northern half of the site, and there was a small concentration in the south-east corner of the twelfth–fourteenth-century enclosure.

Medieval wares

Medieval coarsewares are wheelmade wares of twelfth–fourteenth-century date. Most in this group were well fired and fully reduced to pale to dark greys, although some were oxidised. This large group was dominated by coarsewares, the majority of which were unprovenanced. No attempt was made to distinguish between the coarsewares of unknown origin (MCW), but it was possible to identify some wares which were probably made to the east of Ipswich (Hollesley), in Ipswich itself, and at Colchester. Some coarsewares were similar to Colchester wares but finer, and these may be from other Essex production sites such as Mile End and Great Horkesley.¹⁰ Some Heddingham coarseware is likely to be present amongst the finer greywares and some of the micaceous fabrics, but micaceous wares were also produced elsewhere in Suffolk. Fabrics which are comparable with some identified in Stowmarket and at Preston St Mary were also present, but rare, in this assemblage. Studies of other rural sites in the region have shown that most pottery was sourced from production sites within a 40 km radius, and this site appears to follow the pattern.¹¹

There were 134 rims in the medieval coarseware group, representing jars, bowls, jugs and handled jars. The rim forms indicated that the assemblage continued into the fourteenth century, although the majority of dateable types belonged to the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Rims of both Essex and Suffolk types were present, the former being relatively closely dateable due to work at Rivenhall. The majority of vessels were jars (Fig. 212: 2–9), a total of 96. The Essex H1 form was by far the most common amongst the jars in this group and has been dated to the mid–late thirteenth-century, suggesting that activity on the site reached a peak in the thirteenth century.¹² A few rims may be of slightly later date, but only four of the developed Essex rim forms (H3, E5) were present in this assemblage. The seventeen bowl rim forms (e.g. Fig. 212: 10) in this group were similar to those of the jars, although thickened or beaded everted forms were the most common. Two handled jars with flaring or everted rims were found (e.g. Fig. 212: 11), and thirteen jugs were present. Most had plain or beaded rims (Fig. 212: 12–14), although two examples were collared.

No differences in rim types between the fabrics were observed, although there was a slight difference in vessel forms. Jars and bowls were most likely to be in MCW (not surprising given that this was the dominant coarseware fabric), but jugs were almost as frequent in Hollesley ware as in MCW. Unusually, there were few Hollesley ware bowls in this group, despite their

frequency elsewhere in the county.

Thirty-one vessels in this group had some form of decoration, including thumbing of the rim, applied thumbed strips, finger-tip impressions, combed horizontal lines, and combed or incised wavy lines. One vessel had a slight cordon, one was shell-dusted, and two handles were slashed.

Glazed wares formed *c.* 9% of the total medieval sherds. This is a typical proportion for a rural site. For example, a contemporary group from Cedar's Park, Stowmarket, also produced 9%.¹³ Most glazed wares in this group were comparable with those made further up the coast at Hollesley, although it is possible that an as-yet-unknown, more local, kiln was in operation. Ipswich glazed ware occurred less commonly, and there were some glazed vessels amongst the Colchester Ware, with other Essex production sites at Hedingham and Mill Green contributing most of the remainder. A few glazed wares came from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Whilst the majority of vessels in this category were probably jugs (e.g. Fig. 212: 15), only ten rims were present, and two jug handles were also found. Of the rims, nine were from jugs with collared, inturned, triangular beaded, upright flat-topped or upright thickened rims. There was also an Ipswich glazed ware skillet with a flaring rim. Decoration other than glaze included white or brown slip lines, self-coloured strips, applied pellets, an applied pad with a lattice stamp, a stamped rosette, and all-over white slip. The most complex designs were seen on Hedingham Ware jugs, but all decorative types were typical of their fabrics.

Only one imported ware of this period was identified, a possible Flemish jug (Fig. 212: 16). This was in a gritty fabric with blue-grey surfaces similar to Paffrath Ware, but an overfired version of the local gritty fabric could appear similar.

Like the early medieval wares, most of the medieval pottery came from features dated to the twelfth–fourteenth century, with some intrusive material in earlier phases and small quantities of residual sherds in post-medieval features. The largest single group of medieval pottery (286 sherds) was from pit F.1334. A large group (137 sherds) was also recovered from the metallated surface F.1340. Most of the pottery came from the area defined by the medieval enclosures and, like the early medieval wares, there was a slight concentration in the south-east corner.

Late and post-medieval

With the exception of a single body sherd of yellow-glazed Border Ware from Surrey, all pottery in this group comprised local and regional redwares. There was clearly a decline in pottery use on this site from the fourteenth century onwards, and whilst some of the late medieval wares could be contemporary with the very latest occupation on the site, it is likely that much of this group arrived at the site during manuring activity. The identifiable vessels included a jug, two handled jars, two bowls, a jar and a mug. A handle or tripod leg was probably from a skillet. Closely dateable forms are all of sixteenth/seventeenth century date.

Most of the pottery in this group was recovered from medieval and post-medieval features, particularly from the upper layers of the quarry pits. A relatively large group was recovered from well F.1491, suggesting that it was still open until around the sixteenth century.

Pottery associated with the structures

Most of the pottery associated with Structure 4 and surrounding features is likely to have been in use in the thirteenth century, although there was some earlier and later material amongst the 259 sherds recovered from this group of features. The range of contemporary wares included Hollesley, Colchester and medieval Ipswich wares, as well as unprovenanced coarsewares. Identifiable forms were two jugs, 18 jars and a bowl, and at least nine jar rims were Essex type H1. Almost half this group was recovered from the pit F.1402. A large quantity of pottery was also recovered from F.1334, the large pit to the east of Structure 4. It

was cut by pit F.1569, which in itself produced 92 sherds. The latter were dated to the mid to late thirteenth century, whilst some of those from the earlier pit could be dated to the thirteenth/fourteenth century. F.1334 may have been used for the disposal of rubbish towards the end of use of the structure, but was later recut by F.1569 with redeposition of some sherds.

Structure 5 produced only four sherds of EMW (early medieval ware) from one post-hole, and five sherds of early and high medieval wares from a hollow within the structure. Structure 6 and related features produced 96 sherds, most of which were recovered from the metallised surface F.1340. Whilst sherds from the structural features and a potentially associated pit may indicate that the building was in use in the thirteenth century, there are later sherds from a possible post-hole and surface F.1340, suggesting that it may have continued into the fourteenth century.

A total of 41 sherds were collected from the Structure 7 group. Structure 7 itself and a nearby pit both included sherds of thirteenth century date. One small sherd of MCW was collected from a post-hole in Structure 8 and is not closely dateable. Structure 9 produced 41 sherds. Fifteen were from components of the structure and twenty were from a nearby pit. Again, this group included pottery which suggests use during the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth.

Also of note is F.1616, as a seal matrix was found in it. The pottery included a bowl with a thickened everted rim of Hollesley style, and the possible Flemish jug rim. Three sherds were from a burnt glazed vessel, with a rounded body and a spout, of uncertain provenance.

The small assemblage of Late Saxon material recovered was largely residual in medieval contexts, whilst small quantities of late medieval and post-medieval pottery probably postdate any occupation on the site and are likely to be related to manuring of open fields. The distribution of this material in the western half of the site may suggest that manure was stockpiled close to the road for later dispersal. The bulk of the assemblage is of early and high medieval date and was found in features assigned to the twelfth–fourteenth century.

Most of the assemblage was recovered from pits and linear features, with smaller quantities being derived from post-holes and other negative features. A large group was recovered from the metallised surface F.1340 from various test-pits. Several vessels occurred in more than one test pit, suggesting that the spread of pottery across this surface was contemporary and the material may have been deliberately scattered as hardcore. Three of the largest single groups of pottery were recovered from large pits F.1334 (to the east of Structure 4), F.1586 and F.1683 (at the south-east corner of the enclosure ditch).

It seems likely that there was occupation on the site from the twelfth century onwards and that it continued into the fourteenth century, although the small quantities of late medieval pottery suggest that it had declined by the late fourteenth century, if not before. A high proportion of this assemblage comprised pottery of later eleventh to thirteenth century date. Although the handmade ‘early medieval’ and wheelmade ‘medieval’ fabrics have been separated for the purposes of classification, it is likely that they were broadly contemporary and simply represent the output of different potters or production sites. The fabrics are very similar in both types, being distinguished largely on the basis of coarseness of the sandy inclusions and evidence of hand-building, and it is likely that they were made at potteries located on similar geological deposits. A few shelly wares were present, but these were less common than the sandy types. This is in contrast with sites to the north-west of Ipswich, such as Great Blakenham and Thurleston School, where shelly wares dominated the early medieval assemblage.¹⁴

This assemblage is most comparable with a group from Aldham Mill Hill, Hadleigh, c. 6 miles to the north-west.¹⁵ Few shelly wares were present, and in this respect both Capel and Hadleigh follow a trend which continues into north-east Essex. For example, the quantities from Colchester urban sites are relatively small, and a site at Ardleigh produced only sandy EMW.¹⁶ Despite the similarity, sources of pottery appear to have been different in the two settlements. A

very high proportion of the medieval coarseware at Hadleigh contained abundant mica, for example, which is not the case in the present assemblage; only twenty sherds of this type were recorded here. Hollesley ware was also slightly more common at Capel than in Hadleigh, and there was no medieval Ipswich Ware at the latter, suggesting either that the Hadleigh site was using more local suppliers or that it may have declined before the east Suffolk kilns were fully operational. The much higher proportion of glazed wares at Capel is additional evidence for its continuation further into the fourteenth century than was the case at Hadleigh.

As has been noted in relation to several sites in the south of the county, many of the medieval vessel forms are similar to those found in Essex. Whilst some of the pottery in this assemblage was certainly made in the Hedingham and Colchester areas, and probably at other unknown Essex production sites, there are also Suffolk wares from the known production sites in Ipswich and Hollesley and probably more locally. It is likely that Essex-type vessels were also being produced in the south of Suffolk, but as yet no production sites have been identified.

Ceramic Building Material (Sue Anderson)

A total of 601 fragments of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) weighing 24,970g were recovered from medieval and post-medieval features. A high proportion of the assemblage was abraded and many fragments had lost their surfaces. This, together with the overall uniformity of fabrics in use in this area from the Roman period onwards, has meant that some identifications are uncertain and 13 fragments (114g) were unidentified. Most pieces contained inclusions which occur commonly in local Roman and later ceramics, notably small ferrous particles, mica, small flint fragments and quartz pebbles, chalk, occasional burnt-out organic materials, grog and clay pellets, and fabrics were defined by these and the coarseness of the sand matrix. Detailed fabric descriptions and quantities are available in the archive report.

The majority of stratified CBM was collected from medieval ditches pits quarry pits and metalled surfaces. Apart from the fragments found in surface F.1340 (Structure 6?), none of it formed part of structural features. Post-medieval features contained a few pieces of medieval tile and brick, but the majority of CBM from this group was of post-medieval date and most of it was recovered from the large enclosure ditch.

A relatively large assemblage of Roman tile (161 fragments, 10168g) was recovered from medieval features, but much of it was abraded and probably redeposited. Most was unidentifiable to specific form, although tegulae, imbrices and box flue tiles were identified. The variety of fabrics present suggests that it was probably scavenged from several structures (or a multi-phase single structure) and imported to the site at a later period for reuse.

The remainder of the assemblage largely comprised tile of both medieval and later date (346 fragments (9209g)). Like the Roman material, the variety of fabrics indicates that the assemblage probably came from several sources and may represent more than one structure, or more than one phase of construction. Again, it seems unlikely that any of the medieval structures on the site would have had tiled roofs. Reuse of material, reflected by the presence of mortar on breaks and other surfaces, was common practice during the medieval and post-medieval periods, but on this site the main use of the material seems to have been as hardcore, whether intentionally or unintentionally used, deposited as part of the backfill in negative features.

Metalwork (Andrew Hall)

A total of 243 metal artefacts were recovered during metal detector survey and hand excavation of cut features. The non-ferrous assemblage comprised 16 copper alloy objects, eight lead/lead alloy objects and one silver shilling of late seventeenth–eighteenth century date. A further 218 pieces of ironwork – largely nails, studs and tacks – were also recovered. Significant metalwork finds are shown in Fig. 213 and detailed below:

1. A circular frame with a single pierced suspension lug at right angles to the frame. The frame is also pierced just below the lug. Traces of gilding remain on the upper surface of the frame which has a convex profile and is flat on the reverse. A close parallel was found during the Grand Arcade excavations in Cambridge, and a further example is published from Winchester.¹⁷ With the latter example, the author suggests this is a harness pendant. 14th century. (Surface find)
2. A copper alloy annular buckle 42mm in diameter, complete with pin. The frame is plain and of oval cross section with no constriction or setting for the pin. The latter has a ridged grip. Late Medieval. (F.1294)
3. A diamond shaped copper alloy rove or crude escutcheon plate measuring 28mm in length by 15mm in width with a single centrally positioned hole of 4mm diameter. 15th–16th century. (F.1294)
4. A conical headed stud of 13mm diameter with a sharply tapering triangular section shank. Similar examples are recorded from Norwich where Margerson suggests they were attached to items of furniture.¹⁸ 15th–17th century. (F.1337)
5. An incomplete rectangular buckle plate formed from a folded strip of sheet copper alloy. Pierced with four holes for attachment to a leather strap. There is also a slot for the pin at the folded end of the plate. Undecorated and measuring 24mm in length by 18mm in width. Weight 2g. Comparable with published examples from London.¹⁹ 14th or 15th century. (F.1337)
6. A fine copper alloy rectangular mount possibly from a book or casket measuring 40mm x 12mm. The mount has traces of gilding surviving on the upper surface which is also decorated with fine engraved scrollwork bordered with small punched dots. 15th or 16th century. (F.1334)
7. A copper alloy composite circular strap-end with a forked spacer, measuring 40 x 29mm. This example has an acorn-shaped knop or terminal and its back plate intact. The main body of the strap-end is plain and undecorated. This example has several close parallels from London.²⁰ 14th–15th century. (F. 1340)
8. A cast, dome-shaped mount or fitting measuring 26mm in diameter, undecorated. Traces of a shank are visible within the concave reverse. Late medieval to post-medieval. (F.1341)
9. (by Steven Ashley and Andrew Rogerson) A cast lead seal matrix, flat, palm-like arrangement of seven curling tendrils within concentric mouldings in relief on reverse with unpierced lug towards upper edge. Circular, 32mm. Cinquefoil, each foil like an ear of wheat. * S' ALBRED' RELT' ROB' D' BRAhA (Seal of Albreda (OFr.Albree) widow of Robert de Braham. The A and L are ligatured and there is a horizontal contraction mark above the final A in BRAhA). 12th–13th century. (F.1616)

By far the most important artefact is the twelfth- or thirteenth-century lead seal matrix belonging to Albreda, widow of Robert de Braham (see Fig. 213), which has provided a tantalising link to an individual probably living in Capel St Mary during the medieval period. Within the copper alloy category there is a core group of later medieval (c. fourteenth–sixteenth century) artefacts of some quality, including a composite strap-end, a book clasp and a harness pendant (a selection of these is illustrated and described in Fig. 213). A plot of these more significant later medieval finds demonstrated a tentative linear distribution of material in a narrow band oriented east–west. This may well reflect the former orientation of a route way or path, along which objects were discarded or lost. Although speculative, it could be argued that this pattern and distribution witnesses the approach to well F.1491 from Days Road.

It is interesting to note that, with the exception of the seal matrix, none of the more significant metal artefacts date to the site's twelfth–fourteenth century occupation, and that no medieval coinage and very few dress accessories were recovered.

Worked stone (Simon Timberlake)

A small collection of worked stone (2kg) was recovered from medieval and later contexts. The assemblage is comprised entirely of fragments of quernstone made of imported Niedermendig lava (from the basalt quern-quarries near Mayen in the Eifel region of Germany).²¹ Stones turned by water power would generally be in excess of 0.61m diameter; all of the fragments

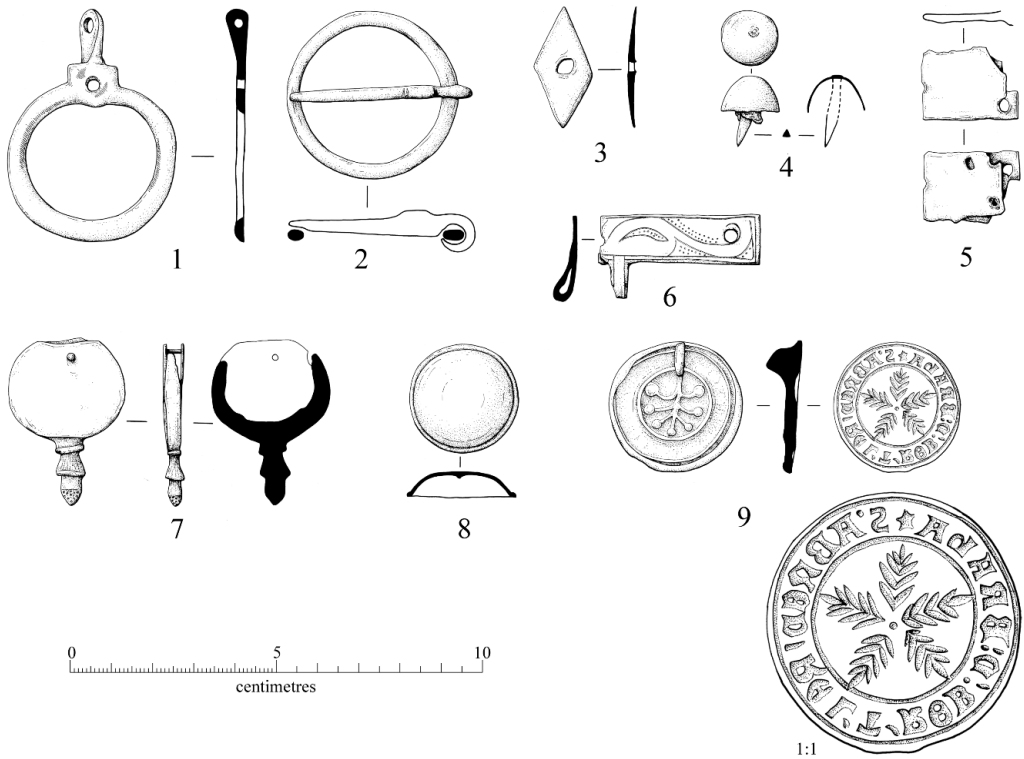


FIG. 213 – Significant metal finds.

recovered from Days Road appear to be smaller than this, suggesting that they were hand-mills. Watts suggests that the levy imposed upon the use of hand-mills following the introduction of manorial watermills may have led to the increased destruction or discard of old querns within the domestic context,²² although archaeologically we see little difference either in the rate or type of deposition of broken lava querns from the Roman, through the Anglo-Saxon, to medieval periods. At Days Road the discarding of worn lava quern into medieval features such as pits, old quarries, and into post-holes (where these flat-sided stones may have been used as post packing) is not unexpected, but it is perhaps unusual to find so much evidence for the continued use of lava querns over sandstone pot querns, a type more commonly used in a rural setting.

Daub and burnt clay (Simon Timberlake)

A relatively large assemblage of burnt clay and daub weighing 6.8kg was recovered from medieval and post-medieval contexts. In addition, a series of bulk samples were taken from large 'dumps' of fired clay/daub within numerous pits and quarry pits for examination. The majority of the material (*c.* 75%) comprised clay with a dominant inclusion of crushed chalk, with lesser amounts of flint and organic material such as straw. The material appears to represent a mixture of clay, earth, water and a little straw to produce a typical coarse cob plaster. That this material could have been produced largely through digging and puddling of the naturally-occurring underlying chalky boulder clay is a possibility. The second major fabric type (*c.* 21% of the assemblage) comprised fine silty daubs which may have been used as a final coat to finish off the exteriors of structures.

Fragments of cob, including flat wall (or possibly floor) surfaces were recovered from a variety of medieval contexts, but largely ditches and pits/quarry pits to the south and south-east of Structure 4. Thicknesses of coarse daub/cob wall-facing up to 60mm deep have been noted, though typically the detached pieces of surface walling are much thinner than this. The occurrence of layers of daub dumped within quarry pits and rubbish pits seems to suggest demolition and levelling, and with it perhaps the burning of old timber, wattle and daub. Finally, a sample (1.28kg) of crumbly lightly burnt clay (rather than fired clay) was recovered from oven F.1583; that the material is not highly fired suggests this was a bread oven rather than any higher-temperature structure or kiln.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Faunal remains (Vida Rajkovača)

The medieval faunal assemblage comprised 408 bone specimens, 106 of which were identifiable to species; the majority came from pits and metallated surface F.1340. Despite the overall quite poor state of preservation, with *c.* 85% of the assemblage showing signs of weathering and/ or erosion, the range of species identified is fairly varied.

Ovicaprids were the prevalent species, with a selective suite of ovicaprid bones being positively identified as sheep. This was closely followed by cattle and pig, with other domesticates such as horse, dog, cat and domestic goose being under-represented (Table 2). Small quantities of wild faunal resources, as evidenced by remains of red deer, roe deer, hare, pheasant and coot, indicate that the community was engaging in hunting, but do not reveal a great deal concerning the role of these species in the population's dietary practices. The unidentified mammal fragment count is dominated by sheep-sized domesticates, mirroring the prevalence of sheep within the identified species. A number of bird and fish bones were highly fragmented and impossible to assign to species.

Skeletal element distribution analysis shows that all parts of beef carcass are present, yet both sheep and pig show an over-representation of skull, mandibular and teeth elements. This slight paucity of elements representing meat-joints is commonly interpreted as the result of the export of the joints of high meat value. Butchery was observed on *c.* 8% of the assemblage, mainly on cattle and cattle-sized fragments. The actions include all aspects of food preparation and consumption, from gross dismemberment and meat removal through to axial splitting for marrow removal.

A cattle metacarpus (F.1340) was recorded, with lesions on the joint surfaces of proximal metacarpals which probably resulted from the herniation of small portions of the joint cartilage through the articular surface of the bone. This condition is known as *osteocondritis dissecans* and it is thought that these result from sudden physical stress or trauma to the joint.²³ Another interesting point represents a case of supernumerary teeth (*heterotopic polyodontia*) or presence of an extra tooth, observed on a pig maxilla recovered from pit F.1334. The interpretation of this condition remains unclear; however the explanation behind this condition might lie in dichotomy of tooth germs as a cause of duplicated teeth.²⁴

The Capel St Mary fauna is evidently livestock-dominated, with a few occurrences of wild species. The presence of domestic goose on site, as well as other domestic species such as dog and cat, corroborates the idea that this represents a typical domestic assemblage. Despite the prevalent ovicaprid cohort (within both the NISP and MNI counts), cattle were likely to have been the main providers of meat and other secondary products such as milk and traction.

The increased importance of sheep as the medieval period progressed – a general trend recorded countrywide in both historical and archaeological sources – is reflected in the assemblage, and is likely to have been connected to the expansion of land devolved to pasture.

Taxon	NISP	%NISP	MNI
Cattle	27	25.50	2
Ovicaprid	34	32.00	5
Sheep	4	3.77	1
Horse	4	3.77	1
Pig	26	24.51	3
Dog	2	1.90	1
Cat	1	0.95	1
Domestic goose	1	0.95	1
Red deer	1	0.95	1
Roe deer	2	1.90	1
Pheasant	2	1.90	1
Coot	1	0.95	1
Hare	1	0.95	1
Sub-total to species	106	100	.
Cattle-sized	114	.	.
Sheep-sized	140	.	.
Rodent-sized	3	.	.
Mammal n.f.i.	27	.	.
Bird n.f.i.	16	.	.
Fish n.f.i.	2	.	.
Total	408	.	.

TABLE 2 – Number of identified specimens (NISP) and minimum number of individuals (MNI) for all species from medieval contexts. The abbreviation n.f.i. denotes that the specimen could not be further identified.

Cattle do not show the same preponderance during this period. This could either be a consequence of the work oxen being replaced by horses, or the Anglo-Saxon trend of favouring sheep over cattle continued into the medieval period. It has been suggested that during the medieval period sheep tended to be more dominant in rural areas, and cattle in towns,²⁵ yet regional variations should be taken into consideration.

Finally, while studies of food procurement, consumption and deposition in medieval Britain have so far offered important evidence for site specialisation, inter-society interaction and trade,²⁶ as at many other rural medieval sites the assemblage is quantitatively insufficient to suggest economic specialisation of any kind.

Environmental remains (Anne de Vareilles)

Samples from eight twelfth–fourteenth-century features – two ditches, five pits and one of Structure 4's post-holes – were processed, three of which were very rich in cereal grains and associated wild plant seeds. Full tabulated results of the environmental processing are included in the site archive report.²⁷ Free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum* sl.) is the dominant cereal in the assemblages. Other types, including hulled barley, rye (*Secale cereale*) and oat (*Avena* sp.), may have grown with the wheat as unintentional but encouraged contaminants, or separate crops processed in the same area. The near absence of cereal chaff is unsurprising, since free-threshing cereals are very easily displaced from their chaff during threshing. The separation of chaff from seeds was probably done through a coarse sieve that would retain all straw and chaff, leaving loose grain and seeds to pass through. The latter crop product was

found in all features except ditch F.1291. Although many arable weed seeds were also identified, cereal grains occurred more frequently, showing that these were partially clean crop products. Ditch F.1291 was the only feature to contain almost entirely crop waste: many 'weed' seeds with a few lost grains. Six grains of spelt and/or emmer (*Triticum spelta/dicoccum*) were found in pit F.1569. Although the importance of spelt decreases from the Roman period onwards, it is not uncommon to find the occasional grain mixed within other wheat crops during the medieval period. Of the non-cereals, lentil (*Lens culinaris*), hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) and a pea (*Pisum sativum*) attest to a varied diet.

In terms of the local environment, arable weeds point to two different locations of cultivation. Stinking chamomile, scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*) and red bartsia (*Odontites verna*) are weeds of damp, clay soils, whereas most of the other seeds, including the 176 seeds of vetches or wild peas (*Vicia/Lathyrus*), some sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) indicate light, sandy loams²⁸ and evidently derive from cultivated areas some distance from the heavier clay soils at Days Roads. Likewise, free-threshing wheat type rivet wheat (*Triticum turgidum*) 'was extensively grown in England between the C12th and C14th [and] was still being recommended for clay soils of low fertility until the 1950s'.²⁹ Conversely, barley and rye grow well on sandy soils.

THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

by Edward Martin (with acknowledgement to the research by Anthony Breen)

The excavation site falls within two fields shown on the 1838 tithe map of Capel St Mary (Fig. 214).³⁰ These are listed in the accompanying tithe apportionment as no. 155 Catesbray, arable, 1 acre 1 rood 35 perches; and no. 161 Barn Pightle, arable, 2 acres 0 roods 17 perches.

Field 161 belonged to a small farm of 8 acres that was owned and occupied by Rachel Day. This farm gave its name to Day's Road – the house and yard, formerly Day's Farm and now Yew Tree Cottage, lying beside that road. Field 155 belonged to the Revd Joseph Tweed, rector of Capel St Mary, as part of an 8-acre addition to the rectorial glebe land, owned and occupied by the rector himself. Both fields abutted to the west on Day's Road, and on the east on another of Rachel Day's arable fields (no. 156) called 'Upper Field'. 'Barn Pightle' (161) took its name from Rachel's barn that lay adjacent to its south-west corner – a pightle being a name for a small field (from Latin *pictellum* 'a small piece') often adjacent to a farmstead. It adjoined southward on her farmyard (164) and three other small fields belonging to her (162: Orchard Pightle, pasture, 2a 0r 19p; 163: Orchard Piece, pasture, 0a 2r 9p; 160: Garden, 0a 0r 22p). The shape of 'Catesbray' (155) corresponds closely to that of the excavated Enclosure C (Fig. 214). This field abutted northwards on a larger arable field (154: 3a 2r 7p) with the almost identical name of 'Catisbray'. The latter belonged to Sir Joshua Rowley of Tendring Hall in Stoke-by-Nayland and was occupied by his tenant John Aylward as an isolated outlier to his holding centred on Vine Farm in Capel St Mary. This field was bounded on the west and north-west by roads, and on the north-east by a large arable field (139: Great Ash-tree Field, 19a 2r 1p) belonging to George Thomas esq. of Kesgrave and tenanted by John Brook of Jermyns Farm in Capel St Mary. By the time of the 1886 Ordnance Survey map, Barn Pightle (161), Catesbray (155) and Upper Field (156) had been amalgamated into one large 7.3-acre field.

Rachel Day can be identified as Rachel Laws Day, who was born in 1776 in the nearby parish of Washbrook, the daughter of Abraham Day, a farmer of Washbrook, and Susan Laws, the sister of Roger Laws, an Ipswich merchant. In 1796 she married a probable kinsman, John Day, farmer of Washbrook. Either she or her husband must have been related to the 'Mrs Day' who is marked as the owner of a field in the position of Catesbray on an

of Upper Field (156). This can be understood as referring to Jeremiah Byles, merchant of Ipswich, who mentions his clerk William Goodchild in a codicil to his will dated 1790. Byles's will reveals that he owned several farms in Capel, which he names as 'Hill farm otherwise Warts' (probably Springhill Farm, formerly Watts Farm), 'Chapmans' (now called Chaplain's Farm), 'Scots' (an isolated barn named as 'Scotts Barn' on the Ordnance Survey 'old' edition map of 1838), 'Pages', and Grovehall farm (now Capelgrove) – the last being also being 'reputed' a manor.³³

Rachel Day's farm (in particular her fields 160–64) bordered south-eastwards on the glebe lands of the rectory of Capel St Mary and, as a result, this land is mentioned as an abutment in the glebe terriers (the written surveys of the glebe land). As shown on the 1838 tithe map, the glebe land consisted of the parsonage, its farm buildings, and some small enclosures close to the road, plus two long narrow fields (159a and 159b) that stretched out north-eastwards but were separated by a similar long field (159) that also belonged to the rector, but was not glebe land (though listed as in the apportionment as 'Part Glebe Field'); there were also three pieces in a separate location to the south near the White Horse Inn. The terriers identify parcel 159a as 'Long Field' and parcel 159b as 'Long Land', and their arrangement strongly suggests that they originated as strips in a common field. The two earliest terriers are unfortunately undated but both probably date from around 1600. The one likely to be earliest is unsigned but mentions a Richard Welham, who is probably the Richard Wellam who was taxed in Capel in 1568 and whose will was proved in 1611.³⁴ This will has two sections that refer to the land that bordered the north-west side of the glebe land:³⁵

(a) 'One peice of land called the beane pictell [part of tithe map parcel 165] containeing by estimacion one acre more or lesse lyeing southwestt uppon a common way leading from Capell Streete toward Jermins [i.e. Day's Road], & part of the northeast syde uppon the land of Henry Warey [163/164], every part els abuttingt uppon the gleebe land [165/166].'

(b) 'One other peice called the barne feild [166] containeing 2 acres & a half more or lesse lying Eastward partly uppon the gleebe land [167], partly uppon a certaine close belonging to Wenham hall [159], & lying westward uppon the lands of Henrye Warey [163/162], the south end abuttingt uppon the gleebe land [165], the north end uppon Wenham hall land called Cimperlyes [157].'

The other early terrier is signed by John Chaplin, who was rector of Capel from 1598 to 1623.³⁶ The same two parcels are described in a slightly different way:

(a) 'Item the beane pictell [part of 165] containeing by estimacion one acre more or lesse haveing three syds, the East syde abbutteth uppon the parsonage yarde [other parts of 165], the west syde uppon a common way leading from Capell Streete towards Jermynes, the north syde uppon a parcell of land called Waldingfeild [163/162] in parte, and in parte uppon a parcell of gleebe land called the barne feilde [166].'

(b) 'The barne feild [166] containeing by estimacion twoe acres and a half more or lesse, lyeing by a certaine land called Waldingfeild [163/4] on the north syde, & on all other partes uppon certaine landes belonging to Wenham hall, & uppon the gleebe lands.'

Henry Warey, the possessor of land that must have been a part, at least, of Rachel Day's farm, has not been identified, though he must belong to a family surnamed Warry or Warrie that is recorded around 1600 in the adjoining parishes of Great and Little Wenham. However, the land he held also seems to have been known by the name of 'Waldingfeild' (a name repeated in a terrier of 1623–31 and in those of 1633 and 1675) – this name is explored more below.

Returning to the 1789 map 'of a Farm in the Occupation of Mrs Sexton' in the book of maps of the estate of Sir Joshua Rowley, this has a preamble which describes the field recorded

as 'Catisbray' (154) in the 1838 tithe apportionment: '3. Kate's Bray, a small piece of Land situate about a furlong and half from the Plough Fields, and abutting upon a Lane leading from the aforesaid Road to Little Wenham.' The text and the map indicate this was an outlying field to Vine Farm. The field is also mentioned in Sir Joshua's marriage settlement of 1777 as 'Cates Bray three acres one rood and twenty perches'.³⁷ This was part of a 62-acre holding occupied by Samuel Sexton that had only just been acquired by Sir Joshua's trustee, John Sherwin, from the executors of Samuel Meddowes Esq. of Halstead in Essex (who died in 1775). The marriage settlement states that Cates Bray had been part of a 10-acre holding that had been acquired in 1720 by John Marven and Elizabeth his wife. They are probably the John Marven and Elizabeth Coker who were married in the adjoining parish of Little Wenham in 1707.

The use of the name 'Waldingfeild' for the land abutting the glebe suggests that it once belonged to a family surnamed Waldingfeild, and there is evidence of a medieval family of that name in Capel St Mary. The earliest recorded is Sir William de Waldingfeild who granted, probably in the 1220s, his wood called 'Dovelond' and land in 'Bromdune' lying near his demesne (*dominicum meum*) in Capel to Dodnash Priory in the adjacent parish of Bentley.³⁸ He also had land at Purton in Stansfield, west Suffolk, and was unfortunately murdered in a field outside his gate there in 1230.³⁹ The family are later recorded as holding a twentieth of a knight's fee in Stansfield.⁴⁰

Jermyns Farm in Capel, whose lands bordered Catisbray field, takes its name from the Jermie family of Metfield in north Suffolk (their surname being also recorded as Germie or Germyn). In 1353–54 Sir William Germie is recorded as holding the manor of 'Germie' in Capel.⁴¹ At some time in the Middle Ages this manor became joined to a manor that had belonged in the late thirteenth century to Sir Fulk de Vaux of Vauxhall in Great Wenham, marshall of the royal household in 1294.⁴² Sir Fulk was the kinsman of Sir John de Vaux (d. 1287) of Shotesham in Norfolk, the overlord of Little Wenham. Great and Little Wenham adjoin the west side of Capel, and by 1618 the manors of Little Wenham, 'Vaulxhall' and 'Jermines' were all in the possession of Sir John Brewse of Little Wenham Hall.⁴³ Gervase, the brother of Sir Fulk de Vaux, is recorded as making a grant of land in Raydon (adjacent to Great Wenham) to Roisia (Rose) the daughter of Robert de Waldingfeld, who was his wife.⁴⁴ Rose later married Roger de Reymes of Higham (which is adjacent to Raydon) and they were granted land in Great and Little Wenham by John de Waldingfeld of Capel in 1315.⁴⁵ John was taxed 3s in Capel in 1327, suggesting that he held a substantial free holding but not as much as a manor.⁴⁶ He was one of four who paid 3s in Capel; for comparison, William fitz Ralph, who held the manor of Churchford Hall, paid 7s 6d in tax.

The last recorded member of the family was William de Waldingfeld, who witnessed deeds relating to land in Capel in 1339 and 1348, and lands of his in Capel are mentioned in 1349.⁴⁷ He also witnessed deeds of Dodnash Priory in 1362 and 1381.⁴⁸ His wife was Amflesia, the daughter of Thomas Baldewyne of Old Hall in East Bergholt (the parish adjoining Capel to the south) and through her he inherited lands in East Bergholt, Brantham and Stratford St Mary (three adjoining parishes) and in Layham and Great and Little Wenham.⁴⁹

By 1346 the Stansfield lands of the Waldingfeld family had passed into other hands, for the return for the Feudal Aid of that year recorded that Margaret de Gatisbury held a twentieth of a knight's fee in Stansfield that Geoffrey de Waldyngfeld had formerly held there (in 1302–3) of Hugh de St Philbert.⁵⁰ Margaret was probably the widow of Richard de Gatesbury of Gatesbury in Braughing, Hertfordshire, who died between 1323 and 1328. She is named as Richard's widow in a settlement of the manor of Gatesbury by her son John in 1332.⁵¹ In 1320 Richard was granted free warren in all his demesne lands in Braughing, Gatesbury, Much Hadham and Little Hadham in Hertfordshire and Stansfield in Suffolk.⁵² He appears to have settled his manor

of 'Preditone' (Purton in Stansfield) on his younger son Adam in 1317–18 and Adam was taxed 5s in Stansfield in 1327.⁵³ The family ended, *c.* 1400, in coheireses who married into the Elveden and Tewe families.⁵⁴ Their holding is, however, still commemorated by Gatesbury's Farm in Stansfield, the associated manor being recorded as 'Gatesburies or Catesbye's'.⁵⁵

The surname Gatisbury provides a very likely explanation for the very unusual field names 'Catesbray' and 'Catisbray' in Capel. The historical linkage of the Gatesbury family with land that had belonged to the Waldingfeld family further supports this and strongly suggests that the excavated farmstead had originally belonged to the Waldingfelds and was then taken over by the Gatesburys. In form, this holding probably had a similar layout to the adjacent glebe land – that is, a farmstead with surrounding small fields or pightles that extended north-eastward into an area of common-field strips. Capel falls within the area of south-east Suffolk where there is some evidence for common fields, though these tend to be more limited in extent than the parish-wide systems of the Midland counties of England.⁵⁶ Through various land transactions over the centuries it is likely that the common-field strips were divided off, leaving the rump of pightles that formed the small Day's Farm in the early nineteenth century.

The finding in the excavation of a lead seal matrix of twelfth- to thirteenth-century date with the inscription S'ALBRED'REL'T ROB'D'BRAhA 'the seal of Albreda (Aubrey) the widow of Robert de Braham' is worthy of comment. Aubrey herself is not mentioned in any known contemporary records, but her husband is likely to have been the Robert de Braham of Capel who was a witness to a Dodnash Priory deed in the late thirteenth century.⁵⁷ He is also likely to be the Robert de Braham who was involved as a plaintiff in a Feet of Fines suit against Idonea de Capel regarding land in Capel in 1257–58, and the Robert who is mentioned with land at 'Coppedthorn' in Capel in an undated charter.⁵⁸ 'Coppedthorn' (later 'Cophthorn') was called 'White Horse Green' in 1838 after the White Horse Inn at the junction of The Old Street and London Road on the eastern edge of the parish.

Albreda/Aubrey's Christian name is relatively uncommon, but it does also occur as the name of a daughter of Gilbert de Reymes of Wherstead (about 3 miles east of Capel), who was alive in 1296.⁵⁹ She was a kinswoman of the Roger de Reymes of Higham (about 3 miles south-west of Capel) who married Rose de Waldingfeld.

Robert de Braham is likely to have been a member of a knightly family that took its surname from Braham Hall in nearby Brantham (though, confusingly, the parish of Brantham is also commonly called 'Braham' in medieval documents). In an undated charter Robert confirmed a gift to Roger son of Richard de Braham, who can be identified as the Roger de Braham who died *c.* 1286 in possession of Braham.⁶⁰ Interestingly, this Roger's son and heir, Sir William de Braham, had a second wife (whom he had married by 1307/8) with the rare name of Amflesia. This lady, who was still alive in 1346, shares this rare name with the wife of William de Waldingfeld.⁶¹ William's wife, who is first attested in 1349/50, is known to have been the daughter of Thomas Baldewyne of nearby East Bergholt, but the rarity of their Christian name strongly suggests that the two Amflesias were related.⁶² If so, it might provide an explanation of why a de Braham seal was in the de Waldingfeld household in Capel.

DISCUSSION

The twelfth–fourteenth century remains at Days Road clearly represent a relatively substantial site, which was detached from the medieval village of Capel St Mary to the south. The site is some distance from the medieval core of the village and there is no evidence, archaeologically or historically, that the village ever extended this far. As such, the remains at Days Road would appear to have been a discrete settlement site situated to the north-east of the larger medieval settlement of Capel St Mary.

With its range of buildings – set within an enclosure and complete with its own well – considered alongside its ‘domestic’ finds assemblages, the site clearly represents a discrete farmstead. As such, it should be considered as belonging to a type identified throughout Suffolk, where farmsteads detached from village settlements appear to have been relatively common during the medieval period. Indeed, it is argued that the lack of archetypal deserted medieval villages recorded in Suffolk is reflective of medieval settlement patterns, whereby dispersed farmsteads rather than nucleated villages were predominant. In times of hardship it tended to be these more vulnerable farmsteads that were deserted, rather than the nucleated settlements. Little above-ground trace of the majority of these sites remains, and most are identifiable only through surface scatters of pottery and building material.⁶³ The excavation at Days Road has therefore provided a rare opportunity to learn more about the date, status and economy of one of these farmsteads.

Due to a lack of stratigraphic relationships between features, interpretation of the chronology of the medieval settlement is almost entirely dependent on general trends identified in the pottery assemblage. Closely diagnostic pottery types present in relatively large quantities suggest a probable peak in occupation during the thirteenth century, and it seems most likely that the settlement-remains date largely to this period. In terms of duration of settlement, while there is no evidence of multiple phases in the aisled building, such a substantial structure could well have lasted for some time, perhaps a century or more. Furthermore, the ‘shifting’ enclosure boundaries show that the layout of the site as a whole was changed/expanded on at least three occasions during the twelfth–fourteenth centuries, suggesting some longevity of occupation. It would appear that the Days Road farmstead belongs to the period between *c.* 1200 and *c.* 1350, regarded as a ‘high point’ in the medieval economy.⁶⁴ Its abandonment in the fourteenth century corresponds well with the population decrease and widespread abandonment of settlement – resulting from many factors, both local and national, not least the Black Death – that is recorded across the region and beyond at this time.⁶⁵

Interpretation of the site is undoubtedly hindered by the limited extent of the area excavated. That we have no real idea of the true size of the medieval settlement certainly has repercussions in terms of trying to establish the status of the site in particular. Consequently, and inevitably, the current interpretation of the site must work on the basic presumption that significant remains – such as additional separate buildings – do not occur to the north of the site, and what has been excavated is reflective of the site as a whole.

Structure 4, dated broadly to the thirteenth century and representing the foundations of an impressive aisled building, is the most significant medieval feature at Days Road, yet little clear evidence as to its function survived. Although a building of such scale could be interpreted as a barn, it could equally have been a domestic dwelling. The evidence is not conclusive either way; however, despite the absence of a surviving hearth, considering its location at the centre of a range of buildings and its domestic context (as indicated by the site’s finds assemblage), it is perhaps more readily interpreted as a house and therefore, given its scale, potentially an aisled hall. In terms of its size alone, at 15m long by 8.5m wide, Structure 4 is certainly comparable to the twelfth–fourteenth-century structure at the Cedars Field moated site near Stowmarket, which was 17m long, and is significantly larger than the late thirteenth-century aisled hall recorded at Purton Green Farm, Stansfield, which measures *c.* 10m by *c.* 6.7m.⁶⁶ While the structure does not necessarily conform to the classic floor plan of a medieval aisled hall, comprising hall, chamber and services,⁶⁷ its apparently ‘open’ floor plan could be largely down to a lack of surviving evidence for internal divisions, and in this sense truncation of the site precludes any detailed interpretation of its internal layout. It is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that Structure 4 is the principal building/house within a dispersed pattern of structures which represent various detached service buildings,⁶⁸ thus explaining the lack of a

clearly defined service area, for example. In this sense the site is comparable to a number of excavated farmsteads in the region, which were broadly contemporary.

The remains of farmsteads occupied during the thirteenth century, and comprising a dwelling with a range of ancillary structures, have been recorded at a number of sites in Essex. At Boreham Interchange, three structures were interpreted as a granary, a kitchen and a dwelling, the latter two on the basis of surviving hearths.⁶⁹ The site at Roundwood at Stansted Airport comprised an aisled building 16m by 11m, which is closely comparable to Structure 4 and interpreted as a barn or hall-house, together with three other buildings including a kitchen with surviving hearths.⁷⁰ Finally, at Stebbingford four buildings are once again interpreted as a 'self-contained rural unit'.⁷¹ In terms of the buildings at Days Road, in being located in separate enclosures to the principal building of Structure 4, Structures 7 and 8 could be interpreted as housing for livestock or barns. Conversely, structures in the immediate vicinity of Structure 4 (particularly Structure 5) can be more readily interpreted as service buildings such as a kitchen, pantry or buttery, although unfortunately in no instance did any clear indicator of function such as a hearth(s), survive. Interestingly, the only evidence of the latter comprised ovens F.1583 and F.1590, which survived in the hollow of an earlier infilled ditch, and which were located away from the main cluster of buildings, presumably due to their potential fire risk.

The Essex farmsteads discussed above were all interpreted as of moderate status; similarly at Days Road, while features such as the fine flint-lined well are undoubtedly indicators of some wealth, there is an overall lack of high-status goods within the finds assemblage (except perhaps for the seal matrix). As such, while Structure 4 was undoubtedly a substantial building, and in many ways could be classified as a 'hall', the site certainly falls far short of manorial status, and the enclosed farmstead was probably inhabited by a family of relatively prosperous farmers. Indeed, Bailey notes that the houses of high status freemen were often substantial timber structures, probably constructed by specialists, and often located within enclosures 'which mirrored the fashion though not the scale of manor houses'.⁷² In this sense the archaeological and documentary evidence complement each other well, and it seems highly likely that the family in question were the Waldingfields who – as discussed by Martin above – were of a status and wealth befitting such a farmstead. The probable passing of the land from the Waldingfields to the Gatesbury family in the fourteenth century also appears to broadly coincide with the beginning of the farmstead's decline, whilst a family connection between the Waldingfields and the de Braham family may also explain the presence of Albretha's seal matrix on the site.

Turning finally to the farmstead's economy, the faunal assemblage from Days Road was limited; evidently the prevailing soil conditions had been to the detriment of good bone survival. However, a varied assemblage with all the common domestic species represented was recorded: pig and cattle were recovered in roughly equal quantities, while slightly greater quantities of sheep/goat reflect the increased importance of sheep to the medieval economy. A slight paucity of meat-bearing elements within the sheep and pig assemblages, as well as the presence of both male and female individuals, suggests probable breeding and rearing for meat export, however, on the whole the assemblage is too small to comment on in detail or identify any potential specialisation. Horses also clearly played an important role in the economy, although given the recovery of a number of iron horseshoes, probably as beasts of burden rather than for meat or breeding. Finally, shellfish undoubtedly formed a significant part of the diet (almost 18.5kg of largely oyster shells were recovered from the excavations) while the presence of a number of bird and fish bones indicate the exploitation of wild resources.

Evidence of arable is also strong, and it would appear that crop production and processing occurred in the vicinity; it therefore seems highly likely that at least one of the structures

within the farmstead was a barn. Free-threshing wheat was by far the dominant cereal crop, though oats, hulled barley, and rye could also have been grown. The recovery of a comparatively large number of fragments of lava quern hand-mills from Days Road is interesting, and suggests that these were potentially still being used during a period when it was more usual for milling to be undertaken at a manorial water mill.⁷³ Despite the presence of ovens – which appear most likely to be domestic – and a number of tank-like pits of unknown function, there is no clear evidence of craft production or specialised activities at the site (although it seems likely that craft activity was undertaken at a household level).

Consequently, on the whole the medieval remains at Days Road appear to represent a typical rural domestic site comprising a dwelling and a range of structures which probably represent buildings including detached service areas, barns and byres/stables. The farmstead appears to have been of moderate status, with a mixed arable/livestock agricultural regime and no evidence of specialisation. Nevertheless this does not undermine the site's significance as one of few excavated examples of a rural farmstead, of a type that appears likely to have been relatively common in medieval Suffolk. Furthermore, documentary research has almost certainly identified the family who owned the farmstead and has provided a tangible link between the site and individuals recorded in contemporary documents. As such, the site forms an important contribution to our understanding of rural medieval settlement in the region, and specifically the character of dispersed farmsteads.

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NOTES

- 1 Tabor 2014.
- 2 British Geological Survey 1991.
- 3 Bettley and Pevsner 2015, 176.
- 4 Bettley and Pevsner, 375–79.
- 5 www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk
- 6 See Tabor 2014, 184–85.
- 7 SROI, FDA57/A1/1b.
- 8 S. Anderson, pers. comm.
- 9 Types 1, 4 and 6: Anderson 2004a, 67–86.
- 10 Drury and Petchey 1975.
- 11 Anderson 2006.
- 12 Drury 1993a, 81–86.
- 13 Anderson, forthcoming.
- 14 Anderson 2009a and b.

- 15 Anderson 2011.
- 16 Cotter 2000, 34–37; Walker 2009.
- 17 Hall in Cessford and Dickens, forthcoming; Biddle 1990, 1049.
- 18 Margerson 1993, 83.
- 19 Egan and Pritchard 2002, 111.
- 20 Egan and Pritchard 2002, 141.
- 21 See Hörter *et al.*, 1.
- 22 Watts 2002, 40.
- 23 Dobney *et al.* 1996, 38.
- 24 As discussed by Miles and Grigson, 1990.
- 25 Albarella 1999, 867–75.
- 26 E.g. Dobney *et al.* 1996.
- 27 De Vareilles in Tabor 2010.
- 28 Hanf 1983, 59, 293, 403, 437.
- 29 Francis 2009, 8.
- 30 SROI, FDA57/A1/1a and b.
- 31 SROI, HD 11:475/213.
- 32 SROI, HA 108/10/2/6
- 33 TNA, PROB/11/1197.
- 34 Hervey 1909, 231: Rychard Wellam £1 in londes; will of Richard Wellam, yeoman of Capel, proved 1611 Suffolk.
- 35 SROI, FAA:2701/20/244.
- 36 SROI, FAA:2701/20/163.
- 37 SROI, HA 108/2/3 Deed 18b.
- 38 Harper-Bill 1998, nos. 97–98.
- 39 *Curia Regis Rolls* xiv, no. 990
- 40 Munday 1973, 25: ‘Galfridus de Waldyngfeld tenet in Stansfeld vicesimam partem unius feodi de Hugone de Sancto Philberto, et dictus Hugo de heredibus Albell de Sancto Martino, et dicti heredes de comite Glovernie, et ille de Rege.’
- 41 Rye 1900, 212, 27 Edw. III no. 1: William Germie, chevalier, and Isabella his wife v. Geoffrey Fausebroun, parson of the church of Mose, of the manor of Germie in Capele with appurtenances.
- 42 Morris 2005, 28–29; Moor 1932, 95–96.
- 43 Crisp 1902, 20.
- 44 *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, vol. II, 504. C. 2299.
- 45 Raimes 1955, 26 and chart; British Library Add. Charter 1879.
- 46 Hervey 1906, 4.
- 47 Helmingham Hall archive, T/Hel/54/2–5.
- 48 Harper-Bill 1998, nos. 207 and 186.
- 49 Rye 1900, 209, 23 Edw. III [1349–50], no. 6; and 226, 35 Edw. III [1361–62], no. 3.
- 50 *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids*, vol V, London 1908, 77, 1346. ‘De Margareta de Gatisbury tenente in Stanfeld xx. partem f. m. quam Galfridus de Waldyngfeld quondam tenuit in eadem villa de Hugone de Sancto Philberto.’
- 51 TNA, CP 25/1/88/73, no. 117.
- 52 *Cal. Charter Rolls*, vol. III, 1300–26, 431: 17 Nov. 1320.
- 53 Rye 1900, 142, 11 Edw. II [1317–18], no. 46: Adam son of Richard de Gatisbury v. Richard de Gatisbury of the manor of Preditone; Hervey 1906, 213.
- 54 For more on the Gatesbury family, see Chauncy 1700, 441–42 and *Victoria County History of Hertfordshire*, vol. III, London 1912, 306–17.
- 55 Copinger 1909, 283–84.
- 56 Martin 2012, 231 and Fig. 14.2
- 57 Harper-Bill 1998, no. 122.
- 58 Rye 1900, 61. 42 Hen. III [1257–58], no. 64: Robert de Braham v. Idonea de Capel in Capel; Queen’s College, Cambridge, QC 81, Box File 1, 40.24.
- 59 *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, vol. I, 402: C.171.
- 60 Queen’s College, Cambridge, QC 81, Box File 1, 40.2; *Cal. of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, no. 628.
- 61 *Feudal Aids*, vol. V, 49.
- 62 Rye 1900, 209, 23 Edw. III [1349–50], no. 6.
- 63 Martin 1999; Martin 2012, 234–35.

- 64 Bailey 2007, 86.
- 65 See also Anderson 2004b.
- 66 Anderson 2004b, 28; Colman *et al* 1967, 158.
- 67 See e.g. Gardiner 2000.
- 68 See e.g. Hurst 1971, 104–15.
- 69 Lavender 199, 23–26.
- 70 Havis and Brooks 2004, 380–90.
- 71 Medlycott 1996, 176
- 72 Bailey 2007, 38.
- 73 Watts 2002, 40–41.

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