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AND HISTORY  
BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES  
2019

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## EXCURSIONS 2019

### *Reports and notes on some findings.*

13 April. Jane and Bob Carr.

*St Mary's church, Walsham le Willows* (Combined with AGM). The morning session, including the AGM, took place at Blackbourne Hall at Elmswell, with a series of short talks as follows: Jo Caruth on the community excavations at Clare Castle; Alice de Leo on the 'Rendlesham Revealed' project; Bob Carr on the newly reopened Bury St Edmunds Guildhall; Sue Anderson on the Suffolk medieval pottery project; and Keith Briggs on place-names around Walsham le Willows.

*St Mary the Virgin, Walsham le Willows* (by kind permission of Revd Philip Merry) (*Report by Jane Carr, Bob Carr and Timothy Easton*). The afternoon exploration of the church was preceded by a visit to the ringing chamber with its ring of six bells, and a short demonstration was arranged by Clive Mees.

An account of the parish history and the church itself was published in the *Proceedings* in 1899.<sup>1</sup> More recently, detailed descriptions may be found in Mortlock and Bettley and Pevsner.<sup>2</sup> The church is Perpendicular, chiefly of 15th-century date, built of flint, with a N porch and W tower. There is flint flushwork, in the style of Norwich Guildhall, to the tower battlements, porch and N aisle base, and also on the clerestory. Due to its location in the village centre lying to the S of the main axial road, the churchyard, porch and elaborately decorated fabric may all be found on the N side of the church.

Within, the church has N and S aisles, the bases of the piers of which form the seven-bay arcades and some have been reused from an earlier building. A square limestone block discovered at the base of the NE arcade pillar may date to c.1120 because of its ornament, according to Dr Tom Plunkett.<sup>3</sup> Other earlier features include a 14th-century font with unusual crosses drilled around the rim; a few 13th–14th-century tiles, some with crude face depictions; and a single 13th-century tomb slab with floriated cross at the E end of the S aisle. The nave roof is also worthy of note, having alternating hammerbeams, once with angels, and tiebeams, and the remains of decoration with remnants of red, white and green pigments with black paint used in the recesses between and above the brattishing to emphasise the depth of carving. This is a method used on some 16th- and 17th-century carved furniture for the same reason.

The so called wooden 'maiden's crance' or garland that hangs above the S aisle remembering Mary Boyce, who died aged 20 in 1685, is possibly made of elm. Elm was used for coffins and this medallion is of the same 2cm thickness as that used for coffin boards, and measures 24 by 19cm. It is not a garland and most likely commemorates her traditional seat in the church. It may have been carried or attached at her funeral. On the W-facing side her name is inscribed 'Mary Boyce' with crude images of a long bone, skull and winged arrow above the name, and a heart and winged arrow below (Fig. 233). Also carved at the top of the medallion is a small heart, 4cm in height, pierced by the wire from which the medallion is suspended. The E-facing side records her death, the inscription in four rows 'ye 15/NOVE/MBER/1685' (Fig. 234). The church register records her death in October 1685 and her burial as 18 November 1685. There is no mention in church guide books of the crance until the 1930s.<sup>4</sup>

Timothy reminded the audience that Walsham was distinguished by formerly having a late medieval 'theatre in the round'. Fully described in a Walsham survey of 1577, it may already have been a century old.<sup>5</sup> With similar circular playing places in Cornwall, this concept, so different from the playing carts associated with the guilds of northern towns like York and



FIG. 233 – Crance name face.



FIG. 234 – Crance date face.

Wakefield, probably informed the layout of the famous near circular London theatres in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.<sup>6</sup> This archaeological site was destroyed in the late 1960s, before an excavation could be undertaken.

Brian Turner, churchwarden and historian, described the Victorian reredos and some window glass in his church pamphlet.<sup>7</sup> The reredos (1883) depicting the Last Supper, and probably influenced by a knowledge of Leonardo da Vinci's mural in Milan, was the work of George Tinworth (1843–1913), exceptionally made from terracotta and fired at the Doulton works in Lambeth. The W window shows the story of the Good Samaritan, thought to be by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake of London, as is also the S chancel glass. The S aisle glass is by W.G. Taylor. The N chancel window was designed as her own memorial by the artist Rosemary Rutherford and other works by her include a 1943 painting entitled *Walking on Water*, and a painted triptych.

8 May. Rosemary Hoppitt and Peter Wain.

*Bawdsey: Bawdsey Radar Museum* (by kind permission of the Trustees of the Bawdsey Radar Trust), *the grounds of Bawdsey Manor* (by kind permission of Ashley Jones, General Manager, PGL) and *Bawdsey Marshes* (by kind permission of Christopher Mann, farmer) (*Report by Peter Wain*). Thirty-seven members attended this outing to discover something of the history of the lost medieval port of Goseford, the development of early radar at Bawdsey Manor and to explore the once outstanding gardens of Bawdsey Manor which were created by Sir Cuthbert and Lady Quilter at the end of the 19th century.

Members met in the public car park above Ramsholt Dock so as to understand from the panoramic view the extent of the port which had encompassed both sides of the lower river. Driving wind and rain meant that this part of the excursion was not successfully accomplished



and so the members made their way to the museum of the Bawdsey Radar Trust housed in the Transmitter Block on the Bawdsey Manor estate. The group was welcomed by Lynette Burgess, Visitor Services Manager, and heard a talk from Peter Wain on the origins and story of the lost medieval port of Goseford and its close connection with Bawdsey, as well as a talk from Lynette Burgess about the history of the Radar Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund Restoration Project.<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, members explored the museum which had been opened by the duke of Gloucester in July 2018 after its restoration. In 2019, the museum had won Suffolk's Small Museum of the Year Award and a Civic Trust Conservation Award, as well as being awarded a Certificate of Excellence by Trip Advisor ([www.bawdseyradar.org.uk](http://www.bawdseyradar.org.uk)).

By lunchtime, the weather had improved and many members adjourned to The Boathouse Café at Bawdsey Quay for lunch. The afternoon session was a led walk around the grounds of Bawdsey Manor (Fig. 235). The site of the manor had been bought by Sir Cuthbert Quilter in 1883 and between 1886 and 1908 he transformed what was originally a summer family home into a rambling country mansion that is now a Grade 2\* Listed Building. The manor is built of red brick with stone dressing and is in a range of styles including Gothic, Elizabethan and Jacobean. In 1936 Sir Cuthbert's son (also Sir Cuthbert) sold the manor and 168 acres of land to the Air Ministry to be used as a centre for the secret development of the then new invention of radar, its remote location making it ideal for this purpose. The result was that Bawdsey Manor became the first fully operational radar station in the world.

In 1991, RAF Bawdsey closed down and the site was bought and used as an international



FIG. 235 – Group outside walled garden (*photo: Rosemary Hoppitt*).

school. In 2016 it was acquired by PGL, one of the leading providers of adventure holidays in the UK, and transformed into a place for exciting holidays for young people. As the school was in session, it was not possible to explore inside the manor and other buildings. Despite the transformation, many of the original features of both the manor house and the grounds have been preserved including the walled kitchen garden, where Lady Quilter originally supervised the growing of fruit and vegetables for the main house (Fig. 236); the Memorial Garden, created in 1989 to honour all who served at RAF Bawdsey; and the buildings that were the original Research Block and the very first Filter School, both of which are now school boarding accommodation. Members were particularly fortunate to see inside the original, preserved game larder and to observe the arrangement of the ceiling hooks that enabled game to be hung after a shoot (Fig. 237).

On the floor of the porch to the main entrance of the house is a mosaic of a ‘beware of the dog’ sign copied from the entrance of a house in Pompei. This image was later used for the badge of RAF Bawdsey with the motto ‘first in the field’. Sir Cuthbert Quilter’s family motto, carved above the main door, was ‘*Plutot mourir que changer* [rather die than change]’. Both could be said to be apposite. Also in the main porch is a plaque unveiled in 1959 by the duchess of Gloucester to commemorate the work of Sir Robert Warson Watt and his team of scientists in the development of radar.

The group then made its way through the secret garden, past the site of Martello Tower V and on to the Pulhamite cliff structure. Pulhamite cliffs were very fashionable during the 19th century and this cliff, about 300 yards in length, is a fine example and one of the longest surviving stretches in the country. Pulhamite was the creation of James Pulham (1820–98) and is made from a blend of sand, cement and clinker sculptured over a core of rubble and crushed



FIG. 236 – Inside walled garden with Lemonry (photo: Rosemary Hoppitt).





FIG. 237 – Game store (photo: Rosemary Hoppitt).

brick. Bawdsey's cliff was created to form a habitat for growing alpine and to give some shelter for the rest of the gardens. Along the cliff are a series of seats, caves and grottos with tunnel access points.

The walk ended on the S terrace of the manor and members were able to go into the single-storey octagonal tea house with its copper-domed roof and Italian-tiled interior. From here, it was possible to see the Dragon Tower with its imposing dragon wind vane. Members returned to the west gate crossing a piece of water known as the 'River Jordan' along which, it is said, Sir Cuthbert took his family by punt to church services in the now derelict Tin Chapel in the nearby wood. The day ended with a short walk along a field to the sluice on the river wall that Peter Wain believes is the original entry point to the deep water channel that led up to the point between Alderton and Bawdsey and the original centre of the port of Goseford.

The excursion organisers are particularly grateful to Ashley Jones, General Manager of PGL, for allowing the visit to the grounds of Bawdsey Manor, even though the school was in session, and to Diane Clouting who opened the Boathouse Café especially for excursion members to use during the lunch break.

*25 May. Edward Martin.*

*Westhorpe Hall moated site and Westhorpe church* (by kind permission of E.J. Barker and Sons) (*Report by Edward Martin*). The excursion started at Lodge Farm, Westhorpe, with a welcome by Claire, David and Patrick Barker, representing our generous hosts, E.J. Barker and Sons. Here, they had laid on a display of some of the very special moulded terracotta



FIG. 238 – Terracotta panel with the radiated Tudor rose badge from the moat of Westhorpe Hall (left) and a similar fragment in red brick from Henham Hall (right).

ornaments, dating from around 1530, that once decorated Westhorpe Hall, the early 16th-century mansion of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk and his wife Mary Tudor, dowager queen of France. The Tudor mansion was demolished in the 18th century and these fragments were recovered in 1991 during silt clearance from the W and N arms of the moat that surrounds Westhorpe Hall. A detailed catalogue of these fragments was published in 2003.<sup>9</sup> The majority of the items are architectural, in that they are fragments of window or door surrounds, hoodmoulds, blind tracery and frieze panels. They are uniformly in a Gothic style, lacking the more Renaissance-style ornamentation that is seen on much of the other terracotta of this date, including that from Brandon's own London home, Suffolk Place.<sup>10</sup> The main figurative items are frieze panels, probably from a string-course, that bear either Brandon's badge (a lion's head erased, ducally crowned), or the royal Tudor badge (the combined roses of York and Lancaster, radiated). Fragments of very similar panels with Tudor roses, but made of moulded red brick instead of terracotta, were found in a Time Team excavation at Henham Park (another Brandon residence) in 2012 (Fig. 238). The lion badge also occurs, set diagonally, on smaller terracotta panels mounted on the exterior of the S aisle of Eye church; these have been produced from a different mould but are very similar in style and very probably by the same mould-maker (Fig. 239). Also on Eye church, but only recently identified, are moulded red brick panels bearing the porcupine and crown badge of King Louis of France, Mary Tudor's first husband;<sup>11</sup> these are not paralleled at Westhorpe, but the use of red brick provides a link with the Henham pieces.

Members were then transferred by a tractor and trailer, ably steered by Patrick Barker, through the fields of the farm to Westhorpe Hall for a walk around the moat, the surroundings of which had been recently been restored by the Barkers (Fig. 240). The present Hall is a replacement building of late 16th/early 17th-century date, with 18th-century additions. It is now a care home and was therefore not visited. The layout of the Tudor house is given in considerable detail in a written survey made in 1538. This was published, together with a report on some small-scale trenching carried out in 1987, in 1988.<sup>12</sup> The destruction of the house in the mid-18th century was witnessed by Tom Martin of Palgrave, the antiquarian:



I went to see the dismal ruins of Westthorp hall, formerly the seat of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. The workmen are now pulling it down as fast as may be, in a very careless and injudicious manner. The coping, bricks, battlements, and many other ornamental pieces are made of earth and burnt hard, and are as fresh as when first built; they might with care have taken them down whole, but all the fine chimneys and ornaments were pull'd down with ropes, and crush'd to pieces in a most shameful manner. There was a monstrous figure of Hercules, sitting cross-legg'd, with a club and lyon beside him, but all shattered to pieces, and the painted glass is likely to share the same fate. The timber is fresh and sound, and the building, which was very lofty, stood as erect as when first built. It is a pity that care is not taken to preserve some few of our ancient fabrics; to demolish every old piece of architecture is quite barbarous.<sup>13</sup>

The figure of Hercules is intriguing in that it might be a lost masterpiece by the Italian sculptor Pietro Torrigiano (1472–1528), who is best known in England for making the tomb of Henry VII and for a terracotta bust of the same king that is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In the 'King's Book of Payments' for January 1511 is an entry 'For image of Hercules, made of earth, £10'.<sup>14</sup> What happened to this terracotta Hercules is unknown, but its purchase coincides with the time Brandon was high in the king's favour and winning praise for his physical prowess.<sup>15</sup> The kingly gift of a figure of Hercules to such a man might be seen as an appropriate gesture. That Hercules may now lie in pieces in the moat at Westhorpe Hall.

Set into the sides of the Tudor brick bridge leading to the moated island are weathered terracotta panels with the Brandon lion and the Tudor rose, but these are probably not in their original positions. Also reset are three very fine and large terracotta panels which are now set over the S door of Westhorpe Hall. Together, these form a display of Brandon's armorial bearings: a shield encircled by a Garter and surmounted by a ducal crown, supported on either side by a falcon standing on a flowery mount, one foot raised and the other standing on a small bird. A drawing of Brandon's heraldic banner, made c.1531–32, shows a similar falcon holding the staff of the banner in its raised foot and it is possible that the original composition at Westhorpe had the falcons doing something similar (the current layout has some inconsistencies in both the colour of the panels and their details which suggest that the layout is not totally



FIG. 239 – Terracotta panel with the crowned lion badge of Charles Brandon (c.1484–1545), duke of Suffolk, from the moat of Westhorpe Hall (left) and a smaller terracotta plaque with the same badge set into the wall of Eye church (right).



FIG. 240 – Aerial view of Westthorpe Hall and its moat  
(*photograph by kind permission of Hedley Wright, 2020*).

original) (Fig. 241). The falcon is described in heraldic terms as being or (golden) with the inside of the wings being azure (blue) and the outer feathers or, the legs and beak are marked 'p' (?for 'proper', i.e. natural colour) and standing within a compartment vert (green) on a rock azure, its lower foot 'depressing a golden bird'.<sup>16</sup> There is every chance that the terracotta falcons were originally similarly painted. It has been said that the shield bears the arms 'of the Duke and his second wife, Catherine Willoughby', and therefore dates from 1534–37 and provides evidence for two phases of terracotta production.<sup>17</sup> But this is doubly incorrect, what it shows are quartered arms, indicating an inheritance, not impaled arms showing a marital alliance, and the quarterings are: 1 and 4 Brandon (barry of 10 [here actually 9] argent and gules, a lion rampant or crowned per pale gules and argent); with 2 and 3 being grand quarters with the arms of Rokele (lozengy gules and ermine) and Bruyn (azure, a cross moline or). Brandon's father, Sir William Brandon, married Elizabeth Bruyn, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Henry Bruyn of South Ockendon, Essex (the Bruyns having inherited South Ockenden from the Rokeles). So the correct order in the quartering should be Bruyn and Rokele, which is the case on Brandon's Garter plate. Correctly identified, the arms do not provide any evidence for a second phase of terracotta production.

Interestingly, a near-identical panel seems to have existed in the ruins of Mendham Priory. An 1808 account records Brandon's arms, with those of his wives, being 'engraved on stone, and placed on each side of the great western window of the Priory Church'. It goes on to say that on the 'North side of the window is Brandon, quartering Willoughby' and an accompanying





FIG. 241 – Terracotta panels with the arms and supporters of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, above the doorway of Westhorpe Hall (right) and a tracing of c.1830 by Thomas Willement of a c.1531–2 drawing of the banner of the duke (right).

engraving shows a gartered and crowned shield which closely resembles the Westhorpe one, except that the first quarter in the grand quarters is left blank, presumably because the heraldry could not be read; the writer also mistook the cross of the Rokele arms in the other quarter for the Willoughby one.<sup>18</sup> The account then states that ‘on the South side are the arms of Mary Queen of France’. This also is depicted in an accompanying engraving, which allows it to be identified with a surviving terracotta panel set into a lodge near the priory site that incorporates remains from the priory (Fig. 242). This has a crowned shield, identical in shape to the Westhorpe one, bearing the arms of France (for King Louis XII) impaled with those of England (for Mary Tudor). Mary continued to use these arms even after her marriage to Brandon because they represented her higher status as a queen, rather than a duchess. The shield is encircled by a collar of scallop shells and double knots (dexter side) and roses (sinister side), this being a combination of the shells and knots of the French royal Order of St Michael (for Louis) and Tudor roses (for Mary). An identical terracotta panel is set into the front of the gatehouse of West Stow Hall. And there can be no doubt that yet another was once a counterpoise to Brandon’s shield at Westhorpe.



FIG. 242 – Terracotta panel with the arms of Mary Tudor (1496–1533), Dowager Queen of France, salvaged from Mendham Priory and reset into a nearby lodge.

*St Margaret's church, Westhorpe* (by kind permission of the Revd Philip Merry and Mrs Rosemary Mees, churchwarden). Mainly 14th century in appearance, but probably finished in the early 15th century; Dame Elizabeth Elmham in her will of 1419 ordered that 'the chapel of St James in Westhorpe, with 2 aisles of the church and the tower to be completed at my expense'.<sup>19</sup> Her husband, Sir William Elmham, was a military captain who had a 'long, turbulent and exciting career in which he was involved in many of the important military, diplomatic and political events of his age'.<sup>20</sup> His career brought him considerable wealth and in his own will of 1403 he had left the considerable sum of £80 to the 'steeple' and to the chapel where his father, mother and grandfather are buried.<sup>21</sup> The Elmhams probably inhabited a house on the site of the later Brandon house and the moat, and perhaps more, may have originated with them. The house must have been quite grand for Dame Elizabeth's will reveals furnishings of sumptuous silks and other luxuries which she willed to Thomas Beaufort, duke of Exeter; not long afterwards Westhorpe was taken over by William de la Pole, duke of Suffolk. It is possible that Brandon's choice of Westhorpe was influenced by this connection with an earlier duke of Suffolk. Sir William and Dame Elizabeth were buried in Bury Abbey, but a tomb recess in the S aisle may be the burial place of his father, Henry de Elmham, recorded variously as a coroner, tax collector and bailiff of the hundred of Hartismere. His tomb adjoins a 14th-century parclose screen with much of its original colour still surviving. This may have enclosed a chantry for the Elmhams, as dictated by their wills. The floor is enriched with encaustic tiles.

The Barrow Chapel in the N aisle contains a grand monument to Maurice Barrow of Barningham Hall (d.1666) (Fig. 243). In his will he requested burial 'in a vault lately built by my selfe at the upper end of the Northside of the Church of Westhorpe for the finishing whereof and erectinge of a Tombe there for my selfe and Mary Lady Pointz my entirely beloved wyfe with an Iron gate before for the preservation of it I appoynt the Summe of five hundred pounds'.<sup>22</sup> Fulfilling this request proved difficult for his heirs, both through the failure by the first contractor, the Italian Diacinto Cawcy, to complete the work, and by the deaths of the heirs (Maurice Shelton [d.1667] and his sons Maurice [d.1670] and Henry [d.1690]).<sup>23</sup> In his will of 1688, Henry directed the payment of 'the remainder of the money which is due for erecting the Monument of Morris Barrowe late of Barningham Hall Esq.', this twenty-two years after Barrow's death.<sup>24</sup> The finished work has been attributed to Edward Pearce of London (d.1695), but a use was found for Diacinto's aborted monument by employing his distinctive



FIG. 243 – Monument in the N aisle of Westhorpe church to Maurice Barrow (c.1597–1666) of Barningham Hall. It is attributed to Edward Pearce of London.

*scagliola* panels, decorated with vases of flowers, as paving slabs for the chapel floor. And Barrow was doubtless comforted by the fact that his heirs did manage to erect an imposing iron gate to protect his tomb.

A curiosity is an otherwise inconspicuous black floorstone in the nave, near the pulpit. In the early 17th century Henry Chittings recorded it thus (with modern translation below):

*Hic iacet Matheus le Borgue miles de Francia natus de ducatu Bituricenss. hostagiu' in isto regno Anglie pro illustrissimo principi Domino duci aurelianenss. qui obiit 15 die Junij A.D. 1431.*  
On the same stone 5 scocheons [5 shields, *with drawn, three trefoils or*].<sup>25</sup>

Here lies Matheus 'the one-eyed' knight of France, born in the duchy of Bourges, a hostage in this kingdom of England for that illustrious prince, the duke of Orléans [i.e. Charles, duke of Orléans, who was imprisoned in England 1415–40], who died on the 15th day of June AD 1431.

The indents indicate a small shield in each of the four corners, with a central small plate with two figures holding a central shield, and the inscription below it. So, there, under that oft-overlooked slab, lies a French knight who was probably captured with Duke Charles at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. Most likely he spent many years as the guest/prisoner of the duke of Suffolk in the original Westhorpe Hall.

Chittings also noted that nearby 'under a little stone [are] the bowells of the French Quene Mary, wife of Charles Brandon D: of Suff.'<sup>26</sup> This 'stone' may be the small, plain, octagonal pamment near the edge of the pew on the S side of the chancel. If so, it is a very modest commemoration for a queen!

#### 18 July. Bob Carr.

*Bury St Edmunds Guildhall (Report by Bob Carr).* The history of the building has been fully covered in Margaret Statham's review in the *Proceedings*.<sup>27</sup> She is currently working on an update and revision which, together with recent archaeological works, is intended for publication in the journal. A short talk by Bob Carr encompassed the changes that have recently been made in the management of the building; the freehold owners remain the Guildhall Feoffment Trust, but the management has been transferred from St Edmundsbury Borough Council to Bury St Edmunds Heritage Trust. The management plan is to conserve this unique and historic building and reintroduce it to the local community and wider public: it is intended to run as a self-sustaining and not for profit centre, attracting visitors to a sensitively interpreted historic building in which will be found short-term rotating displays, a wartime exhibition of national significance, modern educational facilities and a high-quality venue for meetings and social events.

The recent scheme of conservation works, which principally involved replacing the roof coverings and upgrading the utilities, incorporated a design and information display which will allow the building to operate as a heritage centre. In practice, the current financial restraints have meant that educational visits (which formed the backbone of the financial management plan), simply did not happen and revisions to the operation of the building were necessary. The Trust now hopes to continue its intention of making this historic building available to the public by hiring its rooms out for meetings and celebrations.

New discoveries and analysis of the historic fabric made during the building works are still being compiled, along with Mrs Statham's work, into a comprehensive history of the building. Two recent highlights have been the establishment of a firm date for the hall roof structure of AD 1376–77, via dendrochronology. This is significantly earlier than the previous assessment based on the typology of the structure (Fig. 244). The main hall, with its coursed flint and



mortar fabric, is now dated to between the late 12th century and the first quarter of the 13th century. The Early English entrance arch may be an original feature. The present entry from Guildhall Street is via a porch with a chamber above it, believed to be the 'hutch' or strongroom mentioned in early records. A dendrochronological date of after 1461 for the felling of the trees which produced the planks used in the door, confirms the impression that this is the original door, and that the building fits well with the belief that the porch was built by, or commemorates, Jankyn Smyth.

The visit concluded with a tour of the building led by Bob Carr. Catherine Buchanan of the Guildhall Feoffment Trust explained the use of the chamber which was once used by the Town Council, and then set up in 1938 for use during WW2. It became the Royal Observer Corps control centre, which plotted and reported enemy aircraft movements over this zone. It is the only surviving ROC centre in the country and resonates with the tension of that dramatic era.



FIG. 244 – Bury St Edmunds Guildhall: Composite view with roof of AD 1376–7 superimposed above ceiling of the Court Room (*photo: Bob Carr*).

*14 September. Jo Caruth.*

*Clare Castle community excavations (Report by Jo Caruth).* Members made a morning visit to the archaeological excavations being carried out at Clare Castle. This year was the second of a three-year excavation programme being carried out by volunteers from the local community, overseen by a small team from the Suffolk office of Cotswold Archaeology (formerly Suffolk Archaeology CIC) and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The day started with introductory talks by Jo Caruth, leading the project for Cotswold Archaeology, and Richard and Peggy Smith, representing Clare Castle Country Park Trust, who explained the background to the NLHF bid and the broader improvements to the castle and park that the award will enable. Indeed, the introduction took place within the newly refurbished 'Old Goods Shed', which has been remodeled with a smart new look as a multi-purpose community venue providing a larger usable space, improved access and enhanced toilets. Following the short introductions, members were shown around the excavations which this year were taking place within the inner bailey of Clare Castle (Fig. 245).

Clare Castle is one of Suffolk's oldest motte and bailey castles and was constructed in the late 11th century by Richard fitz Gilbert, one of the knights who had accompanied William the Conqueror. Richard had been awarded the Clare landholdings forfeited by the Saxon lord Wihtgar in 1075 following the 'Revolt of the Three Earls'. The exact date of the initial



FIG. 245 – Members visit the community excavations at Clare Castle in September 2019  
(© Cotswold Archaeology).

construction of the castle is unknown, but there is documentary evidence that shows that it was in existence by 1090. Clare became the family seat and the family took on the name ‘de Clare’. Following the death of the tenth lord of Clare at Bannockburn in 1314, Clare Castle and one third of the family estate was handed to his sister, Elizabeth de Burgh, probably Clare’s most famous resident!<sup>28</sup> She was one of the wealthiest women in the country at the time and invested heavily in the castle during the more than forty years of her residency. Detailed records and accounts of her time at Clare give an evocative picture of life at the castle in the 14th century. Following her death, the castle declined in importance with the last known resident in the mid-15th century. In 1618 the castle was described as ‘lamentable ruins upon a most beautiful situation’.<sup>29</sup> In the 19th century the inner bailey was compulsorily purchased and the Sudbury to Haverhill (Great Eastern) railway line constructed. This, and associated buildings, cut through the W and E ramparts of the inner bailey and infilled parts of the moat, whilst an access road to the station was created through the outer bailey. This may have followed the original medieval access route into the inner bailey and it was during the Victorian widening of the entrance to the inner bailey that the 15th-century gold Clare Cross was found. Following the closure of the railway line as a result of the Beeching cuts, the surviving buildings have been repurposed as visitor facilities and the area of the inner bailey restored, although still lacking some lengths of the ramparts. The outer bailey remains bisected by the road, with part of it now a children’s play park and another occupied by the local bowls club. The fire station lies along the line of the truncated N rampart.

The location of the Saxon town is unconfirmed but it included a monastic college of St John, founded around 1045, and whose mention as being within the castle grounds in 1090

provides the *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the castle. The location of this college is unknown, but circumstantial evidence from 1952, when buried human remains were uncovered during the construction of a weighbridge for the railway line, has led to the belief that it was probably sited within what became the inner bailey. In 1124 the college was removed to Stoke by Clare and in 1248 a house of Austin Friars was established just outside the SW ramparts of the inner bailey.

Despite the wealth of documentary evidence for Clare Castle, it is only in the last decade that archaeological excavations have been targeted at finding out more about this important monument. Previous works (most reported in the *Proceedings*) focused on reconstructing the layout from contemporary plans,<sup>30</sup> or monitoring intrusive activities during repairs and development. Notable amongst these former works was that of Group Captain Knocker, related to the digging of a trench for a sewer pipe through the outer bailey in 1955, which recorded evidence of ovens and deposits of (probable) building flint;<sup>31</sup> a similar flint deposit was identified during monitoring for the children's play area in 2000.<sup>32</sup> Excavations in the inner bailey in 2000 for the erection of a millennial beacon uncovered a disarticulated human skull, suggesting that the area of burials might cover a good proportion of the E part of the inner bailey.<sup>33</sup> Of greater informative value were the five trial trenches carried out by community volunteers and Access Cambridge Archaeology under the direction of Carenza Lewis in 2013 as part of the NHLF 'Managing a Masterpiece' project. The work made the significant discovery that the construction of the railway line had caused less damage to the

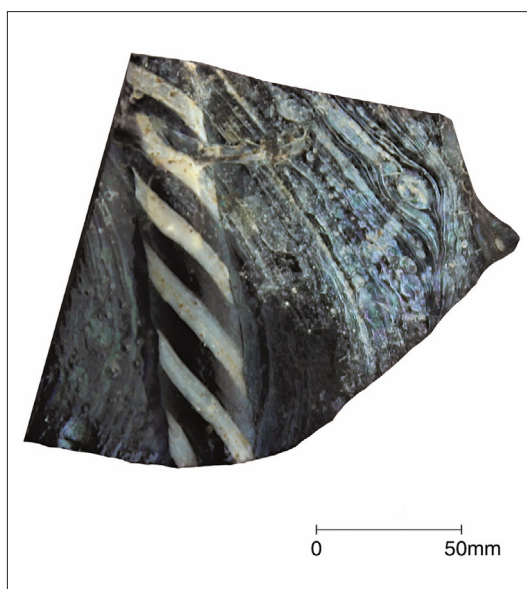


FIG. 246 – Iron M7 military arrowheads of 11th–13th-century date recovered from the outer bailey excavations (© Cotswold Archaeology).

FIG. 247 – Fragment of glass from a globular bowl or beaker with reticella decoration, 7th–9th century AD, L: 15.6mm; W: 14.5mm (© Cotswold Archaeology).



archaeological deposits in the S part of the inner bailey than had been feared, with medieval soil layers surviving under the trackbed. More burials were also found together with evidence of probable wooden and masonry buildings, including dumps of stained glass and lead came possibly indicative of a chapel window.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the opportunity afforded by further NLHF money to open larger areas was seized upon by the Trust and the local community. Each of the three seasons of excavation lasts three weeks and trenches have been targeted to build on the results of the 2013 work and to sample the previously unexplored main area of the outer bailey. The 2018 excavations were all placed within the outer bailey and revealed well-preserved deposits dating to the 12th–14th century and indicative of surfaces, ovens and the flint footings of a building. Finds included a late 8th-century coin, medieval horseshoes and specialised military arrowheads from the 13th century (Fig. 246). Records from 1342 mention the construction of houses for the huntsmen and it is possible that what was found was either one of these houses, or a kennel or stable.<sup>35</sup>

At the time of the SIAH visit, excavations in the inner bailey had been going for five days and it was still early in terms of results. It was possible, however, to see the potential for the survival of medieval buildings within a deep stratigraphic sequence in Trench 1 in the S part of the site where there were spreads of flint and mortar as well as earlier pits and a deep ditch. The edge of a large cut feature, potentially the moat encircling the E edge of the motte, had been identified in the N half of the bailey during machining of the upper modern layers, as had the possible fragmentary remains of a medieval structure, but these had not been investigated at the time. Work in subsequent weeks clarified these finds and also discovered earlier *in situ* burials. Other trenches in the S part of the bailey were still being worked through medieval soils at the time of the visit, but the discovery of disarticulated human remains gave a hint of the rows of burials that were later found to lie beneath. By the end of the excavations it was clear that an early cemetery had covered most of the area of the inner bailey, which probably included more than 500 burials and was far too large to have represented the exclusive cemetery of the small community of the monastic college of St John.<sup>36</sup>

The location of the Saxon town remains as yet unconfirmed, although sherds of Late Saxon Thetford-ware pottery were recovered in 2011 from test pits located around the marketplace and church, c.250m to the NW.<sup>37</sup> There is much still to learn, however, about the relative position of this apparent community cemetery and the extent of the town. The depth of stratigraphy in Trench 1 meant that the bottom of the sequence was not reached in 2019 and this will be a focus for the final season of investigations. Finds of Late Saxon pottery and Middle Saxon vessel glass offer tantalizing hints of that earlier settlement (Fig. 247). Despite the significant documentary evidence of a range of buildings associated with the residence of Lady Elizabeth de Burgh at the castle in the 14th century, archaeological evidence (so far) for this was limited with possibly the greatest damage from railway-related activities having been the reduction of the higher ground in the N half of the inner bailey where there had been sidings and ancillary structures; these causing more damage than the line itself.

At the time of writing, the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus pandemic leaves the timings of the final season of excavations in doubt, but SIAH members will be informed of the dates when these are confirmed and will be welcome to visit again to see the final results.

Cotswold Archaeology are grateful to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and to Clare Castle Country Park Trust for the opportunity to take part in these exciting investigations and we hope to see members at future excavations and open days.

## NOTES

- 1 See Gordon 1899.
- 2 See Mortlock 2009, 487–9 and Bettley and Pevsner 2015, 544–6.
- 3 Laughlin and West 1998, vii.
- 4 Turner 2019.
- 5 Dodd 1974.
- 6 Easton 1985, 1997 and 2001.
- 7 Turner 2001.
- 8 Wain 2016.
- 9 Anderson *et al.* 2003.
- 10 Smith *et al.* 2014.
- 11 See ‘Excursions 2012’ in *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, 43, 134–5.
- 12 Gunn and Lindley 1988.
- 13 Kirby 1839, 314; Bodleian Library, MS Top. Suffolk b2 (a copy of Kirby’s *Suffolk Traveller* with MS notes and additions by Martin and other antiquaries).
- 14 Brewer (ed.) 1864, 1449; I am grateful to Professor Cinzia M. Sicca of the University of Pisa for bringing this to my attention.
- 15 Gunn 1988, 6–11.
- 16 Howard de Walden 1904, 37.
- 17 Gunn and Lindley 1988, 279; this identification, with its supposed implications, is repeated in Anderson *et al.* 2003, 136 and 138.
- 18 Aldis 1808, 969 and pl. I.
- 19 N[orwich] C[onsistory] C[ourt], Hyrning 56–57 (Elmham).
- 20 [www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/elmham-sir-william-1336-1403](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/elmham-sir-william-1336-1403).
- 21 NCC, Harsyk 288–89 (Elmham).
- 22 T[he] N[ational] A[rchives], PROB 11/321/240 (Barrow).
- 23 See J. Blatchly and G. Fisher, ‘The itinerant Italian artist Diacinto Cawcy and the genesis of the Barrow monument at Westhorpe’, *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, 40, 443–54 and A. Bowett, ‘New light on Diacinto Cawcy and the Barrow monument’, *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, 42, 424–33.
- 24 TNA, PROB 11/402/437 (Shelton).
- 25 MacCulloch 1978, 120; I have made the assumption that Matheus’s surname should be read as ‘le Borgne’, which does mean ‘the one-eyed’ or ‘the squinter’, or even ‘the shifty’, though it could, more prosaically, be a reference to Bourges, his birthplace, but a ‘de’ rather than a ‘le’ would then have been a more fitting prefix.
- 26 MacCulloch 1978, 120.
- 27 Statham 1968, 117–57.
- 28 Alston *et al.* 1997; Clare Museum leaflet.
- 29 Clare Museum leaflet.
- 30 Tymms 1849.
- 31 Knocker 1959.
- 32 Gill 2000.
- 33 SHER, CLA036.
- 34 Lewis and Ranson 2013.
- 35 See ‘Archaeology in Suffolk, 2018’, *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, 44, 480.
- 36 See ‘Archaeology in Suffolk, 2019’, *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, 44, 679.
- 37 Lewis and Ranson 2011.

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