

GREAT BARTON: A MANOR OF THE ABBEY OF BURY ST EDMUNDS, A HUMBLE SETTLEMENT IN THE DANELAW

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Summary

Excavation of a small site at Ashend in Great Barton, north-east of Bury St Edmunds, revealed an area of late Saxon to medieval settlement set within ditched enclosures that probably flanked an early road. Foundations of at least six timber buildings, mainly of beam slot construction, were recorded, along with cess pits, quarry pits and a well. The associated Thetford ware, St Neots ware and early medieval ware pottery, as well as three radiocarbon dates, indicate that the main period of occupation spanned the late ninth/tenth to eleventh centuries. The environmental and artefactual assemblages provide a glimpse into the lives of the late Saxon rural community who laboured on this food-producing estate of Bury Abbey. Roadside activity continued, at a much-reduced level, into the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

INTRODUCTION

GREAT BARTON IS SITUATED in what was the hundred of Thedwestry, some 4km north-east of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, which it was held by from its founding. Excavations at Ashend, East Barton Road (Fig. 123) identified two main phases of late Saxon/early medieval and medieval occupation and land-use, with some limited evidence for prehistoric activity. The site is situated about 400m north-east of the medieval setting of the manor house of Great Barton (S[uffolk] H[istoric] E[nvironment] R[ecord] BRG 020; Fig. 124), with the identified remains being characteristic of a rural settlement. The earlier occupation phase comprised a group of rectangular buildings set within a ditched enclosure alongside an early roadway. The medieval phase saw a reduction in activity, evidenced by the remains of a smaller enclosure associated with pitting. Previous investigations in the area and the current archaeological work suggest that Great Barton had a dispersed later Saxon and medieval settlement pattern, with multiple foci.

Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) was commissioned by Oxbury on behalf of Icen Homes to undertake an archaeological excavation prior to proposed housing development on the site (centred on NGR TL 89471 66822) (Fig. 123). Further detail can be found in the Archive Report, available from the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) website.¹ The site archive has been deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Archive.

Geology and topography

The bedrock geology of the excavation area is recorded as Lewes, Seaford, Newhaven and Culver Chalk Formations. This bedrock is overlain by superficial wind-blown sands and silts

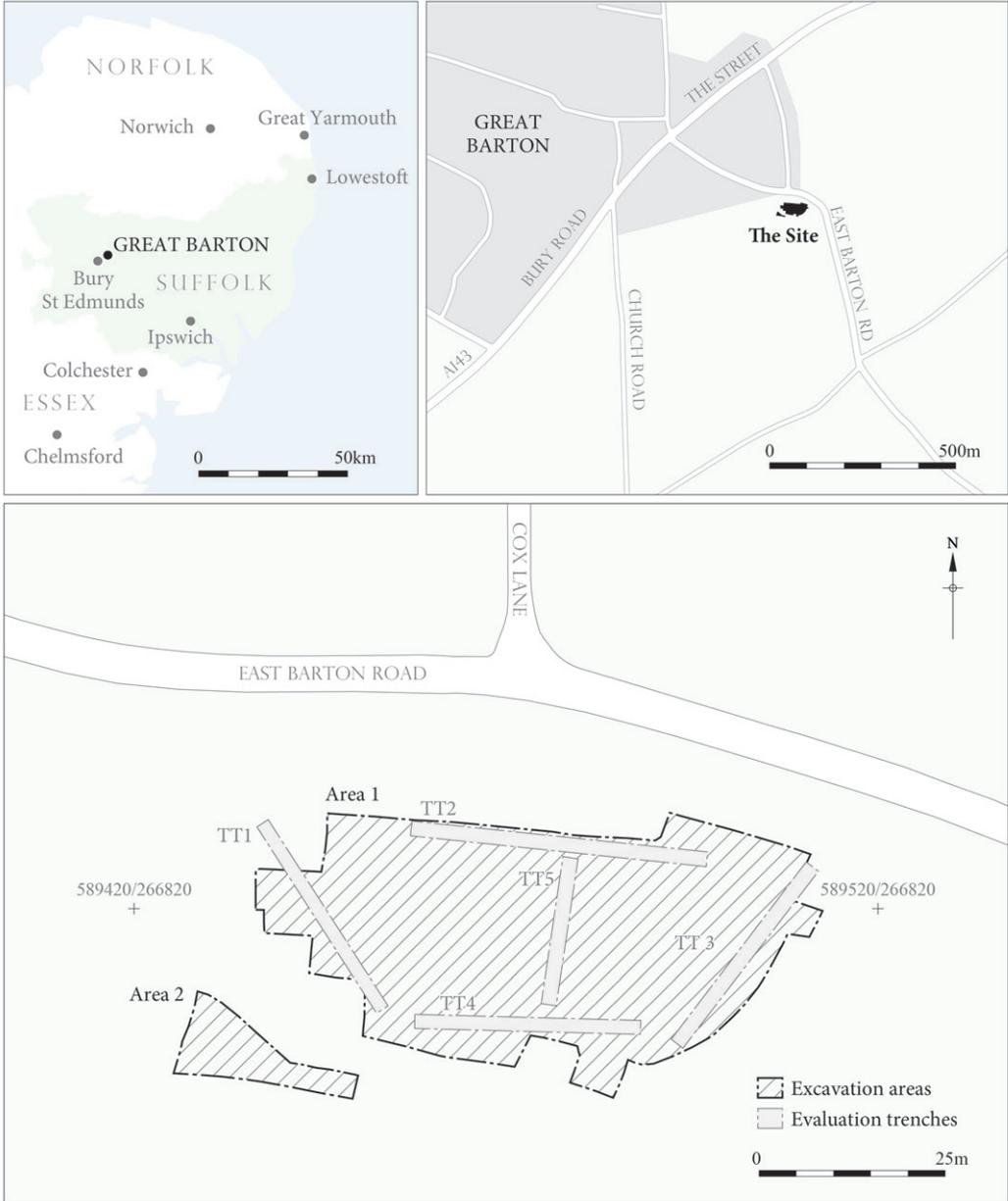


FIG. 123 – Site location.

and deposits of the Lowestoft Formation, a chalky till with outwash sands and gravels, silts, and clays. The site is at a level of *c.*54m AOD, rising gently to the north and dropping off gradually to the south-east. The natural substrate here comprises silts and silty clay deposits. A well at Vicarage Grove and surface water at Wolsey’s Pond and at Barton (Old) Hall, *c.*400–500m west and south-west of the site, constitute the closest sources of water.



FIG. 124 – Sites around Great Barton and Bury St Edmunds referenced in the text (*spatial data relating to sites and finds is reproduced with kind permission of Suffolk Historic Environment Record*).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

One of the earliest documented references to Great Barton is by Theodred, bishop of London, in his will of c.942–51, in which he grants Osgot, his relation and son of Eadulf, his land at *Bertune*.² The place-name Barton means ‘barley-’ or ‘corn farm’, which often developed into the later recorded meaning of a demesne farm or grange.³

Domesday Book records that at the time of its writing (1086), Great Barton had a population of 103 households comprising twenty-two villagers, seven smallholders, four slaves and seventy free men. It held ploughland, meadow, woodland and a church. Its livestock consisted of four swans, eighteen heads of cattle, forty-four pigs, 402 sheep and two beehives.⁴ It is worth noting that, at this time, Great Barton did not have a mill.

From the late ninth to the early twelfth century Great Barton was situated within the territory covered by the Danelaw, where Danish customary law held sway, which included a period of direct Danish rule in the late ninth–early tenth century. Areas within the Danelaw tended to have a higher proportion of ‘sokemen’, free peasants who owed service to the local lord and who were able to own land, than areas outside of Danish rule. A large number of sokemen from Great Barton, such as Ailric Brebebrec, who held ten acres and paid 9d, are mentioned in a feudal book of Abbot Baldwin, dated between 1087 and 1119. The referencing of *warland* for Great Barton in the twelfth-century *kalendar* of Abbot Samson is similarly relevant here, as this was a form of taxable landholding associated with free peasants, which was common in areas under Scandinavian influence and subject to Danelaw.⁵

In close proximity to the site, a Danish presence in the local populace may be reflected in

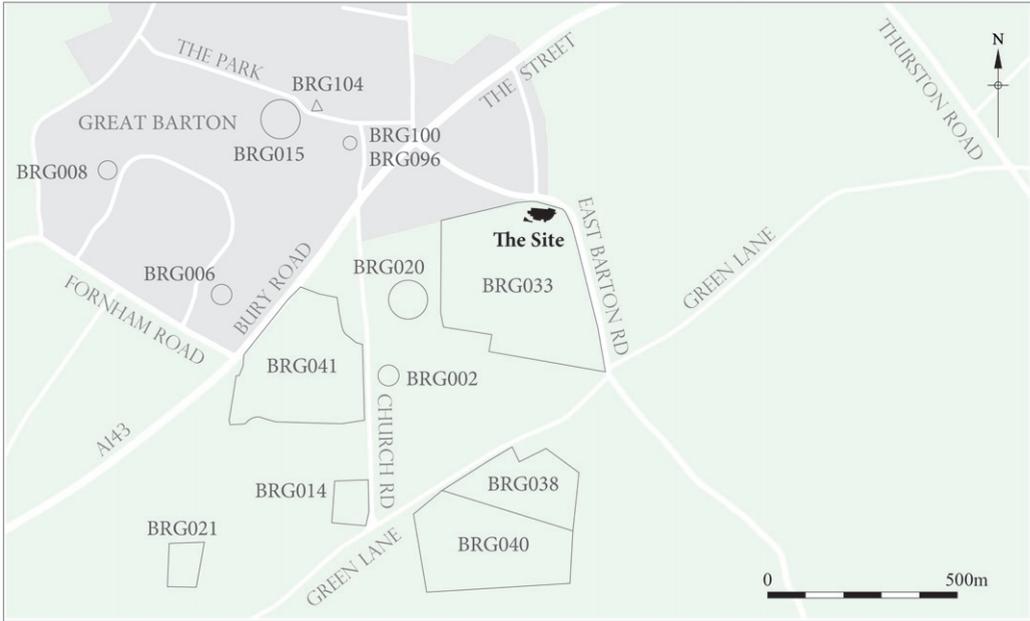


FIG. 125 – Sites in and in the immediate vicinity of Great Barton (*spatial data relating to sites and finds is reproduced with kind permission of Suffolk Historic Environment Record*).

the discovery of a coin hoard in the mid-nineteenth century in the garden of Sir Henry Bunbury's 'New Hall', 600m north-west of the current site (BRG 104) (Fig. 125).⁶ All the identifiable coins in this hoard are long cross pennies of Æthelred II, probably mostly or all minted at Thetford, a Danelaw mint, by Osbern. There are estimated to be fifty coins in this hoard which are fused together and were clearly subjected to considerable temperatures. The appearance of the fused group of coins is consistent with it having been hidden in a wall junction of a building destroyed by fire. The hoard is considered to have been concealed after 1000 and has been convincingly linked with the St Brice's Day massacre of 1002, when Æthelred ordered the deaths of all Danes living in England.⁷ The fact that the Great Barton coin hoard was burnt and not recovered by its owner strongly suggests that inhabitants of Danish origin were among the victims of the massacre here in this community. Elsewhere among the dead, rather inconveniently, was the sister of Sweyn Forkbeard, king of Denmark. This resulted in Sweyn's reprisal invasion and raids, which commenced in 1003 and continued until 1013 when he was declared king of England. His reign ended rather swiftly, with his death in February the following year. His untimely demise was, in some readings, attributed to the miraculous intervention of St Edmund.⁸

Great Barton was a vill within Thedwestry hundred, in the liberty of Bury St Edmunds, and Barton was held by Bury Abbey from its establishment in 1020 until its dissolution in 1539 (Fig. 124).⁹ The manor supplied the abbey with agricultural produce, with the holdings here serving as a food farm, from prior to 1066 and onward.¹⁰ In this system of estate management, the abbey received a food quota in lieu of rent from these holdings, which provided provisions for the monks and abbey dependents. This practice continued at least into the thirteenth century, albeit as time moved on payments in coin increasingly replaced the custom.¹¹

The village and its land (Figs 124 and 125) were under the control of a single lord in the form of the abbot and abbey.¹² In the twelfth century William, son of Ailboldus, confirmed to

the abbey the church of *Bertune* (Great Barton) (Fig. 124), while Edmund of Walpole, abbot of Bury St Edmunds from 1248–56, is noted as appropriating the church of Great Barton during his time as abbot.¹³ In the third part of the survey of Abbot Baldwin of Bury St Edmunds (Baldwin was abbot from 1065 to 1097–8), sixty-three tenants (sokemen) of the abbey are named at *Bertune*.¹⁴ The survey of West Suffolk in the Hundred Roll of 1279–80 identified Great Barton as being equipped with a windmill at this time, confirming a mill here by the mid-thirteenth century. This is likely to have been for the processing of grain from the abbey's holdings in demesne, with the unfree tenants obliged to also have their grain milled here as a form of seigniorial extraction, although the mill may have been leased out to a free tenant.¹⁵ The abbey's holdings in Great Barton continued to grow during the later thirteenth century.¹⁶

Assizes were held at Catteshall or Cattishall in Great Barton (Fig. 124), and subsequently on Henhowe Heath (BSE 487), which would then have been locations which were outside the jurisdiction of the abbey.¹⁷ According to SHER, the king's court is first mentioned in a charter of Henry I of 1102 or 1103 (BRG 001). The king's justices are recorded as having held court at Catteshall (TL 8847 6541) from 1187, during the reign of Henry II, although it may have been active there prior to this date.¹⁸ The toponym Catteshall is currently found *c.*1.5km south of Great Barton.

Great Barton, besides its principal manor at Barton (Old) Hall (Fig. 124), included two sub-manors, comprising Redwell and Necton or Conyers Hall (BRG 004) (Fig. 124). The main manor was situated at the site of Barton Hall (BRG 020), a little east of Church Road, while Necton or Conyers Hall was located immediately south-west of Conyers Green (BRG 003). Redwell Hall was to be found west of Livermere Road and south of Nacton Lane.¹⁹

The abbey appears to have had a significant number of disputes both with the townspeople of Bury itself, and with tenants on its surrounding estates. Indeed, the monks did not shirk conflict, as in 1201–2, when they dispatched a group of supporters to demolish a newly established (and potentially competing) market in Lakenheath.²⁰ Disputes between the abbey and the townspeople of Bury are recorded as occurring in 1264 and in 1292–3.²¹ In 1377 it was reported that there were four tenants from Great Barton who had been in arrears with rents and services for up to six and ten years, suggesting opposition to these charges.²² During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries these disagreements spilled over into open violence on several occasions, for example, in 1264, 1292, and 1302.²³ In 1327 there were riots in Bury, which involved the ransacking of the abbey, with the unrest spreading out to some of the abbey's estates, including the torching of some of its property in Great Barton.²⁴ Crop and livestock losses, as well as damages from burnt buildings, amounted to £93 12s; costs which were only surpassed at Grange.²⁵ Such hostilities were repeated later in the century during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, when the rioters burned many manorial court rolls of the abbey, thus destroying tenurial records.²⁶ Many of the rebels were subsequently shown to have been tenants of the abbey.²⁷

The fourteenth century was punctuated by crop failures, livestock disease and frequent famine years, while the plague epidemic of 1348–9 (later referred to as the Black Death) was followed by subsequent plague outbreaks in the second half of the century, with a major outbreak in Bury in 1361. Great Barton itself suffered significantly during the first outbreak, as evidenced in the 1349 court rolls. The period also witnessed wars in England and Scotland and with France. Although East Anglia had not been as affected by some of the earlier crop failures as elsewhere in the country, the harvest of 1318 was particularly poor. At the same time, the production of salt was adversely affected by the heavy and persistent rainfall. Salt was essential for the preservation of many perishable foodstuffs so its limited availability meant that preserved food was in short supply during the lean winter months. The hay crop

was similarly affected by the rains, which led to reduced food stocks for animals and left them underfed and susceptible to disease. Grain prices increased by a factor of more than five over the period, although they did subsequently decline. A combination of these factors caused such severe famine conditions that the population declined by around ten per cent in the early decades of the fourteenth century. This was followed by the plague epidemic of 1348–9, which possibly resulted in an overall death rate of as much as fifty per cent across the country. Farms and villages were deserted and huge tracts of agricultural land were abandoned. Ultimately, these events brought about massive demographic and social change, with improved living conditions, particularly for the lower social orders.²⁸ Wage rates increased, land was readily available and, by the end of the fourteenth century, food prices had fallen.²⁹ Great Barton was not isolated from events and although famine and disease took their toll, by the end of the fourteenth century the local population was benefitting from increased living standards.

Robert Audley, or his son Henry, built Hall Croft House (BRG 015) at Great Barton in the early seventeenth century, north–north-west of the original manor house (BRG 020) and south of The Park (Figs 124 and 125). This was replaced by the later house of the Bunbury family, which burnt down in 1914.³⁰ Fig. 126 shows the site's location on the 1805 Great Barton Inclosure map and 1883 Ordnance Survey map.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Previous archaeological work in the wider area is limited. The earliest activity in the vicinity is represented by a single possible Mesolithic flint (BRG 040) and a Neolithic leaf-shape arrowhead (BRG 008) (Fig. 125). Bronze Age activity is attested by artefact finds including a small Middle Bronze Age hoard (BRG 006) and a flint scatter (BRG 033) (Fig. 125). Some Bronze Age Beaker sherds (BRG 096) are recorded *c.*500m north-west of the site. At Barton Mere, the remains of a Bronze Age crannog, including timber piles, stone blocks, animal bones and pottery, were reportedly discovered in the nineteenth century (Fig. 124).³¹ Additional prehistoric flint spreads have also been recorded in the wider area (BRG 038, BRG 040 and BRG 041) (Fig. 125). A small excavation and several evaluations were carried out approximately 600m north-west of the Ashend, East Barton Road site (BRG 015), at the former location of the 'New Hall' (Figs 124 and 125). These identified a series of pits or post-holes of Iron Age and Late Iron Age to Romano-British date, with similar evidence at BRG 050, a little east of BRG 015 (Fig. 124).³² Some limited Roman activity in the area is highlighted by the discovery of Roman coins (BRG 002 and BRG 011) and a bracelet (BRG 021) (Fig. 125). For the Anglo-Saxon period, a number of stray finds have been recorded, including several copper mounts with stylised acanthus designs (BRG 045), a bronze stirrup strap mount with a coiled beast design (BRG 039), a sixth-century bronze wrist clasp, a ninth- or tenth-century nummular brooch (BRG 036), and a late Saxon strap end (BRG 039).³³

At BRG 050 fieldwork also included investigation of a post-medieval building.³⁴ Evaluation work on land adjoining the Church Institute along The Street (BRG 106) uncovered remains of a ditch, oven, metalworking, a metallised surface and structural remains with finds dating from the twelfth/thirteenth to fourteenth centuries and the post-medieval period, much of it relating to a seventeenth- to nineteenth-century forge (Fig. 124). The site of a possible medieval mill (BRG 100) is situated *c.*500m north-west of the site, which could be the mill referenced in the Hundred Roll of 1279–80. An evaluation at Conyers Green, to the north of the village (BRG 004) (Fig. 124), revealed later medieval remains, largely consisting of cut features of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date interpreted as being situated within a moat related to Conyers Hall (Fig. 124). At Moreton Hall East (BRG 077), some 2km south-west of the East Barton Road site (Fig. 124), finds included a middle Anglo-Saxon burial, medieval

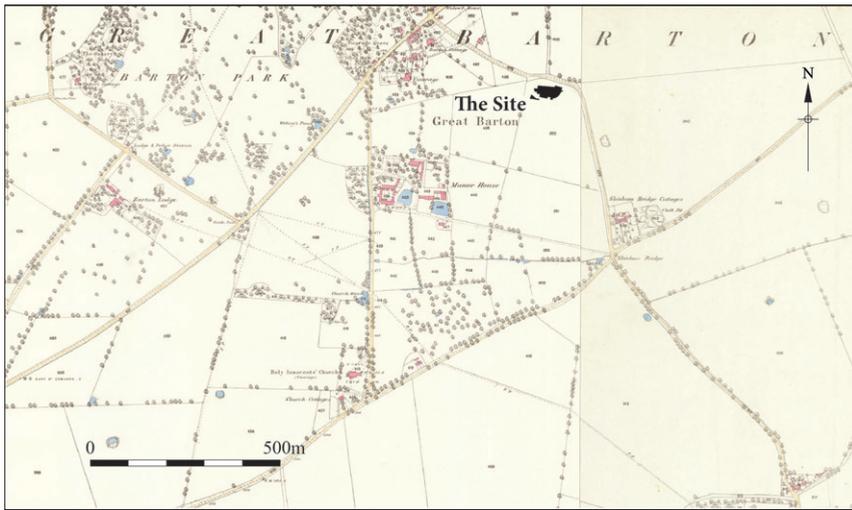
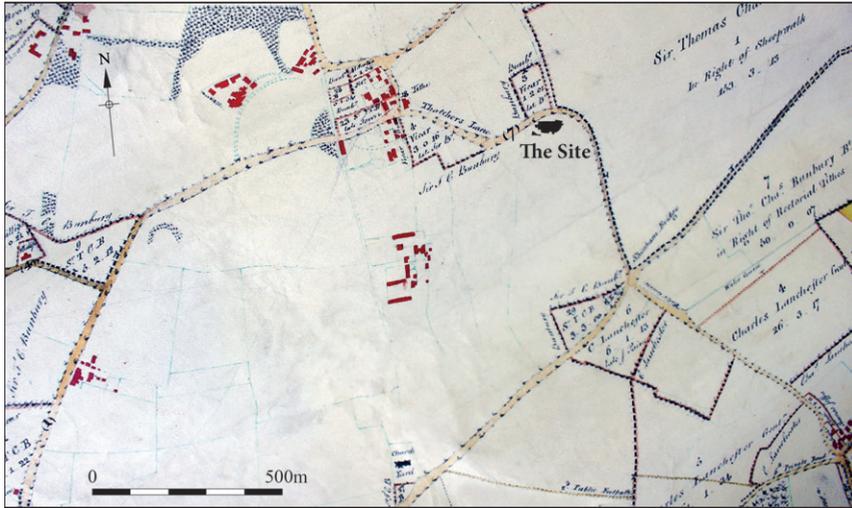


FIG. 126 – Site location on the 1805 Inclosure and 1883 Ordnance Survey maps (1805 *Great Barton Inclosure map* [E18/100/2] reproduced by kind permission of the owner via Suffolk Archives; 1883 *Ordnance Survey 1st ed. 25in:1 mile Suffolk sheets XLIV.4 and XLV.1* reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

field and enclosure boundaries, ovens (possibly associated with brewing activity), rubbish pits (dated from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries), and a post-built structure on the margins of later Catsale Green; as well as post-medieval features.³⁵ Just south-east of Great Barton (BRG 066) (Fig. 124), two ditches of Anglo-Saxon to medieval date have been found.³⁶

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE EAST BARTON ROAD SITE

THE SEQUENCE

Prehistoric

The earliest features identified at the Ashend, East Barton Road site comprised a small number of tree throws and natural glacial features. Six sherds of prehistoric pottery and eighty-six pieces of struck flint were found, largely residually in later features or in unstratified contexts. The oldest pieces comprise Mesolithic and Early Neolithic struck flint, with most of the flint being characteristic of Later Bronze Age to Early Iron Age traditions. The pottery is not diagnostic enough to be further identified with any degree of confidence, although it appears to fit a Later Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date most closely. Three small pits may be contemporary with the later prehistoric activity identified.

Late Saxon and early medieval

The late Saxon to early medieval period witnessed the most intensive period of use of the site (Fig. 127). A number of enclosure ditches partitioned the site, the principal ones forming a large 'L-shaped' boundary that had been redefined several times, leaving traces of several ditches side by side. This comprised a c.65m long section demarcated by ditches between c.1.5m and 3m wide by c.1m deep (Ditches 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11), extending on an east–north-east to west–south-west alignment along the southern margin of Excavation Areas 1 and 2. At its western extremity this boundary appears to have had a right-angled return on a north–north-west by south–south-east orientation (Ditches 2 and 3) (Fig. 127). The actual corner of the enclosure boundary here remained unexcavated as it was situated outside the area of

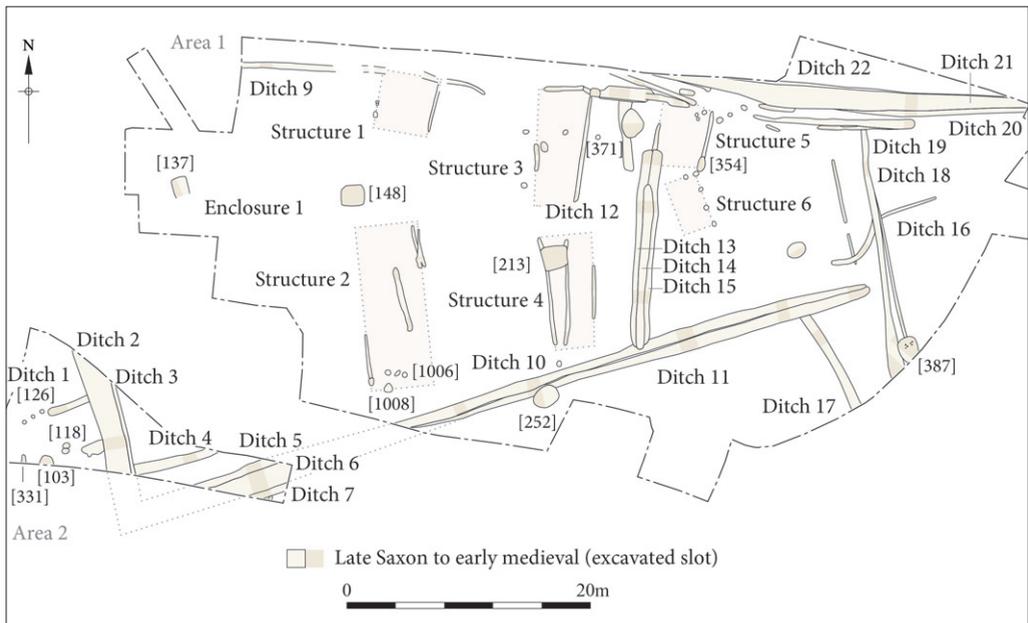


FIG. 127 – Plan of late Saxon to early medieval features.

excavation. Animal bone from Ditch 4, which appears to be a stratigraphically early iteration of part of the southern enclosure boundary, returned a calibrated C-14 date of AD 772–900 (85.6 per cent) or 921–950 (9.8 per cent) (SUERC-85511; 1170 ± 24 BP).³⁷ Along the northern limit of excavation, a further substantial east–west-orientated ditch was located. The surviving section of the main ditch (Ditch 21) measured *c.*31.5m in length, 2m in width and 0.5m in depth; traces of at least two earlier cuts of the boundary ditch were present alongside it (Ditches 20 and 22). Immediately adjacent and parallel to the western part of this ditch were a number of smaller ditch elements (for example, Ditch 19). On the north-west side of Excavation Area 1, a further narrow linear cut (Ditch 9) continued again on the same alignment and may represent an extension of the boundary delimitation of the same enclosure. It measured *c.*29m in length, 0.55m in width and 0.19m in depth and contained a single fill. Together these boundary ditches enclosed an approximately trapezoidal space (Enclosure 1).

Several smaller ditches perpendicular to these east–west-aligned elements were also present (Fig. 127). The most significant of these were closely spaced/intercutting Ditches 12, 13, 14 and 15, which together formed a roughly north–south division of Enclosure 1 into a larger western and a smaller eastern ‘compartment’. Various other, smaller linear ditches and gullies abutted the sides of some of these more substantial enclosure framing elements; these comprised Ditches 1, 16, 17, 18 and 19. Ditches 17 and 18 may have formed a trackway extending out of the south-east corner of the enclosure’s eastern subdivision.

The trapezoidal enclosure was subdivided into smaller spatial sections containing remains of broadly rectangular structures. From east to west, the first of these consisted of Structures 6 and 5, both situated in the north-west corner of the eastern-delimited section of the larger enclosure (Fig. 127). Of these two buildings, Structure 6 was a post-built structure made up of five post-holes forming an ‘L’ shape (Fig. 127). As with most of the structures identified, the partial survival precludes confident reconstruction of the plan and dimensions of the building. Northern corner post-hole [300] contained a rim from a small Thetford ware jar, suggesting a tenth- to eleventh-century date.

Structure 5 was formed of two parallel beam slots, spaced 4m apart and aligned north–north-east to south–south-west (Fig. 127). The position of the north wall was unclear as there were numerous features in this area which truncated this side of Structure 5. The overall dimensions of the structure are likely to have been 6m by 4m. Eastern Beam Slot [356] contained three sherds (4g) of Thetford and St Neots ware. Together with its stratigraphic relationships with later Pit [354] and Ditches 13 and 15, these finds suggest a tenth-century date for the building.

Along the east side of the western part of the larger enclosure, and within its central section, were the remains of Structures 1 to 4. Structure 4 comprised three broadly parallel beam slots and measured approximately 9m in length (Fig. 127). The overall footprint of this building would have been *c.*9m by 4m. Individual sherds of Thetford ware were found in the eastern and western beam slots, while the north end was cut by a *c.*late eleventh-century pit [213], providing a firm tenth–early eleventh-century date for the building.

Structure 3 had a floorplan of approximately 9m by 4.3m (Fig. 127). Four post-holes located within and around the footprint of the structure may have been related to it. These measured approximately 0.38m in width and 0.2m in depth. It could be that they were parts of two walls of a different building on the same spot, or they may have been part of a porch-like element pertaining to Structure 3. Six sherds (51g) of Thetford and St Neots ware were found in the eastern and western beam slots. The easternmost post-hole [371] contained six residual struck flints of mixed dates, including two Later Bronze Age to Iron Age ‘squat’ flakes and a blade-like flake of likely earlier prehistoric date.

Structure 1 was found centrally along the northern margin of Enclosure 1 defined by Ditch

9 (Fig. 127). The west side of the structure was demarcated by a row of north- to south-aligned post-holes. The east side was outlined by a beam slot on a similar, roughly north-south alignment. The post-holes varied in width from 0.16m to 0.49m, but all had a similarly shallow depth of approximately 0.07m. These features had been truncated by medieval activity and may represent the remains of more than one structure. The extant remains encompassed a 4.5m by 4.25m footprint, but could have originally continued further to the north, an area which was obscured by medieval features and the northern limit of excavation. The features forming this structure did not contain datable finds, but several were cut by later medieval elements, and the building's footprint was partly occupied by a large tenth- to early eleventh-century pit [417], thus placing the structure early in the site's Anglo-Saxon occupation.

Structure 2 consisted of four parallel beam slots and four post-holes (Fig. 127). These remains had a minimum floorplan of *c.*12m by 6m. A sherd of tenth- to eleventh-century Thetford ware (8g) and a Bury sandy ware jar fragment (32g) were recovered from the central beam slot [145=147]. Post-hole [1006] contained a sherd (1g) of Thetford ware, and 26g of Thetford and St Neots ware was found in Post-hole [1008]. Other finds include animal bone (88g), some of which is burnt, burnt stone (34g), oyster shell (8g) and struck flint (7g).

Several pits and more isolated post-hole groups complete the picture for this phase of use of the site. These include a small group at the south-western side of Excavation Area 2, beyond the space delimited by Enclosure 1 (Fig. 127). The post-holes ranged in size from 0.36m–0.45m in width and 0.15–0.22m in depth, with all features containing single fills. Post-hole [118] contained eight sherds (48g) of Thetford ware, and there was a single Thetford ware sherd in [126]. Pits [103] and [331] were partially exposed. Pit [103] contained Thetford ware pottery (1 sherd; 1g) dated to the tenth or eleventh century. A residual sherd of likely Late Bronze Age flint-tempered pottery and three flint flakes of Bronze or Iron Age type were also present. Despite its partial exposure, there is a strong impression of another structure in this corner of the excavation.

There was a similar small group of pits beyond the eastern limit of Enclosure 1. A small number of larger-sized cuts, possibly quarry and cess pits, were widely distributed across the bounded space of Enclosure 1 (Fig. 127). Three of these pits ([137], [148] and [213]) were roughly square in plan with steep sides, with their lengths and widths ranging between 1.8 and 2.5m. Pits [148] and [213] measured 0.72m and 0.92m in depth respectively, while Pit [137] was considerably shallower at 0.13m in depth. These cuts had indications of cess deposits around their sides and bases, suggesting that cess-containing fills had been removed prior to infilling with more general waste. The fills comprised dark, clayey silt deposits, representative of waste. Pottery from these features dates to the tenth to twelfth centuries and includes Thetford ware, St Neots ware and a single sherd of Stamford ware. Animal bone from Pit [213] was C-14 dated to 978–1032 cal. AD (SUERC-85512; 1027 ± 24 BP; 95.4 per cent). The uppermost deposit (210) in Pit [213] contained one of the very few personal items from the site (S[mall] F[ind] 4), a tang-hafted iron knife blade, as well as a deposit of cereal grains, mainly wheat, and a few fragments of lavastone quern.

Pit [417] was large and situated midway along the north side of Enclosure 1, truncating the space occupied by Structure 1 and measuring 3.7m long, 3.1m wide and 1.4m deep (shown on Fig. 128 to avoid obscuring earlier Structure 1). It contained six fills. A burnt grain from fill (375) was C-14 dated to 951–1033 cal. AD (SUERC-87331; 1039 ± 30 BP; 90.5 per cent; or 901–921 cal. AD at 4.9 per cent). Thirteen sherds (117g) of late Saxon Thetford ware and St Neots ware, including fragments of several jars, were recovered from the pit fills. A near-complete iron prick spur of late Saxon form (SF 6) (Fig. 128) came from fill (375) and a near-complete equid skull from fill (376). The fills of this pit appear to derive from primary dumps of settlement waste. The size of the feature suggests it may have originally been excavated as

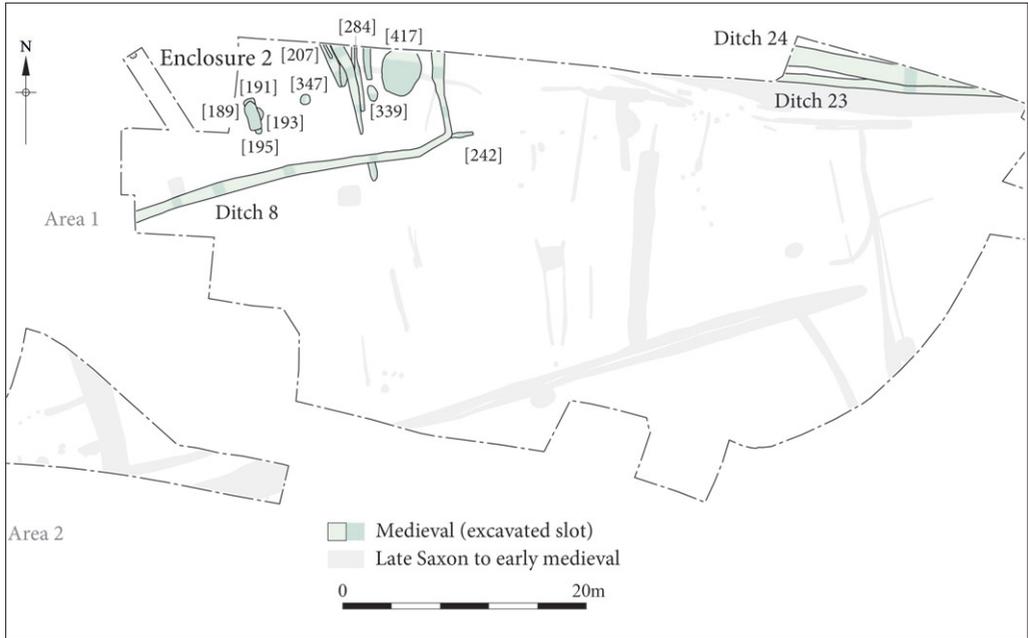


FIG. 128 – Plan of medieval features.

a quarry, perhaps for gravel and sand extraction, and subsequently been reused for waste disposal. The dating evidence, combined with the pit's position partly within the footprint of Structure 1, would suggest a date late in the Anglo-Saxon phase of occupation.

Pit [252] was located at the southern limit of Enclosure 1, cutting Ditch 11. It had near-vertical sides and may have been a well. Its fills suggested that this feature had been used for waste disposal when it had ceased to function as a well. Fill (259) contained a single 3g sherd of Thetford ware.

Medieval

The subsequent medieval period (twelfth to fourteenth centuries) witnessed a significant contraction of activity, which was now limited to the northern part of Excavation Area 1 (Fig. 128). Along the north-eastern edge of Excavation Area 1, Ditches 23 and 24 were uncovered. Ditch 23 extended on the same alignment as earlier Ditches 20, 21 and 22, a little north of the latter. It is likely that it represents a continuation/replacement of the same boundary (Fig. 128). The exposed part of the ditch was *c.*19m long, 0.82m wide and 0.47m deep and contained a single fill. It is likely that these ditches continued further to the north-west beyond the northern limit of excavation. The twenty-one pot sherds (101g) from the ditch fill include early medieval sparse shelly ware and medieval shell-dusted ware, while residual late Saxon pottery is also present. Three smithing hearth bottoms were identified, as was hammerscale evidencing ironsmithing in the vicinity, or alternatively the reuse of ironsmithing debris in the maintenance of a road surface in close proximity. Ironworking debris is frequently found in association with Roman and medieval road surfaces, repairs and roadside ditches.³⁸

Ditch 24 was parallel to and cut Ditch 23. Its exposed length was *c.*16m and it was 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep. The ditch contained two fills, (230) and (231). Pottery from (231)

comprises twenty-nine sherds (114g), including early medieval sparse shelly ware, medieval shell-dusted ware and early medieval ware, as well as a single sherd of unprovenanced glazed ware. Residual late Saxon pottery was also present. These fills also contained two smithing hearth bottoms and fragments of fired clay hearth lining.

Along the north-western limit of the excavations and in the north-western corner of Excavation Area 1, the 'L'-shaped corner of Enclosure Ditch 8 was situated (Fig. 128). It extended from the western edge of the excavation area on a west-south-west to east-north-east alignment, before turning north-north-west and continuing beyond the northern limit of the excavation. The exposed east-west length of this ditch measured 27m and its north-south segment added a further 7.4m. It was approximately 0.6m wide, 0.2m deep and contained two fills. Finds from the excavated slots include medieval coarseware and Bury sandy ware sherds (twelve; 97g; late twelfth to fourteenth centuries), as well as residual Thetford ware. A c.mid-fourteenth-century lead alloy mount with possible heraldic decoration (SF 2) (Fig. 130.3) was also recovered. On its western side, and on a similar alignment as the north-south return of Ditch 8, were a number of small intercutting and parallel ditches, some including recuts. These were internal to Enclosure 2. The fills within these ditches were distinct from those found elsewhere across the site. They were very dark and contained much burnt material. Sample 11, from Ditch [284], included fuel waste, while Sample 3, from Ditch [207], held burnt wheat grains and cereal-processing waste. A single short beam slot was found external to Enclosure Ditch 8 and was cut by the enclosure ditch. Beam slot [242] was 1.25m long, 0.41m wide and 0.26m deep and contained a single fill.

Pit [339] was situated next to earlier Pit [417] (Fig. 128). It was oval in plan, measuring 1.3m in length by 0.76m in width and 0.12m in depth, and contained a single fill (340), a dark greyish-brown clayey silt with charcoal flecks. An environmental sample from this deposit (Sample 13) contained a high proportion of barley, wheat, and rye grain. Pit [347] was located slightly west of the north-south-aligned group of ditches internal to medieval Enclosure 2 (Fig. 128). It was circular, measured 0.82m wide by 0.41m deep, and contained three fills from which a sherd (7g) of Bury sandy ware and a sherd (10g) of medieval coarseware were recovered. Further west, four intercutting pits were identified (Fig. 128). Pottery recovered from these includes Bury sandy ware and medieval coarsewares dating to the late twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

FINDS, ANIMAL BONE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

The post-Roman pottery (Berni Sudds)

The pottery amounts to 436 sherds, weighing 4239g, with a rim-based estimated vessel equivalent of 4.01. The pottery was recorded following the Suffolk Ceramic Type Series.

Thetford-type ware is the commonest fabric on site, dating predominantly to the tenth and eleventh centuries, with Thetford itself the most probable source for the majority of the material as it was the closest production centre to Great Barton.³⁹ A smaller group may derive from Ipswich, closely resembling products from the Ipswich-Thetford ware kilns. Typically, jar forms occur most frequently (Fig. 129.1), with everted, everted thickened or hollowed (wedge-shaped) rims. A single shouldered bowl with rouletted decoration to the top of the everted rim is present (Fig. 129.2). A number of body sherds with applied thumbled strip decoration indicate the presence of storage jars or pitchers. St Neots-type ware is the next most frequent of the late Saxon fabrics. Great Barton lies towards the limit of the tradition's main sphere of distribution, although it makes it further into East Anglia in some quantity and is well-represented in Bury St Edmunds.⁴⁰ Forms include jars with everted thickened or

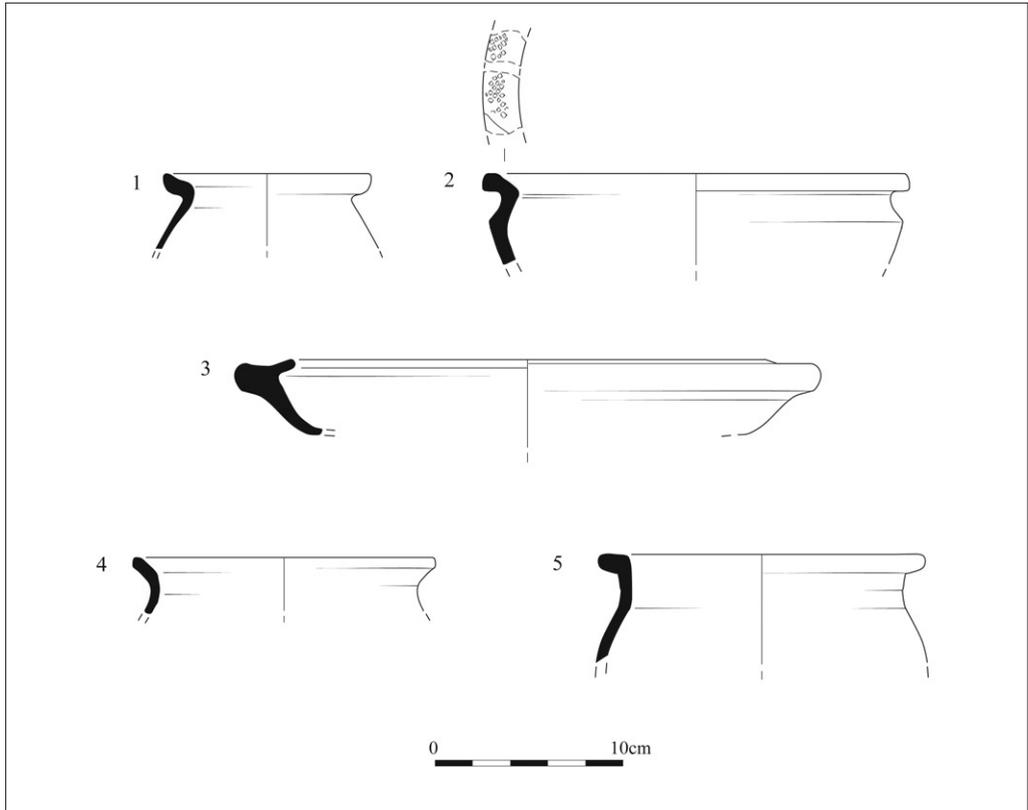


FIG. 129 – Medieval pottery: 1. Thetford ware jar. Fill (212), Pit [213].
 2. Thetford ware shouldered bowl with rouletted decoration. Fill (112), Slot [111], Ditch 7.
 3. St Neots-type ware bowl with a hammerhead rim. Fill (416), Slot [415], Ditch 19.
 4. Early medieval ware jar. Fill (231), Slot [232], Ditch 24.
 5. Bury sandy ware jar. Fill (190), Pit [191].

hollowed (wedge-shaped) rims, and bowls with inturned or hammerhead rims (Fig. 129.3). A single sherd of glazed Stamford-type ware was also recovered, probably from a pitcher.

A smaller early medieval assemblage includes types found in excavations at nearby Moreton Hall East.⁴¹ The most numerous amongst the small group are early medieval wares and early medieval sparse shelly wares. Early medieval wares include a jar with a simple everted rim (Fig. 129.4), another with a more developed, near-squared rim, and bowls or dishes with clubbed or flat-topped rims. The early medieval shelly wares include jars with thickened, everted thickened or beaded rims. Yarmouth-type ware and medieval shell-dusted ware were also identified. These fabrics were absent from Moreton Hall East, but are known from Bury St Edmunds and are otherwise well-paralleled in the region.

The medieval assemblage is dominated by coarsewares potentially produced in or around nearby Bury St Edmunds, primarily Bury medieval coarsewares and Bury sandy wares, although the latter group may have originated from further afield, forming part of a broader tradition of production focused on north Essex and perhaps south Suffolk.⁴² Jar forms dominate, with either thickened rims (with a rounded outer edge, triangular profile, or an internally bevelled top, sometimes internally beaded) or squared rims (Fig. 129.5). Bowls and

dishes were also recovered, with a similar range of rim profiles. There are no diagnostically late types. The coarsewares can be well-paralleled in the locality and in Bury St Edmunds but, in contrast, the glazed wares are notable by their absence.⁴³ At Moreton Hall East, Hedingham and Grimston wares occurred most frequently. The Great Barton site produced a single medieval glazed jug rim and handle of uncertain source, although most likely of East Anglian or Essex origin. The paucity of glazed wares, low even for a rural site, is possibly indicative of lower-status activity.

Numerically the largest proportion of the assemblage predates *c.*1100, but ceramic continuity at the site is indicated thereafter until the thirteenth or early/mid-fourteenth century. The range of coarseware forms, and residues and sooting, are consistent with domestic activity.

The stone (Barry Bishop)

The stone can be grouped into three main types: lavastone, sandstone and a metamorphic basement rock. The lavastone was recovered as small fragments from four separate contexts, all dated to the late Saxon period. It is mid-grey in colour, highly vesicular with occasional white mineral inclusions, and hard and brittle, but friable, in texture. Two of the fragments, both from Ditch 13, conjoin and retain traces of their exterior surfaces. These are flat and worn, indicating that they formed part of the grinding surface of a quern. Although no diagnostic elements survive, these and other lavastone fragments almost certainly come from rotary querns. These were imported in large numbers during the Roman and middle Saxon to early medieval period from Mayen or Niedermendig in the Andernach region of the Rhineland.⁴⁴ Although it is usually assumed that they were intended for grinding corn, they may also have been used for beans or other crops.⁴⁵

All the other types of stone likely derive from glacial erratics gathered from the local Quaternary tills. Of interest is a roughly cylindrical or sub-rectangular fragment of metamorphic stone, possibly chrome spinel, which probably originates from the very old, hard, Precambrian basement rocks of north-west Scotland or Norway.⁴⁶ It retains no obviously worked surfaces, but may have been roughly shaped, and its fabric, which includes very hard crystals <3mm diameter set in a softer matrix, would make it suitable for coarse grinding. A whetstone in a similar hard Norwegian Precambrian rock has been recovered from a thirteenth-century well in Bury St Edmunds.⁴⁷

A cobble and a large spall of hard, siliceous sandstone show no signs of deliberate shaping, but are burnt, causing localised colour changes and some cracking of their fabric. The remaining piece consists of a cobble of friable, ferruginous sandstone. This shows no evidence of modification, but it is perhaps worth noting that similar stone was quarried from the local glacial deposits and used as ore for smelting during the late Saxon period at Thorpe St Andrew near Norwich.⁴⁸

The stone fragments represent agricultural-processing practices and possibly craft activities during the Anglo-Saxon period. The lavastone is also a reflection of an extensive and organized trade network that was probably organized through the major trading centres of the period, such as Ipswich.

The lithics (Barry Bishop)

The lithic assemblage consists of eighty-six struck flints recovered from thirty-six separate features as well as unstratified deposits. With the exception of an undated tree hollow [313], which produced an undiagnostic, but possibly later prehistoric, decortication flake, all of the

features date to the late Saxon or medieval period and their contained flintwork can be regarded as residually deposited. A few earlier pieces suggest low-level flintworking at the site during the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic, but the bulk of the assemblage can be dated on technological grounds to between the later Neolithic and the end of the Bronze Age or even Iron Age.

The small finds (Märit Gaimster)

Seven metal small finds were recovered; most can be allocated to the late Saxon or medieval periods. One find, a possible iron repair patch, was unstratified (SF 3).

Three finds are late Saxon or early medieval in date (tenth to late eleventh/early twelfth centuries). One is a near-complete iron knife blade of fine and slender form (SF 4).⁴⁹ There is an iron prick spur, which is almost certainly late Saxon (SF 6) (Fig. 130.1). The spur has characteristic horizontally straight sides, with flat rectangular terminals for fixing the spur leathers; the neck is long and slender and finished in a small, set-back spike. Similar spurs have been dated to the eleventh or early twelfth centuries.⁵⁰ A further late Saxon find comprises a 'D'-shaped copper-alloy buckle with a short integral plate with faintly incised decoration (SF 1) (Fig. 130.2). The buckle has a flat-section, slightly angled frame, with trefoil decoration at the centre of the front edge. There are two horizontally placed rivet holes on the buckle plate; the one nearest the buckle frame retains fragments of iron, likely the remnants of the buckle pin. The buckle has a parallel in an example from east Surrey — a more elaborate buckle with an openwork frame featuring an animal head terminal, and with the outer edges of the frame formed by a pair of animal heads in the Ringerike style.⁵¹ The form would date the Surrey buckle to the eleventh century, with further parallels known also without integral plates.⁵² There are later medieval lead/tin buckles with integrated plates, but on these the plates are hollow with the leather strap fixed inside.⁵³

Two finds represent characteristic late medieval forms. A small iron buckle (SF 8), intrusive in fill (167) of Ditch 13, has outward-facing prongs at the corner of the frame. The buckle has a parallel in a well-known late medieval buckle type, normally of copper alloy, dating to the late fourteenth century.⁵⁴ Also interesting is a small shield-shaped mount of lead alloy, cast with possible heraldic decoration on the slightly dished front (SF 2), from Ditch 8 (Fig. 130.3). The mount originally had two separate rivets for fixing; one is still present. Shield-shaped mounts of lead/tin are known from London, where they date to the mid-fourteenth century.⁵⁵ Examples with heraldic decoration are also known from Meols in Merseyside.⁵⁶

Metalworking residues (David Starley)

The site produced a small assemblage of industrial debris totalling 2.2kg. There are five smithing hearth bottoms, diagnostic of the forging of iron. This predominantly fayalitic (iron silicate) slag is a waste material which forms in the hottest part of a smithing hearth, where the air is forced into the hearth, forming a characteristic dipped or flat upper surface and a convex base in the pool of liquid slag. The three smaller hearth bottoms were recovered from Ditch 23 and two more massive ones from Ditch 24. A sieve residue from Ditch 23 also produced microslag hammerscale, which is similarly characteristic of smithing and tends to remain in proximity to the smithing activity.⁵⁷ Two further fragments from Ditch 24 may also derive from the smithing; the first is fired clay, the second, vitrified hearth lining. The latter typically forms at the air inlet where temperatures are most acute. No fuel remains were found adhering to the slag, although its well-consolidated, non-clinker nature would tend to support the use of charcoal rather than coal or coke as fuel. Two dense nodules, likely of haematite,

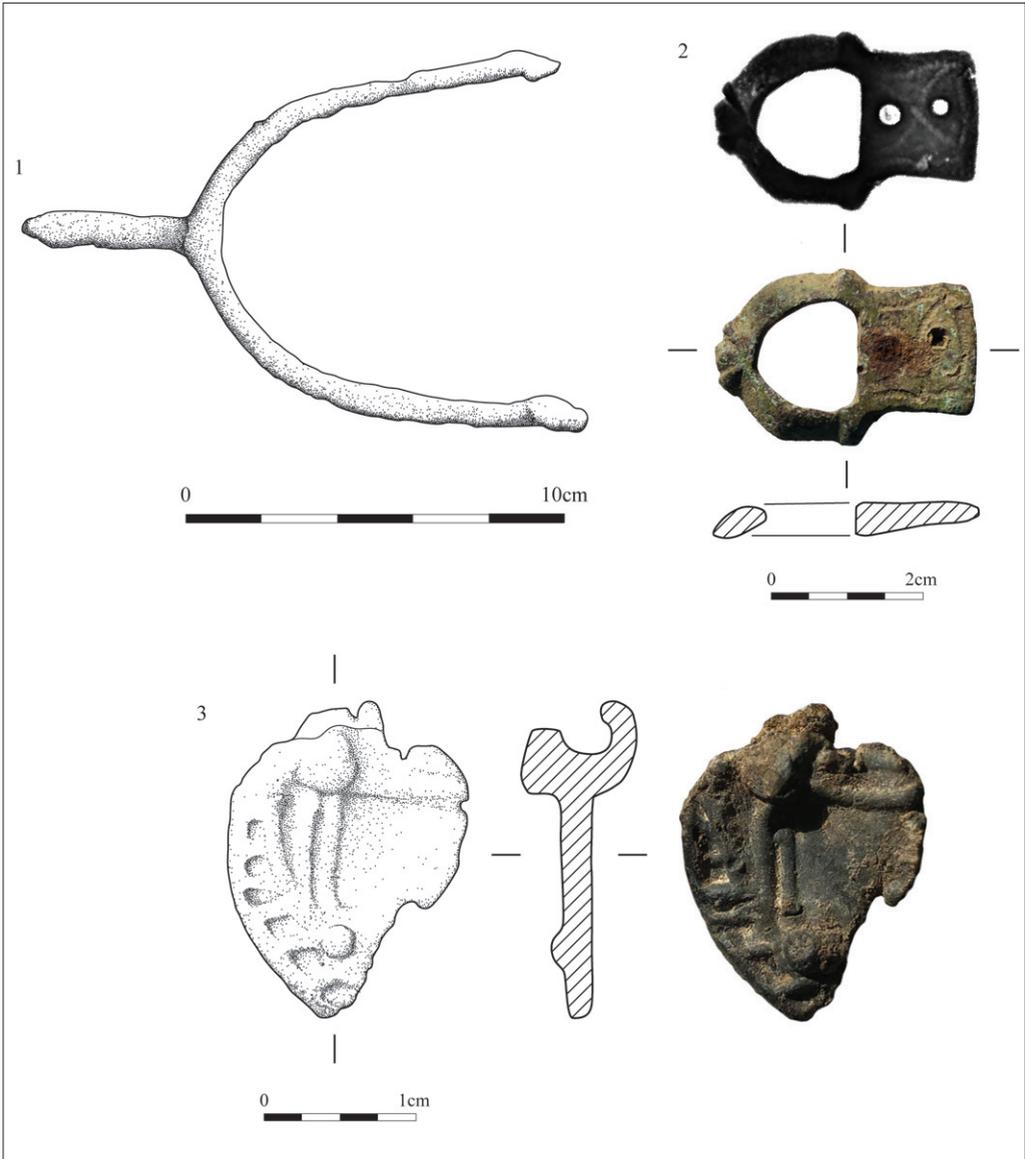


FIG. 130 – Small finds: 1. Late Saxon iron prick spur. SF 6, fill (375), Pit [417].
 2. D-shaped copper-alloy buckle with a short integral plate with faintly incised decoration. SF 1, fill (224), Slot [225], Ditch 21.
 3. Shield-shaped mount of lead alloy, cast with possible heraldic decoration on slightly dished front. SF 2, fill (236), Slot [235], Ditch 8.

derive from Ditches 13 and 10. Such material could be sufficiently rich in iron to provide a viable ore for the smelting of iron. In the absence of evidence of their being heated, or any furnaces or ironsmelting slag, they cannot be positively used as evidence for this activity, however.

The small amount of slag provides clear evidence that ironsmithing (hot working of ferrous alloys) was taking place in the vicinity of Ditches 23 and 24. The quantities are very small and it would seem likely that smithing was not a large-scale activity. The material is consistent with the medieval date indicated for the features excavated, though technologically it is possible that the debris could be residual from earlier Roman activity. The presence of the less robust hearth lining suggests that redeposition is unlikely to have occurred and therefore the slag and ditch are likely to be contemporary. It might be speculated that the difference in size of the hearth bottoms found in the two ditches (23 and 24) indicates a change in the nature of the items being forged, but this is based on too few objects to confirm this hypothesis. Despite the presence of the haematite nodules, the smelting of iron, or the working of other metals, cannot be confidently substantiated.

Oyster shell (Sian O'Neill)

A small amount of oyster shell was found in late Saxon and early medieval contexts. These are evidence of exchange with coastal areas, most likely the Stour/Orwell estuary. The quantities involved indicate that oysters formed only an occasional or minor component of the late Saxon and medieval occupants' diet.

The animal bone (Kevin Rielly)

The site produced a total of 507 hand-recovered fragments, refitting to 272 bones. A total of 270 of these derived from late Saxon or medieval deposits; the remaining two were from an undated tree hollow. The majority of the assemblage is well-preserved apart from a little root etching. Fragmentation varies between features, being notably greater amongst the ditch compared to the pit collections.

The late Saxon/early medieval assemblage is principally composed of the major domesticates, with cattle most frequent and similar numbers of sheep/goat and pig. Cattle and sheep/goat are mainly represented by adult individuals and pig by approximately equal quantities of pre-adults and young adults. There are a number of equid bones, widely distributed (amongst the ditches and the pits), with a maximum of no more than two bones per fill. This suggests either the presence of heavily disturbed carcasses, or that these carcasses experienced some post-mortem usage. However, such practices are not apparent from the bones, which bear no obvious cut marks, nor is there any concentration of parts which could signify skinning or food waste. The use the horses were put to is indicated by a metacarpus from an adult individual (from Ditch 22) with a fused metacarpal 2 (splint bone), indicative of an animal of advanced years. There is an active bony growth on the mid-shaft of the splint bone. While this type of pathology could be interpreted as a response to a traumatic event, thus forming a haematoma where present on the anterior, lateral, or medial surfaces, this is highly unlikely to occur on the posterior surface. In this case, and considering the age of the animal, it is suggested that the extra bone represents ossified soft tissue, probably in response to the general wear and tear of a working animal. There is a complete equid radius from fill (326) of Ditch 13, allowing the calculation of a shoulder height of 131cm, *i.e.* a medium to large pony.⁵⁸

The other late Saxon/early medieval species include dog, chicken and, probably, goose. Most of the chicken bones were derived from Pit [213], this providing a near-complete hen, as demonstrated by a metatarsus with no spur, and limb bones with slight medullary bone, here signifying a bird 'in lay'.⁵⁹

There are general similarities between the late Saxon/early medieval and medieval

collections, the later assemblage also supplying a major domesticated-dominated collection with an approximately similar pattern of cattle, sheep/goat and pig abundance. In addition, equid is relatively well-represented, again with the odd bone scattered about the site. These include the remains of a paired mandible and maxilla from Pit [189], comprising a number of fragmented teeth. These incorporate unworn adult premolars or molars, indicative of either a juvenile or sub-adult individual. This contrasts with the remains, also fragmented, of a near-complete equid skull from Pit [417], which provides a relatively complete set of adult maxillary teeth. Crown heights suggest an age of about nine to ten years.⁶⁰

For the late Saxon/early medieval period, beef provided by far the greater amount of the meat diet. Older cattle and sheep are prevalent in the assemblage, suggestive of the importance of secondary usage of these animals. The few equids, most probably pony-sized horses, were probably used for work.

The far smaller medieval portion of the assemblage allows for much more limited conclusions. While there are some young cattle, sheep, and pig present, there are not enough to merit interpretation as infant mortalities, which would have been an indication of local production.

The lack of animal bone from the environmental samples suggests that the hand-collected assemblage constitutes a representative reflection of the animal bone present on site.

Environmental remains (Val Fryer)

Cereal grains, chaff and seeds of common weeds were present in all sixteen samples tested. Preservation is generally good, although a high proportion of the grains are severely puffed and distorted, probably as a result of extremely high temperatures during combustion.

The late Saxon/early medieval samples are from a ditch, a beam slot, a post-hole, and pits. These assemblages are generally quite sparse and it would appear that much of the recovered material is derived from scattered domestic detritus or midden refuse. Three contain slightly higher densities; of these Sample 1, from Ditch 1, is charcoal-rich. It is thought most likely that this assemblage represents a small, discrete deposit of hearth waste which was dumped in the open ditch. The condition of the material suggests that it was burnt at considerable temperatures. Sample 6, from the fill of Pit [213], contained a moderate density of cereal grains and, although most are too poorly preserved to allow close identification, wheat grains are quite common. As the settlement is situated on fairly light soils, more suited to the production of barley, rye, and oats, it is assumed that this wheat was probably imported from farms on the heavier clay soils to the north and east of Great Barton.

For the medieval features confined to the north-western and north-eastern limits of Excavation Area 1, it would appear that the features were likely associated with either a small farmstead, or with roadside settlement. Sample 7, from Ditch 24, is particularly sparse, possibly indicating that this area was entirely peripheral to any focus of settlement. In contrast, the features on the north-west side of the excavated area all contained high densities of grain, with wheat marginally more frequent than barley. The assemblage from Pit [339] (Sample 13) contained a high density of cereal grains including barley, rye, and wheat. Although it is likely that much of this grain derived from cereals which were accidentally charred during culinary preparation, the high density of very poorly preserved cereals within certain assemblages may indicate that some batches were being dried prior to storage. Such a process inevitably led to occasional catastrophic fires during which the grain was burnt, often at very high temperatures. The high density of wheat within Sample 3 may well have derived from such an accident as wheat was rarely eaten whole (unlike barley), being more commonly stored and ground as flour. It is also noted that the assemblage from Sample 11 (Ditch Slot

[284]) contained a high density of bracken pinnule fragments, as well as small pieces of heather stem. Both were frequently used as fuel within domestic hearths and ovens as they were both readily available and easy to ignite, maintaining an even, high temperature throughout combustion.

Chaff is present within most assemblages, but at a density which is unlikely to be indicative of large-scale agricultural activity. It may be that local households were each processing sufficient grain for their day-to-day needs, with any processing waste being used as tinder or kindling within domestic hearths. Although oats are present at a higher frequency than in the earlier deposits, it is still thought most likely that all are present as contaminants of the main barley and wheat crops, with the same possibly also being true for the rye.

Weed seeds are still quite scarce, but it is noted that many of those present are of a similar size to the cereals. Such seeds were rarely removed during the early stages of processing and often persisted as contaminants of batches of semi-cleaned or prime grain. Most would have been removed by hand immediately prior to consumption/use. Small legumes are also present in moderate quantities within most assemblages. It is most likely that these are indicative of a change in agricultural practice which appears to have occurred across much of eastern England and the east Midlands during the early medieval period. As cereal production became more intensive, and as animal manure became less readily available, nitrogen-fixing crops were increasingly grown as part of a rotational cropping regime in an attempt to increase the fertility of impoverished soils.

The material within the assemblages appears to be largely derived from domestic hearth or midden waste, some of which may have been deliberately dumped within various open features, while the remainder was either scattered around the site or generally dispersed by the elements or the subsequent reworking of the features. Cereals were obviously of considerable importance to the occupants of the site, although it appears unlikely that the site was primarily agricultural in nature. It is more likely that batches of grain, some of which were at an advanced stage of processing, were being imported from elsewhere and then dried and stored prior to final processing and use. The medieval assemblages appear to indicate that the north-west side of the main excavation area was a particular focus for grain-related activities. It may be the case that this space was used as a focus for hazardous activities involving fire, for the dumping of refuse, or for a combination of the two. Notwithstanding this, the cereals utilised by the occupants of the site were being produced on both the local light loams and on the heavier clay lands to the north and east, with the productivity of the soil being improved by the introduction of rotational cropping regimes. The Breckland areas to the north of the settlement were also providing fuel in the form of bracken and heather, some of which may have been used in drying ovens as well as domestic hearths.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Late Saxon to early medieval period (tenth to late eleventh/early twelfth centuries)

The earliest evidence for sustained occupation activity at the site dates to the late Saxon to early medieval period (tenth to eleventh centuries). Thetford ware early rim types are present (Types 3 and 5) which, in addition to the St Neots-type ware bowl with the hammerhead rim (Fig. 129.3), suggest that occupation of the site is likely to have begun during the tenth century, or perhaps from as early as the *c.*ninth century to judge from the C-14 dates.⁶¹ Many features contained late Saxon wares in isolation, while a smaller number included early medieval wares, intimating an eleventh-century date, or possibly later for those where the Thetford ware is residual. Elsewhere, Thetford ware has been found in mid- and late twelfth-

century groups where it is considered to derive from primary deposition.⁶² Some of the early medieval wares, found in moderate-sized groups in Ditches 23 and 24 alongside Yarmouth-type ware, medieval shell-dusted ware, and the single glazed ware, date these unambiguously to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

During the later twelfth century, wheel-thrown coarsewares, mostly produced in Bury St Edmunds, were introduced and dominate the site assemblage from then on. These products have a relatively localised distribution, rarely traded far beyond Bury St Edmunds itself. The rims are relatively simple, with only a few developed types. Taken together with the absence of any diagnostically later fabrics, this would indicate the site was vacated during the fourteenth century.

The uncovered remains are characteristic of a rural roadside settlement. What its location was within the wider late Saxon/early medieval settlement pattern of Great Barton remains uncertain, though historic maps suggest that pre-modern settlement in the area was dispersed (Fig. 126). The emphasis on definition of the large southern boundary ditches would suggest that this was the limit of the settlement in that direction, with no further features identified beyond it; however, the excavation area ended here so this remains uncertain. It is likely that further late Saxon/early medieval settlement would have been associated with the location of the church of Holy Innocents (BRG 014) (Fig. 125), which, notably, was situated just south of a spring (OS 1988). Similarly, based on the documentary sources, the location of Great Barton manor house (BRG 020) seems likely to have had some settlement of late Saxon date in its vicinity. As yet archaeological evidence to confirm occupation of such date in these locations is missing. It is likely, however, on the current evidence base, that Anglo-Saxon to early medieval Great Barton had multiple settlement focal points interspaced with arable land and pasture, similar perhaps to the evidence uncovered at Cedars Park in Stowmarket, some 17km south-east of Great Barton, where a dispersed medieval rural settlement pattern, with multiple foci, was identified.⁶³ Alternatively, a comparison can be made with the settlement evidence of Anglo-Saxon date at Wenhasston, some 50km east of Great Barton, where a shifting settlement focus was indicated, followed by eventual stabilisation of the location of the village core.⁶⁴

There were several ditched enclosures in the excavated area, within which were a number of rectangular structures. A major boundary was identified at the northern limit of the excavations, which was on a similar alignment to that of the present road. An early road or trackway undoubtedly existed here, with settlement expanding along its route.

A number of demarcations within the larger ditched enclosures were recorded, creating subdivisions within which structures were located. These buildings were poorly defined by foundation elements which often did not form complete or coherent ground plans (Fig. 127). In some cases the features ascribed to one structure might represent the remains of multiple buildings or different phases of construction. The building method is dominated by beam slot foundations, with evidence for a single exclusively post-built structure (Structure 6). Due to the lack of complete building plans, the size and shape of the structures can only be estimated. They appear to be rectangular, ranging in width between 4m and 6m, with the overall length of any one building unlikely to have exceeded 10m (with the exception of Structure 2 where a total length of 12m is suggested). The limited structural debris found across the site (daub, roofing tiles, etc.) suggests the buildings were timber-built, with thatched roofs, and likely of single-storey height. The 'arrangement' of the structures and cess pits suggest plots based on a north-south layout, perhaps fronting onto the road.

The finds assemblage and environmental remains are consistent with agricultural practices which would concur with the role attributed to the Great Barton manor from the early eleventh century onwards as a food farm, supplying the abbey of Bury St Edmunds with

agricultural produce to provide sustenance for the monks and other dependents. Few personal objects were recovered. Of those that were, the knife, spur and buckle could all represent casual losses of people on the move, unsurprising considering the site's location alongside a roadway. The area's link with a 'Viking' presence (it being under Danelaw), having a high percentage of sokemen, and with the suggestion of it having been impacted by the violence associated with the St Brice's Day massacre of 1002 should be noted. The three C-14 dates obtained for the sequence are all in the ninth- to tenth-/early eleventh-century range, with one of the three possibly extending back into the late eighth century.

Little evidence for pits relating to disposal of waste was seen within this phase of activity, although those features with remains of cess did show signs of having been maintained or periodically cleaned out. It is likely that cess and other organic waste was collected and reused as manure to enrich adjacent fields.

Medieval (late twelfth to fourteenth centuries)

The archaeological remains from the late twelfth to the fourteenth centuries were limited to the northern edge of the site, in particular the north-west corner of Area 1. Ditches 23 and 24 suggest a continuation, or re-establishment, of a roadside boundary previously defined by Ditches 20, 21 and 22. The medieval activity in the north-west corner was 'contained' within an enclosure formed by Ditch 8. This enclosure is likely to have fronted onto an existing road to the north. There is no evidence for structural remains relating to this medieval phase of activity, suggesting occupation was focused elsewhere or perhaps directly beside the road frontage (Fig. 128).

The associated finds material for the enclosure suggest the area may have served for preparation for grain storage, or another form of small-scale industrial activity involving high-temperature heating. The small finds are characteristic of casual losses of fourteenth-century date, comprising an iron buckle and a small shield-shaped mount of lead alloy, possibly with heraldic decoration, again likely to have originated from passing traffic on the nearby road.

The decrease in evidence for land use during the medieval phase and its eventual disappearance altogether is likely to have been related to the widespread demographic collapse of the fourteenth century, when many rural settlements were abandoned altogether, or underwent a major period of decline.

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NOTES

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- 45 Powlesland 1998.
- 46 K. Hayward, pers. comm.
- 47 Hayward 2018.
- 48 Bishop and Proctor 2011.
- 49 See Ottaway 1992, fig. 228 no. 2800.
- 50 See Ellis 1995, fig. 90 nos 316 and 318.
- 51 Williams 1996, 172 and fig. 6.
- 52 Griffiths *et al.* 2007, 62 and pl. 8 no. 307.
- 53 Egan and Pritchard 1991, fig. 66; see Whitehead 2003, 37 no. 218.
- 54 See Meols Type 10, Griffiths *et al.* 2007, pl. 14 nos 544–45 and 548; Egan and Pritchard 1991, fig. 44 no. 299.

- 55 Egan and Pritchard 1991, fig. 126 no. 1087.
 56 Griffiths *et al.* 2007, 118–19 and pl. 20 nos 1120–21.
 57 Starley 1995.
 58 Von den Driesch and Boessneck 1974.
 59 Driver 1982.
 60 Levine 1982.
 61 Anderson 2004; Slowikowski 2013.
 62 Young and Vince *et al.* 2005, 100.
 63 Woolhouse 2016.
 64 Antrobus and Stirk 2013.

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