EXCURSIONS 2022

Reports and notes on some findings.

9th April.
The morning session, including the AGM, took place in the Blackbourne Hall at Elmswell, with a series of short talks as follows: Jo Caruth on the community excavations at Clare Castle; Lisa Wall on trade in Suffolk buildings and their interiors in the 20th century; Faye Minter with an update on the 'Rendlesham Revealed' project; Miriam Stead with an introduction to Walpole Old Hall; and Suffolk Archaeological Field Group on their recent work in the county.

25 May, Miriam Stead.
Walpole Old Chapel and Halesworth and District Museum (*Report by Miriam Stead*). The day began at Walpole Old Chapel with a tour led by Miriam Stead and Simon Weeks. Walpole Old Chapel is a grade II* listed building and home to a very early Independent (or Congregational) religious body (Figs 169 and 170). They called themselves Independents because they rejected any external control, not wishing to belong to any organised church. They believed they should be able to worship in their own way, run their own affairs, choose their own minister and that worship should be simple and unadorned.

FIG. 169 – Walpole Old Chapel.

FIG. 170 – Interior of Walpole Old Chapel.

The leader of this tendency in eastern Suffolk and Norfolk in the 1640s was William Bridge. He was an influential figure, ordained in the established church, who had fled from Norwich to the Netherlands to escape Stuart persecution. After being pastor of the English refugee church at Rotterdam, he returned to take a prominent place in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which had been set up by the Long Parliament to make the English church more thoroughly Protestant. Bridge, who ministered at Great Yarmouth, believed this could only be achieved by breaking away and following a separate path.

The Yarmouth Church Book, preserved in the Norfolk Record Office, records that on 21 June 1649 'ye saints in and about Coukley' asked Bridge's church for 'ye right hand of fellowship in this their great undertaking'.[1] These 'saints' were not only devout locals, but also several relatively well-known and ordained men, some of whom had been contemporaries at

Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a centre of non-conformist teaching. They were Samuel Manning, who was to be minister in Walpole for nearly 50 years, his brother John, their close friend Thomas Spatchet, and John Tillinghast, nephew of the regicide Robert Tichbourne. Tillinghast was a leading member of the Fifth Monarchists who believed that the Independents should govern the country until Christ himself returned to take the vacant throne as king. The first minister here, Samuel Habergham, was of the same persuasion.

When the Anglican bishops returned to power with Charles II, the clergy were required to conform to the new Act of Uniformity. A great many Independents and other dissenters refused and were expelled from their livings. Nonetheless, they went on preaching (sometimes under licence) in their own or other houses. As a result, they suffered under one of the most severe campaigns of religious repression in English history: surprise raids on dissenting meetings by the magistrates' constables, imprisonment and heavy fines. The Mannings of Walpole suffered with them. The Act of Toleration after 1689 went some way towards giving dissenters freedom of worship. Nevertheless, they did not gain the right to university entrance, or the holding of public office for another century and a half.

It was in 1689 that the six trustees of the Walpole congregation received a lease on the building and an acre of land from the Corporation of Southwold. The annual rent was ten shillings. These trustees were local men of some substance: Richard Whincop, gentleman, and Joshua Nunn, yeoman, of Spexhall; Thomas Reeve, yeoman, and Samuel Folkard, grocer, of Walpole; John Fella, cordwainer, and John Hugman, glover, of Halesworth. It is not known how the town of Southwold came to own land in Walpole, but the site was probably part of the surrounding farm leased at that time to Joseph Skoulding, named as occupier of the building. It is possible that the land once belonged to the dissolved Sibton Abbey, which had sizeable holdings in Walpole.

After the end of the 18th century, the chapel began to lose prominence. There was a substantial drift of country people into the towns. In addition, the founding of Halesworth's own Independent church in 1793 reduced the numbers who drove, rode or walked to Walpole on Sundays. Moreover, the Primitive Methodists opened a chapel in the village in the l860s. By 1958 the congregation had become so small that trusteeship was passed from local people to the Suffolk Congregational Union, the chapel being formally closed in 1970. 25 years of uncertainty followed, with at least one attempt to sell the building as a house, until in 1995 it came into the care of the Historic Chapels Trust.

The afternoon was spent in Halesworth, only 2.5 miles away. There were two elements, a visit to the Cut Arts Centre to see the Malt Experience, and a visit to Halesworth and District Museum.

Malt, produced from fine barley grown on the light local soils was turned, in malthouses or maltings, into the main ingredient of one of Britain's favourite drinks, beer. The Malt Experience exhibition provides an opportunity to get the feel of what it must have been like to work in a traditional maltings in about 1900. Interactive displays show the stages of production of malt, the special layout of the buildings and different skills involved. Malting in Halesworth started as a small-scale local trade, producing just enough malt to make beer for local inns. Then improvements in transport made it possible for larger, more efficient maltings to sell their produce to a wider world, particularly to the large breweries growing up in London and the Midlands. This process began as early as the mid-1700s when improvements to the river Blyth allowed Halesworth malt to be carried down to the sea and around the coast to London. The arrival of the railway in the 1850s brought even greater speed and economy. Production expanded rapidly, particularly under Patrick Stead, the Scottish maltster who made his base in Halesworth and became one of the country's most successful and innovative malting entrepreneurs. Halesworth became known as a regional

centre for the industry. The last Halesworth malt was produced in 1981, but there is still plenty of evidence of the town's malting legacy. A Malt Trail leads visitors around the town to find significant relics of this important industry.

At Halesworth and District Museum, we were welcomed by Pauline Wilcox, Brian Howard and David Wollwebber who showed us key elements of their collection accompanied by lively and informed talks.

David Wollweber gave a gripping account of the dynasty of de Argentein, lords of the manor of Halesworth, a family with a very chequered past. The full story can be read in his museum publication *The de Argentein Family: cup-bearers to medieval kings*, or in his article for the Suffolk Review.[2] Although now little known, in the 13th and 14th centuries the de Argentein family played a decisive role in the development of the two Suffolk market towns of Halesworth and Newmarket and were key players in some important national events. They were on the edges of the upper nobility, but never rose to be major players as they frequently backed the wrong side.

It is thought that the de Argentein family originally came from the town of Argentan in Normandy and fought at the Battle of Hastings. Late in the reign of William the Conqueror, in return for the manor of Great Wymondley in Hertfordshire, one Reginald de Argentein was awarded the honour of serving the king his first cup of wine at the coronation banquet. The de Argenteins and their descendants continued to perform this service for over 600 years. The banquet was discontinued after an extravagant and expensive one for George IV in 1821.

The Suffolk connection began when another Reginald de Argentein married one Rose of Halesworth, daughter of Thomas de Halesworth, who held the manor of his name, in the middle of the 12th century. The family began to gain prominence under Reginald's son (or possibly nephew), Sir Richard de Argentein. Richard was at various times sheriff for Essex, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon, and governor of Hertford Castle. He was also a steward of the royal household and signed the Magna Carta of 1225. In around 1200 Richard married a Bedfordshire heiress called Emma de Broy and after her death he married Cassandra de L'Isle, who brought with her a generous settlement, including the manor of Newmarket. Richard successfully petitioned for both Halesworth and Newmarket to have yearly fairs in 1223 (reaffirmed in 1227), and for Halesworth to have a weekly market for which he was to give the king (Henry III) 'two palfreys'. Richard was also a crusader and was heavily involved in the Fifth and Sixth Crusades and when Damietta in Egypt was captured in 1219, Richard took over a mosque in the city and dedicated it to St Edmund.

Richard was succeeded as head of the family by his son Giles. We hear little of Giles until 1258 when Henry III agreed to a council of twenty-four to reform the realm. Giles was one of twelve members of the council chosen by the barons. The king presumably also thought highly of Giles since he was appointed a royal steward, serving from 1258 to 1260. Giles joined the Second Barons' War against King Henry, led by Simon de Montfort. He was briefly made constable of Windsor when the castle was taken from the king. In March 1265 an updated Magna Carta was agreed by King Henry and Giles was among the signatories of the document. Nevertheless, Prince Edward escaped and raised an army that beat the rebellious barons at the Battle of Evesham on 4 August 1265. Given the vicious nature of this battle, Giles was lucky to escape with his life; he was captured and required to forfeit all his lands including those at Halesworth, Newmarket and Burton in Suffolk.

The youngest son of the Giles of the Barons' War, another Giles, was a famous crusading Knight Hospitaller with an awesome reputation for his skill in battle and the joust. In November 1302 Giles headed N with the army of Edward I into Scotland. However, he deserted the campaign to go jousting at a tournament at Byfleet in Surrey. Edward was not amused and we know from the *Calendar of Fine Rolls* that he ordered the seizure of Giles'

lands in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Huntingdonshire, Essex and Hertfordshire. The king ordered his sheriff to 'arrest the body of Giles de Argenteim [*sic*] for certain trespasses and contempts, and have him before the king fifteen days from Easter next to answer touching the same'.[3] Giles did not learn from his experiences and deserted from the Scottish army again to go jousting in 1306.

In 1311 Giles decided to return to the Holy Land on crusade. However, *en route* on the island of Rhodes, he was captured and held to ransom by a gang known as the 'bad neighbours'. The new English king, Edward II, went to some length to secure Giles' release. Edward wrote to the Byzantine emperor and his wife and son, the king of Sicily, and the master of the Knights Hospitaller amongst others. This diplomacy paid off and Giles was given the important job of 'holding the reins' (i.e. personal bodyguard) for Edward at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. He died a heroic death charging into the fray in defence of his king.

Giles' nephew John married Agnes de Bereford, daughter of the Chief Justice of England. They had a son, John, but the father died young. Agnes remarried twice, her third husband being Sir John Maltravers, one of the two 'guardians' of Edward II at the time of his murder. On the accession of Edward III, Maltravers fled abroad but the astute Agnes managed to retain her dower property, including the main de Argentein manor at Great Wymondley. Her son John only inherited the secondary estate at Halesworth. It kept the family linked to the town for a further 80 years, but with reduced wealth and prestige.

The final character in this family saga was John's illegitimate son William. He usurped the estates from his father's three legitimate daughters in 1382. Fighting broke out between the two sides of the family in the parish church of St Mary's, Halesworth, at Sir John's funeral. William was a fiery character who had fought in the Hundred Years' War, including in a spectacular 'wine heist' in the English Channel in 1387. The English captured a year's supply of wine bound from Bordeaux to the Low Countries. Disaster then struck the family as Sir William, all his sons, and grandson all died between 1413 and 1420. The heirs were his two granddaughters, Elizabeth and Joan. The girls became valuable wards and the king's commissioners were sent to confirm their age before their marriage to the Alington brothers, William and Robert. With the marriage of Elizabeth to William Alington, the de Argentein estates, including Halesworth and Newmarket, became those of the Alington family.

Bronze Age axe hoards.

Early in 2011 two hoards of Bronze Age axe heads, spears and a rapier blade were discovered in Wissett by Chris Frost and Marilyn Throssell, two responsible metal detectorists (Fig. 171). The hoards were found about nine feet apart. The second hoard was excavated fully by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service and expert examination of the objects has shown them to be over three thousand years old, dating to the Middle Bronze Age (*c.*1500–1150 BC). It is most unusual to find two hoards so close together and the evidence, from the identical alloy used in both, is that they are contemporary with one another. Furthermore, this is a very significant find as several of the items are of a type never previously been found together. In all, fifteen objects have been authenticated by the British Museum. These are exciting discoveries for the area and have now been purchased by the Halesworth and District Museum.

In 1839 a hoard of Bronze Age palstave axe heads were found in Bramfield. Various reports have been made on this hoard, with differing numbers of axes reported. A number of axe heads have probably disappeared over time. Those remaining are now in the collection of the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds, where volunteers from Halesworth and District Museum were fortunate to inspect them and to photograph them. Seven axe heads remain from the

FIG. 171 – Bronze Age axe hoard, Halesworth and District Museum (© *Halesworth and District Museum*).

Bramfield Hoard. There were two other axe heads, catalogued as coming from Ireland, that resembled the Bramfield axe heads and may have been miscatalogued in the past. These items are now on loan from the Royal Armouries Museum and are displayed in the Halesworth and District Museum alongside the Wissett hoard.

Iron Age coins from Blythburgh

These rare nineteen gold coins are amongst some of the earliest coins to be produced in Britain (Fig. 172).[4] They are known as '*staters*' from the Greek meaning 'weight'. It is thought the Celts copied the idea from the ancient Greeks as there are stylistic similarities between the two. Historians originally thought that gold coins were minted predominately as war money and used to pay troops, tribute and in diplomacy. Whilst most people in Iron Age Britain still used barter for everyday trading, or were beginning to use the new low-value base metal coins, gold coins were the preserve of the rich and minted by tribal leaders. However, more recently, the numismatist John Talbot has put forward an alternative theory in his study of Iceni coinage and suggested that coins could have been used more for trade than had previously been thought.[5] If this is the case, these pioneering coins represent the beginning of a monumental change in British society, the first move away from barter to a cash-/coin-based economy.

The coins are thought to date from an 85-year period between 60BC to around 25AD. Most knowledge we have about Britain at this time comes from archaeology and coins like these, as the only written records are fleeting references in Roman sources. The study of the coins identifies rulers and their tribal identity. Experts suggest that a few of these coins have a Kentish (Cantiaci) style to them, but are minted by an unknown leader. Two of these coins are of a pattern not seen before.

The majority of the coins in this hoard are attributed or deeply influenced by, the 'North Thames' area of the Trinovantes tribe of Essex and south Suffolk. It is thought the coins may reflect a period of unrest started by an invasion by the Cantiaci tribe into the Essex/Thames

FIG. 172 – Iron Age coins from Blythburgh, Halesworth and District Museum (© *Halesworth and District Museum*).

homelands of the Trinovantes. The Romans tell us that at some point the Trinovantes moved their capital from Hertfordshire to what was to become Camulodunium [*Colchester*] during this period, which may suggest they took back the territory, maybe after some years. This collection of coins also includes a number that were probably minted by the Iceni tribe of Norfolk and north Suffolk.

How do we explain this strange collection of coins and how they ended up in Blythburgh? One theory could be that Blythburgh and the river Blyth marked a shifting boundary or a trading or customs/toll-post between the Icenian lands to the N and the Trinovantian lands to the S. Perhaps a soldier caught up in the fighting further S was paid in coin and returned home or was posted there. Perhaps they belonged to a rich Trinovantian or Icenian trader, or represented a nest egg of the new currency. Maybe they were buried for safekeeping or hidden in a long disappeared dwelling and the owner, through conflict or disease, never reclaimed them. We shall never know.

The style of these coins is like nothing that came afterwards. These coins have images of animals and strange symbols. Many of the coins contain hidden faces or eyebrows, wheels, plants and swirly patterns. Numismatist Robert Van Arsdell wrote:

> it is no secret that Celtic artists liked to hide faces in their artwork… The Celts had a fine appreciation for the surreal. They loved 'now you see it/now you don't' images, Cheshire cat faces appearing and disappearing, foregrounds that fade into backgrounds as new images leap to your attention. The art tied in with their religion, things are not what they seem, behind everyday scenes lurk unseen forces manipulating the action.[6]

Chris Rudd, another expert on English iron age coins, said of the coins:

> Looking at these highly stylised faces with their almost childlike features, I cannot conceive that they are meant to represent human beings; indeed, in a few cases the faces look more like animals or birds. I think they are more plausibly regarded as "spirit faces" — otherworldly faces or Celtic deities or supernatural forces. I feel these human faces have a religious, mythological or magical meaning — a shadowy meaning that is unknown to us today and likely to remain unknowable.[7]

How different these 'Blythburgh' coins are from what came next – coins with the head of the leader on one side and a message or symbols on the back, which started with the Romans, and have continued into our own time. There are immense cultural differences on display. These coins give us a glimpse into a strange, very different and largely unknown past.

This hoard was purchased with funding that included a grant from the Institute. Another Iron Age hoard has recently been discovered in the same area and the museum is currently fundraising to purchase this important find.

20th June. Bob and Jane Carr, with Martin Harrison.
St Andrew's church, Great Saxham (by kind permission of the Revd Lynda Sebbage) (*Report by Bob and Jane Carr*). Members were welcomed by Revd Savage and churchwarden Dr Dick Soper with coffee and biscuits. Great Saxham church has Norman origins, visible in its surviving N and S doorways, but remodelling was undertaken by Thomas Mills in the 1790s, and took place again in *c.*1869 (Fig. 173). The tour started outside, looking at the N nave wall. Its uniform style suggests a reskinning probably of the 1860s. The stonework of the N door, which has shafts with leaf corbels and is more elaborate than the plain S door, appears to be original, although the voussoirs may also have been resurfaced during the refurbishment (Figs 174 and 175). The regular flint coursing of the N nave wall is interrupted along its upper levels with a decorative band of square flint motifs, including Christian emblems as well as images from the coats of arms of the Mills family, and are part of the 1869 refurbishment.[8]

Following round to the E end, further motifs were observed in a band below the E window. The S chancel wall is brick built, the size and style suggesting that this happened during the late 18th-century restyling.[9] The S nave wall is of flint rubble comparable with that of the N nave, but containing rather more brownish flints suggesting a different phase of construction (Fig. 176). The Norman S door is composed of a plain arch and is accessed through the 15th-

FIG. 173 – View of Great Saxham St Andrew from the SE (*photo: Bob Carr*).

FIG. 174 – North nave wall with Norman door (*photo: Bob Carr*).

century porch with its original timber roof, forming the main church entrance today.[10]

Inside the church, with the help of a torch, the close-set rafters of the medieval wagon roof with its original timbers could be clearly seen along with later herringbone infill; and once illuminated the window reveals showed signs through the render of the tracery having been replaced (1790 or 1869). There were wooden benches at the W end of the nave, those to the N being of 17th-century date and probably removed from their original position in the chancel. Of the same date is the pulpit surround decorated with blind arcading. In the chancel the Mills family pew was decorated with stylised poppy-head bench ends, the chief seat having the 'pelican in her piety motif'. The use of this Christian symbol is known from medieval bestiaries and prayer-books, and certainly by *c.*1260 when Sir Thomas Aquinas is believed to have written the word in the verses of the Eucharistic hymn *Adoro te Devote, 'Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine*'.

FIG. 175 – Norman south door (*photo: Bob Carr*).

FIG. 176 – South nave wall and fifteenth-century porch (*photo: Bob Carr*).

FIG. 177 – Portrait bust of John Eldred (*photo: Bob Carr*).

In the chancel the memorials to John Eldred (d.1623) were noted.[11] The floor brass was once situated upon a table tomb in the S chancel below the portrait bust of Eldred which looks out over it (Fig. 177).[12] Renowned for his exploits in the Middle East between 1583–8 in search of textiles as a member of the Clothworkers' Company, he returned with a cargo of spices, especially nutmeg, thus securing his fortune and giving the name of 'Nutmeg Hall' to his new house at Great Saxham, which was subsequently known as Great Saxham Hall when the Mills family purchased the estate in 1795. He undertook the refurbishment of the church from that time. His son William travelled widely in Europe, returning with some high-quality painted window glass, which is here described by Martin Harrison. Although none of the church's medieval glass remains, it contains an outstanding collection of stained glass of the 16th to 19th centuries. This was due solely to the patronage of the Mills family; William Mills purchased the ancient glass in France, Germany and Switzerland in 1815 and his father, Revd Thomas Mills, had it placed in the church in the same year (see the brass plate, N chancel).

The present W window is composed entirely of Swiss glass, skilfully painted using stained glass and coloured enamels, some of it attributed to Joshua Klein of Rapperswill and Altdorf, *c.*1620. Among the Swiss panels in the E window are coats of arms of the cantons and towns of Schaffhausen, Fribourg, and Winterthur. The eclectic mix of French and German glass in the E window is of the highest quality; Guy-Michel Leproux has identified the author of the *Marriage of Anne and Joachim*, *c.*1525 (Fig. 178), as Gauthier de Campes, a Flemish artist working in Paris, and the angels in the tracery, with their strikingly etiolated wings, bear a

FIG. 178 – Detail of the *Marriage of Anne and Joachim*, by Gauthier de Campes, *c.*1525, in the east window (*photo: Martin Harrison*).

strong resemblance to the paintings of Nicolas Dipre. A copy in the church of a watercolour by Anne Mills, William's sister-in-law, shows the original arrangement of the imported glass in the E and S chancel windows, within simple Y-tracery. Subsequently, it was reset in the way we see it today, in the Gothic revival stonework of the E and W windows.

FIG. 179 – Detail from the *Ascension* by Frederick Preedy, 1860 (*photo: Martin Harrison*).

The tracery lights of the N and S chancel windows are all that remains of two windows by Charles Clutterbuck of Stratford, Essex, *c.*1848. The *Ascension* in the S nave (William Mills' memorial) is unique (Fig. 179). It was designed in 1860 by the architect/glass-painter Frederick Preedy, but made by Lavers and Barraud; Preedy had recently moved from Worcester to London and his glass workshop was not operative until shortly after Great Saxham's window was executed. In the N nave are windows by Ward and Hughes, *c.*1872, and a *Resurrection* by Heaton, Butler and Bayne, *c.*1875; its palette instructively more muted than the *Ascension* on the opposite side. The SW window, with armorials moved from the N nave in the 1870s, is replete with the patrons' emblem, mill-rinds, a device that also features on the church's exterior.

7 July. David Gill.

Sibton Abbey (by kind permission of the landowner, Mr Nick Levett-Scrivener) (*Report by David Gill*). The members visited the ruins of Sibton Abbey (the fourth such in our history, previous visits being in 1892, 1929 and 1990). The ruins have recently been consolidated and the site cleared of scrub by the landowners working in collaboration with Historic England. As part of this work, a detailed study was made of the building's fabric and the information

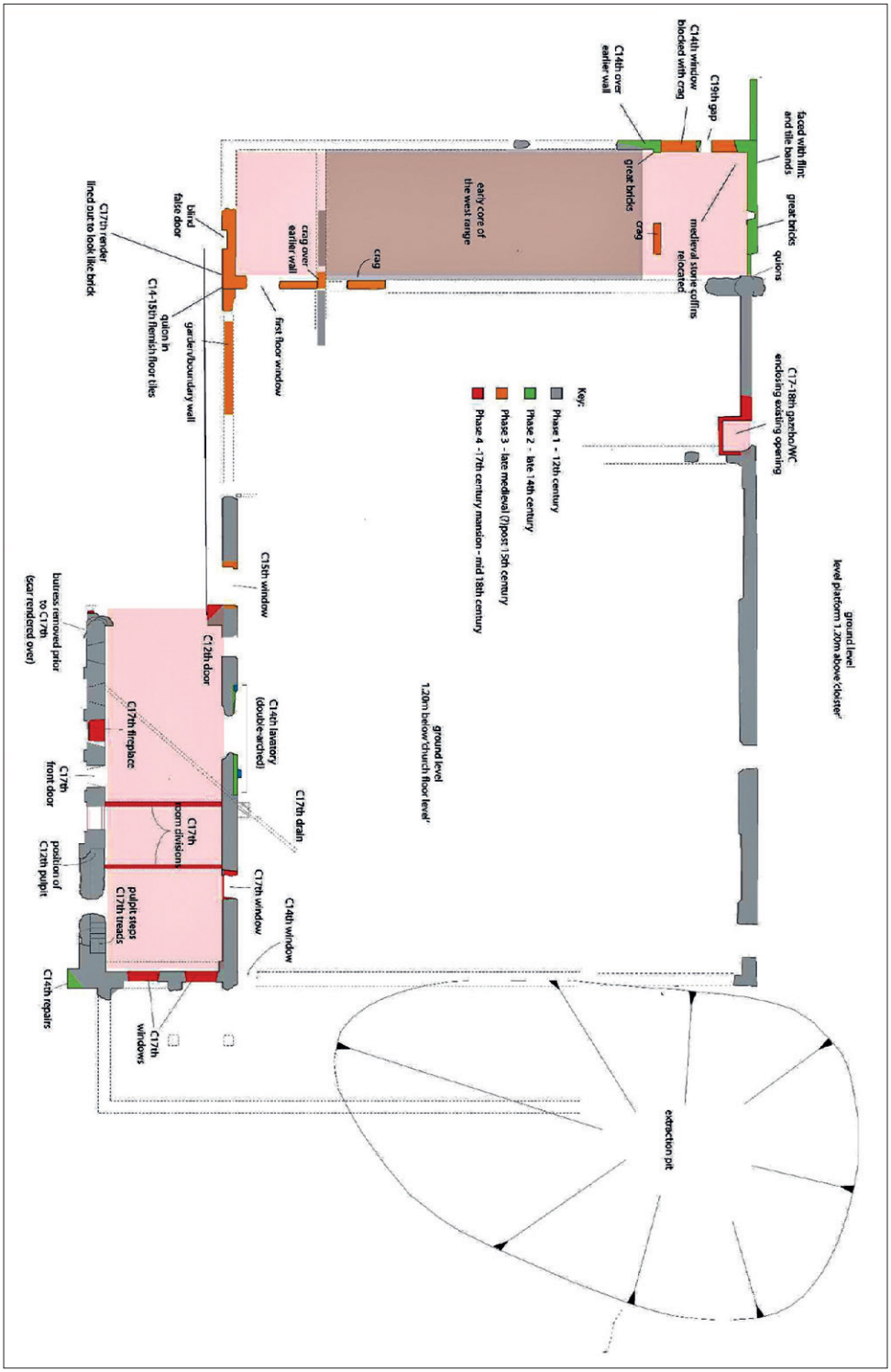

FIG. 180 – Phase plan, Sibton Abbey.

that this revealed was shared with members during the visit (Fig. 180).

Sibton was the only Cistercian monastery in East Anglia and a daughter house of Warden Abbey in Bedfordshire. It was built *c.*1150 by William de Chesney to fulfil a promise made at the deathbed of his elder brother John to atone for the dying man's sins. The original colony sent from Warden consisted of an abbot and 12 monks, but numbers quickly grew to over 20 monks and many lay brothers; it had extensive land holdings in east Suffolk and Norfolk and became an increasingly wealthy establishment which was valued at £250 at the Dissolution when, unusually, the abbot and monks sold the abbey to the duke of Norfolk.

John Scrivener bought the site in 1610 and built a house there in 1655; this was later pulled down by John Freston Scrivener (1732–97), who had inherited the estate in 1751. The fine Georgian bridge that provides access to the site (a direct replacement for a medieval predecessor) is dated 1770, so presumably the house was still standing at this time, and Hodskinson depicts a mansion (in a stylised form) on the site of the abbey ruins on his map of Suffolk published in 1783.

The medieval ruins comprise the remains of three building ranges: the refectory (to the S), the cellarer's range (to the W), and the abbey church (to the N), around a rectilinear cloister. The orientation of the refectory is unusual for a Cistercian house as these more typically project at a right angle to the cloister, rather than aligned along one side, although when the refectory at Cleeve Abbey in Somerset was rebuilt in the *c.*15th century it was also realigned this way. The building range that once enclosed the E side of the cloister (including the chapter house/day rooms) is completely missing, but is evidenced by the stub of a return wall at the E end of the church and the vestiges of vaulting that carried the first floor dormitory, on what is now the external face of the refectory's E wall.

The abbey church survives only as a single featureless wall. It is generally believed that this is the S side of the church which was located on the flat platform 'behind' the wall, but no other evidence of this building is visible.

The refectory, dormitory and church are all part of the original phase of construction begun in *c.*1150 and can be identified by the Romanesque style of architecture of the surviving windows and door and the distinct, horizontally coursed flintwork which is typical of Norman masons. Lift lines, thicker beds of mortar indicating the height to which the wall rose during each building season, are clearly visible within the refectory and church walls and show that they were raised by three or (more typically) four flint courses per tranche of work, equating to a vertical gain of only *c.*240mm per year. Putlog holes, where the original scaffolding was fixed, coincide with the lift lines and wooden shingles that formed lintels across the top of the putlogs are visible in places.

The introduction of bricks into the construction begins in the E wall of the refectory at about 2.7m up from the ground where they form lintels for putlogs and the alcoves in the first floor dormitory. The large blind arch that spans the E wall (high end) of the refectory has a 'keel' roll moulding, this is a transitional form, a stylistic period that transcends the evolution from Romanesque to Gothic at around the start of the 13th century, and these developments (the introduction of brick and the change in moulding styles) possibly reflects the time it took to build the abbey.

The long walls of the refectory range were notionally divided in two by opposing internal pilasters which separated the refectory at the E from the kitchens at the W end of the building. When first constructed, paired doors located either side of the N pilasters indicated separate entrances into the refectory and kitchen from the cloister. The refectory door retains its original round arch form and stone dressing, but the door to the kitchen was enlarged with a wider and lower Tudor-style arch, built from reused floor-tiles sometime after the 15th century; the remaining outline of the original blocked-in door head, however, can still be seen above it.

The S wall of the refectory was originally pierced by eight tall windows, equally spaced, of which evidence of seven survive. At the E end was a shallow pulpit bay that projected out from the external wall line; the bay is 6.1m (20ft) wide and contains the remains of a flight of steps that would have led to a pulpit, raised about *c.*2m above the refectory floor and from which readings were delivered during mealtimes. No evidence of the pulpit survives, but a band of limestone blocks set into the wall-face possibly indicate where the pulpit base started to corbel out from the wall.

A lavatory or washing place was inserted into the exterior of the refectory N wall by mason John Blundeston in 1363–64.[13] Originally, the lavatory was in the form of a large, ornate double-arched niche above a Purbeck marble shelf into which the washing basins were set. The lavatory extended to the full height of the covered cloister and the underside of the cloister roof can be identified by the cut-off remains of a row of timbers inset into the wall. A large part of the lavatory was lost to a wall collapse and the basins no longer exist; the double arch was recorded by Davy in an engraving in 1820, but the western half was missing when Thomas Keys surveyed the site in 1892.

Just enough of the cellarer's range, on the W side of the cloister, survives above ground to define the complete building which in its final incarnation was 32m long and 8.5m wide. The S gable is constructed of a mix of recycled or salvaged materials and blocks of coralline crag and represents a later phase of development which was added, possibly as an extension, to an existing building. The recycled materials used in its construction include a large number of glazed floor-tiles dating from the 15th century, suggesting that this part of the building was either a (very) late addition to the abbey, or dates to after the Dissolution.

Past interpretations have suggested that the building continued further to the S, but the recent analysis shows that the surviving ruin represents its full extent and that it was joined at the SE corner to the refectory by a 3m high boundary/garden wall that enclosed the cloister.

To disguise the hotchpotch of materials used in its construction, the exterior of the building was originally covered with a render scored with lines and painted red to give the building the appearance of being built uniformly of 2in bricks. Patches of render survive in three places on the S and E walls suggesting the faux red-brick effect covered the entire building, whilst the recessed blind arch at the centre of the E wall may have been intended to give the illusion of a door.

The cellarer's range was at least a two-storey building and timber sockets and the remains of internal plaster show the approximate position of the first floor. This is now only 0.5m above the modern ground surface, but small-scale excavations showed that the medieval levels on the W side of the site were once *c.*800mm lower; even taking this into account the ceiling height of the ground floor would still have been very low (possibly only about 1.5m or 5ft), suggesting that the ground floor was used for a store (the eponymous cellar!).

The 17th-century house Almost all traces of the house built into the ruins by John Scrivener in 1655 were removed when it was demolished toward the end of the 18th century and antiquarian D.E. Davy recalled that no vestige of the house remained when writing in the early 19th century. The unpicking of the house from the medieval fabric, whilst preserving the old, seems a deliberate act and left an enigmatic ruin within the parkland consistent with the ideals of 'the picturesque'.

The post-medieval alterations are identified by the use of plain 'handmade' red bricks and these occur only in the refectory wing, suggesting that John Scrivener used only that part of the ruin for the construction of his house. There are no post-medieval bricks in the remains of either the cellarer's range, or the S wall of the abbey church, save for the construction of a small cell built against the remains of the church.

In the front (S) wall of the refectory, the angled reveals of the tall narrow medieval lancets

were cut back to make modern-style windows and the sill of the central one cut down to ground level to create the main entrance. The medieval window to the W of the door was enclosed to incorporate it into a chimney for a small fireplace and consequently it is the only one of the large windows that has retained its medieval stonework and original shape. Render on the exterior of the S and N walls shows that the appearance of the post-medieval alterations and original flintwork were unified behind a layer of stucco.

Two large windows, now blocked, were cut through the refectory E wall; their presence indicates that this was now the end of the building and that the dormitory range had already been demolished by this time. The level of an inserted first floor was indicated by a row of large sockets above the windows and it could be traced down the length of the building by various brick inserts and ledges which all occurred at the same level. At the W end of the refectory, sockets in the N wall show that the floor joists were orientated across the width of the building, and confirmed that the first floor spanning the former kitchen end was in a different bay/room of the 17th-century conversion. A small brick-built room, measuring 2m by 1.60m (6ft 6in by 5ft 2in), was constructed against the S wall of the church overlooking the cloister yard. It enclosed a narrow opening that had been knocked through the church wall and was accessible only from the N. Its only stylistic feature is a small round-headed window which echoes an Anglo-Palladian style first introduced into this country in the first quarter of the 17th century. The floor within the building is now missing, but would have been suspended over a brick-built box drain which ran N–S through the building. This started somewhere in the area N of the church wall and ran to an open outlet built into the front wall. The drain was closed within the footprint of the building and doesn't seem to relate to its function. Further post-medieval drains are known to run across the cloister yard and under the refectory. In the description of the ruins within the Historic England listings, it is suggested that the room may have been a stair-turret within the 17th-century house, but its insubstantial method of construction implies that it was a light, single-storey building. It is quite decorative and perhaps a garden room or gazebo overlooking the cloister yard (possibly a walled garden by the 17th century) is a more likely interpretation.

20 July. Stephen Dart.

Cathedral Ancient Library, Bury St Edmunds (Report by Stephen Dart). Before their visit to the Cathedral Ancient Library, members were given an introductory talk, followed by the opportunity to inspect a number of individual early printed books from the collection. The Parochial Library of St James, founded in 1595, is now housed in its room above the porch, the volumes kept in cases in a medieval style commissioned by Dean James Atwell in 2004 from Leonard Goff.

Canon John Fitch included a description of the library in his article on 'Some ancient Suffolk parochial libraries', published in the *Proceedings* in 1964, and Dr Nicholas Hadgraft, in his 2000 report for the cathedral, stated that, 'it is a collection rich in the history of the book and should be considered as a national asset'.[14] Of particular interest are the donors' plates and inscriptions. John Craig gave an indication of this in his article 'The Bury Stirs revisited: an analysis of the townsmen', published in the *Proceedings* in 1991, and he wrote brief biographies of the early donors, as well as transcribing the 1599 library list.[15] Margaret Statham has continued his work by providing biographical notes of the later donors until the last acquisition in 1761.

Professor Rod Thomson first came to view the late 14th-century manuscript fragment of Walter Burley's *Commentary on Aristotle* which had been noted by Neil Ker. More leaves from the same book are in Merton College and New College, Oxford. He has since identified the manuscripts which have been used as flyleaves or as pastedowns to strengthen the bindings

in over 100 volumes. These include music, part of a rare late 12th-century bilingual Anglo-Norman/Latin psalter and a 15th-century Irish translation of a medical treatise by Petrus de Argellata.

Professor David Pearson noted that the library had good examples of early bindings. A volume by Zwingler (Basle, 1571) was bound in Archbishop Matthew Parker's private bindery in Lambeth Palace. Given our location, it is not surprising there are more Cambridge bindings than in most parochial libraries. These include volumes of Beza in white vellum; a Euclid (Vicenza,1491) bound by the 'Demon' binder in late 15th-century, and the fine gold-tooled binding on a work of Peter Baro, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity at Cambridge from 1574.

In his 1964 article, John Fitch expressed the hope that 'steps be taken in order to ensure the preservation of the surviving libraries for posterity'. Recently Vicky West, from the British Library, has conserved three books: Robert Catchpole's *Choice Collection of Church Music*, printed in Bury in 1761 with a list of local subscribers, and the volumes of Baro (Figs 181 and 182) and Euclid previously mentioned, which were given to the library before 1599 by Samuel Aylmer, the son of John Aylmer, bishop of London.

6 September. Faye Minter.

Rendlesham Revealed community excavation (*Report by Faye Minter, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service*). Members were invited to visit the second season of archaeological excavations at Rendlesham as part of the Rendlesham Revealed project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and led by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service. The excavations are part of an extensive three-year fieldwork programme throughout the Deben valley. This is the second site visit provided to members of the Institute as part of this project, with the first site visit taking place in 2021.

During August and September 2022, excavation was carried out by volunteers under the guidance of a small expert team from the Suffolk office of Cotswold Archaeology and Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, with academic advice and direction from Professor Christopher Scull. Special thanks go to the landowner and farmer for their kind permission and support. 290 individuals volunteered including members of the local community, Suffolk Archaeological Field Group, and young adults from Suffolk Family Carers, Suffolk Mind and local primary school students.

20 members were invited to the visit, although 13 joined on the day. The members were welcomed by Faye Minter before being taken to the site where Professor Scull gave an introduction followed by a one-hour tour around the excavated trenches.

Two large open areas trenches (40m by 30m and 30m by 15m in size) were excavated (Fig. 183). These targeted potential features of the possible royal residence previously identified on magnetometry and aerial surveys, and recorded in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in the 8th century. The excavations in the larger trench revealed the footprint of a large hall, 23m long and 10m wide, and a large ditch that would have enclosed the royal complex. It is likely that other similar buildings would have been nearby. Such halls would have been elaborately decorated and there is evidence that they were rendered white and possibly painted creating a visual statement of power and wealth in the landscape. A rubbish dump was also uncovered in the smaller trench, producing over 150kg of animal bone, likely the waste from food preparation and feasting, mainly beef and pork (Fig. 184). Dress jewellery, such as brooches and beads, were also found, along with fragments of drinking vessels and pottery.

This royal compound would have covered an area of six hectares, set within a larger settlement of over 50 hectares. For 150 years between AD 570 and 720, this was the centre from which a major province of the East Anglian kingdom, focused on the valley of the river

FIG. 181 – Peter Baro *In Jonam prophetam praelectiones* (London, 1579) before conservation (*photo: Vicky West*).

FIG. 182 – Peter Baro *In Jonam prophetam praelectiones* (London, 1579) after conservation (*photo: Vicky West*).

ABOVE:

FIG. 183 – Aerial image of excavation site (*photo: Jim Pullen;* © *SCCAS*).

RIGHT:

FIG. 184 – Member of Suffolk Family Carers with cattle jaw bone found in the rubbish dump (© *SCCAS*).

Deben, was ruled. The results of this second season of excavation are of international importance. Rendlesham is the most extensive and materially wealthy settlement of its date known in England, and the excavation of the hall confirms that this is the royal residence recorded by Bede.

Traces of earlier settlement and activity were also discovered on site including a Roman field system and an early to middle Neolithic pit which had a very rich assemblage of worked flint tools and Mildenhall-ware pottery.

The final season of archaeological excavations at Rendlesham is planned for September 2023.

NOTES

1 Norfolk Record Office, FC 19/1.
2 Wollweber 2019.
3 *Calendar of the Fine Rolls*, 1272–1307, 471.
4 Wollweber 2023.
5 Talbot 2017.
6 https://halesworthmuseum.org.uk/wpress/iron-age-gold-coin-hoard-from-blythburgh-description-of-coins/.
7 https://halesworthmuseum.org.uk/wpress/iron-age-gold-coin-hoard-from-blythburgh-description-of-coins/.
8 Bettley and Pevsner 2015, 263.
9 Mortlock 2009, 207.
10 Mortlock 2009, 207.
11 Scarfe 1949, 112–15.
12 Monumental Brass Society, 2006, https://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/index-of-brasses/john-eldred.
13 Denny 1960, 118.
14 Fitch 1964, 44–87.
15 Craig 1991, 208–24; Craig 2001, appendices.

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