

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE REPORT

## The Archaeology of the Suffolk Coast



Iken Church on the Alde estuary  
(Photo: Suffolk County Council)

**Clare Good and Jude Plouviez, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service**

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Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport  
Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX Tel. (01473) 583000



**Suffolk County Council**

*Environment and Transport*

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## 1. Introduction: Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey 1999-2007 – summary of key elements, previous outputs and the 2005-2007 phase of the project

It was recognised by English Heritage in the 1990's that the archaeology of the English coastal zone was poorly understood and that a better understanding of the resource was needed in order to effectively integrate the historic environment into coastal management schemes (Fulford et al 1997). At this time there was a similar recognition by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council that coastal archaeology was disappearing without record and that information was being provided *ad hoc* and without interpretation to the various bodies (and their consultants) planning for the future management of the coast and estuaries. Initially a single rapid assessment survey project was designed for Norfolk and Suffolk, later divided to suit the administrative needs of the two counties. The project was fully funded by English Heritage.

The project consisted of:

- Air photograph study of the coastal strip and estuaries to National Mapping Programme (NMP) standards, the results being fully incorporated into the Suffolk County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) (formerly known as the Sites and Monuments Record, SMR). A report (Hegarty & Newsome 2005) described and discussed the results of the project. Following on from the impressive evidence for coastal military defences, particularly in the 20th century, a popular publication on Suffolk's defended shore was produced (Hegarty and Newsome 2007).
- Assessment of the available historic maps and other documentary evidence for the coastal parishes (Ringwood unpublished (a) and (b)). This data is available to the Suffolk HER and contributed to the coastal historic landscape characterisation (see below).
- Field survey of the intertidal zone, the results of which are presented in an assessment report (Everett *et al* 2003) and the individual sites added to the Suffolk HER.

The latest phase of the project has involved:

- Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) of the coastal marshes, to provide a more detailed analysis to supplement the broad brush of the county-wide HLC map. The coastal marsh mapping by Tom Williamson includes land use information, reference to historic maps used for individual areas (including some digitised copies of early maps) and an assessment of the relative importance of the individual landscape areas. The map layers are available within the Suffolk HER, and individual summary records have been created within the HBSMR database. (see Appendix 3 for details of the available HLC coastal marsh data)
- Follow up field survey, mainly detail recording in plan and wood sampling for dating at key sites identified in Everett *et al* 2003. The results have been incorporated into the Suffolk HER and a separate report produced (Everett 2007).
- Scoring of the archaeological importance (based on a combination of significance, condition and potential, see Appendix.1) of individual monuments in the Suffolk HER in the coastal parishes. This has provided the basis for the present document which looks at the monuments in the context of other aspects of the historic environment and provides a guide to the archaeological potential of the zone, in both the intertidal zone and the immediate hinterland.

The main objective of this report is to provide a guide to the historic environment of the coastal zone which will inform future management. The total number of HER monument records in the coastal parishes is 4,890 and growing, even without inclusion of all of the listed buildings which is pending. This report tries to show which are the most significant of the identified monuments, groups of monuments and landscapes, and which areas have the greatest potential for as yet unknown significant information to be uncovered in the future.

## **2. Available resources within or alongside the Historic Environment Record (formerly the Sites & Monuments Record) for the Suffolk coast**

Monument records: these define archaeological sites, ranging in scale from single item findspots to substantial upstanding monuments and in date from the Lower Palaeolithic to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each database record is linked to a digitally mapped location, usually a polygon showing known extent but sometimes only a spot location. The map records include a minimal amount of the HER data.

Event records: these are a record of archaeological activity (such as an excavation, site survey etc) which may or may not have produced evidence for a monument record. In many cases the event information is subsumed in the monument record, and only recently have Events been systematically mapped. Generally not very significant in management terms, but can indicate reasons for concentrations and gaps in the evidence.

Designated sites – Scheduled Monuments: these also exist as monument records, but the extent of each scheduled area has been mapped by English Heritage and made available to the Suffolk HER as a digital layer with some linked data; this information is also on the Defra MAGIC website.

Designated sites – Listed Buildings: The complete buildings list has not yet been incorporated into the Suffolk HER as data records. However some buildings have already been entered as monuments. The data supplied by English Heritage has been used to create a point-based map layer of Listed Buildings with some related data. There is no current provision for updating this dataset (the text data is also available online, where it is current, to local authorities).

Designated sites – Parks & Gardens: these exist as monument records within the HER, and mapping was based on EH information where available.

Historic Landscape Characterisation: the landscape of the entire county has been analysed and mapped according to a set of "landscape character types". The methodology was pioneered in Suffolk and has been applied, with modifications, across the entire East of England region. The data is held as digital mapped polygons with embedded data.

HLC Coastal: the coastal marshland areas were characterised in greater detail and assessed for relative importance. This data has been transferred to HLC records within the HER database with linked mapping.

National Mapping Programme plots: Features identified from air photographs were transcribed onto a series of map layers (separated by type of remains, ie banks, structures, ditches etc). The monument records derived from these provide outline areas of NMP evidence, these layers provide the detail.

Miscellaneous backup materials: The HER holds a variety of primary and secondary materials such as drawings, field reports, photographs etc, which are usually referenced from the monument records.

### 3. The areas of study

The elements of the rapid coastal survey were tightly focussed on the coast and estuaries. The field survey was primarily concerned with the present day intertidal zone plus fieldwalking of available fields landward of the cliff from the south edge of Kessingland to Easton Bavants (detailed locations in Everett *et al* 2003, figs 17-21). The NMP air photo plotting was based on areas defined along the National Grid for practical reasons, an approximately 1 km wide band along the shoreline and a slightly broader zone around the estuaries (see Fig.1). A flexible approach allowed for some extension of the field survey to examine individual sites identified on air photos, particularly potential Roman salt working areas. This illustrates the limitations of the field survey – originally all the salt extraction sites were of necessity on the edge of the tidal zone of the period, but today only those still on the estuary foreshore (eg Iken, Snape, Blythburgh) were recorded during the initial field survey. Air photos identified new examples on ploughed fields in Hollesley and Alderton which were then visited (eg ADT 062, HLY 095) – these locations are on the landward edges of areas of reclaimed coastal marsh which have subsequently been ploughed. Similar areas have been identified by volunteer fieldwalking in Sudbourne and elsewhere. Roman salterns are easily identifiable because of the characteristic reddened soil, whereas most other types of early activity are much less visible. Clearly these areas form part of the historic Suffolk coast, and indeed may fall within future areas of deliberate or unavoidable flooding. The area studied for this report (see Fig.1) has been designed to include all the low lying areas near the coast. In addition it has been extended to include entire parishes since these were coherent administrative units from the early medieval period onwards and provide a minimum sensible context for understanding the coastal monuments. This gives a total area of study of 542sq km. A list of the parishes and the study areas they are included within is attached as Appendix 2.

The subdivisions of this broader coastal zone roughly separate the estuarine areas from the predominantly coastline. They do not correspond to the shorter SMP (shoreline management plan) units but these have been listed within each zone. It would be possible to carry out a more detailed assessment defining historic environment character zones comparable to work done in Essex (eg Brown *et al* undated), particularly in conjunction with extensive urban survey of the medieval and modern ports and market towns, to give a more in-depth analysis appropriate for detailed future planning decisions of all kinds in the coast zone. This however was not regarded as an economic option at this stage.

Although initially examined from the south, the areas defined within the coastal zone are here presented in Appendix 4 from north to south, corresponding to the shoreline management approach. Each has key statistics, and cross reference to SMP units, at the start and the discussion is then in chronological sections. Information about how the data was extracted and mapped is given in Appendix 1, so that the process can be replicated to take account of new data in future. All relevant map and data layers are available on the Suffolk County Council server and historic environment data can be exported for specific uses elsewhere.

The major urban areas (Felixstowe and Lowestoft) were not systematically scored and assessed alongside the rest because the primary objectives of this study relate to coastal defence which is highly likely to be maintained for these towns. Both are strong candidates for extensive urban survey. For the purposes of this study only the most significant historic environment elements have been noted.



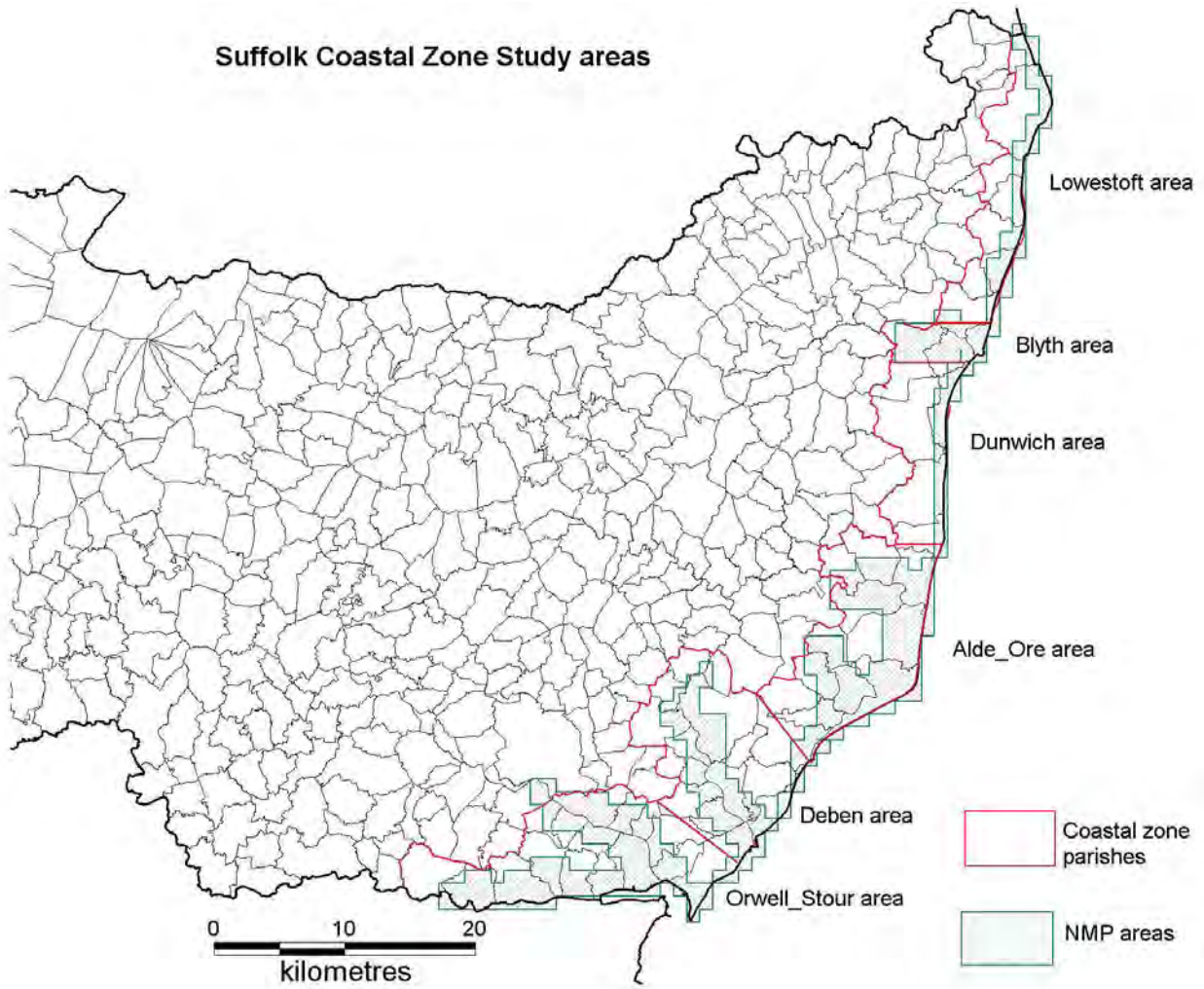


Fig 1. Map showing the extent of the NMP air photo plotting and the parishes included in the coastal zones

#### 4. Archaeological potential of the Suffolk coast – summary and discussion

Total number of high importance HER monument records 281, medium importance records 1875

##### Chronological summary

*Palaeolithic (c.700,000 – 8,300 BC) and Mesolithic (c.8300 – 4,500 BC)*

Throughout most of this long period, during which the area of Britain was only intermittently occupied by hominids, the concept of the “coast” is irrelevant, as the present division between Britain and the Continent only occurred in about 6,500 BC due to rising sea levels following the last glaciation. However the Suffolk coastal cliffs provide important exposures of early deposits, and recently have shown that exceptionally early (pre-Anglian glaciation) hominids were present in the Pakefield area. There is high potential for further lower Palaeolithic evidence in the cliffs between Corton and at least Easton Bavants, with one probable site identified recently at Benacre, and perhaps further south since a single handaxe is recorded from the Dunwich cliffs.

A second significant area for Lower Palaeolithic material (of somewhat later date than Pakefield) is in the low cliffs around the north side of the Stour, particularly the Holbrook Bay area. This area has not received any research attention recently.

The majority of Mesolithic material is recovered as surface finds in ploughsoil, which suggests that the contextual evidence, always relatively slight for hunter-gatherer societies, is largely destroyed. However there is considerable potential for Mesolithic (and subsequent Neolithic) deposits buried in the estuaries and valleys by silts and peats forming over dry land as sea levels rose. Such sites would probably also include important preserved organic material. That such sites exist is possibly suggested by a few finds on the north bank of the Orwell (Nacton, NAC 003) and on the Stour. Recorded sites in Kessingland and in Hollesley overlooking marshland might also extend into the wetland. At the very least these areas should contain important palaeoenvironmental sequences relating to the period of transition from hunter gathering to agriculture.

*Neolithic (c. 4500 – 2500 BC) and Bronze Age (c. 2500 – 700 BC)*

The Neolithic period sees the introduction of agriculture and the construction of the first major monuments, including tombs. Settlement sites in England characteristically survive as groups of small pits with no evidence for domestic buildings. The coastal zone includes one monumental structure, a causewayed enclosure at Freston, situated on the peninsula between the Stour and Orwell estuaries. Possible mortuary enclosures have been identified on the Felixstowe peninsula in Levington and Martlesham (LVT 014, 055, MRM 049) and occasionally elsewhere as at Kessingland (KSS 062) and, tentatively, a possible cursus in Kirton (KIR 049, undated). Another unusual, potentially late Neolithic or early Bronze Age monument, is a double concentric pit circle at Boyton (BOY 068).

Potential settlements, evidenced by surface assemblages, are most common in the northern part of the area, often on the south facing slopes of the valleys between 5 and 10m OD. As with the Mesolithic these are the areas where there currently seems most likelihood of associated waterlogged deposits. To the south only single finds have been recorded in the Blyth and Dunwich areas of the survey, and little more in the Alde-Ore area. More field survey around the southern estuaries has produced

further flint scatters including a large collection of Neolithic and Bronze Age types at Hollesley (HLY 008, 010, 012-014) at 10m OD looking south over marshland. As elsewhere the proximity of known early activity to uncultivated reclaimed marsh is of potential high significance. On the Felixstowe peninsula the general pattern of early settlement from the Neolithic onwards favours relatively high spurs on the south facing slopes of the, often small, tributaries feeding into the Deben.

The Bronze Age includes the earliest features still visible in the landscape, the burial mounds, variously described as round barrows, tumuli, and as cropmark ring ditches. Many of these features are not individually dated, and are may be listed under either Bronze Age or undated (or occasionally Saxon). The sites may include Roman or Anglo-Saxon burial mounds, post-medieval windmill mounds and, in the case of the cropmarks, prehistoric houses and enclosures; however the majority are most likely to be Bronze Age barrows. The Suffolk coast has a relatively high proportion of surviving barrows, because many are located on the upland sandy areas which remained as uncultivated common land until recently. Most of the upstanding mounds are scheduled monuments. Discussion of the barrows of Suffolk can be found in Lawson *et al* 1981 which illustrates the linear barrow cemeteries of the Felixstowe peninsula and contrasts this with the more scattered pattern on the Shotley peninsula. Elsewhere in the coast region barrows tend to be found in small groups (eg Aldringham, ARG 001, 012, 013) or isolated. Although there is a tendency for them to be situated uphill (presumably of settlements) some are sited low in the valleys (eg Kessingland KSS 065, Covehithe COV 028, Trimley St Martin TYN 015).

Other monumental structures of the period include henges, which are often difficult to distinguish from barrows in the air photo evidence. The scheduled site at Shottisham (STT 004 etc) includes several unusual circular features, potentially hengiform, as well as simpler ring ditches, located around the head of a minor valley draining into a tributary of the Deben to the south-west.

By contrast settlement evidence is rare, and generally relates to areas of fieldwork survey or excavation. At present few if any cropmark enclosures or field systems are thought likely to be earlier than the Iron Age. Settlement evidence from the early Bronze Age tends consist of groups of pits as in the Neolithic; occasional circular buildings have been identified but not yet in the coastal region. In the later Bronze Age domestic and field enclosures may be found – the circular enclosure from south of Lowestoft (Gisleham CAC 035) is the first of this type identified in Suffolk.

#### *Iron Age c. 700 BC – AD 43*

Site density increases and expands into new areas in Suffolk generally during the Iron Age (Martin 1999, 38-40), but in parts of the coastal zone there is a complete lack of evidence reliably dated to this period. This mainly reflects low levels of fieldwork generally in the Blyth and Dunwich areas. Elsewhere avoidance of the very dry heathland areas is normal, as is true for settlement sites of almost all periods.

Many settlements are unenclosed and have dispersed features – pits, four-poster granaries, circular houses – but there are also settlement enclosures (a good example is the excavated site at Foxhall on the Felixstowe peninsula just outside the current study area, (Martin *et al*, 1992). At present it seems that the more extensive rectilinear field systems and enclosures identifiable from cropmarks throughout the coastal zone (including Shotley and Felixstowe peninsulas, Hollesley, Alderton, Butley, Covehithe (COV 038, 084), Corton) are probably late Iron Age or Roman. At this time (1st century BC – 1st century AD) changes in burial rites, settlement and material culture reflect strong Continental influence. In the century before the Roman

conquest it is also possible to begin to identify named tribal areas from the types of coins in use.

The group of areas of finds and features in Butley, mainly identified in the 20th century, illustrate the dispersed pattern of activity on the valley sides between 10 and 15m overlooking Butley Creek and its tributary; with Burrow Hill (BUT 001) being a contemporary naturally enclosed and prominent site, on which there are several undated enclosures of potentially Iron Age type (but see also middle Saxon activity here). It is very likely that other valley sides and spurs throughout the coastal zone contain a similar density of Iron Age features. A cropmark complex in Sudbourne (SUE 002) with unenclosed small ring ditches, trackways and two discrete rectilinear enclosures might also be Iron Age in date and is unusually low-lying on a spur between two marsh areas of the Ore estuary.

Undated but probably Iron Age enclosures have also been identified from air photos on the Felixstowe peninsula at Kirton (KIR 051), Martlesham (MRM 049) and Trimley (TYN 033).

In the late Iron Age the northern part of the zone was in the Iceni tribal area – a wealthy site, now largely or completely lost to erosion, was suggested by numerous coins found at Covehithe (COV 008). The Trinovantian area to the south has wealthy assemblages at Alderton (ADT 003/038) including a hoard of early staters, several coin-rich sites in Shotley, and a strong late Iron Age background to a substantial Roman site in Sutton (SUT 022).

#### *Roman AD 43-410*

The Roman military conquest in 43 was followed by a second military occupation of East Anglia following the revolt of Boudica in 60-61. No early forts have been identified within the coastal zone, nor are they likely in an area at the margins of the road network. However the discovery of a hoard of Republican silver coins at Sutton (SUT 041, 022) might suggest a Roman official or veteran soldier resident here before AD 60.

Part of the Roman road from Colchester to Venta Icenorum (Caister by Norwich) is just within the coastal zone at East Bergholt, and there was a substantial roadside settlement in East Bergholt and extending beyond the study area into Capel St Mary. It is likely that a road linked Felixstowe with this route, supported by the place name Stratton Hall, and probably taking a route similar to the modern communications routes along the centre of the peninsula. Various road lines survive on the claylands and disappear well short of the coast zone – some might be projected to the coast at, for example, Blythburgh and somewhere north of Aldeburgh, but equally they may not have reached the coast.

The largest settlement, presumably a port, within the area was in north Felixstowe (FEX 093) – perhaps with a harbour on the Deben. There was subsequently also a coastal fort (a Saxon shore fort), probably from the late 3rd century, which was completely destroyed by the sea by the mid 18th century – any related evidence such as a cemetery to the west of this fort would be extremely important.

The typical higher status Roman rural settlement, the villa, is uncommon in much of east Suffolk (Plouviez 1999, 42-43). The coastal zone contains several possible villa sites, none of which is definitively so. At Sutton (SUT 022, 145) there is certainly a building with flint footings or walls but the plan is somewhat atypical (Hegarty and Newsome 2005, 52) – associated finds suggest an affluent site from the mid 1st

century as noted above, and continuing so until at least the mid 4th century. Other sites with substantial amounts of building material are on the current shoreline at Gisleham (GSE 031, 034 etc) and at Woodbridge (WBG 001/005). In Martlesham (MRM 039) there are some finds of tesserae from a mosaic floor. The Barber's Point settlement in Friston (FRS 001) was previously regarded as a possible villa but recent work suggests that the building material may be re-used from elsewhere in the middle Saxon period although there was some Roman activity here. Despite a relatively low number of substantial buildings there are numerous individual small settlements throughout the area. Some of the rectilinear cropmark systems can also probably be linked with surface concentrations of Roman finds, eg Shotley (SLY 004/006), Sutton (SUT 034), and in Martlesham surface finds (MRM 034, 037) and cropmark systems (MRM 026, 051).

Two sites have produced evidence for pottery manufacture, in Martlesham (MRM 007) in the 1st century and in Leiston (LCS 142); although potting is a common rural industry in Roman Suffolk it is less likely to be found in areas lacking good supplies of both fuel and clay.

The best represented coastal activity is salt extraction. Although there are far fewer sites than in the core area of Red Hills in north Essex the numbers have increased by field survey and by targeted air photography during the coastal survey project. The definite examples occur as far north as the Blyth estuary (BLB 003)(?REY 020), but are more common on the Alde (IKN 008, 050; SNP 023, 048) and Ore (ORF 034; SUE 035, where associated settlement on the 5m contour has also been identified, SUE 031, 032) and Orwell (TYO 001, 015, 044; TYN 073, 111; SLY 161) and slightly fewer on the Deben (FEX 099; FLK 034; KIR 038). Similar sites in the ploughed marshes at Alderton – Hollesley (ADT 062, HLY 095, 096) reinforce the fact that this was a tidal area, as was Stonebridge marsh off the Butley river in Capel St Andrew (CSA 026).

A few scatters of surface finds are in likely locations to have functioned as ports – eg at Walberswick (WLB 007, 010/015, adjacent to the Old River in the same area as the earlier medieval port) and perhaps Orford (cremations at ORF 011 suggest a 1st – 2nd century settlement) or Gedgrave (GED 003) on the Butley river and Aldeburgh (ADB 003, 009.014) on the sea coast. There is also a possible shipwreck or quay in the Alde (Iken, IKN 010) indicated by the discovery of complete pots in the river.

#### *Anglo-Saxon AD 410 – 1065*

The two centuries following the departure of the Roman government, during which there was immigration from the Continent, see a marked drop in the number and visibility of archaeological monuments. The identifiable settlements, and more commonly cemeteries because they produce metal grave goods, are generally restricted to the lighter soils and valley locations resulting in a distribution similar to the early to middle Iron Age. Settlements are also difficult to identify from surface survey because of the relatively fragile nature of the hand-made pottery and are rarely identified from accidental finds. During the 7th century, along with the emergence of regional kings, the development of a port and urban centre at Ipswich and the re-introduction of Christianity, the rural pattern often shifts and in many places settlements can be found in the vicinity of the medieval churches. From this point on, despite social and political upheavals such as Viking incursions and control of East Anglia and the Norman conquest, one can trace elements of the medieval and modern landscape.

The light soils of the coastal region mean that early Anglo-Saxon activity is likely to be widespread where other conditions such as proximity to water are favourable. The relative scarcity in the northern half of the study zone is probably largely a product of low levels of investigation. The area should be particularly interesting because of its potential proximity to the Continental homelands of the immigrant element of the population.

Areas where late 4th or 5th century Roman finds are close to early Anglo-Saxon ones are of particularly high potential interest for study of the poorly understood transition period, particularly as such late Roman sites are relatively rare in east Suffolk. One example is noted at Shottisham (STT 017, 018, 043); there is also evidence for Anglo-Saxon features in Felixstowe, close to the area of the late Roman shore fort (FEX 088).

The zone is particularly remarkable in this period for a series of high status cemeteries with boat burials and barrows, most notably at Sutton Hoo (SUT 004-019) but also at Snape (SNP 007) and at Bloodmoor Hill, Gisleham (GSE 003). Of these only at Gisleham/Carlton Colville on the edge of the study zone has an associated settlement been investigated, while the main cemetery remains poorly recorded.

Substantial indications of early Anglo-Saxon settlements, which remain much scarcer than potential cemeteries because of the nature of the evidence, is recorded in two areas of Butley (BUT 003/008 and 004/015), in Martlesham (MRM 034); slighter evidence consisting of small numbers of pottery sherds (eg Westleton, WLN 010; Aldererton, ADT 018) is also treated as potentially representing a significant site.

There does seem to be a real absence of Anglo-Saxon activity in the 5th and 6th centuries in the Shotley peninsula – here there has been fieldwalking and metal detecting survey which has produced Iron Age, Roman and later Anglo-Saxon material. It is worth noting that there are also very few later Roman finds here.

In the middle and later Saxon period significant early Christian sites are identifiable. The first bishopric in Suffolk is recorded at “Dommoc” from the 630’s, but both the potential locations for this (Dunwich and Walton Castle at Felixstowe) have been lost to coastal erosion. Monastic sites include Iken (IKN 007) and possibly Burrow Hill, Butley (BUT 001) and Barbers Point, Friston (FRS 001) – if not monastic the latter are certainly high status. All of these have potential for further work, and because of their semi-island locations all have potential for waterlogged deposits in the vicinity (contemporary timber at Barber’s Point is described in Everett 2007).

Another area of high status potential is Blythburgh, suggested to be a royal residence and a minster church, with middle Saxon finds close to the river and at a crossing point. A minster church is also tentatively suggested at Leiston but no Saxon material has been found in the town or its hinterland.

Although dispersed settlement seems to be a normal pattern suggested by finds in surveyed areas – for example along the south facing slopes west of Alderton village and into Ramsholt – a high proportion of the sites are close to the medieval churches, and any church recorded in Domesday or with Norman architectural features will potentially have 8th to 11th century activity nearby. Examples noted include: Gisleham, Westleton (WLN 021), Covehithe, Sudbourne (SUE 020), Ramsholt, Sutton (028, 029), Melton (MTN 017), Stutton (STU 007).

Specifically coastal features include one complete timber fishtrap in Holbrook Bay (STU 067, Everett 2007) and fragments of a probable fishtrap at in the Deben at Sutton (SUT 195), dated to the early and middle Saxon period.

A small dugout boat found off the coast (COV Misc) has been dated as middle Saxon. The dates for boat fragments from both Easton Bavents and Buss Creek, Southwold are later Saxon or early medieval; although some wreck fragments this early may survive off the coast the best potential areas for good preservation are the rivers and creeks where such boats would have been in harbour.

#### *Medieval AD 1066 – 1530*

Most of the major monuments and settlements of the medieval period are at least partially visible today, although the sea can completely remove a town such as Dunwich with churches, religious houses, streets and domestic houses. Also virtually completely eroded is Easton Bavents, and Sizewell church had disappeared by the 19th century.

The only pre-16th century military structure is Orford Castle (ORF 001) built by Henry II in 1165-1172, a scheduled monument in guardianship, with surviving keep and bailey on the west side of the town.

Religious houses (monasteries, friaries, priories, nunneries) were either demolished or converted post-Reformation in the 16th century. Some structure, often only a few wall fragments, survives above ground at: Blythburgh (BLB 001), Dunwich Greyfriars (DUN 003); Leiston – two sites (LCS 002, LCS 001); Orford (ORF 002); Butley (BUT 002), Woodbridge (WBG 002); Nacton (NAC 001). Snape (SNP 009) is only visible as surface building material scatter, though probably related agricultural buildings survive. Felixstowe (FEX 031) was excavated in 1971 and re-covered.

By contrast of course churches remained in use and represent significant medieval buildings. Several have been abandoned – Walberswick (WLB 012) was replaced in the 15th century as the town realigned itself to the changing coastal topography, and the second, large church (WLB 014) was partially abandoned in the late 17th century as too large for the parish to support; Hazelwood in Aldeburgh (ADB 005) was ruined by 1600, Gedgrave (GED 001) was dismantled post-Reformation; a chapel in Thorpe (ARG 004) was also abandoned from the 16th century, as was Capel St Andrew (CSA 001). On the Orwell Stratton Hall (SNH 002) was in ruins before the mid 18th century, Alston (TYN 021) disappeared sometime after the late 15th century. Covehithe (COV 004) like Walberswick is a partially ruined large church – both reflect the high medieval wealth of the coast villages and their later decline. The relatively high population of the coastal strip is demonstrated by the greater number of taxpayers per acre in 1327 and particularly in 1524 (Todd and Dymond 1999, 80, 82-3). The wealth of medieval archaeological finds over a considerable area in Covehithe (Everett *et al* 2003, fig 19) confirms that this now isolated and sparsely populated area was thriving, presumably because of the resources of the coast and perhaps also a sheltered harbour if the river/broad was accessible to the sea at the time.

A majority of the coastal parishes have isolated churches or more commonly a church and manorial hall in isolation, with dispersed rural farms and cottages often around the edges of the extensive commons (eg Reydon). There is also a tendency for the church and hall to be inland, with settlement along lanes running down to the coast (eg Benacre) or even at Lowestoft the substantial medieval fishing settlement (LWT 040) along the coast with separate church (LWT 029) a kilometre inland.

To the south there are groups of parishes where the settlements are more nucleated – Chelmondiston, Arwarton and to some extent Shotley on the Shotley peninsula; Sutton, Shottisham, Bawdsey, Hollesley, Alderton and Boyton to the north of the Deben estuary. Some of these parishes, such as Hollesley, Bawdsey and Shottisham, have extensive fieldwalking survey evidence supplementing the information from early maps and surviving settlement patterns.

The large medieval settlements were, unsurprisingly, mainly ports – Lowestoft, Covehithe, Blythburgh, Southwold, Walberswick, Dunwich, Aldeburgh, Orford, Woodbridge, Felixstowe – and of course Ipswich dominating the southern area from the head of the Orwell. Leiston was the only substantial inland market centre in the study area, with coastal access at Sizewell.

Moated medieval farmsteads are relatively scarce in this area compared to most of Suffolk, because of the difficulty of retaining water on a sand subsoil. Many of the recorded examples (Gisleham GSE 001, 002, Westleton WLN 002, Trimley, Shotley, SLY 007, Brantham BNT 002, 022) are in siltier subsoil areas.

There is archaeological evidence for significant pottery production in the 13th century at Hollesley (HLY 001, 002, with possible further sites along the Black Ditch valley to the north?). A possible 14th century brickmaking site has been identified in Benacre (BNC 010).

Some of the broads have evidence of probable peat cutting for fuel (turbary) – for example on Minsmere (WLN 038, DUN 084, 085).

The agricultural landscape includes very large areas of common, much of it the dry sandy heaths which remained unenclosed (for example the high central part of the Felixstowe peninsula; Sutton Walks) and there is a generally late pattern of enclosure throughout the coastal strip with earlier field patterns to the west (eg South Cove, Reydon, Leiston), on the lower areas of the Felixstowe peninsula and more extensively on the Shotley peninsula. Most of this early enclosure correlates with the more water retentive soils. The medieval period also saw extensive use of saltmarsh for grazing, and enclosure and draining of the marshland to provide better pasture and occasional arable use. Where the classic early pattern of marsh reclamation survives, characterised by irregular patterns of boundary deriving from the saltmarsh creeks, it has been identified as of high landscape importance. The greatest density of these surviving areas is around the Ore and Alde estuaries.

#### *Post-medieval and modern 1530 – 2000*

A range of social and industrial activities leave evidence in the landscape – for the more recent periods this study tends to focus on the coast-related aspects because other areas have been less comprehensively incorporated into the record. For example all the medieval and post-medieval urban areas need better survey and characterisation to inform detailed future planning.

Survey along the estuaries revealed large numbers of traces of small timber quays relating to local movement and trade throughout the area, as well as the remains of boats of relatively recent date. Oyster beds were identified from air photographs and on the ground. A duck decoy survives at Iken (IKN 011) and elements of the wooden structure of a destroyed decoy have been recorded at Benacre broad (BNC 077).



The pattern of regular renewal and alteration of seabanks and dykes was also recorded from the air photos, and elements also noted in the field where only the core posts in the banks survived.

From the 16th century military defence is a significant element in the coastal landscape (Kent 1999). The earliest forts planned in 1539 were at Lowestoft, Southwold, Minsmere, Aldeburgh and Landguard, Felixstowe but little of this scheme was constructed and none has been identified on the ground. Landguard was the most substantial fort, from 1625 onwards, with gun batteries recorded at other towns (Lowestoft, Southwold, Aldeburgh). The most comprehensive pre-20th century scheme was the Napoleonic Martello towers (17 in Suffolk), constructed from 1809 on the coast south from Aldeburgh (Slaughden, ADB 013). Many of these survive, and most of the intact examples are scheduled monuments. In 1862 a fort was constructed at Shotley (SLY 062) as part of the Harwich Haven defences.

The majority of military defences recorded on the HER are 20th century, particularly the extensive World War 2 systems which can be seen on contemporary air photos. A majority of these were dismantled soon afterwards, and no systematic assessment has been done of which recorded sites survive although some were noted as still evident, or under erosion, during the field survey. Survival of anti-tank ditches and structures such as pillboxes and batteries is generally best in the unploughed heathland areas. Elements of the coastal beach scaffolding are preserved at East Lane Bawdsey (BAW 100).

Key areas of surviving 20th century defence interest are Orford Ness (ORF 021) which has significant features from both world wars and in particular the Cold War; RAF Bawdsey (Bawdsey Manor) (BAW 046, 051) where Radar was developed and Landguard Fort (FEX 064) which illustrates the development of a strategic coastal defence point over a long period.

## **5. Managing the historic environment of the Suffolk Coast**

### *Some preliminary notes and thoughts*

The initial presumption (eg in Planning Policy Guidance notes 15 and 16) is that the historic environment is irreplaceable and that significant buildings, monuments, below ground archaeological deposits and landscapes should be preserved where possible.

For archaeological deposits and individual structures the alternative is to collect and keep a record for posterity – a pragmatic solution to the impossibility of 100% preservation and a positive way of increasing knowledge through excavation of a sample of the total resource without which archaeological research would become sterile.

It is obvious that standing structures and landscapes are of value as part of the perceived environment, contributing to a sense of place and local identity and they are interpretable for greater enjoyment and understanding by both local residents and visitors. A photograph of a farm building, of a concrete pillbox or of an area of coastal marsh is a much diminished resource, and the same is true of understanding an archaeological site without seeing it in its landscape context.

This assessment of the coast zone, where change brought about by natural as well as human processes is at the centre of the story throughout (Figs 2, 3), has tried to assess the importance of the individual elements of the historic environment taking into account their potential to inform us in the future as well as their intrinsic historic significance (Figs 4, 5). In collating the data some ideas about the potential for hitherto unrecorded significant deposits have also noted – for example the potential for buried prehistoric deposits in areas subsequently enclosed as coastal grazing marsh urgently needs testing.

This process, and this document, is not a final statement but an ongoing assessment of our knowledge and ideas about the significance of the pieces of the historic environment. Particularly fluid is the map being developed to show the areas of potentially high archaeological significance.

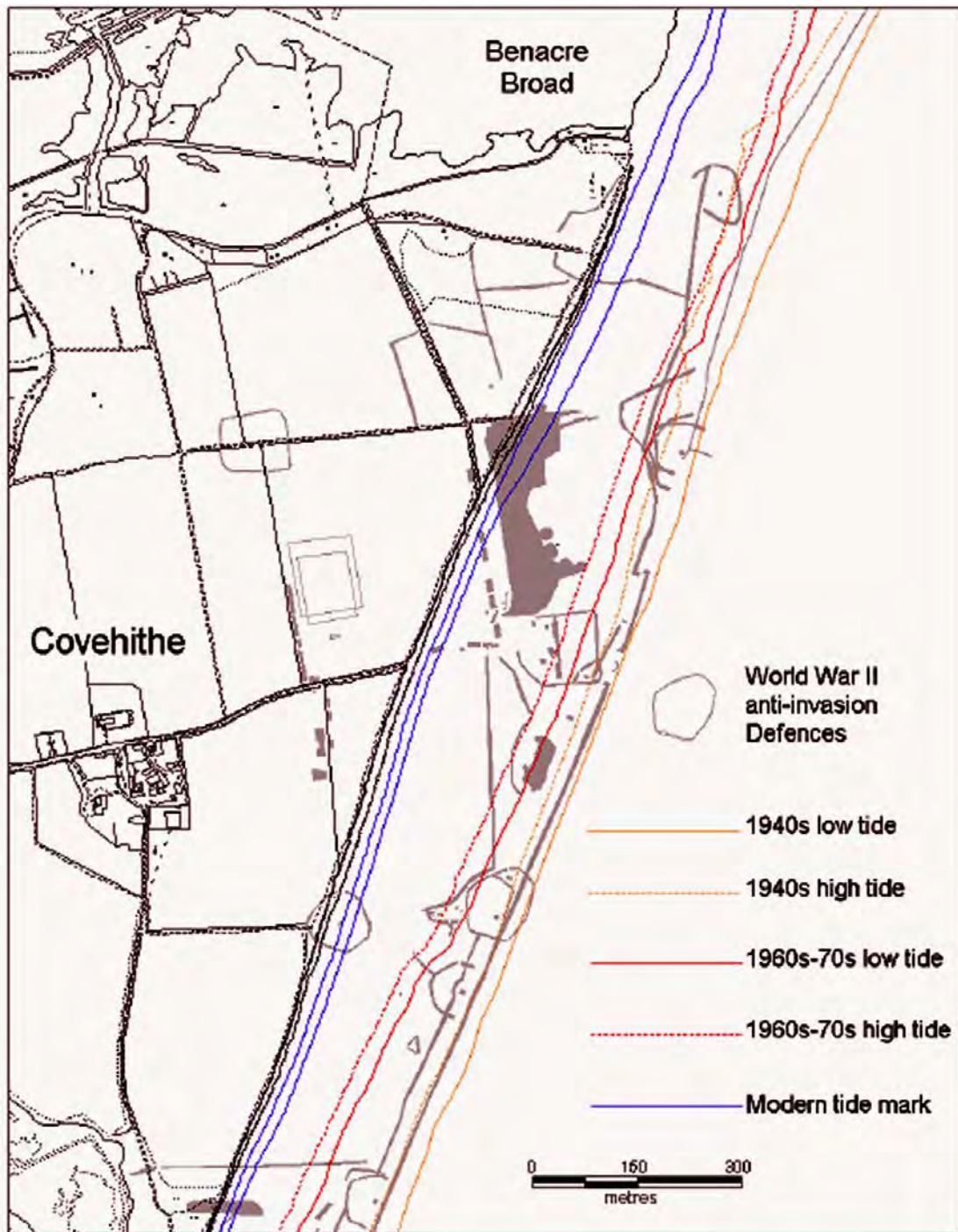


Fig 2 World War 2 features and tide levels plotted to show the erosion at Covehithe

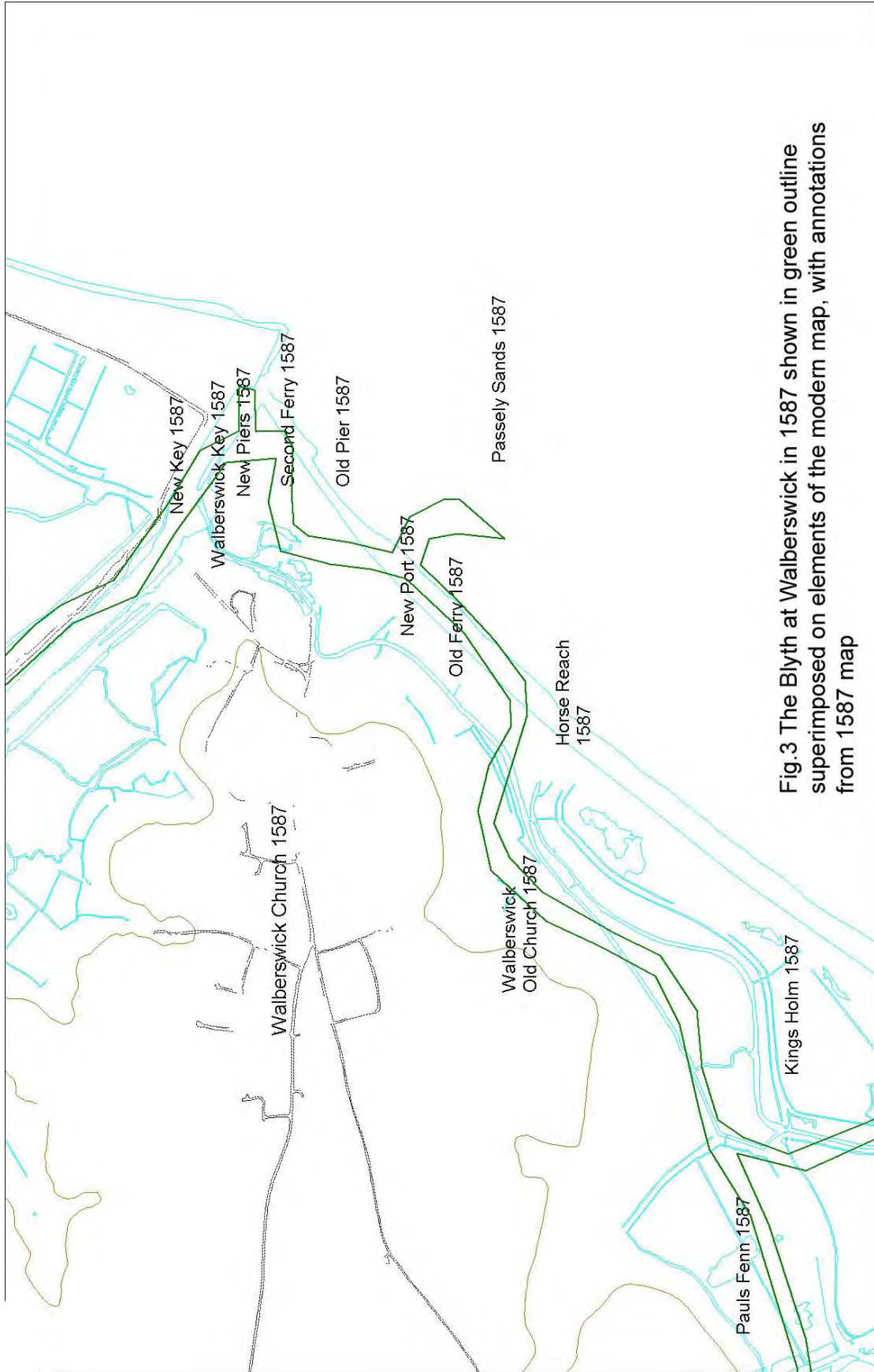


Fig.3 The Blyth at Walberswick in 1587 shown in green outline superimposed on elements of the modern map, with annotations from 1587 map

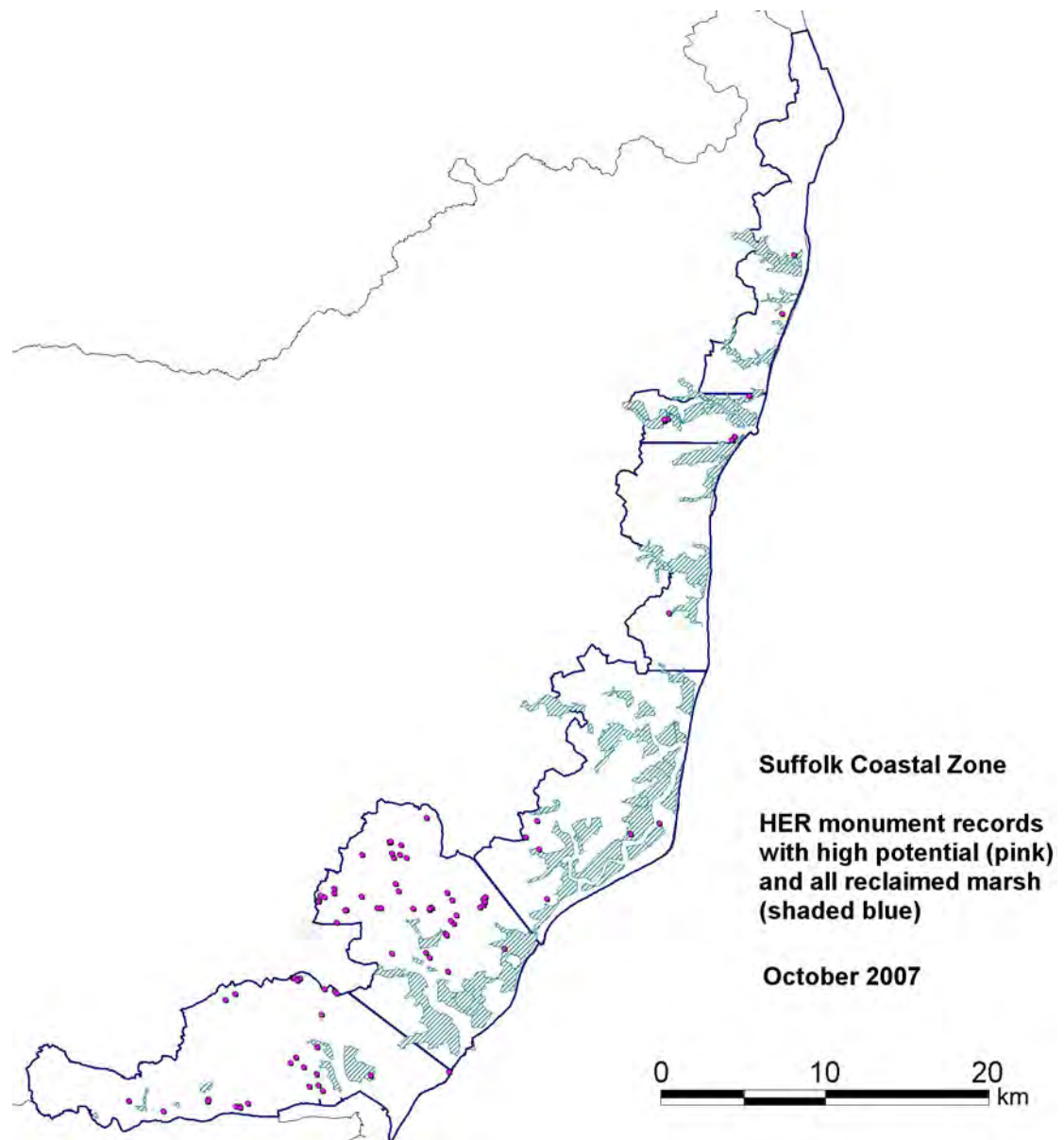


Fig 4 Areas of reclaimed marsh and HER records of high archaeological potential

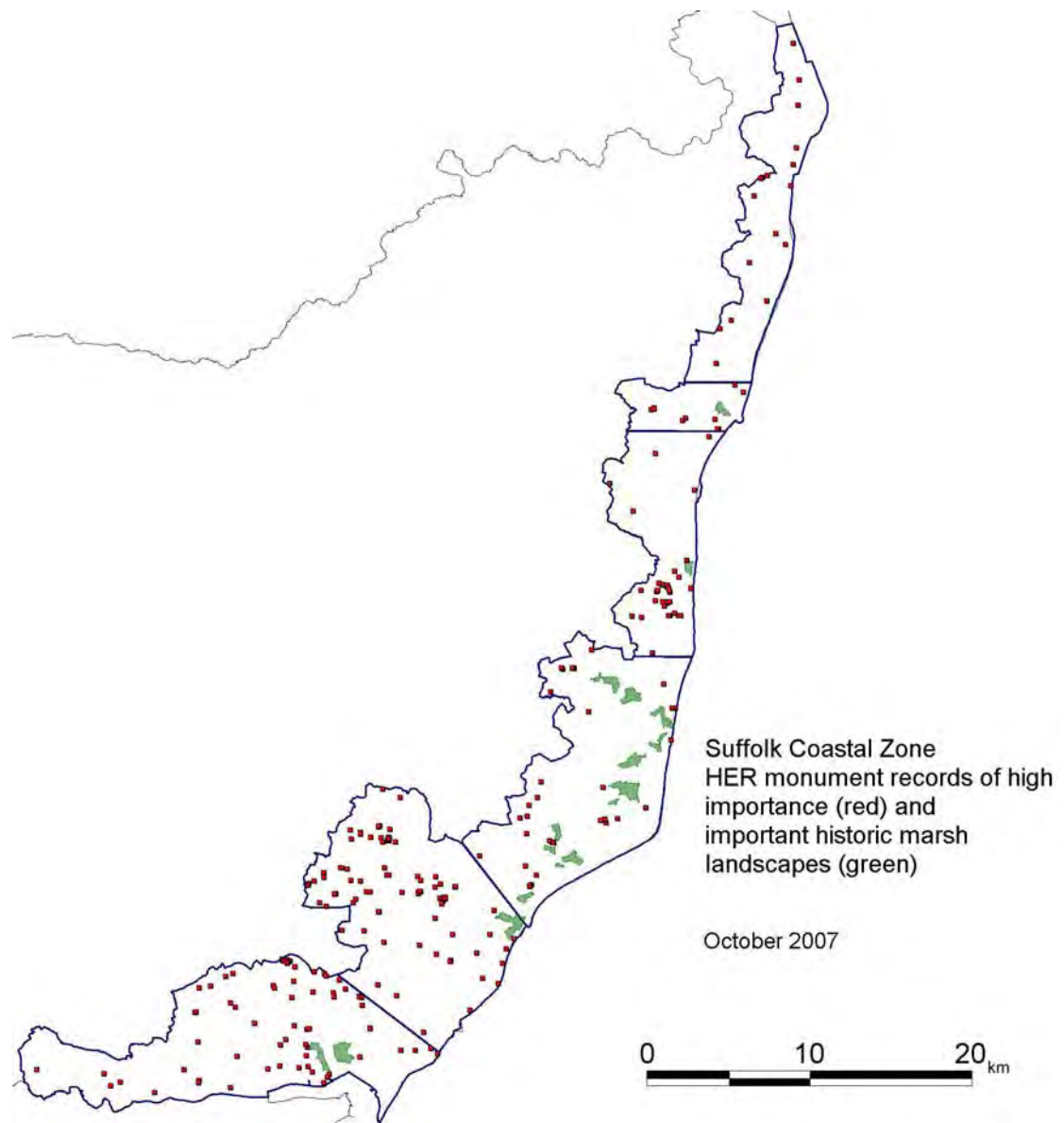


Fig 5 Areas of highly important historic marshland and HER monument records of high importance

## **Appendix 1 Methodologies used in assessing coastal data**

### ***Scoring Monument records***

This, relatively simple, system was developed for use on both the coast assessment (as originally defined in the project design, 2005) and in the aggregate areas. It has also been used for supplying information to the Forestry Authority. For large areas such as these it was found more efficient to extract the HER data to an Excel table. The sites have been valued as to Condition (good, medium, poor), Significance (international, national, regional, local, none), Potential (high, medium, low, none) and an overall assessment of Importance (high, medium, low) in the individual Excel files and the data re-imported to HBSMR using custom MS Access queries.

At present it is not easy to include the scoring data in the standard HBSMR monument record as shown in MapInfo. Instead the Excel tables also formed the basis for creating map tables with symbols for records in each broad period (standard single periods are already allocated to each monument record in the Suffolk HER, apart from periods describing individual monument types within the record) with the scoring data used to select high/medium/low groups and allocate these different sizes of symbol.

### ***Notes on specific IT procedures developed or used for the project:***

*Extracting monuments from HBSMR within a specific area defined in a MapInfo table*

Within HBSMR, Open map

Right click – ‘Open table’ and find table (in this case ‘CoastParishArea’)

In Layer Control put Mon layer at the top and the area layer below

Click Boundary select tool anywhere in the relevant area (selects all mons within your table)

Right click – ‘Save copy as’ to keep an appropriately copy table of the selection from Mon.

Click on ‘Transfer to database’ button to view the selected records in HBSMR Index form

This selection can be output to Excel via Snapshot (needs previously defined queries)

It can also be further refined – any of the Index form search criteria will be applied to the map selected records alone while the Mon?xxx is displayed in the Data window (top left)

*Define site polygons by period/colour*

In MapInfo.

Open table of selected mons.

Query – select.

Select from relevant table.

That satisfy Period=“Rom” (use ‘or period=“Sax”’ to combine several periods).

Rom records within that table will be selected, so colours etc can be changed by making the layer editable and changing the colour in the point, line and polygon editing options.

*HLC polygons – Coastal Marsh*

New HLC records created (and linked) in HBSMR for each coastal marsh polygon.

Source = ‘Tom Williamson Coastal Survey’ for each one.

Monuments – click “GIS monuments” and will update HLC record with all mons within its polygon.

Types created for each marsh type.

## Appendix 2 List of Parishes and coastal zone areas

Parish	Area
ALDEBURGH CP	Alde_Ore
ALDERTON CP	Deben
ALDRINGHAM CUM THORPE CP	Dunwich
ARWARTON CP	Orwell_Stour
BAWDSEY CP	Deben
BENACRE CP	Lowestoft
BLYTHBURGH CP	Blyth
BLYTHBURGH CP	Dunwich
BOYTON CP	Alde_Ore
BRANTHAM CP	Orwell_Stour
BROMESWELL CP	Deben
BUTLEY CP	Alde_Ore
CAPEL ST ANDREW CP	Alde_Ore
CHELMONDISTON CP	Orwell_Stour
CHILLESFORD CP	Alde_Ore
CORTON CP	Lowestoft
COVEHITHE CP	Lowestoft
DUNWICH CP	Dunwich
EAST BERGHOLT CP	Orwell_Stour
FALKENHAM CP	Deben
FELIXSTOWE CP	Deben
FELIXSTOWE CP	Orwell_Stour
FRESTON CP	Orwell_Stour
FRISTON CP	Alde_Ore
GEDGRAVE CP	Alde_Ore
GISLEHAM CP	Lowestoft
HARKSTEAD CP	Orwell_Stour
HEMLEY CP	Deben
HOLBROOK CP	Orwell_Stour
HOLLESLEY CP	Alde_Ore
IKEN CP	Alde_Ore
KESSINGLAND CP	Lowestoft
KIRTON CP	Deben
LEISTON CP	Dunwich
LEVINGTON CP	Orwell_Stour
LOWESTOFT	Lowestoft
MARTLESHAM CP	Deben
MELTON CP	Deben
NACTON CP	Orwell_Stour
NEWBOURNE CP	Deben
ORFORD CP	Alde_Ore
RAMSHOLT CP	Deben
REYDON	Blyth
REYDON CP	Lowestoft
SHOTLEY CP	Orwell_Stour
SHOTTISHAM CP	Deben
SNAPE CP	Alde_Ore
SOUTH COVE CP	Lowestoft
SOUTHWOLD CP	Blyth
STRATTON HALL CP	Orwell_Stour
STUTTON CP	Orwell_Stour
SUDBOURNE CP	Alde_Ore



SUTTON CP  
TRIMLEY ST MARTIN CP  
TRIMLEY ST MARY CP  
WALBERSWICK CP  
WALBERSWICK CP  
WALDRINGFIELD CP  
WESTLETON CP  
WOODBIDGE CP  
WOOLVERSTONE CP

Deben  
Orwell\_Stour  
Orwell\_Stour  
Blyth  
Dunwich  
Deben  
Dunwich  
Deben  
Orwell\_Stour

### Appendix 3 Coastal Marsh Historic Landscape Characterisation

Contained in t:\arc\HLC Map\Williamson Coastal HLC on the SCC network server.

#### *Introduction (Jude Plouviez August 2006)*

Detailed mapping of HLC for the Suffolk coastal marshes was carried out by Tom Williamson, UEA as part of the Rapid Coastal Survey (Updated, 2005-2007) funded by English Heritage in April 2006.

As well as allocating new HLC-type descriptions and subdivisions the current land use was mapped, and the combined information also used to create an importance layer.

These maps were originally coded by polygon colour with no associated tables and a Word text description. To facilitate use with other maps the layers have been copied and simple tables attached to identify the character, landuse and importance data. These layers are held in two formats, one uncoloured (CoastalMarsh HLC.tab, CoastalMarsh\_Landuse.tab and CoastalMarsh\_Importance.tab) for use in detailed work along with other layers, the second with coloured polygons (CoastalMarsh HLC Coloured.tab etc) for broader viewing. The full text describing each of the datasets are in Word files with the same names, descriptions in the map layer tables are heavily abbreviated to fit.

More detailed information with references about the individual marsh areas was also supplied. A general layer (CoastalMarsh Histories.tab) allocates a name and number to each area, cross referencing with a Word text (character by area.doc). These have been hyperlinked so that the MapInfo table will open the text file, and within the text file a hyperlink cross reference on the first page can be used to find the specific area text.

Additionally some of the historic maps have been scanned and geo-referenced. These maps are held in \Historic Map Extracts subfolder. The existence of these is noted where they occur in references in the 'character by area.doc' and in the table on the 'CoastalMarsh\_Histories.tab' map. The geo-referencing will seriously distort the other MapInfo layers in a display, fully close the tables after use.

#### **Coastal Marsh HLC** (CoastalMarsh HLC.tab and CoastalMarsh HLC Coloured.tab)

This is a mapinfo file containing a map of Historic Landscape Character – essentially, it classifies the various areas of coastal wetland in terms of their dyke pattern, as this exists today. This has not been done on a field-by-field basis, for the wetlands have been reclaimed, or modified, in the form of substantial blocks: more minute subdivision than that attempted here would be meaningless and misleading. It includes areas of fen, reed bed and grazing marsh, but excludes mudflats and saltings (i.e., areas still subject to direct tidal influence).

**Seven** categories are employed:

**CM1:** Areas of highly rectilinear dyke pattern, typically created by eighteenth and nineteenth-century enclosure and reclamation. Most dykes are ruler-straight; the exceptions are old

streams and 'landspring dykes', which occur at the junction of the wetland and the 'upland', generally following the contours.

**CM2:** Areas of highly serpentine dykes, with few straight examples. These patterns were generally created by early (pre-1600) embanking and reclamation of former salt marshes, and the distinctive dyke pattern preserves, in part, the layout of natural channels draining the salt marshes. Dyke patterns of this type are mainly found on silt/clay soils towards the south of the region, but in limited patches.

**CM3:** Areas displaying a mixture of straight and serpentine dykes. These areas were generally reclaimed from salt marsh in the period before c.1600, but – unlike those in the previous category – have had their drainage pattern modified in subsequent centuries by the filling of old, curvilinear dykes and the insertion of straight ones. Most of these changes took place in the period after c.1700. These patterns dominate the wetlands to the south of the district.

**CM4:** Areas reclaimed in the period before c.1600 in which the old dyke pattern (of the kind described in the previous two categories) was comprehensively redrawn in the period after 1950, usually as areas of grazing marsh were converted to arable. The pattern of straight dykes is morphologically similar to those in category 1, but the enclosures are usually larger.

**CM5:** These areas are the least easy to describe or define. They generally occur in narrow valleys, some way inland from the coast, on peaty soils. They lack the highly serpentine channels associated with the reclamation of former salt marsh, but – while they usually include a high proportion of straight dykes – they also contain numerous less regular boundaries, including examples representing relict stream courses. These patterns are associated with areas of meadow and pasture, generally enclosed before c.1600 and subject to a long history of small-scale, piecemeal alteration.

**CM6:** Areas formerly subdivided (normally with dyke patterns of category 1 or 5 type) but which have reverted to open fen, usually in the period since c.1950, to such an extent that the dyke is largely or completely lost.

**CM7:** Areas never subdivided, or only ever minimally so.

## **CM8**

Although the various files contained on this disk are mainly concerned with wetland reclamation, a number of reclaimed areas have reverted to tidal mudflats or saltings since the late nineteenth century. This file shows the most important of these areas.

For example see Henham001.tab – Farm in Bulcamp 1862, from Book of Farm Plans of Henham estate: IRO HA 11/C9/74.

### ***Coastal Marsh Landuse***

(CoastalMarsh\_Landuse.tab and CoastalMarsh\_Landuse Coloured.tab)

This is a mapinfo file which shows current patterns of land use. By the middle of the nineteenth century, with the last reclamations of the fens in the north of the region completed, the coastal wetlands were almost all under pasture. In the course of the twentieth century, however, much of the damper peatlands reverted to fen and reedbed, in part because of the 1880-1940 agricultural recession, in part as a result of deliberate flooding – for reasons of nature conservation, or as a defensive measure during the Second World War. In the period after 1953, moreover, large areas of the silt/alluvial soils in the south of the district were subject to deep drainage and converted to arable. Some of these have been returned to pasture during the last

decade or so, and are beginning to resemble unploughed traditional grazing marsh once more.

Land use has been plotted from recent (2001) aerial photographs, followed by ground checks. The information needs to be treated with a little caution due, in particular, to the difficulties of distinguishing unploughed grazing marsh (Category 1) from arable marsh which has recently reverted to pasture (Category 3). Moreover, the distinction between grazing marsh, and reed bed/fen, is often blurred, especially by the activities of nature conservation bodies, deliberately 'wetting up' areas of unploughed grazing marsh.

**LU1:** Grazing marsh.

**LU2:** Arable marsh.

**LU 3:** Former arable marsh, relatively recently returned to pasture.

**LU4:** Fen and reed bed.

**LU5:** Woodland, all probably post-1800 in origin.

### ***Coastal Marsh Importance***

(CoastalMarsh\_Importance.tab and CoastalMarsh\_Importance Coloured.tab)

This map attempts to assess the relative importance, in historic terms, of the various coastal wetland landscapes in Suffolk – a somewhat subjective exercise, but a necessary one given the current pressures on these areas, not only from the policy of 'managed retreat' but also, to some extent, from changes in agriculture and the activities of nature conservation bodies, keen to convert areas of grazing marsh to rather rougher and wilder landscapes.

**IM1:** These are areas of degraded coastal grazing marsh which are of low landscape value. They are now under arable cultivation, and have often had their historic pattern of drainage dykes simplified in the second half of the twentieth century.

**IM2:** Areas of relatively recent enclosure; or areas in inland valleys, little different from other valley-floor landscapes in Suffolk; of moderate historical importance.

**IM3:** These are areas of coastal grazing marsh which were converted to arable in the later twentieth century but without major simplification or alteration of their dyke pattern, *and* which have now returned to pasture. They are of moderate historical importance: earthworks, relict creek patterns etc will have been lost but over time these areas are coming to resemble, in visual terms, those in category 4.

**IM4:** Areas of early-enclosed coastal marsh, with serpentine or 'mixed' dyke patterns, surviving under grass. These areas are of considerable historical importance.

## ***Character Areas***

The following notes provide short descriptions of the main areas of coastal marsh, with comments on their probable history.

### **Area 1:**

#### **Marshes on the Hundred River/Kessingland Level.**

A map of Benacre, made in 1580, shows that the part of the area lying within Benacre parish was at this time largely unenclosed – an open, peaty common. It was separated from the sea by a spit of sand and gravel. Some drains were dug and a sluice installed before 1783, but more extensive drainage occurred in the 1780s and 90s, following the establishment of the Commission of Sewers for the Hundreds of Blything, Mutford, Lothingland, and Wangford in 1786: numerous new dykes were installed and the area of water immediately behind the sand spit drained. Further work was carried out from 1812, directed by the engineer William Smith, including the excavation of a new main drain running through the southern section of the Level; and of landspring dykes, running at the junction with the higher ground.

#### **References.**

Survey of the Manor of Benacre, 1580: Lowestoft Records Office LRO 629/3/2  
Minute Books of the Commission of Sewers for the Hundreds of Blything, Mutford, Lothingland and Wangford: Lowestoft Records Office LRO ST 336/1 and LRO 687/1.  
Hodskinson's Map of Suffolk, 1783.

### **Area 2.**

#### **Benacre Level.**

The 1580 map of Benacre shows that there was a small enclosed area immediately beside Benacre Broad, but otherwise this was then unenclosed common fen. Hodskinson's 1783 map of Suffolk suggests that the area still then comprised unimproved fen. The area was presumably reclaimed by the Gooch estate in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century although no relevant records appear to survive in the estate archives or the IRO. The First Edition OS 6" and the First Edition OS 2 1/2 " show a rectilinear dyke pattern, but the area is now largely open and has reverted to fen and reed bed.

#### **References.**

Survey of the Manor of Benacre, 1580: Lowestoft Records Office LRO 629/3/2  
Hodskinson's map of Suffolk, 1783.

### **Area 3**

#### **Covehithe**

All maps suggest that this area was never other than minimally drained, and remains largely open fen.

### **Area 4**

#### **Easton**

The inland portion of this area was probably drained piecemeal at an early date. Hodskinson's map of 1783 suggests that much of the western portion was occupied by what was then a much larger Easton Broad. This had been reclaimed by 1817, to judge from a Gooch family estate map, and has a rectilinear dyke pattern.

#### **References**

Hodskinson's map of Suffolk, 1783.  
Map of the Gooch estate, 1817: Ipswich Records Office AR 882/2/4

### **Area 5**

#### **Buss Creek, Southwold.**

This entire area appears to have remained as tidal saltings until at least 1840. Fully reclaimed by the time the Ordnance Survey 6" was surveyed in 1889, it has a rectilinear dyke pattern.

#### **References**

Hodskinson's map of Suffolk, 1783.  
Map of Southwold Harbour and the River Blyth, 1840: Ipswich Records Office Q.A.627.2

## Area 6

### Wood End and Town Marshes (south of Southwold).

This area was reclaimed as grazing marsh before 1801: a map of that date shows a pattern of dykes broadly similar to that of today. Date of original reclamation unknown: may be medieval or sixteenth century, but the area is today dominated by a rectilinear dyke pattern.

#### References

Map of Southwold by Thomas Ablett, 1801: Ipswich Records Office HD 417/21

## Area 7

### Havenbeach Marshes

Reclaimed between 1801 and 1840. Highly rectilinear dyke pattern.

#### References

Hodskinson's map of Suffolk, 1783.

Map of Southwold by Thomas Ablett, 1801: Ipswich Records Office HD 417/21

Map of Southwold Harbour and the River Blyth, 1840: Ipswich Records Office q.A.627.2

## Area 8

### Reydon Marshes.

Reclaimed as grazing marsh before 1798. A map of that date shows rather more curvilinear dykes than today, although even then straight dykes predominated.

#### References

Enclosure maps for Reydon parish, 1798: Ipswich Records Office B 150/1/3.25a

## Area 9

### Marshes upstream from Blythburgh Bridge

No early maps for this area survive, but the present dyke pattern has a mixture of rectilinear and curvilinear channels suggesting early reclamation, probably medieval. Several early charters for Sibton and Blythburgh, dating to the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, refer to fens and marshes here. In the late twelfth century, for example, Geoffrey Capra granted Blythburgh Priory a parcel of marsh 'which lies between the marsh which Alexander the son of Walter of Dunwich holds of the canons in Bulcamp and the ... bridge of Bulcamp' (Harper-Bill 1980, Charter no.70). Parcels of marsh as small as half an acre are described (e.g. Harper-Bill 1981, Charter no. 486) and various phrases imply a managed, ordered environment. Sometimes the term 'fossatum marisci', 'embanked marsh' is used; and when, in the early thirteenth century, William granted a portion of his marsh in Blythburgh to the Priory he allowed the monks free access to 'the lodge which stands in my marsh' (*logium qui stat in marisco meo*) (Harper-Bill 1980, Charter no. 103).

#### References

Brown, P. (ed.) (1986) *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters, Part 2*, Suffolk Record Society, Woodbridge.

Brown, P. (ed.) (1987) *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters, Part 3*, Suffolk Record Society, Woodbridge.

Brown, P. (ed.) (1988) *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters, Part 4*, Suffolk Record Society, Woodbridge.

Harper Bill, C. (ed.) (1980) *Blythburgh Priory Cartulary Part One*, Suffolk Record Society, Woodbridge.

Harper Bill, C. (ed.) (1981) *Blythburgh Priory Cartulary Part Two*, Suffolk Record Society, Woodbridge.

## Area 10

Date of reclamation unknown, but the present rectilinear dyke pattern here must post-date the creation of the canalised river Blyth following an act of 1757 (Lawrence 1990; Boyes and Russell 1977, 98-107) as the boundaries all stop at the 'new' river, and do not extend as far as the 'old'.

#### References

Boyes, J. and Russell, R. (1977) *The Canals of Eastern England*, David and Charles, Newton Abbot.

Lawrence, R. (1990) *Southwold River: Georgian life in the Blyth valley*, Moxon, Southwold.

## Area 11

### Tinkers Marsh, Walberswick

No pre-nineteenth century maps of the area survive, but the rectilinear dyke pattern implies relatively late reclamation, perhaps following the canalisation of the river in the eighteenth century (Warner, p.42).

#### References

Warner, P. (2000) *Bloody Marsh: a seventeenth-century village in crisis*, Windgather Press, Macclesfield.

## Area 12

### Robinson's Marshes and Town Marshes, Walberswick

No pre-nineteenth century maps of the area survive but the mixture of serpentine and straight dykes suggests early – perhaps medieval – reclamation.

## Area 13

### Old Town Marshes, Westwood Marshes, East Marsh, and Pauls Fen, Walberswick/Wenhaston

The areas known as Pauls Fen and East Marsh – what is now Westwood Marshes - were reclaimed from fens and saltings at the end of the sixteenth century, and were the subject of a major court case in the mid seventeenth. A document of 1637 describes how, some forty years earlier, both had been enclosed

By a wall from an arme of the sea ... and before that time they were not worth above xiid the acre per annum. ... the enclosing of them cost one hundred and two of pounds..

The tithe award map, the First Edition OS 6", and the First Edition 2 1/2", all show a complex pattern, with a mixture of curvilinear and straight dykes, crossed by some long, linear channels – evidently the result of eighteenth or nineteenth-century improvement.

The area of marsh further to the east (Old Town Marshes) was probably enclosed rather earlier, but this is not certain: it had a highly serpentine dyke patterns.

The entire area has now reverted to wet fen (partly as a result of wartime flooding) and now forms part of the Walberswick Nature reserve. Most of the dykes shown on the First Edition OS have disappeared.

#### References

Warner, P. (2000) *Bloody Marsh: a seventeenth-century village in crisis*, Windgather Press, Macclesfield.  
Sir Robert Brooke's answer to his tenants petition, 1637: Ipswich Records Office HA 30:50/22/3.1 (42).  
Walberswick tithe award map: Ipswich Records Office P461/267 (1841).

## Area 14

### Corporation Marsh, Reedland Marsh and Dingle Marshes

Only Corporation Marsh and Reedland appear on any map predating the Tithe Award, a survey of 1826, which shows a simple, rectilinear pattern of division rather sparser than that of today. The main area of Dingle Marshes was property of the Barnes estates, and no early maps survive in the IRO. The tithe award maps show a pattern of division more or less the same as that of today: the south of the area has a mixture of straight and serpentine dykes, the north a largely rectilinear layout. Both areas were probably reclaimed in the lee of the old Dunwich river following the silting of the estuary here in late medieval times, with the northern part reorganised (?by the Barnes estate?) some time in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. A map of Dunwich in 1587, published in Gardiner's *Dunwich* of 1753, shows that a sea wall separated the south of this area, at least, from the old Dunwich River.

#### References

Gardner, T. (1754) *An Historical Account of Dunwich*, London.  
Map showing land between River Blyth and Minsmere, 1826: Ipswich Records Office EE6/1144.202.  
Westleton tithe award map: Ipswich Records Office FDA 280/A1/1b (1840).  
Dunwich tithe award map: Ipswich Records Office P461/85 (1838).

## Area 15

### Minsmere Level East

Minsmere Level is the largest area of wetland in the north of the district, covering some 1,600 acres (648 hectares) in the parishes of Middleton, Westleton, Theberton, Dunwich, and Leiston with Sizewell. It comprises a mixture of peat and silt soils occupying the former estuary of the Minsmere river, finally blocked by a shingle spit some time in the seventeenth century, together with the valley of a minor tributary

extending south eastwards into Leiston. It remained a poorly-drained tract of fen and rough grazing until the establishment, by an Act of 1810, of the Minsmere Level Drainage Trust, composed of all owners of thirty acres or more of land in the Level, or tenants of fifty acres or more. The Trust's creation followed the passing of the enclosure act for Theberton and Leiston in 1810, although the award itself – formally dividing the commons – did not in fact come until 1824. For convenience, the Level is best divided into three areas: Minsmere level East (15), Minsmere Level West (16), and Leiston (17)..

Minsmere Level East – to the east of Eastbridge – is itself a complex area. Some parts, especially to the south of the old Minsmere river, have a mixture of straight and serpentine dykes and were already enclosed by 1786: their association with the old, pre-1363 site of Leiston Abbey suggest medieval reclamation. There are also a number of substantial sea walls here, suggesting successive episodes of encroachment on the silting estuary of the Minsmere River. However, there were also some areas of common land here; a small 'broad' survived as late as 1813; and the drainage of the whole area was comprehensively improved following the Act of 1810 which, as already noted, was part of a wider scheme to drain the areas of newly-enclosed common in Theberton (Theberton Bogs) and Leiston (Leiston Wet Common). In 1812 and 1813 a new Main Drain was laid out through the middle of the Level, three miles in length. Together with its associated embankments, this cost no less than £1,835. The drain led to a substantial sluice, replacing an earlier structure, which was built of iron, and connected to the sea by an iron pipe four feet in diameter, which ran for some 100 metres through the sand and shingle bank. It was cast by Garrett's of Ipswich and completed in 1818.

#### **References**

Documents relating to Minsmere Level Drainage Trust: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/2/1; IRO EK 401/1.

Map of the Old Abbey Estate, Leiston, 1786: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/1/2.

Plan of Marshes called Minsmere Level, 1813: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/1/3.

### **Area 16**

#### **Minsmere Level West**

This area is mainly characterised by small, relatively rectilinear enclosures, interspersed with some more irregular boundaries, of the kind resulting from piecemeal improvement of meadow land over long periods of time. Areas of more rectilinear division result from the enclosure of Theberton Bogs in 1813.

#### **References**

Documents relating to Minsmere Level Drainage Trust: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/2/1; IRO EK 401/1.

Plan of Marshes called Minsmere Level, 1813: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/1/3.

### **Area 17**

#### **Leiston Wet Common**

An almost entirely rectilinear dyke pattern, created by the enclosure of Leiston Wet Common by an act of 1810.

#### **References**

Documents relating to Minsmere Level Drainage Trust: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/2/1; IRO EK 401/1.

Plan of Marshes called Minsmere Level, 1813: Ipswich Records Office HD 306/1/3.

### **Area 18**

#### **Thorpeness**

This is a complex area. The central portion, still known as 'The Fens', remains essentially undrained and undivided. The area to the east and south east was likewise undivided at the time that the Aldeburgh tithe award map was surveyed in 1846, and now has a rectilinear dyke pattern (the area of water called 'The Mere' is shown on Hodskinson's map of 1783 as extending much further to the south than today, almost to Aldeburgh). The western portion of the area – i.e., to the west of the Fens – has the pattern of small dyked fields, with a mixture of straight and less regular boundaries, typical of a long history of management as meadow or wet grazing.

#### **References**

Hodskinson's Map of Suffolk, 1783.

Aldringham tithe award map: Ipswich Records Office P461/4 (1839).

Aldeburgh tithe award map: Ipswich Records Office P461/2 (1846).



## Area 19

### Hazelwood Marshes

The earliest surviving map of this area, the Hazelwood tithe award, shows a mixed pattern of straight and serpentine dykes broadly similar to that of today.

Hazelwood tithe award map: Ipswich Records Office P461/4 (1839).

## Area 20

### Snape and Dunningworth.

The area to the north of the river is shown on a map of c.1840 much as it is today, with the exception that some portions of marsh, lying to the south of Warren House, were abandoned to saltings in the first half of the twentieth century. The whole area, extending well above Snape Bridge, is characterised by relatively small enclosures, defined by regular and irregular boundaries, and was probably reclaimed in the medieval or early post-medieval period. To the south of the river the pattern is similar: part of this area is shown on an undated map of Dunningworth, c.1750, when it was then slightly more subdivided than today.

### References

Map of southern portion of parish of Snape, c.1840: Ipswich Records Office, Isaac Johnson Collection HD 11/475 Snape. [see Snape001.tab]

Dunningworth Hall estate, undated plan: Ipswich Records Office HD 80/1/1.

## Area 21

### Aldeburgh Marshes

This block of marshes falls into two distinct areas. The western section has a highly serpentine dyke pattern, virtually identical to that shown on an estate map of 1733. The eastern section, which is not included on the map, has a more mixed pattern, with a higher proportion of straight dykes. The contrast probably reflects later history, rather than differences in the original date of reclamation: both are shown as grazing marsh, although not in any detail, on John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates, 1601; and on an undated, late sixteenth century map of Aldeburgh, where the area is described as 'King's Marshes'.

### References

Allen, M. (1982) *The Development of the Borough of Aldeburgh 1547-1660, aspects of the economy of the borough*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Wales at Aberystwyth.

Clodd, H.P. (1959) *Aldeburgh: the history of an ancient borough*, Adlard, Ipswich.

'An Exact Mapp of the Land and Premises commonly called Aldebrugh Hall Farm ...', 1733: Ipswich Records Office. [See Aldeburgh001.tab]

John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates: Ipswich Record Office EE5/11/1.

## Area 22

### Iken

Two estate surveys of 1841 show this entire area with a dyke pattern almost identical to that which still survives today: there have been only minor subsequent alterations. Across the entire area, a mixture of curvilinear and straight dykes – with in many areas a clear predominance of the former – suggests early, probably medieval reclamation. A small part of this area is shown on Norden's survey of 1600-01, as reclaimed grazing marsh.

### References

Survey of Farms in Iken by B.H.Galland for the Marquess of Hertford, 1841: Ipswich Records Office HD 628/4 and 628/7. [see Iken001.tab and Iken002.tab]

John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates: Ipswich Record Office EE5/11/1.

## Area 23

### Sudbourne, Orford and Gedgrave

This entire area, with the exception of the 'Town Marshes' immediately to the east of Orford, is shown on an undated late eighteenth-century map. Parts of Orford Marshes are also shown on a map of 1775, and the Gedgrave Marshes on an undated early nineteenth century survey. The dyke patterns are broadly similar to that shown on the First Edition 2 1/2", with a mixture straight and curvilinear dykes, although with some pockets of marsh entirely dominated by the latter. More straight dykes were added in the course of the nineteenth century, to judge from the First Edition 6" OS, and a block of marsh in

the north of the area was comprehensively simplified and modified as a consequence of conversion to arable in the twentieth century, creating an essentially modern pattern of large, rectilinear enclosures.

Norden's survey of 1600-01 shows most of the marshes in Orford and Sudbourne: at this time there were few rectilinear dykes, and some pockets of salt marsh still existed amidst the grazing marsh. Norden does not show the area of Rayden or Town Marsh very clearly – it was not Stanhope property – but his depiction suggests that it was at this stage only minimally divided, and was probably common grazing. It is noticeable that this area today has a rather more rectilinear pattern than the adjacent areas of marsh, although still essentially 'mixed' in character.

Some of the earliest records of reclamation and embankment in Suffolk come from this part of the coast. They date from the 1160s and are associated with the construction of the castle at Orford by Henry II. In 1169/70 the Pipe Rolls record payments of £4.11s 7d for 'closing off the Marsh at Orford and ... digging out earth of the same Marsh', presumably a reference to the construction of sea banks to prevent tidal penetration. There were further payments for 'closing off the Marsh at Orford' in the following year and a neighbouring landowner, one Oslac, was paid compensation for 'his land which was enclosed in the Marsh', suggesting that even the unreclaimed salt marshes might, at this early date, be the property of specific individuals.

#### **References**

'A Plan of Sudbourne, Orford and Gedgrave Levels with the Marshes called Lantern-King's Marshes and Halvergate Island', late eighteenth century: Ipswich Records Office. [See Orford001.tab and Orford002.tab]

Map of Gedgrave Hall and Richmonds Farm, Gedgrave, undated, 1800-1840: Ipswich Records Office, Isaac Johnson Collection, HD11/475 Gedgrave.

Estate of John Syred in Orford, 1775: Ipswich Records Office HB 83: 988/41. [See Gedgrave002.tab]

John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates, 1600-01: Ipswich Record Office EE5/11/1.

Allen, J., Potter, V. and Poulter, M. *The Building of Orford Castle: a translation from the Pipe Rolls 1163-78*, Orford 2002.

## **Area 24**

### **Kings Marshes and Lantern Marshes.**

Norden's survey of 1600-01 shows the Lantern Marshes in some detail, King's less clearly: these are areas of early reclamation, with serpentine dyke patterns which have been modified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the addition of numerous straight dykes, so that they now have a mixed dyke pattern. The far south west of Kings Marshes have been more extensively modified, and simplified, in the course of the twentieth century, so that it now has a rather sparse boundary pattern, in part defined by fences more than dykes.

John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates, 1600-01: Ipswich Record Office EE5/11/1.

## **Area 25**

### **Sudbourne Marshes.**

John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates shows 'The New Inned Marsh' on the north side of the Butley river, beside the Sudbourne Fleet, as well as the dam erected across the mouth of the fleet to prevent the ingress of the tides. Although the area to the south of the Fleet is simply described as 'part of Gedgrave' (it was not owned by Stanhope) the damming of the Fleet mouth presumably enabled this entire area to be enclosed and drained, presumably in the decades around 1600. The area has an essentially rectilinear dyke pattern..

#### **References**

John Norden's survey of the Stanhope estates, 1600-01: Ipswich Record Office EE5/11/1.

## **Area 26**

### **Butley and Stonebridge Marshes**

No early maps survive of this area, but part at least was probably reclaimed in the 1520s and 30s, according to Burrell, when the salt marshes in Alderton, Bawdsey and Butley were embanked by Butley Priory. Before this date they had been 'often drowned with salt water and of lyttle valuew'. The area is characterised by a mixture of straight and serpentine dykes.

## References

PRO E134 Eliz.27/28 M15, quoted in Burrell, E. (1960) *An Historical Geography of the Sandlings before 1840*. Unpublished MSc Thesis, University of London..

## Area 27

### Boyton Marshes

No early maps survive of this area, and no information has come to light concerning its drainage and reclamation, but it may have been enclosed around the same time as neighbouring areas on the Butley River (30 and 31), i.e., in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

## Area 28

### Hollesley Marshes.

No early maps survive of this area, but most of it was probably reclaimed in the sixteenth century. Henry VIII's sister Mary, her husband the Duke of Suffolk, and others went to view Butley Priory's newly enclosed marshes at Hollesley when they visited the area in 1528 (Dickens 1951, 50), while in the following decade 400 acres (162 hectares) of the Duke of Norfolk's marshes in the same parish were reclaimed, a venture which involved the construction of a sea wall some 370 rods in length (Burrell 1960). Other parts may have been reclaimed in the same period by Butley Priory, according to Burrell. The area has a mixture of straight and serpentine dykes.

### References

Burrell, E. (1960) *An Historical Geography of the Sandlings before 1840*. Unpublished MSc Thesis, University of London.

Dickens, A.G. (1951) *The Register or Chronicle of Butley Priory, Suffolk, 1510-1535*, Warren, Winchester.

## Area 29

### Bawdsey, Alderton and Ramsholt Marshes

Part at least of this area may have been reclaimed in the 1520s and 30s, according to Burrell, when the salt marshes in Alderton, Bawdsey and Butley were reportedly embanked by Butley Priory. A map of 1802 shows the south eastern portion of the area, in Butley parish: the pattern of dykes is broadly similar to that which survives here today, but with some changes, which had occurred by the time the OS 6" First Edition was surveyed in 1890. The area has a mixture of straight and serpentine dykes.

### References

Rough plan of Bawdsey Hall Farm, 1802: Ipswich Records Office Isaac Johnson Collection HD 11/475 Bawdsey. [See Bawdsey001.tab]

Burrell, E. (1960) *An Historical Geography of the Sandlings before 1840*. Unpublished MSc Thesis, University of London.

## Area 30

### Kirton and Falkenham Marshes, including Corporation Marshes.

A small portion of this area is shown on a 1731 survey of the Corporation Marshes. This shows a broadly similar pattern to that depicted on the 2 1/2" OS of c.1950 but, typically, fewer rectilinear elements. The dyke pattern was comprehensively redrawn in the second half of the twentieth century, when the marshes here were converted to arable.

### References

Plan of lands belonging to Ipswich Corporation, 1731: Ipswich Records Office C3/10/8/1/13.

## Area 31

### Walton and Felixstowe Marshes, including Rosier Marshes.

There are three early maps which show portions of this area: A survey of Dodnish Manor Farm in Falkenham, dating to 1766; a plan of the Cartaret Leathes estate in Walton of 1733; and a 1740/41 survey of George Nassau's holdings, copied in 1784, which survives as a copy made in 1823. All, especially that of 1733, show a much more serpentine pattern of dykes than that which appears on the title award maps: evidently the drainage pattern was extensively reorganised in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There has been further simplification and straightening in the course of the twentieth century, but the area still retains a mixture of straight and serpentine elements. It was probably reclaimed in stages, from medieval times and into the sixteenth century.

### References

A survey of Dodnish Manor Farm in Falkenham, 1766; Ipswich Records Office 79/2/2. [See Falkenham001.tab]

Plan of the Cartaret Leathes estate in Walton, 1733; Ipswich Records Office HA 403:T 1039/13. [See Walton001.tab]

Map of 1825, taken from 1784 plans of 1740/41 survey by Kirby of parishes within the Lordship of George Nassau's; Ipswich Records Office HA 119: 435/26 (Vol.1). holdings, copied in 1784, which survives as a copy made in 1823.

### Area 32

#### Walton and Trimley Marshes.

A complex area of largely serpentine dykes. The area is shown, but only schematically, on a nineteenth-century copy of an early eighteenth-century survey, with a dyke pattern very similar to that of today. It was probably reclaimed in stages during the middle ages and early post-medieval period. Two hundred and forty seven acres (100 hectares) of saltmarsh in Walton were reclaimed in the 1570s; in the 1590s, walls and a sluice were erected to drain the marshes 'around Trimley'; and a survey of the manor of Walton cum Trimley, made in 1613, describes four acres of grazing marsh as 'a new improvement or enclosure latelie inclosed and taken in from the East Cliffe common or the salt marshes'.

#### References

Map of 1825, taken from 1784 plans of 1740/41 survey by Kirby of parishes within the Lordship of George Nassau's; Ipswich Records Office HA 119: 435/26 (Vol.1). holdings, copied in 1784, which survives as a copy made in 1823.

PRO E134.Car.I. M18, quoted in Burrell 1960..

PRO E 178 2190, quoted in Burrell 1960.

## Appendix 4 Analysis by area

### Lowestoft area

SMP units: Sub-Cell 3B units Cor4, Cor5, Cor6, Cor7; Sub-cell 3C units Ben1, Ben2, Ben3, Ben4, Ben5, Ben6(part, excluding south

Area: 69.14 sq km

Total HER site records 644 (includes Lowestoft), importance scored for 531 records of which c. 20 high, 194 medium, 316 low

The surface geology and soils of the area are predominantly on sands and gravels giving well-drained soils, sometimes rather thin and acidic in the southern part of the area – but overall rather better than for example the Dunwich area. One area of glacial till with clay soils is shown to the south of Lowestoft.

Drainage in the north of the area was previously via the Waveney, entering the sea via a large estuary area to the north (Great Yarmouth). The connection of the Waveney via Lake Lothing to the sea at Lowestoft, providing a new route to avoid Great Yarmouth and a sheltered harbour for Lowestoft, was constructed in 1827-1831 (Robertson 1999). Valleys to the south – the Hundred River at Kessingland, Benacre Broad, Covehithe Broad, and the Easton Broad and river – are all more or less blocked by coastal sand deposits. This has resulted in the accumulation of fen peats in the valley floors, the exploitation of which in the medieval period was probably at least partially responsible for the creation of the broads at Benacre and Covehithe. Over time there has been a complex process of change including extensive erosion of much of the coast and variable tidal impact along the valleys.

Between the valleys the coast is typically cliffs composed of sands, gravels and sometimes glacial till. Recent high erosion areas include Pakefield to the south of Lowestoft and the entire length from the Kessingland Hundred river to the south.

The modern landscape is dominated by Lowestoft, the second largest urban area in Suffolk and currently a major growth area particularly for housing. Its dominant position was ensured by direct road and rail links to the south, in contrast to many of the smaller coast ports. In addition to the herring fishing (until the second half of the 20th century) and industrial development, the seaside holiday industry has been very important for Lowestoft and adjacent parishes (Corton, Gisleham, Kessingland). In contrast the area south of the Hundred river is much more sparsely populated except for Reydon at the south edge of the area.

Archaeological discoveries have been biased towards the north of the area, recently in response to development around Lowestoft, but also by fieldwalking activity in the 1960's -1970's by a local group and individuals based in Lowestoft. There has also been some recorded metal detecting survey since the 1970's, mainly in Gisleham, Kessingland and Covehithe. There are practical problems with recording amateur finds from this area because of the distance from Suffolk's professional archaeologists (initially in Ipswich museum, currently in SCC at Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds) and casual finds have quite often been shown to Norwich Museum Service or to the locally run museum in Lowestoft, resulting in less accurate mapping and delayed notification to the Suffolk HER.

### *Palaeolithic and Mesolithic*

7 HER records (Importance 1 very high, 2 high, 3 medium, 1 low)

Three of the records are Lower Palaeolithic (BNC 079, KSS 007, GSE 061) –of these the Gisleham cliff discoveries were recognised in 2005 (Parfitt *et al* 2006) as internationally important with potentially the earliest evidence for hominids in Europe. At Benacre recent finds of handaxes on the beach probably deriving from fluvial deposits in the cliff also potentially represent an important lower Palaeolithic site. The Kessingland record of Pleistocene animal bone deposits is plotted to the landward side of the present cliff line, but should be further researched to check the circumstances of discovery and location. The evidence of all three suggests enormous potential for significant future discoveries along all the cliff exposures in north-east Suffolk, particularly where the cliffs actively erode. The extent of early hominid activity sites and of the appropriate geological deposits for survival is virtually impossible to predict and such significant deposits cannot easily be preserved – active recording of new exposures would be more productive for knowledge and local interest if such recording could be ensured as part of a management strategy.

Of the significant Mesolithic sites surface scatters KSS 001 and 005 on the north side of the Hundred River may be one or adjacent sites, with 001 mis-located in an unploughed valley floor – but the proximity of a very large flint assemblage and potential wetland deposits is important, and the overlap in location with Neolithic material is also of potential interest. The BNC 002 scatter overlooks a more degraded area of marsh from the south.

The restriction of early prehistoric finds to the parishes immediately south of Lowestoft may reflect survey work by the local individuals rather than any true distribution, except for the absence in Corton where there has also been fieldwalking.

### *Neolithic/Bronze Age/prehistoric unspecified*

74 HER records (1 high, 39 medium, 31 low)

Just over half the HER records (c.44) are attributable to the Neolithic. Corton has various assemblages (and stray finds) of worked flint suggesting widely dispersed activity north of the built up area of Lowestoft. Although the urban area has been excluded from detailed analysis it should be noted that various urban development sites have produced Neolithic flintwork, and an evaluation (LWT 137) on a south facing slope between 5 and 10m revealed a pit containing early Neo pottery, typical evidence for a settlement of the period.

In the southern part of the area there is a strong correlation between assemblages of Neolithic flintwork and the valleys, with many sites just above 5m for example on the south facing slope in Kessingland and Gisleham and a smaller number on the opposite side of the valley in Benacre; a few sites are identified on lower ground immediately overlooking marshland (BNC 005). The substantial scatter at KSS 005 has been noted above for the potential overlap with earlier Mesolithic activity, but there are also traces of curvilinear cropmarks in an adjacent area (KSS 062) just above the marsh, including a possible oval enclosure which might be a Neolithic mortuary enclosure. The general potential for environmental evidence, and perhaps for preserved settlement evidence in the grazing marshes here is high. Around Benacre Broad there are isolated finds in similar locations, with a larger flint scatter (COV 016) immediately overlooking the valley fen. A scatter (COV 014) just below

5m overlooks the valley floor just west of Covehithe Broad. Around the Reydon valley there are a few stray finds and scatters, again mostly situated between 5 and 10m OD.

Only 18 records are identified as Bronze Age, with a few further ring ditches recorded as Prehistoric or unknown period. Ring ditches likely to be Bronze Age barrows are fairly sparse in this area. A couple in Corton parish are within a probably later field/enclosures system, and one of these is large (COR 015, c.50m diameter) and might be a later Bronze Age circular enclosure though no entrance is visible. In Kessingland KSS 065 is unusually located in the valley floor, with two smaller rings slightly higher on the valley side (KSS 064) just below 5m. A substantial ring ditch (COV 028) overlaps a ?later trackway and is situated just above 5m overlooking Covehithe Broad, while an inverted urn containing the cremated bones of a juvenile, perhaps also originally within a barrow, was found as it eroded out of the cliff on the north-east side of the broad in a similar location. In the south of the area there is a possible cemetery (one ring ditch REY 006 and possible mounds, REY 013, 014, 015) overlooking the south side of the Easton River valley and a further isolated example also to the south of the valley (REY 056).

Other Bronze Age sites recorded in this area are mostly individual isolated finds with a few artefact scatters more likely to represent settlement sites – generally these are near the valleys, and most are not particularly low-lying.

A group of prehistoric discoveries from recent developments on the southern side of Lowestoft illustrate how fast our knowledge of the prehistory of an area can change – prehistoric material is frequently found when development sites are evaluated and in one case the first example of a Late Bronze Age circular enclosure in Suffolk was excavated (CAC 035). Further west the various developments in Carlton Colville have shown a correlation between pre-medieval sites and the lighter soils also found throughout the coastal strip, with sparser, mainly medieval activity on the glacial till.

### *Iron Age*

10 HER records (Importance 5 medium, 5 low)

Only 10 records are definitely attributed to the Iron Age within this area, and half these are single finds. A significant site has probably been largely or completely lost to erosion at Covehithe (COV 008, 005) judging by the number of late Iron Age coins found on the beach in the 1970's – 1980's. There is occasional correlation between Iron Age finds and areas of earlier prehistoric activity (eg KSS 017 on the north side of the Hundred River, and in the development areas around Lowestoft), and there are also Iron Age pottery sherds from predominantly Roman sites in Corton. It is very likely that undated cropmark field systems and enclosures (COR 012, 014, 017) in Corton (which extend over much of Lothingland beyond the coastal parishes) are of late Iron Age or Roman date

### *Roman*

49 records are of Roman date (27 medium importance, 22 low).

Two areas of cropmark landscape are probably of late Iron Age or Roman date: Corton as noted above( where however the main areas of potential settlement finds lie just south of the cropmark areas) and a less well defined series of features in Covehithe (COV 084 and perhaps COV 130) including a possible road and a

rectilinear enclosure. The latter area however has metalwork finds suggesting post Roman, mainly medieval activity.

The most likely villa-type settlement is at Gisleham (031, 034, 037, 062) on relatively high ground (15m OD) but now in an area of active cliff erosion. Another area producing Roman flue tile (COV 012) and pottery is within a fragmentary rectilinear cropmark system (COV 038) overlooking Covehithe broad from the south.

Roman sites are more widely scattered across the landscape than the earlier periods, but continue to show a preference for the valleys such as the Kessingland Hundred River, especially on the tributaries on the north side.

Finds at REY 008 on the south side of the Easton valley might derive from a Roman building, but it has been suggested that the location and description might also relate to a salt extraction site, if the Easton river was tidal at the time, – the most northerly in the county if it is one.

### *Anglo-Saxon*

21 records (Importance: 3 high (all Bloodmoor Hill), 6 medium, 12 low)

Early Anglo-Saxon sites are scarce, despite the light soils. A major concentration in the Bloodmoor Hill area (Gisleham/Carlton Colville parishes) is on the edge of the study area. It includes one excavated settlement and several cemetery areas including several rich burials of probable late 6<sup>th</sup>/early 7<sup>th</sup> C date. Two further possible cemetery locations are suggested by single brooch fragment finds in Corton (COR 024) and on a Kessingland Hundred valley tributary (GSE 014).

Middle – Late Saxon sherds from fieldwalking (COR 009) are probably either on or close to a settlement. Stray items which are widely scattered around Gisleham church probably relate to a middle to late Saxon onwards settlement close to church. Similarly there are a few items of this date in the large collection from fields north of Covehithe church; cropmark evidence here is also tentatively interpreted as early Anglo-Saxon sunken featured buildings but this is not supported by the finds. In Gisleham (GSE 004) late Sax metal items and early medieval sherds indicate dispersed settlement, between 5 and 10m OD overlooking the Hundred River. A 16ft dugout boat was found offshore (COV Misc) and radiocarbon dated to AD775-892 – it is suggested that this may have been eroded from Benacre, Covehithe or Easton Bavents broad. A piece of a larger wreck of 10<sup>th</sup> –12<sup>th</sup> century date (EBV 004) was found on Easton Bavents beach, and it was suggested at the time that it derived from a sandbank c. 2 km offshore

### *Medieval*

94 records (importance 12 high, 46 medium, 34 low)

The sites rated of high importance are the churches, the area of the late medieval town at Lowestoft and Gisleham moat (GSE 001). The majority of the low-rated records are stray finds.

The medieval evidence was assessed in the context of the later maps (Hodskinson 1783 and 19th century Ordnance Survey for each settlement from north to south:



Corton: Isolated church, settlement by late 18<sup>th</sup> (Hodkinson, 1783) is on the north-south coast road to east and medieval finds COR 010 confirm this pattern earlier also. Area of heath running inland from the south part of the settlement - all except the church area now built over. Medieval potential along Church Lane and perhaps the north part of The Street (now Caravan park and Holiday Village). The surviving rural landscape is mostly late enclosure, with a small area of earlier "random fields" to the south west of the church and village and another area south of the heath just north of Gunton.

Lowestoft has engulfed various former settlements, Gunton being the most northerly with only the Norman church (LWT 021) surviving of the church/hall complex. The remaining undeveloped areas to the north east of the church have potential for later Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement.

The medieval church of St Margaret (LWT 029) is also isolated from the medieval settlement area (LWT 040) which focuses on the shoreline from which the medieval fishing fleet operated. To the south other settlements now within the Lowestoft built-up area include Normanston, Kirkley (Church at LWT 005) and Pakefield (church LWT 030). Pakefield Hall (GSE 002) on the southern edge of the current built up area is a moated site, unusually for this area. An area of medieval settlement (GSE 024 etc) is eroding from the cliffs to the east of Pakefield Hall and includes 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century material.

Gisleham church (023) and moated manor (GSE 001) are both significant sites, with potential for further medieval settlement along the roadside between them (and note earlier finds above are off the existing road line, as is the manor). The enclosure pattern is late throughout this area, with various heaths and commons also shown on Hodkinson 1783.

Kessingland Church (KSS 022) and adjacent manor were also isolated until recently, with the 19<sup>th</sup> century village focus on the coast (perhaps settlement fringed Kessingland Common). Various finds and assemblages have been identified, mostly overlooking the Hundred valley and marshes to the south – the northern marshes are also characterised as early enclosure, in contrast to most of the area south of the river. However the southern marsh includes an unusual area of medieval activity, perhaps brickmaking, on a slight rise (BNC 010).

Benacre inland church (BNC 014) with substantial post-medieval hall and park (BNC 020) adjacent to south and roadside settlement to the east (Hodkinson, OS ).

Covehithe: a large ruined church (with later church inside) and farm, originally inland but now within the potential erosion zone. Extensive finds scatters confirms substantial size and status in medieval period, extending south to Covehithe Broad and east to the shore. The church is also at the east end of a substantial common (Hodkinson 1783) with scattered settlement around it. A later rabbit warren lies to the south of the broad.

South Cove is inland of Covehithe at the head of the Easton river valley, Norman church (SCV 006) with farm and rectory, on the east edge of Wrentham Common.

Easton Bavents parish has largely been lost to the sea; dispersed medieval settlements have been recorded at the cliff edge (EBV 008) or just inland (EBV 046) and are highly vulnerable.

Reydon Church (REY 011) and farm are isolated despite substantial modern growth of the village. Dispersed settlements around Reydon Common and along the roads (Hodskinson 1783); common land and late enclosure is found along the coast and estuary. The pattern is of earlier enclosure in the western two thirds of the parish, with random and irregular co-axial fields (the latter extending north into South Cove).

Industrial evidence: some at least of the broads are the result of flooding of medieval turbaries.

*Post medieval - modern*

171 records (importance 13 medium, 158 low)

The higher ranked sites include Benacre Hall with associated park and ice-house (BNC 016, 020) and an area of ancient woodland to the west (BNC 076). Evidence has been recorded in Benacre Broad of the wooden pipes forming part of a duck decoy (BNC 077).

Industrial evidence includes a brickworks in South Cove (SCV 007) and sites of others in Gisleham, and a possible 17th-18th century pottery kiln (REY 001) just above Smear marsh.

The majority of the low-rated sites record elements of World War 2 defences, most of which were dismantled after use, but no thorough assessment has been done of what elements survive, although those partly or wholly on the beach were noted in the field survey. From Benacre to Easton Bavants the accurate plotting of the WW2 structures graphically demonstrates the amount of erosion in the last 50 years, shown in Fig.2 where the high and low water marks through this period are also plotted

*Undated*

76 records (importance: 2 high, 52 medium, 22 low)

The high rated records include cropmarks at Covehithe discussed above (COV 084) and an earthwork at South Cove (SCV 001), on the western edge of the survey area, – an enigmatic feature in need of assessment, apparently a substantial ditched mound where excavation produced burnt material and possibly medieval material in the upper levels.

The remaining undated records are mostly cropmarks, including the rectilinear system in Corton discussed above as probably late Iron Age or Roman and more fragmentary evidence of trackways, field system etc in the southern parishes; undated ring ditches have generally been covered in the Bronze Age section above. There are also undated features and timbers from the beach at Benacre Broad, some of which relate to the duck decoy.

## **Blyth area**

SMP units: Ben6 (part), Ben7, Min1(part)

Area: 21.4 km<sup>2</sup>

Total HER monument records 197: 12 high, 68 medium, 117 low importance

This area encompasses the tidal stretch of the River Blyth, and its floodplain, with a few minor tributaries on the north side. It is a generally low lying area, with no land higher than 20m OD. The Blyth is best described in three sections. Adjacent to Southwold and Walberswick, and for some 3.5km inland to Wolseys Creek, there is an extensively and effectively embanked stretch with much low lying marshland behind the banks and deep silts along the river's edge. From here to Blythburgh attempts at management have failed, creating a massive expanse of tidal mudflats and reed beds over former farmland, with remnants of failed banks evident within the mud. Here the north bank has a firm sandy foreshore, but the south is covered in dense reed beds and saltmarsh. From Blythburgh to Blyford, the river is again effectively managed, and no more than 25m wide, with embanking, well drained marshland and with reed beds obscuring much of the foreshore and water.

River traffic is limited to the mouth of the river around Southwold and Walberswick only, with an old railway bridge 1.5km inland between these two settlements preventing boats sailing further up river. A ferry runs between the two sides at the quay, which is managed and maintained for the fishing industry, to which both settlements owe their origins. The river was once navigable up to Halesworth with Reydon Quay, at 3km inland, a remnant of this (marked on a map of 1587 as "Reydonnew Quay").

The management on the coastline at Southwold and Walberswick Quays alter the behaviour of the river itself. A shingle spit at the mouth has prevented the towns from becoming major ports, and also affects tidal processes. The heavy embanking towards the east end of the river prevents erosion here, but the mudflats and parts of the shore adjacent to Blythburgh are eroding.

Southwold, Walberswick and Blythburgh are the only settlements along this stretch of river. They are all medieval or earlier in origin. A more extensive road infrastructure means the area is not as isolated as the southern Alde, for example, but the marshland to the south of Reydon and around Tinkers Marshes is more remote and not suitable for settlement.

Evidence from archaeological interventions is largely restricted to the settlements of Southwold, Walberswick and Blythburgh. There has been some fieldwalking in the 1970's/1980's around Blythburgh and Bulcamp and reported metal detecting finds are scarce.

### *Palaeolithic and Mesolithic*

3 records (3 low)

The HER contains two references to Pleistocene animal bone deposits and one to a single flint blade, all poorly located within Southwold except that the flint tool was found "at the foot of a low cliff bordering the beach".

### *Neolithic, Bronze Age and Prehistoric*

4 sites (1 medium, 3 low)

Two surviving scheduled round barrows are listed as “undated” in Walberswick (WLB 001, 002) but are likely to be Bronze Age barrows, probably surviving as upstanding earthworks because of their location on Walberswick Common. They are above 15m OD overlooking the Blyth to the north. A further possible barrow in the same area is visible as an undated cropmark ring ditch (WLB 023).

Cropmark evidence includes two large (c.100m diameter) circular enclosures (BLB 039, 057) on the 15m contour south of Blythburgh of potential prehistoric date, but there is some suggestion that the features resemble a nearby modern circular trackway in a pig field.

Two unstratified finds from Blythburgh form the only other two records from this period. A Neolithic axehead (BLB 002) and a Bronze Age fragment of a socketed axe (BLB 035).

### *Iron Age*

There are no sites dated as Iron Age in this area.

### *Roman*

10 sites (5 medium, 5 low).

A Roman salt working site is recorded on the foreshore in Blythburgh, on the north side of the Blyth (BLB 003). An undated rectangular enclosure cropmark immediately to the north may be related, and some pottery is recorded as being found upslope of the shore. This site has been substantially eroded since its identification in the late 1970's but remains a visible feature of the shoreline.

Surface finds of 1st to 3rd century data probably represent settlement to the south of Walberswick (WLB 007, 010, 015) overlooking the old river (where the Blyth entered the sea at this stage is not known, but see below for the medieval evidence). There have also been occasional finds in Blythburgh village, with more material on higher ground to the south.

A major Roman settlement lies at Wenhaston, 2.3km west of the present bridge at Blythburgh. The layout of the major Roman roads is unclear, with Stone Street the closest definite line to the north of Halesworth. Presumably river crossings were important, and it is possible that Wenhaston is the significant settlement before the middle Saxon period because the Blyth and its tributary to the south were less of an obstacle, replaced by Blythburgh which had the advantage of good access for boats as well as the lowest recorded bridging points prior to the railway.

### *Saxon*

8 sites (2 high, 7 medium)

Blythburgh is recorded as the burial place in AD 654 of King Anna of East Anglia and his son Firminus following a battle at Bulcamp to the north; combined with its position as the central place in the Blything hundred it has been suggested that this is an Anglo Saxon royal residence (*regio*). The size of the church estate here by Domesday also suggests a Saxon minster church. It also had a market pre-1066 and is likely to have functioned as a port. Finds of high status from the priory area on the

north side of the peninsula overlooking the crossing point of the Blyth include writing styli and a decorated whalebone writing tablet (BLB Misc); better located survey finds include middle Saxon Ipswich ware from the area between the priory and the river below 5m OD (BLB 016), probably a key area for understanding the complex, and sherds have been found in the priory area (BLB 001) and in evaluation to the east (BLB 038). In addition middle to late Saxon pottery has been found just north of the river (BLB 04). Whether this is an early monastic site or a royal site or both is open to debate but the importance of the area is very high.

The only other potential Sax evidence recorded is in Buss Creek (SWD 006): timbers from various boats were identified and mostly re-buried; one radiocarbon date centred on the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Medieval*

35 sites (7 high, 20 medium, 8 low)

By the medieval period this small area includes three major settlements. As discussed above Blythburgh was a well established centre before Domesday and continues to prosper, as evidenced by the church (BLB 021) still a key landmark today. The small priory was founded in 1125 (BLB 001) and little is now visible above ground. A potential harbour area was identified in the field survey on the west side of the town with a scatter of pottery (BLB 055) and the remains of jetty timbers (BLB 054), though the latter are probably mainly from recent jetties shown on OS maps. To the south of the settlement as suggested by listed buildings and finds there are scatters of metalwork (BLB 018, 023) – these might represent further settlement along the road frontages combined with manuring scatters on adjacent fields.

Southwold is recorded as a fishing port by Domesday (but with a church listed under Reydon). It is effectively an island, with Buss Creek running between the town and Reydon, and only one road crossing. The creek is silted up now but early maps show Southwold with a waterway of reasonable size behind it, although flowing south to the Blyth by the late 16th century, and possibly defended at the northern end by a coastal fort (SWD013) – whether a fort was actually built is unclear (Kent 1999). Boats (SWD 006) and fragments of planks from a structure have been recovered from Buss Creek, with the latter being dated loosely to the medieval period (SWD 045, unpublished assessment by R. Darrah, September 2007).

Walberswick had a harbour to the south of the present village, on the Blyth river (now the Old River) which did not at the time flow into the sea between Southwold and Walberswick but turned south as far as Dunwich. The constantly changing configuration of the major rivers at the coast is illustrated by the 1587 map (Gardner 1754) which shows this former course, and also the stub of at least one previous route through to the east before the present version (see Fig 3). The original church was also to the south, probably at WLB 012 with cropmark enclosure and building material identified in surface survey but further scatters (WLB 009, 010) also indicate intense medieval activity in the old port area. The present church (WLB 014) was built in the 15th century at the west end of the street that leads to the “New Port” according to the 1587 map; subsequently the harbour area shifted further north onto the present line of the Blyth, served by Ferry Road. To the north of the town Town Marshes, Robinsons Marshes and Squireshill marshes are well preserved areas of probably medieval reclamation.

There is some evidence of dispersed settlement with finds scatters along the north side of the Blyth (BLB 037, BLB 012) and one on the river edge found in the field survey (BLB 053) with pottery dating 11th-14th century.

A map of 1587 (Gardner 1754) marks a "Walberswick Bridge" across the estuary downstream of Blythburgh using the natural promontory of Bulcamp House and Collins Island.

*Post medieval and Modern*

97 sites (18 medium, 79 low)

"In 1659 a devastating fire destroyed much of the Borough. The subsequent rebuilding work created Southwold's distinctive greens as fire breaks should such a disaster re-occur." [www.wrcw.org.uk/southwold](http://www.wrcw.org.uk/southwold)

The post medieval records include bridges (the earliest record of the Blythburgh bridge (BLB 026) is late 16th century, as is the Walberswick Bridge mentioned above as both probably originate in the medieval period if not before), the Blything workhouse (BLB 033) and sites of a windmill (BLB 024) and a tower pumping mill in Reydon marshes (REY 021). The majority of the low rated sites are world war 2 structures – some work may be available on which elements still survive around Walberswick.

*Undated*

41 sites (3 high, 19 medium, 19 low)

Two high importance sites are the round barrows (WLB 001, 002), the third relates to Walberswick Old Church so all are discussed above. Some of the other undated cropmarks are also discussed above. Human skeletons of uncertain date have been found both in Blythburgh and in Southwold, in both cases probably relating to the medieval churches.

## Dunwich area

SMP units: Min1 (part), Min2, Min3, Min4, Min5, Min6 (part)

Area: 62.69sq km

Total 356 HER monument records: 33 high , 131 medium, 192 low importance

This area lies between the two estuaries of the Alde and the Blyth. It is predominantly heathland, with the small town of Leiston to the south and relatively little other settlement. The once sizeable coastal town of Dunwich is now a small village. The countryside includes large nature reserves, low lying marshes and modern coniferous woodland over much of the area, which is very sparsely populated. Much of the coastline consists of sand and shingle beaches with soft cliffs which suffer from severe erosion.

The complex history of the coastal rivers is illustrated by the former course of the Blyth, which in the late medieval period flowed southwards around the east side of Walberswick (Fig.3) to reach the sea at Dunwich – part of the course is still traceable through the marshes but the southern route flowed across what is now sea. South of Dunwich the Minsmere river and its tributary from Leiston are largely blocked by the coast shingle

The soils of this area are predominantly sandy, but with an area of siltier soils and some clay in the west in Leiston parish.

The modern coastline is dominated by the nuclear power station at Sizewell, near Leiston. In advance of possible expansion, a desktop study was commissioned, involving extensive documentary and cartographic analysis. As a result, the number of sites recorded in this immediate area is disproportionately high, compared to other areas which have had few archaeological interventions.

The settlements of Dunwich, Leiston and Westleton have also produced some archaeological evidence but in areas where there has been little or no development, sites are very sparse. For example, with exception of World War II features, nothing is recorded on the HER in the area surrounding Westleton.

So archaeological evidence in this area is scattered and sparse, with clear concentrations in the areas to have seen the most development. Potential for further archaeology to be revealed must be viewed as high, although those areas of heath without easy access to water would not have been attractive for settlement.

### *Palaeolithic/Mesolithic*

3 records (1 medium, 2 low importance)

Only one site is recorded from the Palaeolithic period. At Dunwich, a late Acheulian handaxe was found in eroding cliff material (DUN 001), said to possibly derive from a chalky till. Considering the extensive erosion occurring in the cliffs, further evidence may be expected from the cliff face in the future if there is a layer containing evidence for hominid activity but at present this is a solitary find.

In Leiston, two Mesolithic maceheads were found close to each other (LCS 005), and another not far away (LCS Misc), on a 10m OD spur overlooking a tributary of the Minsmere river to the north.

### *Neolithic/Bronze Age/Prehistoric*

62 records (22 high, 25 medium, 15 low importance)

The evidence from this period is almost exclusively from the area surrounding Sizewell power station and identified during an assessment. The features that were identified as of high importance comprise almost entirely of causewayed ring ditches, with twenty of these recorded in the area to the north of, and between, Sizewell and Leiston (for example LCS 034, 039, 046, 048, 072, 079, 081, 082). Suffolk only has 77 of these features identified in the whole county, and so twenty within a 2.5km stretch is potentially significant and unusual. The features revealed at Sizewell also vary in size from 8m to 60m in diameter, implying they had a number of different functions. To have this number in one group, all of varying sizes, suggests poor interpretation, perhaps of unclear photographs (the source material has not been checked). A number of 'standard' ring ditch features have also been identified in the vicinity (for example LCS 033, 077). Unfortunately there appears to be no correlation between the NMP mapping (here in a very narrow strip) and these features. Large scatters of worked flints were also recorded (for example LCS 032, 049, 058), dated as prehistoric only, certainly suggesting prehistoric activity. Although this area has been left with the scores appropriate to the features as described there is considerable doubt about the accuracy of the entire assessment, and it should be revisited before management decisions are based on the data.

The remaining evidence from this period includes two possible ploughed out round barrows. Two ploughed barrows are recorded as Bronze Age in Blythburgh (BLB 066, 067) adjacent to four further undated round barrows (WLN 003, WLB 001, 002, BLB 028). The undated barrows are on unploughed heathland in Dunwich Forest and appear to be extant, although all have undergone some form of unrecorded excavation.

Two further 'undated' round barrows are extant on Aldringham Green (ARG 001, 012), with a third believed to have been almost completely destroyed (ARG 013). They have suffered some damage from previous excavations and the creation of a sandpit to one side of 001 and 013. The site is scheduled and should stay as heathland, allowing them some protection from further damage. A further three barrows are recorded in Aldringham parish: ARG 002 and 014 are extant within a recent plantation and have no evidence of excavation in the past; another example is also upstanding (ARG 003), although this one has been partially altered to form a bunker for a golf course. Otherwise its condition seems good.

Two cropmarks of possible long houses have been identified from aerial photographs in Blythburgh (BLB 064). They are roughly 12m long, and dated loosely to the prehistoric period – but would be Neolithic and extremely rare if the interpretation is correct. They are on the limit of this survey area, but in searching the HER for adjacent sites, a concentric ring ditch is recorded as a cropmark some 100m to the south (BLB 063).

### *Iron Age*

1 site (1 low)

Evidence from the Iron Age is limited to one stray find, a bronze decorated miniature terret ring, found whilst metal detecting on the beach on Dunwich (DUN Misc).



### *Roman*

11 records (4 medium, 7 low)

Evidence of Roman occupation is limited, partly because of the low level of survey and detecting in the area. The four sites rated as of medium importance are in the south, around Leiston, with the remaining evidence consisting of single or small groups of coins or Roman pottery. To the north of Leiston, two small pottery and coin scatters were recovered (LCS 010, 135) close to each other, with three Roman coins (LCS 013, Misc) also found near by and metal detecting has revealed a Roman metalwork scatter in the same area, including further coins and a bow brooch; recently a pottery kiln, probably of 2nd or 3rd century date was identified in an adjacent garden (LCS 142) which adds to the significance and potential of this group. A further pottery scatter was found towards the sea at Sizewell, (LCS 051), with another group in the centre of Aldringham (ARG 021).

It is noticeable that Roman finds are scarce in the vicinity of Dunwich village – the pattern of roads has often led to the identification of Dunwich as a significant Roman settlement, perhaps to be equated with the named place Sitomagus. If there were a port at Dunwich at this time it would be over a mile out to sea by now so there is little chance of resolving the speculation, except to note that sites such as one at Knodishall fit the evidence for the location of Sitomagus equally well.

### *Saxon*

4 records (4 low importance)

Saxon evidence is also very limited, with just four isolated Anglo-Saxon finds being recovered, two at Westleton (WLN 010, 021) and two at Dunwich (DUN 011, 022). These include a possible sherds of Ipswich ware and definite Thetford ware from near the medieval church (WLN 021), a disc brooch (DUN 011, from the medieval town area) and a bronze buckle plate. Dunwich is one of two places (the other being Felixstowe) which may be a 7th century bishopric – again it is likely that the relevant evidence has been eroded by the sea long ago.

### *Medieval*

63 records (9 high, 43 medium, 11 low importance)

Medieval evidence almost entirely relates to current settlements: villages and towns of at least medieval in origin. The greatest concentration is, as expected, in Dunwich (DUN 001), a thriving medieval port now mostly lost to the sea. The coast has been reduced by up to a mile in the last 1000 years, reducing Dunwich, once a large medieval town, to nothing more than a few ruins and a handful of houses. Dunwich was known to be minting coins in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and so it is assumed that it was a small defended town at this time (Wade & Dymond 1999). By 1066 there were 120 burgesses in Dunwich, which had increased to 236 by 1086, with the number of churches also increasing from one to three during this time. The prosperous town grew mainly as a result of the successful herring fishing industry but was already suffering from erosion almost as soon as it was established. Eight churches were constructed throughout the town's existence, with only St James', constructed in 1832, surviving on the west side of the town. Two priories were founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Blackfriars and Greyfriars (DUN 003), with Blackfriars lost to sea in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and ruins of Greyfriars just surviving on the cliff edge today. Two hospitals were recorded. St James' Leper hospital (DUN 005), on the site of the current St

James' church, and Holy Trinity (DUN 006), adjacent to the current beach. The town began its decline in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when storms effectively blocked off the harbour, resulting in ships, thus goods and services, docking in Walberswick instead.

As expected, any archaeological interventions in Dunwich village almost always result in medieval and post medieval evidence. Regular cliff collapses also produce finds, with the 400m stretch below the Greyfriars (DUN 003) precinct being most productive. Segments of the precinct wall survive. Archaeological trenches have been placed across the town and precinct wall and within Greyfriars (DUN 016, 023, 024, 025) over the last few years in an attempt to assess survival and layout and the need for further recording (Loader 1999).

Leiston was also a town of reasonable size during the medieval period (LCS 143). It was recorded as having grant of a market (and fair) in 1312 and 1391 (Scarfe 1999) and a Premonstratensian Abbey, constructed in 1182 (LCS 002). This abbey was constructed too close to the sea on a slight rise in the marshes and was moved to its present site, to the north of Leiston (LCS 001) in 1363. Some ruins of the original abbey remain, as well as clear cropmarks identified on aerial photography and geophysics has also recently revealed some of the layout. The new abbey is also ruined, although it has later additions including a listed 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse, which forms the S aisle of the abbey. An original seven bay tithe barn exists in the grounds as well as barns and out buildings of a farmyard with probable monastic foundations. The church of St Margaret (LCS 018) is a post medieval reconstruction of a former medieval church, possibly a Saxon Minster (Scarfe 1999 b). A number of pottery scatters have been recovered from in and around Leiston, in particular between the current settlement and the site of the previous abbey, and aligning the road between here and Sizewell.

Sizewell is known to have had a church, St Nicholas (LCS Misc), about which little information is known. A market was recorded in the village in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, indicating it was a place of some urban status, and in 1536, 40 taxpayers were recorded in comparison to Leiston's 33 ([www.leiston.com/historydetail](http://www.leiston.com/historydetail)). All this implies a settlement of some size during the medieval period, that has probably suffered the same fate as Dunwich, some 8km up coast. Certainly the presence of a number of medieval pottery scatters along the current road (LCS 49, 051, 054, 058, 073) are also indicative of this.

Westleton and Aldringham have medieval parish churches (WLN 005, ARG 15) as well as occasional pottery and find scatters recovered from around the villages. Further pottery scatters were recovered from a clearing in Dunwich Forest, during fieldwalking (WLN 017, 018). This suggests further dispersed medieval evidence may exist but will only be accessible during woodland clearance.

Many of the towns and villages have a number of listed buildings, in particular in Westleton, Leiston and Dunwich.

A moated site is recorded just to the north of Darsham (WLN 002) at Lymball's Farm. It is in an isolated position, close to parish boundary, and is unoccupied, giving a high potential for undisturbed medieval deposits.

A medieval green is still partially evident in the centre of Aldringham (ARG 013). The road system reflects the outline of the green and recent archaeological interventions along the edge of this green (ARG 020, 021) have both revealed medieval pottery scatters, as expected. Further archaeological finds and features are predicted around this green edge.

As elsewhere there were large areas of common and heathland, many of which survive or have been used for forestry.

Only at the west edges of the area - at the head of the Minsmere valley, and north and west of Leiston - does the HLC analysis show areas of early enclosure, mainly with random field patterns. The best area of early marsh reclamation is at Leiston, south of the earlier abbey (LCS 002); the area north of Dunwich is also early reclamation but with later modifications.

*Post medieval/Modern*

158 records (1 high, 15 medium, 142 low importance)

The post medieval and modern sites in this area mostly comprise World War II features on the beach, since lost to the sea. A second World War pillbox has been built into the ruins of the scheduled first abbey at Leiston (LCS 002). This ingenious construction juxtaposes the old and the new, with the ruins having provided camouflage for the pillbox.

Post medieval finds have been recovered from the beach at Dunwich, having eroded from the cliff here.

A number of ruins and/or cropmarks of wind and tower mills are visible in this stretch. A tower mill, possibly dating from 1798 is visible in Walberswick (WLB 013). It worked until 1940 and was used for target practice during the war, undergoing reconstruction in the 1950s. It was unfortunately burnt out in October 1960 and now stands with the cap mostly destroyed and the interior floors and gearing damaged.

Areas of potential ridge and furrow were identified on air photos to the north of Dunwich (DUN 036, 039, 046, 050). This is extremely rare in Suffolk; usually only associated with the 'Champion' landscape of central England and their location on the edges of reclaimed marsh may relate to a specific agricultural practice to facilitate drainage; their regular layout was interpreted as probably post-medieval rather than medieval.

A number of bridges, with potential early origins, are also recorded (MDD 006, LCS 022, THB 008). Certainly Ton Bridge (THB 008), in Theberton, is recorded on Saxton's Map of 1575, suggesting an origin of at least the late medieval period.

Possible rabbit warren earthworks and peat extraction evidence is included below as undated.

*Undated*

54 records (1 high, 43 medium, 10 low importance)

Round barrows listed as undated have been discussed under Bronze Age above

In Westleton, four long low mounds are visible parallel to each other, running SE-NW. They are probable rabbit warrens but all have been slightly damaged by Forestry Commission machinery.

A number of field boundaries and enclosures have been identified on aerial photography throughout this area, none with enough diagnostic traits to date them. These may date from as early as the Bronze Age and so must always be seen to

have good potential. For example, near to Sizewell, a large enclosure is visible (LCS 056) just to the north of three further enclosures and other cropmarks (LCS 059). However these fall within the assessment that needs re-evaluation.

Areas of potential peat extraction are visible at Minsmere bird reserve (WLN 038, DUN 084, 085). The pits look as if they were originally quite regular, and probably man-made, but in the course of time have become conjoined or have begun to silt up.

## Alde and Ore area

SMP units: Min6 (part), Orf1, Orf2, Orf3, Orf4, Orf5 (part)

Area 125.3sq km

Total HER records:1148 Scored for importance: 38 high, 353 medium, 757 low

The Ore is a continuation of the Alde, with the latter blocked by Orford Ness at Slaughden, resulting in it turning southwards from where it is known as the Ore. The Alde and the Ore are very different in character to one another. Whilst the Alde is similar to the Blyth with some embanking, areas of saltmarsh and sections of firm sanded foreshore, the Ore, at the seaward end of the system, is almost completely embanked on the west side, and bounded by Orford Ness to the east.

Orford Ness is a shingle spit stretching for 16km south of Aldeburgh, in existence since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century when it offered the port of Orford protection from the sea. However as it gradually extended, approach to the port became more difficult and both this and the town went into decline.

The Ness is now a National Trust nature reserve but has had a varied history. Marshland was reclaimed and embanked for grazing, probably during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and this use continued until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it became an internationally important base for military experimentation. Remnants of this episode survive today giving the spit a somewhat eerie appearance.

Havergate Island lies between Gedgrave and the Ness, just to the south of Orford. It was created as a result of mud banks forming in the channel, due to accretion at Orford Ness, which were embanked around 1450 (Simper 1994). It was mainly used for seasonal grazing and has been an RSPB nature reserve since 1947.

The Ness and Havergate Island make the behaviour of these rivers unusual. The general trend is accretion within the rivers themselves, but with continued extensive erosion along the coastline. Recently, a programme of works to strengthen and expand the shingle at Slaughden has been undertaken to prevent breaching of this bank and resultant flooding along the Alde.

These rivers are used by a moderate amount of river traffic, mostly small pleasure cruisers. Orford has an extensive area for mooring in the harbour, with the Ness offering protection from the sea. This small town is at least medieval in origin, and owes its origins to the presence of the river. This was a port of reasonable size in the medieval period, and remnants of this existence are obvious today, with a castle and large parish church. The small town of Aldeburgh lies at the top of Orford Ness, with the village of Snape at the tidal limits of the Alde. Both of these are again medieval in origin. With the exception of these, settlement is sparse, with the low-lying marshlands behind much of the embanked river offering unsuitable settlement conditions. This marshland is mostly used for grazing with arable land confined to the higher ground at the limits of the study area.

The smaller Butley Creek and its tributaries drain the area west of Orford. This quiet meandering waterway joins the Ore at the base of Havergate Island, and is heavily silted up restricting modern use by river traffic.

Soils on the higher ground are all sandy, sometimes acidic, and prone to wind erosion.

There is a distinct lack of evidence from archaeological intervention in this area. Much of the land is geographically isolated and has remained almost untouched since the introduction of PPG16, restricting what is normally one of the major sources for archaeological information. The settlements of Snape, Orford and Aldeburgh are the most frequently examined areas. Earlier survey and excavation by local fieldworkers was particularly focussed on Hollesley, Butley and Snape. Metal detected finds have been recorded, but little consistent survey has been done except for limited recent work in Friston.

*Palaeolithic and Mesolithic*

5 sites (5 low)

Palaeolithic and Mesolithic evidence from this area is extremely limited. At Snape, a Palaeolithic flint flake was discovered on a footpath (SNP Misc) and was probably imported. The remaining find spots are single Mesolithic flint implements.

*Neolithic, Bronze Age and Prehistoric*

90 sites (8 high, 48 medium, 34 low)

Specifically Neolithic material is sparse and mainly single finds but a couple of flint scatters in Aldeburgh are probably Neolithic; ADB 008 on an east facing spur at 15m OD and ADB 007 (also producing a Beaker sherd and early Bronze Age flints) on the north east edge of Hazelwood marshes.

Four probable round barrows are recorded in Rendlesham Forest (CSA 002, 005, BOY 008, BOY 012). All are extant mounds, in various states of preservation. Two sherds of Bronze Age pottery were recovered from CSA 002 but no further finds. Their condition, currently unplanted and within the forest, suggests they are in relatively good condition.

In Hollesley and Boyton, a focus of prehistoric activity is evident, identified from aerial photography, at 10 to 15m OD on the spur overlooking marshes adjacent to the southern part of the Ore. Possibly the earliest element is BOY 068, a double concentric ring of pits which has been interpreted as possibly a late Neolithic or early Bronze Age ritual timber circle (Hegarty and Newsome 2005, 24-25). A large group of possible causewayed ring ditches are noted, either representing former Bronze Age burial mounds or more likely, due to their small size, drip gullies from former prehistoric round houses (HLY 022, 026, 023, 025, 027, 029, 087, 088). These are situated within an area of extensive cropmarks including enclosures and probable field boundaries (BOY 002, 060, 061, 062, 066), and are likely to be Iron Age rather than earlier. To the north, on the high ground above 15m, two pieces of late Bronze Age metal work were recovered including a metal working 'cake' (BOY 007) and a socketed axe fragment (BOY 006). At the end of the spur, overlooking the Butley river to the east, a further group of cropmarks have been identified, including a probable trackway at BOY 009, a rectangular enclosure at BOY 026, and a number of ring ditches (BOY 027-030).

Two further small groups of ring ditches (and an extant barrow at Chillesford - CHL 001) have been identified from aerial photographs in Sudbourne and Chillesford. The Sudbourne group (SUE 066-069) have been noted alongside cropmarks of a trackway and enclosures (SUE 002) and lie on very low lying ground behind post medieval embanking. This area lies at less than 5m OD, but surrounds the base of a promontory of slightly higher ground.

Beaker sherds and a late Bronze Age hoard were recovered from a multi-period site at Butley (BUT 004) initially found by deep ploughing. The site was excavated in the late 1940's by Basil Brown who discovered an occupation floor with associated hearth as well as a large quantity of late Neolithic – early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. The initial hoard comprised 13 socketed axes, five small fragments of others, a fragment of a small riveted spearhead, two small knives, 15 lumps of scrap bronze, and a bronze 'jet'. Two further hoards were found close to the site of the first. One contained parts of two winged axes, 10 socketed axes, fragments of five others, a portion of a sword blade, two bronze 'jets' and 11 lumps of scrap bronze. The other had two winged axe fragments, seven socketed axes, fragments of eight others, a sword fragment, a bronze runner with two jets, a bronze runner with three jets, and a quantity of bronze cakes. The position of these hoards are fairly typical, on high ground overlooking a river valley. But three being found in close proximity is more unusual, suggesting a significant focus of activity within this field.

A group of probable Bronze Age barrows are recorded in Snape. It is said at least eight barrows were present here (SNP 004, 007) but only SNP 003 is still evident and likely to have been excavated a number of times. This site was used subsequently during the Saxon period as a cemetery of great importance(see below).

#### *Iron Age*

20 sites (1 high, 16 medium, 3 low)

An Iron Age settlement site is recorded on Burrow Hill, on the west side of Butley Creek. This hill rises to 15m OD, in an otherwise almost low-lying, and probably at times underwater area, and so is visible for some distance. A number of cropmarks have been identified on the sides of the hill, including three large ditched enclosures and a number of possible ring ditches, although these may not be archaeological in origin. A number of excavations have identified pits, a stake wall round-house and various finds including Iron Age pottery and a large quantity of animal bone. This site has been subject to fairly extensive small-scale quarrying over time, and so evidence has been lost but residual pottery sherds and flint suggest that the summit of the hill was utilised from at least the Neolithic period.

Various Iron Age pottery scatters have been recorded some 2km north west of this site, where the flat land begins to rise again (for example BUT 004, 006, 013). Evidence of settlement was also visible here, with deep ploughing in 1952 revealing three large ring ditches, black against the yellow subsoil (BUT 011). The rings were in a row, the central one being most complete, measuring sixty feet in diameter with two smaller arcs forming an entrance (porch). The interior of the circle contained six hearth sites and these contained, as did the ditch itself, typical Iron Age pottery. Further 'hut sites' and 'hearths' are recorded at BUT 003 and 014. As Iron Age evidence is relatively rare, this focus of activity at the top and west of Butley Creek must be viewed as very significant.

#### *Roman*

64 sites (1 high, 33 medium, 30 low)

Only one site of Roman date is considered to be of high importance in this area. In Aldeburgh (ADB 003), thirteen amphorae were found in a garden (the location is not precise), in a similar area to a large group of Roman greyware pottery (ADB 009, 014), red burnt clay and burnt flints. No further details are known about the amphorae discovery, but if found complete and together, these would represent a deliberate deposit of traded containers. The presence of further Roman finds in the area

confirm Roman activity in Aldeburgh and raise the possibility that this area, overlooking the marshes, was part of a port.

The remaining Roman evidence is fairly scattered over this area. Three potential 'red hills' (salt working sites) are recorded in Sudbourne (SUE 031, 032, 035) and another possible one in Orford (ORF 034). Another, on a tributary of the Butley river in Capel St Andrew (CSA 026) seems well inland, but is just above sea level, and so the river must have been tidal at this time. Four more are noted in Iken (IKN 008, 050) and Snape (SNP 023, 048) with two present on each side of the river Alde, facing each other. Scatters of Roman pottery have been recovered from the surrounding area and down river, including three almost complete Roman pots been found at Cob Island (IKN 010) discovered at very low tide, suggestive of either a shipwreck or a quay. Further 'settlement debris' including Samian pottery and miscellaneous Roman metalwork were recovered from Barbers Point in Friston (FRS 001). Recent excavations have helped define this further with substantial briquetage (from probable saltern sites) and 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman pottery recovered, as well as Mid Saxon evidence. Only 10% of the Roman finds were recovered in features, with the majority being in an occupation layer above this (Tester, pers. comm.). This stretch of the river appears to be a significant focus of Roman activity.

There is an apparent, but small, Roman presence in Orford. Residual pottery has been recovered during excavations there including sherds from the upper fill of the castle ditch at ORF 054 and two cremation urns at ORF 011; a substantial group of surface finds overlooks the Butley river in Gedgrave (GED 003).

Similarly at Butley, evidence of continuation in the landscape is visible, with a small presence of Roman finds at the predominantly Iron Age sites at BUT 004, 006 and 019, at the top of Butley Creek.

#### *Saxon*

31 sites (4 high, 15 medium, 12 low)

The best evidence for an early Anglo-Saxon settlements is in Butley. At BUT 008 (and with further pottery at BUT 003) Basil Brown recorded traces of hearths and a long rectangular building (undated) with six 'black patches' on the fields, with fragments of rough handmade early Anglo-Saxon pottery throughout. This description suggests a typical settlement with sunken featured buildings and possibly also a hall building. The site lies at roughly 15m OD, overlooking Butley Creek. Further settlement was found on the crest of a spur to the north, above 20m OD, with 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century pottery in probable sunken featured buildings.

A recent find is a potential Anglo Saxon cemetery site at Friston (FRS 046). Significant metal detected finds have been made, including a rare 7<sup>th</sup> century male figurine, perhaps a religious amulet, fragments of six brooches and a fragment of girdle hanger. This plot of land is on a south facing spur overlooking the Alde valley. Early Saxon pottery has also been found, indicating a probable cremation burials as well as inhumations.

This site is only 1.5km east of a well known Saxon cemetery at Snape (SNP 007). This is a mixed inhumation and cremation cemetery on the site of a number of Bronze Age barrows. Many rich graves were discovered, including three boat burials, over 40 urned cremations as well as cremations within bronze hanging bowls. This site is on a par with the Saxon cemetery at Sutton Hoo in terms of importance. It has been looted over time though, and the creation of the road through the centre will have damaged it further.



There is some dispute over the location of the Benedictine monastery of St Botolph. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, year 654, states that the monastery was at "Icanho" and three places have been put forward as occupying the position of "Icanho"; they are Hadstock, Grundisburgh/Burgh and Iken. Hadstock and Grundisburgh/Burgh both have dedications to St Botolph and both have C12 documents to back their claims. Iken, however, has similarity of name, the right topographical situation and location in the East Anglian Kingdom, a dedication to St Botolph and the suggestive grant of the manor of Sudbourne, including Iken, to St Aethelwold, who was also granted the remains of St Botolph. Taken altogether these pieces of evidence argue strongly that St Botolph's monastery was situated at Iken in Suffolk, probably at the same site as the current church of St Botolph (IKN 007), where a decorated Saxon cross shaft was found re-used in the church wall. An excavation in the 1980's demonstrated that the Norman foundations of the present nave overlie traces of an earlier beam-slot building and cut earlier graves. A few fragments of middle Saxon pottery confirm activity here at the time of Botolph's monastery.

A major middle Saxon site was excavated in advance of small scale quarrying operations at Burrow Hill (BUT 001). Around 200 inhumations (predominantly male and adult), including claimed boat burials, were recorded, thought to date from circa 780 AD. A pottery kiln was archaeomagnetically dated to circa 830 AD. Post hole clay structures with associated finds were excavated on the summit, with occupation here have occurred during the late 7<sup>th</sup> to mid 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. As discussed, this site also has extensive Iron Age and possibly earlier evidence and seems to have been frequently re-used.

A recent find of potential trackways or perhaps a small quay or a fishtrap at Barbers Point (FRS 047) has been dated as 650-710 AD (Everett 2007) and was found some 100m south west of an area of Saxon settlement (FRS 001). Recent excavations at the predominantly Roman site at Barbers Point have revealed, amongst other things, a mid Saxon grave and ditches of the same date (Tester, pers.comm.). Middle Saxon pottery and tweezers were recovered from the same area in excavations in the early 20th century.

### *Medieval*

140 sites (15 high, 78 medium, 47 low)

Medieval evidence for this area is again concentrated in a few areas, focussing mainly on settlements and road systems we still have in place today. In particular a number of finds scatters and medieval cropmarks are recorded aligning the B1084 between Butley and Orford, and the road from Butley to Boyton (for example BUT 005, 009 and CSA 013). These settlements, as well as the majority of other villages within this area, have extant village churches, all of which are also listed buildings. The church of St Botolph is extant at Iken (IKN 007), perched above the river bank – the unusual siting next to the water reflecting its origin early Saxon monastic origin, for which remote spots and islands were favoured. The village itself has almost disappeared, with only a handful of houses remaining. This part of the Alde estuary is very isolated and quiet, with a basic infrastructure of roads, and the decline of the village is a likely result of this. A number of villages in this area have seen a general decline in population and development, probably again due to their isolated nature, and comparative distance from major towns.

Similarly the number of churches has also declined. In Hazelwood, just north of Aldeburgh, a ruined church is just visible (ADB 005) and 11<sup>th</sup> century on pottery has been found. Only very small fragments remain but two churches were listed in

Aldeburgh in the Domesday survey, and alongside the church of St Peter and Paul (ADB 018) in Aldeburgh, this is a likely candidate.

Orford was a medieval market town and port, on the banks of the Ore. It was established by Henry II in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, for whom the castle was constructed in 1165-1167 (ORF 001). It was a town of considerable importance with the castle, a fine parish church (ORF 003), a priory for Austin Canons (ORF 002) and the grant of a market in 1256. With the exception of the priory, the town retains much of this medieval character. Regular archaeological interventions in the town almost always produce further medieval evidence, including building evidence and material culture. The town has a number of fine listed buildings, dating from the medieval and post medieval periods. The river silted up as a result of the growth of Orford Ness, and the port gradually fell out of use. It is used currently for pleasure craft only, and has been fairly extensively altered to prevent flooding to the low lying areas of the town.

A priory of St Mary was established in Snape in 1155 (SNP 009). This small Benedictine priory was dissolved in 1525 and little evidence remains of it today. A number of skeletons, coins and various monastic relics have been recovered, and the area is now the site of Abbey Farm.

Further evidence of medieval settlement in Snape has been discovered. Local fieldwork and small scale excavations in the village, revealed, amongst other things, a small area of settlement and an oven (SNP 030), more ovens (SNP 011, 012, 014, 015), and a number of hearths and clay pits. This village lies at the top of the tidal stretch of the Alde, at the lowest bridging point. Its position as a settlement is favourable, with access down both banks of the Alde and inland to Saxmundham, Wickham Market and Framlingham.

Similarly Aldeburgh was a settlement of some considerable size in medieval times. Evidence from archaeological intervention is limited, but historic buildings include the church and moot hall (ADB 012).

A former medieval green is visible at Friston. A watching brief condition on development in 2003 revealed evidence for medieval and post medieval green edge settlement, mainly pottery and pits. Just to the east of this are settlements called Knodishall Common and Coldfair Green. These names are both suggestive of former common land in these villages, and indeed Knodishall Common appears to remain intact on the outskirts of this settlement.

There are extensive areas of early reclamation of marshland in this area, many of which survive with little modification and are historic landscapes of high importance. Apart from the marshes the only areas of early enclosed landscape are at the north end of the Butley river.

#### *Post medieval*

482 sites (1 very high, 2 high, 68 medium, 411 low)

One of the most mysterious places on Suffolk's coast is undoubtedly Orford Ness. It is now an internationally important nature reserve owned by the National Trust but was used throughout the 20th century as a military research establishment with several phases of often secret experimentation, all of which have left unusual and striking evidence of this activity. Activities on the site helped develop various significant military advances including radar and the atomic bomb. Two 'pagodas' are amongst the most striking buildings: vast, conspicuous concrete structures juxtaposing with the nature reserve they sit within, creating a poignant symbol of

20th-century warfare. The National Trust now own this land and monitor these deteriorating buildings, although many have been plundered for scrap metal over time.

In Orford, Thorpeness, Snape and Aldeburgh, there are many listed buildings of post medieval and modern age. Two of note are in Aldeburgh. Moot Hall (ADB 012) is a 16th century (circa 1520-1540) timber framed town hall of two storeys with many original timbers, restored at the end of the last century. It sits almost on the beach of the town, protected from the sea by a small concrete wall.

Slaughden Martello Tower (ADB 013) is the largest and most northerly tower of the chain, built at a similar time as a defence against Napoleonic invasion. It is the only remnant remaining of the settlement that was once at Slaughden, to the south of Aldeburgh town. Slaughden (ADB 026) was a port of some considerable size, said to be a large quay with warehouses and fish houses in 1679, and with coal yards and saltings in 1840. It's position at the top of Orford Ness, on a rapidly eroding coastline meant its maintenance was untenable and it was gradually eroded away, and is currently composed of just the Martello Tower and a small sailing club.

The remaining post medieval and modern sites predominantly consist of small pottery scatters, and modern World War II features identified during the aerial photography survey.

#### *Undated*

317 sites (6 high, 95 medium, 215 low, 1 none)

Three of the undated sites scored as of high importance have are part of the barrow cemetery at Snape, and have been discussed in the Bronze Age and Saxon periods. A bowl barrow in Capel St Andrew is also discussed in the Bronze Age period.

An undated trackway is visible in Butley (BUT 062), to the north of a multi-period occupation site (BUT 006). This circa 5m wide trackway has no diagnostic features to date it, but its proximity to the large site to the south suggests it could be from anywhere between the Bronze Age and medieval period.

A causeway is visible at Burrow Hill in Butley (BUT 018). This extensive Saxon settlement site was owned by Butley Priory (BUT 002) during the medieval period, for whom the island was the main stepping-stone in their ferry-route to Orford (Fenwick, 1984). Burrow Hill was formerly an island, cut off from dry land by a stretch of tidal mudflats and the marsh here sits lower than sea level. It is reasonable to assume that this causeway, 450m long, is at least medieval in origin, forming a trackway across this marsh when the tide was in.

The remains of another causeway are visible between Snape and Iken (SNP 047), on the Alde, in the form of a linear spread of stones and cobbles. The causeway was inaccessible during field survey due to the soft mud but the surrounding area was completely devoid of any stones, suggesting these were not a natural phenomenon.

A number of undated cropmarks have been identified during the aerial photography survey, but none have diagnostic traits to date them. They must be presumed to be archaeological features until proved otherwise, and so always have potential for further evidence. Similarly frequent undated post groups and lines have been recorded during the field survey. These are likely to be post medieval or modern in date, but the survival of wooden structures of at middle Saxon origin at Barbers Point shows that preservation of older structures can occur.

## Deben and surrounding coast

SMP units: Orf5 (part), Fel1, Fel2, Fel3 (part)

Area: 127.5sq km

Total HER site records: Scored for importance: 1381 of which 106 high, 598 medium, 677 low

The Deben River is different in character to the other estuarine rivers of Suffolk, in that a vast proportion of the foreshore is bounded by saltmarsh. Ramsholt, Hemley and Waldringfield in particular are rich in wide expanses of channel cut saltmarsh, making field survey difficult and time consuming. Where this saltmarsh wasn't evident, modern embanking often was, resulting in a foreshore of inaccessible deep silt. As such, much of this river was surveyed either from the riverbank, or not at all. However the saltmarsh surface deposits were felt to have low archaeological potential; an area on the west bank of the Deben enclosing Falkenham marshes was surveyed and was not productive.

The river itself has a significant amount of river traffic, mostly small pleasure cruisers, and modern moorings, again for small private boats. The small market town of Woodbridge lies at the northern end of the Deben, on the west bank, and stretches for some 2.5km along the river contained by a concrete harbour wall. Apart from this there is little settlement near the river, with scattered small villages spread over the survey area.

A general trend of erosion is evident, with an estimated loss of 23% of the rivers' saltmarsh between 1971 and 1998. This is not nearly as extensive as the erosion occurring on the Orwell and Stour, but is likely to have affected the preservation of archaeological deposits nonetheless.

The coastline is fairly typical of beaches on the east coast. It comprises heavily eroded sand and shingle cliffs and beaches with some areas of accretion to the north around the southern end of Orfordness. Again this coastline is very sparsely populated with the hamlets of Bawdsey and Shingle Street being the only settlements along this stretch.

Much of the land adjacent to both the Deben and the coastline remain quite wet, with creeks and drainage channels crossing much of the low lying land. As such it is used mostly for grazing, with arable land confined almost exclusively to the northern Deben, around Sutton and Martlesham, and at the limits of this study area, where the land begins to rise. Preservation of archaeological deposits in these wet areas is thought to be good, although with the exception of the post medieval, modern and undated periods, they are relatively absent from these extreme low-lying areas.

Identification of features on aerial photography was relatively unsuccessful in this area, perhaps due to the topographical nature of the steep estuary (Hegarty & Newsome, 2005). The coastal marsh study was more effective however, with the south Deben and coastline both producing good evidence.

A large proportion of this area of land was subjected to intensive systematic fieldwalking during the 1980's resulting in a potential bias in archaeological distributions. The South East Suffolk Survey (SESS) was undertaken in 35 parishes in south east Suffolk, including most of the parishes in the Deben area. Consequently, a disproportionately high number of find scatters are recorded here in comparison to, for example, the Stour and Orwell area.

Archaeological intervention through development is limited in this area. With the exception of Woodbridge town, little expansion of the villages has been undertaken. The east side in particular, being somewhat geographically isolated, has remained almost untouched since the introduction of PPG16 conditions. This has restricted what is normally one of the major sources for archaeological information. Other sources do offer more weight though, with regular and systematic metal detecting on much of the land around Ramsholt for example, undertaken by a competent operative. Similarly the cropmark evidence, as discussed earlier, is an excellent resource on the Felixstowe peninsula in particular. Despite the regular archaeological intervention at developments in Woodbridge, relatively little archaeological evidence has been recovered. Development within the core of the town, the oldest part, is very restricted due to the presence of many listed buildings and in all probability, medieval evidence is retained within this core.

### **Palaeolithic/Mesolithic**

11 records (2 medium, 9 low)

A group of Clactonian style patinated flint flakes have been recovered from the beach at Felixstowe Ferry, at the mouth of the Deben (FEX 090), from the shingle spreads. This implies that these flints are eroding from the shingle here, with the potential for further material. Another three possible or certain single Palaeolithic finds are widely dispersed.

A substantial scatter of Mesolithic flint implements including microliths is recorded at Hollesley (HLY 013) in an area also producing Neolithic and later flintwork at 10m OD overlooking reclaimed marshland to the south. Other stray finds and small possible assemblages occur both in valley locations and on high ground.

### **Neolithic/Bronze Age/Prehistoric**

228 sites (25 high, 129 medium, 74 low)

The distribution of sites of Neolithic, Bronze Age and unspecified Prehistoric in the Deben area is more varied than the Orwell and Stour. There are a number of distinct 'gaps' and concentrations of evidence of this date. For example, there are few sites in general in the parishes of Sutton and Shottisham, but a group of seven high importance sites indicating a probable barrow site is visible in the centre of Shottisham.

Specifically Neolithic monuments are sparse but an oval enclosure is recorded in Martlesham (MRM 049) which may be a mortuary enclosure.

Again, the high importance sites seem to be situated on higher ground with the majority being ring ditches or extant barrows. A number barrow groups are evident, in Shottisham, Martlesham, Waldringfield, and Newbourne. Shottisham is directly across river from these other parishes, and the groups may have been visible to one another. The Shottisham group (STT 004-010) comprises seven ring ditches positioned within a small area, with a possible henge monument at the centre. On the west side of the Deben a number of barrows and ring ditches are evident over a large area. One group in Martlesham (MRM 001, 014, 015, 017, 018,) comprises five barrows in various states of repair. MRM 001 and 017 appear to be completely destroyed, whilst 014, 015 and 017 are extant barrows in poor condition. Two ring

ditches are noted just to the south of these (MRM 120, 121) that may also be part of this cemetery. An extant barrow in Brightwell (BGL 009) has been heavily damaged by a World War II pillbox that has been built into it. These monuments are stretched over a 5km area on the west side of the Deben lying at 25m OD at least. As well as being visible over the east side of the Deben towards Shottisham, they also lie at the top of a valley to Kirton Creek to the south. Therefore they were also probably visible to those barrows on the top of the Orwell valley, in the Stour and Orwell area.

A number of Neolithic or Bronze Age features including ditches, pits and a possible hearth and associated finds were discovered to the south of mound 5 at Sutton Hoo, during the excavations here (SUT 038). A ring ditch (SUT 058) and recti-linear field boundaries (SUT 057) are also recorded from aerial photographs just to the south, with a number of find scatters found during field walking surveys in the surrounding areas. This is perhaps an example of continuation in the landscape, with the re-use of sacred features over time. A number of sites are known with Saxon burials re-using or focussing on a Bronze Age barrow, for example in Hadleigh (HAD 059).

At Ramsholt, some Bronze Age banded gold and bronze ring money (RMS 011) was discovered whilst metal detecting. A possible hut circle, adjoining oval enclosure (RMS 010) and a double ditched rectilinear enclosure (RMS 011) have been identified in the same area on aerial photographs, along with some flint gritted pottery recovered during field walking. This site lies at 15m OD, facing south over a minor inlet on the Deben.

Cropmarks are visible in various areas through Alderton, including a Scheduled Ancient Monument at ADT 001. The aerial photograph reveals a complicated series of rectilinear and circular enclosures, which appear to indicate a settlement site of considerable interest. An extensive series of ditches and vague ring-ditches are visible, in a field that lies at less than 5m OD. This area of land appears to be heavily crossed with drainage dykes and channels and is heavily embanked adjacent to the coast.

A number of small groups of finds were found during the SESS in the 1980's. These vary from occasional sherds of pottery to small groups of flints. They may be indicative of larger sites, and should be treated as such. Substantial flint assemblages are also recorded from volunteer fieldwalking at Hollesley, where the scatters (HLY 008, 010, 012, 013, 014) lie on the south slope of a spur at 10m OD overlooking marsh – these groups include a strong Neolithic component.

## **Iron Age**

48 sites (11 high, 26 medium, 11 low)

Iron Age pottery is notoriously fragile and rarely survives. Therefore when a number of Iron Age sherds are recovered, they often represent a much larger site. Hence most of the sites rated as of high importance in this area are pottery scatters, recovered during the SESS and whilst ploughing and building. Some of these scatters have been found close to other finds of Iron Age date. For example at Martlesham, where two groups of flint gritted pottery were found adjacent to one another (MRM 003, 004). Similarly in Alderton, a scatter of Iron Age pottery (ADT 003) was found close to a metal detected coins and brooches (ADT 030) and a hoard of staters of the 1st century BC (ADT 038). Activity continues through the Roman period on this complex.

At Sutton Hoo, ditches, post-holes and 4 post buildings were found during the excavations of the mounds, to the west of mound 5 (SUT 038). Further scatters of pottery were found during the SESS (SUT 030, 046-048) suggesting a site of sizeable proportions.

Further small scatters of pottery and flint were found during the SESS throughout this area.

On the west side of the Deben, in Kirton parish, a number of late prehistoric cropmarks were identified on aerial photographs, including a ring ditch (KIR 052) and a possible 'D' shaped enclosure (KIR 051). This large enclosure may be associated with an undated cropmark (KIR 002) of field boundaries, trackways and enclosures. This general area is scattered with cropmarks of various features, dated as prehistoric through to post-medieval, and so has a high potential.

## **Roman**

132 sites (15 high, 79 medium, 38 low)

The distribution of Roman sites is notable in the absence of evidence from high ground, and the proximity of sites to the river. The majority are within 2km of the water, lying at 25m OD or less. Large areas are without Roman evidence at all, for example in Sutton Heath, Brightwell and parts of Kirton. This is especially surprising on the western side, in Brightwell and Kirton, due to a significant Roman presence in Felixstowe, to the south of these parishes. Related settlement would be expected, but does not seem to be evident.

There is a concentration of Roman sites on the east side of the Deben, in Sutton village and towards the foreshore at Methersgate. Three coin hoards (SUT 002, 041, 121) were recovered near to a Roman Villa (SUT 149) and an extensive area of cropmarks (SUT 022, 145), thought to be a settlement. Various find scatters (SUT 022, 042, 118) have also been recovered from the surrounding area. These coin hoards vary in date from the Late Iron Age/Early Roman (1-100AD) (SUT 041, 121) to the mid 4th century (SUT 002). The general finds scatters in this area are not as closely dated, seemingly from anytime within the Roman period, suggesting continued use of this site throughout this time.

Towards the river at Methersgate, further widespread cropmarks have been identified from aerial photography including a probable hut circle (SUT 064), settlement (SUT 063) and field systems (SUT 034, 065). A small scatter of Roman greyware pottery sherds were also recovered from within SUT 034.

Just across river from Methersgate, at Martlesham and Waldringfield, more cropmarks of field systems and probable settlements have been noted (MRM 025, 026, 048, 051), again with associated find scatters of metalwork and pottery (MRM 032, 034, WLD 013, 015). Again these find scatters are dated loosely to the Roman period.

Just upriver from here at Martlesham Creek, a large scatter of Roman tile and pottery sherds (WBG 005) were found alongside a scatter of tegula, box and plain tiles from the 1<sup>st</sup> century (WBG 014), a scatter of 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century pottery and roofing tiles (WBG 001) and several large pieces of mid 1<sup>st</sup> century Belgic greyware.

Many other small scatters of pottery and tile from throughout the Roman period have been recovered, often found within or near to cropmarks identified from aerial photography. As stated, they tend to occur in groups, perhaps indicating small settlements along the river edge. A definite focus of activity is noted at Martlesham and across to Sutton, in an area that was not surveyed fully during the field survey due to the extensive and very fragmented saltmarsh on the Waldringfield (western) side. A number of features on the eastern shore at Stutton deserve mention here. The Tips and The Hams, Methersgate Quay and Stonners Point are all prominentarys into the river along a 2km stretch. These must be seen as potential Roman crossing points, in an area which obviously saw a great deal of activity in this time. Methersgate Quay in particular, with Roman cropmarks and find scatters only some 300m from the current quay, is a likely place for crossings in this period. There are likely similar points along the whole of the Deben, where Roman activity occurred on both sides, which, as the distribution map shows, happened on the majority of this river.

### **Saxon**

79 sites (17 very high, 5 high, 33 medium, 24 low)

Again Saxon evidence is generally sparse in this area, with one obvious exception. Sutton Hoo, an internationally important Saxon burial site (SUT 004-019) is situated within the parish of Sutton, some 800m from the foreshore of the Deben. At least 15 round barrows (up to 19 have been claimed) are sited within an area roughly 200m by 100m, each containing a rich burial. SUT 005, in particular, excavated originally by Basil Brown in 1938, contained a disturbed boat burial and rich associated finds dating from between 601 and 700 AD, said to be the burial place of King Redwald. The barrows all seem to be from this date, although some are, as yet, unexcavated.

In 2000, an excavation (BML 018) was undertaken in advance of the construction of a new visitors centre for the Sutton Hoo mounds, some 500m to the north of the cemetery, close to the findspot of pieces of an elaborate 7th-century bronze Coptic bowl (BML 009). Another mainly 7th century early Saxon cemetery was discovered, and although by no means as rich as the main barrows, the new site consisted of nine small ring-ditches, nineteen graves and seventeen cremations, four of which surrounded a complete bronze hanging bowl. A larger ring-ditch and cremation have been tentatively dated to the Bronze Age, perhaps the original focus for this cemetery.

Potentially, further evidence exists in this area of Sutton / Bromeswell, with a Saxon settlement site somewhere close to the cemeteries though perhaps the opposite shore of the Deben (Woodbridge) might be a more likely place of origin for the high status individuals.

Furthermore, during the field survey of the coast, man made wooden structures were discovered on the foreshore of the Deben, below Sutton Hoo (SUT 195). These wattle like structures were radiocarbon dated to between 420AD and 590AD, comparative to the cemetery discovered in 2000, with topographical and environmental evidence suggesting they are the likely remains of fishtraps. These structures are discussed fully in SCCAS report, number 2003/110.

This focus of activity is unique – partly because of the nature of the main royal ship burial, but also because of the resultant high level of research activity.



Small scatters of handmade pottery and occasional metal detected finds have been recovered during the SESS fieldwalking and by metal detectors, perhaps indicative of a larger site but certainly nothing else of this scale has been revealed..

Alderton – scattered finds to north of the marsh between 5 and 10m OD include an early Saxon sherd (unusually from near the church, ADT 011) and another small group of early saxon sherds (ADT 018), other finds in this area are later Saxon.

In Martlesham (MRM 034) field survey has identified a probable ploughed out sunken featured building on a south-facing slope between 15 and 20m OD, close to an area of Roman finds.

Shottisham (STT 017, 018, 049) an area of early Saxon pottery finds on a tributary of Shottisham Creek, between 5 and 15m OD, close to late Roman material and a 5th century brooch has high potential, including proximity to potential palaeo-environmental data in the stream or the Creek valley.

A further small group of barrows are situated 5km south east of the Sutton Hoo group. These consist of five barrows, three of which are dated as Saxon (SUT 001), with the other two undated (SUT 060, 061). There is no evidence for the Saxon date and they should be regarded as most likely Bronze Age, typically located within the southern end of a large common.

The discovery of ditches containing early Saxon pottery in evaluation at Brackenbury, Felixstowe (FEX 088) is of interest because of the proximity of the late Roman shore fort and settlement.

Middle and late Saxon finds, mainly pottery and metalwork from survey projects, occur near the church at Melton (MTN 017)

## **Medieval**

206 sites (15 high, 119 medium, 72 low)

The density and position of sites of medieval date is, as expected, loosely based on our current settlement pattern and road systems. Many of these had origins in medieval times, or earlier, with our present villages often focussing on extant medieval churches, for example. With the exception of WBG 002, an Augustinian priory of 1193-1537AD, all the sites of high importance within this period are existing medieval churches. Again the majority have associated find scatters, evidence of nearby settlement and such like surrounding them. The church of St Mary and Martin, on the outskirts of the current village of Kirton (KIR 014) does appear to be isolated however, with no find scatters or similar recorded from nearby. Similarly St Mary's Church in Woodbridge (WBG 016) has had no finds recovered from close by but this is perhaps expected with it being in the centre of urban Woodbridge, where finds retrieval is more limited.

The Augustinian priory in Woodbridge has a 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house, currently the Abbey School, built into part of the ruins, possibly incorporating part of the cloister wall. This priory is adjacent to St Mary's church and dwellings to the north and east, but to the south and west, the grounds remain undeveloped, potentially masking further remnants of the priory.

Settlements are more spread out in this area, with large areas of heathland and low lying marshland frequent, particularly on the east side of the Deben. The SESS revealed many find scatters, in particular large groups of pottery, mostly surrounding current villages. Apparent foci do occur, however, in areas where there is no current settlement. Between Hollesley and Shottisham, for example, extensive scatters of medieval pottery were recovered during the SESS, suggesting a possible former settlement here. Similarly at Ramsholt, the Church of All Saints sits close to the river, now isolated. A midden and small scatter of medieval pottery was identified in the field opposite, as well as an array of metal detected finds from the surrounding area, suggesting a settlement of this date was present (and indeed earlier middle-late Saxon is recorded here also).

The small market town of Woodbridge is thought to be at least medieval in origin, with the first record of settlement in the 10<sup>th</sup> century when King Edgar the Peaceable re-established a monastery in 970AD ([www.woodbridgesuffolk.info/Woodbridge/history](http://www.woodbridgesuffolk.info/Woodbridge/history)) Despite the towns' comparative size and its early origins, relatively little archaeological evidence has been recovered during archaeological intervention works. Occasional pottery sherds are discovered but little more than this. Development within the core of the town, the oldest part, is very restricted due to the presence of many listed buildings and in all probability, medieval evidence is retained within this core.

The broad pattern of historic land characterisation appears to be land enclosed after the 18<sup>th</sup> century, particularly on the east side of the Deben. On the west, in particular around Newbourne and Kirton, areas of pre-18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure are visible in places. Similarly, some areas of marshland around Falkenham, Kirton and Bawdsey were reclaimed sometime before 1600. This marshland on the foreshore at Kirton was not surveyed fully during the field investigation due to it being heavily creeked and generally inaccessible.

### **Post Medieval and Modern**

356 sites (11 high, 64 medium, 281 low)

The distribution of post medieval and modern sites again focuses on the foreshore and the coastal strip, with only occasional sites recorded elsewhere. The majority are of low importance, being hulks, former jetties and World War II features no longer extant. This period sees a rise in sites immediately adjacent to the river, and on the surrounding low lying areas. There is not the concentration of settlements that the Stour and Orwell areas offer, with the west side of the Deben in particular having vast areas of heathland, woodland and a modern military airbase (SUT 197).

The high importance sites are found in two areas only. Woodbridge town centre and the strip adjacent to the coast. This coastal strip has six Martello Towers, constructed between 1810 and 1812 as a chain of defence against the threat of invasion by Napoleonic forces. The most northerly of the six, BAW 008, is sited on the beach and is at risk of erosion. The other three on the east side of the Deben (BAW 009, BAW 010, ADT 005) are presently behind dykes but all are in a reasonably good state of repair. The two in Felixstowe (FEX 061, 062) are in poor states of repair, one currently used for storage and the other virtually derelict. A number of other towers existed along this stretch that have since been dismantled or lost to sea.

Also in this coastal strip is Bawdsey Manor, with an associated grade II listed park and garden (BAW 046) laid out between 1885 and 1909. This land was partially occupied by the RAF during World War II and remnants of this habitation are still visible today. A radar station (BAW 051), pillboxes and earthworks can be seen within the grounds. The manor itself is listed, as are a number of these military features.

Many listed buildings are recorded in this area, particularly in Woodbridge Town centre. A number of fine examples of post medieval buildings exist, in particular the Tide Mill (WBG 036) on the foreshore of the Deben. A tide mill was first recorded here in 1170 with the present building dating from 1793. This stopped working in 1957 but the building has since been fully restored and opened as a museum.

### **Undated**

322 sites (7 high, 146 medium, 168 low, 1 none)

Again the majority of sites recorded as undated consist of field boundary, ring ditch and trackway cropmarks, identified on aerial photography. Of the undated sites given a high importance, five have been discussed elsewhere. The barrows at SUT 060 and 061, and the areas of wattle on Sutton foreshore (SUT 176-178) have been loosely dated to the Saxon period.

At Sutton (SUT 062), a complexity of linear features including possible enclosures and cropmarks have been identified on aerial photographs. These have no typical diagnostic traits to date them, but appear to form some sort of settlement. No finds have been recovered from the area, but a Roman coin hoard (SUT 121) was found some 400m to the south west, and the cropmarks are similar to those at SUT 022, a probable Roman settlement.

In 1949, during monitoring of work by the Electricity board, Basil Brown recorded finding animal bone and horn (SUT 043) at a site between Sutton Hoo and the Deben foreshore, as well as two coombs (small valleys) leading to the river, filled with a black peaty soil. He suggested that this could have been where the burial ship was dragged up from the river, although this interpretation appears to be circumstantial rather than based on direct evidence. Nonetheless, this area does seem to produce extensive Saxon evidence almost every time the opportunity is given.

Again many undated and unidentified posts and hulks were seen during the field survey, with further undated jetties, banks and wooden structures also identified during the air photograph study.

### **Orwell and Stour**

SMP Sub cell 3C, units Fel3 (part), Fel4, Fel5;

Area 136sq km;

Total HER site records: Scored for importance: 1261, of which 79 high, 589 medium, 593 low

The Rivers Orwell and Stour, at the southern end of the survey area, are similar in character. The modern ports of Felixstowe and Harwich at their confluence, and Ipswich port upriver in the Orwell undoubtedly contribute to their make-up and behaviour, with considerable river traffic, regular dredging, and general river management schemes affecting their natural behaviour. The loss of saltmarsh in the Stour is said to have been around 55% between 1973 and 1988, with a 32.6% loss in the Orwell during the same period. The rate of loss on the Stour is twice as high as any in Essex (English Nature website 2007). This general trend of extensive erosion will certainly have affected the preservation of any archaeological deposits that may have remained.

Only the north bank of the Stour is in Suffolk and so field and aerial photograph survey was limited to this side only, as far upriver as Brantham. The Orwell was surveyed from Felixstowe and Shotley on the coast, as far upriver as the Orwell Bridge just outside Ipswich. The field survey was reasonably extensive on these rivers, with firm sands on the shoreline and relatively little saltmarsh, ensuring that access was relatively easy.

The soils of the Shotley peninsula and the south west part of the Felixstowe peninsula are silty or sandy loams, with better moisture retention and much less prone to acidity than the sandy soils that predominate in most of the coast region.

The town of Felixstowe was covered by the coastal NMP mapping but did not have HER enhancement and so is not included in the gazetteer.

#### *Palaeolithic and Mesolithic*

18 sites (2 high, 1 medium, 15 low)

Six Palaeolithic records comprise a remarkable series of finds along the north side of the Stour, principally on either side of Holbrook Bay, in Stutton to the east and Harkstead to the west. In Stutton, Palaeolithic implements and faunal remains were recovered (STU 001) over a long period of time including a rolled leaf point, core, straight tusked elephant bone, and lion and mammoth bones. At Harkstead comparable finds were recovered (HRK 006) including rhinoceros and elephant faunal remains, seven broken or complete hand-axes and four flakes. These were believed to have derived from gravel and, in the case of a few fresh pieces and the fauna, from the brick earth layer above. A Palaeolithic flint cleaver and handaxe (HRK 024, 055) have also been recovered from nearby. These significant remains, which are rarely found in such quantity, derive from similar deposits on either side of the bay. The low cliff faces are seemingly exposed on areas of the greatest erosion, on the 'corners' of the bay, where the force of the river is likely greater than within the bay itself. The potential for further remains to be exposed in these cliff faces must be viewed as high, with the continuing erosion of the river. Further west a single rolled handaxe was found in gravels in an extraction pit just north of the estuary (BNT 004), and to the east a single handaxe found in Arwarton, apparently on the marsh edge in an area beyond the cliffs of Holbrook Bay.

The Mesolithic material mainly consists of scattered single finds, but again there is potential on the west side of Holbrook Bay with a small assemblage recorded at STU 021 as well as single flints on the shore and just inland. A similar area of potential for Mesolithic and Neolithic material has been identified on the Orwell estuary, on the edge of the study area, (IPS 001, NAC 003), which may derive from *in situ* deposits recorded as in/below river alluvium and "in cliff".

*Neo/BA/Preh*

260 sites (32 high, 153 medium, 74 low, 1 none)

Evidence for the Neolithic, Bronze Age and unspecified Prehistoric sites can be gained from previous records in the HER and the NMP aerial photograph study which added many new sites of this date to the record. No features of Neolithic or Bronze Age date were identified during the field survey in this area.

In Freston, a Neolithic causewayed enclosure (FRT 005), with a possible Neolithic long house or Anglo Saxon hall (FRT 023) inside, is visible on aerial photographs and is a scheduled monument. These monuments are rare, with only three other examples known in Suffolk at Fornham All Saints, Kedington and possibly Bentley. Essex also only has four recorded examples in the county. The site lies at roughly 30m OD at the head of a valley running south to the Stour but slightly closer to the Orwell to the north. If the structure within this enclosure was a Neolithic long house, this would make this site unique within Britain and internationally important (Hegarty and Newsome 2005, 21-23). No detailed investigation has taken place of this structure to date, something that is long overdue.

Further Neolithic sites of high archaeological importance include two possible mortuary enclosures, or long barrows, sitting roughly on the 25m contour line in Levington (LVT 014, LVT 055) overlooking the Orwell. These have also been identified on aerial photography and comprise oval cropmarks with possible internal features. Few long barrows are known in Suffolk with only 24 entries in the SMR, none of which are confirmed. A cropmark in Kirton, KIR 049, is tentatively identified as a possible cursus

Almost all the other records of specifically Neolithic material are single finds, apart from a group of flints from the Stour shore (STU 001) and a small assemblage from Trimley (TYN 110) at 20m OD overlooking the Orwell to the south. It was also noted in previous assessment of the Felixstowe area (Good *et al* 2007) that the high areas of the south of the peninsula were largely empty.

On looking at the distribution of Bronze Age and unspecific Prehistoric sites in the Stour and Orwell area, the most striking aspect is the number of 'high' importance sites, and their position. Twenty nine sites have been rated as of high importance and, with the exception of a number of Beaker period inhumation graves and later Bronze Age urn cremations found in Brantham in the 1920's (BNT 004) and a collection of worked flints and later Bronze Age handmade pottery at Nacton (NAC 016), no sites of this category are within a kilometre of the foreshore of either river. Both the Brantham burials and the Nacton settlement evidence lie on the south-facing valley side at around 15m OD. Most of the sites rated as high importance are Bronze Age ring ditches, the probable remains of barrow, or extant barrows, which are usually situated at the top of a valley side where they are most visible. Many of these barrows form groups such as those at Seven Hills in Nacton (BUC 006, BUC 007, FXL 011, NAC 004-013), or a group of eight on Levington Heath (LVT 001-008). A number of these barrows are upstanding and scheduled, and have a high potential for further evidence.

A further group of ring ditches were identified on aerial photographs in Shotley, close to the river. The valley side is steep here so despite their proximity to the water, they are also on high ground. These have been classed as medium importance as many are unclear, have been heavily ploughed or may not actually be archaeological features.

There are very few sites of this date close to the foreshore. A ring ditch at Trimley St Martin (TYN 015) is situated just below 5m OD overlooking Trimley marshes (recently "restored" flooded area) to the south.

### *Iron Age*

28 Sites. (3 high, 6 medium, 19 low)

Again Iron Age features can be identified from aerial photography, although there is some difficulty in discerning them from features of an earlier or later date. No features known to be of this date were discovered during the field survey.

At Shotley, two groups of Iron Age coins were discovered. Three bronze coins, including a very rare "Dubnovellaunus" type, of which only three other examples are known nationally, were discovered in a group of undated cropmarks, thought to be a possible Iron Age or Roman settlement site (SLY 023). Similarly, a dispersed gold coin hoard was discovered whilst metal detecting within a probable late Prehistoric or Roman trackway with associated field boundaries and enclosures (SLY 031). Both these sites are less than 300m from the current foreshore with SLY 031 only 100m from an area of saltmarsh around Hare's Creek. This site is at risk of damage should this area of saltmarsh suffer serious flooding.

A number of Iron Age sites within this area have been found during excavations and include single pits and small groups of Iron Age pottery. A small ring ditch, possibly the remains of an Iron Age round house is visible at Trimley St Martin (TYN 117) and nearby a length of ditched trackway of late prehistoric date is also visible on aerial photographs (TYN 118).

The sites rated as of low importance comprise mainly of single finds such as a bronze coin or a sherd of pottery.

The distribution of Iron Age sites is notable in the lack of recorded evidence on the Stour, or indeed in the south of this area. Only four sites lie within a kilometre of this river, with the majority aligning the Orwell. It is worth noting that cropmarks identified as Roman from aerial photograph study are interpreted as this by their characteristics only. They may in fact date from the late prehistoric period, or another time entirely. They are most likely to be Roman due to their size and form and so are dated as such, but this goes some way to explaining the apparent lack of Iron Age cropmarks, but the abundance of Roman ones. The Shotley peninsula is still relatively undeveloped and so potential for further evidence must be viewed as high.

### *Roman*

131 Sites (4 high, 76 medium, 51 low)

Evidence for Roman sites can be gleaned from a number of sources. Again the aerial photography survey was very productive, with distinctive enclosure ditches and structures being very visible. Sites were also found during the field survey, namely a number of probable Roman saltern sites. The HER also holds extensive evidence from this period. A key area is Felixstowe, not fully analysed in this study, where

there was a substantial settlement, perhaps a port throughout the period and a Saxon shore fort established in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the last remains of which can now only be seen as an outcrop of rubble some 200m beyond low water mark at very low tide.

Only four sites were rated as high importance for the Roman period, three of which are extensive cropmark areas on the Shotley Peninsula. SLY 004 and SLY 006 form a probable settlement site of Roman date, comprising a ditched enclosure and related ditches, two probable house sites (SLY 004) and a substantial trackway (SLY 006). Occasional scattered Roman finds have been recovered from this general area including coins and brooches. Further extensive cropmarks of trackways, field boundaries and enclosures are evident throughout this area (ARW 002, 025, 056, 057, SLY 045, 132, 141, HRK 005, WLV 008, 012) again with occasional associated find scatters.

This area has a number of Roman salt working sites, or 'red hills' around Trimley Marshes, with one site being recently excavated at Trimley St Martin (TYN 073) in advance of the reclamation of marsh land for a bird reserve. A farmer reported a further site (TYN 111) of reddened earth in this parish although this can no longer be located. In Trimley St Mary, three salterns are known to have existed (TYY 001, 015, 044). All five are situated below the 5m contour line in order to be regularly flooded with sea water from which to extract salt. Small groups of associated finds are located around these red hills, presumably associated with these workings. Felixstowe, the adjacent settlement, is known to have had a fairly extensive Roman presence and so it is likely these are related.

On the Stutton foreshore, a small group of finds have been recovered from one area (STU 014, 023, 039), suggesting a possible Roman site. These include a possible coin hoard (STU 014), and sherds of Romano British pottery. This site is under direct erosion and so is at constant threat.

A number of small find scatters have been recovered from a small area surrounding East Bergholt (EBG 006, 007, 022, 026, 028) including samian pottery sherds, bronze and silver coins and Roman greyware pottery. These finds are all from alongside the current A12, suggesting that this may follow a similar line to a Roman roadway leading out of Colchester to the south.

There are significant gaps and concentrations in the Roman evidence. The central Shotley Peninsula between Holbrook and Woolverstone has no Roman sites recorded on the county HER. Similarly to the west of Brantham, there is little evidence. Similarly the Portable Antiquities Database has low numbers of finds recorded in these areas. Both these areas remain relatively undeveloped which may be a factor. It is also possible that the land is owned by one landowner who doesn't allow detecting and so the archaeology remains undiscovered.

### *Saxon*

59 sites (3 high, 13 medium, 43 low)

Saxon evidence is generally sparse in this area. It noticeably lies mostly along the rivers sides, less than 2km from the waters edge with very few sites recorded further inland than this. Certainly the Shotley Peninsula has no Saxon evidence recorded away from the foreshore. It is also evident that early Saxon records are even more rare. Of the 59 sites recorded, only nine have been dated to the early Saxon period (before 650AD) with one on the Shotley Peninsula (FRT 022) and eight on the

northern side of the Orwell (FEX 081, 088, TYY 021, 054, NAC 032, 33, TYN 104). Early Saxon evidence is notoriously rare for a number of reasons. For example, the use of handmade (and so fragile) pottery and relatively little metalwork ensures that material culture is infrequently found. Features are also difficult to identify on aerial photography due to their contrasting form from the monumental sites of the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods (Hegarty & Newsome, 2005). Evidence is often gained through metal detected finds, or during exploratory excavations.

Cemetery evidence is extremely sparse on the Felixstowe peninsula, generally only single metal finds to suggest possible burials, but at least one of the round barrows at Brightwell (BGL 017) (just outside current study area) contained an Anglo-Saxon cremation group and was apparently constructed in the Anglo-Saxon period rather than the Bronze Age. So far none of the Bronze Age barrows in the area have been shown to be the focus for more extensive inhumation burial groups, but few have been examined.

A number of single finds or small groups of pottery sherds have been recovered from this area. Again it is evident that the finds are recovered in small groups. Completely isolated finds are rare and where one occurs, a number of others can be seen close by. For example a small group of late Saxon finds are noted on the northern side of the Shotley Peninsula, close to Woolverstone. They include a late Saxon disc brooch (WLV 017), Ipswich ware pottery sherds (WLV 012), Thetford ware pottery sherds (CHL 004) and a cut half penny of Aethelred III (978-1016).

A coin hoard comprising of roughly 90 silver coins and coin fragments of Edward the Elder, deposited 920, were found during a metal detecting rally in Brantham (BNT 041). A mid Saxon disc brooch (BNT Misc) was found close to this but no further sites of this date exist in this area. This site is close to the foreshore, at some 15m OD.

One of the most significant finds of the entire coastal survey was in Holbrook Bay, on the River Stour. An Anglo-Saxon fishtrap (STU 054/067), dating from between 650AD and 1050AD was recorded some half a kilometre into the bay on the mudflats of the intertidal zone. This fishtrap was first photographed in 1995 but not recorded in any detail until the field survey in 2003. It comprises two substantial linear lengths of parallel posts that form a 'V' shape pointing eastwards towards the main channel of the estuary. It was sampled for Radio Carbon dating, preliminary results of which suggest a date of between 650AD and 1050AD, with a number of phases of use. This feature is discussed in greater detail in Everett 2007. It is perhaps surprising that little Saxon evidence has been found close to this fishtrap. Two Ipswich ware pots (STU 007) were recovered adjacent to the church at Stutton with a further sherd (STU 024) from the shore close by. A bronze strap separator or belt fitting was found to the east of the bay in Harkstead (HRK 028) but no further sites are recorded. It is worth noting that much of the foreshore around the bay belongs to the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook, and as such development or indeed metal detecting through this entire area has been limited. To the west of the school is Stutton Church which is mentioned in the Domesday Book and so has origins of this date at least. A number of private houses surround the rest of the foreshore and so development and potential for finding further sites will have been limited. Therefore the likelihood for further Saxon evidence surrounding this feature must be viewed as high.

In general, the position of this area in relation to Ipswich, which was an established settlement in Saxon times, would suggest potential for Saxon evidence remains high. As stated, it is notoriously difficult to find and the small groups of evidence that do exist are likely to reflect a greater number of sites that remain currently undetected.



### *Medieval*

165 Sites (17 High, 62 Medium, 86 low)

It is evident that the recorded evidence often relates to road systems and villages in existence today, with many of the high importance sites, for example, being extant village churches. With the exception of a former 12th century Augustinian Priory at Nacton (NAC 001), the former Walton Old Hall (FEX 037) in Felixstowe and a medieval moat at Shotley Old Hall (SLY 007), all the other sites related as high importance are churches. The fact that these sites are often found near to current roads and villages implies that we owe much of our present layout to the medieval period. This layout comprises a number of small villages dotted along the main routes between Ipswich and Felixstowe on the Felixstowe Peninsula, and similar small villages around the edges of the Shotley Peninsula.

The churches are invariably on high ground and are often found with related settlement, find scatters and such like surrounding them. They are rarely single sites within the landscape, and often produce more evidence than is immediately obvious. With the exception of the site of St Peters Church at Stutton (STU 007) and All Saints Church in Holbrook (HBK 015), all the churches have medieval sites recorded close by. For example, St Mary's Church at Shotley (SLY 055) lies just north of the medieval moat at Shotley Old Hall (SLY 007) and close to a late medieval finger ring fragment (SLY Misc). This church lies some 800m east of the Orwell, at 20m OD.

A former chapel at Harkstead (HRK 003) was probably one of two churches in Harkstead recorded in the Domesday survey. This site now lies right on the foreshore of the river Stour. A pottery scatter (HRK 040) was found just to the east of this site, also at the rivers edge, suggesting that both are subject to current erosion.

The broad pattern of site density clearly reflects the level of fieldwork undertaken. The apparent concentration of sites in the Trimleys, for example, reflects the massive extension of these villages in recent times, and so the extensive fieldwork that has subsequently taken place. Similarly, with the presence of a number of large houses and schools with extensive gardens and private marinas throughout both these peninsulas, metal detecting is also limited to a few areas, again suggesting a false level of distribution. What is discovered in these few sites that are exploited can perhaps be used to predict archaeology levels elsewhere. As suggested above, and as can be seen in the Trimleys, the presence of a medieval (or earlier) parish church suggests a nucleus of sites around this building, reflecting the medieval settlement.

The majority of the sites recorded as medieval are finds scatters discovered whilst metal detecting. Medieval finds are much more prevalent than their predecessors and are often found in large numbers around settlement sites, field boundaries and such like, similar to the general site distribution of this period.

There appear to be no surviving medieval greens within this area. The Historic Land Characterisation map (HLC) shows some areas of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, particularly towards the foreshore of the Stour, around Holbrook and Stutton and through the centre of the Felixstowe Peninsula. Stutton is currently fairly underdeveloped, with a small nucleus of settlement to the north of the church towards Alton Water. The area of land between this and the river is currently privately owned and is unlikely to have been surveyed and so must be seen as an area of high potential. Through the centre of the Felixstowe Peninsula and around Shotley Gate, the other area with some pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure evident, modern development is common place, with the settlements growing at fairly rapid rates.

A large area of coastal marsh, thought to have origins before 1600, exists just to the north of Felixstowe. Since the coastal marsh survey mapping, the area at the north of this in Trimley Marshes has been re-flooded (and extensively managed) as a nature reserve to counterbalance the loss of marsh in the extension to Felixstowe docks and so unfortunately no longer exists in this form.

### **Post medieval and Modern**

271 Sites (9 high, 74 medium, 188 low)

The distribution of post medieval and modern sites is fairly even across this area. The types of sites encountered during the medieval and modern periods are much more varied from those before, due to the diverse nature of the sites recorded. For example abundant wartime features are recorded from post medieval and modern times, as well as boat hards and hulks, sites that are reasonably temporary in nature and would not still be evident from previous periods.

The landscape character of this area is varied. Large portions of land are identified as pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure (discussed above), with some later enclosure, particularly around East Bergholt and Brantham, and a large area of post 1950's agricultural landscape around Chelmondiston. Modern housing development has affected substantial areas around Felixstowe and Trimley.

This area is fairly rich in extensive landscape parks with associated large post medieval structures. For example at Orwell Park (NAC 042) and Broke Hall (NAC 043) in Nacton, Woolverstone Park (WLV 024), Stutton Hall (STU 030) and the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook. Each of these, as well as a number of large private houses in this area, have substantial managed parks and gardens which as well as being fine examples of 18<sup>th</sup> century and later landscaping, potentially conceal and preserve archaeological deposits beneath.

Many listed buildings are recorded in this area. All medieval churches are recorded listed buildings, as well as a number of private properties including, for example, Orwell Park school on the north of the Orwell in Nacton, and the Royal Hospital School on the Stour in Holbrook. The village of East Bergholt has a great number of listed buildings along the main street, as well as five listed graves in the churchyard of St Mary (EBG 014).

This area of the coast is comparatively void of 20<sup>th</sup> century defensive structures. Two listed Napoleonic Martello Towers are present in Shotley (SLY 032, 033) as well as a coastal defensive fort (SLY 062), known presently as HMS Ganges, that was built in 1862/3 to defend Harwich Harbour.

### **Undated**

330 records (9 high, 204 medium, 117 low)

The majority of undated sites consist of cropmarks of field boundaries, ring ditches and trackways. Where possible, features are given an estimated date of origin but many have no clear diagnostic traits to allow this. Most are scored as medium importance, ensuring that they are flagged up as potential features for planning purposes. Ring ditches in particular could be the remains of a Bronze Age barrow, and so must always be treated as such.

Since most of these recorded sites are cropmarks, it is clear that there is an even and dense concentration of these throughout this area. A few have been noted as

being potentially highly significant. For example, at Kirton (KIR 049), a number of very regular linear ditches have been identified on aerial photographs, which might be part of a cursus of Neolithic date, a feature very rare in Suffolk. Similarly in Shotley (SLY 013, 020), a number of complex field boundaries with intersecting linear ditches and trackways, creating two large enclosures are noted. These boundaries are close to a number of cropmarks thought to be Roman in date, and so may be related.

During the field survey of the coastal project, a number of unidentified posts were seen in the intertidal zone. Most were thought to be modern; mooring posts, old jettys and such like and were not thought to be significant.

A number of post circles and lines were recorded on the foreshore at Holbrook Bay. These were sampled for radio carbon dating and are discussed fully in Everett 2007.

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