the Colchester archaeologist

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Cover. Main picture by Steve Brading. Courtesy of the Essex County Standard.

Below. Manly digging team excavating part of the Berechurch Dyke extension discovered on the Hyderabad site.



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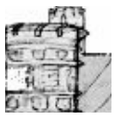
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Colchester's biggest church discovered

by Philip Crummy

The discovery of Abbot Beche's church earlier this year was a big event. Archaeologically and historically it was a significant find because, not only do we now know precisely where the church stood, but we can see it must have been a substantial building, bigger than previously imagined. Emotively too it was a big find because the destruction of this building, very evident in the ground, was part of a sequence of traumatic and tragic events which involved the cruel execution of John Beche, last abbot of St John's Abbey.



Above. Excavation in progress on the abbey church site.

The abbey church was laid out in 1095 and completed in 1115. The church along with the rest of the abbey was demolished during the century following the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII. No plan of the monastery has survived, the nearest being what was shown on John Speed's somewhat schematic map of Colchester which he prepared in 1607 and published in 1611-12. This shows a number of buildings huddled together inside the abbey's defensive wall labelled 'St John's Abbey' and what appears to be the church's central tower still standing in isolation.

A few sections of monastic foundations were uncovered in 2007 when CAT trenched the western part of the precinct as preliminary works for Taylor Wimpey's redevelopment of former Garrison land. This was an important advance but the exposures were limited and inconclusive because the investigation was modest in scale. Nothing was seen of the church itself until some of the remains of the nave were discovered early in 2011 during more exploratory archaeological excavations inside the former precinct. This time the investigation was for the members of the Officers' Club. The work took place on the site of their clubhouse which was burnt to the ground last year.

Four trenches were dug across the site of the clubhouse where its replacement was planned and as a result the 'robbed' remains of four very substantial foundations were revealed, all lying east-west just as you would expect for a church. Quite a discovery – the west end of the abbey church! The foundations had in fact largely been broken out about 400 years ago so as to recover building stone for reuse elsewhere. However, their original positions and dimensions were plainly indicated by the debris-filled trenches left by the workmen who carried out this back-breaking work.

Of the four foundations, the widest had been the matching pair along the centre of the building. These would each have supported a row of massive columns which in turn would have supported the nave roof. (The nave was the western part of the church.) The two outer foundations were narrower and they formed the bases for the outer walls of the nave. All four foundations terminated at the western end with a wide north-south wall to give us the position of the west end of the church.

The church proved to have been very thoroughly demolished. Even the floors had been removed. Finds were limited but fragments of glazed tile testify to quality floors, and painted glass point to colourful windows just as would be expected in a building like this.

Length of the church

Tim Dennis was able to carry out and process two ground-penetrating radar surveys over the adjacent grass tennis courts. These used a Mala GPR system kindly provided by Ralph Potter of the University of East London, and a Noggin Smart Cart from Michael de Bootman of East



Site plan and the results of the geophysical survey combined.

Lexham, Norfolk. Both surveys were able to confirm the location and probable dimensions of the eastern section of the building. While most of the indications were quite weak, indicating heavily robbed-out foundations, at the extreme east end a very clear picture was obtained. This discovery was especially valuable because it provides us with the overall length of the building.

A church built in the early 12th century would have had a rounded east end but Tim Dennis' survey showed that it had been square and that therefore this part of it had been rebuilt. Other parts of the church are much more difficult to detect on the surveys. The fact that the east end stands out so clearly is because its remains are more substantial. This reinforces the conclusion that the east end was rebuilt.

Surprisingly, at 90m, the church turns out to have been big, much bigger than the church of St Botolph's Priory nearby. The church also lies a bit further north than we expected. In fact it stood along the top of the southern side of a little valley which lies east to west just outside the walled town-centre. Perched up on that slope, the church must have dominated the southern skyline of the medieval town.

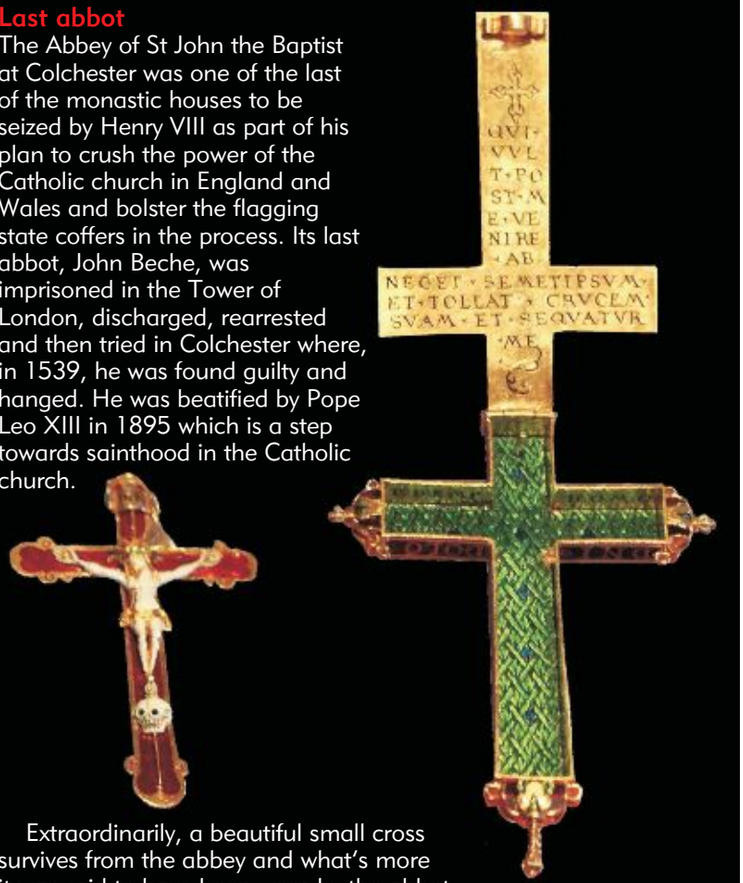
Early picture of the church

Fortunately – and rather remarkably – a drawing of the church exists. It is hard to date but it appears to be an Elizabethan (ie c 1550-1600) copy of an earlier drawing made before or at the time of the Dissolution. An interesting aspect of the picture is that it shows an early 13th-century church with some later alterations – not the early 12th-century we might expect. This is clear from the design of the windows and other details. How do we explain this? Well presumably the church was extensively remodelled in the 13th century. A monastic record that, in 1235, Henry III gave 15 oak timbers to the abbey seems to back up this conclusion.

Unfortunately this most interesting drawing is seriously flawed because it appears to show several features which are strange and force us to question its accuracy and reliability. Plainly the drawing shows the south side of the church. It shows a cruciform-shaped building with a large central tower flanked by short arms (transepts) and a single tower at the west end. The drawing also appears to show two chapels which have

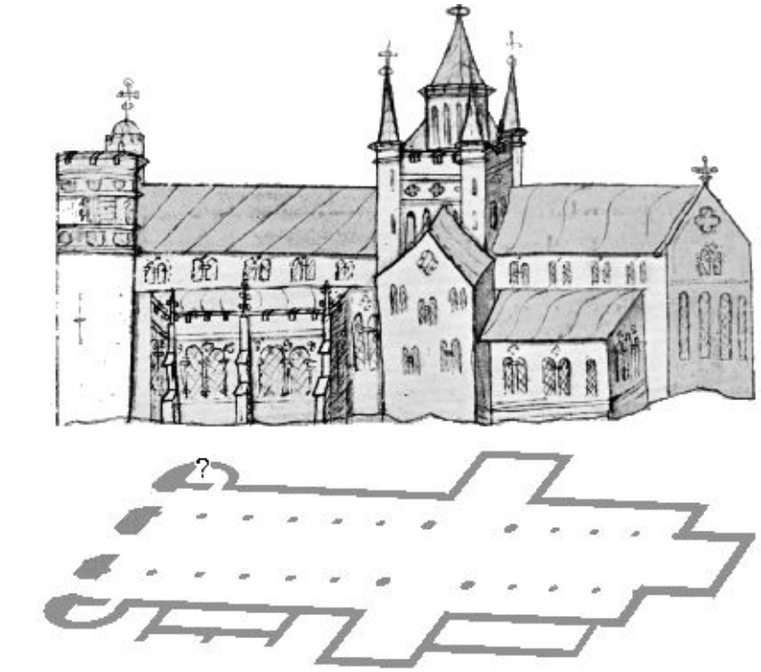
Last abbot

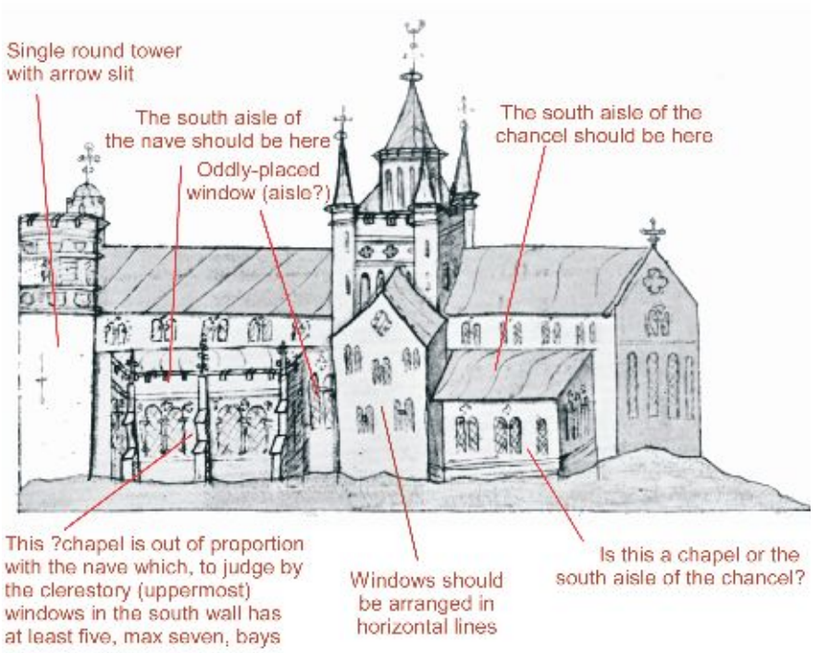
The Abbey of St John the Baptist at Colchester was one of the last of the monastic houses to be seized by Henry VIII as part of his plan to crush the power of the Catholic church in England and Wales and bolster the flagging state coffers in the process. Its last abbot, John Beche, was imprisoned in the Tower of London, discharged, rearrested and then tried in Colchester where, in 1539, he was found guilty and hanged. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1895 which is a step towards sainthood in the Catholic church.



Extraordinarily, a beautiful small cross survives from the abbey and what's more it was said to have been worn by the abbot in his last moments. And the cross really is a beautiful object – an exquisite gold and ivory crucifix inside a crucifix-shaped case all in perfect condition as if new. It is an example of a pectoral cross which is a type of symbolic ornament – a kind of badge of office and expression of faith which would have been worn around the neck on a silken chord or chain so that the cross lay on the lower part of the chest. Crosses of this kind would have been worn by senior clergymen such as cardinals, bishops, abbots, and even popes.

The cross was given to Buckfast Abbey in Devon in 1922 on condition that it should not return to Colchester until the abbey of St John's was rebuilt. By a strange coincidence, the cross did come back briefly to Colchester last year (for the second time as a matter of fact) for an exhibition in the Castle Museum. This happened a short while before the remains of John Beche's abbey church were discovered.





been added to the south side of the building. But there are problems here. Where are the south aisles of the building? These should be visible between the chapels and the main south wall of the church. Also the drawing shows a round, battlemented tower at the west end with an arrow slit in it. A square, not round, tower would be normal in this size and type of church. And so too would narrow windows, not arrow slits. We would also expect to see, not a single tower, but a pair of flanking towers at the west end. Most problematic and important of all, there is no obvious evidence for cloisters, and this is a key consideration when we come to try and reconstruct something of the overall ground plan of the monastery.

Round towers at the west end are not impossible but it would be very unusual. Some parish churches have them. They are commonest in East Anglia, much less so in Essex. And there are a few, very rare examples of towers with arrow slits. To have both would seem extraordinary but maybe not absolutely impossible. The abbey did after all have a defensive wall.

Reconstructing the plan of the church

We can attempt to improve our rudimentary plan of the church by combining it with the drawing. The numbers of the windows in the picture reveal the number of columns. Left of the transepts, the drawing shows five windows. This suggests four columns in each of the two rows plus an attached one on the west wall. We can guess the likely layout of the columns in the church using this sort of approach.

Interestingly we can now start measuring the plan and trying to work out if we can detect something of the architect's thinking when he designed the building. We need of course to work in feet, not metres, as he would have done. The crucial things to look for are multiples of whole feet and repeating patterns of dimensions. We make an assumption here that the architect would have had an underlying strategy when designing the building and that probably he would have worked with whole feet to implement it.

At its root – if we could go back far enough – the principle would be that each of the two rows of columns was placed under the centre of its half of the roof so as to take its weight. This means that the distance (all measured centre to centre) between the two rows of columns would have been twice the distance between each column and the side wall next to it. The spacing between the columns themselves in each of the rows (ie the width of the bays) would probably have been specified in terms of whole feet.

Using these assumptions about design principles and column positions as implied by the windows, it is possible to produce a ground plan for the whole of the church which comes close to matching the drawing of the church. The resultant plan assumes that the two rows of columns are 38 feet apart and each row is 19 foot from the nearest side wall, all measured centre to centre. The best fit east to west gives us a spacing between the columns (ie bay width) of 20 feet. Our provisional plan of the church has been constructed using these figures.

Location of the cloisters and other monastic buildings

The cloisters formed the hub of a monastery. Normally on one side and attached to it lay the church. Attached to another side was the Chapter House where the monks would hear a chapter

from their order and conduct their daily business. Around the other sides were the living quarters, dormitories, refectory, kitchen, toilets and the like. The cloisters allowed the monks to move around their monastery whilst staying under cover. Sometimes the cloisters lay on the north side of the church but in most cases they were to the south.

In our case, it sounds as if the cloisters had been in both places at different times. Early accounts of the history of the abbey tell us that the monks' living and working quarters were moved from the north to the south side of the church in the early 12th century. These buildings presumably would have included the cloisters (see plan on page 6). To make the move possible, a little 'hill' which overlooked the church had to be removed and the resultant spoil was spread out north of the church to make a cemetery.

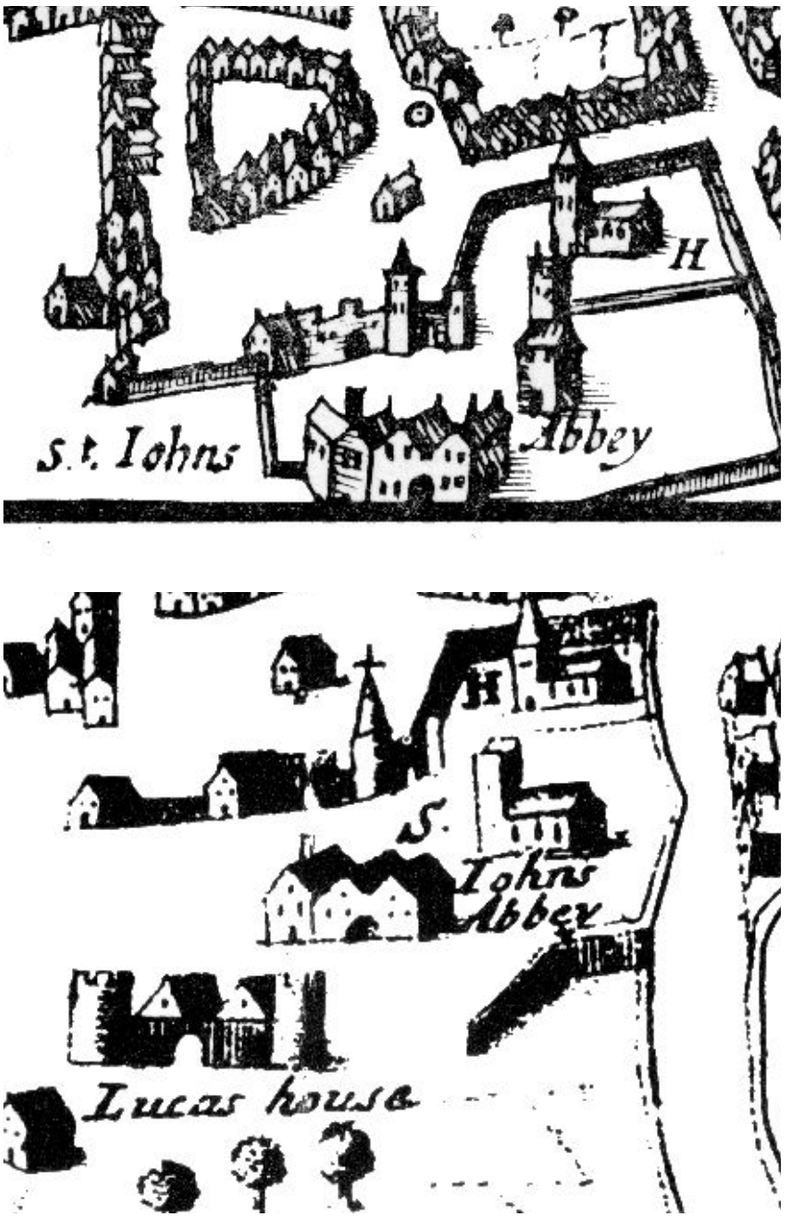
The parish church of St Giles was built in this cemetery not many years later. Now that the position of the abbey church is clear, it is evident that, by the time St Giles' church was built, the cloister and cloistral buildings must have been south of the abbey church because there would not have been enough room to build St Giles's church north of it.

So where does this leave the cloisters and the main monastic buildings? From the mid 12th century or earlier, they were south of the abbey church but not, it would appear, with the cloisters butting on to the south side of the nave. An arrangement such as this would very unusual but not unique. Salisbury is a case in point. The cloisters there were detached from the nave but were still connected via two short passages so that the monks could move around the monastery in relative comfort.

But the picture of our abbey church does not seem to show such passages far less cloisters. So we've hit an impasse. What now? The most likely explanation lies in the drawing. It's too unreliable and we cannot take what it tells us at face value. Too many things seem unusual. A single tower at one corner of the west end of the building. Arrow slits in the tower. No obvious evidence of the cloisters. No obvious evidence of passages which might have led to a detached cloister. Some of these things might be correct. But all of them? Unlikely surely? Perhaps the drawing was made from memory? Perhaps it was made when the building had been partly demolished and the church has been wrongly reconstructed? It's a mystery.

Puzzle of the little hill

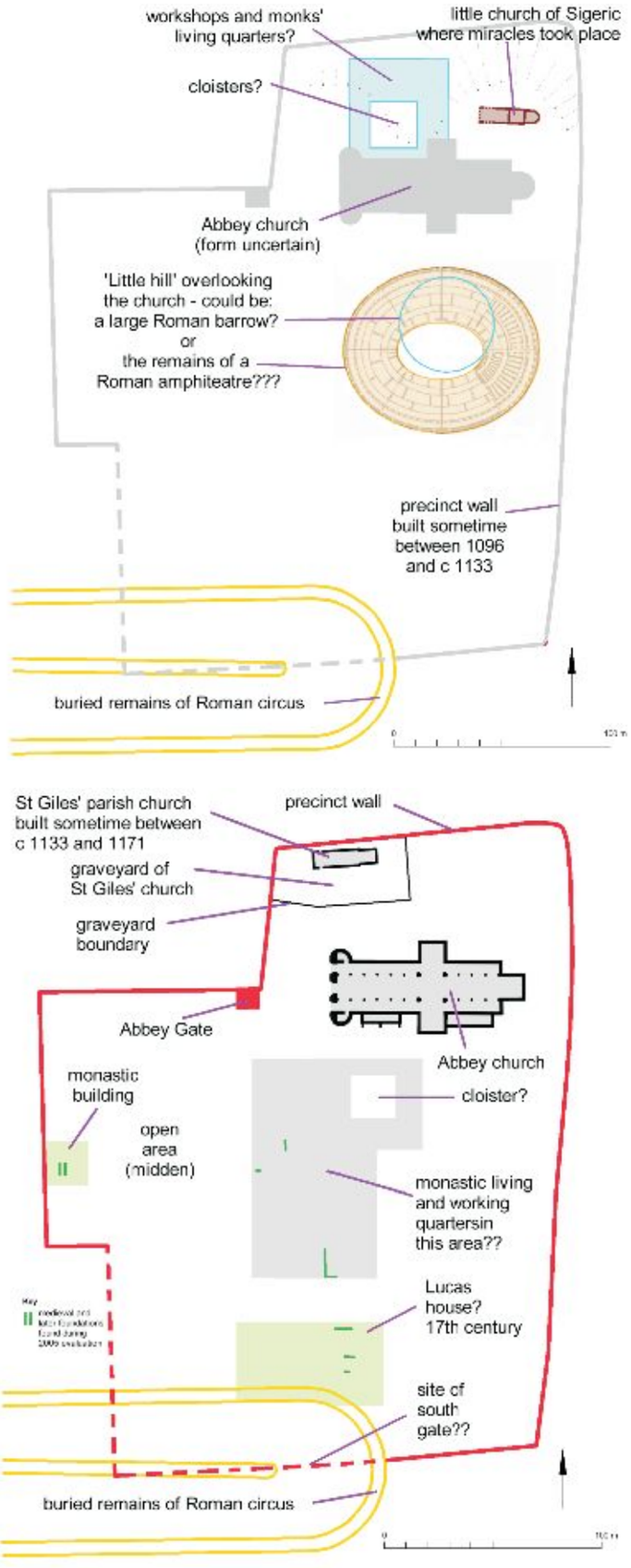
The little hill that had to be moved in the early years of the abbey is intriguing too. The ground that the abbey was built on rises to the south. If the monks felt they wanted level ground south of the church, then perhaps the levelling work which they would have needed to do was what became described as 'removing a little hill'. This seems the most likely explanation for the 'hill'.



Map evidence showing the remains of St John's Abbey in 1607.

Above. Extract from John Speed's plan of Colchester which he surveyed in 1607. The map shows the precinct wall, the Abbey Gate, St Giles' church (H), what appears to be the central tower and southern transept of the abbey church, and to the south-west a group of buildings labelled 'St Johns Abbey'.

Below. Extract from the 1648 map of the siegeworks around Colchester. This map reused Speed's map but extended it outwards in all directions to include the Parliamentarian siegeworks. The map provides a redrawn version of the Speed map (hence somewhat debased) but extended southwards a little to show a building marked as the 'Lucas house'. This looks like a house of two gables behind a gate flanked by round towers. There is some evidence that there was a gate in the middle of the southern stretch of the abbey precinct wall. Perhaps the Lucas house incorporated it in some way.



Above. Highly conjectural layout of the abbey in the early 12th century.

Below. Highly conjectural layout of the abbey in later medieval times. Includes the probable (approx) location of the later Lucas mansion.

If there really had been a hill south of the church, then it could not have been a natural one. Two explanations for such a man-made feature come to mind. The most likely one is that hill was in fact a very large Roman burial mound (a barrow). The location was a very prominent one and there were Roman burials in the immediate vicinity. A less likely explanation is that the hill was the remains of a Roman amphitheatre. Again the location is good for one, it's close to the circus, and we are running out of possible sites for the amphitheatre elsewhere in town. Amphitheatres in Britain largely consisted of earthworks to create seating. This idea makes sense since such earthworks could conceivably have been referred to as a hill in the 12th century.

The Lucas family and the reuse of redundant abbey buildings

The mass closure of the religious houses of England and Wales in the early 16th century by Henry VIII was followed by a mass sale of their assets. Many former monasteries were converted into homes by the rich and influential. St John's Abbey was no different. It was acquired in due course by the powerful Lucas family who appear to have converted some of the buildings into a large mansion and demolished many of the others. Details are thin but they must certainly have been knocking down buildings around 1590 when Thomas Lucas built Bourne Mill with building materials from the former abbey.

In 1607, when John Speed prepared his survey of Colchester, he labelled a collection of buildings inside the abbey precinct as being 'St John's Abbey'. This group does not appear to have been reused by the Lucas family because the Lucas house is shown as a separate building on the Colchester Siege Map of 1648. (The reason why the Lucas house does not appear on the Speed map must be because Speed's survey did not extend far enough south to reach it.)

This then is what can be concluded from these maps. A large part of the abbey is shown on Speed. The buildings concerned lay south-west of the church. They were still standing as late as 1648 but were demolished not long afterwards along with the Lucas mansion.

What next?

Our excavations were very limited. It would have been interesting and very productive to carry out more investigations and recover more information about the plan of the church. But the priority is to leave the remains of the church as undisturbed as possible for future generations. The plan now is to rebuild the clubhouse on the same site but to do it in such a way as to leave the buried remains untouched and safe for the future.

The investigations at St John's Abbey were carried out on behalf of the Officers' Club who funded the work.

Walter of Colchester



Although not much survives above ground of St John's Abbey, its written legacy is extensive. Here, in these early records, we can catch a glimpse of a monk who left the monastery to achieve great distinction elsewhere. Don Shimmin explains...

One of the most accomplished and, in his day, most widely-known of all the monks associated with St John's Abbey was Walter of Colchester *(c* 1175-1248). Unfortunately little is known about his early life in Colchester, although his name is mentioned several times in early documents relating to St John's Abbey. He probably embarked on his career as a craftsman during his time at the abbey, although no examples of his work have been identified in Colchester or its vicinity.

Subsequently Walter of Colchester is recorded at St Alban's Abbey (now a cathedral) where, during the early part of the 13th century, his career flourished. He perhaps became best-known for his wall-paintings, although he could turn his hand to many trades such as sculpture, wood-carving, and metalworking including goldsmithing. He also became the sacristan, the person in charge of the sacred objects in the abbey church.

He is nearly always described as 'Master' Walter of Colchester as he had pupils and others working under his guidance. His workshop was responsible for many improvements and decorative features in St Alban's Abbey church. Some of these are still evident today, including some wall-paintings. These were white-washed over after the Reformation and remained hidden from view until they were discovered and re-exposed in the late 19th century. Walter's wall-paintings are later in date than the well-known local examples in Copford church, which date from c 1130.

Walter also carried out commissions away from St Albans, the most prestigious of which was the design and construction of the shrine of St Thomas à Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. This was undertaken in conjunction with Elias of Dereham, who was Canon of Salisbury and is usually credited as being the architect of Salisbury Cathedral.

In 1220 Becket's remains were translated from the crypt in Canterbury Cathedral to the new shrine in the Trinity Chapel, which had also just been completed for the purpose.The shrine was by all accounts magnificent and included a marble plinth surmounted by a richly gilded and decorated casket. This was covered by a canopy, which could be raised or lowered by a series of pulleys. Writing of his visit to the cathedral in c 1512, the famous scholar Erasmus wrote of the shrine that the least valuable portion was of gold, but every part glistened, shone, and sparkled with rare and very large jewels, some of them larger than a goose's egg. It comes as no great surprise to learn that the shrine was destroyed and the valuables looted in 1538 during the reign of Henry VIII.



St Albans Cathedral and a mural by Walter of Colchester. Photographs reproduced by kind permission of Neil Wildin of NeilWildin Photography (www.neilwildin.co.uk)(copyright).

This article is based on **Forgotten Brothers of Colchester** (2001), a unique piece of research by Colchester resident John P Richards. His interest in Walter of Colchester was stimulated following a visit to Salisbury Cathedral. While reading about its architect Elias of Dereham, he came across references to Walter of Colchester and resolved to find out more about him. This involved many hours of research on Walter, and was also broadened to cover William of Colchester (c 1338-1420) who became Abbot of Westminster Abbey in 1387.



Garrison roundup



Colchester Garrison has been our major source of work over the past decade. The redevelopment of the former Colchester Garrison slowed down during the recession but demolition, site clearance, and building work have now restarted. Howard Brooks gives us an overview of the recent major discoveries on the sites of three former barracks in 2010 and into 2011.

Hyderabad and Meeanee Barracks

Like most of Colchester, the Hyderabad and Meeanee Barracks are in an area of high archaeological potential. This is partly because the barracks are situated in the belt of Roman cemeteries around the south side of the Roman town, and are also immediately east of the St John's Abbey precinct and the Roman circus site. But the potential is raised considerably by the fact that antiquarian finds of weapons and a pot (presumably derived from burials) indicate that there may be an Anglo-Saxon cemetery here. So the archaeological work at Hyderabad allowed us to test for the presence of Roman burials, the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, and anything connected with St John's Abbey.

Evaluation trenching from October to December 2010 revealed thinly-spread pre-historic pottery and flints, a few sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery, and what looked like a group of Roman cremations and inhumations. There were also two ring-ditches surrounding Roman cremation burials.

The evaluation had identified ten areas where larger-scale excavation was necessary before the site was handed back to the builders. So, the follow-up excavation stage, which took place between January and March 2011, tested these places, including the ring-ditches and other discoveries there of potential interest. On two of the excavation areas were found an Bronze Age ring-ditch and the Iron Age dyke mentioned below by Philip in the article about the coin hoard. Some of the features excavated at Hyderabad were what we call tree-throw pits. These are usually irregular in shape, and have leached-out fills which may indicate that they are of a considerable age. Our best guess is that these features are the result of trees being blown over in gales, or else deliberately uprooted by ancient farmers to clear land for farming. Intriguingly, some of these tree-throws contained Neolithic (New Stone Age) pot sherds. These tiny scraps of pottery may seem insignificant but they are amongst the earliest evidence for Neolithic activity in Colchester and are of tremendous significance. Do they show that Neolithic farmers were clearing trees in this area?

Other important remains were the two ring-ditches surrounding burials. We excavated a number of similar ring-ditches close to the Arena Leisure Centre in 2004 (Colchester Archaeologist **18**), and found that they contained late Roman cremation burials. However, the 2011 ring-ditches were associated inhumation burials with spears and shields. These are extremely interesting. Ring-ditches are though to be Germanic in their affinities. Is it possible that these are the burials of some of the Germanic mercenary soldiers known to have been drafted in by the Romano-British authorities to defend Roman Britain against Saxon marauders?

Other discoveries included two Roman cemetery areas containing a total of about sixty burials. There were also the usual Roman pits and ditches, and one intriguing ditch which may be connected with the Civil War. Two more areas inside Hyderabad remain to be excavated, and will be reported on in a future *Colchester Archaeologist*.

Roman Barracks

This is another of the garrison sites where we have done multiple phases of work. An

Above right. The excavation of a Roman cremation burial at Hyderabad.



Left. Evaluation trenching at Hyderabad Barracks.

evaluation in July-August was followed by area excavations in September and October 2010. This site is flanked by Roman Way (to the west), the Berechurch Dyke (to the east), and the part of the old Roman Barracks excavated in 2007 to the south.

The principal discoveries were a gravel trackway cut by wheel ruts, and a number of field ditches. These were parts of a Roman farmed landscape on a NW/SE alignment which we have seen previously at the garrison. The trackway and the general lack of large quantities of Roman (or earlier) finds indicate that this was essentially a rural landscape, although finds such as the fragments of querns (cereal grinding stones) show that a farmstead or other settlement cannot have been too far away.



Goojerat Barracks

The Goojerat Barracks are located to the south-west of Abbey Field and to the east of Layer Road. We evaluated the site between November 2007 and January 2008 and found large quantities of Roman building material (brick and tile) as well as early Roman pottery. It was assumed that the Roman brick and tile was derived from a demolished Roman structure, and that post-holes were the remains of associated timber buildings within yards or fields defined by ditches.

So, we returned to Goojerat in June and July of 2010 to excavate areas highlighted by the earlier evaluations. These excavations confirmed the existence of a farmstead which started life in the late Iron Age, and developed through the early Roman period. The masonry structure detected in the evaluation stage was elusive, and may actually have been located beyond the edge of the excavation site, but we found a substantial Roman timber structure here. An adjacent well shows that this was probably a domestic building, or else part of a farm. There was, as usual, a large number of field ditches which confirm the presence and layout of the Roman field system recognised in recent archaeological investigations at the Garrison.

The work took place in association with RPS Group on behalf of developers Taylor Wimpey.

Left. The wheel ruts in the surface of the gravelled trackway.



Steady as she goes! Mark Baister delicately excavates a shield boss in one of the warrior graves. The skull of the warrior can be seen in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture. A spearhead lies to the right of the skull.

Garrison

Warrior burials and the coming of the English

by Philip Crummy

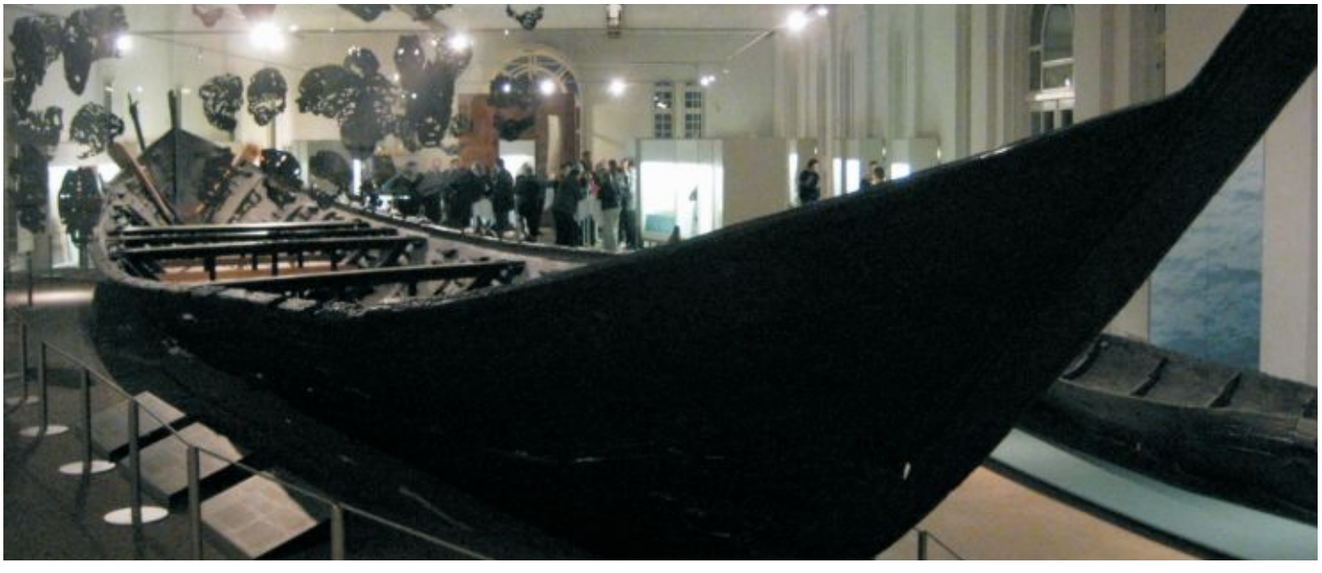
A grey November's day was never going to be the time to see northern Germany at its best. I was in Schleswig Holstein to be exact, heading north to a conference about Iron Age burial chambers in northern and eastern Europe. Not everybody's idea of a fun break but I had never been here before and Schleswig Holstein and northern Germany generally has a particular significance to us in England. Why? Because this is the land of the early English. Tradition has it that they came and settled in eastern England in large numbers just after the end of Roman rule in Britain. Saxons supposedly poured in from Saxony taking over what is now Essex (kingdom of the East Saxons) and Angles from Schleswig Holstein moved into what we now call Norfolk and Suffolk to make the kingdom of the East Anglians. You couldn't tell that this happened today except for our language, which of course is a direct descendant of the language of these Germanic settlers.

I stared out of the train window as we rumbled and rocked along the tracks. It all looked familiar yet it was different. Sure, there were the usual greenery, hedges and fields but somehow it was not the same. Where were all the big trees? I looked hard into the grey landscape. In fact, were there any I wondered. Yes here and there I spotted the odd one but certainly on the whole the trees seemed smaller. And in amongst them there was birch – lots of them – a sure sign that I had come to a place with a harsher climate than I am used to. I couldn't help thinking that Essex and East Anglia must have seemed lush and fertile to those Saxons and Angles who had headed our way all those years ago.

Nydam Boat

The conference was held in the impressive Gottorf Castle on the outskirts of the town of Schleswig. The building is now home to the Schleswig-Holstein State museum. Its most famous exhibit is the extraordinary oak boat which was found in a bog in southern Denmark in 1869.

One evening, we were treated to a reception in a large exhibition hall where now stands this



The Nydam boat in Gottorf Castle, Schleswig.

extraordinary find. Dated by tree-ring dating to AD 320-30, this is reckoned to be the largest and earliest rowing boat yet discovered in northern Europe. The vessel is 23m long and 3.5 m wide with space for 30 rowers plus one man on the side-mounted rudder. This would have been much the same kind of boat that was used as a burial chamber in Sutton Hoo.

The Nydam boat shares the hall with an impressive selection of weapons, shields and other objects discovered in the bog at the same time as the vessel. Hundreds of them were recovered. The theory is that the boat along with all those weapons and at least two other vessels were the spoils of war ritually buried in the bog. The collection provides the visitor with stark proof of the ferocity of the Scandinavian warrior. Spears, swords, axes and broken and twisted metal bits from wooden shields all testify to the war-like nature of their society which seemed to have involved much inter-tribal warfare.

Saxon conquests over the sea

The Nydam boat lies at the centre of a controversy which divides those who study ancient boats. Did these Germanic peoples use sails or did they simply row all the way to Britain and other distant places in boats such as this? There are various arguments for and against. One important one in favour of sails is the claim that it would have been difficult to transport large numbers of people, especially woman and children, in boats that could only be rowed. But then, there is a counter argument that the Saxons did not settle in such large numbers as generally thought. It was warriors who came and conquered and many of the people whom we imagine were Saxons were in fact not immigrants but indigenous British under Saxon rule.

Sails or not, the crews in boats like the Nydam vessel must have been made up of strong, super-fit men. Standing in that hall in front of that boat and surrounded by hundreds of axeheads, spears, swords and all the rest around it, could not have make it any clearer. Imagine a sleepy village on the east coast of Britain waking up one morning to find a bunch of these athletic, battle-hardened men running up the beach on the rampage. Just two boatloads could bring sixty men armed to the teeth and ruthless. The British would have had no chance.

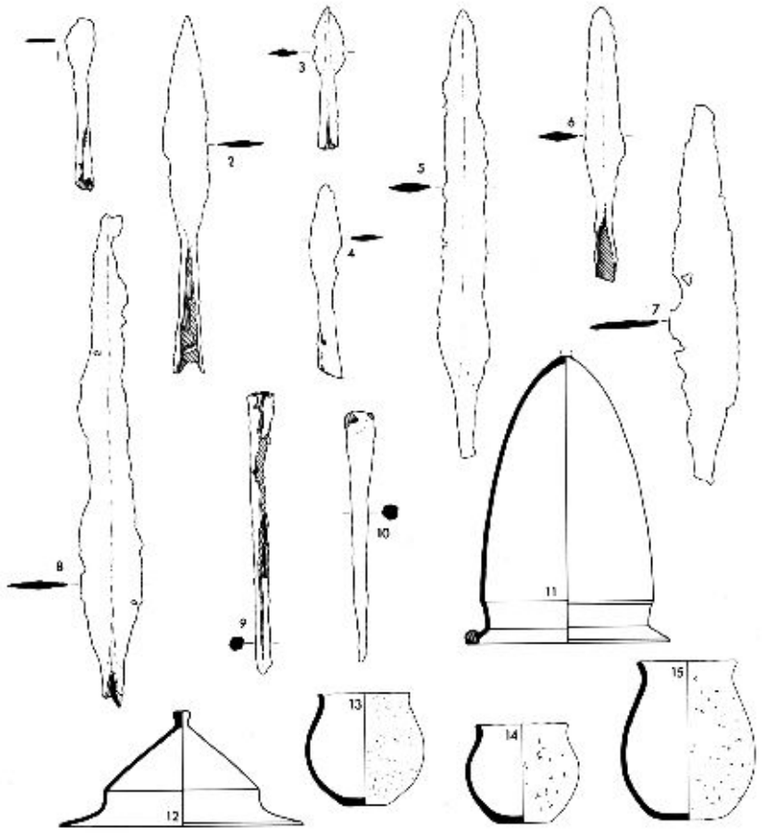
That evening I somewhat cheekily told the director of the museum (Claus von Carnap-Bornheim) about my train journey and my thoughts about his country. He could see why the east coast of southern England might have seemed so attractive to his ancient forebears that they might have wanted to leave. But he thought it was no bad thing. "After all", he beamed, "their language developed into English and this is now the language of the internet and in effect the world!"

By now, you are bound to be wondering why I am telling you all this. Well, although I didn't know it at the time, we were to make some interesting discoveries in Colchester a few months later – discoveries that would bring me back in spirit at least to Northern Germany, Schleswig-Holstein, and that marvellous exhibition hall in Gottorf Castle.

Early Saxons settlers in Colchester?

You will gather from elsewhere in this magazine that the excavations on the site of the former Hyderabad and Meeanee barracks have proved to be extremely interesting and rewarding. A Roman coin hoard, a previously unknown section of Iron Age dyke, and Iron Age round-houses were just parts of what proved to be a most interesting area to excavate. As if all of that wasn't enough, the investigation also led to the discovery of some unusual burials of a type which could help illuminate the circumstances surrounding the arrival of the English in Britain.

The burials were found in the extreme north-west corner of the site, immediately next to Mersea Road. Two of them were 'spearmen' and likely to be of Germanic origin because of their weapons and because one of them lay inside a shallow circular ditched enclosure of a type associated with some Germanic cemeteries elsewhere. Both men had been equipped with a round shield and a spear. One of them also had a dagger held in a belt around his waist. They were laid to rest on their backs with their shields on their chests and their spears by their sides. The wooden parts of the weapons had almost completely decayed away but the ironwork



Some of the iron spearheads, ferrules (spikes at the lower ends of spears), shield bosses, and pots discovered to the immediate north of the Hyderabad and Meeanee barracks in the late 19th century. The objects range in date from the 5th to the 7th centuries.



The north-west corner of the Hyderabad and Meeanee site showing the two ring ditches, the two warrior burials (top), and the remains of a woman buried inside one of the ring ditches (lower right). Also highlighted are the skeletal remains of a young girl who had been buried with a bead necklace around her neck (lower left).

(mainly shield bosses, spear heads and the dagger) survived in situ, albeit heavily rusted. The men were not buried with metal helmets or body armour although they may have worn cheaper leather alternatives instead. The form of shield bosses evolved as time went on. These examples point to the early 5th century.

At least thirty burials were identified in this area during the current phase of work and more are likely to turn up when excavations resume to the east later in the year. We have yet to assess the dates of these burials properly as a group but they appear to be a mixture of what we would normally have been regarded as late Roman and early Anglo- Saxon (ie post-Roman). The group included a second example of a burial enclosed by a ring ditch. In this case, the dead person appears to have been female (to judge by the bones) which presumably explains the absence of weaponry.

The site lies next to a housing estate where many Anglo-Saxon spears and shield bosses were discovered some years ago. Records of the discoveries are poor but a substantial number of them were evidently found when house foundations were dug in the 1880s and 1890s alongside what was to become Cromwell Road, Fairfax Road and Lucas Road. Our recent discoveries in the north-west corner of the Hyderabad and Meeanee site must be part of the southern end of the same cemetery.

A few years ago in 2004, we found some burials similarly located inside a total of at least eleven small ring ditches. These lay near the south side of the Roman circus and about 200 m to the west of these latest discoveries. These burials were 4th century or so in date (ie of the Roman period) but they did not include weapons or shields. This latest discovery with its two examples of the same kind of ring ditch suggests an ethnic link between the two groups and that therefore the Anglo-Saxon type-burials in the Hyderabad cemetery may have been the dead of descendants of the group whose dead where buried next to the Roman circus maybe a century or so earlier.



Possible Germanic burials found not far south of the circus site. Each burial is represented by a ring or penannular ditch enclosing a pit containing the cremated remains of the dead person.

The date of the two warrior burials at the Hyderabad site appears to belong to the early 5th century, that interesting period at the very end of Roman times in Britain and the start of the Anglo-Saxon one. There is then the tantalising possibility here that they would have lived in the town in Roman times. If they this is true, they will be very significant because they could have been part of some kind of local Roman-period militia.

The apparently close association of these remains with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery discovered in the 19th century appears to sit neatly with the story about the end of Roman Britain which comes down to us largely from two ancient historians, Gildas and Bede. Here the two clerics, one writing in the 6th century and the other c AD 700, describe how peoples from outside the Roman empire, who had been settled in Britain in exchange for military service, came to revolt against their British masters and defeat them thereby opening the way to the conquest of much of eastern and central Britain by their own kind from across the North Sea. Names are revealing too. The word 'English' derives from 'Angle' as does 'Anglia'. Hence some people from Schleswig Holstein – the 'English' – would have settled in East Anglia (because they were 'Angles'). Similarly others from Saxony in northern Germany went to Essex to create the kingdom of the East Saxons (hence comes our word 'Essex').

There are, however, problems with associating our Anglo-Saxons with those of Gildas and Bede. These come about as a result of conflicts with dates and with what is known about the defensive arrangements in late Roman Britain. An alternative explanation is that the group who buried their dead near the south side of the circus were indeed Germanic but they were not some sort of militia. Instead they were simply part of an immigrant Germanic population whose members lived and worked in the Roman-period town for some other reason (or reasons) and whose descendants may or may not have survived the transition of Colchester from a world inside the Roman empire to one outside it. It's all complicated and tentative. However, either way, these burials could be significant in terms of our understanding of the historical development of Colchester and its much wider region.

More work remains to be done on the date and ethnicity of the two warriors whose remains were found on the Hyderabad site since this will help clarify if they were indeed part of the population of the late Roman town or if they belonged to a group of incomers who arrived after the end of Roman Colchester. To this end, we hope to commission some isotope analysis on their teeth to see if their place of origin can be identified and we may also explore their DNA to see if more can be gleaned about their genetic background and familial relationships.

Developer Taylor Wimpey has been working hard with CAT Trust to ensure that these important remains are fully explored and recorded before the site is redeveloped for housing. RPS acted as archaeological consultants to Taylor Wimpey and managed the project on their behalf.







The remains of three houses where Anglo-Saxons would have lived were discovered in the 1970s and early 1980s in Colchester town centre.
Above (top to bottom). Lion Walk (mid 5th century), Lion Walk (6th or 7th centuries), Culver Street (c 7th century).

Below. Reconstruction of an Anglo-Saxon house.





Garrison

In the days before banks

It's not every day a complete coin hoard turns up on an archaeological excavation site. But one did on the Hyderabad site. A small pit filled to the top with over 1,200 Roman coins. Philip Crummy provides some details.

In the days before banks, people would bury their money in pots for safe keeping rather than leave them lying about the house under the bed or in a cupboard. The money would be safe but things could still go wrong. Occasionally, the owners couldn't find it again – imagine the panic! – or sometimes they died without telling anybody where they had hidden their cash.

Something like this must have happened on the site of the Hyderabad and Meeanee barracks on Mersea Road Colchester where in March 2011 we found a hidden stash of 1,247 Roman coins. They lay inside a small grey-ware pot which had been buried in the ground at a slight angle.

The coins are of a type known as antoniniani. The hoard is made up of issues of at least nine Roman emperors ranging from Gallus (251-3) to Victorinus (269-271). The latest coins in the hoard point to a date for its deposition in the early part of AD 271.

The antoninianus started life off as a silver coin issued in the early 3rd century but, by the time of the Hyderabad hoard, it had become very debased and ended up as a copper-alloy coin with a very thin silver coating. Severe inflation reduced its monetary value which is why later antoniniani are common finds on archaeological sites of the third quarter of the 3rd century. The Hyderabad hoard belongs to this period.

Coins from the hoard. Coins of Quintillus (above) and Marius (below).





The burial of coins seems to have been more common in periods of unrest or uncertainty. The 270's was a difficult time in eastern England because of civil war in the Roman Empire and serious raiding along the coast by foreign peoples. This explains why the Hyderabad hoard is not the first hoard of this period to have been discovered in the Colchester area. Over a hundred years ago, one, possibly two, hoards of the date were found in Colchester itself although the precise find spot is not known. Also over 6,000 antoniniani were found in three pottery vessels at Gosbecks in 1983, the latest coins dating to between AD 270 and 274. And some distance from Colchester, a hoard of about 657 antoniniani was discovered at East Mersea in about 1980. This fits the pattern with its latest coins being again in the range of 270 to 274.

When discovered, the Hyderabad hoard was carefully removed intact from the site and excavated indoors so that the positions of all the coins could be studied and recorded as the pot was emptied. The distribution of the coins in the pot in relation to their dates suggest that the coins had all been placed in there at the same time. In other words, no clear evidence was found to suggest that the pot had been used like a piggy bank with coins being added as time passed by. Instead all the coins appear to have been put in

the pot at the same time and then buried. Interestingly many of the coins inside the pot looked as they had been placed in there in little stacks. From this, we can visualise the owner sorting out his money into neat piles on a table so that he could count it accurately before putting the coins in the pot stack by stack.

Samuel Pepys famously recorded in his diary what could go wrong if you had to resort to digging holes to protect your savings. The Dutch fleet was about to sail up the Thames and consequently Pepys, living in London, was worried about his money. So he decides to ask his wife to take £1,300 in gold secretly to his father-in-law's house in Brampton in Huntingdon and bury it there. But, horror of horrors, his father-in-law hadn't a clue how to carry out this relatively easy task. The man simply buried the money in the middle of his front garden and, worse, did it in broad daylight for all to see. A few months later, an anxious Pepys was in the garden himself. He waited until it was dark, lit a candle, and then got to work. He found the buried treasure sure enough but – oh no! – the bag had rotted and, despite some frantic sieving, about 25 coins couldn't be found.

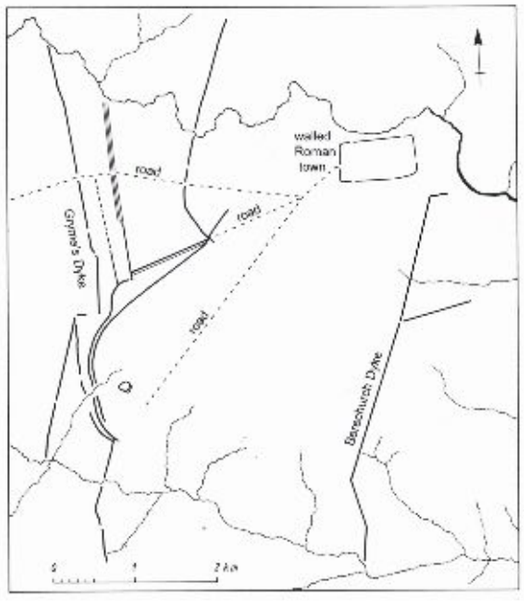
A similar story was in the news recently but there was a tragic side to this particular tale. It concerns a German-Jewish family who fled to Britain ahead of WW2 to escape the Nazis. They were feared that the banks were vulnerable if the Nazis invaded Britain so eighty gold coins ended up buried in a glass jar in the garden of the new family home in Hackney. Unfortunately, the house was subsequently destroyed during a bombing raid and everybody in it lost their lives. No record survived of the exact location of the buried coins and a search in the garden after the war by other family members failed to find them. The missing coins eventually came to light by accident a few years ago when the current owner was digging a hole for a frog pond.

The Hyderabad hoard had not been buried in somebody's garden. Instead it looks as if it had been buried in the side of a field well away from prying eyes. The place where it had been hidden turns out to have been an interesting one because it was part of one of the defensive earthworks which protected pre-Roman Colchester (Camulodunum). This system of earthworks, known as dykes, originated up to a hundred years before the Roman invasion of Britain and the subsequent foundation of Roman Colchester. The Hyderabad hoard had been buried in the upper part of the filling of the ditch of the Berechurch Dyke which, until the recent excavations, had not been traced this far north. The dyke system at Colchester included at least 15 miles of earthworks and represents the largest complex of its type and date in Britain. This latest discovery adds about another half a mile to known extent of the complex.

The discovery of the hoard has been reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme and it is anticipated that in due course the hoard will be judged as being treasure trove and hence in the ownership of Taylor Wimpey as owners of the site. Taylor Wimpey will then donate the hoard to the Colchester Museum and the people of Colchester just as they are doing with all the other finds from their sites on former Colchester Garrison land.



The excavations at the Hyderabad and Meeanee site were carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust on behalf of Taylor Wimpey who have funded all the work. RPS act as archaeological consultants to Taylor Wimpey and manage the project on the company's behalf.



Coins from the hoard. Coins of Postumus (above) and Probus (below).





Garrison

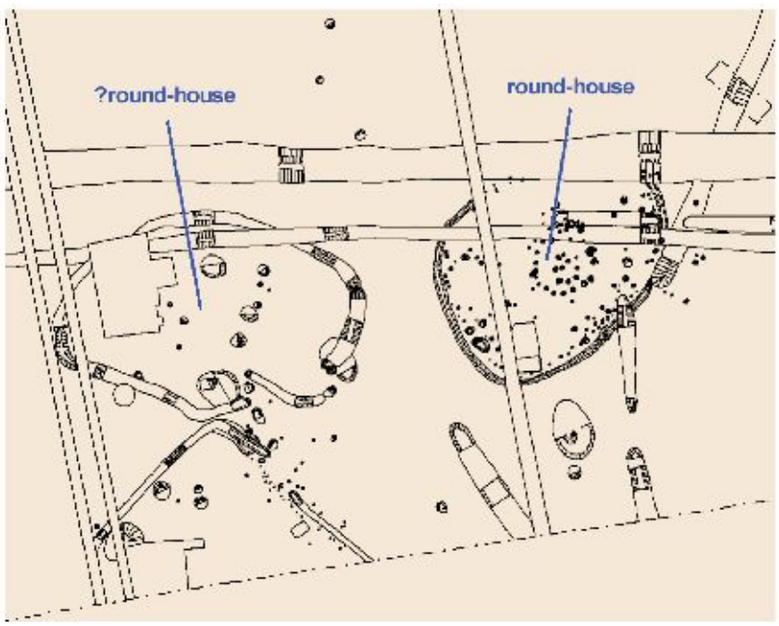
Round-houses

Julius Caesar tells us how the Catuvellauni tribe were at odds with the Trinovantes. Evidence from coinage points to the subsequent expansion of Catuvellaunian influence at the expense of the Trinovantes during the century before the Roman conquest of Britain. Do the recently discovered round-houses in Colchester provide a further indication of this change? Philip Crummy explains.



Camulodunum during the years leading up to the Roman conquest in AD 43 must have had a substantial population. This is obvious from its size and the discoveries over the years of contemporary burials and large quantities of broken pots and other artefacts. But there is a problem. We never seem to find any of the houses they lived in. The recent excavations at the Hyderabad barracks site shed some light on this puzzle with the discovery of the remains of not one but possibly two round-houses (although not so round!).

They are recognisable in the ground by a scatter of filled-in holes which once supported posts inside a shallow circular ditch which apparently served as a drip gully around the outside of the building. The pair from Hyderabad bring the total recognised in Colchester to at least four. A well preserved round-house was found on a site off Ypres Road in 2003. The excavations for Tarmac at the Stanway pit produced traces of a another one, as did other archaeological work nearby in about 2000 on a site called Abbotstone, also for Tarmac.



What is so interesting about these discoveries is their date. The round-houses are all Middle Iron Age which means they predated the Roman conquest by at least a century. In turn, this means that we still have yet to find any good evidence for houses in the later years leading up to the conquest – the period we associate with Camulodunum. The most obvious answer to this puzzle is that the inhabitants in Camulodunum lived in houses which differed to the earlier ones in ways which meant they left few or no traces for us to find.

This change might seem rather trivial. Why should the possibility of different types of houses be significant? It is because this could indicate an important cultural change: a change which could be seen as a manifestation of a 'British' tribe (in our case the Trinovantes) who lived in round-houses being heavily influenced or displaced by a tribe who didn't. In our case, the external tribe would have been the Catuvellauni who originated some time earlier from mainland Europe.

Clearly we need to be sure we are detecting a real pattern before we begin to explore explanations like this. Four, maybe five, Middle Iron Age round-houses and nothing for the following century looks like one. But we need to keep digging.

The way in which tribes on mainland Europe affected widespread cultural change in southern Britain is a big and complicated subject and one which has been exercising archaeologists for a great many years. The discovery of the round-houses at Hyderabad and elsewhere in Colchester is likely to enliven the debate further.

The excavations at Hyderabad are being carried out on behalf of Taylor Wimpey by CAT. Archaeological consultants are RPS.

Circus latest: we're getting there!

Finally, after months of much preparation and planning, work is about to start on Colchester's interpretation centre for Britain's only Roman chariot racing track. If things work to plan, the Trust will buy and move into the upstairs of the former Army Education Centre in late 2011 or early 2012. This will become the Trust's new headquarters. Work should start shortly afterwards on the garden of the Sergeants' Mess with a view to a public opening in the middle of 2012.

The former army building is in need of a lot of repair. Electricity, water, and gas will need to be brought to the building from scratch. It was also badly affected by a serious flood so there is much renovation to do as well.

The interpretation centre is to occupy nearly all the ground floor of the building. A lot of rebuilding work and new infrastructure will be needed to make the new centre. The plan is to replace the flat-roof infill which exists at the back the building with a new block which will consist mainly of a tearoom, a kitchen and toilets. Structural alterations to the main two-storey part of the building will provide a single large exhibition hall on the ground floor for the main displays and interpretation.

The finished centre

When you visit the completed centre, you will be able to find out lots about, not just Colchester's Roman circus, but circuses around the Roman empire. Hopefully you will find the displays informative and entertaining. You will also be able to look into the CAT finds workshop and see how finds are processed as they come off the sites.

Outside you will be able to visit the garden of the former sergeants' mess where you will see a reconstruction of the base of the circus starting gates including some of the original foundations. Two glass screens will provide an artist's reconstruction of the gates superimposed on the stone reconstruction.

A short distance away, there will hopefully be the 'Circus Arena', an enclosed part of the original circus trackway, where on special days there will be events including re-enactments and hopefully Roman racing chariots with horses.

Elsewhere you will be able to walk around the footprint of the circus to see exactly where it once stood and to get a feel for its considerable size. Much of the outline of the circus will be marked on the ground. The ultimate aim is to mark out the footprint in its entirety but this is a long-term aspiration dependent on future redevelopment of various parts of the circus site.

Next big challenge

After the purchase of the former education building, the next big task – our 'Phase 2' will be to create the interpretation centre itself. This will be an expensive process which will consequently need a fresh round of successful fund-raising. Our plan this time is to try to raise the necessary funds from various grant-giving bodies. Our campaign to do this will be off to a good start because we will already own the building for the interpretation centre, we will have a substantial balance of the appeal fund as 'seed money', and we will be actively setting up the displays in the Sergeants' Mess garden as the first step in the creation of a unique and exciting Roman circus interpretation centre in the UK. We aim for a 2013 or 2014 opening but this will depend on how successful we are with the fund raising and how long this takes.

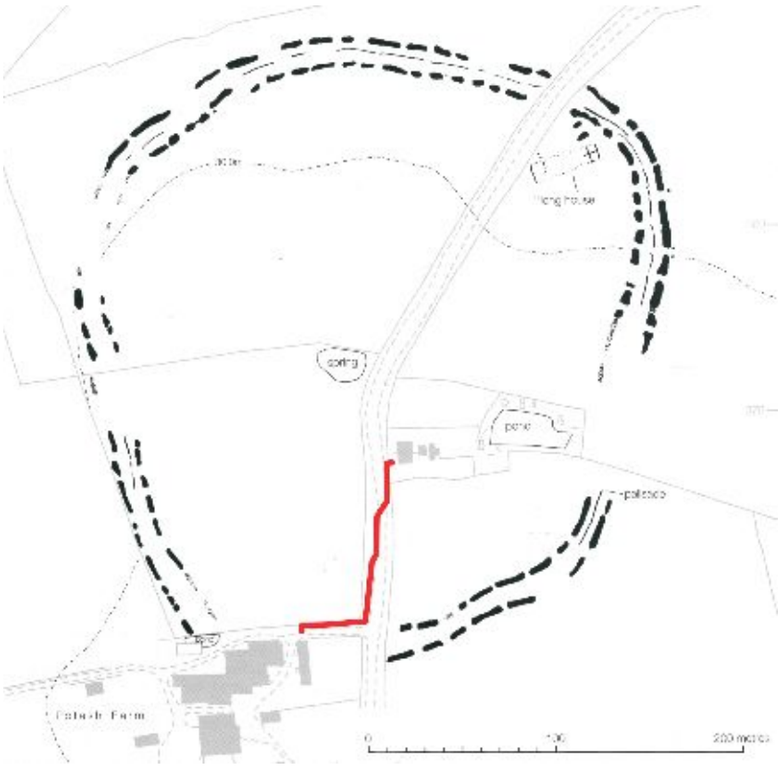


Plan of the proposed circus interpretation centre.

Neolithic monument in Suffolk



Adam Wightman describes a surprisingly-rewarding and interesting CAT project in Suffolk involving an example of a type of earthwork monument constructed over five and a half thousand years ago. These sites are known as causewayed enclosures because of the many gaps in the ditches which formed their perimeters. They are interpreted by archaeologists as having been major tribal focal points constructed in the Neolithic period for ceremonial and political purposes. Recent computer-based research produced the surprising conclusion that all causewayed camps were erected within a relatively short-space of time, ie between about 3700 and 3550 BC.



A welcome move among electricity suppliers, and one intended to make the world a more attractive place, is the practice of 'undergrounding'. This involves the removal of overhead wires from 'telegraph' poles, and the laying of the cables into a newly-dug trench. The telegraph poles are then uprooted and taken away. Of course, archaeology comes into play if the new trench has to be dug through an archaeological site. CAT was called upon to provide archaeological monitoring when EDF Energy Networks were 'undergrounding' a cable to the north of Holbrook in Suffolk in an area of archaeological importance – a Neolithic causewayed enclosure.

The site is a 'cropmark site', first spotted from the air in 1969, and consists of two concentric broad rings with a thin line between them. (Although the site is in Holbrook, it has entered the literature as the 'Freston enclosure'.) These sites are known as causewayed enclosures (and previously as causewayed camps, which may be a more accurate description of what people did there). They are generally assigned to the New Stone Age or Neolithic period which, in Britain, means the period between approximately 4500 and 2500 BC.

Comparison with excavated causewayed enclosures allows us to interpret the two broader



Above left. The cable trench alongside the B1080.

Below left. Plan of the Neolithic causewayed enclosure. The red line shows the route of the cable trench.

Above. Poles and supports have to be dug out by hand before the new cable is laid.

Below. Neolithic blade and scraper (left) and Bronze Age pottery (right)

lines as interrupted ditches and the thinner line as a stout fence (palisade) in between. The word 'causewayed' means that there were causeways across the ditches, allowing dry access to the interior of the enclosure from many points on its perimeter. Very little field investigation has occurred in the enclosure since its discovery through aerial photography, although geo-physical survey has led to the identification of a rectangular structure in the NE corner of the site. Whether this is a contemporary and therefore rare Neolithic house, or an Anglo-Saxon hall (which it may resemble more closely) is unknown, and is a question which could only be answered by excavation.

As the cable was to be laid along the roadside verge, there was a chance that archaeological deposits may have survive there, for the simple reason that the verges have probably not been as heavily plough-damaged as the interior of the enclosure (most of which is currently under cultivation).

The job of inspecting the deposits exposed by the cable trench was hindered by its narrow width (200mm). Despite this, 45 worked flints and a few fragments of prehistoric pottery were re-covered. The flints are Neolithic but the pottery is Bronze Age or later and presumably was related to activities on the site post-dating the life of the causewayed enclosure.

The quantity of flints from such a narrow trench could indicate a relatively high level of human activity in this part of the enclosure. Plainly they relate to the Neolithic monument. More to the point, they vividly demonstrate the value of monitoring trenches for things as every day as an electricity cable, even when they are so narrow.

The monitoring work at Holbrook was funded by EDF Energy Networks.



An Ossian connection in Essex

by Philip Crummy



There is a little domed building hidden away in the grounds of Braxted Hall in Great Braxted. The 200-year-old brick structure is a bit of a mystery. Why was it built and what purpose did it served? The owner of the hall plans to repair the building and undertake some restoration work so he called us in to investigate.

In plan, the building at Braxted Hall has distant echoes of a round Roman temple but it is very plain and primitive by comparison. The structure is practically underground because it was built into an earth dam erected across one end of a small valley to form an artificial lake. The front of the building opens out onto the lake close to the water level. The floor inside the building falls away sharply towards the back to a lower level although there is no sign that water ever flowed through it. A platform of Yorkstone slabs on top of the buildings suggests a later adaption of the building to make a viewing platform or even a summerhouse.

The building has been variously described as an ice house, a bath-house, a hermitage or a cave. However, the map evidence is clear because, on the Ordnance Survey maps published from 1874/5 to at least 1974, the folly is referred to as 'The Cave'. Other evidence takes us further and points to the folly as being not just a cave, not even just an artificial cave – which it is – but a special artificial cave, one with pretensions way beyond its realisation. The Cave at Braxted Park was to be the Ossian connection in Essex – a romantic, but very modest, evocation of Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa in Scotland. Proof of this extravagant claim is not absolute but it is hard to avoid this conclusion when the circumstances are closely examined.

The Braxted folly was probably built between 1804 and 1808 when the grounds of Braxted House were re-landscaped by John Johnson for Peter Du Cane II. There is little about the folly to indicate that it was an ice-house. Structurally it does not resemble one. It stood at an inconvenient distance from the main house and, more to the point, early maps show that the estate did possess such a building and that this was only about 175 m away from main house. Similarly, too, the idea that the folly had been a bathhouse seems unsustainable in terms of the physical remains which survive today.

Four factors are crucial to its interpretation: 1) the likely date of its construction, 2) its relationship to the lake and the water-level in the lake, 3) the fact that it looks like a cave because of the way the folly sits in relation to the earth bank into which it was cut and, above all, 4) the surprising presence inside the building of blocks of basalt.

Above, the entrance to the 'Cave'.

Below. Braxted Park house viewed from the lake.





Left. View of the interior of 'The Cave'

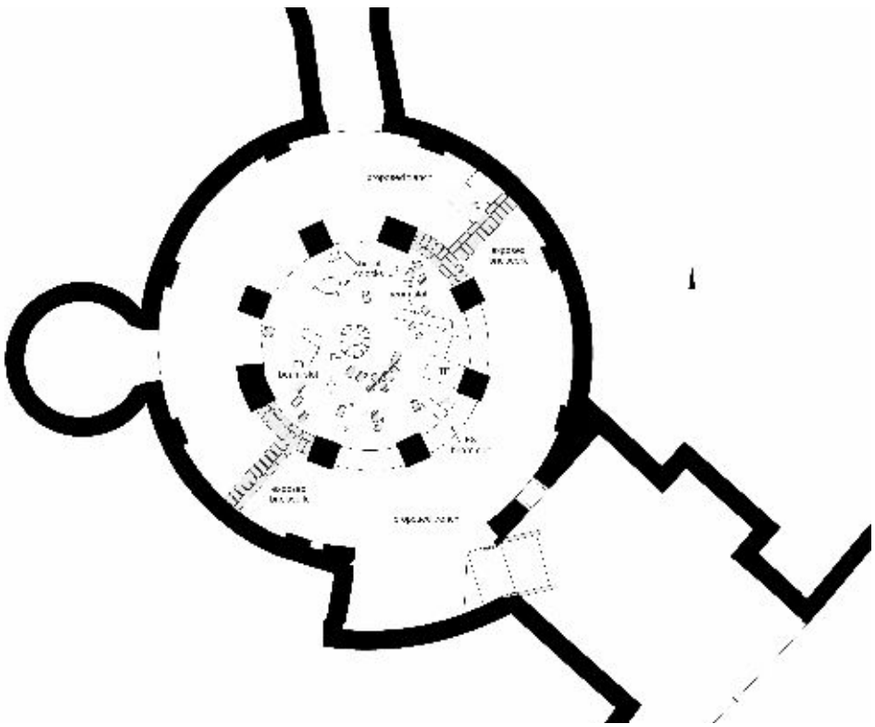
Below. Plan of building.

To understand the folly, we need to go back to the late 17th and 18th centuries. Three key 'discoveries' are very relevant here. These turned out to be gifts to tourism in Scotland and 'Celtic' culture generally and were subjects of considerable academic and popular interest. First came the Giant's Causeway in Ireland in 1692. Then in 1762-5 came Ossian and his epic poems about the Scottish hero Fingal. Finally, only a few years later, in 1772, came Fingal's Cave off the west coast of Scotland. These 'discoveries' all dovetailed beautifully together to produce some compelling mythology about Ireland and Scotland's long-lost Gaelic past set in some of the most romantic natural settings imaginable.

The Giant's Causeway was discovered or at least brought to the public's attention supposedly by the Bishop of Derry in 1692. In academic circles, intense debate followed as to how the causeway had been formed. Possible explanations included natural forces, men with tools, and even a giant named Finn MacCool. In the years to follow, the site became a major tourist centre.

Between 1761 and 1765, James Macpherson famously published his translations of a cycle of ancient Scottish poems which he claimed to have found in oral and documentary forms. The most influential of these was an epic about a heroic Scottish king called Fingal. The poems were very well received and enjoyed considerable international attention (Napoleon and Thomas Jefferson were enthusiasts) although, from the beginning, doubts were expressed about their authenticity. The poems were narrated and supposedly composed by the blind bard Ossian who was Fingal's son. The poems were so highly regarded by some that Ossian was seen as Scotland's equivalent of Homer.

Fingal's Cave, although off the coast of Scotland, is formed from the same volcanic outflows that make up the Giant's Causeway in Ireland and has the same basaltic columns. The cave was a later and accidental 'discovery', this time by botanist Joseph Banks in 1772. It is a sea-cave, meaning that the floor of the cave is provided by the sea. At that time, the cave was practically unknown even in the Hebrides. Banks was bowled over by what he saw and heard – walls of tall columns of black basalt, a high, arched roof, and eerie echoes of the sea.

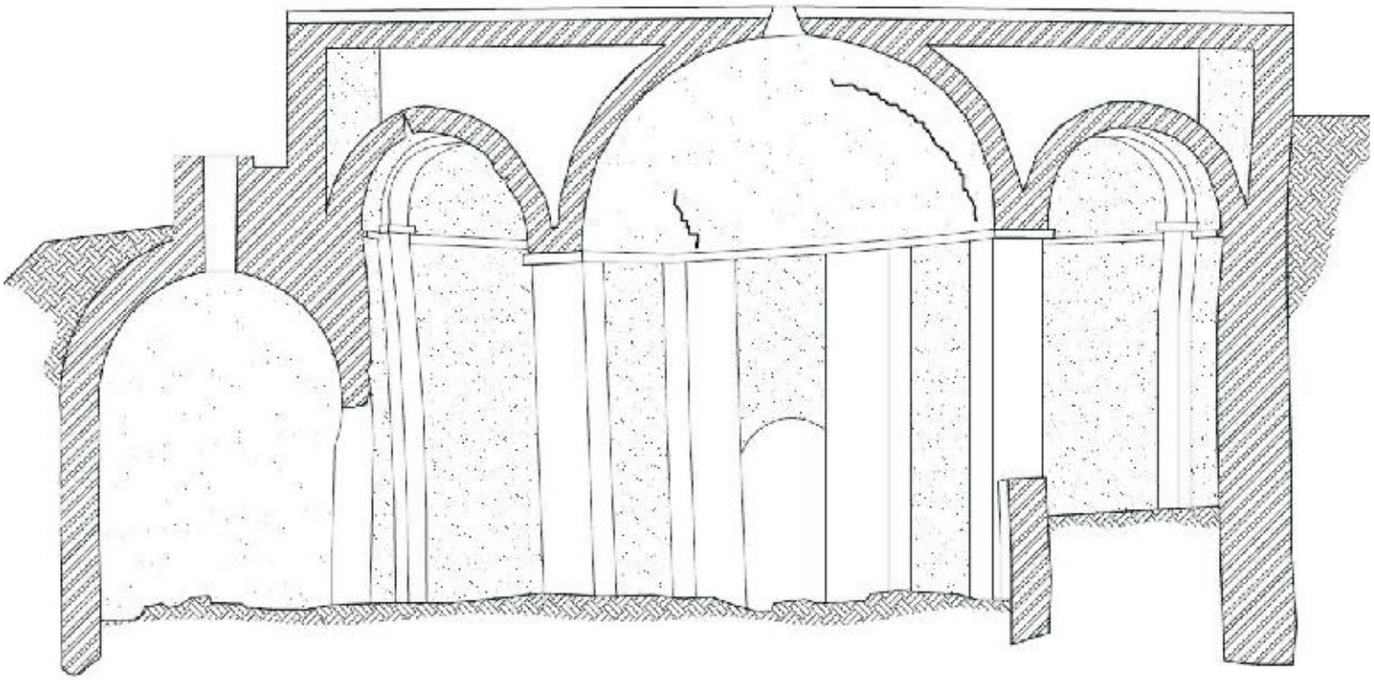


Right. The hexagonal basalt blocks, evocative of Fingal's Cave and the Giants' Causeway.

Below. Fingal's Cave. Photograph reproduced with the kind permission of Richard Toller.







Section through the Braxted folly.

At Fingal's Cave, thin tall columns form the walls and a platform of broken basalt blocks form part of its floor. The similarities at Braxted are obvious. Here columns of brick rather than basalt support its roof and broken basalt blocks lie on its floor.

'Compared to this what are the cathedrals and palaces built by men!', he wrote. The cave soon became famous and, despite being isolated and difficult to reach, developed into a fashionable tourist spot for the affluent. By the time Braxted folly was built c 1805, the public interest in Ossian, Fingal and the Giant's Causeway was intense.

Inevitably, complaints followed about the way its atmospheric solitude was being spoilt by too many tourists. But still they came, including the great and the creative in search of inspiration and a desire to experience the magic of the place. The list is an impressive one and includes Walter Scott (in 1810), John Keats (in 1818), Felix Mendelssohn (in 1829), J M W Turner (in 1832), William Wordsworth (in 1833), Jules Verne (in 1839), Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (in 1847), Alfred Lord Tennyson, Alice Liddell of Alice in Wonderland (in 1878), Robert Adam, David Livingstone (in 1864), and Robert Louis Stephenson (in 1870).

Peter Du Cane II must have been caught up in all the excitement to the extent that he wanted to create his own piece of the legend. Perhaps he, too, had been a visitor to Fingal's Cave. But his creation would not have been unique. There are at least four Ossian caves, in Scotland. Three are natural structures (Glen Coe, Arran, and Aonach Dubh), whereas the famous Ossian Cave in Dunkeld is an 18th-century folly.

It is sometimes said that Fingal's Cave was given its name by Mendelssohn who composed his evocative Fingal's Cave (Hebrides Overture) as a result of his visit there in 1829. If this were true, then this would present us with a problem because it would mean that the Braxted Folly as a cave would have been too early to have been associated with Ossian, Fingal and hence (crucially) blocks of basalt. But Mendelssohn did not give Fingal's Cave its name. The cave was known by this title when Joseph Banks discovered it in 1772. The evidence for this lies in a revised version of a travel book, *A Tour in Scotland, and voyage to the Hebrides 1772*, by a botanist called Thomas Pennant. Published in 1774, the book includes an account by Joseph Banks himself of his discovery of the cave. Banks describes a conversation with one of his guides in which he was told the cave was known as Fingal's Cave. He also gave Pennant permission to publish an engraving of a drawing which John Frederick Miller, one of his draftsmen, made of the cave at the time. The illustration is captioned in Pennant's book as 'Fingal's Cave', leaving no doubt about the early date of the name.

Peter Du Cane II offered a hundred pounds to anybody who would spend a year in his 'cave' in Braxted Park without washing or shaving. Plainly he also saw the building as a hermitage as well as a place to be associated with the Fingal legends. Interestingly and significantly, the builder of the Ossian Cave in Dunkeld tried to find a hermit for his cave too. Apparently Peter Du Cane was successful in his search but, given the occupation was just to be a temporary exercise, it seems that we should be content to regard the building as a folly which was evidently known for many years as simply 'The Cave'.

We are grateful to Mr Duncan Clark of Braxted Park Estate who funded the project and invited CAT to become involved. We are also grateful to the Morton Partnership for their help.

Bronze Age barrows at the University of Essex

by Adam Wightman
and Howard Brooks
with thanks to
Dr Tim Dennis)

In some parts of the country, upstanding prehistoric burial mounds survive in great numbers. But not so in Essex where centuries of arable farming have rendered them all but invisible. However, near the University of Essex there is a remarkable survival of not just one, but a small group of these ancient burial places.

A new 40-acre 'Knowledge Gateway' development is now under way at the University of Essex. It aims to provide research and development and office space for start-up businesses and large companies as well as accommodation for up to 1,300 students.

Part of the development site coincides with the location of a group of five Bronze Age barrows, one on the west side, and four (Barrows A-D) on the east side of both the railway line and Salary Brook close to where it flows into the Colne near the Hythe. However, there may originally have been more than five, since it is possible that others were destroyed during the construction of the railway line in the 1850s. Since the preferred option is to preserve monuments in situ to allow future generations to examine them, the challenge for engineer and archaeologist alike has been to preserve these barrows within the new development.

An evaluation by Essex County Field Archaeology Unit in 2004 was targeted on the barrows, and concluded that one of them (Barrow C) was certainly man-made, but artefacts recovered from the mound interior and surrounding ring-ditch deposits indicated an Iron Age, Roman or later date. However, it was



Right. The two slightly raised circular mounds in the fenced-off area are the remains of two of the Bronze Age barrows (A and B). They are visible as low mounds because the field is flooded.

Below. Part of the site under development.



thought that this material may be the product of later use of an existing Bronze Age monument in the Iron Age or Roman period.

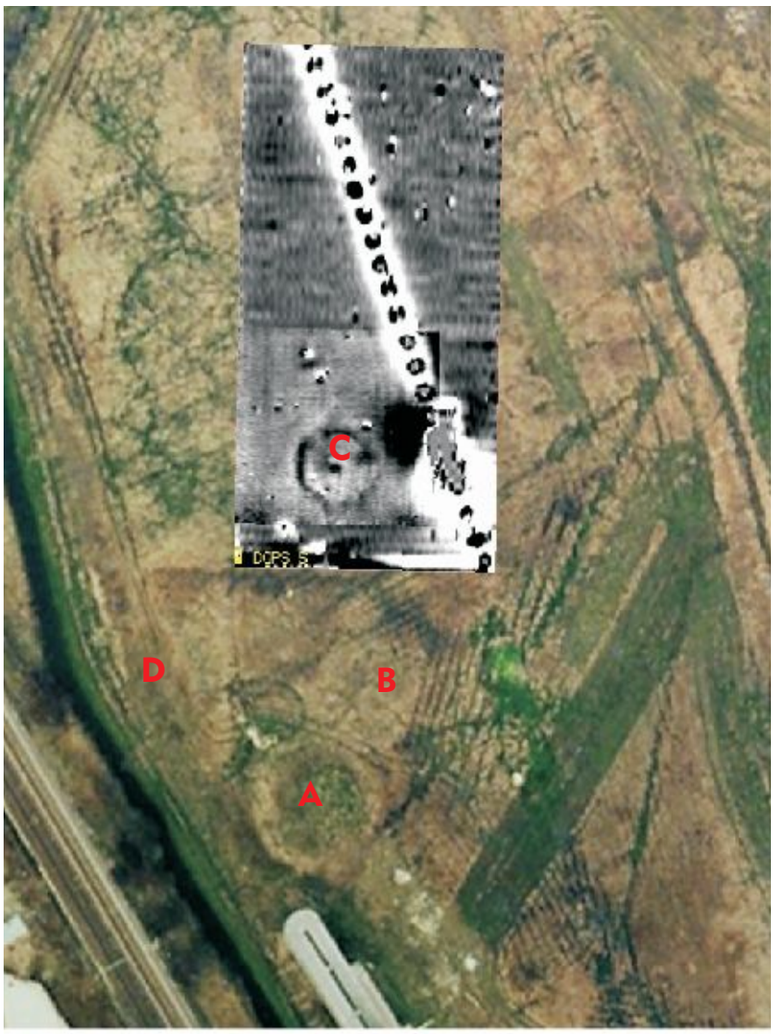
The stripping of topsoil off the construction site gave an opportunity to survey the barrow site, and Dr Tim Dennis of the University of Essex has carried out a geophysical survey. This has been particularly useful in identifying those barrows which did not survive as visible mounds.

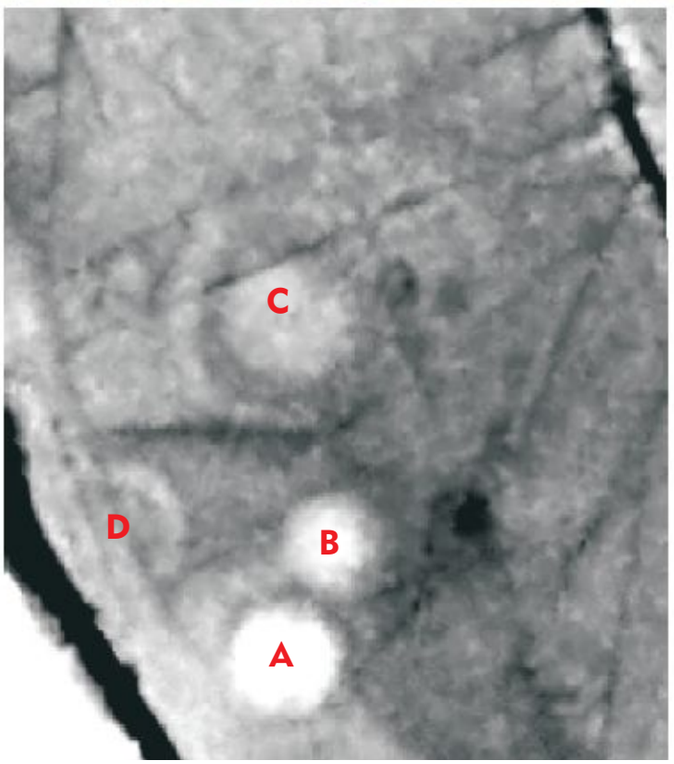
Dr Dennis has plotted the barrows onto a Google Earth air photograph (right). Two barrows (A and B) survive as low mounds and appear in the photograph. Superimposed on it a grey-tone rectangle which is the area of the magnetometer survey. This shows a number of features, the most striking being a row of black dots on a white background. This is actually a water pipe (whose course can be seen continuing to the south as a green stripe), but to its left is a black ring. This is part of a third barrow (C), and the most northerly in this group. It is interesting to note that it has a prominent black dot at its centre. Speculatively, this could be the central burial of the barrow, but it is also likely to be the result of someone digging into the barrow in the hope of finding cremation pots and any associated finds such as jewelry and weapons.

Below right is a LiDAR plot. LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) survey is an optical remote sensing technology that can measure the distance to, or other properties of a target by illuminating the target with light, often using pulses from a laser. This technique has exciting possibilities for archaeology. As the technique measures distance, the plot below can effectively be read as a contour survey. Showing as two white blobs are the first two barrows (A and B). The third barrow which is the prominent ring shown well by Dr Dennis' magnetometry also appears clearly (Barrow C). It is interesting that it seems to have a white area on at least its western side – is this an external bank? The fourth barrow (D) also appears, apparently disturbed or cut off on its western side. There is some indication on the LiDAR plot that there may be an enclosing bank around some of the barrows.

CAT continues to monitor the development as it progresses. So far, this has resulted in the discovery of a Roman cremation vessel, showing the site has a longer history of use as a cemetery than in just the Bronze Age.

The investigation was funded by the University of Essex and made much easier with the help of Jackson Civil Engineering, the contractors, for which we are very grateful.



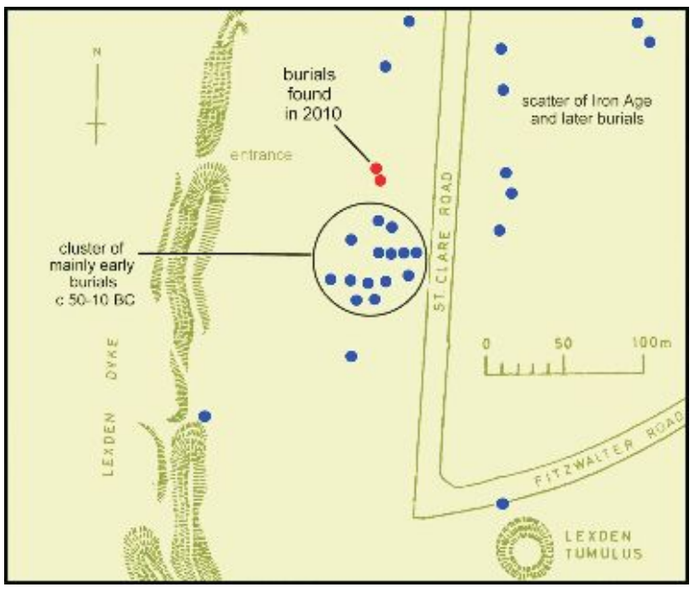


Above right. Google Earth satellite picture with Tim Dennis' survey results superimposed. Courtesy Tim Dennis, University of Essex. Photograph Google Earth and Tele Atlas. Barrows marked A-D.

Right. Raw LiDAR data showing four round barrows which survive as earthworks. Environment Agency 2010. All rights reserved.

St Clare Road's hidden past

by Don Shimmin



Standing ancient monuments, such as the Lexden Tumulus and Lexden Dyke, survive in the vicinity of St Clare Road. However, less conspicuous remains are found there too, including a series of late Iron Age and Roman burials. These are known as the Lexden cemetery, and some of Colchester's earliest known inhabitants are buried there. Donald Shimmin explains how recent building work in St Clare Road has helped our understanding of its archaeology.

The Lexden cemetery area lies just inside Lexden Dyke, a mile or so to the west of the walled area of Colchester town centre. It is known about from finds, mainly of late Iron Age and Roman pottery vessels, collected sporadically over the last 150 years. Many of these finds were discovered during the first quarter of the 20th century, when the suburbs in this part of town were built. Unfortunately most of the finds were poorly recorded and remain largely unpublished.

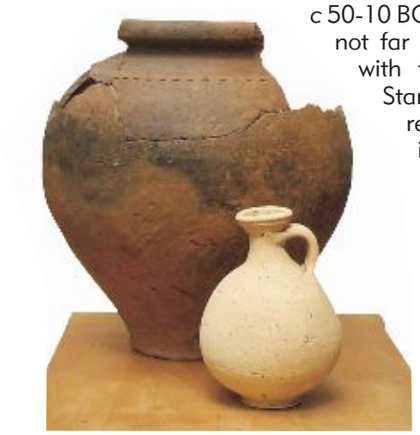
The Lexden Tumulus lies on the southern edge of the cemetery area. It was excavated in 1924 and contained a rich late Iron Age cremation burial dating to c 15-10 BC. Careful plotting of some of the earlier finds suggests that there's a cluster of mainly early cremation burials, dated c 50-10 BC, in the southern part of St Clare Road, not far from the Lexden Tumulus. Together with the early funerary evidence at the Stanway quarry site, these burials represent the earliest known remains of inhabitants of the late Iron Age oppidum of Camulodunum, the precursor of the Roman town.

Any opportunity to get reliably-excavated information from this area is therefore eagerly seized upon. Groundworks at two sites on the western side of St Clare Road were watched by CAT in 2010. At one of these sites, at the southern end of St Clare Road near the junction with Fitzwalter Road, nothing much turned up. However at the other site, roughly half-way down St Clare Road, two cremation burials were uncovered during machine-stripping for an outdoor swimming pool.

In both burials, a pottery vessel contained the cremated human bone. In one of the burials, a flagon had been placed within the large storage jar which served as the urn. The pots date this burial to early in the Roman period, between the mid 1st and the mid 2nd century. The pot from the other burial is less closely datable, but belongs to later in the Roman period. A scatter of other, mostly early Roman, potsherds came from the site and were probably derived from disturbed burials and/or associated funerary activity.

The burials confirmed that although the Lexden cemetery area originated in the late Iron Age, it continued in use well into the Roman period. Unlike the cluster of early cremation burials to the south of the site, the Roman burials seem to be scattered more widely across the cemetery area. Excavations in 1932 suggested that there was an entrance through Lexden Dyke adjacent to the site. An east-west Roman road probably extended through this entrance and passed close to the site. The recently-discovered finds once again indicate that the preferred location for Roman burials was alongside the main road out of town.

The watching brief was commissioned by Mr R Carbiner.



The urn and flagon from one of the burials found recently in St Clare Road. The urn is 320 mm high.



Moving the boundaries

St Leonard's Church on Hythe Hill

by Adam Wightman and Howard Brooks

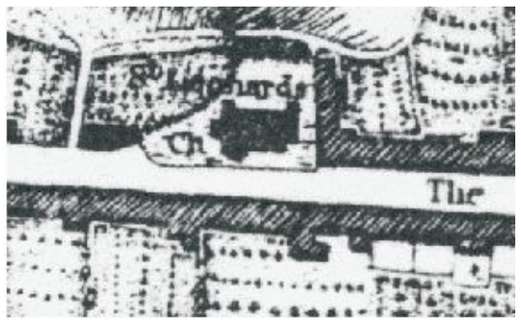
The southern boundary wall of St Leonard's was sagging and needed to be strengthened. In advance of contractors working on the repair work, CAT archaeologists dug a trench along the rear face of the wall to allow a closer inspection of the problem brickwork. The trench cut mostly through soil which had previously been disturbed and which contained many fragments of human bone. Why was the soil disturbed and where did the bone come from?

As each grave was dug, a substantial amount of soil was brought to the surface. This may originally have been mounded up over the grave, but gradually it tended to become dispersed over the churchyard. That is the reason why ground level often appears relatively high inside a churchyard. Over time, the ground level rises and the earlier graves become more deeply buried, and newer graves are inadvertently placed on top of them. This leads to stray fragments of human bone ('charnel') finding their way into the surrounding soil layers and coming to light when new graves are dug.

The church has traditionally had a pragmatic policy for dealing with charnel, and the larger religious houses used to place it in rooms (often the undercrofts) which were known as charnel houses. Our policy is that we also ensure that bone is reburied on site. This is not only the natural and respectful thing to do, but it also complies with legislation forbidding the removal of human remains from a place of burial (unless a license has been granted for this purpose).

However, the density of bone fragments found in the 2010 work seemed too high to merely represent charnel. A likely explanation is based on a study of old maps (right). These show that when the current graveyard wall was constructed, part of the southern edge of the graveyard was removed to widen Hythe Hill and allow the alignment of the graveyard wall with the rest of the street frontage. The graveyard can be seen to protrude out into Hythe Hill in the Chapman and André map of 1777. However, in the Ordnance Survey map of 1881, the wall appears to be straight and more in line with the road up Hythe Hill. (The southern porch of the church also appears to change at the same time). The removal of the soil in this area of the graveyard may have resulted in the collection of the large quantity of fragmented human bone subsequently placed in the foundation trench for the new wall, and the spreading of soil from these excavations over the southern edge of the graveyard (which may explain the thickness of deposits here). Indeed some of the gravestones currently leant against the western wall of the graveyard may have come from this lost area of graveyard. So based on the map evidence, we can infer that the large amount of human bone is the result of the straightening of the boundary wall to allow parishioners to walk down Hythe Hill without the need to step on to the road.

Chapman and André map of 1777 (above) shows the churchyard protruding into Hythe Hill, whereas an Ordnance Survey map of 1881 (below) shows that the churchyard wall has been moved back by this date.





The Colchester Archaeologist on the web



The Colchester Archaeologist has gone on-line as part of a reorganisation of the CAT websites. The magazine now has its own website – www.thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk – which replaces the Trust's www.catuk.org. **The Colchester Archaeologist** will continue to be published annually in the normal way but some of the material in it will also appear on the web in a reduced form. The website has been launched to extend the readership of the magazine and make it easier for people to keep up to date with the news about the latest archaeological discoveries in Colchester.

The Friends of CAT are also affected by the changes because its website has closed down and been replaced. You can now find the Friends on the new website under the '*Friends of CAT*' tab on the front page. This is where you will find information about forthcoming Friends' events, subscription rates, and so on.

Please continue to support the Friends and the printed version of **The Colchester Archaeologist**. It is important that the magazine continues to thrive. There are lots of people who prefer the printed page to the computer screen and you will find more information and pictures in the magazine than you will on the website. As a member of the Friends, you will in effect be supporting the magazine because you will continue to receive a copy of it as part of your membership.



Competition prize giving



Earlier this year (2011), we welcomed all the 2010 competition winners to our offices to Lexden Road to receive their prizes. With families and friends, they made quite a crowd. Earlier that day, the first-prize winners were given a tour of excavations being run by the Colchester Archaeological Group at Wormingford on the site of a 16th-century hunting lodge. All three winners were able to try their hand at digging which, despite the cold weather, they obviously enjoyed.

The photographic competition was won by David Eade. The winning entries for the children's writing and drawing competitions were published in last year's magazine including the names of the winners. (See also Kids' Zone at thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk.) All of these entries plus many others were on display earlier in the year in an exhibition in the public library in Trinity Street.

Many thanks to everybody who entered. The standard was amazingly high so don't be disappointed if you weren't one of the lucky winners!

Spoil heap

The annual roundup of last year's work by Ben Holloway





Once again, its time for **The Colchester Archaeologist** 2011 and another edition of Spoil Heap, the annual roundup of the Trust's expeditions and activities in Colchester and beyond. This past year has been busy and has seen teams from the Trust working not only in Essex but across East Anglia. Trust archaeologists have braved, among other things, sub-zero temperatures (one of the coldest winters on record), boggy fields and temperamental transport. All this was in pursuit of archaeological excitement across three counties, as well as our more familiar surroundings in and around Colchester.

Work further afield this year has included trips deep into the East Anglian countryside, with projects in Norfolk and Suffolk. There was a common theme to many of these projects, as recently seems to have been a flurry of farmers wanting to put new reservoirs on their land. The following projects were all agricultural in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

Breck Farm, Stody (near Holt, Norfolk)

This is first of the reservoirs and our furthest outing of the year. Indeed much further north and we would have ended up in the North Sea. It was a slightly unusual project as it involved absolutely no digging. The site of a proposed reservoir was archaeologically surveyed by fieldwalking and metal-detecting. The site was massive, 9.63 hectares, but the work recovered very few finds. The fieldwalking survey produced three post-medieval pottery sherds, a prehistoric struck flint and seven brick or tile fragments, and the metal-detecting survey recovered some three items of metalwork: not a lot for two days' work. The majority of the metalwork consisted of agricultural ironmongery (bits of tractor, horse shoes etc) dating to the 18th-20th centuries (not surprising given the size of the survey area). The only significant find was a World War II American Air Force copper-alloy cap badge. This may seem an unusual find in the middle of a field, but given the number of USAAF bases in this part of the world during the war, perhaps not unexpected.

Stratton Hall, Levington

Another agricultural reservoir – this was the first of our Suffolk outings for this edition of Spoil Heap. The site was located in pasture on the banks of the river Orwell. The trenching scheme was targeted as a result of prehistoric activity on higher ground to the north of this site. The evaluation produced little of archaeological significance. Of the fifteen features identified, the majority were modern or post-medieval in origin, and were mostly associated with drainage. This was unsurprising given the conditions underfoot. Of the 21 evaluation trenches excavated, the majority were brimming with water the next morning, and two filled almost as quickly as we were able to open them. The rate at which the trenches filled indicates why the evidence for prehistoric activity is on the higher ground to the north. After all, nobody likes having wet feet!

Above. Carringtons Farm, Great Bromley.

Below. Stratton Hall, Levington.





Wherstead, Ipswich.

Wherstead, Ipswich

More evaluation trenching in Suffolk and more work in advance of a reservoir. Again this was overlooking the river Orwell, but this time on a ridge above the river. Documentary evidence suggested that late Iron Age and Roman activity had been identified on the other side of Vicarage Lane in the grounds of Redgate House, so hopes were high. We were, however, disappointed. Only thirteen features were recorded and of these only three could be dated. One of the dated features was a Romano-British pit, and Roman material was recovered from the plough soil. This suggests that there was activity nearby, just not in our evaluation area. I guess that we will have to try harder next time….

Carringtons Farm, Great Bromley

We are in Essex for the last of our agricultural projects for 2011. Evaluation trenching was carried out on a 6.5 hectare site in Gt Bromley, prior to the construction of a reservoir. The evaluation work found relatively little of archaeological significance. Although the work was able to identify and confirm the locations of a number of cropmarks, most of these proved to be former field boundary ditches. However, the evaluation did confirm the position of a prehistoric enclosure, also identified as a cropmark. Further evidence of prehistoric activity included an assemblage of worked flints collected from the field surface. We were lucky with our work at Gt Bromley, the evaluation falling between two periods of heavy snow and freezing conditions just before Christmas. The bad weather made the recovery of the site hut impossible until the end of January!

West Hanningfield

Another evaluation and another reservoir site, although this time on a much larger scale. The site at Hanningfield needed to be evaluated before the upgrading of the water treatment works and the construction of new ecological filter systems (reed beds). Our work identified two archaeological sites within the area. First, Bronze Age activity in the centre of the site, and second, late Iron Age or Roman activity in the eastern part of the site. Only pits and ditches were uncovered, suggesting an agricultural landscape, but no buildings contemporary with them were found. The settlements appeared to lie outside the evaluation area and, who knows, perhaps one day further investigation may pinpoint their locations.

Westerfield, Ipswich

Another Suffolk project and a return trip to Westerfield, a site which in 2009 was of one of the largest (and possibly the coldest) trial trenching projects that we have ever carried out. In fact at 43.4 hectares, with 395 trenches at a total length of a little over 12 km, this project is second only to the 2002 Garrison evaluation as one of the Trust's largest evaluation projects ever. This return trip was to collect additional environmental samples from features pinpointed in the 2009 evaluation. This has helped to highlight areas of the site that are of archaeological interest, with a view to further investigation and in due course excavation.

Friars Lane, Maldon

This site lies within the historic medieval core of Maldon, and east of the site traditionally identified as the 10th-century *burh*. An evaluation revealed areas of clay and a metalled yard cut by post-medieval and modern pits. Hopes were high that medieval or even Anglo-Saxon remains might be found during the excavation of pile caps, footing beams and utility runs. No evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity was found, perhaps because the focus of the Anglo-Saxon settlement lies further to the north and west of the site. No certain medieval features were revealed, although the clay identified in



Right. Friars Lane, Maldon.

evaluation may have been the floor of a previously unidentified late medieval structure. However, a quantity of residual medieval pottery was found in later post-medieval features. This is probably the result of domestic rubbish being dumped into the back gardens of medieval properties on the street frontages.

Sewards End

This was a return to an old project: the recently restored Sewards End farmhouse. No archaeologically-sensitive material was identified when CAT archaeologists monitored underpinning works in 2007 at this Grade II listed structure. The continuation of the project with the excavation of stormwater drains across the farmyard was monitored. It progressed in a similarly archaeology-free manner, as the ground level had been reduced substantially at some point (presumably to level the site). However, the project did attract attention from an unexpected source on the other side of the planet…. Australia. We were contacted by members of the family who had once held the farm and who had left Essex in the late 19th century. They were compiling a family history and were interested in any information regarding the farm and its restoration. Fascinating that a fairly quiet job can attract attention from so far away.

As well as these and other projects across East Anglia, this year, as always, there has been lots of work closer to home. As usual it seems that you can't put a spade into the ground in Colchester without finding something archaeological.

Colchester Royal Grammar School

A familiar location, CRGS lies in an area of Roman cemeteries on one of the main Roman roads into and out of Colchester. Previous discoveries in the school grounds have included Roman burials and a temple tomb. This most recent evaluation site is north of a Roman road, and immediately south of the Roman 'walled cemetery' discovered in the CRGS grounds in the 1940s. The evaluation trenches should have contained the gravel surfacing of a Roman road, but did not. Instead, a robber trench was revealed. There may be two possible explanations for this. First, the cemetery has been plotted too far to the north and this robber trench marks its south wall. Second, the road gravel has been removed by gardening or landscaping activities. No Roman burials were revealed. But further work is anticipated as part of the modernization of the VI form common room and the construction of new laboratory facilities, so additional visits are likely.

Lower Castle Park

Monitoring of foundation trenches for a temporary art installation, 45m north of the Roman town wall and 60m south of the river Colne, close to the boating lake, revealed a post-medieval pit and ditch, one of which contained a residual fragment of Roman tile. The ditch is visible on aerial photographs as an east-west orientated mark, and may be a post-medieval field boundary whose subsequently backfilling incorporated Roman material. Unfortunately the archaeological work was in vain as shortly before the artwork was to be moved from its previous location on the south coast, it was set alight and destroyed by arsonists. Suppose there's no accounting for taste.

St Helena School

The site lies within a SAM (scheduled ancient monument) on the eastern side of the important Late Iron Age and early Roman site at Sheepen. This is the northern focus of the *oppidum* of Camulodunum, and until recently has been a major site of archaeological work as part of the redevelopment of Colchester Institute. The recent evaluation took place in the grounds of St Helena School prior to the redevelopment of the school's dyslexia unit. The St Helena site contains a number of important Roman features including two temples. The eastern *temenos* wall of Temple 2 was observed in recent work, 35m to the west of the evaluation area. The trenching revealed pitting and a compacted gravel surface. It is possible that the gravel is surfacing associated with activity at the Roman temple. As the project develops, archaeologists from the Trust will be back to monitor the ground works for the new unit, so hopefully the precise relationship of the gravel to the temple will become clear.

St John's Green

A Roman coin and a farthing of Charles II were found by a local enthusiast with a metal detector during renovation and extension work to No 33 (close to St Johns Abbey Gate). These were reported to CAT via the Finds Liaison Officer at the museum service. Observations within the footings exposed an inhumation grave cut and three large pits. The removal of the garden soil to the west of the extension exposed the base of a brick wall, beneath which was observed a rare survival: the stone remains of the precinct wall of the former Benedictine abbey.

Town Hall

Archaeological work in the town centre seems to be a bit of a rarity these days, so it was with great interest that we went to monitor ground-works associated with a new disabled access at the rear of the Old Library in the former graveyard of St Runwald's church. The graveyard was said to have been 'cleared' in the late 19th century before building work began on the town hall. However, it quickly became apparent that the clearance had not been particularly thorough as a large quantity of disarticulated human bone was collected for re-burial. In addition the remains of two headstones, one 18th century and the other undated, were also uncovered during the course of the work. This suggests that you shouldn't always believe what you are told.

The Friends of Colchester Archaeological Trust

Annual roundup by Brenda May (Social Secretary)

Castle Acre

Our first trip in 2010 was to Castle Acre in Norfolk on May 8th. I hadn't booked myself on this visit as I was supposed to be in South Australia then, but the Icelandic volcanic eruption put paid to those plans when my flight was cancelled, and by that time, the coach was fully booked! However, all was not lost, as Mike and Gill Corbishley asked me to accompany them on a 'recce' to Castle Acre the week before the planned trip.

We stopped off on the way at Cranwich in order to visit the round-towered church of St.Mary with its thatched roof and Norman nave, set in a wooded clearing. The Saxon tower is one of the most ancient in East Anglia and had a top added around AD 1000. High up here are small circular openings to allow the sound of the bells to be heard. Inside, the church is plain, with a simple wooden tympanum forming the chancel arch. In the front of the sanctuary is an elaborately carved stone which is a medieval stone altar slab with consecration crosses, possibly a relic of the church's Catholic history.

Castle Acre is a Norfolk village famous for its Castle and Priory, both now in ruins. They are a reminder of the past, and are one of the best examples of a Norman settlement in the country. Now only the walls and ramparts of the castle remain, an impressive sight whichever way you access the site from the bottom looking up, or the top looking down. The Bailey Gate arches over the northern entrance into the town.

After exploring the castle ruins and stopping for lunch, we walked down to see the ruins of Castle Acre Priory – as the Prior's Lodging is the main upstanding building, it was possible to access the original stairs to the first floor to get a view of the rest of the site. There are still significant remains of the priory church, and the monastic buildings, including the cloisters.

We were lucky that it was a warm and sunny day. Unfortunately the following Saturday when



the Friends arrived for their visit, it was cold and wet, so much so, that Jane feared hypothermia setting in! However, the Friends are a stoic bunch and everyone seemed to enjoy it. We are indebted to Mike Corbishley for the time he gives and the care and detail he takes in the preparation of these trips.

Roman Silchester

Our second trip of 2010 on the 24th July was to Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) near Reading. While the weather was perfect, the journey was horrendous – the M25 living up to its reputation – so we were an hour late arriving. We were met by Professor Mike Fulford and his team from the University of Reading who gave us an excellent tour, explaining the town layout and pointing out remains of shops and workplaces. Some of the finds shown to us were brooches, Iron Age coins, a coin mould and evidence of rare marbled samian.

Our visit finished off with a walk round the town walls and a visit to the amphitheatre. Luckily for us, the church was supplying tea and cakes that afternoon and most us of took full advantage of this to sustain us for the journey back to Colchester.

Caistor St Edmund talk

In spite of the snow, about 60 Friends enjoyed an informative illustrated talk by Dr Will Bowden in November about the Roman town of Caistor St Edmund. As Associate Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University of Nottingham, he is on site for a few weeks every summer with his students for further excavations.

Basically he poses three questions. What are the origins of the site, what did the Roman town look like, and what happened to it during the Anglo-Saxon period? During the 2009 excavations at the nearby St Edmunds church, several late Roman features were found and a lot of writing implements (*stylii*) and samian inkwells. Excavations also revealed 4th-century burials where the bodies had been huddled up and laid on their sides. A visit to the site is being arranged for 3rd September 2011. Some tickets are still available at time of writing.

AGM and annual roundup

At the Friends Annual Lecture held on the 29th January 2011, Jane Meech confirmed that she would be resigning from the post of Chairman and the committee. Mark Davies will be the new Chairman and Brenda May will take over as Social Secretary. Gabrielle Chadwick also resigned as Membership Secretary and was replaced by David Walton. Frank Black took over as Minute Secretary from Mick Meech. Mark thanked Jane for all her work for the Friends. As usual the meeting was well attended with about 100 Friends keen to hear presentations by the Trust's team on the work undertaken in 2010. Speakers were Ben Holloway (Garrison), Adam Wightman (Bronze Age burial mounds on University of Essex land, Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Holbrook, Braxted Park folly) and Chris Lister (Westerfield in Ipswich update). Many thanks to the above for giving up their free time to take part in this afternoon's talks.



Footnote:

Interestingly we have some weddings coming up at the Trust. Chris (and Sharon), Adam (and Anna) and Ben and Emma all tie the knot within the coming year, as will former CAT archaeologist Kate Orr in September. Our congratulations and best wishes go to them all.

Above. Castle Acre with Mike Corbishley in the rain.

Below. Roman Silchester with Professor Mike Fulford in the sun.

