

ARCHAEOLOGY IN SUFFOLK

A celebration of 60 years of reporting Suffolk's archaeology



A two-day conference sponsored by



Suffolk Institute
of Archaeology
& History



East
Anglia



Archaeological
Service



27th-28th March 2010

at University Campus Suffolk

Waterfront Building, Neptune Quay, Ipswich IP4 1QJ

2010 is the 60th anniversary of the compilation of the first of what has become an annual list the archaeological discoveries, excavations and surveys in Suffolk. Since 1955 it has been entitled 'Archaeology in Suffolk' and has been a major source of authoritative and up-to-date information about the county's archaeology. This conference will celebrate this anniversary by presenting an overview of the current state of knowledge about Suffolk's heritage – with an emphasis on interpretation, meaning and new directions. It is intended that the proceedings will subsequently be published as a monograph.

Suffolk's story starts about 700,000 years ago with the earliest evidence of humans in northern Europe. The conference will start at this distant time and will carry the story through the succeeding millennia down to our own recent past.

Saturday 27th am : Session 1 : Chairman: Edward Martin, Chairman, Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History

10.00 am **Welcome and introduction**

4 Talks (30 minutes each):

10.15. **The cold front: the early human colonisation of north-west Europe** – Nick Ashton, British Museum

The colonisation of northern Europe presented challenges to early humans through colder winters, shorter growing seasons and at times impenetrable dense forests. New evidence from sites in Suffolk and Norfolk is now throwing light on how these challenges were met and has pushed back the first occupation of northern Europe to over 700,000 years ago.

10.45. **The Suffolk River Valleys Project – understanding the palaeoenvironmental potential, and implications for future research** – Will Fletcher, English Heritage

This project (sponsored by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund administered by English Heritage, and undertaken jointly by SCCAS and Birmingham University) set out to characterise the palaeo-environmental potential of Suffolk's river-valley wetlands through a programme of sampling, laboratory-based analysis and radiocarbon dating. This has provided a unique understanding of the value of this resource in East Anglia, and its potential to provide an insight into human interaction with the landscape. The implications of this work for future development and research will also be discussed.

11.15. Coffee break (30 minutes)

11.45. **A monumental landscape revealed: Flixton in the Neolithic and Bronze Age** – Stuart Boulter, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS)

A decade of excavation at Flixton Park Quarry in north Suffolk has uncovered evidence of a landscape rich in monuments of the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. The majority, but not all, of these were associated with funerary activities, either as their primary use or as a focus for later burials. The Neolithic component includes the first long barrow and timber circles to be identified in Suffolk, and the Bronze Age component includes no less than 14 ring-ditches displaying a range of burial practices, some unique to this site.

12.15. **Continuity and change: an examination of the Bronze Age in Suffolk** – Dr Colin Pendleton, SCCAS

Recent fieldwork has resulted in many new Bronze Age discoveries in Suffolk and this paper will couple this evidence with the results of a detailed analysis of the material for which this region is renowned – its artefacts. By using a thematic approach it is intended to illustrate a new and greater understanding of the period than has previously been possible.

12.45. **Discussion and questions** (15 minutes)

13.00. **Lunch** (1 hour)

Saturday pm : Session 2 : Chairman: Dr Andrew Rogerson, Chairman, Council for British Archaeology East Anglia Group

5 talks (30 minutes each):

14.00. **Pots, practice and identity - investigating the earlier Iron Age in Suffolk through ceramics** – Matt Brudenell, Dept of Archaeology, University of York

As more Iron Age pottery is recovered from excavations in East Anglia, it is increasingly apparent that the systems of classification that have been used for the past 40 years to organise the ceramic sequences and site chronologies are inadequate. This is particularly true for the earlier first millennium BC, where the conventional approach of 'typing' pottery by style-group has blinded us to other patterns in the ceramic data. This paper offers a review of the earlier Iron Age ceramic sequence in Suffolk, and explores new patterns that are emerging from a study of some of the county's largest pottery groups.

14.30. **Drowning in data or filling in the gaps? The Roman period in Suffolk** – Jude Plouviez, SCCAS

Compared to prehistory and to the subsequent early Anglo-Saxon period the first four centuries AD have a proliferation of sites and artefacts of many kinds. Integrated studies of this huge and apparently ever expanding dataset in Suffolk are still relatively rare, and sometimes it is the gaps in the evidence that stimulate new research directions.

15.00. Tea break (30 minutes)

15.30. **Early Anglo-Saxon** (title to be confirmed) – Dr Jess Tipper, SCCAS

16.00. **Urban origins** – Keith Wade, SCCAS.

60 years ago little was known about the origins of Suffolk's towns. Little information illuminated the gap between the collapse of Roman rule in the early 5th century and 1086, when Domesday Book recorded a number of places which were probably towns because of their size and/or the possession of a market. Just how long before 1086 these towns were founded has slowly emerged since the 1950s. Ipswich is now known to be our earliest Suffolk town and one of the earliest in England. Information on the other towns is still scanty but excavations in Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury have suggested likely development models.

16.30. **The ecclesiastical landscape in Suffolk in the Middle and Later Anglo-Saxon periods** – Dr Tim Pestell, Norwich Castle Museum

Understanding of the Church in Anglo-Saxon England has been transformed in the last three decades, both through re-examination of the limited documentary sources and an expansion in archaeological fieldwork. This paper will attempt to summarise how our understanding of Suffolk's ecclesiastical landscape has developed and what this tells us about East Anglia in the Anglo-Saxon period more generally.

17.00. **Discussion and questions.**

18.00. **Wine reception**

Sunday 28th am : Session 3 : (chairman to be confirmed)

4 talks (30 minutes each):

10.00. **Suffolk's pre-Viking place-names** – Dr David Parsons, University of Nottingham

A discussion of what types of name might be considered to belong to the early Anglo-Saxon period, and why. Name-types will be examined in the light of Suffolk's archaeology and the earliest Anglo-Saxon documentation.

10.30. **Norman Suffolk** (title to be confirmed) – Dr Lucy Marten, UEA

11.00. Coffee break (30 minutes)

11.30. **The fabric of the medieval church in Suffolk: secrets and lies** – Robert Carr, Diocesan archaeologist

'Silly Suffolk' is renowned for its wealth of church building. This lecture will explore the fabric, stone and flint of some typical examples dating from the Norman period and beyond.

12.00. **'Farms scattered or gathered': the interpretation of the landscape of medieval Suffolk** – Edward Martin, SCCAS

Suffolk's rural landscape in the Middle Ages abounded in farmsteads – some standing together, some grouped around greens, some standing alone within their own groups of fields, and some of them were distinguished by being moated. This will be an examination the complex evidence for their origins and the significance of their forms, their landscape associations and their distribution patterns.

12.30. **Discussion and questions**

13.00. Lunch (1 hour)

Sunday pm : Session 4 : Chairman: Chairman: Dr Harvey Osborne, History, UCS

3 talks (30 minutes each):

14.00. **Evidence of industrial activity in late medieval buildings** – Leigh Alston, architectural historian

Suffolk retains an exceptionally high proportion of its late medieval timber-framed buildings. Many contain evidence of commercial manufacturing and semi-industrial activities such as baking and brewing. The increasing coordination of structural analysis and below-ground archaeology in recent years has proved of great benefit to both, and has important implications for future policy.

14.30. How old is an historic landscape? – Professor Tom Williamson, UEA

Although archaeologists and historians are often keen to emphasize the antiquity of the landscapes they study, much of the countryside, in Suffolk as elsewhere, was created in relatively recent times. How should we treat recent landscapes, and recent landscape features? How much value should we attach to the historic landscapes of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries? In what ways and why is a 19th-century Scots pine row, or a 20th-century smallholding, less significant in historic terms than a medieval field pattern?

15.00. Tea break (30 minutes)

15.30. The Defence of Walberswick, 1940: Wartime Archaeology and Computer Reconstruction – Dr Robert Liddiard, UEA

This paper will investigate the archaeology of Second World War Coastal Defence in and around Walberswick in Suffolk. As well as discussing the development of wartime defence works it also examines the issues surrounding the use of computer technology in reconstructing lost defence landscapes.

16.00. **Discussion and sum up** (30 minutes)

16.30. **End.**