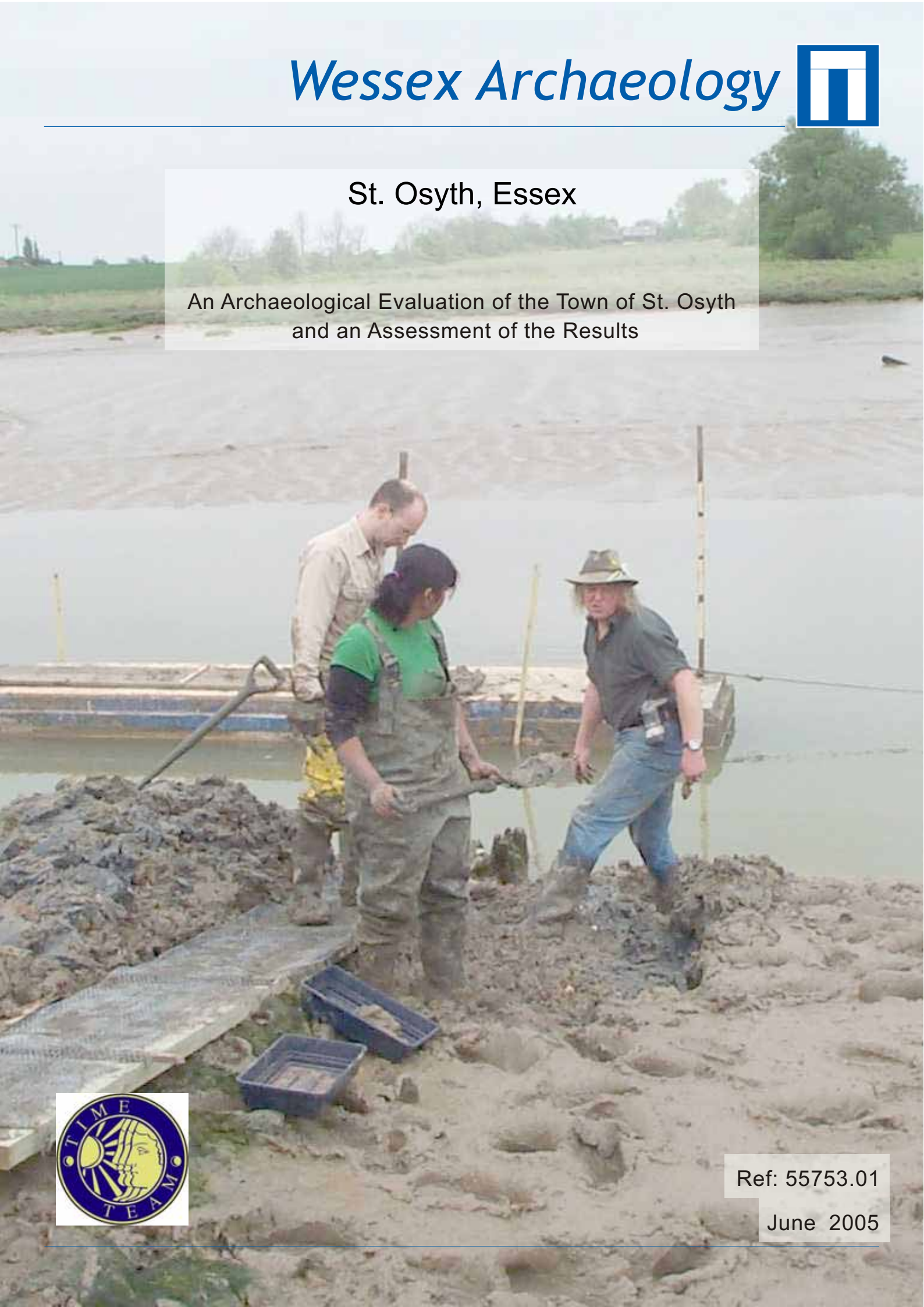
Wessex Archaeology

St. Osyth, Essex

An Archaeological Evaluation of the Town of St. Osyth and an Assessment of the Results



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ST OSYTH, ESSEX

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to carry out archaeological recording and post-excavation analysis on an archaeological evaluation by Channel 4's 'Time Team' in the village of St Osyth, Essex. St Osyth is located in the Tendring district of north-east Essex, approximately five miles west of Clacton-on-Sea. The village, which developed around the site of the medieval Priory, lies on the crest of a low spur of land, centred at NGR 612500 215800, that rises approximately 19m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) from the St Osyth creek to the south.

The aim of the evaluation was to gain an understanding of the evolution and development of St Osyth with its relationships to the development of the Priory and examine the role of the creek in the economy of the town. To achieve this, a number of techniques were employed, including geophysical survey, fieldwalking, trial trenching and dendrochronology. The work was undertaken between the 11th and 14th May 2004. Spoil from all of the archaeologically significant trenches was metal detected by approved operators.

Some 1.7 ha of land were subject to geophysical survey, wither in the form of gradiometry survey or resistance survey. In the area to the north of the creek, magnetic survey identified a number of anomalies towards the southern edge of the survey area bordering the creek, including one particularly strong response, though to be industrial in origin, and the line of a palaeochannel.

Small quantities of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon material were recovered, adding to our scant knowledge of these periods in St Osyths' history. The Domesday Survey mentions St Osyth, which was clearly a thriving settlement before the founding of the first Abbey on the site in AD 1121.

The early medieval period saw a marked expansion in St Osyth's prosperity and in population. Time Team's work at St Osyth has demonstrated that medieval settlement, which is not likely to be much earlier than the early 14th century, extended along the spur of land west from the present centre of the town. This tract of land overlooked the St Osyth Creek to the south and was possibly constrained by St Osyth Little Park to the north. Surface collection identified a large spread of medieval pottery in this area.

Settlement was also located around the church and the Priory precinct. All test pits in the centre of the town were characterised by deep soil accumulations up to a metre deep, indicative of prolonged occupation. The project also investigated a structure, thought to be a wharf, on the north bank of the creek. This was radiocarbon dated to

between AD 1480 and 1660 (at a 95% confidence level). This was probably built to serve the needs of people living west of the present quay.

The evaluation suggests that the prosperity of the town was inextricably linked to the fortunes of the Priory. Settlement in the area west of the town appears to have continued into the 16th century, but contracted and ceased in the 17th century, possibly related to the Dissolution of 1539. Dendrochronology work undertaken as part of this project has indicated that three of the town's timber-framed buildings were built or modified in the 15th or early 16th century.

Nearer the waterfront however there is no evidence for settlement after the 17th century. A brick built kiln was excavated immediately north of the creek. It probably dates to the 17th or 18th century. Hammerscale found in the furnace debris indicates that smithing, probably related to continued shipbuilding and repair, continued along the creek. However the quantities of debris are insufficient to conclude that this structure was related to metal work and were probably derived from activity nearby.

Acknowledgements

This programme of post-excavation and assessment work was commissioned and funded by Videotext Communications. Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the staff at Videotext, and in particular Zarina Dick and Melinda Smith (Executive Producers), Rebecca Woodhead (Assistant Producer) and Kate Edwards, Oliver Twinch and Karen Kirk (Researchers) for their considerable help during the recording and post-excavation work. The extensive collaboration of local residents, who allowed access into their back gardens, and helped excavate small test pit trenches, is gratefully acknowledged.

The evaluation strategy was developed by Professor Mick Aston, and all fieldwork undertaken by Time Team's retained excavators with help from members of the staff of Essex Archaeology. The on-Site recording was undertaken and co-ordinated by Catriona Gibson, assisted by Steve Thompson, both of Wessex Archaeology. The finds were sorted and partially processed on-site by Steve Thompson. Other contributors to the programme and assessment report included Gustav Milne (medieval wharves and waterfronts), Brenda Watkin (architectural historian), Chris Thornton (medieval history), Paul Blinkorn (pottery identification), Damien Goodburn (woodworking) and Dr Martin Bridge (dendrochronology)

The geophysical survey was undertaken by John Gater, Fiona Robertson and Emma Wood from GSB Prospection Ltd. The field survey was undertaken by Dr Henry Chapman, University of Hull.

Wessex Archaeology co-ordinated the post-excavation programme. This report was compiled by Phil Harding and Catriona Gibson, and edited by Nicholas Cooke. Specialist work and reporting was undertaken by Lorraine Mepham (finds) and Steve Thompson (finds), Stephanie Knight (animal bone) and Nicholas Cooke (coins) and Jimmy Anderson (geophysics). Environmental samples were prepared and assessed by Dr Mike Allen, Dr Chris Stevens, Dr Cathy Chisham and Sarah Wyles. The illustrations were prepared by Matthew McMurray. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Nicholas Cooke.

ST OSYTH, ESSEX

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd. to undertake a programme of archaeological recording and post-excavation assessment of an archaeological evaluation by Channel 4's 'Time Team' in the village of St Osyth, Essex (see Figure 1).

1.1.2 St Osyth is located in the Tendring district of north-east Essex, approximately five miles west of Clacton-on-Sea. The village, which developed around the site of the medieval Priory, lies on the crest of a low spur of land, centred at NGR 612500 215800, that rises approximately 19m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) from the St Osyth creek to the south. This muddy tidal creek forms a tributary of the larger Brightlingsea Creek to the west which is itself a tributary to the River Colne. The spur slopes gently downwards on three sides to the water but extends northwards across the Tendring Plateau. The local geology consists of St Osyth Gravel and Oakley Gravel, fluvial deposits of Pleistocene age.

1.1.3 The project focussed on two principal site areas:

- a timber structure that was visible in the north bank of the first meander of the St Osyth Creek, west of the causeway carrying the road from St Osyth to Point Clear, hereafter referred to as Area 1. It was postulated that the timbers represented a medieval wharf associated with the construction of St Osyth Priory. Work was extended subsequently to an arable field immediately to the north of the timber structure (see Figures 1 and 2)

- a series of test pits and trial trenches were also dug in the back gardens of a number of houses throughout the town centre, hereafter referred to as Area 2 (see Figures 3 and 4). Some of these houses were timber framed and were thought most likely to contain evidence making it possible to characterise and identify the emergence and development of the medieval town from the quay to the Priory grounds. The town has an unusually high number of listed buildings, many of which are timber framed, with weatherboarded exteriors.

1.1.4 The abbey at St Osyth was founded in AD 1121 for the Austin Canons and became a wealthy Priory in AD 1150. The medieval town of St Osyth is thought to have been founded by the Priory and comprised a main settlement centred on the crossroads at the centre. A second focus of settlement is

thought to have existed 600m to the west, beside the creek, where the quay is still located.

1.2 Historical background

1.2.1 According to legend, St Osyth was born in Buckinghamshire in the early 7th century, the daughter of Freithwald, the first Christian King of the east Angles. She was married to Sighere, the King of Essex but before the marriage was consummated, she took the veil and Sighere gave her the village of *Cicc,* where a nunnery was built. In AD 653, a band of Vikings attacked the area and Osyth was killed, favouring death rather than surrender. *Cicc* was later renamed St Osyth in honour of the virgin martyr (Pevsner, 1965).

1.2.2 The Domesday Survey of 1086 (Rumble, 1983) confirms that St Osyth already had a thriving village before the foundation of the Priory, possibly associated with the quay and local maritime activities.

1.2.3 The Priory was founded for the Austin canons around AD 1121, and became an Augustinian Abbey by AD 1200. By the time it was finally suppressed in 1539, it had in its possession a great deal of land and wealth. The income from the Abbey was the third largest of the monasteries in Essex, after Waltham Holy Cross and Barking.

1.2.4 Most of the Priory was destroyed at the Dissolution in 1539, although the magnificent gatehouse with chequerboard stonework designs in flint, stone and septaria still survives, along with fragments of the original abbey. There are no quarries locally to supply the stone for such a large building suggesting that materials were imported, most probably from the creek.

1.3 Previous archaeological work

1.3.1 The archaeological record for the town is sparse, reflecting a lack of development in the area. Records of opportunistic discoveries of prehistoric artefacts are known and a number of prehistoric monuments have also been recorded nearby.

1.3.2 Roman artefacts have also been recovered from several sites around the town, including traces of a small building that was found in 1962 during gravel extraction at St Osyth Park Priory and may have formed part of a larger domestic complex of 3rd-4th century date.

1.3.3 Archaeological evaluation in 1999 (CAT 1999) in advance of development on land adjoining the churchyard of St Peter and Paul's church in the town centre revealed stratified deposits ranging from prehistoric to Post-medieval in date.

2 METHODS

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A project design for the archaeological work was compiled and produced by Videotext Communications Ltd (Videotext Communications 2004).

2.1.2 The north bank of the creek in Area 1 is an ecologically sensitive area, maintaining a habitat for Golden Samphire, a Nationally Scarce plant, and a breeding environment for wading and marshland birds. The project design therefore incorporated measures, including reinstatement, to ensure the preservation of the ecology and was formulated in consultation with the Environment Agency and English Nature.

2.1.3 The project design set out details of the research aims of the project and the methodologies to be employed in achieving the aims. They are summarised below.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 The main aims of the project were to characterise the nature, extent and date of the archaeological deposits within Areas 1 and 2. The over-arching aim was to gain an understanding of the evolution and development of St Osyth and its relationship to the Priory through the archaeological record.

2.2.2 With this in mind, a number of specific objectives were identified. The first of these was to investigate the timber structure at the creek, its associated deposits and the adjoining field to the north (Area 1). The aim of this was to establish the date and function of the timber structure and any associated structures, identify their relationship to the Priory, assess their contribution to the economy of the town and define any additional activities at the creek.

2.2.3 Work in Area 1 was complemented by test pitting in the town (Area 2), designed to recover datable artefacts from garden deposits and establish the origins and patterns of expansion in the town. The aim was to closely involve a large number of local residents who were anxious to help contribute to the study of occupation at St Osyth. This was augmented by a programme of building survey allied to a programme of dendrochronology sampling of timbers from suitable buildings.

2.3 Fieldwork Methods

2.3.1 The aims of the project were to be addressed using a combination of extensive resistance and magnetic geophysical survey, dendrochronology, surface collection on a controlled grid and excavation. The excavation comprised both hand-dug and machine excavated trenches with some hand-dug test pits, principally in Area 2.

2.3.2 A magnetic survey was undertaken on the bank of the creek in a small area immediately north of the timber structure in Area 1. A more comprehensive survey was undertaken in the field to the north to locate areas of

archaeological potential and to guide the subsequent location of any evaluation trenches (see Figure 5). Ground resistance techniques were also employed on the bank of the creek and where areas of sufficient size could be found in Area 2 (see Figure 6).

2.3.3 Dendrochronology work was undertaken on timbers from three buildings in Area 2. Thirteen timbers were sampled from the house at 8 Spring Rd (Bridge, 2004a), six from the building at 45 Mill St (Bridge, 2004b), and a single timber from St Clere Hall (Bridge, 2004c).

2.3.4 A small part of the field in Area 1 was field walked using the grid established for the geophysical survey to recover datable artefacts from the surface.

2.3.5 Excavation of the timber structure in the north bank of the creek was undertaken by hand. Seven larger trenches, including one that was abandoned for health and safety reasons, were opened by machine and excavated in the field to the north (Area 1). These trenches were targeted both on the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey and the results of the fieldwalking (see Figures 2 and 5).

2.3.6 Sixteen hand-excavated test pits and a small machine dug trench were opened in a number of back gardens of premises in St Osyth (Area 2). Most were concentrated within the main centre of the town. However two test pits were dug in gardens to the rear of the White Hart public house on the west edge of the town, near the quay, and one test pit was excavated in the grounds of Warren Farm to the south (see Figures 3 and 4).

2.3.7 All excavations in Area 2 were undertaken within private gardens. In the light of this, the location of test pits in these areas was determined by a combination of archaeological merit and a desire not to inflict unnecessary damage on well-kept gardens. This limited the location and density of the test pitting.

2.3.8 The location of the trenches was determined by Mick Aston in consultation with associated specialists and guided by the results of the geophysical survey in order to answer specific aims and objectives of the project design.

2.3.9 Where appropriate, trenches were excavated using a JCB Wheeled excavator with a mechanical backhoe, fitted with a 2 m toothless ditching bucket (Area 1); and a tracked mini-digger fitted with a 1.25 m ditching bucket (Area 2). All machine work was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the identification of significant archaeological deposits, or where natural deposits were encountered. All trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand and archaeological deposits were planned, recorded and representative samples excavated by hand. One trench in Area 1 was excavated to a point at which it was considered unsafe to enter and was abandoned and backfilled.

2.3.10 A site code (STO 04), which is compatible with the system used for all archaeological work currently undertaken by Essex County Council, was allocated to the site before the evaluation began.

2.3.11 A sufficient sample of all deposits was excavated to allow the resolution of the principal questions outlined in the aims and objectives above. Other deposits, some of which were regarded as archaeologically significant, were recorded, preserved *in situ* and backfilled.

2.3.12 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Trenches were located using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. All archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to Ordnance Survey datum and a photographic record of the investigations and individual features was maintained in monochrome, colour transparencies and digital format.

2.3.13 The work was undertaken between the 11th and 14th May 2004. Spoil from all of the archaeologically significant trenches was metal detected by approved operators.

2.3.14 At the completion of the work all trenches were reinstated using the excavated spoil from the trenches and turf re-laid or replaced. All artefacts were transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology where they were fully processed and assessed for this report.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features, a full geophysical report (GSB 2004) and results of artefact and environmental sample analysis are retained in the archive.

3.2 Geophysical Survey

3.2.1 Approximately 1.5 ha of detailed gradiometer survey was undertaken on the bank of the creek and in the arable field north of the creek in Area 1. In addition a small area on the bank of the creek and four small plots in Area 2, collectively amounting to 0.2 ha, were subjected to a resistance survey.

3.2.2 Conditions for gradiometry and resistance survey at the creek area were 'challenging' due to the thick tidal mud and the sloping of the bank towards the river. However, the quality of data was not affected.

3.2.3 The field north of the creek was under a cover of knee high crop and the sensors on the instrument were placed higher than normal to avoid the bulk of the vegetation; as a result weaker anomalies may not have been detected.

3.2.4 Survey in Area 2 was undertaken in areas of short grass, in gardens and a churchyard.

Magnetic survey – Area 1. (Figure 5)

3.2.5 The small area immediately north of the timber structure in the bank of the creek produced a number of inconclusive anomalies. The results were insufficient to determine whether they were associated with the structure.

3.2.6 The data from the field indicated a number of anomalies towards the southern edge of the survey area bordering the creek. A particularly strong response (1) was identified as industrial in nature. This was confirmed by excavation (Trench **20**) to be a furnace/kiln.

3.2.7 A scatter of archaeological responses (2), immediately east of this strong anomaly, was not as well defined but was also thought to be industrial in origin. The anomalies were surrounded by an area of increased magnetic response, of a type that might be expected from an area of industrial activity.

3.2.8 Another area of increased magnetic response (3), similar to that surrounding (2), could also represent industrial activity, however, there were no clearly defined patterns within this area and the results were thought more likely to be indicative of occupation or general burnt and fired debris.

3.2.9 A palaeochannel (4) was located to the east Other natural responses within the data (5) were thought likely to be caused by seasonal flooding of the creek.

3.2.10 Numerous other ferrous responses were present across the survey area. These were thought to result from modern debris within the topsoil, on the surface or next to the survey area.

Resistance Survey – Area 1.

3.2.11 High resistance on the north bank of the creek in Area 1 was probably related to the timber structure. Data shown in the north part of the survey area corresponded to the current river bank.

Resistance Survey - Area 2(Figure 6)

3.2.12 An area known as 'The Bury', south west of St Osyth Priory produced areas of high resistance which are thought to be archaeological. Although no clear building edges can be seen, the response could be from building rubble. This area would benefit from a wider survey as a full investigation was not possible within the timescale available. A linear band of low resistance within the southern half of the area probably represents a drain.

3.2.13 An area of the churchyard to the east of the church was surveyed. The boundary between unconsecrated and consecrated land areas was clearly visible in the results. High resistance responses, indicative of building remains, were dominant to the north of the boundary. Building rubble was recovered from the surface and excavated test pits.

3.2.14 Survey in the grounds of 'The Old House', south of Chapel Lane, produced a linear band of low resistance, aligned east - west, which was thought to represent a ditch. A subsequent excavation could find no trace of the feature. Other low resistance anomalies were considered to be natural. High resistance anomalies in the west of the data probably reflected a former extension of the house. Building debris was present in two adjacent test pits. Other areas of high resistance were detected that may be archaeological, including garden features.

3.3 Dendrochronology

By Dr Martin Bridge

Introduction

3.3.1 Detailed reports on the dendrochronology work undertaken as part of this project have been prepared and are retained in archive (Bridge, 2004a, 2004b and 2004c). The results outlined in the summaries of these reports are reproduced here, in edited form.

8 Spring Rd

3.3.2 A total of thirteen timbers were sampled from 8, Spring Rd - three in the form of *ex situ* slices, two of which were of known origin, and ten cores from various structural elements. As is typical of this part of Essex, several

timbers were found to have been derived from fast-grown trees, and had insufficient rings to warrant further analysis.

3.3.3 Three of the longer series match each other and were combined into a site chronology, which dates to the period 1365-1494. The series actually gives stronger matches (at the same date) when only two of the series are used as the site chronology. The sapwood estimates applied to these timbers suggest a felling date for the timbers between 1494 and 1500 AD. This is of interest as the building shows the use of diminished-haunch soffit-tenon joints where the floor joists meet the main floor beams, giving the earliest date for this feature yet found in Essex, though it was used much earlier elsewhere (e.g. Oxfordshire).

45, Mill St.

3.3.4 Six samples were taken from various elements in the house at 45, Mill St, of which four provided dates. These matched each other and were combined into a site chronology, which dates to the period AD 1282-1418. Adding the appropriate sapwood allowances for oaks grown in this area derives a most likely felling period for these timbers of AD 1427-59, and it is likely that construction took place within this period.

St Clere Hall.

3.3.5 Unfortunately, the dendrochronology work undertaken at St Clere Hall did not help further our understanding of the date of the building, which has been radiocarbon dated to between the end of the 13th century and the first third of the 15th century. Most timbers – even the large ones, contained too few rings for dating. There was one exception however, the SE brace to the arcade plate, which yielded a sequence of 95 rings and dated very readily. This sample, cored through the heartwood-sapwood boundary, dates to the years 1397-1491. With the addition of the standard sapwood estimate for the area, was most likely felled in the period AD 1500-1532**.** This clearly indicates that this particular brace was added at a much later date to the rest of the structure, and does nothing to help date the main building phase.

3.4 Surface Collection

3.4.1 A sample of the geophysical survey grid, 200 m east - west and 80 m north - south, in the field north of the creek in Area 1 was systematically searched to retrieve artefacts from the field surface. Grid squares, 20 m square, were individually numbered 1 to 40 from the south-east corner of the grid to record artefact distribution.

3.4.2 Individual squares were ‘field walked’ for 20 minutes using volunteer labour, many of who had no previous experience. The crop was well developed, which restricted visibility of the ground. Initially all artefacts were collected, although subsequently the presence of CBM, which was particularly dense over most of the area, was merely noted. Observation showed that this material was less prevalent in the north east corner of the grid.

3.4.3 Artefacts were processed with material from the trenches and test pits. Totals are tabulated in Table 1. The search produced 196 sherds of pottery, including 80 with medieval fabrics, 72 of post-medieval date, 43 modern and a single sherd of Roman material.

3.4.4 The distribution showed that there was a general spread of material across the entire survey area, although medieval sherds were slightly more prevalent in and extended beyond the north and west of the grid. The concentration was less dense along the lower slopes, nearer to the river, although excavation (Trench **20**) recovered medieval pottery from this area.

3.4.5 Surface densities also fell to the east where the land fell away into a dry tributary valley. It is possible that medieval material has been incorporated at a lower depth in slope deposits. Fragments of modern pottery were more frequent in the east, nearer to the present boundary of St Osyth.

3.5 Archaeological Evaluation of the creek in Area 1

Trench 1 (Figure 7)

3.5.1 The timber structure in Trench **1** was visible in the north edge of the St Osyth Creek as a cluster of timber posts protruding through the upper slope of the main channel. The structure lay in the intertidal flood zone of the creek and was totally inundated at high tide. This restricted access in the upper part of the site to approximately four hours per day; access to the lower part was reduced according to the level of the tide in the channel.

3.5.2 Work was restricted to removing silt from around the timbers to expose the structure in plan. The face of the main creek channel was also straightened to create a sloping section, sample deposits for datable artefacts and expose timbers of the structure.

3.5.3 The structure was of single-phase construction, although it was probably repaired from time to time. It comprised an elongated cut (**102**) with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base that was dug into the natural yellow alluvial clay (**108**). The cut measured 3.40 m wide and approximately 2.2 m deep. Traces of timbers and wattle lining extended north from the edge of the channel for approximately 4.20 m towards the bank, although the northern limit, near the present footpath, was never exposed.

3.5.4 A timber revetment (**110)** was constructed on the east side of cut **102** to support a raised gravel causeway (**109**) that was built out into the mud flats. At the channel edge this revetment comprised a row of vertical round-wood piles with sharpened tips that were driven into the natural alluvium. The piles, which were approximately 0.10 m in diameter, extended approximately 1.20 m out into the channel but turned east for over a metre to support the edge of the channel and the south end of the gravel causeway.

3.5.5 There was nothing to indicate that the continuous timber pile revetment continued inside the cut, an area that could not be sampled. Traces of intermittent piles were visible along the edge of the gravel causeway,

however the revetment here appeared to have been constructed primarily of wattles (**107**), possibly backed by horizontal planks and chalk block packing behind. The wattle lining also extended out into the main channel immediately inside the timber pile revetment.

3.5.6 A revetment on the west side of cut **102** was of a similar construction with a wattle lining (**112**) and horizontal timber planks (**113**) laid behind. The wattle linings on the east and west sides created a wharf approximately 2.40 m across. The western facade had no packing and probably only served to prevent boats from drifting onto the mud flats as the tide rose and fell.

3.5.7 The primary fill (**103**) of cut **102** comprised dark grey-black alluvial clay up to 0.60 m deep and contained animal bone and two sherds of post-medieval pottery. These sherds have been dated to the 16th –19th century, however it is most likely that they relate to the construction and use of the structure in the 15th-16th centuries (see below). The primary fill was overlain on the east side by lenses of alluvial clay interleaved with gravel (**104**), which resulted from the decay of the revetment and collapse of the gravel causeway. The entire structure was sealed by blue grey alluvial clay (**105**).

3.5.8 Additional medieval and Post-medieval sherds were recovered from what was termed 'surface cleaning' (**101**). These sherds included a fragment of imported Spanish fineware in the form of Cuerda Seca (*c*. 1475-1525) and a late medieval (14th –15th century) Colchester Ware pipkin handle. Given that most of the 'cleaning' occurred to define the east side of cut **102** it is most likely that these sherds were recovered from the packing associated with the wattle revetment (**107**).

3.5.9 Two piles were recovered from the revetment (**110**); both were of oak (*Quercus)* and of >13-16 years old when felled. A sample from the outer five rings of a pile was collected for radiocarbon dating.

3.5.10 A fragment of a wattle rod from the revetment (**107**) comprised small branch wood with five annual growth rings, commonly observed for coppiced wood. A sample was also submitted for radiocarbon dating.

3.5.11 The results of the radiocarbon determinations produced calibrated dates of 1440-1660 AD (NZA-20327) for the oak pile and 1480-1660 AD (NZA-20328) for the wattle.

3.5.12 The combined dating methods suggest that the wharf was probably in use sometime in the late 15th or early 16th centuries.

3.6 The field to the north of the creek

3.6.1 Seven trenches (**19-24**) were excavated by machine in the arable field north of St Osyth creek. These included an unnumbered trench between trenches **23** and **24** that was placed across a former palaeochannel. The excavated section was unstable, was photographed and the trench backfilled immediately.

Trench 19 (Figure 8)

3.6.2 This trench measured 2.80 m east – west and 2.0 m north – south and was opened in an area of increased magnetic response survey.

3.6.3 Part of a sub-rectangular/square pit or terminal end of a linear ditch (**1904**) was discovered at the base of the trench. It extended approximately 1 m from the north section and was 0.70 m deep. The sides were sloping and the base flat.

3.6.4 The dark grey-brown silt primary fill (**1903**) was 0.50 m thick and contained pottery, shell and tile. It was sealed by light orange-brown clay (**1902**) derived from the local natural bedrock. The sequence was completed by modern plough soil, 0.28 m thick.

3.6.5 A quantity of pottery sherds, including a fragment of a Cologne/Frenchen ware (late 16^{th}-17^{th} century), a piece of a chafing dish of probable German or north French origin (16^{th} –17^{th} century), late medieval jug fragments, Post-medieval redwares and Post-medieval Metropolitan slipwares were recovered during the excavation of feature **1904**.

Trench 20 (Figure 8)

3.6.6 The magnetic survey detected a highly magnetic response, which was thought to be an industrial feature, approximately 25 m north of the field edge. A trench (**20**) 4.7 m east - west and 2.5 m north - south was placed across the feature to examine its construction, date, condition and function.

3.6.7 The removal of the topsoil, which was approximately 0.30 m thick, revealed the foundations of a brick-built kiln or furnace (assigned group number **2011**). Plough furrows passing through the trench indicated that the surviving remains were restricted to those that lay below the plough zone.

3.6.8 The structure comprised a flue, aligned north - south that expanded into the main chamber. The flue, of which approximately 1.40 m was exposed, was constructed of two walls (**2003**, **2004**) approximately 0.40 m apart. The walls were visible on the surface of the trench as parallel bands of heavily decayed brickwork approximately 0.60 m across. It was not possible to examine the walls lower down to assess whether the decomposition was due to excessive heat from the stoke hole, which lay to the south, or to the effects of moisture on badly fired bricks combined with agriculture.

3.6.9 The flue was filled with a mixed deposit (**2005**) including some brick fragments but also black ashy material derived from the stoke hole.

3.6.10 The main chamber measured approximately 2.10 m across. Its northern extent lay beyond the edge of the trench and could not be established, although it is reasonable to think that it may have been roughly square. Excavations in the eastern half revealed details of the construction and the condition of the remains.

3.6.11 The east wall of the flue (**2004**) continued into the chamber as a brick pier approximately 0.30 m wide. Five courses of brickwork survived to a height of 0.30 m from the brick floor of the flue (**2009**). The pier was constructed of two skins of bricks laid primarily in a stretcher bond with the cavity filled with brick fragments. The north end of the pier terminated at the floor of main chamber, which was raised by one course of bricks, 0.50 m, to a slightly higher level than the floor of the flue. This may have served to deflect heat up and allow it to circulate beneath the floor of the kiln. The floor of the flue was covered with a dark grey ashy deposit (**2007**) that was sealed by material from the demolition of the structure.

3.6.12 A separate narrow cavity, approximately 0.10 m across, separated the east side of the pier from the east wall of the structure (**2010**). This feature probably served to allow additional air circulation below the floor of the kiln.

3.6.13 No datable artefacts were recovered from the structure although the size and form of the bricks suggest that it is of Post-medieval, 17th or 18th century date. The absence of pottery wasters, bricks or tiles suggest that it is not a ceramic kiln but may have been employed as a grain drying kiln or was associated with a marine function. A similar, although apparently less well preserved, structure was exposed in Trench **24** (see below).

3.6.14 A surface spread of oyster shells immediately east of the flue wall was thought to predate the construction of the brick structure. It is possible that this spread and a spread of flint nodules immediately west of the flue wall were of an earlier date and may be related to the medieval activity noted elsewhere in the field.

Trench 21 (Figure 8)

3.6.15 Trench **21** measured 5 m east - west and 2.5 m north - south and was dug in an area of high background magnetic response, approximately 4 m south-east of Trench 20.

3.6.16 The excavation revealed a ditch (**2106**) aligned north - south across the trench. It measured approximately 2.5 m wide, was 0.40 m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It was silted naturally with light to mid yellow brown silty clay (**2103/2104**) and contained quantities of medieval Colchester type pottery.

3.6.17 The feature had been re-cut on a slightly skewed alignment by a ditch (**2107**), 1.2 m across, with sides that sloped to a narrow, flat base, 0.20 m wide. It was filled with dark, grey-brown silty clay (**2102**) and, although it included no datable artefacts, contained fragments of brick and tile similar to that found in the kiln feature recorded in Trench **20**.

3.6.18 The entire sequence was capped by 0.48 m of mid brown silty clay topsoil (**2101**) which was supplemented by material that had migrated down from further up-slope.

Trench 22 (Figure 8)

3.6.19 This machine-excavated trench was dug in an area of the field that had produced quantities of medieval pottery from the surface and which showed as an area of increased magnetic response on the geophysical survey.

3.6.20 The trench measured some 15m from east to west, and was a bucket width wide – some 1.85m. A small extension, 2 m wide, was added to the south side.

3.6.21 The results demonstrated that the trench was located in an area of dense medieval activity. The restricted width of the trench and the limited time available to complete the excavation made it difficult to evaluate all features, establish their stratigraphic relationships or function.

3.6.22 The natural yellow orange silty clay (**2211**) was exposed at the east-end of the trench and was cut by a number of archaeological features.

3.6.23 A spread of gravel (**2215**) and small area of mortar (**2216**) were noted towards the south edge of the trench extension. Neither of these deposits was sampled, although it is likely that they represented deliberate floors or yard surfaces related to occupation in the area.

3.6.24 The gravel spread and area of mortar were truncated by a series of shallow, parallel slots (**2206, 2208, 2210**) aligned east - west. They were approximately 0.60 m apart, averaged 0.50 m across and were 0.08 m deep. The east end of the most northerly slot (**2206**) was indistinct but was considered, by the excavator, to cut through a post hole (**2214**) that coincided with the terminus of the slot. They were classified as beam slots, however insufficient was seen of their extent to confirm this.

3.6.25 A ditch (**2204**) aligned north-east – south-west was also sampled at the west end of the trench. It measured 0.75 m across and 0.38 m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled with a homogeneous fill of light brown silty clay (**2203**).

3.6.26 The west end of the trench, including the ditch (**2204**) and slot (**2206**), was sealed by a dump of domestic refuse, 0.10 m thick, containing medieval pottery, oyster shell, tile and bone (**2202**). The refuse deposit was itself overlain by a small patch of large cobbles that extended from the south edge of the trench (**2212**). It was not possible to examine any intersection between the slot (**2206**) and ditch (**2204**) or establish a stratigraphic relationship.

3.6.27 The archaeological features were capped by dark grey brown silt loam topsoil (**2201**), 0.43 m deep, which also contained pottery of both medieval and Post-medieval date, tile and animal bone.

3.6.28 Trench **22** produced the largest quantity of medieval pottery from the site, as well as a residual sherd of Late Saxon pottery – a sherd of Badorf type ware dated to the 8th or 9th century. Virtually all of the archaeological deposits contained some medieval material, however the deposits were frequently

insubstantial, which increased the probability of mixing. The overall conclusion of the deposits and features in this trench suggest that activity began no earlier than 1300 and ceased by the 16th century.

Trench 23 (Figure 8)

3.6.29 This machine-excavated trench was positioned to examine a magnetic anomaly on the edge of an area of high magnetic response and a linear 'trend', aligned north - south that appeared in the geophysics results. This single bucket width excavation measured 5 m east - west.

3.6.30 The excavation showed that 1.25 m of soil accumulation was present in the trench. Most of this is likely to represent colluvium that filled a dry tributary valley of the St Osyth Creek and which is shown on detailed contour mapping. An additional trench that was subsequently excavated immediately east of Trench **23** revealed that the colluvium thickened to the east in the base of the valley. This trench was aborted after the sides became unstable.

3.6.31 The excavation record of Trench **23** suggests that a large poorly defined 'pit' (**2306**) was present in the lower parts of the section. The fill (**2308**) was virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding colluvium and the feature was not detected in plan but was only visible in the excavated section.

3.6.32 The pit was thought to have silted naturally, yet contained no artefacts or distinctive fills. The edges were also only partially recorded on one side. The limited evidence casts doubt on the existence of the 'pit' and suggests that it is more likely that the entire deposit should be regarded as part of the natural colluvium filling the tributary valley.

3.6.33 A gravel-filled deposit (**2309**) was present in the section. This undated deposit is likely to be a land drain and may reflect the linear 'trend' detected on the geophysical survey.

Trench 24 (Figure 8)

3.6.34 A trench 4.6 m east - west and 3 m north - south was opened over a high magnetic anomaly towards the east edge of the survey area. The excavation exposed the remains of a severely heated affected brick structure (**2419**), probably a kiln or furnace.

3.6.35 Work was limited to cleaning and recording the exposed deposits. The full extent of the structure was not established, although it is probable that the limits on the west and south were defined. No attempt was made to examine the foundations of the structure, which were dug into the natural yellow brown clay (**2402**).

3.6.36 The walls of the structure were ploughed to the level of the natural clay. An area of ash and charcoal (**2420**) that may relate to a flue or firing chamber of the kiln/furnace was exposed in the north end of a probable chamber. Elsewhere a thin deposit of dumped material (**2413**), probably demolition

rubble, overlay the structure, protecting the remains of the foundations beneath.

3.6.37 An elongated flue, 1.4 m long and 0.30 m wide, defined by three walls (**2403, 2404, 2406**), up to 0.40 m thick and open on the north side was apparent on the east side of the structure. This may represent one of a series of parallel flues allowing air to circulate beneath a raised floor. Other components of the plan, including the location and orientation of the stoke hole, which provided the heat, were more difficult to define. There was nothing to indicate its function.

3.6.38 A pit (**2416**) with large quantities of oysters (**2418**) was cut through the wall (**2408**) forming the west edge of the feature. A second deposit (**2415**), which may represent a spread of material or the upper fill of an ill-defined pit (**2414**), also overlay the foundations to the east (**2404**). Neither of these deposits was excavated fully and no datable material was recovered.

3.6.39 No stratified artefacts were recovered to establish the date of the structure, although sixteen fragments of Roman brick and tile were recovered from the topsoil. The total absence of Roman pottery suggests that these fragments had been scavenged from the site of a Roman building that was known to be in the area and reused in the construction of the structure. However elsewhere on the site deposits containing oyster shell were often associated with medieval pottery.

3.7 Area 2 – Test pits and Trenches in St Osyth

Test pits 2, 11 and 16 and Trench 17 – The churchyard (Figure 4)

3.7.1 Four excavations were undertaken in the churchyard – test pits 2, 11 and 16 and Trench 17. Trench 17 was initially begun as a test pit but was extended to 3 m long.

3.7.2 Test pit **2** was dug immediately east of the lych gate on the north side of the church. The excavation revealed a soil accumulation some 1.35 m deep. The trench was not excavated further for health and safety reasons A cobbled surface (**205**), which was associated with ten sherds of medieval Colchester type ware, was observed at a depth of 0.95 m below the present grass level. Additional medieval pottery was present in the deposit below (layer **206**).

3.7.3 Test pits **11** and **16** and Trench **17** were all located approximately 25 m west of the church, in a north to south alignment that extended from the street frontage on 'The Bury' into the present churchyard.

3.7.4 The upper 0.50 m of test pit **11** contained fragments of brick and concrete and overlay a former soil horizon (**1104**). A deposit of mid grey-brown sandy silt (**1105**) below the buried topsoil was thought to fill a steep sided pit or ditch terminus (**1106**), although in the area available this could not be confirmed. The feature measured approximately 0.80m in diameter and 0.50m deep, but could not be bottomed due to the overall depth of the test pit. Animal bone, shell and pottery, principally of medieval Colchester type

ware but including single sherds of 16th and early 18th century date were found in the fill. A sherd of Colchester type ware was found in the surrounding soil (**1107**).

3.7.5 Test pit **16**, located 8 m south of test pit **11**, revealed the corner of a wall foundation (**1604**) buried beneath the modern topsoil (**1601, 1602**) and a rubble destruction layer (**1603**), 0.65 m below present ground level. The wall foundation comprised five courses of mortared bricks but was only exposed in the corner of the test pit, making it difficult to ascertain its function. The foundation, which was associated with modern ceramics, was cut into a soil accumulation of brown sandy silt (**1605**), which contained a sherd of medieval Colchester type ware.

3.7.6 Trench **17** was hand-dug and was aligned east to west parallel to the street frontage. Part of the excavated area had been included in an earlier test pit dug during Channel 4's Big Dig Project in 2003.

3.7.7 Two circular postholes and an irregular vaguely linear feature were identified in the natural gravel, which was located approximately 1 m below the present ground surface. Posthole (**1708**) was *c.* 0.40 m in diameter, 0.25 m deep and filled with brown silty clay (**1709**). Posthole (**1714**) was *c.* 0.30 m in diameter, 0.27 m deep, with a post pipe (**1711**) 0.10 m wide and grey-brown clay packing (**1715**). The linear feature (**1718**) was located in the north-west corner of the trench and was filled with redeposited natural clay (**1719**). No finds were recovered from these features.

3.7.8 The archaeological features were overlain by mid yellow-brown silty clay (**1707**), 0.25 m thick, which contained tile, animal bone and medieval and late medieval pottery of late 14th – late 15th century date. It is unclear whether this layer represents a soil that was buried by deposits (**1701** and **1703**) during subsequent landscaping or was the base of a deeper accumulation that was truncated by **1701** and **1703**, which both contain Post-medieval and modern ceramics.

3.7.9 It was not possible to record evidence of early occupation on the site at the east end of the trench, which was obstructed by a brick wall (**1705**) and a possible drain (**1706**), both aligned north to south.

Trench 3- The King's Arms

3.7.10 This hand-dug trench measured 2 m long by 1 m wide. The section revealed a continuous soil accumulation approximately 0.95 m thick. No features were observed and a mixed assemblage of pottery, primarily of Post-medieval and modern date was recovered.

Trench 4 and test pit 5 – 'The Butchers'

3.7.11 These hand-dug excavations were placed approximately 10 m apart in the back garden of a property known as 'The Butchers' located at the east end of 'The Bury'.

3.7.12 Trench 4 measured 2.10 m long, 1.70 m wide and 1.78 m deep and was stepped to prevent collapse. Dark brown silty loam garden soil (**401**), 0.35 m thick, contained post-medieval and modern pottery. The underlying dark brown silty sand (**402**) was 0.50 m deep and included rubble and tile. This material probably represents Post-medieval landscaping of the garden.

3.7.13 The made-up ground sealed dark brown silty sand (**403**), 0.20 m thick, that contained, in places, large quantities of tile fragments (**404**). This may relate to the demolition of a brick and cobble wall (**411**), 0.35 m wide, which ran east to west through the test pit. A mortar-rich orange silty layer (**405/407**), 0.07 m deep, was sealed by the tile rubble and may also be associated with it.

3.7.14 A small circular pit (**413**), 0.52 m in diameter and 0.25 m deep, with straight sides and a flat base, was cut through the mortar rich layer. It was filled with building rubble material (**412**) and may equate with **414**. Additional rubble (**408**) lay beneath the mortar spread. A thin lens of coarse yellow sand (**409**), 0.06 m deep, lay below and may originally have formed part of a construction deposit for the wall (**411**). This comprised a single course of cobble and tile foundations, 0.20 m deep, which were cut to the top of levelling layer **409**.

3.7.15 The base of the trench comprised a dark brown humic silty sand (**410**), which was excavated to 0.55m deep, where excavation ceased to prevent trench collapse. This deposit, which may have contained midden material, included medieval Colchester ware, occasional oyster fragments and charcoal flecks.

3.7.16 Test pit **5**, measuring 1m x 1m was bottomed at a depth of 0.64m. The dark brown silty sand topsoil (**501**) was 0.12 m deep and contained pottery of Post-medieval and modern date. It sealed a spread of brick rubble along two sides of the test pit, which was considered to represent the corner of a robbed wall (**503**) that lay on a flint cobble foundation or surface (**504**). Traces of mortar bonding were noted on the bricks.

3.7.17 The cobbled foundation was associated with a small patch of scorched earth (**506**) in the north-west corner of the trench. These Post-medieval deposits lay on a light brown silty clay soil layer (**505**), which was 0.2 m deep, contained sherds of medieval Colchester ware and lay immediately above the natural clay (**507**).

Test pit 6 – Warren Farm

3.7.18 A test pit (**6**), 1m x 1m sq., was dug on the southern edge of St Osyth. No archaeological features were present. Thick humic garden topsoil, 0.28 m deep with tile, nails and pottery, overlay grey brown silty subsoil (**602**), 0.09 m deep, containing tile and iron nails. Red-orange natural gravel was encountered at a depth of 0.35 m.

Test pits 7 and 8 and Trench 14 – The Old House

3.7.19 Test pits **7** and **8** each measured 1x1 m sq. and were located approximately 1.5 m apart at the west end of the garden of this property, which had once

been part of a former brewery. The topsoil in test pit **7** (**701-2**) overlay a layer (**704**) containing large quantities of tile and oyster shells, which sealed a brick culvert (**707/708/806**) aligned north - south. The culvert had been partially truncated in test pit **7** by a large deep circular pit (**706**), at least 1m wide and 0.50 m deep and filled with orange silt (**705**), but was sealed in test pit **8** by undifferentiated garden soil (**801/802**). All features and layers were Victorian or later. Coarse sandy natural (**709/808**) was reached at a depth of 0.74 m and 0.60 m respectively from the surface.

3.7.20 Four fragments of a perforated brick were found in Trench **8**. This type of brick is typical of those used in the floors of 18th and 19th century malt houses and undoubtedly relates to the use of the site as a brewery.

Trench 14

3.7.21 A machine cut trench (**14**), 2 m long and 1.25 m wide, was opened to investigate the possible ditch detected in the resistance survey. The section revealed a sequence of topsoil (**1401**) and sub-soil (**1402**) that overlay the natural (**1404**) at a depth of 0.78 m. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Test pits 9 and 10 – The Red Lion

3.7.22 Two test pits, each 1 m by 1 m sq. and approximately 8 m apart, were dug in land behind the public house. Both test pits contained deposits of topsoil (**901/1001**) subsoil (**902/1002**) and redeposited clay (**903/1005**) above the sandy natural, which was encountered at a depth of approximately 1.0m. No archaeological features were identified in either of the test pits, except for a post-hole (**1003**) that was cut in to the redeposited clay in the north-east corner of test pit **10**.

3.7.23 The topsoil horizons contained Post-medieval and modern pottery, however 44 sherds of medieval material and a sherd of Saxon ware were found in soil layer **1002** and medieval pottery and an abraded prehistoric fragment from **903**. All were accompanied by more modern material suggesting that it is all derived.

Test pits 12 and 15 - White Hart

3.7.24 Two test pits, both 1m by 1m sq. were opened in the garden of the White Hart public house in Mill Street, on the west edge of St Osyth. Test pit **12** contained modern disturbed deposits and a shallow modern pit (**1204**) which overlay the alluvial clay natural 0.36 m. below the surface. The absence of any relic topsoil suggests that the original soil profile had been truncated.

3.7.25 Test pit **15** was located approximately 52 m south of test pit **12** to assess deposits on the street frontage to the side of the White Hart. This test pit revealed a cobbled surface, 0.30 m below the surface that was overlain by made-up ground. No effort was made to penetrate below the cobbles.

Test pits 13 and 18 – No 7 Spring Road

3.7.26 Test pits **13** and **18**, both 1 x 1 m, were dug garden of 7, Spring Road. Test pit **13** was positioned in an area of modern disturbance and was abandoned without further work.

3.7.27 Test pit **18** was placed approximately 2 m south of test pit **13**. The results demonstrated that stratified deposits are present in the garden, but they were unable to establish the scale of Post-medieval and modern disturbance.

3.7.28 Natural gravel was exposed approximately 0.95 m below the ground surface, in the north east corner of the test pit at the base of what was classified as a pit (**1807**). However the test pit archive does not indicate clearly that the edges of the feature were clearly defined. The basal fill of brown sandy silt (**1806**) contained a fragment of medieval pottery, which may be residual. The overlying dark brown sandy silt (**1802**) was thought to represent a separate pit and contained both medieval and modern ceramics. It overlay an undated deposit of grey-brown sandy silt (**1803**), which contained charcoal flecks and oyster shell, and a band of brick rubble (**1804**), which was located along the southern edge of the test pit.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Finds were recovered from all 24 of the trenches excavated in and around St Osyth creek and the town itself, and also from an initial surface artefact collection to the north of the creek. All finds have been cleaned (with the exception of the metalwork) and have been quantified by material type within each context. Quantified data form the primary finds archive for the site, and these data are summarised by trench in **Table 1**.

4.1.2 Subsequent to quantification, all finds have been at least visually scanned in order to gain an overall idea of the range of types present, their condition, and their potential date range. Spot dates have been recorded for selected material types as appropriate. All finds data are currently held on an Access database.

4.1.3 This section presents an overview of the finds assemblage, on which is based an assessment of the potential of this assemblage to contribute to an understanding of the development of the town and its associated quay, and the nature of activity within it.

4.2 Pottery

4.2.1 This is a fairly substantial pottery assemblage (1286 sherds; 15,108g) which is almost entirely of medieval or post-medieval date. The condition of the sherds is variable; those recovered from fieldwalking are in general more heavily abraded, consistent with their post-depositional movement within the ploughsoil.

4.2.2 Five sherds are earlier than medieval. These comprise a single later prehistoric sherd (Red Lion) in a coarse, flint-tempered fabric, probably Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age; two small body sherds (Churchyard and fieldwalking) which have been tentatively identified as Romano-British coarse greywares (although the possibility exists that these are abraded medieval greywares), one sandy/organic-tempered sherd of Early/Middle Saxon date (Red Lion), and one sherd of Late Saxon imported Badorf-type ware (Wheatfield). All were residual finds in later contexts.

4.2.3 Medieval and later sherds have been quantified by ware type, following the Essex type series for post-Roman pottery (Cunningham 1985; Cotter 2000). Totals by ware type are given in **Table 2**.

Table 1: All finds by trench

Location	Tr	Animal Bone	CBM	Clay Pipe	Glass	Pre-med. Pottery	Medieval Pottery	Post-med Pottery	Shell	Slag	Stone	Metalwork	Other Finds
Butchers	4	101/1572	56/4551	25/142	13/824		20/224	109/1290	7/72	2/33		7 Cu; 8 Fe	
Butchers	5	20/141	28/1447	2/2	3/21		7/45	33/340		4/354		7 Fe	
Churchyard	2	58/839	33/1513	16/46	28/349		52/313	125/753	11/135			40 Fe	1 flint
Churchyard	11	167/1429	151/16948	3/5	7/128	1/4	33/955	22/190	20/287	6/483	5/1657	42 Fe	1 flint
Churchyard	16	15/107	48/3510	6/13	6/78		2/152	64/889	1/34	2/81		20 Fe	
Churchyard	17	19/425	61/4735	2/7	30/516		20/314	21/186	13/144	31/1590	2/73	3 Fe; 1 Pb	
Harbour	1	5/129	42/4518				6/390	3/43					
King's Head	3	17/123	26/1583	22/43	5/83		2/34	20/442	1/3			2 Fe	
No. 7	13	4/63	6/500					7/200	1/19		1/76	1 Fe	
No. 7	18	31/404	21/1310	4/9	4/337		3/53	20/193	7/79			1 Cu; 2 Fe	
Old House	7	8/37	86/12,128	1/3	2/14		5/61	19/90	62/360			5 Fe	
Old House	8	25/81	133/9509	13/27	12/73			51/337	7/69	4/196	1/8	12 Fe	1 burnt flint
Red Lion	9	7/44	74/2033	10/19	3/95	1/5	3/18	21/208	2/19	1/52		24 Fe	1 burnt flint
Red Lion	10	113/1042	86/4317	28/45	34/215	1/5	52/1295	95/636	8/59		1/101	3 Fe	
Warren Fm	6		25/629		3/71			3/18				1 Cu; 4 Fe	
Wheatfield	19	7/176	54/3862				8/337	26/516				1 Cu; 90 Fe; 1 Pb	
Wheatfield	20		4/199				20/149	5/50		9/323		1 Cu; 1 Pb	
Wheatfield	21	17/202	45/3514	2/3	2/8		67/903	14/192	4/21	6/232		1 Cu; 14 Fe; 1 Pb	
Wheatfield	22	46/400	123/9544			1/8	101/1436	13/148	37/287	7/1058	2/82	1 Cu; 58 Fe; 3 Pb	
Wheatfield	23		1/761									1 Cu	
Wheatfield	24		19/3741		1/8		2/12	8/19				3 Fe	1 flint
White Hart	12	2/10	16/2272				1/14	4/88	38/2856				
Fieldwalking	-	6/53	187/4870	7/20	1/2	1/7	81/590	115/997				1 Ag; 8 Cu; 4 Fe; 6 Pb	1 burnt flint
	TOTAL	**668/7277**	**1325/97,994**	**141/384**	**154/2822**	**5/29**	**485/7295**	**798/7824**	**219/4444**	**72/4402**	**12/1997**	**1 Ag; 22 Cu; 342 Fe; 13 Pb**	

Late Saxon

4.2.4 One large, plain body sherd of Late Saxon Badorf-type ware was found in Trench 22 (Wheatfield), residual in a post-medieval context. This is a fine, wheelthrown whiteware of a type known from kilns in Badorf and probably made at other centres in the Rhineland. The date range of Badorf-type wares is thought to be principally 8th or 9th century, although similar vessels were apparently made into the 12th century, and certainly evidence from London suggests that sherds found there in 11th and 12th century contexts were imported during that period (Vince and Jenner 1991, 98-9).

Medieval

4.2.5 The medieval assemblage is dominated by Colchester-type ware (fabric 21A), which is a coarser variant of the sandy orange wares found across Essex. This ware is found in the Colchester area and includes both the 'classic' type originally defined as 'Colchester area' (Cunningham 1982) and other less distinctive types which are also likely to be of local origin (Cotter 2000, 107-80). It has a wide date range, produced from the early 13th to the mid 16th century, and later variants can be difficult to distinguish from early post-medieval redwares (fabric 40). In Colchester, however, it only became common in local assemblages in the 15th and early 16th centuries (Cotter 2000, 108). Possible production sites are known at Great Horkesley, just outside Colchester to the north-west, and within the town itself.

4.2.6 A wide range of vessel forms was produced in Colchester-type ware, and many were present at St Osyth. The most common forms are jars and jugs, with a smaller proportion of bowls. Less common forms found here include skillets, pipkins and dripping dishes. Many vessels, particularly the jugs, are decorated with white painted slip designs, and some jugs are glazed over a coating of white slip.

4.2.7 The close dating of sherds of this ware type is hampered by its lengthy currency. Certainly there appear to be examples of both early types (white-slipped jugs) and later forms (pipkins and slip-painted jugs), but there does appear to be an emphasis on the later period (15th and early 16th century), and this is supported by the association of many context groups of Colchester-type ware with post-medieval redwares.

4.2.8 Other coarsewares originating (or probably originating) within Essex include a single sherd of early medieval shelly ware (fabric 12A; Wheatfield) and six sherds of early medieval sandy ware (fabric 13; No. 7 Spring Rd and fieldwalking). The latter was superseded around the end of the 12th century by the better fired medieval greywares (fabric 20), of which there is a small quantity here (mostly from Wheatfield (Trench **22**) and fieldwalking). Some sandy orange wares have not specifically been identified as Colchester types but may also be of local origin. Hedingham ware, relatively common in Colchester (Cotter 2000, 75-91), is not so well represented at St Osyth. Diagnostic sherds include a jug with a twisted rod handle (Wheatfield, Trench **22**), a later 13th/early 14th century type (Cotter 2000, fig. 50, 17).

4.2.9 Regional medieval wares comprise a handful of Surrey whitewares, including Coarse Border ware and Kingston-type ware (Wheatfield, trenches **20** and **22**), and two sherds of London-type ware (Wheatfield, Trench **22** and fieldwalking), none particularly diagnostic. There are also three sherds of imported wares – two Saintonge and one North French monochrome (all from Wheatfield, Trench **22**).

Table 2: Pottery totals by ware type

Broad Period	Ware	Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. (g)
MEDIEVAL	Early medieval shelly ware	12A	1	2
	Early medieval sandy ware	13	6	33
	Medieval coarseware	20	59	430
	Sandy orange ware	21	11	89
	Colchester type ware	21A	388	6456
	Hedingham fineware	22	3	80
	Kingston-type ware	23D	4	43
	Coarse Border ware	23F	1	2
	Badorf-type ware	-	1	63
	Saintonge ware	27	2	5
	North French monochrome	28	1	9
	London type ware	36	2	6
POST MEDIEVAL	Redwares	40	244	3365
	Metropolitan slipware	40A	2	26
	Border Ware	42	8	66
	Martincamp flasks	43	1	3
	Langerwehe stoneware	45A	6	72
	Siegburg stoneware	45B	4	18
	Raeren stoneware	45C	8	167
	Cologne/Frechen stoneware	45D/45E	12	90
	Westerwald stoneware	45F	2	7
	English stonewares	45G	15	123
	Modern English stonewares	45M	38	795
	Tinglazed earthenware	46	11	54
	Seville: Cuerda Seca	46D/1	1	7
	Other import (unid.)	-	1	53
	White salt glaze	47	19	128
	Porcelain	48B	7	51
	Creamware	48C	47	236
	Refined whiteware	48D	279	1518
	Yellow ware	48E	58	547
	Agate ware	48W	3	8
	Whieldon-type wares	48W	2	11
	Refined redware	48X	2	29
	Bone china	48X	10	43
	Staffs-type slipware	50	19	349
	Late slipped kitchenware	51A	4	107
	Flowerpot	51B	2	28
	TOTAL		**1283**	**15,119**

Post-medieval

4.2.10 By the mid 16th century the Colchester ware industry was superseded by vessels in red earthenwares (fabric 40), a process which had already

happened over much of central Essex (Cotter 2000, 189). These redwares were produced at a number of production centres across Essex and the surrounding region, over a long time period – the closest centre to St Osyth is Thorpe-le-Soken, known only from 18th century documentary evidence (*ibid.*, 368-9). A range of utilitarian forms such as jugs, jars and bowls, were found at St Osyth, but these wares generally do not lend themselves to close dating. Later redwares (19th/20th century) such as the slipped kitchenwares (fabric 51A) and flowerpots (51B), have been quantified separately (see **Table 2**). Only two sherds of Metropolitan slipware (from the same vessel) were identified. A small quantity of coarseware was also supplied by the Surrey Border ware industry (fabric 42).

4.2.11 It is only at this period that imports become anything other than rare within the St Osyth assemblage, largely in the form of German stonewares – all the well known types are represented, from the late medieval/early post-medieval Langerwehe and Siegburg types to Raeren (16th century), Cologne/Frechen (late 16th/17th century) and Westerwald (17th/18th century). There is a single sherd from a Martincamp flask (late 15th to 17th century), and one sherd of a less common type – Sevillian fineware in the form of *Cuerda Seca* (Harbour/Wharf). Only around 20 examples of this ware are known from England and south Wales (including one sherd from Colchester), dating from the late 15th or early 16th century (Hurst *et al.* 1986; Cotter 2001, 296). One other sherd (Wheatfield, Trench 19) is almost certainly an import, possibly French or German, although not as yet identified. This appears to derive from a chafing dish in a fine white fabric, covered with a yellow lead glaze mottled with manganese. Running around the outside of the vessel, below the rim, is an illiterate motto.

4.2.12 In addition to these imports, the coarsewares were augmented from the 17th century by finewares such as the Staffordshire-type slipwares, and later, from the 18th century, by other Staffordshire types such as agate ware, tortoiseshell ware, white salt glaze, and creamware, as well as porcelain. Modern (19th/20th century) stonewares and refined whitewares are common.

4.3 Ceramic Building Material

4.3.1 This category includes fragments of brick, roof, floor and wall tile. The greatest proportion (1174 pieces) consists of fragments of flat roof (peg) tiles, mostly in fabrics which are visibly coarse and sandy in texture. No complete tiles were recovered, and only one complete width (165mm). Four tiles are at least partially glazed on the upper surface. Two pantiles were recognised, and five other curved fragments could either derive from further pantiles, or from ridge tiles (no clearly diagnostic ridge tiles were identified). In addition, four roof tiles of modern 'corrugated' type were found at the White Hart (Trench **12** topsoil).

4.3.2 Of the 99 brick fragments, one from the White Hart is of obviously modern date (Trench **12** topsoil); the others are all unfrogged types of varying sizes, in relatively soft, coarse fabrics (two pale-firing). Many of these fragments are heavily abraded.

4.3.3 Eleven floor tiles (all plain, and most of them glazed) were identified, as well as one modern paving/flooring tile from the White Hart (Trench 12 topsoil). In addition, four fragments of perforated brick in a pale-firing fabric, all from Old House (topsoil and garden soil in Trench 8), can be identified as forming part of a malthouse floor (compare late 18th/19th century examples: Belford and Ross 2004, fig. 4).

4.3.4 Twenty pieces were identified (with varying degrees of confidence) as of Romano-British date. This comprised one possible (combed) flue tile, and 19 miscellaneous brick fragments, of which 16 came from Wheatfield (topsoil in Trench **24**; seven of these are in pale-firing fabrics). The rest were either unstratified (fieldwalking) finds, or were residual in medieval or post-medieval contexts.

4.3.5 All of the four wall tile fragments identified (all from the White Hart; Trench **12**) are of modern date.

4.4 Clay Pipe

4.4.1 Fragments of clay tobacco pipe recovered consist largely of plain stem, but four complete bowls are present, as well as three other fragments stamped with makers' marks. Three complete bowls came from the Butchers; these comprise one example of an early 17th century type (Hind and Crummy 1988, type 2) and one of a later 17th century type (Hind and Crummy 1988, type 7). One decorated fluted bowl of 19th century type (Hind and Crummy 1988, fig. 61) has circles (possibly rosettes) stamped on the sides of the spur (Old House). Three other spurs from bowls with similar decoration also carry makers' marks – one stamped I/? (Red Lion), one stamped J/P (Churchyard), and one stamped L/M (King's Head). J/P is possibly the mark of James Pettitt, a 19th century Colchester pipemaker (Hind and Crummy 1988, 66).

4.5 Glass

4.5.1 All of the glass is of post-medieval date and includes window and vessel glass, as well as a single bead. A few pieces of window glass (all from Old House, Trench 8) have the heavily oxidised appearance of early post-medieval glass, but no quarry shapes could be distinguished. Other early post-medieval glass comprises two pieces almost certainly from the same vessel (also from Old House, Trench 8), from a beaker of unknown form with applied horizontal rigaree trail(s), a late 16th or 17th century type (e.g. Willmott 2002, fig. 11).

4.5.2 The remaining glass is almost equally divided between fragments of green wine bottle of later 17th century date or later, and 18th century or later clear (or pale greenish) bottle/jar fragments, some later examples embossed.

4.5.3 A single bead, an opaque purple/brown cylindrical form, was an unstratified find from No. 7 Spring Rd (Trench **18**). This is of uncertain date.

4.6 Stone and Worked Flint

4.6.1 The stone includes building material and portable objects. Three pieces of continental lava stone (Churchyard, Trench **11**; Wheatfield, Trench **22**) derive from quern- or millstones of Roman or later date.

4.6.2 The remaining fragments include one slab-like piece of fine-grained limestone, possibly flooring material (Churchyard, Trench **16**), and a few fragments of roofing slate (Old House, Red Lion, Churchyard, No. 7 Spring Rd).

4.6.3 In addition, three pieces of worked flint were recovered, all waste flakes (Churchyard and Wheatfield). These could be of prehistoric origin; alternatively, they may derive from medieval or later walling.

4.7 Metalwork

4.7.1 This includes coins as well as other objects of copper alloy, iron and lead.

Coins and Tokens

4.7.2 Six coins and tokens were recovered. All of these are late medieval or post-medieval in date. Five are copper alloy coins or tokens, with the one exception a silver penny of Henry VI. All of the coins were recovered unstratified – either during the course of the fieldwalking exercise or from metal detecting of the topsoil removed from the trenches and test pits. The date range of the coins recovered points to activity on the site in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, but need not indicate settlement activity on the site. Two are small copper alloy farthings struck during the reign of Charles I, whilst a third is a large 17th century trade token. The halfpenny of George I is so worn and corroded as to be barely identifiable, whilst a second probable token is almost completely illegible. None are particularly unusual. The copper alloy coins and tokens show varying degrees of wear and corrosion.

Copper alloy

4.7.3 Recognisable objects include a thimble and sewing ring (Wheatfield; fieldwalking), four buckles (three D-shaped, one double-looped; Warren Farm and fieldwalking) and four buttons (one marked 'South Africa Constabulary': Butchers). A small, decorative rosette fitting with two loops is probably a clothes fastening (Butchers). One object appears to be a decorative handle from a vessel such as a flagon or tankard (fieldwalking), and there is a possible strapend. Two rings are of uncertain function. A piece of rolled sheet could have functioned as a ferrule. One object is unidentified.

Iron

4.7.4 Most of the ironwork consists of nails and other structural items; some of these may be related to shipbuilding activities, as at least four roves were observed (three unstratified and one from Wheatfield), and others may

survive still attached to nails (in particular from pit **1904**, Wheatfield). Also recognised at this stage were several blades and a horseshoe. Due to heavy corrosion, a number of objects remain unidentified.

Lead

4.7.5 Lead objects include a small figurine, a possible weight and possible shot. Other objects are either waste/offcuts or unidentified.

4.8 Worked Bone

4.8.1 A single worked bone object was recovered, a complete pin or awl (Churchyard). Associated pottery suggests a medieval date.

4.9 Human Bone

4.9.1 Fragments of human infant cervical vertebra and adult thoracic vertebra and fibula were found in Trench 2 topsoil.

4.10 Animal Bone

Method of analysis

4.10.1 The potential of the assemblage to provide information about husbandry patterns, population structures and consumption practices was ascertained from the number of bones that could give information on the age and sex of animals, butchery, burning and breakage patterns. The number of bones that could provide metrical information was also counted.

4.10.2 Conjoining fragments that were demonstrably from the same bone were counted as one bone in order to minimise distortion. Whole individuals were also given a count of one for the same reason. No fragments were recorded as 'medium mammal' or 'large mammal'; these were instead consigned to the unidentified category. No attempt was made to identify ribs or vertebrae (except the atlas and axis) to species, although large numbers of these bones were noted where they occurred.

4.10.3 The extent of mechanical or chemical attrition to the bone surface was recorded, with 1 indicating very poor condition, 2 poor, 3 fair, 4 good and 5 very good. The numbers of gnawed bone were also noted. Marks from chopping, sawing, knife cuts and fractures made when the bone was fresh were recorded as butchery marks. Some 668 fragments of animal bone were examined, representing 560 identifiable bones.

Results

4.10.4 Of the total 560 bones, 153 were from contexts that contained only medieval ceramics, 26 post-medieval, and the remainder undated, modern or mixed. The latter are the largest proportion at almost a third of all bones recovered. In them medieval ceramics often predominated, but intrusive or residual ceramics were also present.

Condition and preservation

4.10.5 Almost all the assemblage was recorded as being in fair condition, with the exception of the four bones from topsoil in Trench 13, which were in poor condition. Gnawing was not common, seen on only 15 bones throughout the trenches. Loose teeth were similarly infrequent, with 25 in total, again found in many trenches, but with a concentration in topsoil in Trench 2. 53% of fragments were identified, and together these figures suggest an assemblage in relatively good condition.

Animal exploitation

4.10.6 In the medieval contexts and in general sheep/goat dominate (positive identifications of both), with smaller but almost equal numbers of cattle and pig. Dog, cat and horse, bones are not common. Birds were fairly common and comprised domestic fowl, with some goose and a single duck bone. Another bone may have been from a curlew but has not been formally identified and is in any case from topsoil. Hare and rabbit bones were seen in several trenches, and small numbers of fish bones were found in medieval, post-medieval and mixed contexts. One piece of fallow antler in 401 was the only evidence of deer, and may have been from a shed and collected antler.

Table 3: Species list and percentages (NISP).

	Horse	**Cattle**	**Sheep/ Goat**	**Pig**	**Dog**	**Deer**	**Cat**	**Hare**	**Rabbit**	**Bird**	**Fish**	**Unid-entified**	**Total**
NISP	1	51	108	45	4	1	2	7	6	30	5	299	560
% identified fragments	<1	20	41	17	2	<1	1	3	3	11	2		

4.10.7 Almost a quarter of bones (137) could be aged and a tenth (57) measured. One male pig tooth was seen in a medieval context. Several neonatal bones of domestic animals were also present and young fowl, cat and lagomorph (hare/rabbit) bones were also seen. Pathological conditions were relatively common and included a sheep/goat metatarsal that had thickened and extended along the medial anterior margin, possibly as a reaction to stress, in a medieval deposit. In mixed deposits were the porous mandible of a rabbit suffering from infection, a hare metapodial with sinuses on the shaft and distal part, but no other signs of infection, and a domestic fowl tibiotarsus with exostosis on the lateral distal condyle. A sheep/goat metacarpal with ossified ligament was probably from an old individual, and a sheep mandible in Trench **22** was extremely unevenly worn. The lower first and second molars were very worn and the first molar had lost almost all of its enamel and is in two separate parts, with porosity and recession of bone along the gum line.

Consumption and deposition

4.10.8 Butchery marks were observed on 70 bones, and included marks from filleting, portioning and disarticulation. Some bones had been fractured when

fresh presumably to extract marrow. Saw marks were present in contexts that contained some modern material and were probably not made during butchery of medieval carcasses. The antler had numerous small cuts along the anterior margin that may have occurred when removing the velvet. Only one burnt bone was present, from topsoil (Churchyard, Trench **2**).

4.10.9 The partial remains of a pig under a year old were recovered from medieval context **1105**. Some of the smaller elements such as phalanges were missing, although this may be due to recovery bias rather than because they were not with the carcass when it was deposited. The reason for deposition of this animal whole is not clear; nothing on the bones indicated illness, but most diseases would not have marked the bone. This ditch or pit fill also contained the widest range of species, probably due to the large number of bones from this context.

4.11 Marine Shell

4.11.1 The marine shell collected consists largely of oyster shell, the largest deposit coming from the White Hart (Trench **12**, pit 1204). This group included both left and right valves, i.e. both preparation and consumption waste, and other contexts in other trenches contained similarly mixed groups of valves although in smaller quantities. The presence of small quantities of scallop, cockle, winkle and whelk is to be expected in such a coastal location, but a single abraded cowrie shell is of interest, possibly a fortuitous seashore find (Churchyard, Trench **2**).

4.12 Recommendations for further work.

4.12.1 The finds assemblage from St Osyth represents a significant quantity of material, recovered from various locations around the town. Questions that might be addressed by further analysis of the various categories include the nature and date range of structures and/or activity within the town, in particular the possible Late Saxon origins of the settlement, and the medieval wharf.

4.12.2 Very little datable material was recovered from the harbour (Trench **1**). Small assemblages from trenches excavated around the town provide 'keyholes' into medieval and post-medieval activity within the town, but much of the material recovered from these trenches was chronologically mixed. Further detailed analysis of selected stratified pottery groups might help to refine dating for specific areas (for example, the larger medieval groups from Churchyard and Wheatfield).

4.12.3 The range of pottery fabric types (including continental imports) illustrates the wide-ranging contacts of the town during the medieval and early post-medieval period, although the vast bulk of the assemblage was locally supplied. The presence of Badorf-type ware is interesting, given its potentially early date ($8^{th}/9^{th}$ century), although it could have been imported as late as the 12^{th} century. Some material types also have the potential to inform on the lifestyle of the town's inhabitants, for example through the use of pottery finewares, or fine glass drinking vessels, or metalwork.

4.12.4 There is a quantity of structural evidence (ceramic and stone building material). This is not, on the whole, closely datable, but might be combined with data obtained from the dendrochronological survey and other work on standing buildings within the town. Some of this building material can be related to specific structural elements (walls) encountered within the evaluation trenches.

4.12.5 The fieldwalking assemblage might provide some spatial information (for example, on the location of any structures in this area, or other foci of activity) and a broad date range for this activity. Some interesting objects (e.g. coins and other metalwork) were recovered from this area but are essentially unstratified. Further analysis of this group of material is not recommended.

4.12.6 There is little that can be gained from further analysis of the coins, although it is recommended that the silver coin be professionally cleaned by a conservator.

4.12.7 The faunal assemblage is relatively well preserved with apparently little bias from scavenger activity or post-depositional destruction, but much of the bone is from topsoil and/or mixed deposits, which restricts sample size for well-defined periods. Thus the potential for understanding animal husbandry, consumption or deposition is limited and further work is not recommended.

4.12.8 Certain categories of material could be targeted for selective discard, in particular the ceramic building material, plain clay pipe stems and ironwork.

5 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1.1 A single two litre soil sample was taken from burnt deposit **2007** in brick kiln **2008**. It was processed by standard flotation methods. The sample contained high amounts of viscous material resembling material resulting from high temperature burning. Some of this material probably reporesents wood charcoal, probably burnt while wet, and some represents coal. A rachis of rye (*Secale cereale*) was the only identifiable plant remain recovered. Charcoal was noted from the flots and included one piece of oak. The purpose of this kiln is uncertain, but the absence of cereal remains suggests that it was probably nt used for corn drying.

Table 4. Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal.

				Flot							Residue	
Feature type/ No	Context	Sample	size litres	flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	Weed seeds uncharred	Weed seeds charred	Charcoal >5.6mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm	analysis
Kiln 2008	2007	1	2	300	-	C	-	-	B	-	-	-

KEY: A** = exceptional, A* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (h) = hazelnuts, smb = small mammal bones; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs Moll-f = freshwater molluscs; Analysis, C = charcoal, P = plant, M = molluscs

NOTE: [1]flot is total, but flot in superscript = ml of rooty material. [2]Unburnt seed in lower case to distinguish from charred remains

Wood and Radiocarbon dating

5.1.2 Two wooden stakes were examined for suitability for radiocarbon dating. Stake 121 was an oak roundwood stake of which the last five rings were sampled for radiocarbon dating. The second (107) was a short-lived (5 rings), unidentified wattle rod. Samples of less than 5 outer rings of one stakes and one fragment of wattle were submitted for AMS dating. The results confirm that the wattle and the stake are contemporary (Ward and Wilson 1978) and date the structure to mid 15th to mid 17th century.

Table 5. Radiocarbon results.

Stake	*material*	*result no*	*δC^{13} ‰*	*result BP*	*cal date*
121	oak round wood stake <31> last 5 rings	NZA-20327	-25.79	361±35	1440-1640 cal AD
107	wattle rod (33) 5 rings	NZA-20328	-26.73	306±35	1480-1660 cal AD

6 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 The 'Time Team' evaluation at St Osyth set out to gain an understanding of the evolution and development of St Osyth with its relationships to the development of the Priory. It also aimed to examine the role of the creek as an important feature of the economy of the town.

6.1.2 These aims were addressed by investigating the timber structure at the creek, its associated deposits and undertaking evaluation trenching in the adjoining field to the north. Activity and occupation in the area of the present town was examined by test pitting in gardens in the immediate surroundings of the church to recover datable artefacts and establish a chronological framework for activity and expansion or contraction of settlement.

6.1.3 Occasional finds of prehistoric date have been found in the area, although they are generally of low density. The recent work at St Osyth produced a single sherd of heavily abraded prehistoric pottery. Material of Roman date was also sparsely represented. Two sherds were found of which one was of uncertain identification and the other was also heavily abraded.

6.1.4 The largest accumulation of Roman material was found in the topsoil horizon above the kiln feature in Trench **24**. This assemblage comprised a mixed group of brick and tile fragments. Roman pottery was completely absent, both from the trench and the immediate surroundings, which suggests that the kiln feature is of post Roman date and merely reused fragments of brick and tile that were found from a source nearby. A number of Roman buildings, which may have supplied the bricks and tiles, are known to have been constructed in the area including a small structure found at St Osyth Park in 1962 (Essex SMR No. 2890).

6.1.5 Saxon occupation at St Osyth can be traced from documentary evidence to at least the 7th century when a nunnery was founded at the village of *Cicc* (St Osyth) during the reign of Sighere, King of Essex. It is unclear whether the foundation of the village indicates continued occupation from the Roman period or whether the exposed spur on which St Osyth stands affected the choice of location for the nunnery.

6.1.6 Saxon occupation at St Osyth is poorly represented in the archaeological record. An archaeological evaluation, undertaken by the Colchester Archaeological Trust in 1999 (CAT 1999) on land immediately south of the church, recovered two sherds of redeposited Saxon pottery. The recent work at St Osyth has added an additional sherd of Saxon pottery, from test pit **10**, north east of the church, and a single sherd of Badorf type ware from Trench **22** to this total. Both were residual in later contexts. The general lack of evidence is consistent with the results of earlier work, and does not significantly alter our understanding of the origins of Saxon St Osyths.

6.1.7 The Domesday Survey (Rumble, 1983) confirms that St Osyth was a thriving village before the foundation of the Priory, possibly owing its success to the quay and other maritime activities.

6.1.8 The Priory itself was founded for the Austin canons in AD 1121, and became an Augustinian Abbey by AD 1200. The period immediately after this marked an expansion in prosperity and in population.

6.1.9 The prosperity is reflected in the evidence contained in the archaeological record. The recent evaluation work at St Osyth has demonstrated that medieval settlement, which is not likely to be much earlier than the early 14th century, extended along the spur of land west from the present centre of the town. This tract of land overlooked the St Osyth Creek to the south and was possibly constrained by St Osyth Little Park to the north. Surface collection has identified a large spread of medieval pottery in this area.

6.1.10 Limited evaluation has confirmed the results of the surface collection and suggested that timber buildings once occupied this area to the west of St Osyth. The evaluation has been unable to establish whether this settlement marked a continuous spread from the town or was an isolated farm separated from the main concentration by the dry valley feature that drained in the creek.

6.1.11 Little can be said concerning the economy of this settlement. Excavated deposits were frequently associated with oyster shells suggesting that shellfish may have constituted a substantial part of the diet. Nearer the shore of the creek a number of rove ends from the fill of a medieval ditch confirmed that the building, maintaining and breaking-up of clinker built boats was also an important shoreline activity.

6.1.12 Settlement continued to thrive around the church and the Priory precinct. All test pits in the centre of the town were characterised by deep soil accumulations up to a metre deep, indicative of prolonged occupation. They contained quantities of medieval pottery, frequently from the lower excavated deposits. Trench 17, the only trench capable of examining a former street frontage, produced evidence of post-holes. These post-holes were undated but may relate to timber medieval buildings.

6.1.13 The archaeological evaluation by the Colchester Archaeological Trust in 1999 (CAT 1999) also revealed a number of features, principally pits, that lay to the rear of the present street frontage. The evidence also indicated continuous medieval activity around the church from the 13th century. They noted the difficulties of dating isolated features that were cut through deposits of soils subject to long-term cultivation.

6.1.14 The success and expansion of the town undoubtedly owed much to the prosperity of the Priory. This was also linked to mercantile activities. Ships would undoubtedly have been drawn up on the shore at the present quay and loaded with cargo brought through the town by road. However purpose built wharves were probably also needed where no natural firm beach was available.

6.1.15 The structure on the north bank of the creek, dated to somewhere between 1480 and 1660, but probably in use between the late 15th and early 16th

centuries, may have been located to serve the needs of people living west of the present quay.

6.1.16 By the late 16th century, following the Dissolution of 1539, records survive of ships of up to 28 tons trading to and from St Osyth. However most were of 8 to 12 tons carrying capacity, a size that could have been accommodated within the timber wharf. Broadly contemporary vessels of clinker built construction have been found, including the Blackfriars ship 2, a 17th century flat bottomed barge, which measured approximately 2m across the base. It was blunt ended, approximately 12-16 m long and was probably fitted with a sail. The wharf frontage could only be traced for 4.20m northwards from the edge of the channel.

6.1.17 Most of the trade was with London although voyages to a range of ports, primarily along the north coast of Kent and to Essex, were also made. Ports such as Maidstone, Sittingbourne and Colchester were frequently, as at St Osyth, situated on tidal rivers. Cargo was predominantly derived from agricultural sources on the Essex Marshes, including cheese, butter and assorted cereal products, but also included logs for fuel for London.

6.1.18 The evidence of the evaluation suggests that the prosperity of the town was inextricably linked to the fortunes of the Priory. Settlement in the area west of the town appears to have continued into the 16th century, but contracted and ceased in the 17th century, possibly related to the Dissolution of 1539. By the time it was finally suppressed in 1539, the Abbey had in its possession a great deal of land and wealth. The income from the Abbey was larger than that of any other monastery in Essex, except Waltham Holy Cross and Barking.

6.1.19 The present town of St Osyth has a number of timber framed properties that date from the late 15th and early 16th centuries, mostly centred on the core of the settlement around the church. Dendrochronology work undertaken as part of this project has indicated that three of these buildings were built or modified in the 15th or early 16th century. The results of the test pits also produced evidence for continuing occupation in the town throughout the medieval period.

6.1.20 Nearer the waterfront there is no evidence for settlement after the 17th century. The most intriguing feature is the brick built kiln found immediately north of the creek. It was of brick construction, which suggests that it was of 17th or 18th century date. Hammer scale found in the furnace debris indicates that smithing, probably related to continued shipbuilding and repair, continued along the creek. However the quantities of debris are insufficient to conclude that this structure was related to metal work and were probably derived from activity nearby.

6.1.21 This assessment demonstrates that the work undertaken by Time Team at St Osyths has significantly enhanced our understanding of the origins, layout, nature and extent of the medieval settlement at St Osyths. It has added to our limited knowledge of the Roman and Saxon exploitation of the area, and altered our understanding of the development of St Osyths in the medieval

and Post-medieval period. In particular, the combination of geophysical survey, trial trenching and dendrochronology have all contributed new evidence for analysis.

6.1.22 A copy of this assessment report will be lodged with the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record, along with a copy of the geophysical survey report and the dendrochronology report.

7 THE ARCHIVE

7.1.1 The excavated material and archive, including plans, photographs and written records are currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Salisbury under the code 55753 where they await to be deposited and curated in the appropriate local museum under the Code STO 04.

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APPENDIX 1. LOCATION AND NUMBER OF TEST PITS/TRENCHES.

Location	**No of test pits/ trenches**	**Trench Numbers**
Wharf/ Creek	1	1
Churchyard	4	2, 11, 16, 17
Kings Head pub	1	3
Butchers	2	4, 5
Warren Farm	1	6
Old House	3	7, 8, 14
Red Lion pub	2	9, 10
No. 7 (which street?)	2	13, 18
White Hart pub	2	12, 15
Wheatfield	6	19-24
TOTAL	24	

9 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

TRENCH 1. Harbour/ wharf Dimensions: 4.5 x 2 m

Context	Description
101	Clean-up layer. Number allocated to material recovered during cleaning of the wharf trench
102	**Contruction cut for wharf**
103	Primary silting of 102. A black alluvial clay
104	Secondary fill of 102. A mixed greyish orange gravel intermixed with lenses of alluvial clay
105	Upper fill of 102. A greyish blue alluvial silty clay.
106	Small piece of loose timber – part of 111.
107	north - south line of wattling – associated with timber revetment 110.
108	Natural alluvial silting. A yellow alluvial silty clay.
109	Wharf make-up layer – gravel.
110	north - south lower line of timber revetment
111	north - south upper line of timber revetment

TRENCH 2 Churchyard Dimensions: 1 x 1.35m

Context	Description
201	Topsoil
202	Rubble horizon
203	Midden-like deposit with oyster and shell
204	Silty layer associated with cobbling
205	Make-up layer for cobbles
206	Lowest layer - too deep

TRENCH 3 Kings Head Dimensions: 2 x 1m

Context	Description
301	Topsoil. A dark brown silty loam
302	Modern disturbance associated with tree roots. A yellowish brown silty gravel.
303	Subsoil, deposited in the post-medieval period.
304	Dog skeleton in 303.
305	Layer – mid brown silty clay
306	VOID – same as 305
307	Orangey yellow silty clay - natural

TRENCH 4 Butchers Dimensions: 2.10 x 1.7m

Context	Description
401	Topsoil - A dark grey brown silty loam
402	Subsoil. A dark greyish brown sandy silt
403	Rubble layer. Similar to 404.
404	A dark brown silty sand containing large quantities of tile. Possibly a tile lining
405	Mortar layer associated with 404.
406	Possible Stone foundation
407	VOID, same as 405
408	Demolition/silty rubbish layer. A dark brown silty sand
409	Yellowish orange gravel layer related to construction cut.
410	Midden-related rubbish deposit. A dark brown silty sand.
411	east - west running wall.
412	Fill of pit 413. A mid grey brown silt.
413	**Small circular cut of pit**

TRENCH 5 Butchers Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
501	Topsoil. A dark brown silty sand.
502	Rubble horizon. A dark brown silty sand.
503	Robbed out brick/tile wall.
504	Stone cobbling
505	A yellowish brown silty clay layer.
506	Scorched layer. A reddish brown silt showing signs of burning
507	Natural

TRENCH 6 Warren Farm Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
601	Topsoil. A mid-dark brown silty sand.
602	Subsoil. Mid greyish brown sandy silt.
603	Reddish orange gravel - natural.

TRENCH 7 Old House Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
701	Topsoil. A dark greyish brown silty sand.
702	Dark brown silty sand. Garden soil
703	Light orange silt containing much brick rubble.
704	A dark greyish brown silty sand. A rubble horizon
705	A dark brwnish orange sandy silt. Fill of 706.
706	**Cut of straight sided feature**
707	A greyish brown silty sand. Fill of 708
708	**Cut of possible robber trench**
709	A yellowish orange sandy silt. - Natural

TRENCH 8 Old House Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
801	Topsoil. A dark grey brown silty loam
802	Garden soil layer. A dark brown sandy loam
803	Same as 802
804	**Robber cut to remove bricks of culvert**
805	A grey brown sandy silt containing frequent cobbles. Fill of 804
806	Brick foundations of culvert.
807	**Construction cut for culvert**
808	Natural

TRENCH 9 Red Lion Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
901	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown silty sand.
902	Subsoil. Dark grey silty sand.
903	Redeposited clay deposit. A light brown silty clay.
904	Yellowish orange coarse sand - natural

TRENCH 10 Red Lion Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1001	Topsoil. A dark greyish brown silty sand
1002	Rubble layer. A mid brown silty loam
1003	**Post hole cut.**
1004	Fill of 10003
1005	A yellowish brown silty clay. Redeposited clay layer
1006	Natural – yellowish brown silty clay

TRENCH 11 Churchyard Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1101	Topsoil A dark grey brown silty loam
1102	Subsoil. Light yellowish brown silty sand.
1103	Destruction/ building collapse layer. A mid greyish brown sandy silt
1104	Buried topsoil. A dark greyish brown sandy loam.
1105	Fill of 1106. A mid greyish brown sandy silt.
1106	**Cut of Pit/ ditch terminus**
1107	Fill of unexcavated feature 1106. A mid yellowish brown silty sand.

TRENCH 12 White Hart Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1201	Topsoil. A light – mid brown silty clay.
1202	Dumped modern material with fragments of asphalt. Light gingery brown silty gravel.
1203	Clay lens/ layer. A dark greyish brown silty clay.
1204	**Cut of pit**
1205	A dark greyish brown silty clay. Fill of pit 1204
1206	A light yellowish brown silty clay. Interface of unploughed topsoil and natural
1207	Natural – A yellowish brown sandy silty alluvial clay

TRENCH 13 No. 7 Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1301	Topsoil and Modern debris. A dark grey brown silty sand.

TRENCH 14 Old House Dimensions: 2.3 x 1.25m

Context	Description
1401	Topsoil. Dark greyish / black silty sand.
1402	Subsoil. A light brown silty clay.
1403	Interface between subsoil and natural. An orangeish yellow sand.
1404	Natural – yellow sand.

TRENCH 15 White Hart Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1501	Modern make-up/ gravel. A light brown silty gravel.
1502	Modern clinker/ asphalt.
1503	Sandy silt layer. A light brown silty sand.
1504	Cobbled surface. A greyish brown silty sand.
1505	**Cut for concrete post**
1506	Fill of 1505. A brown silt.

TRENCH 16 Churchyard Dimensions: 1.25 x 1m

Context	Description
1601	Topsoil. A dark grey brown silty loam.
1602	Mixed layer. A dark grey brown silty sand.
1603	Rubble/destruction layer. A dark grey brown silty sand.
1604	Brick foundations/ structure
1605	Silting deposit abutting brick structure. A mid brown sandy silty loam.
1606	Natural – A yellowish orange silty sand

TRENCH 17 Churchyard Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1701	Redeposited layer – a dark brown silty loam
1702	Topsoil – a dark brown silt.
1703	Mixed debris layer – A light yellowish brown silty loam
1704	Metalled surface
1705	(Victorian) brick wall.
1706	Drain

1707	Layer – mid yellowish brown silt clay
1708	**Cut of pit**
1709	Fill of 1708. A mid to dark brown silty sandy clay.
1710	**Cut of pipe**
1711	Fill of 1710. A mid brown sandy silt.
1712	**Cut of foundation trench**
1713	Fill of 1712. A mid to dark brown silty loam.
1714	**Cut of post hole containing 1710**
1715	Fill of 1714. Light brownish orange fine silty clay
1706	Topsoil. A sark brown silt
1717	Deposit above 1706 – same as 1701?
1718	**Cut of ill-defined feature**
1719	Fill of 1718. A very mixed deposit.

TRENCH 18 No. 7 Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
1801	Topsoil. A very dark brown, almost black, sandy silt.
1802	Fill of 1805. A dark brown sandy silt.
1803	Organic lens. A mid greyish brown sandy silt.
1804	Rubble horizon. A light yellowish brown coarse sand.
1805	**Cut of pit**
1806	Fill of 1807. A dark to mid greyish brown sandy silt.
1807	**Cut of pit**
1808	Natural orange yellow sand

TRENCH 19 Wheatfield Dimensions: 2.7 x 1.9m

Context	Description
1901	Topsoil. A light brown silty clay
1902	A light brown slightly silty clay. Redeposited fill of 1904.
1903	Lower deposit in 1904. A dark greyish brown clay silt.
1904	**Cut of pit**

TRENCH 20 Wheatfield Dimensions: 1 x 1m

Context	Description
2001	Topsoil – a mid yellowish brown silty clay
2002	Subsoil. A light yellow silty clay.
2003	north - south aligned wall of flue
2004	north - south aligned brick wall – forming eastern flue wall
2005	Backfill of flue. A mixed reddish brown and brownish black silt clay.
2006	A mid to dark brown silt containing much broken brick
2007	Ashy deposit. A very dark grey brown silty clay.
2008	Brick floor of flue
2009	Brick foor of kiln
2010	Eastern wall of kiln
2011	Group number assigned to the kiln structure.

TRENCH 21 Wheatfield Dimensions: 4.8 x 2.3m

Context	Description
2101	Topsoil. A mid brown silty clay
2102	Fill of 2106. A very dark greyish brown / black silty clay.
2103	Fill of 2107. A light to mid yellowish brown silty clay
2104	Fill of 2106. A very dark greyish brown / black silty clay – identical deposit to layer 2102.
2105	Fill of 2107. A mid grey silty clay.
2106	**Cut of ditch**
2107	**Cut of narrow ditch/ drain**

TRENCH 22 Wheatfield Dimensions: 15 x 3.4m

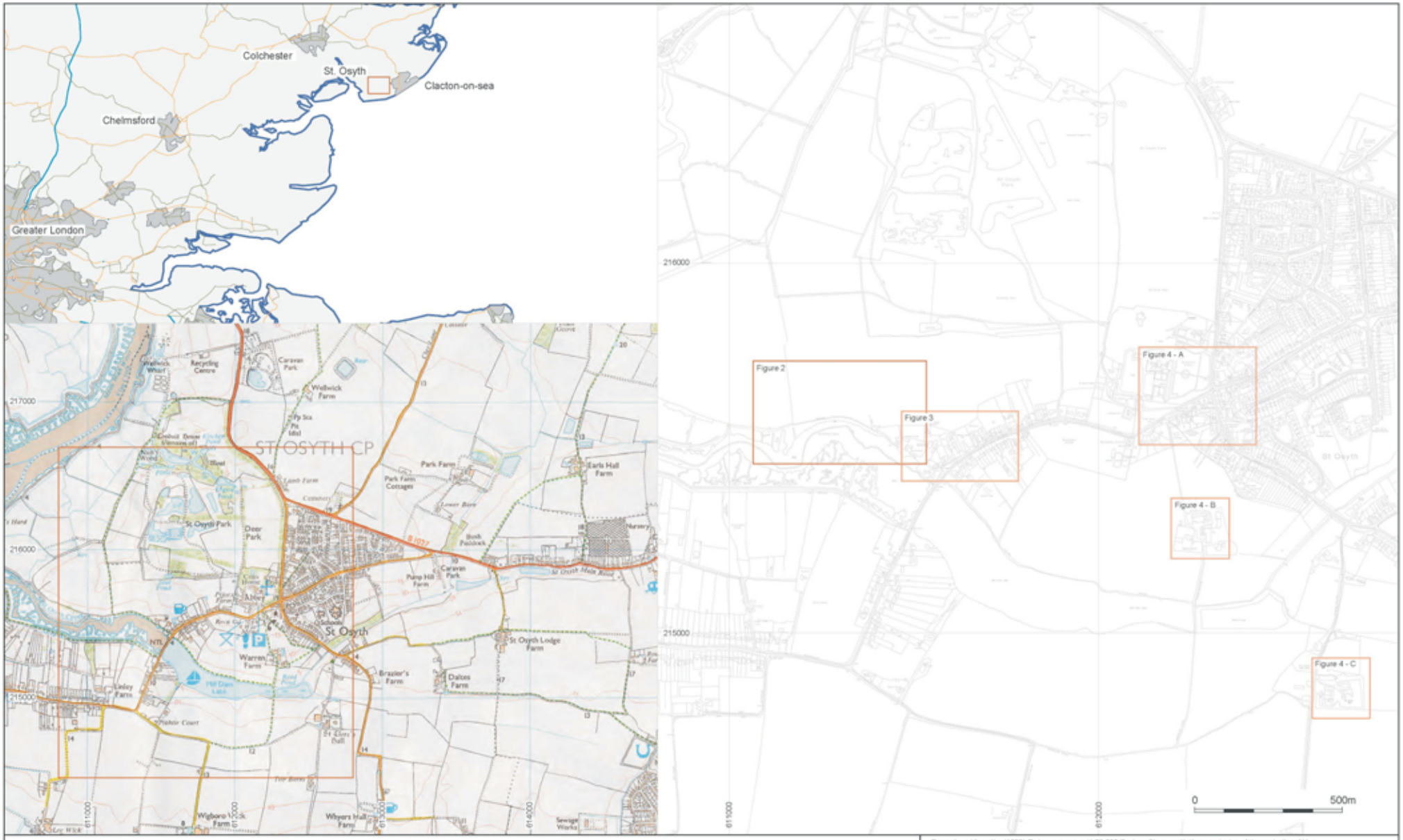
Context	Description
2201	Topsoil. A dark grey brown silty loam
2202	Oyster layer (?derived midden). A mid greyish brown clay silt.
2203	Fill of ditch 2204. A light brown alluvial silty clay
2204	**Cut of ditch**
2205	Fill of 2206. A light brownish orange alluvial silty clay.
2206	**Cut of east - west ditch**
2207	Fill of 2208. A dark greyish brown silty clay.
2208	**Cut of east - west beamslot**
2209	Fill of 2210. A dark greyish brown silty clay.
2210	**Cut of east - west beamslot**
2211	Natural – yellowish orange alluvial clay
2212	Patch of Cobbling
2213	Fill of 2214. A dark to mid greyish brown clay silt.
2214	**Cut of post hole**
2215	Gravel layer. A light brownish orange sandy gravel.
2216	Patch of mortar.

TRENCH 23 Wheatfield Dimensions: 5 x 1.6m

Context	Description
2301	Topsoil. A mid grey brown silty clay
2302	Subsoil. A light yellow brown silt clay
2303	A mid yellowish brown silty clay - colluvium
2304	VOIDED
2305	A mixed and mottled mid – light grey and mid yellow lay. Natural
2306	**Cut of pit/field drain**
2307	Fill of 2306. A light grey clay.
2308	Fill of 2306. A mid grey brown silty clay
2309	Fill of 2306. A light grey silty clay
2310	Fill of 2306. A mid grey brown silty clay.

TRENCH 24 Wheatfield Dimensions: 5 x 3m

Context	Description
2401	Topsoil. A mid grey brown silty clay
2402	Natural – yellow-brown colluvium. Mid yellowish brown silty clay.
2403	north - south aligned decayed wall of brick structure
2404	east - west aligned decayed wall of brick structure
2405	north - south aligned decayed wall of brick structure
2406	east - west aligned decayed wall of brick structure
2407	north - south aligned decayed wall of brick structure
2408	Decayed brick structure
2409	north - south aligned decayed brick structure
2410	Heat affected clay in between 2406 and 2407
2411	Heat affected clay associated with 2408
2412	Dump deposit. A mid to dark brown silty clay
2413	Extensive spread of collapse and dump material. A mixed layer
2414	**Cut of pit**
2415	Fill of 2414. A dark greyish brown and mottled yellowish brown silty clay.
2416	**Cut of pit**
2417	Brick-rich fill of 2416A mid brown silty clay
2418	Fill of 2416. A light to mid grey brown silty clay
2419	Kiln group number
2420	Remnant clear-out deposit of flue. A mixed yellow brown and black silty clay.



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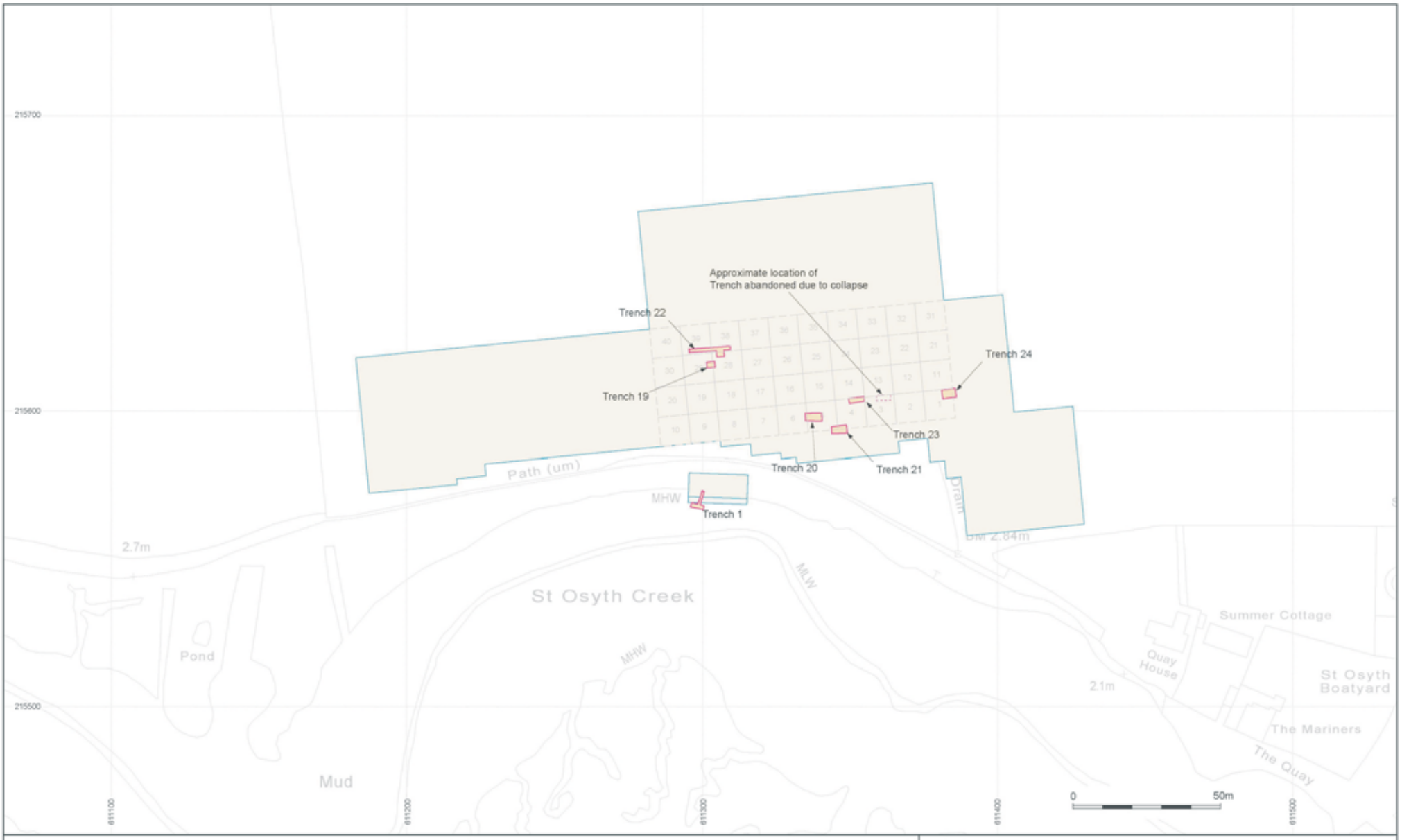
Location plan

Figure 1



Area 1 location plan

Figure 2

Hand dug test pits

Dendrochronology dates

Supplied by Time Team Licence number AL 100018665

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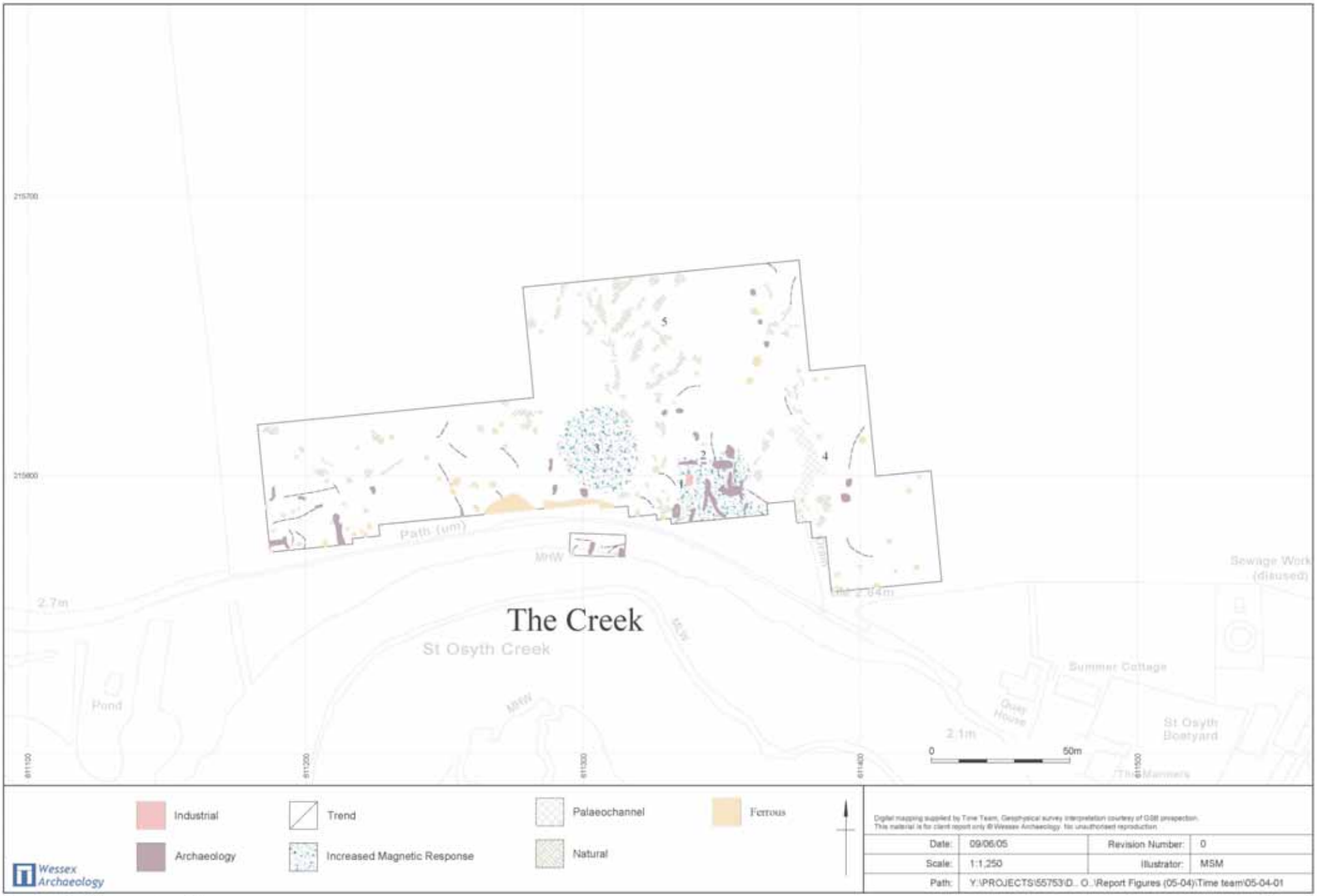
Area 2 loction plan

Figure 3

Area 2 location plans

Figure 4



Area 1 geophysical survey interpretation

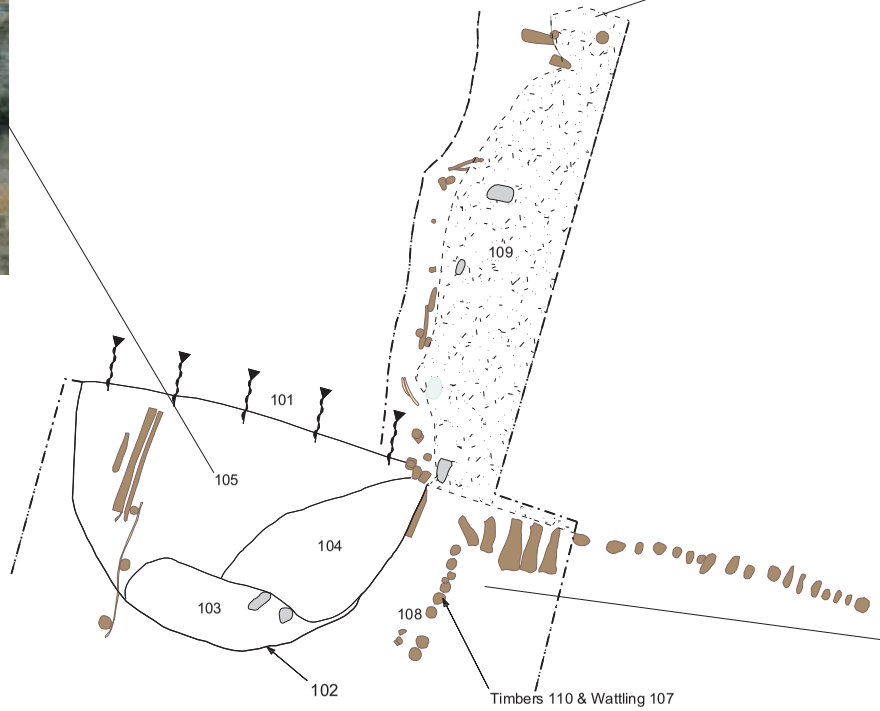
Figure 5

Area 2 geophysical survey interpretation

Figure 6

End of wharf cut looking north

View of wharf looking south



Timber revetting looking north

0 1 2m
Approximate only

Timbers Stones Chalk Wattle Gravel

Edge of excavation

Based partly on a drawing by S. O'Dell (N.D)

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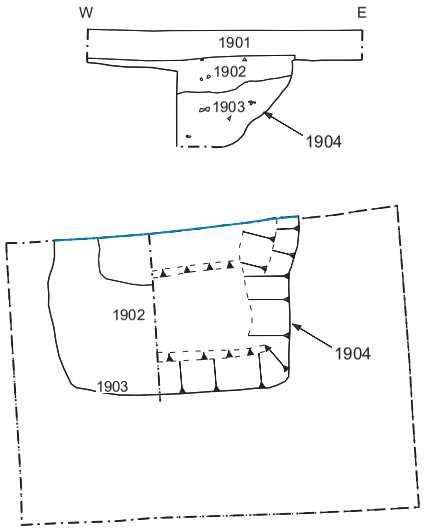
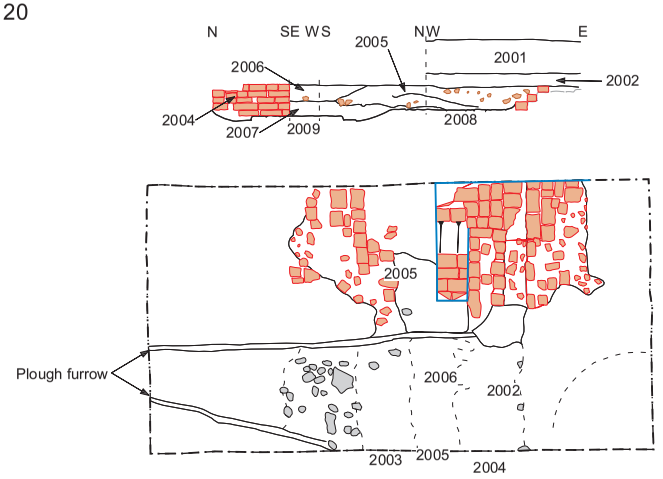
Trench 1 plan & photographs

Figure 7

Trench 19



Trench 20



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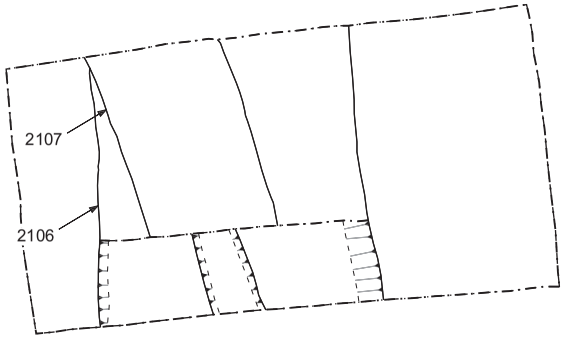
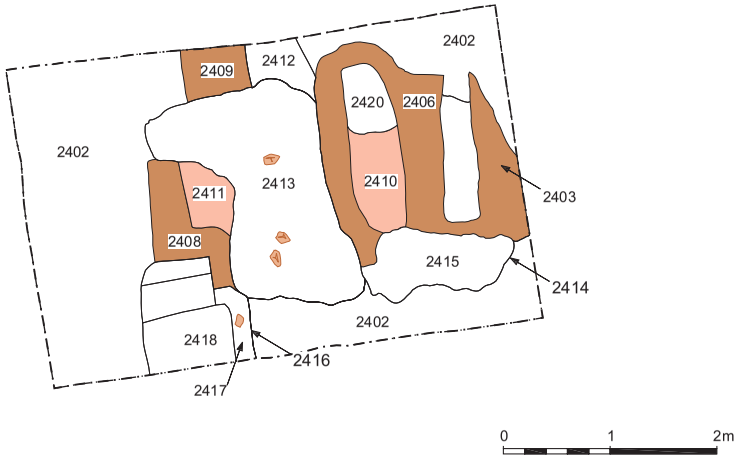


Trench 24



Bricks
decayed brick
Heat effected area
Edge of excavation
Section line

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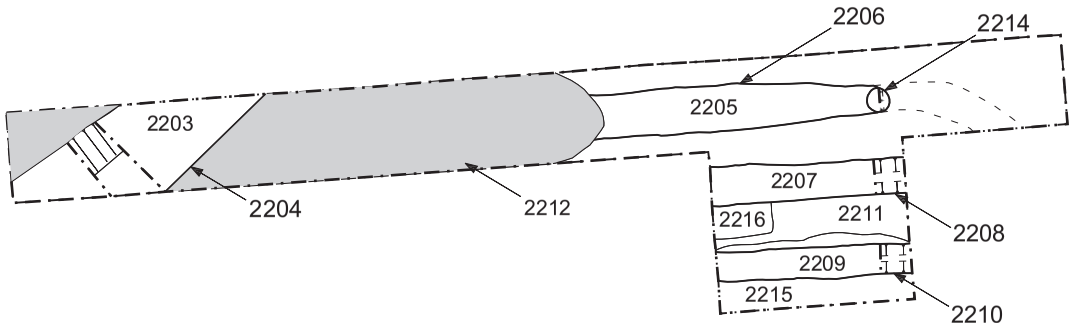

0 2 4m

Cobbled surface

Edge of excavation

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Trench 22

Figure 9

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