Fieldwalking at Covehithe, Suffolk, January 2015

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Front cover image: Field walkers at the western end of the field (copyright ACA)
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1 Summary

Over a period of two days in January 2015, a programme of community field-walking was undertaken on a field immediately west of the church in the village of Covehithe in Suffolk. The fieldwalking was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the Touching the Tide programme along the Suffolk coast and enabled 36 local residents and volunteers living in the surrounding area to take part in the fieldwalking which was supervised by Access Cambridge Archaeology at the University of Cambridge and directed by Dr Carenza Lewis.

Although only one field was walked during the survey a number of inferences can be made from the results. The earliest evidence is a thin scatter of worked flint dating from the Mesolithic period through the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age. Romano-British settlement is hinted at by the volume of pottery found during field-walking, possibly associated with a linear feature which may be a road sited to the north of the survey area. The settlement appears to have been founded in the middle Anglo-Saxon period and grew vigorously in the later Anglo-Saxon period. The settlement was at its peak during the medieval period, and saw little in the way of any decline after the Black Death. In the post-medieval period the community east of the church may have migrated westwards onto the field-walked area in the face of coastal erosion, but by the 19th century settlement west of the church was in decline, thinned out to leave just a couple of cottages.

The field-walking successfully engaged a large number of volunteers from the local area. In response to feedback after the two days, 100% of the volunteers rated the fieldwalking as either good or excellent, with 94% stating the days were excellent. A further 88% of people responded saying that they felt more engaged with their heritage than before; and 97% would recommend the experience to others.
2 Introduction

Two days of archaeological fieldwalking were undertaken in the coastal hamlet of Covehithe, on the north Suffolk coast, situated between Southwold and Kessingland, over the 21st and 22nd January 2015. The fieldwalking was organised, funded and run by Touching the Tide in conjunction with Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) and the fieldwalking was all undertaken by residents and volunteers local to the Covehithe area.

2.1 Touching the Tide Project

Touching the Tide (TtT) is a Landscape Partnership Scheme for the Suffolk coastline, covering the area between Covehithe and Felixstowe. It aims to conserve and celebrate the heritage of the coast and to increase understanding of coastal change. TtT is a £900,000 partnership between a wide range of statutory, voluntary, and community organisations and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Full details of all TtT’s work are on the website at www.touchingthetide.org.uk. The Scheme is hosted by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Suffolk County Council.

Touching the Tide started delivery in spring 2013 and ends in July 2016.

2.2 Access Cambridge Archaeology

Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) (http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/aca/) is an archaeological outreach organisation based in the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in the University of Cambridge which aims to enhance economic, social and personal well-being through active engagement with archaeology. It was set up by Dr Carenza Lewis in 2004 and specialises in providing opportunities for members of the public to take part in purposeful, research-orientated archaeological investigations including excavation. Educational events and courses range in length from a few hours to a week or more, and involve members of the public of all ages.

Thousands of members of the public have taken part in scores of programmes run by ACA, including teenagers involved in Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) test pit excavation programmes intended since 2005 to build academic skills, confidence and aspirations. More widely, ACA has involved thousands of members of the public of all ages and backgrounds, including those with special needs, in a wide range of archaeological activities including field-walking, excavation, analysis and reporting. These have included projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and events in 2011-12 as part of the Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 London Olympic Games.
3 Aims, objectives and desired outcomes

3.1 Aims

The aims of the field-walking at Covehithe were as follows:
- To allow local community participants to develop a wide range of practical and analytical archaeological skills related to archaeological field-walking.
- To increase knowledge and understanding of the historical development of the village of Snape.
- To increase understanding of the area to support employment, sustainable tourism and encourage inward investment.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the field-walking at Covehithe were as follows:
- To investigate the archaeology of a field in the west of Snape through archaeological fieldwalking.
- To provide the opportunity for a minimum of 20 volunteers to learn new practical and analytical archaeological skills.
- To provide 20 person-days of hands-on archaeological training and experience.
- To support and engage with members of local communities through involvement with the project.

3.3 Desired outcomes

The desired outcomes of the field-walking at Covehithe were as follows:
- A minimum of 20 people with new archaeological skills.
- A minimum of 20 people with an enhanced understanding and awareness of the archaeological potential of the landscape around Covehithe.
- A local population more engaged and informed about the historic landscape at Covehithe.
4 Methodology

The field-walking was carried out using line-walking with stints at 20m intervals. Field-walkers worked across the field systematically, in order along the base line, starting with 0/0-20, then 20/0-20, 40/0-20 and so on until the next transect was started at 0/20-40. The ground was immediately scanned about 1-2m either side of the stint.

4.1 Pre-field-walking briefing and set-up

- Novice volunteers were briefed on the aims and methods of the field-walking and shown examples of material likely to be found, including worked flint, fire-cracked flint and pottery sherds ranging in date from Neolithic to 19th century.
- Field-walkers were instructed to pick up all items thought to be human artefacts, of any date and material.
- A base line was set up along the longest and straightest edge of the field; which at Covehithe was the eastern boundary of the field that also incorporated the western boundary of St Andrews church.
- This base line transect was marked every 20m with canes.
- Stints were also marked in 20m intervals heading west from the base line transect.
- Canes at every 100m mark were highlighted with red and white bunting to aid in locating the correct stints to be walked.

4.2 Field-walking methods

- The volunteers were divided into pairs allowing those who wished to work together to do so.
- Each 20m stint was walked for 10 minutes with an area of 5m either side of the line scanned visually.
- Finds were collected by field-walkers and checked in with the site supervisor after each stint was completed.

4.3 On-site archaeological supervision

- Three archaeologists from ACA were on hand for the duration of the field-walking, with one supervisor specifically assigned to directing the volunteers from a central base as well as recording which stints have been walked. Volunteers assisted with marking out stints for walkers to follow. A pottery specialist was also on site to spot date the ceramic finds.

4.4 On-site recording

- A scale plan map of the field and grid were drawn at 1:2500 with transects and stints marked when completed to avoid repetition.
- Finds bags were labelled prior to being supplied to volunteers with transect and stint numbers, for example: 0/0-20, with also the site code (which includes the settlement name code and year of excavation).
- The site code for the fieldwalking at Covehithe is COV/15.
4.5 Finds processing

- All collected finds were retained for initial identification and processing.
- Non-metallic inorganic finds (unless in very poor condition) were washed, thoroughly dried and bagged separately for each spit walked. This was done during post-excavation when also the pottery, flint and burnt stone are bagged separately, ready to be given to specialists.

4.6 Finds recording and retention

Few excavations or field-walking surveys retain all the finds that are made if they are deemed to be of little or no research value. Surface collection during field-walking may produce significant quantities of modern material, not all of which will have research value.

Finds appropriate for recording, analysis, reporting, retention and curation

- All pottery has been retained.
- All worked and burnt stone have been retained
- All other finds from contexts pre-dating 1800 have been retained.
- All finds pre-dating 1900 have been retained

Finds appropriate for disposal after recording and reporting

- The following finds which are not considered to warrant any further analysis were sorted, counted, weighed, and then discarded: Slate, coal, plastic, Perspex, modern glass, modern metal objects (including nails), concrete, modern mortar, modern fabric, shoes and other modern items (including batteries and shotgun cartridges), naturally occurring animal shells, unworked flint and other unworked stone (including fossils).
- C20th window and vessel glass was sorted, counted, weighed and then discarded.
- Modern tile (floor, roof and wall) was discarded after counting and weighing, with a sample of each type of pre-modern tile retained with the remainder discarded after counting and weighing. Any decorated examples were retained unless recovered in very large quantities in which case representative samples were retained with the remainder discarded after counting, weighing and photographing.
- Brick was sorted, counted, weighed and then discarded. One sample of any examples of CBM that appeared to be pre-modern was retained
- Most metal finds of modern date were discarded. Metal finds of likely pre-modern date were retained if considered useful for future study. Modern nails were discarded but any handmade nails were retained.
Legal ownership of finds

- Ownership of objects rests in the first instance with the landowner, except where other law overrides this (e.g. Treasure Act 1996, 2006, Burials Act 1857).
- Owners of private unscheduled land where field-walking is undertaken who enquire about the final destination of finds from their property will be informed that ACA prefers to retain these in the short term for analysis and ideally also in the longer term in order that the excavation archives will be as complete as possible.
- NB: Most land-owners are not concerned about retaining ownership of the finds and are happy to donate them to ACA.
- Any requests by owners for the final return of finds to them will be agreed. Finds will be returned after recording, analysis and reporting is complete, accompanied by a letter inviting them to treat the finds with care, retain them in association with identifying documentation and to consider donating them to ACA/University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology should they ever change their minds about wishing to have possession of them.
- If the landowners are unwilling, for whatever reason, to donate any or all of the finds from the excavation on their land to ACA, the requested finds are returned to them after recording and analysis is completed, safely packaged and conserved (if required), accompanied by a letter explaining how they should be cared for and asking for them to be returned to the University of Cambridge if for any reason the owners no longer wish to retain them, and that if they are moved from the address to which they were returned the ACA should be informed. The location of such finds will be stated in the site archive.

Curation of Archaeological Finds

- All finds which are not discarded or returned to owners are retained and stored in conditions where they will not deteriorate. Most finds are stored in cool dry condition in sealed plastic finds bags, with small pierced holes to ventilate them. Pottery and flint have been bagged separately from the other finds.
- Finds which are more fragile, including ancient glass or metal objects, are stored in small boxes protected by padding and if necessary, acid free paper. Metal objects are curated with silica gel packets if necessary to prevent deterioration.
- All finds bags/boxes from the fieldwalking days have been bagged/boxed together. All bags and boxes used for storage will be clearly marked in permanent marker with the site code and the transect and stint walked
5 Location, geology and topography

5.1 Location

The village of Covehithe on the north Suffolk coast is situated 5.8km north of Southwold and 11.5km south of Lowestoft. The village can be accessed via the A12 at Wrentham, a major routeway in East Anglia that connects London, Chelmsford, Colchester and Ipswich in the south to Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth in the north. Additional local access to Covehithe is also through the village of South Cove. The field that was walked and is the purpose of this report is highlighted in figure 1 and is centred on TM 52000 82000.

Figure 1: The village of Covehithe on the Suffolk coast in relation to Wrentham to the west and South Cove to the southwest. The field available for the fieldwalking is highlighted in blue (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

The small village of Covehithe is situated along a single road that ends abruptly at the cliff edge that begins at the convergence of the only two lanes into the village from Wrentham and South Cove in a ‘Y’ formation. Covehithe was once known as North Hales and would have been one of many thriving fishing villages along this Suffolk coastline, but due to the high levels of coastal erosion, over half of the original settlement has been lost to the North Sea. The village today is dominated by the remains of St Andrews Church, around which is a small cluster of houses and farms with a current population of about 20 people1. Previous census population records state that in 1801 Covehithe had a population of 180 people, which fluctuated over

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the next 100 years and was recorded as 189 in 1901. It was during the 20th century that the population went into steep decline to 1961 when it was recorded as only 73.²

Figure 2: The village of Covehithe in its environment and the field available for fieldwalking highlighted in blue (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

Figure 3: A close up view of Covehithe and the field available for fieldwalking highlighted in blue (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

5.2 Geology and Topography

Suffolk is a coastal county in East Anglia, bounded by the North Sea to the east, Norfolk to the north, Essex to the south and Cambridgeshire to the west. Covehithe sits in a generally flat landscape of northeast Suffolk that has been classified as ‘Estate Sandlands’ by Suffolk County Council. This type of landscape has been characterised as a ‘very gently rolling plateau of free draining sandy soils, where the dry mineral soils have given rise to extensive areas of heathland and grasslands and used for either sheep grazing or rabbit warrens. It is a landscape generally without areas of ancient woodland, although has a number of ‘fields with trees’. The scarcity of water in these areas also means that they were also not favoured as areas for settlement and were usually peripheral to settlements in the valleys. This led to the Sandlands being utilised as areas for burial from the Bronze Age onwards, in particular as a number of barrows, with only later isolated farmsteads and small settlements developing’.

The field designated for the fieldwalking is situated at 10m OD immediately west of the remains of St Andrews Church in the centre of the remaining village. The village is relatively flat as Covehithe cliffs are also on about 10m OD. The land does drop slightly to the north into Benacre Broad, as well as to Covehithe Broad to a level of 5m OD.

The rates of coastal erosion do vary along the Suffolk coastline and even at the two points that are monitored to the north of the village (point SWD3) and to its south at Covehithe Broad (point SWD4). The cliffs between Covehithe and Benacre Broad (SWD3) have retreated a total of 80m between the years 1991-2009, with a relatively slower rate of erosion noted after 1998. A similar record has been found at SWD4 between Covehithe village and Covehithe Broad to the south where the smaller cliffs of low grass covered sand and gravel have retreated by 65m between the years 1991-2009. Significant periods of erosion have also been noted in 1993, 1996 and between 2006-2007 in this area it has been stated that ‘strong erosional trends at all tide levels give a mean trend of a loss of land of 3.8m a year’. A visual change of the coastline can be seen on the following maps (figure 4-7) between the 1880’s and the present day.

The underlying geology of the village consists of a bedrock of crag group sand that was formed approximately 0-5 million years ago in the Quaternary and Neogene periods, when the local environment was previously dominated by shallow seas. The superficial deposits of the village, away from the cliffs are Happisburgh Glacigenic formation of sand that was formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was previously dominated by Ice Age conditions. Along the coast are marine deposits of sand and gravel that also formed up to 3 million years ago when the local environment was dominated by shorelines.

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5 Ibid
Figure 4: 1880’s Map of Covehithe village around the church and its distance to the sea (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

Figure 5: 1920’s map of Covehithe village around the church and its distance to the sea (Map copyright Edina Digimap)
Figure 6: 1970’s map of Covehithe village around the church and its distance to the sea (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

Figure 7: Present day map of Covehithe village and its distance to the sea (Map copyright Edina Digimap)
6 Archaeological and Historical Background

6.1 Historical Background

The Suffolk coast has a long history of settlement and trade and it is likely that Covehithe would have had good trade and contacts with the neighbouring settlements along the coast as well as inland.

Covehithe means ‘harbour near (South) Cove’ and is probably derived from the Old English work *hyth*, referring to a landing place (Mills 2003), perhaps an original harbour around the location of Covehithe Broad. The original name for Covehithe though was North Hales, and this is how the village was referred as in the Domesday Book. It means a 'northern neck of land', and may originally have referred to a spit of land at Covehithe that has since been lost to the sea (Ekwall 1940).

There are six separate entries in the Domesday Book for North Hales, recorded as *Nordhalla*. The manor of North Hales was known as Oulstede and was two carucates and held by Edric a free man before 10667. The Domesday survey shows that at 1086 Oulstede manor was held by William de Warenne and states ‘…then there were 5 bordars, now 6, then 1 slave. Then 2 ploughs in demesne, now 1 ½ ploughs and half a plough belonging to the men. 1 acre of meadow, then 1 horse, now 1, 8 pigs and 105 sheep. Then it was worth 40s, now 20s. To this manor were added 100 acres of land which 14 free men held. Then 2 ploughs, now 1, 1 acre of meadow. It is worth 10s. William fitzReginald holds all this land from William de Warenne. Of these 14 men, Williams men have been seized of two half free men against Count Alan’ (Williams and Martin 2003). Additional Domesday records include smaller landowners in the parish including one which William de Noyers was given custody of ’32 acres with two free men. Then as now 1 plough, it is worth 4s’.

The lands of Count Alan included ‘4 free men with 16 acres. Then as now half a plough.’ Roger Bigod holds 6 acres but the land is assessed in Peasenhall, with another ‘20 acres with 1 free man, Hearing by name, commended by Ulfkil the Predecessor of William do Warenne. Then as now half a plough and 1 bordar, with 3s. The King and Earl have the soke’ (Ibid). The manorial records for Oulstede Manor have been recorded in Copinger’s book, the ‘Manors of Suffolk’ that was published in 1908. He states that in about 1286 the manor was owned by John de Vallibus, who also owned land at Shottisham, Bramfield, and Wenham Parva and it was in 1298 that a John de Cove held the manor. It was perhaps when the de Cove family were lords of the manor that the village name was changed from North Hales to Covehithe, both reflecting this change in ownership as well as the importance of Covehithe with its fishing harbour, as records also state that John de Cove had a quay on his land in 1308 (Copinger 1908).

Copinger states that in 1298 a market was granted by Edward I to John de Cove and was to be held in North Hales on a Monday. In the same year Edward I also granted a fair to be held in the village on St Andrews Day (30th November). Edward II granted John de Cove a second fair in North Hales in 1310, to be held on the day of St Lawrence (10th August)8. In 1316 the manor was said to be held jointly by both John de Cove and Walter de Cove, until 1324 when the manor passed to Simon de Pierpont, who upon his death soon after passed the manor to his sister Sibil and her

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8[http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html) (Accessed March 2015)
husband Sir Edmund de Ufford and eventually their son Sir Robert de Ufford, who died in 1400. Upon Sir Robert’s death the manor passed to his daughter Ela, who was married to Sir William Bowes (or Bowett), who died in 1435 and the manor passed to their daughter Elizabeth who was married to Sir Thomas, the 7th Lord Dacre. The manor was kept within the Dacre family through the 15th century until 1537 when the manor passed briefly out of the family to a Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, but was reportedly back with the Dacre family by the 1560’s and passing to the grandson of the 8th Lord Dacre, Lord Henry Norris, until Lord Norris sold the manor to Robert Payne in 1577. From Robert Payne, the manor passed to William Smith who then passed it to his son William Robert Smith upon his death in 1596.

After a gap in the records it was next in 1707/8 that an Edward North decreed the manor to a Thomas Carthew of Benacre, until his death in 1741, when it passed to his widow Elizabeth, who then sold it to Sir Thomas Gooch in 1742. It was at this sale that several manors of the area were amalgamated together, including Benacre, Covehithe and Easton Bavent under the Gooch family and remained with them through to the start of the 20th century (Copinger 1908).

St Andrews Church was rebuilt during the 15th century, at the same time that the other large churches of the area – Southwold, Walberswick, Blythburgh and Easton Bavents were also being updated and reconstructed, as a reflection of the wealth in these mediaeval coastal Suffolk towns. The church at Covehithe was held by the monks at the small priory at Wangford, which itself was a cell to the larger priory at Thetford. Unfortunately by the 17th century, the maintenance costs for St Andrews were too high for such a small parish (which was cumulatively additionally reduced by coastal erosion) and so permission was given in 1672 to pull down much of the original church so a smaller thatched church could be built within its original walls against the west tower, so that could also be retained and remain as landmark for ships at sea, as it had been for the previous 200 years. The church at Walberswick also suffered the same fate, as it was much too large for such a small parish community and the church at Easton Bavents has since been lost to the sea.

The decline in the population of Covehithe after the medieval period and its subsequent loss of wealth, as reflected in the part demolition of the church during the later 17th century, as well as a retreating coastline (which may have also meant the loss of the harbour, much like at Dunwich); may have forced a change in industry in the village. Fishing and trade through the harbour was one of the main industries for the majority of these thriving medieval coastal communities, as well as agriculture, but there was also a rise of the linen industry during the 17th century, particularly in north Suffolk and south Norfolk, including the Waveney Valley around Covehithe (Holt-Wilson 1998). A series of 45 possible retting ponds have been found in Covehithe (COV 003) to the east of Warren House, utilised as part of the process of linen production, by soaking the hemp in water to remove fibres from the stems. For this, access to fresh water is also a requirement so the proximity to Covehithe Broad would have been essential, as well as the fact that the soil type contains more peat and clay compared to other parts of the parish which would also have aided in the construction of watertight pits (Hegarty and Newsome 2005). The industry was at its peak at the start of the 18th century, but was in decline 100 years later due to the lack of industrial upgrades as well as cheaper imports of cotton from abroad (Holt-Wilson 1998), and is also likely the time that the pits at Covehithe also went out of use.

A day school and Sunday school were both established in Covehithe in 1825, and by 1833 it was recorded that between 36-40 children did attend school. An infant school
was then set up with support from voluntary contributions, which 20 children attended in 1891, but by 1912 all the schools in the parish had closed and the children were sent to schools at the nearest town, Wrentham.\footnote{https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/parish-histories/covehithe.pdf (Accessed March 2015)}

### 6.2 Archaeological Background


#### 6.2.1 Prehistoric

Almost all the prehistoric monuments in Suffolk have today been ploughed out, in this intensive farming county. Any prehistoric monuments that are identified are done so by aerial photographs and by cropmarks, but these cannot always be specifically dated as prehistoric without any archaeological investigations, so are often only categorised as undated on the HER record.

The vast majority of the records on the HER for Covehithe relate to finds, mainly lithics that were found throughout the parish dating from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age. A burnt flint scatter northeast of Cedars Field west (COV 100) has been recorded simply as prehistoric in date.

The majority of the flints so far found in the parish appear to date to the Neolithic period. In the far south of the parish around the Warren a small but well-worked spear head has been recovered (COV 003) and in the same area were the remains of three flint scrapers and one burnt hammer stone (COV 002). Additional worked flint scatters have been identified elsewhere in the parish, many of which have turned up in the plough soil and consist of mixes of flint scrapers, secondary flakes, multi-platform cores, flakes, a possible lance head, hammer stone, a chopper, a small straight backed knife and the tip of a leaf arrowhead (COV 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 020, 021, 022, 023 and Misc.)

Prior to the construction of a reservoir at Keens Farm to the west of the church, an archaeological evaluation revealed the presence of two pits that were also found to contain Neolithic pottery (COV 121).

Less Bronze Age material is included on the archaeological record for Covehithe compared to the Neolithic material, with scatters of finds being the most common type of entry and the majority of these have come from the cliff face or the beach. Bronze Age flint-tempered pottery has been found with a bronze socket axe fragment, saddle quern fragment, a piece of a bronze sword and two bronze flat axes (COV 001, 005, 009 and 010). Also found from the cliff face was an inverted Bronze Age pottery urn that contained a single cremation of an individual aged between 11-12 years at the time of death (COV 027). A questionable large ring ditch or circular enclosure has also been tentatively dated to the Bronze Age, but without excavation remains undated (COV 028).
Iron Age activity in the parish is again limited to the presence of a few artefacts, again mainly from the cliff edge as pottery (COV 001) and a 5 pattern horse bronze coin (COV 005). A number of additional Iron Age Iceni coins were also recovered from the beach during metal detecting with a small number of medieval coins as well, though the Iron Age coins were reportedly less worn than the medieval ones. Five of the coins had horse patterns and one was of a boar-horse type (COV 008).

A single cropmark has been recorded as possibly Iron Age in date given its shape, as a small possible banjo enclosure (COV 123) although as this feature has not been excavated its Iron Age date must remain provisional.

6.2.2 Roman

Romano-British settlement is widespread in Suffolk, although less common in the region around Covehithe, possibly due to poor soils.

As with the prehistoric period, the majority of the Roman activity identified on the Covehithe HER comprises scatters of finds along the cliff edge and beach. In all instances, this distribution may reflect the areas in which searchers have concentrated, rather than indicating more intensive prehistoric or Roman land-use. Records include sherds of pottery (COV 001 and Misc.) and a bronze pin fragment that was found through metal detecting on the beach (COV 005). Additional scatters of 1st and 2nd century pottery have been found in plough soil near to Hog Pen Plantation with fragments of flue tile (COV 012) as well as further pottery scatters found on lower slopes of woodland with medieval pottery and a Roman tile fragment that had a deer footprint in it (COV 013). A single bronze strigil was also reportedly found in the later 19th century (COV Misc.). Two timber-lined wells in the retreating cliffs (COV Misc. and Misc.) could not be assessed before they were lost to the sea but were both initially recorded as potentially Roman in date, although a more likely assumption is that they dated to the medieval period.

A possible Roman road has been identified through aerial photography as cropmarks that start in the field immediately east of the church and runs on a roughly east-west alignment flanked by two parallel ditches (COV 084). The road would have been a minor one as the metallised surface only measures 5m in width and although not clear from the photographs it was assumed to continue to the east. A likely contemporary rectilinear roadside enclosure has also been identified in cropmarks north of the church, with a second possible enclosure also evident to the south. Also part of the HER record are two sets of double ditches that are also orientated east-west, set 25m apart and are about 60m in length, that may be associated trackways or field boundaries. Also noted on the photographs were a pit alignment, and further to the west of the pit alignment are a number of regular shaped features that have been interpreted as potential ‘sunken floored structures’, which may make these Anglo Saxon in date rather than Roman. None of these features can be definitely dated from the photographs alone, so excavation would be needed to confirm the date and use of many of the features described here.

6.2.3 Anglo Saxon

Despite the light sandy soils and the prominent position of Covehithe along the East Anglian coastline there has been little found in the way of evidence for Anglo Saxon activity in the parish, apart from the presence of a few spot finds. This may however be due to the fact that little archaeological work has been undertaken in the area rather than a lack of potential archaeology. No Early Anglo Saxon finds have yet been recorded on the HER but a single Middle Saxon sherd of Ipswich ware was
recovered from the cliff edge (COV 001). Late Anglo Saxon finds were also identified in the form of a copper alloy box mount that was found by metal detecting on the beach with an oval gold and glass pendant (COV 005), a Late Saxon decorated belt end (COV 008) and a Late Saxon strap end (COV 081).

A 16ft dugout canoe was found just off the coast of Covehithe during a fishing trip by a local fisherman in 1998 (COV Misc.), but there are a number of places along the coast that the boat may have originated from, including Benacre, Covehithe or Easton Bavents broad. Radiocarbon dating on the boat put a date range of the Middle to Late Anglo Saxon period of 775-892 AD and does give proof that there was likely small fishing settlements dotted along this part of the Suffolk coast.

A possible area of Anglo Saxon occupation with a possible cemetery has tentatively been identified through cropmarks around the current church of St Andrew, which may also include some of the cropmark features already discussed in section 6.2.2 (COV 084) as possible ‘sunken floored buildings’. A lot of the features appear to line up with the current northern boundary to St Andrews church, which presumably is medieval in date. Based on the cropmark evidence it is possible that the church was specifically aligned with the Anglo Saxon settlement or that there was an earlier church on the site, predating the medieval stone building (Hegarty and Newsome 2005).

6.2.4 Medieval

Large scatters of medieval finds, particularly pottery have been recorded from a number of sites in Covehithe as well as along the cliff edge. The analysis of the pottery on the HER is not very detailed but that which has been recovered has been dated mainly to the 13th and 14th centuries (COV 001, 012, 013, 023, and 082, Misc., Misc., Misc. and Misc.). Associated with some pottery scatters were additional finds, such as a bronze brooch (COV 019), a later medieval papal bull of Alexander V and a gilt silver pinhead of 15th century date (COV 081).

Additional finds, mainly from metal detecting on the beach, include three Edward I silver pennies (AD 1272-1307), an Edward II penny (AD 1327-1377) and a probable Henry II short cross penny (AD 1154-1189), as well as a 12th/13th century lead seal matrix, a couple of pilgrims ampualla and another lead seal matrix, a long cross penny and a buckle with a loop terminal. A coin of William the Lion of Scotland was also found (AD 1180-1214) with two further 13th century circular seal matrices, a possible 16th lead cloth seal, a scallop shell ampulla, a 14th century circular bronze seal matrix and a likely medieval barrel padlock fragments and a bronze mount (COV 005). Three 14th century pennies were also found, one ampulla and a 14th century French jetton with an Edward II penny and farthing, a later medieval bronze belt hook and scabbard chape. An Italian Soldino coin dating from the 15th century was also found with a gold quarter noble of Edward III (COV 008). Further coins have been recovered from the beach, including two silver pennies of Edward I and one of Edward II; with another ampulla and a 14th century token (COV Misc.).

A gilded copper alloy roundel was recovered from the cliffs and had the Arm of England quartered with those of France pierced secondarily on it with two holes for attachment and evidence of the solder on reverse from the original attachment (COV Misc.). The roundel was found with a 14th or 15th century harness or casket that had the Arms of Richard II from when he was married to Isabel of France. Elsewhere along the coastline was found a medieval lead seal or sand box lid that was decorated with Royal arms and the collar of the House of York (COV Misc.), as well as a lead ampulla and a 13th-14th century pilgrims token (COV Misc.)
A rabbit warren of probable medieval date has been recorded at The Warren in the south of the parish (COV 003), although the site may also have been part of industrial workings. In February of 2006 a hull fragment from a possible wrecked or washed up ship was found on the beach and was photographed and planned in situ but only a rough date of either medieval or post medieval could be assigned to it at the time (COV 122).

A number of possible medieval pits were recorded just south of Benacre Broad along the cliff edge that contained numerous scatters of medieval pottery (COV 091) with daub and charcoal and two bronze fragments (COV 005). These were found in the cliffs with five wells, three of which were described on the HER. One was brick lined; one timber lined at base with barrel staves and one was unlined. Also recorded in the same record of the cliff site due to coastal erosion, were eight bronze buckles two bronze brooches, one C14 bronze belt chape, one bronze button or stud, one bronze stud, one bronze decorative object possibly mount for box or strap, ten bronze strips, later medieval strap ends, one lead ampulla and three probable whetstones of uncertain date. Further pits that were exposed by coastal erosion contained 13th century pottery (COV Misc.) as were the remains of a timber boarded well or pit feature that had pottery strewn around it (COV Misc.) and were both totally destroyed by the coastal erosion.

Field-walking undertaken in the parish as part of the larger coastal survey of Suffolk recorded scatters of medieval pottery in a field to the west of The Cedars, opposite the church to the south (COV 098 and 099) and in another field north of Warren House, in the south of the parish (COV 101).

During an evaluation at Keens Farm, prior to the construction of a reservoir, a series of medieval extraction pits were recorded with a number of undated ditches that were probably originally field boundaries (COV 121).

6.2.5 Post medieval and modern

Only a small number of post medieval finds have so far been recorded on the HER that have again mainly been exposed in the cliffs by the rapid coastal erosion of the area or from finds scattered along the beach that had evidently fallen out of the cliffs.

The majority of records are of pottery scatters (COV 001 and Misc.) although a number of post medieval metal finds have been found through metal detecting, including a bronze decorated object, a decorative mount for a box or leather strap, three bronze buttons one pewter button, one bronze button with a rose motif, one bronze stud, an Elizabeth I three pence coin and a buckle with a plate (COV 005). An additional coin scatter of both silver and gold coins of James I and Charles I (COV 024) were found along the cliffs in the far south of the parish.

The medieval rabbit warren at The Warren may have continued in use during the post medieval period, although it has also been suggested that these features may alternatively have related to industrial workings (COV 003). The recovery of part of a hull from a ship wreck that was also partly washed up on the beach (COV 122), has been tentatively dated as medieval, but may actually also be post medieval in date. A post medieval water tower has also been recorded on the 1st edition OS map (COV Misc.).

The cropmarks of a trackway (COV 025), likely later 19th century in date, given their presence on the 1880’s OS map but not on both the first OS Map or the 1950’s map
of the parish, have been recorded on the HER as a continuation to the northeast of an existing trackway from the ‘middle buildings’ over Covehithe Road and potentially also beyond to the enclosures and cropmark complex COV 006 (currently recorded as undated). A second possible post medieval crop mark feature is that of a likely drainage ditch (COV 085) that is visible from aerial photographs from the mid-1990’s immediately to the south of North Common wood and curves to the southwest. The north eastern end of the cropmark is aligned with a drain that is within the area of Benacre Broad Nature Reserve and is still marked on current OS Maps.

Figure 8: 1880’s map of Covehithe village and the field available for fieldwalking highlighted in blue (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

A probable post medieval relict water meadow was noted from aerial photographs from the late 1970’s as earthworks and water management channels to the south of Benacre Road (COV 097). The clearest features of the water meadow are visible between North Common Wood and Chancel Covert and were mainly constructed on the Covehithe side of the Covehithe/Benacre parish boundary that may be indicative that the meadow was constructed on a parish basis. Many of the irrigation channels were also marked on the 1st OS map of 1884, but as the site was not marked as a water meadow, it may have already been abandoned for some time.

The majority of the modern finds from the HER date to either the First or Second World Wars as defensive structures or changes to the landscape that are a direct result of the wars. Anti-glider ditches have been recorded (COV 029) as well as lines of scaffolding along the coast that were utilised as anti-invasion defences (COV 033). Anti-talk ditches are also present in the parish (COV 052 and 093) as well as a barbed wire belts (COV 056, 088, 135) and anti-tank cubes (COV 064, 106 and 131). Military features just recorded as earthworks have also been recorded on the northern side of Green Heath (COV 047) as well as elsewhere in the parish (COV 053), and WWI or WW2 trench systems were also recorded (COV 103 and 112). A number of pillboxes also exist (COV 063, 102 and 119) with a coastal artillery battery at Easton Woods (COV 109 and 116). The presence of a water reservoir also east of Easton Wood was also probably established during WW2 as a fire precaution (COV 113).

A series of bomb craters have also been recorded (COV 031, 032, 045 and 061) as well as various WWII strong points, to the southeast of Porter’s Farm (COV 037), the north east of Warren House (COV 039), at Green Heath (COV 044 and 046) and along the beach (COV 043). Further strong points are recorded just southeast (COV
054, 055 and 132), east (COV 118) and northeast of Covehithe (COV 060, 065 and 066), to the south of Easton Wood (COV 104), to the east of Easton Wood (COV 105) and to the north of Easton Wood (COV 110) and to the west of Warren House (COV 133). Defended positions are also known in the village, at Crossways Cottage (COV 042) to cover the crossroads, to the southeast of Big Ausgates (COV 129) and to the northwest (COV 048), northeast (COV 137) and west (COV 134) of Covehithe.

A Royal Naval Patrol Service Gunnery School was set up in the summer of 1943 to the east of Covehithe (COV 058) and a Coastal Artillery Battery Command Post, visible in 1943 as under construction was also situated to the east of Covehithe (COV 059). A ‘Diver’ Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery T10 was also originally to the northeast of Easton Wood (COV 114), a ‘Diver’ Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery T9 was found to the east of Covehithe (COV 120) and a ‘Diver’ Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery T19 on the parish boundary with South Cove (COV 013). Further ‘war time structures of uncertain function’ were also recorded on the HER (COV 115 and 136).

A total of four listed buildings survive in the parish, one of which is the grade I listed church of St Andrews. The other three buildings are grade II listed; Warren House dates from the 17th century, Anchor House, opposite the church dates from the mid-17th century and was once a public house and Whitehouse Farmhouse, also opposite the church in early 17th century in date.

Also recorded as modern on the HER was a 9 gang drainage pipe (COV 089), a layer of stone and rubble, likely hardcore for a roadway (COV 090) and two modern pits or trenches, one with a barbed wire infill (COV 092).

6.2.6 Undated
The undated features that have been recorded on the HER for Covehithe are mainly in the form of cropmarks and earthworks and have been found through the parish and remain undated due to a lack of archaeological investigation into them.

Areas of ancient woodland have been recorded in the parish at Holly Grove (BNC 022) and Easton Wood (COV 026), which also has associated earthworks with it. A likely saltern has also been recorded on the beach at Covehithe (BNC 018) and areas of possible peat extractions have also been noted at Covehithe Broad, to the northeast of Warren House (COV 040) as water filled earthworks. The full extent of this has not been determined due to the presence of surrounding vegetation in the area. Cropmarks of a possible rectilinear enclosures and linear features have been recorded to the southwest of Covehithe (COV 006) and have been interpreted as likely field systems. Further linear features, probably forming enclosures of field boundaries have also been seem to the west; (COV 034) and the east of Warren House (COV 124), to the west of Middle Buildings (COV 036), southeast of Porter’s Farm (COV 038), to the south of Cut Throat Lane (COV 041) and to the west of Easton Woods (SCV 012). A possible fragmentary field system, again visible as cropmarks, to the west of Big Ausgates has also been noted on the HER (COV 130). Part of an enclosure, visible as cropmarks, has been recorded in the south of the parish as identified from aerial photographs (COV 094). Also cropmarks of a pair of parallel lines to the east of Warren House were interpreted as a possible trackway (COV 125). Two parallel linear features were also noted as cropmarks to the southwest of Covehithe (COV 126) and in the same area were at least three further rectilinear enclosures, some of which also had associated pits (COV 127 and 128).
A single ring ditch was recorded in the far northwest of the parish (COV 007) and three possible ditch sections were noted in the cliff face, but due to their inaccessibility, it is unknown if these were just where some of the cliff face has washed out or potentially also where tree stumps had previously been (COV 087). These have now also since been lost to the sea. An irregular shaped mound has also been recorded to the northeast of Easton Wood (COV 108) and without investigation its use is unknown but it has been suggested that it may have been affected by the nearby WW2 constructions.

A group of four quarry pits have been recorded near to Middle Buildings (COV 030) in the south of the parish and along the parish boundary with South Cove and a single quarry pit identified as an earthwork was noted to the northwest of Warren House (COV 036). Further single quarry pits have also been recorded as earthworks at the west end of Covehithe (COV 050) as well as to the south (COV 051), east (COV 057) and northeast (COV 062). A pair of quarry pits have also been recorded either side of the road out of Covehithe (COV 117); the only difference noted is that the southern pit is much smaller than the north pit.
7 Results of the fieldwalking at Covehithe

The fieldwalking at Covehithe was undertaken on a field immediately west of St Andrews church. A total of 141 20m stints were walked over the two days, covering a distance of 2,820km. The total extent of the grid walked on 21st - 22nd January can be seen in figure 9 below.

![Figure 9](image)

Figure 9: The total extent of the grid walked at Covehithe. The red lines represent the 100m marks (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

The conditions on both days of the fieldwalking were overcast, with occasional sunshine. The field was well-weathered with vegetation growth obscuring perhaps 20% of the ground surface.

The pottery and flint distribution maps for the fieldwalking can be seen in the following sections, in chronological order. The circles used to represent the distribution of finds are shown on the respective grid line, even though the finds were collected from a distance of c.5m either side of the stint.
7.1 Prehistoric

Figure 10: The distribution of the burnt stone from the Covehithe fieldwalking

Figure 11: The distribution of the primary flint flakes from the Covehithe fieldwalking
Figure 12: The distribution of the secondary flint flakes from the Covehithe fieldwalking

Figure 13: The distribution of the tertiary flint flakes from the Covehithe fieldwalking
Figure 14: The distribution of retouched flint flakes from the Covehithe fieldwalking

Figure 15: The distribution of notched flint flakes from the Covehithe fieldwalking
Figure 16: The distribution of flint blades from the Covehithe fieldwalking

Figure 17: The distribution of flint scrapers from the Covehithe fieldwalking
A range of prehistoric flint flakes were recorded from across the field, most of which appears to derive from local geology with a few beach pebbles also utilised, particularly for the burnt flint. The latter was quite widespread across the field and is likely to be later prehistoric in date, perhaps relating to Bronze Age activity. The flint blades, some of the retouched flakes and the burin are most likely to date to the Mesolithic or early Neolithic periods, whereas the rest of the assemblage is based on flake based material that dates from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age.

No significant concentrations of lithic material were noted across site, although there was a general trend of flints found in the eastern half of the field.
7.2 Roman

The 29 sherds of Roman pottery that were picked up during the Covehithe fieldwalking account for only 5.33% of all the pottery that was found in the field on this occasion. The distribution of the sherds favours the south and eastern half of the field and indicates Romano-British activity in the general area but the volume of pottery recovered is not likely to be indicative of intensive use such as by settlement within the field-walked area and appears more likely to derive from manuring of arable, possibly from a settlement located to the south of the field-walked area. This material may possibly relate to the linear feature noted on cropmarks which has been putatively identified as a Roman road but could also be a field boundary.

Figure 20: The distribution of the Roman pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)
7.3 Anglo Saxon

Figure 21: The distribution of the middle Anglo Saxon pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

Figure 22: The distribution of the Late Anglo Saxon pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

The two sherds of Middle Anglo Saxon Ipswich Ware that were found during the fieldwalking account for 0.36% of all the pottery found and 7.4% of all the Saxon pottery identified from the field. Both these sherds were found on the southern edge of the field-walked area near the present road, suggesting that there was perhaps a focus of occupation in the village at that time along the main road through the village.

The 24 sherds of Late Saxon Thetford Ware and one sherd of Late Saxon Stamford Ware account for 4.59% of all the pottery found during the fieldwalking, and 92.59% of all the Anglo Saxon pottery found from the field. Much like the Middle Saxon
pottery, the Late Saxon pottery is focused to the south of the field, close to both the church and the main road through the village. In this instance, the concentration is sufficient to reasonably infer the presence of settlement in the area due west of the church at this time. The Anglo Saxon pottery accounts for only 4.96% of all the pottery that was recorded from the fieldwalking in Covehithe.

7.4 Medieval

Figure 23: The distribution of the high medieval pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)

Figure 24: The distribution of the late medieval pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)
106 sherds of high medieval pottery were found during the fieldwalking at Covehithe, including 90 sherds of Early Medieval Sandy Ware, 13 sherds of Hedingham Ware and three sherds of Grimston Ware. The high medieval pottery accounts for 19.48% of all the pottery found from the field and 58.56% of all the medieval pottery identified and was concentrated through the whole eastern half of the field, closest to the church.

A total of 75 sherds of Late Medieval Ware pottery were identified from the fieldwalking, accounting for 13.78% of all the pottery recorded and 41.43% of all the medieval pottery identified. The distribution for the late medieval pottery is very similar to that dating to the high medieval period; with the majority of the pottery found through the eastern half of the field, with additional single sherds also identified further to the west. All the medieval pottery together accounts for 33.27% of all the pottery that was recorded from the fieldwalking in Covehithe.

7.5 Post Medieval

![Figure 25: The distribution of the post medieval pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)](image)

The largest concentration of post medieval pottery found through the fieldwalking at Covehithe was in the south and east of the field, with the distribution then extending northwest. The 135 sherds of post medieval pottery found accounts for 24.81% of all the pottery identified from the field. The majority of the wares were English (106 sherds), but there were also 29 sherds (21.48% of all the post medieval pottery) that were imported from Germany.
7.6 19th century

The scatter of 19th century pottery was found in two distinct clusters, one in the southeast of the field behind both Corner Cottage and Church Farm Cottages and the second to the west of the field, behind Jasmine Cottage. There was also a thin scatter of the 19th century pottery found through the rest of the field. In total, the 19th century pottery was the second largest quantity of pottery found, after the combined medieval pottery total, at 31.61%.

Figure 26: The distribution map of the 19th century pottery from the Covehithe fieldwalking (Map copyright Edina Digimap)
8 Discussion

Interpreting data from field-walking is never straightforward, but attempting this for a single field is particularly problematic as there is no scope for local comparisons to be made. If we accept the premise that ‘With the single exception of ‘manuring scatter’ all field-walking finds ultimately derive from significant archaeological contexts’ (Foard 1978), then we could simply note the locations of finds, and their different dates and leave it at that. However, more meaningful patterns revealing variations in land use can become evident when densities of finds can be compared across a larger area such as a parish or more (e.g. Rogerson et al 1997; Davison 1990, Parry 2006; Gerrard and Aston 2007). This allows areas of more and less intensive use to be distinguished, enabling patterns of settlement, agriculture, industry, ritual and other land use to be reconstructed (with varying degrees of confidence). But in the case of Covehithe, we have no neighbouring field-walking data to compare the 2015 data against. Nonetheless, some potentially interesting observations can be made of the 2015 data, and the results from the fieldwalking at Covehithe are discussed below in chronological order by historic period.

8.1 Prehistoric period

The total of 88 worked and 53 pieces of unworked flints that were recorded from the Covehithe fieldwalking were likely derived from local sources of flint, although there are none recorded in the immediate vicinity of Covehithe. A number of beach pebbles were also utilised for burning that were also recorded here.

The earliest evidence dates to the Mesolithic period with a small number of flint tools, particularly blades, which from the manufacture likely saw a continuation of activity on site through the Neolithic and into the Early Bronze Age, although probably not as settlement but more likely as sporadic activity with people moving through the landscape along the coastline.

8.2 Roman period

Pottery of Romano-British date was widely but thinly distributed across the field at Covehithe, slightly favouring the east of the field. The pottery may be related to the east-west linear feature visible as cropmarks crossing the site which may be a field boundary but has been tentatively identified on the HER as a Roman road. The pottery may additionally or alternatively derive from manuring of arable from a settlement in the vicinity, but it appears unlikely that any settlement is present within the field-walked area. Given the limited amount of material and lack of clustering, further analysis to see if it was possible to narrow the date range for the material seems unlikely to be useful.

8.3 Anglo-Saxon period

Only a single sherd of Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware had previously been found in Covehithe (as reported on the HER), so the addition of two further sherds during the field-walking is of interest. It seems likely to indicate activity of some sort, and may relate to settlement, possibly focussed in the area along the present road. Given this material, it is interesting to note the presence of cropmarks identified as possible Anglo Saxon ‘sunken featured buildings’ in the eastern half of the field. Although all
the evidence is somewhat tentative, it does in balance seem likely that there was activity, most likely settlement, in this area in the middle Anglo Saxon period, perhaps constituting a pre-village nucleus. In the late Anglo-Saxon period the pattern is much clearer and it is possible to say with some confidence that there was a settlement present west of the church which appeared sometime between the mid-9th and mid-11th century AD.

8.4 Medieval period
The quantity and distribution of high medieval pottery in the centre and east of the field near St Andrews church clearly indicates the Late Saxon settlement continued and expanded north in the high medieval period. The recovery of medieval pottery and finds from the nearby cliffs or beach suggest that medieval Covehithe may have been quite a large place during the medieval period, with occupation stretching perhaps 100m or so east towards the North Sea.

From both the historical record as well as the large quantity of high medieval pottery identified through the fieldwalking, it is evident that the peak of prosperity for Covehithe was during the high medieval period. It was a thriving fishing village with also its own quay and so was likely able to trade both locally with the bigger Suffolk coastal towns of the day, such as Southwold and Dunwich as well as potentially internationally as well. The construction of a very large church for such a small parish also reflects its wealth and importance, particularly as it matched the churches in larger parishes of Blythburgh, Walberswick, Southwold and Easton Bavents.

The late medieval pottery distribution across the survey field is much the same as that of the high medieval and suggests that a large proportion of the village may still have been focused next to the church during the 14th and 15th centuries. There is no significant post-14th century decline in the amount of pottery suggesting that the settlement was not in the long term adversely affected by the widespread demographic decline after the Black Death. This pattern reflects that noted elsewhere in Suffolk through test pitting, such as that undertaken in both Walberswick and Southwold, just to the south of Covehithe, but contrasts with the wider regional trend of demographic decline evident in reduced recovery of pottery (Lewis 2014).

8.5 Post-medieval and later
The distribution of post-medieval pottery favours the east of the field, continuing the medieval trend, but there is also a spread of pottery in the north-west of the walked area. The highest numbers of post medieval pottery however were concentrated along the southern edge of the field and closer to the current road layout, perhaps suggesting that it was in the 16th century and later that there was a gradual shift in occupation in the village, away from the later Saxon and medieval focus immediately west and north-west of the church, to a linear layout along the present road, similar to that which can be seen today, but more continuous than is now the case. This may have been affected by the ever encroaching coastline, which would have led to the loss of land previously used for settlement and caused habitation to migrate to the area west of the church.

Just over 20% of all the post medieval pottery recorded from the survey field was imported from Germany, reflecting the coastal location of the settlement with easy access to imported wares.

During the 19th century and later, the distribution of the pottery becomes distinctly clustered into two small foci adjacent to Church Farm Cottages and Jasmine
Cottage, with a clear gap separating these. This dispersed pattern of settlement appears very different to that present previously, but similar to the existing settlement, which is very small and strung out along the lane past the church.

9 Conclusion

The field-walking at Covehithe has allowed some inferences to be made as the changing use of the area and the origins and development of the medieval settlement near the church. The areas seems to have been thinly used throughout the prehistoric period, with more intensive deposition in the Roman period suggesting the likelihood of settlement nearby although not present on the walked site itself. No material of early Anglo-Saxon date was recovered, but there is evidence for activity of middle Anglo-Saxon date which is considered most likely to relate to settlement and thus suggests that the origins of the settlement at Covehithe, possibly arranged along the line of the present road, considerably predates both the church and the earliest documentary record in Domesday Book. This settlement clearly expanded in the later Anglo-Saxon period to occupy the area between the present church and Jasmine Cottage: this may have represented reorganisation of the road-side middle Anglo Saxon settlement. The medieval settlement at Covehithe continued to expand, notably in the area away from the road and probably to the east of the church as well; its size reflecting its prosperity as a medieval fishing village. The fieldwalking results suggest that the village did not go into decline after the Black Death during the 14th century, but did do so much later during the post-medieval period, when westward migration due to coastal erosion eventually petered out as the population declined in the 19th century to leave just a couple of dispersed cottages strung out along the lane west of the church.
10 Acknowledgments

The 2015 fieldwalking at Covehithe was funded as part of ‘Touching the Tide’ by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is gratefully acknowledged. The fieldwalking was directed by Dr Carenza Lewis, supervised by Catherine Ranson with help from both Laure Bonner and John Newman. Touching the Tide was responsible for the pre-fieldwalking arrangements and thanks are due to both Bill Jenman and Kate Osborne for their support with this and on site during the fieldwalking. Thanks are also due to the owners of Wood Farm Barn in Benacre who gracefully let us use the barn as our base for the two days and to all the volunteers who braved the cold January days to take part in the fieldwalking.
11 References:


12 Appendices

12.1 Pottery Report – Paul Blinkhorn

Pottery Types

RB: All Romano-British

IPS: Ipswich Ware. The first industrially produced pottery to be made after the end of the Roman period. Made in Ipswich, and fired in kilns, some of which have been excavated. Most pots were jars, but bowls also known, as are jugs. It is usually grey and quite smooth, although some pots have varying amounts of large sand grains in the clay. Very thick and heavy when compared to later Saxon pottery, probably because it was made by hand rather than thrown on a wheel. Dated AD720 – 850.

THET: Thetford ware. So-called because archaeologists first found it in Thetford, but the first place to make it was Ipswich, around AD850. Potters first began to make it in Thetford sometime around AD925, and carried on until around AD1100. Many kilns are known from the town. It was made in Norwich from about AD1000, and soon after at many of the main towns in England at that time. The pots are usually grey, and the clay has lots of tiny grains of sand in it, making the surface feel a little like fine sandpaper. Most pots were simple jars, but very large storage pots over 1m high were also made, along with jugs, bowls and lamps. It is found all over East Anglia and eastern England as far north as Lincoln and as far south as London.

STAM: Stamford Ware. Made at several different sites in Stamford in Lincolnshire between AD850 and 1150. The earliest pots were small, simple jars with white, buff or grey fabric, or large jars with painted red stripes. By AD1000, the potters were making vessels which were quite thin-walled and smooth, with a yellow or pale green glaze on the outside, the first glazed pots in England.

EMW: Early Medieval Sandy Ware: AD1100-1400. Hard fabric with plentiful quartz sand mixed in with the clay. Manufactured at a wide range of generally unknown sites all over eastern England. Mostly cooking pots, but bowls and occasionally jugs also known.

HED: Hedingham Ware: Late 12th – 14th century. Fine orange/red glazed pottery, made at Sible Hedingham in Essex. The surfaces of the sherds have a sparkly appearance due to there being large quantities of mica, a glassy mineral, in the clay. Pots usually glazed jugs.

GRIM: Grimston Ware. Made at Grimston, near King’s Lynn. It was made from a sandy clay similar to that used for Thetford ware, and has a similar ‘sandpaper’ texture. The clay is usually a dark bluish-grey colour, sometimes with a light-coloured, buff or orange inner surface. It was made between about AD1080 and 1400. All sorts of different pots were made, but the most common finds are jugs, which usually have a slightly dull green glaze on the outer surface.

LMT: Late Medieval Ware: Hard, reddish-orange pottery with lots of sand mixed in with the clay. Made from about 1400 – 1550 in lots of different places in East Anglia. Used for everyday pottery such as jugs and large bowls, and also large pots (‘cisterns’) for brewing beer.

RAER: Raeren Stoneware, 1400 - 1600. German import. Hard, dark grey stoneware with a slat glaze on the outer surface, often over an iron wash, giving the pot a metallic brown appearance. Range of drinking vessels.

GRE: Glazed Red Earthenwares: Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, usually on the inner surface. Made at numerous locations all over England. Occurs in a range of practical shapes for use in the households of the time, such as large mixing bowls, cauldrons and frying pans. It was first made around the middle of the 16th century, and in some places continued in use until the 19th century.


MB: Midland Blackware. AD1550 – 1700. Similar to GRE, but has a black glaze on one or both surfaces. Vessels usually tall cups, jugs and bowls.

WCS: Cologne Stoneware. Hard, grey pottery made in the Rhineland region of Germany from around 1600 onwards. Usually has lots of ornate moulded decoration, often with blue and purple painted details. Still made today, mainly as tourist souvenirs.

EST: English Stoneware: Very hard, grey fabric with white and/or brown surfaces. First made in Britain at the end of the 17th century, usually for inn tankards, then became very common in the 18th and 19th century, particularly for mineral water or ink bottles and beer jars.

SWSG: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware. Hard, white pottery with a white glaze with a texture like orange peel. Made between 1720 and 1780, pots usually table wares such as tea bowls, tankards and plates.

VIC: ‘Victorian’. A wide range of different types of pottery, particularly the cups, plates and bowls with blue decoration which are still used today. First made around AD1800.
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Table 1: The pottery excavated from the fieldwalking in Covehithe, Suffolk
12.2 Flint Report – Lawrence Billington

Quantification and Distribution

A total of 88 worked and 1004g (53 pieces) of unworked burnt flint were recovered by the programme of fieldwalking. The worked flint was thinly distributed, deriving from a total of 56 stints with no more than five pieces of worked flint being recovered from any individual stint. The assemblage is quantified by basic type in table 1. Discussion of the distribution of worked flint should follow the production of plots using the data tabulated here.

Condition and Raw Materials

The condition of the assemblage is varied. A majority of pieces show some degree of edge damage or are worn and are entirely characteristic of material recovered from a ploughzone context. A small minority of pieces are in markedly fresher condition, one example being a blade from 80/320-340, which may have only recently entered the ploughzone, perhaps from previously untouched subsoil horizons or cut features. The overwhelming majority of the assemblage is uncorticated (unpatinated).

The assemblage is made up exclusively of flint, although there is a great deal of variability in terms of the colour, texture and surviving cortical surfaces of individual pieces. There is no clear evidence of the use of flint derived from a primary source on the parent chalk or closely related deposits and the character of surviving cortex invariably indicates an origin from secondary sources where flint nodules and cobbles have been subject to extensive glacial/fluvial transport. Much of this material could be derived from relatively local glacial sands and gravels or diamictons although it is important to note that, based on the geological mapping of the site (BGS 1:50,000 mapping, sheet 176), no flint resources would be available within the actual area of the site. A minimum of four worked flints (flakes from -40/60-80 and a core from -20/0-120) and a burnt flint (from -40/60-80) are made on cobbles with the distinctive morphology and chatter marks characteristic of beach pebbles (Gibbard 1986).

Characterisation

The vast majority of the assemblage is made up of small, fragmentary flint working waste and little is strongly chronologically diagnostic. Retouched tools account 9% of the total worked flint and cores are very rare, with just two examples. It is possible to identify a small group of pieces which exhibit traits suggestive of a relatively early date during the Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic (c. 9000-3200 cal BC). These include five examples of fine blade based removals (see table 1) and there are a few flakes which may also belong to this broad period. The only retouched piece which can be tentatively linked to this ‘early’ material is a possible burin (a chisel like tool formed by the removal of thin spall from the edge of a flake or blade), in this case formed on the unretouched (cortical) distal end of a broken secondary flake. Burins are generally associated with the working of bone, antler or wood and are best known from Mesolithic contexts, but do occur in some Early Neolithic assemblages.

The remainder of the assemblage comprises flake based material likely to relate to somewhat later activity, from the late Neolithic through to at least the Early Bronze Age (c. 3200-1600 cal BC). The majority of this flintwork consists of small hard hammer struck flakes which exhibit little in the way of platform preparation of signs or systematic production. There are a few pieces which seem to the products of more sophisticated technologies, most notably a flake struck from a levallois-like core from -20/0-20 which is characteristic of later Neolithic (c. 3200-2400 cal BC) flint working (see Ballin 2011) and other several other pieces with fine dorsal scar patterns.

The cores from the assemblage display similar technological traits to the flakes, displaying evidence for the expedient production of relatively squat and small flakes. The retouched
tools are all consistent with a broad later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date and include a
broken flake with two opposed notches and several informally retouched flakes. The most
distinctive retouched pieces are two scrapers. One of these (from -60/80-100) is a relatively
large example and has a broadly sub circular morphology with steep dorsal retouch which
is accompanied in places by ventral spalling and edge crushing suggesting it may have
also been used in a percussive mode as a chopping tool. The second scraper is a small
convex side scraper on a broken flake with fine, invasive, retouch of the kind which is very
characteristic of some Early Bronze Age tools, especially so called thumbnail/button
scrapers and flake knives.
The burnt flint includes both large fragments of cobbles and much smaller fragments and
burnt gravel clasts. Although at least a proportion of this material is likely to be associated
with the prehistoric activity at the site it is, in itself, undatable and may partly relate to later
phases of the site.

Discussion

The flint assemblage from Covehithe clearly indicates prehistoric activity at the site
probably from the Mesolithic through to at least the Early Bronze Age. Mesolithic and Early
Neolithic material is relatively poorly represented and any activity during this broad period
may have been limited to brief task based visits as opposed to more intensive
occupation/settlement. The same might be true for much of the later flintwork, although the
occurrence of a fairly high proportion of typical retouched tools, evidence for flint working
and quantities of unworked burnt flint suggests there may have been more enduring
episodes of activity on the site during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Further
analysis of the distribution of both the worked and burnt flint has the potential to identify any
discrete concentrations or patterns of prehistoric activity on the site.

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**Table 2: Basic quantification of the flint assemblage**
### Other Finds – Catherine Ranson

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Stint not walked – not in field</td>
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<td>60-80</td>
<td>Clear flat glass x1, clear container glass x2</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>Green bottle glass x6, blue bottle glass x2, orange bottle glass x1, clear container glass x15, clear flat glass x3, half a central battery stem x1, centrally battery core x1, corroded iron nails x2, red flat tile x1</td>
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<td>Green bottle glass x11, orange bottle glass x5, clear container glass x21, clear flat glass x4, clay pipe stem x2, curved red tile x1, yellow glazed tile/pot? x1, coal x1, red CBM x3</td>
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<td>120-140</td>
<td>Green bottle glass x2, clear container glass x3, curved red tile x1, clay pipe stem x1, red CBM x3, flat thick heavy plate of corroded metal x1</td>
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<td>140-160</td>
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<td>180-200</td>
<td>Red CBM x5, tarmac x2</td>
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<td>200-220</td>
<td>L shaped corroded metal bolt x1</td>
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<td>Slate x1, chalk x1, clear container glass x1, red CBM x12, a square rusted bolt with hole through the centre x1, tarmac x2</td>
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<td>Green bottle glass x1, coal x2, slag? x1</td>
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<td>3 prong thick metal 'comb' fragment x1</td>
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<td>Lump of metal/slag x1</td>
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<td>Green bottle glass x1, red CBM x2, black glaze red flat tile x1, round corroded iron nail x1</td>
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<td>Red flat tile x3, red CBM x2</td>
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<td>Red flat tile x1, thick square corroded bolt x1, very smooth stone fragment (whet stone?)</td>
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<td>Rec CBM x1</td>
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<td>200-220</td>
<td>Curved yellow field drain fragment x1, red CBM x1, slag x1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220-240</td>
<td>Red CBM x3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240-260</td>
<td>Green bottle glass x1, clay pipe bowl fragment x1, red flat tile x2, red CBM x3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260-280</td>
<td>Red flat tile x2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280-300</td>
<td>NO FINDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-320</td>
<td>Red CBM x2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-340</td>
<td>Red curved tile x1, red CBM x3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340-360</td>
<td>Yellow brick fragment x1, red CBM x3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-380</td>
<td>Modern sewer drain fragment x1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380-400</td>
<td>NO FINDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-420</td>
<td>Yellow/red flat tile x1, think corroded round metal nail x1, red CBM x2, flower pot fragments x4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-440</td>
<td>Red flat tile x1, thick square corroded iron nail x1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440-460</td>
<td>Large lump of charcoal x1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460-480</td>
<td>NO FINDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>