

1. Hadstock Church

Dr Warwick Rodwell carried out an archaeological investigation of Hadstock Church in 1974. Dedicated to St Botolph, the church is a well-known building discussed by many scholars because of (i) its architectural interest as a late Anglo-Saxon transeptal church (ii) a possible connection with the Battle of Assandun in 1016 AD. The results of Dr Rodwell's study were published in *The Antiquaries Journal*, March 1976, 56, Part 1.

The abstract of the paper is as follows:

Total excavation of the nave, crossing, and transepts of Hadstock church in 1974, together with a detailed examination of parts of the upstanding fabric, revealed that this well-known Anglo-Saxon building is not a single-period structure, as has long been assumed. Three periods of Anglo-Saxon work are now known, the earliest of which probably belongs to the pre-Danish era: it comprised a large, five-cell cruciform church which, it is suggested, may be part of the seventh-century monastery founded by St. Botolph, at Icanho. Rebuilding on a monumental scale took place in the early eleventh century and the possibility is discussed that this was Canute's minster, dedicated in 1020. The church was extensively repaired in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, following the collapse of the central tower. Subsequently the decline in the size and importance of Hadstock as a village saved the church from further extensive alteration.

The Hadstock Society also published a booklet titled 'Under Hadstock Church' by Warwick Rodwell in Dec 1974.

2. "Why Hadstock?"

A Local Heritage Initiative grant funded an archaeological dig in 2005 to investigate the early history of Hadstock. Information on this project can be found on The Recorders of Uttlesford History website and by following the link to Village Local History Sites and Hadstock:

<https://www.recordinguttlesfordhistory.org.uk>

A further paper on this dig was published in the *Essex Journal*, 2007, Spring edition, by Trevor Ennis of the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit and can be found at:

<https://www.esah1852.org.uk/library/files/Essex-Journal-Spring-2007.pdf>

A selection of artefacts found in this dig have been archived by the Hadstock Society and some have now been photographed. You will find these pictures in accompanying posts in this section of the archive website.

3. Field Walks

Field Walk 2007

A field walking survey of Bantons field, Hadstock, was carried out by members of the Hadstock Society in 2007 and surface artefacts collected, washed, marked by grid space, and bagged. The Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned to identify the collected artefacts and provided an assessment of their meaning and significance.

In its report, the artefacts were classified into the following types:

Prehistoric pottery and flint
Roman pottery
Roman tile and quern stones
Medieval pottery, including Saxon
Post- medieval tile
Post-medieval pottery

Discarded material included bone, brick, shells, ironwork and glass.

Key artefact types have been archived and selected ones photographed in 2021. Some of these pictures are shown in other posts in this 'Archaeology and Artefacts' section of the website.

Field Walk 2010

Bantons field was surveyed again using a similar grid pattern to 2007 but covering a reduced area. Artefacts were washed and marked but classification and identification has not yet been completed as of May 2021. An initial review in June 2021 by Carolyn Wingfield, Curator of Saffron Walden Museum, has shown no unexpected or unusual artefacts, compared to the 2007 field walk. This project is ongoing.

4. Search for the Site of the Battle of Assandun 1016AD

In 2015, The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded the Hadstock Society a grant of £7,300 to carry out a geophysical survey of Red Field where numerous skeletons had been uncovered in 1863 and which may have been the site of this crucial battle, which led to Cnut being crowned King of England. The infill of the old railway line interfered badly with the survey results, but two possible burial pits were found. These were excavated in a trial dig under supervision by an archaeologist, but no burial remains were found.

5. Carbon 14 dating of mortar samples from St Botolph's church

In 2018, two samples taken during church repairs were sent to the USA for mortar analysis, one from the South wall taken from within the first 11 regular courses of flint herringbone from the floor, and the second from the North wall on the West side of the uncovered blocked up door, about 1 metre from the floor level.

With advice from the Cambridge University Department of Archaeology, the North wall mortar sample was dated (with a 95% probability) to 993-1154 AD, whereas the South wall sample indicated there was a 95% probability that the mortar dated to 676AD-870AD and a 75% probability that it was between 676AD-770AD.

This South wall result is significant and provides evidence supporting the conclusion of Dr Rodwell's 1974 investigation of a pre-Danish stone church in Hadstock.

Richard Dolby, July 2021