


Welcome

The Hadstock
Society

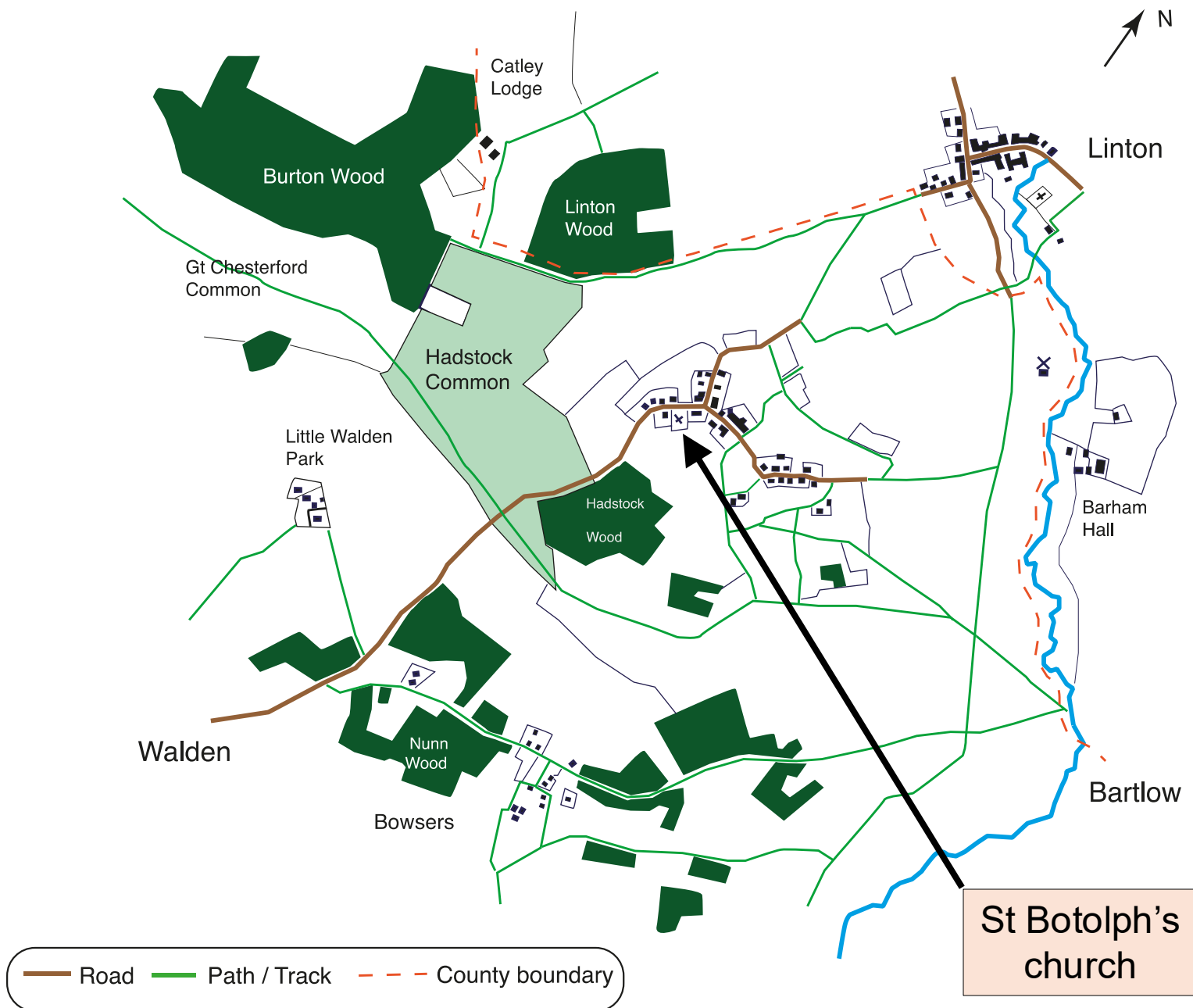
Dr Richard Dolby

September 2025



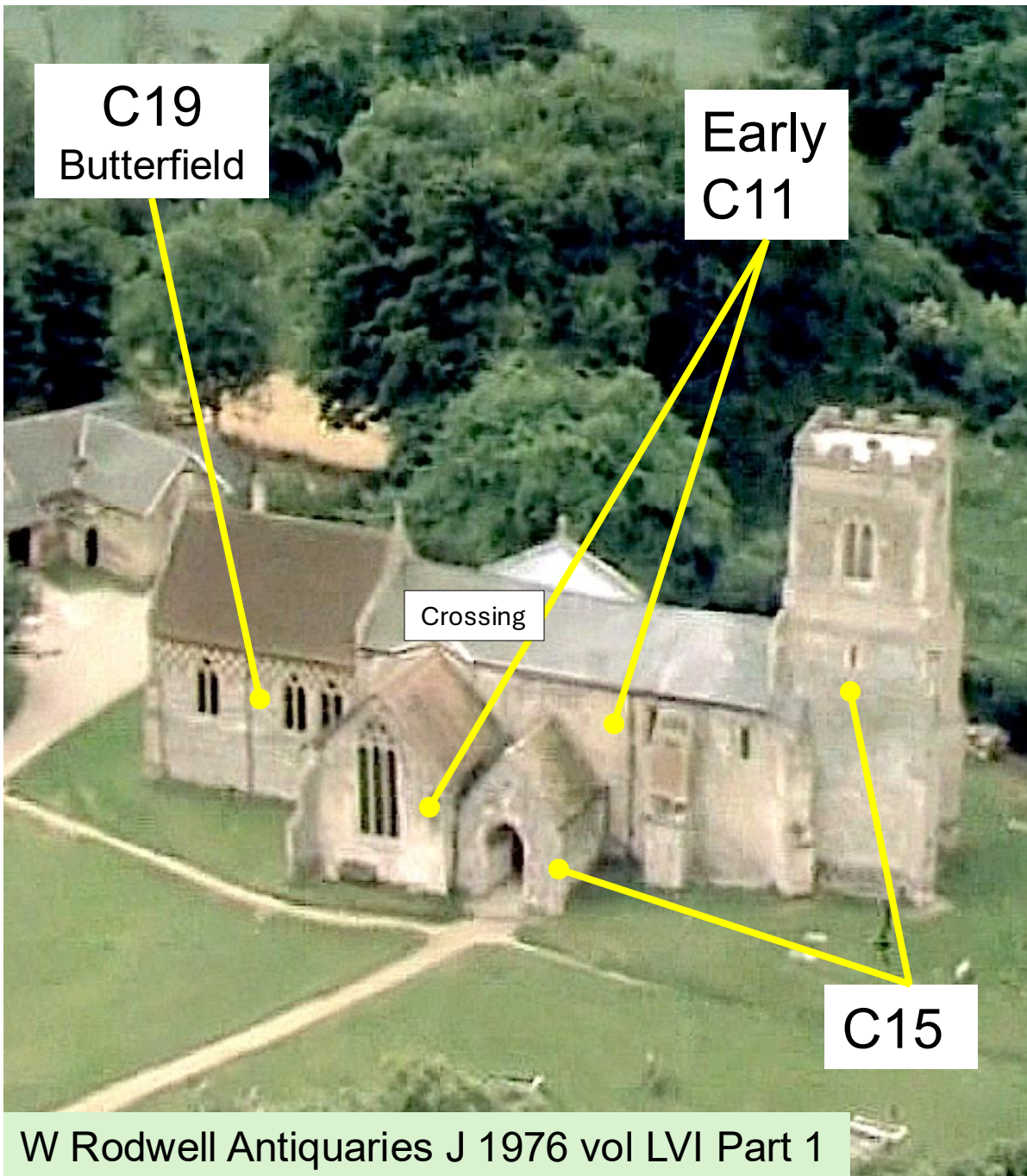
St Botolph's Church

How
old are
you?



Hadstock Parish 1777

- This 2 inch to 1 mile map by Chapman-André was the first to show building footprints.
- The village was nucleated to the north of St Botolph's church with the extensive Walden forest to the south.
- The only remnants of the forest today are Nunn and Hadstock woods. Most of the 1777 woods have gone.



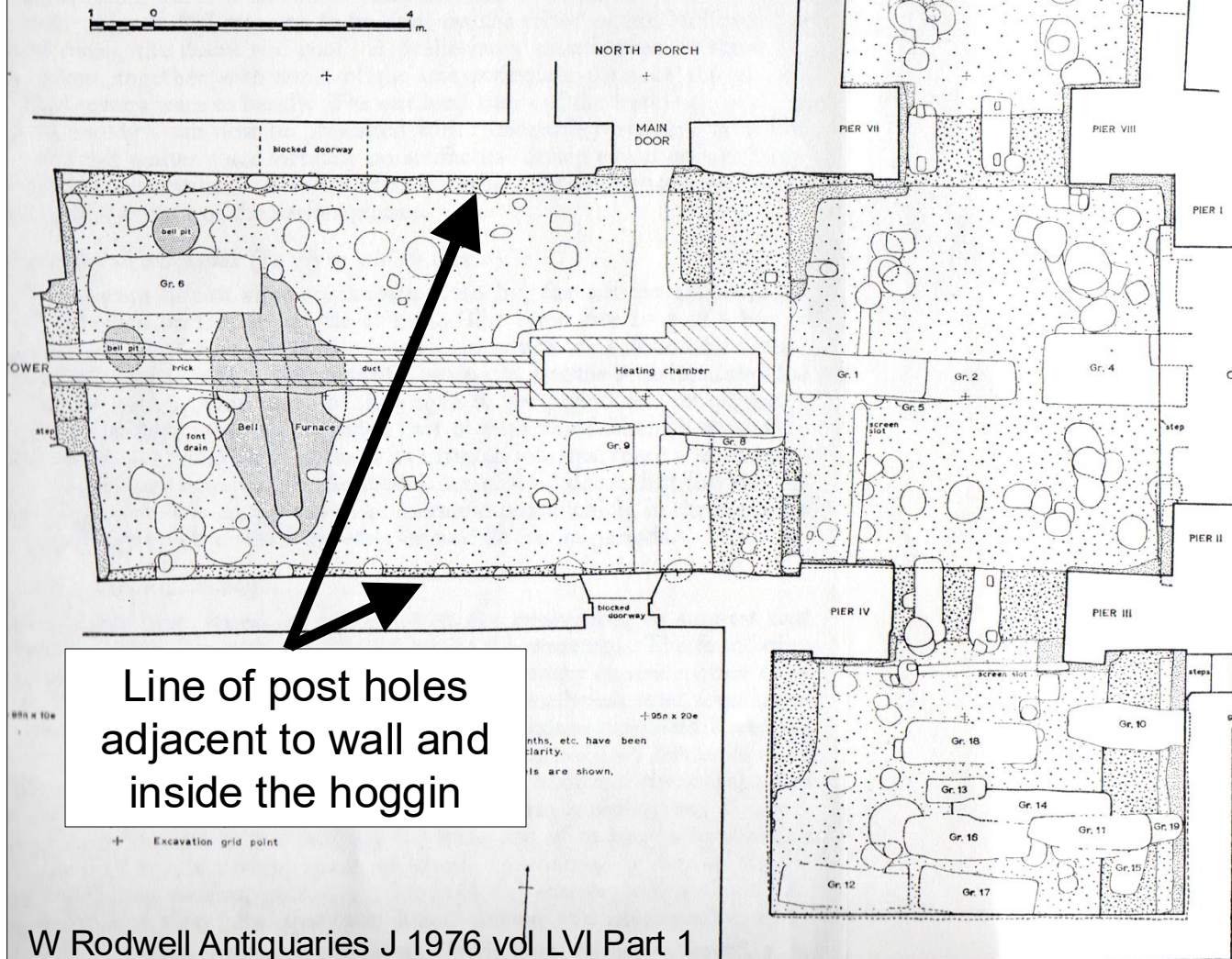
Archaeological Investigation 1974

Warwick Rodwell conclusions

- Built a cruciform shape in early C11, the nave masonry walls were probably half height but with a timber upper stage.
- Later in C11, a rebuild saw a four arch masonry tower erected at the crossing, and the nave walls raised to full height.
- But the masonry tower collapsed in the early C13 and was replaced by a new crossing. The south transept was rebuilt in the late C14.
- The west tower and north porch were added in C15. A new rectangular chancel replaced a small apse in C19.

HADSTOCK ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH

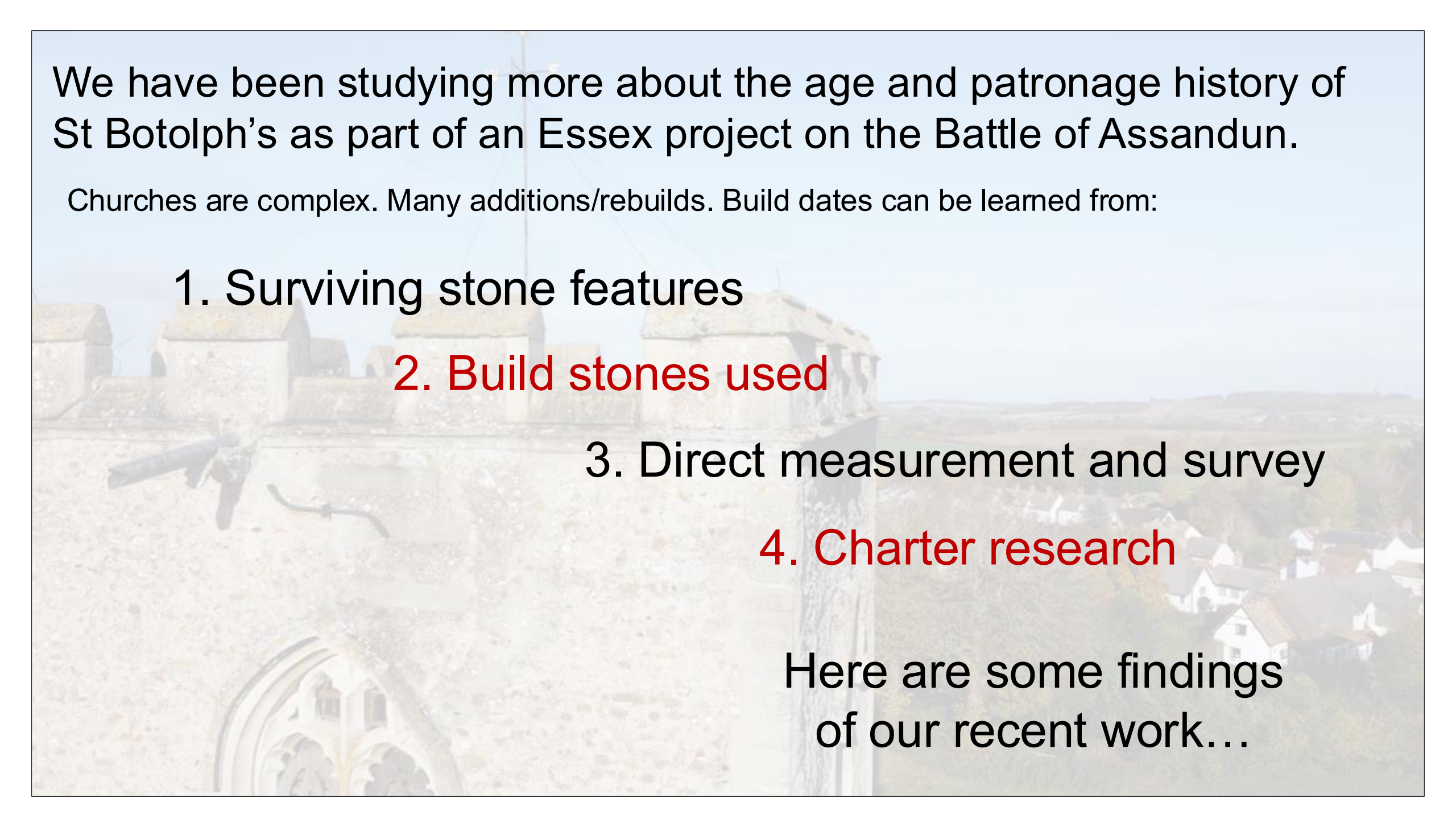
Plan of Features excavated in Nave, Crossing and Transepts - 1974



St Botolph's Church Warwick Rodwell's conclusions - 2

- The hoggin foundations (gravel, sand, clay mix) were designed to carry masonry walls at the outset.
- Post holes, 1m apart, were found close to the nave walls with an apparent pairing across the nave.
- He suggested the lines of vertical nave posts may have supported a timber upper stage and roof.

He concluded the first church could be dated 'late Saxon' - pre-Norman and pre-Danish conquests (<1016).



We have been studying more about the age and patronage history of St Botolph's as part of an Essex project on the Battle of Assandun.

Churches are complex. Many additions/rebuilds. Build dates can be learned from:

1. Surviving stone features

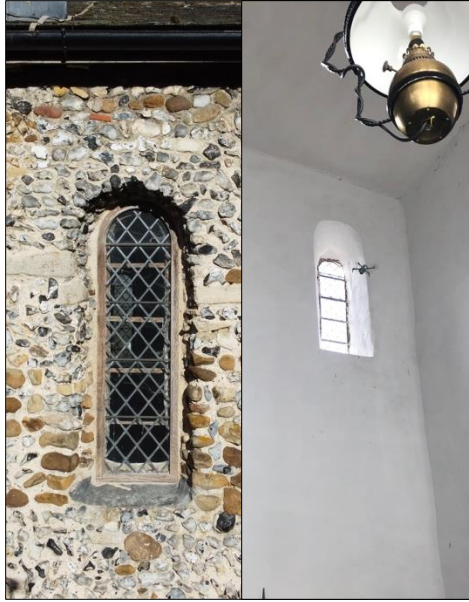
2. Build stones used

3. Direct measurement and survey

4. Charter research

Here are some findings
of our recent work...

Saxon



Double
splayed
windows
No dressings

Angle roll
>1060AD



Decorated
capitals/imposts
Arch angle roll

**Saxon or
Norman**



Rubble walls with tilted
flint courses

**Saxon or
Norman**



Quoin

Side alternate quoins

1. Dating by stone features

- All these Hadstock features are widely accepted as C11.
- But only our window design is classed by experts as uniquely Saxon, <1066. Other feature types can be Saxon or Norman.
- While our nave flint walls and windows are Saxon, the north door stonework dates to 1060-1070s, (Saxo-Norman!) (Fernie).

Surviving stone features date the nave <1066, with the north door probably 3rd quarter C11.



Barnack
stone
quoins

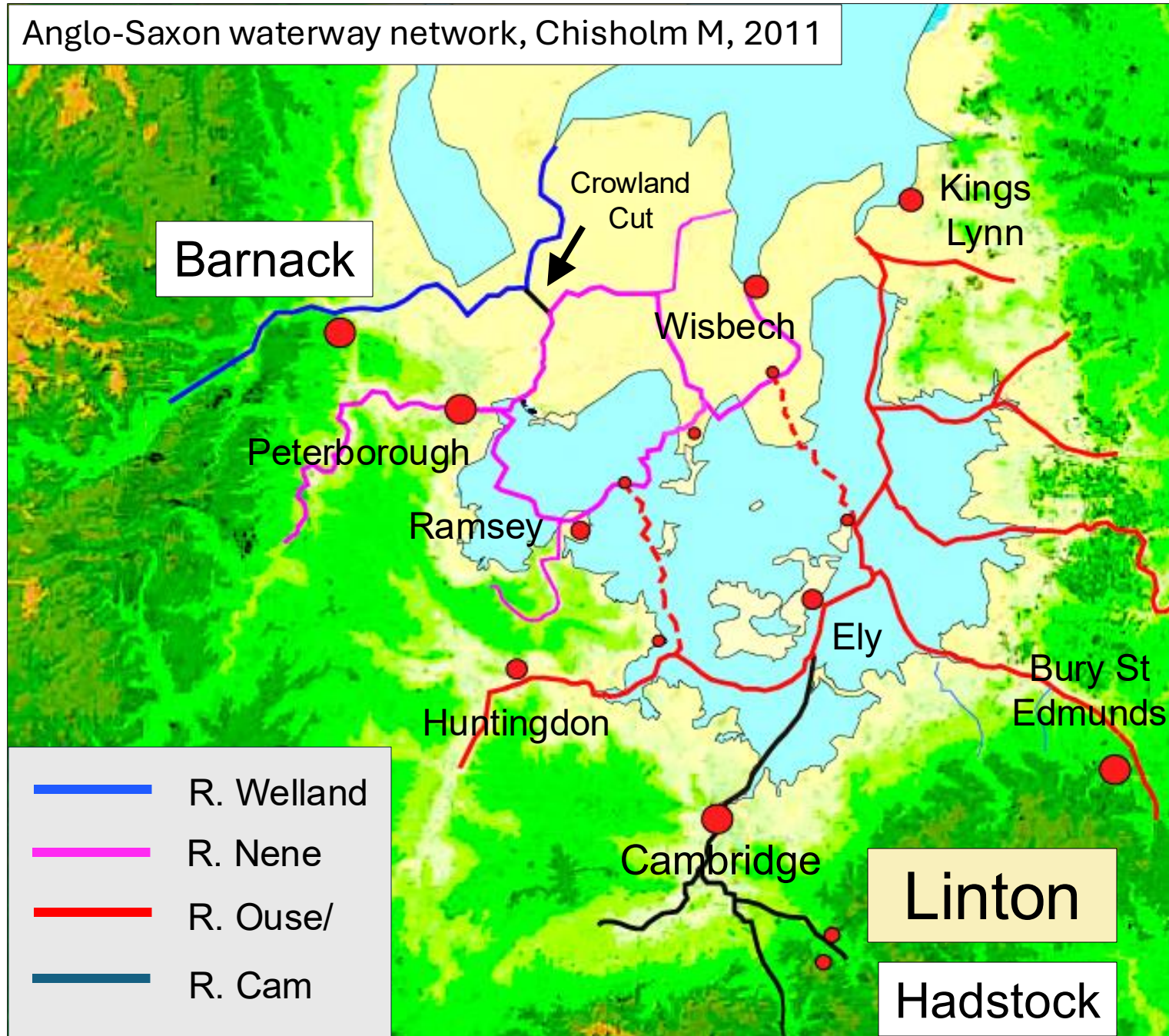


2. Dating by stone type

(i) Quoin stones

- The lower courses of the north transept are considered part of the oldest fabric (Rodwell, Hall).
- Its quoins have been recently expertly assessed. They are Barnack limestone, in the side-alternate design and original to the transept build (Woodcock).
- Given the transept quoins are C11, how did the stone get from Barnack to Hadstock 1000yrs ago, some 70 miles?

Anglo-Saxon waterway network, Chisholm M, 2011



By boat through Fenland

- Barnack limestone quarry was open in Roman times and between 960 -1460AD.
- Stone was shipped around the tidal fens in up to 10tn loads for cathedrals/churches.
- Barnack stone is present in St Bene't's Church, Cambridge, 1025 -1050, so some could have been shipped to Linton, via the Granta in mid C11.

Stone dating shows that the Hadstock north transept quoins could be mid C11.

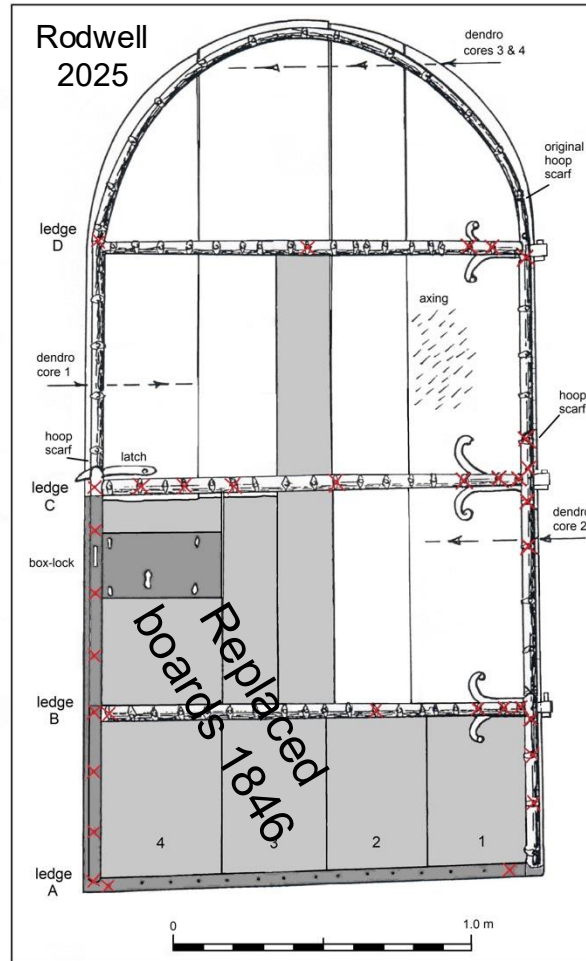


North
Door



West
Door

Details of both doors
are to be found in
Warwick Rodwell's new
book "Archaeology of
Britain's oldest doors".



3a. Dating by measurement (i) Doors and features

- 4 original oak boards (white) in our north door were dated in 2003 by dendrochronology.
- The tree rings spanned 663-1022AD. The tree was felled after 1034AD and the door dated to 1040 -1070AD.
- The north and west doors both have similar strap hinges ending with split curls. These strap hinges are rare and considered Saxon by Rodwell.

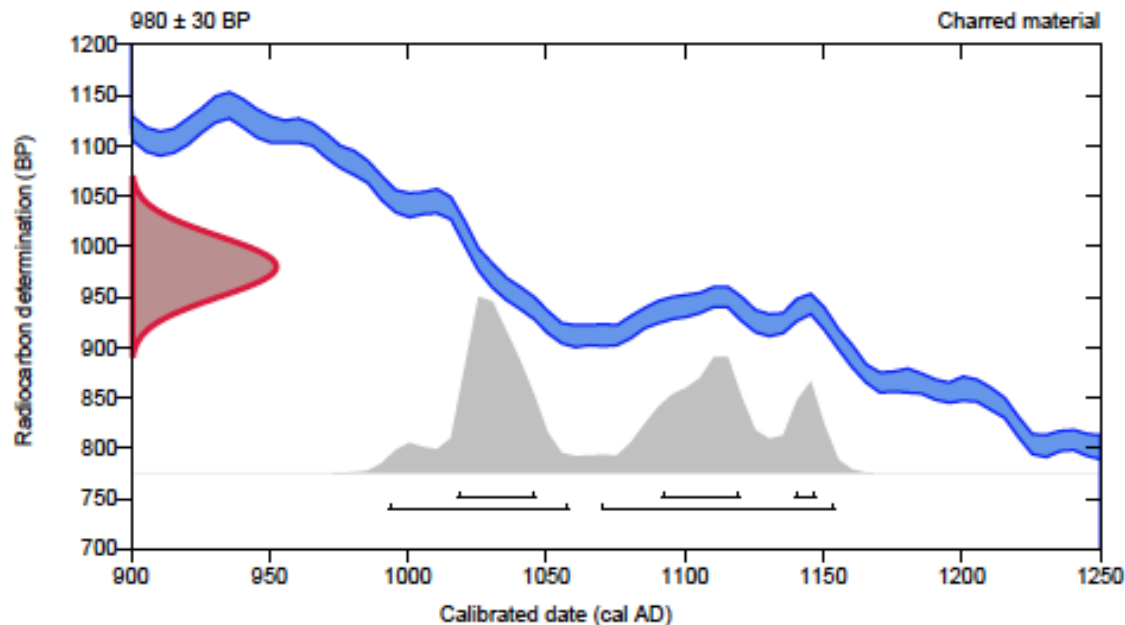
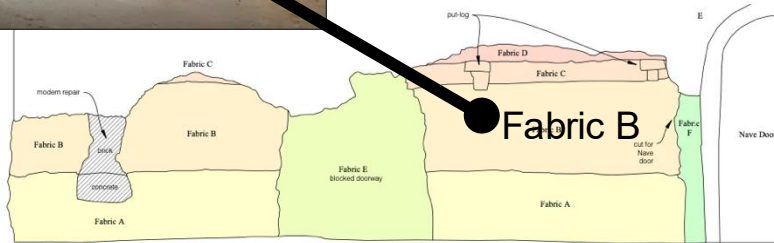
3a. Dating by measurement (ii) Wall lime mortar

- In 2018, we radiocarbon dated a lime mortar sample from the north nave wall taken out of Fabric B. The method analyses the charcoal in the mortar.
- The result is shown in the lower figure. There is a 95% probability that the date range is 993-1154 AD, and within that it's about 50/50 whether the date falls into 993-1058 or 1070-1154.
- Based on the evidence from stone and feature dating that the nave is pre-conquest, the mortar results show that Fabric B was probably built in the first half of the C11.



North nave wall

Garwood 2018



Do the post holes indicate a nave timber-framed upper stage with half height masonry walls (proposed by Rodwell) or is there another explanation?

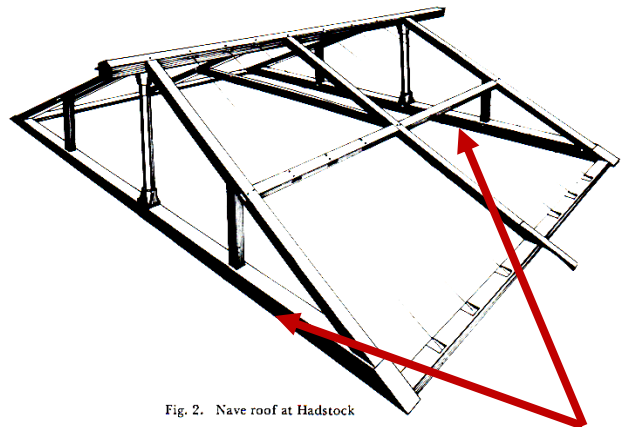
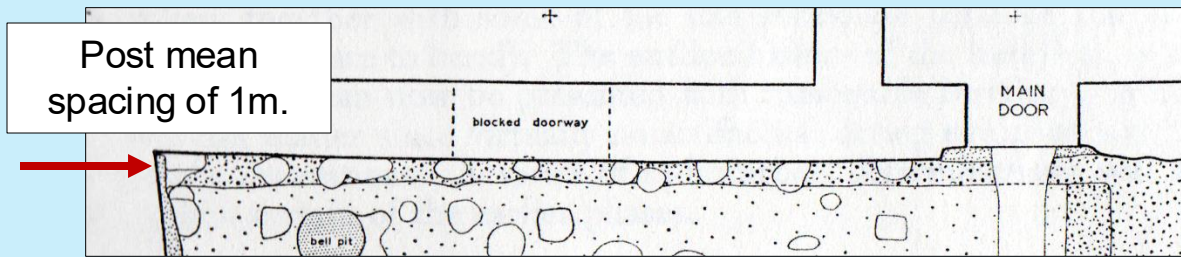
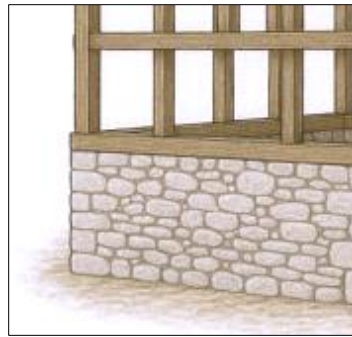


Fig. 2. Nave roof at Hadstock

St Botolph's church
roof timbers (Hewitt)

Tie
beams



Timber posts joined to
wood sill plates on a
masonry foundation.
(ChatGPT)

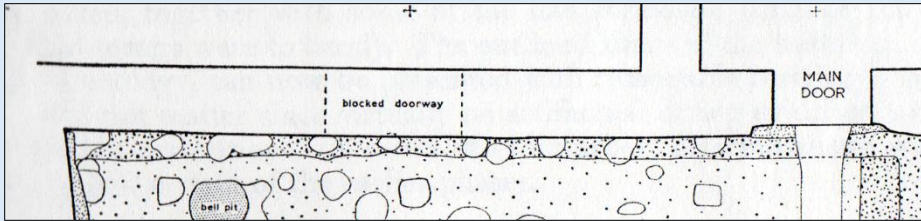
3b. Dating by Survey

Post Holes - 1

- Rodwell proposal implies 11 tie beams and 10 bays. But only 6 beams (5 bays) are present today.
- There are four Saxon churches with timber wall frames, but these comprise posts set on low masonry plinths/footings, not wall line posts.
- Rubble masonry walls can securely support tie beams and roof timbers, without the need for wall line posts.

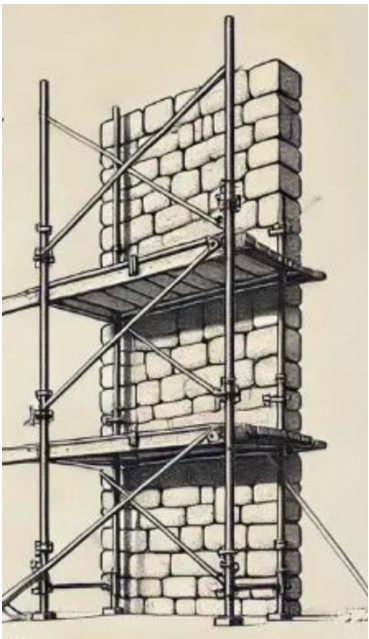
The probability the posts were supporting a timber upper frame and roof is low

Could the 1m spaced post holes in hoggin be remnants of a scaffold system for the walls?



A survey shows the typical spacing for scaffold posts for Saxon buildings was 1.2 - 2.0m, the closest spacings for heavier loads.

Here is a double scaffold system image (mason's scaffolding) used in medieval times and even today for masonry walls. It requires one line of posts close to the wall line, secured to the wall for stability (ChatGPT).



3b. Dating by Survey

Post Holes - 2

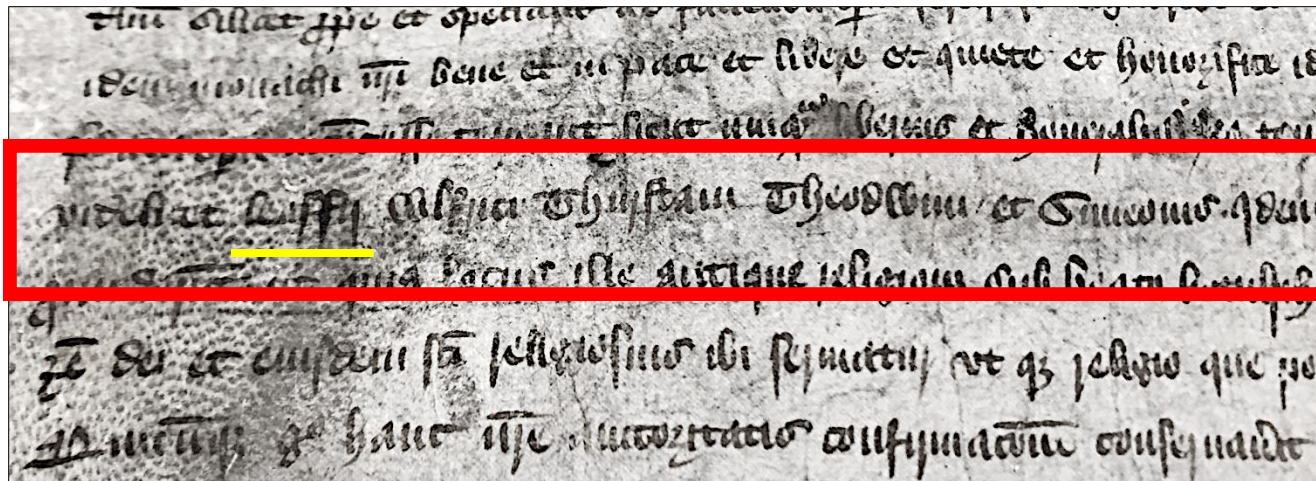
- So, the hole spacing and location appear consistent with the use of a double scaffold system, the inner posts secured at the wall base by hoggin for carrying heavy loads.
- Outside the hoggin, the outer line of posts were probably not dug deeply into the floor, and later floor levelling would have destroyed any evidence of posts.

This scaffold explanation shows that the nave walls were probably built to full height in one construction phase, not two, as proposed by Rodwell. The first church was a full height masonry building from the outset.

1576. [1129.] Rouen

Notification by Henry I generally addressed: That, for the souls of his father and mother and the redemption of his own sins, he has granted, at the prayer of Hervey, first Bp. of Ely, a weekly market to be held in the vill of Hadstock [Essex]; and has confirmed the fair held there on St. Botulf's day, as it was in the time of William I and at the day of King Edward's death. All who resort to the said fair and market are to have the King's firm

It also confirms an annual Hadstock St Botolph's fair running since at least 1066. Therefore, Hadstock had a church dedicated to the Saint before 1066.



C15 copy Ely Bishop
Nigel charter 1144,
Ely archives.

Leofsig is the first named abbot
and was in office 1029 -1044AD.

4. Dating by charters


- This 1129AD charter from Henry 1 granted a weekly market to Hadstock.
- This is an 1144 charter (Ely Abbey cartulary D) which lists the abbots who had the advowson of Hadstock church. This cartulary predates Liber Eliensis.

Here is good evidence St Botolph's church is Saxon, dating to second quarter C11.

St Botolph's Church

Dating summary


- This summarises the various C11 features and their probable dates from the evidence.
- Most show a pre-conquest date, although the north door is more probably 3rd quarter C11.
- And we have the Ely 1144 charter confirming a church in Hadstock in the 2nd quarter of the C11.



Saxon
quoins
Mid C11

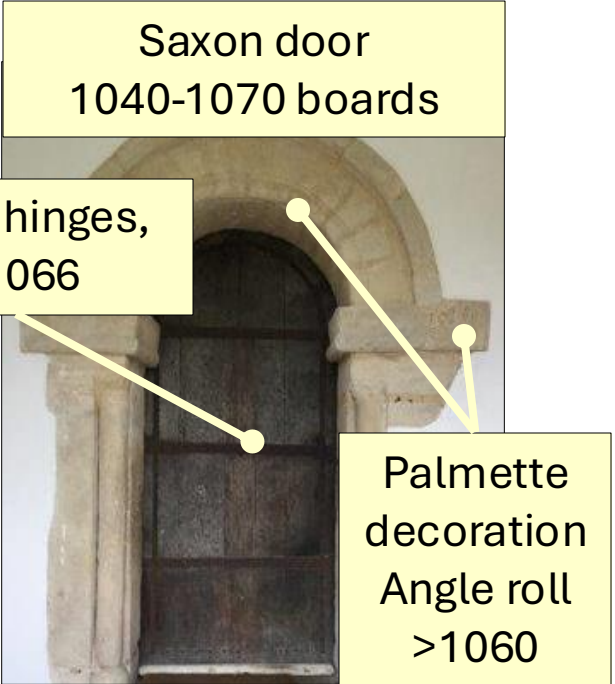
Saxon lime
mortar
<1050

Door
straps
<1066



Saxon
windows
<1066

Saxon
herringbone
flints, <1066

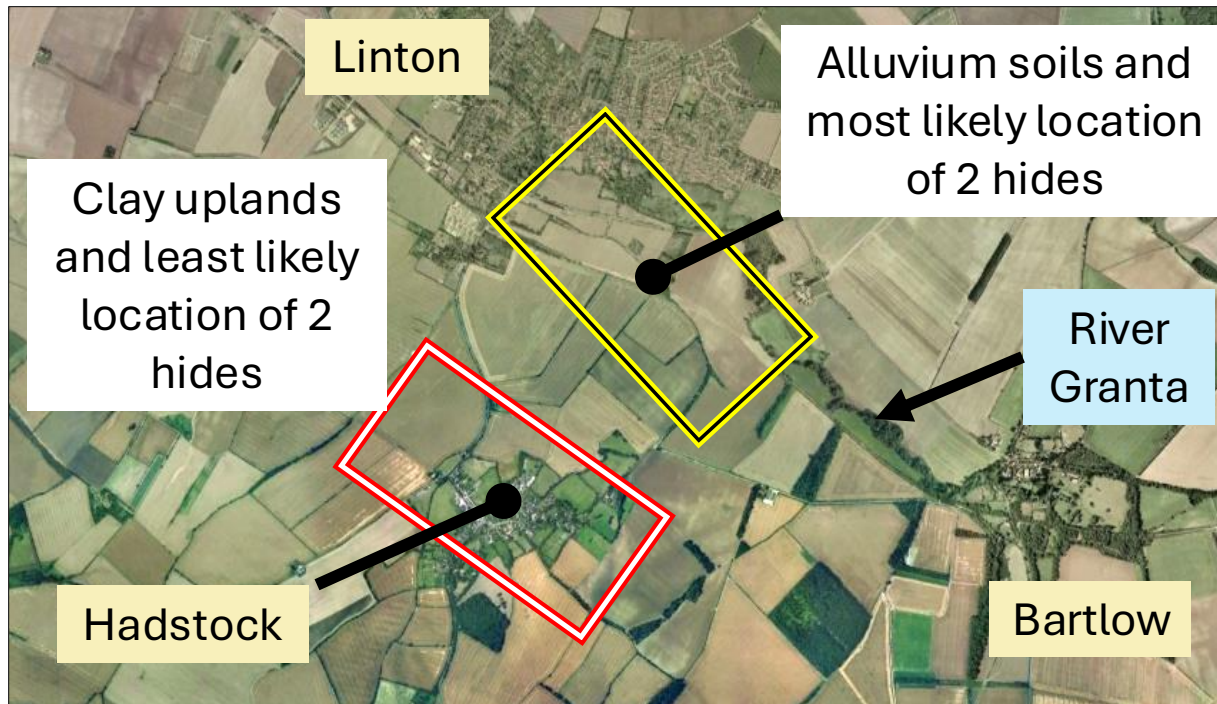


Saxon door
1040-1070 boards

Strap hinges,
<1066

Palmette
decoration
Angle roll
>1060

So, who could have built St Botolph's church? Who were the landholders with money in C11?



We know Ely Abbey bought 2 hides in Cadenho (Hadstock) from the Crown in 1008AD and the estate was required to provide food to the abbey for 4 days/year. (Liber Eliensis)

Where were these 2 hides (240acres)?

The yellow outlined area is most likely because of the high-quality arable land near the Granta

It is clear that both the Crown and Ely abbey owned Parish land from 1008AD

The background of the slide features a faded image of a church tower on the left and a landscape with a body of water and distant hills on the right.

Q1

Which of these two patrons funded a large expensive masonry church in Hadstock in rural Essex, why and when?

A possible answer:
The Crown

Q2

Why and when was our church dedicated to St Botolph?

The build may have been ordered by Cnut after the Battle of Assandun, when he became king of England in 1016AD.

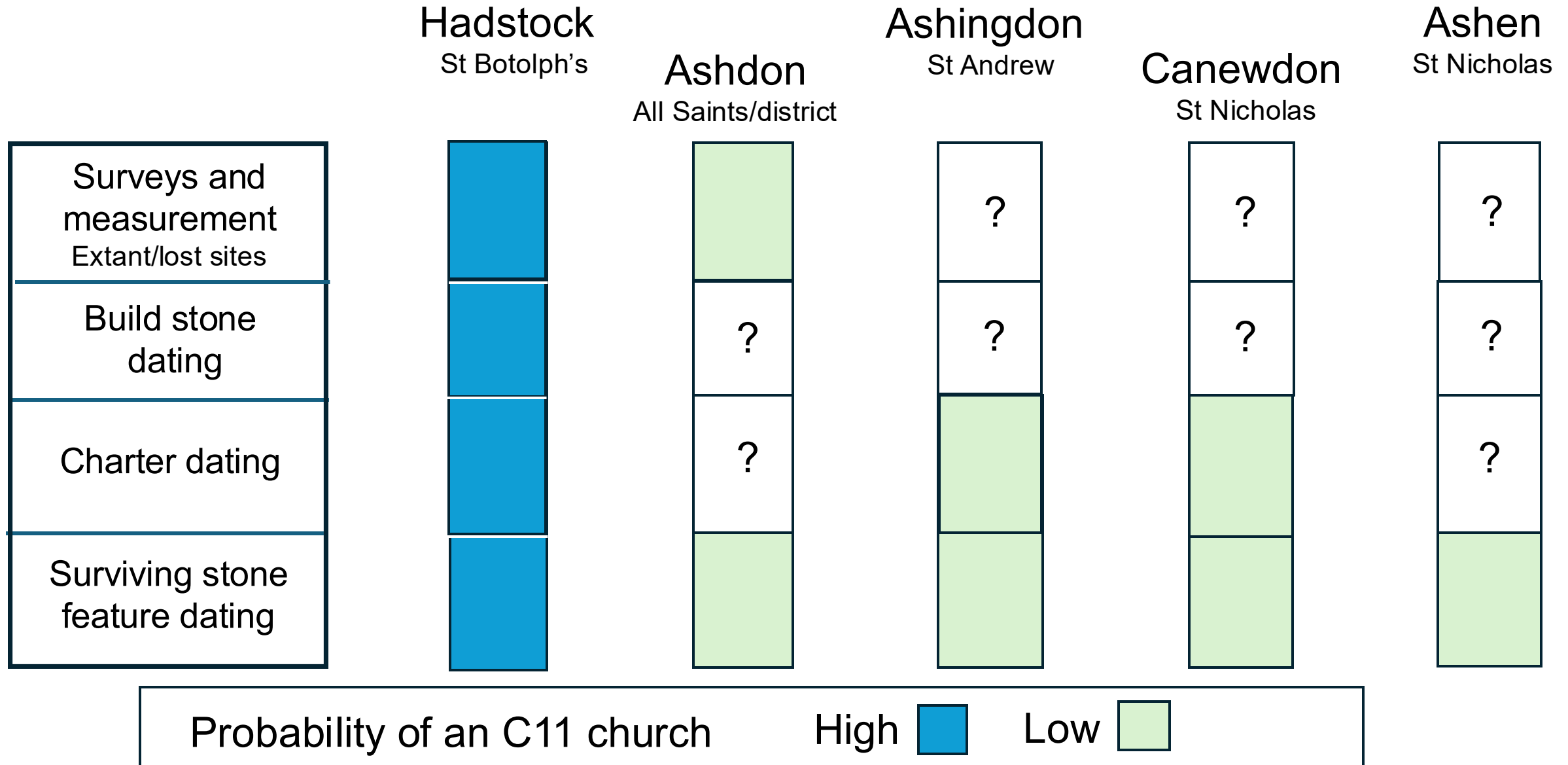
Cnut “had a minster built there of stone and mortar for the souls of those slain....” (ASC F)



Cnut and St Botolph's *Essex Battlefield's Trust project*

- Our evidence shows that Cnut was raiding in S. Cambs and was returning to his ships.
- He was intercepted in Essex by Edmund Ironside's English army.
- The battle area will have been close to one of Cnut routes back to the coast (dotted red lines).
- Since many monks from Ely and Ramsey were killed at the battle, it is probable Assandun was sited somewhere in north-west Essex.

St Botolph's is one of 5 candidates for Cnut's minster



Probability of 1020AD church

Hadstock

St Botolph's

Ashdon

All Saints/district

Ashingdon

St Andrew

Canewdon

St Nicholas

Ashen

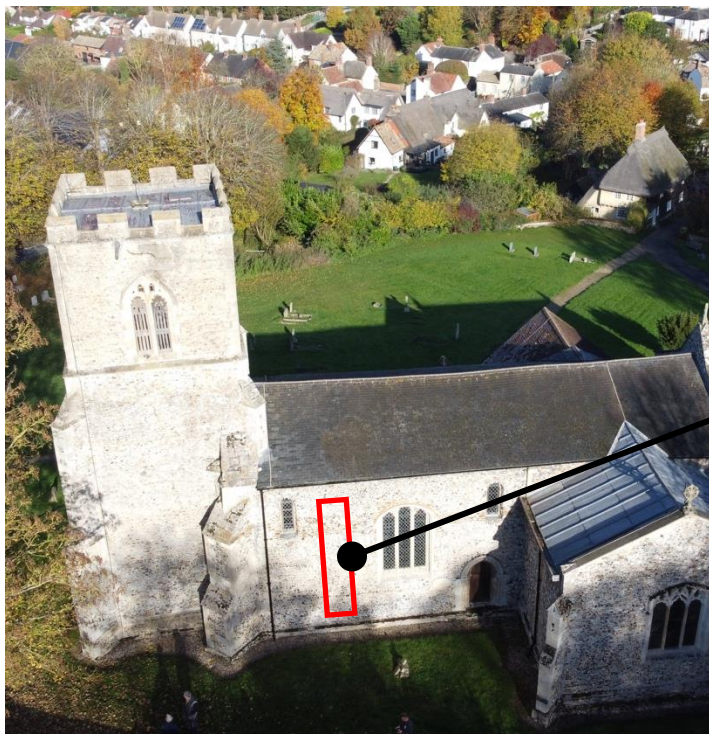
St Nicholas

Surveys and measurement Extant/lost sites	?		?	?	?
Build stone dating	North transept quoins	?	?	?	?
Charter dating	?	?			?
Surviving stone feature dating	North Door				

Probability of 1020AD church

High

Low



Planned area
for mortar
dating

We plan to try and date St Botolph's nave to 1020AD by measurement

- Diocesan permission has been given to radiocarbon date lime mortar samples from the south wall within the red rectangle.
- This should (i) show if the nave was built early in the C11 (ii) clarify if the nave was built to full height in one or two phases.
- Rodwell considered the Saxon window wood frames to be original. The frames will shortly be examined and assessed for dating, and permission sought to take samples.

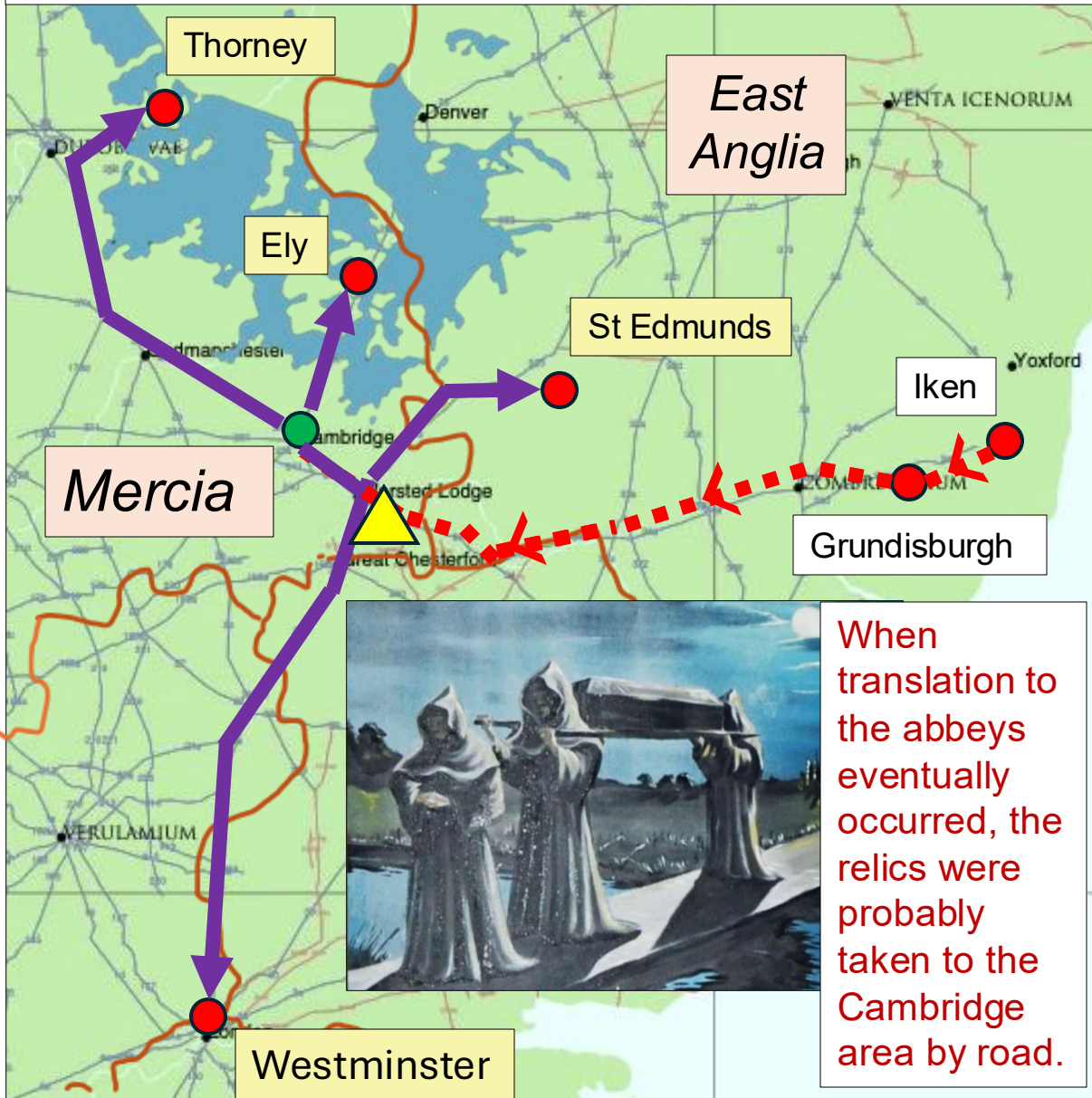


Rodwell 1974



Coxhall 2024

Here is a plausible explanation....



Q2. WHY and WHEN was our church dedicated to St Botolph?

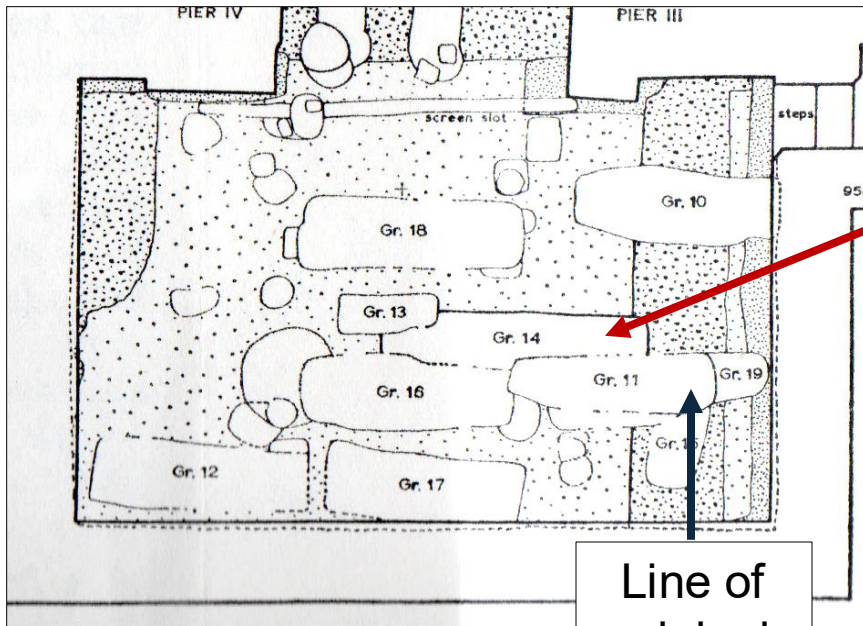
- In C10, Benedictine reformer Bishop Aethelwold wanted abbeys e.g. Thorney, Ely, Westminster and St Edmunds to acquire relics, and gain prestige.
- In C10 Botolph's relics were moved from Iken to Grundisburgh for safe keeping (Florence of Worcester, Bury copy 1170)
- But further translation to the abbey was clearly delayed, St Edmunds only receiving Botolph's relics 1042-1065.

Hadstock is a location where the relics could have been 'rested', divided, and taken to the various abbeys.

This fits with Ely Bishop Nigel's charter of 1144 about Hadstock church
"....because the place had been consecrated to the religious life of former times under the blessed Abbot Botwulf, who reposes there....."



St Botolph's south side, 1960s



South transept, rebuilt late C14

Line of original east wall

Rodwell 1974

Q2. WHY and WHEN was our church dedicated to St Botolph?

- Ely had the advowson of Hadstock church from 2nd quarter C11 and relics 'resting' here would have been sufficient reason for Ely to dedicate our church to St Botolph.
- Rodwell's stone grave 14 against the original east transept wall may also have been a St Botolph memorial.
- Botolph's relics did finally reach Ely and Thorney, but arrival dates are unknown. But Bury received its relics between 1042-1064.


This suggests our dedication to St Botolph may have come after 1042, but before 1066 (when Botolph's fair at Hadstock was extant.

The Hadstock Society

So far...surveys,
stone features, build
stones and charters
indicate the nave to
be second quarter of
C11.

Work continues...

Our planned
radiocarbon dating
of mortar should
provide more clarity
later this year.



St Botolph's Church

How
old are
you?

Many questions on St Botolph's church remain..

e.g. Did Cnut walk the aisle of Hadstock church in 1020AD?

Were the transepts really part of the first church?

Who paid for the expensive rebuild in 3rd quarter C11?

How long were St Botolph's relics resting in Hadstock?

We would be pleased take a few questions

.....

and then we'll move to the church and talk to you about some interior features.