

## **A THOUSAND YEARS OF LIFE AND DEATH IN IPSWICH**

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Oxford Archaeology were asked to undertake an archaeological assessment of the area bounded by Great Whip Street and Stoke Quay prior to a mixed dwelling/business development.

Ipswich background - located on the confluence of the Rivers Orwell and Gipping. Alluvial strata consists of limestone and flint with clay. A map/drawing of 970 shows Great Whip Street and Stoke Quay area along with the church of St. Peter and also the church of St. Mary, but no mention of St. Augustine, possibly already demolished. The map of 1874 shows the Kings Cooperage occupying the site. Pennington's map of 1778 shows the area having a shipyard. The 1848 map shows no shipyard and the area cut through by a road. The second edition of the Ordnance Survey map shows malting houses.

Archaeologically there is evidence of Mesolithic and Palaeolithic occupation. Roman occupation: the Castle Hill Villa. Saxon cemeteries along with Ipswich ware and also C10<sup>th</sup>-C12<sup>th</sup> enclosure. Ipswich ware was exported all across the Eastern counties and showed dynamic trade. The area of Stoke Quay initially had 10 trenches opened and photographic studies taken using a helicopter drone, with GPS facility. This showed a bird's eye view of the whole area.

During the period May to December 2012 1,181 burials, 741 pits and 417 post holes were discovered. Pottery recovered was prehistoric and Roman, followed by C7<sup>th</sup>-C8<sup>th</sup> pre-Ipswich ware, C8<sup>th</sup>-C9<sup>th</sup> Ipswich ware and C9<sup>th</sup>-C12<sup>th</sup> Thetford ware. Prehistoric finds included blades, cores and scrapers. Of the 1,181 burials by far the majority were East-West but some were North-South including one of a 35-year-old woman. These burials were of C7<sup>th</sup>-C8<sup>th</sup>. The East-West burials were probably early Christian; they were poorly preserved with very few finds. The earliest, to date, partially preserved kiln from Ipswich ware was found. This dates to the C8<sup>th</sup>-C9<sup>th</sup>. South of the burial area there are signs of wells, oyster shell dumps and also general household rubbish pits. Several post holes were also found which indicated that buildings were erected over the site at a later date. To the North of the site there is evidence of a cemetery and the continuation of the palisade. The burials were a mixture of pillow stone, coffin, stone lined and stone lined with head niche. All the burials showed poor health which indicated general low status individuals, the mortality had the expected U-shaped profile and the diseases included TB, leprosy, syphilis, cancer and various fractures.

Ongoing analysis means that we have increased knowledge of Ipswich. Questions included:

why and when did the population change? when was trade in Ipswich ware superseded by Thetford ware? when was St. Augustine's church demolished?