



COGGESHALL ABBEY, ABBEY LANE, LITTLE COGGESHALL, ESSEX CO6 1RD (TQ960962)



Resistivity Survey of Lawn Area Adjacent to House

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mr & Mrs Hadlee for inviting us to support them in their archaeological investigation of this fascinating site and for their warm hospitality. Members both old and new of the Maldon Archaeological & Historical Group (MAHG) joined together to carry out the geophysical survey on the 20th May 2006. Those on site were Brian Riley, Stuart McPherson, Sandra Rae, Nancy Bernius, and Bernie Steel.

BACKGROUND

The site itself lies to the south east of Coggeshall and to the north-northeast of Coggeshall Hamlet (refer to the map in Appendix 1). The Abbey Church site and the field to the east of St Nicholas' Chapel were subject to resistivity, magnetometry, and GPR surveys in December 2004 to; (i) investigate the layout of the Abbey church and compare it with the published plan (RCHM Essex iii 166; 1922), as confirmed by J S Gardner in 1955, and (ii) to seek geophysical evidence for the location of the precinct wall in the region of St Nicholas' chapel.

MAHG was invited to carry out a resistivity survey of the lawned area directly to the north of the 16th century manor house occupied by Mr & Mrs Hadlee (see satellite imagery in Appendix 1) to seek to confirm the position and foundation lines of the Abbey church that formed a part of the 12th century Cistercian Abbey.

DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

MAHG was provided with a copy of the Geophysical Survey Report prepared in 2004 by the Colchester Archaeological Group. Historical information contained in Appendix 3 was obtained from a variety of web sites, including;

'Houses of Cistercian monks: Abbey of Coggeshall', A History of the County of Essex: Volume 2 (1907), pp. 125-29.

URL address: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=39835>.

Mapping information and satellite imagery contained in Appendix 1 was obtained from Multimap.com whose copyright is hereby acknowledged.

APPROACH

The lawned area surveyed lay directly to the north of the 16th century manor house and was bounded to the east by the river, to the south by the paved area surrounding the manor house. The northern and western limits were established by reason of the overall grid dimension.

The survey area consisted of 4 (four) 20 metre x 20 metre grids with the south west peg of the first grid set 1 metre out and 19 metres west of the north western corner of the patio paving.



The resistance meter used was a TR Systems Ltd Resistance Meter TRCIA 1.3 owned by MAHG.

Each grid was surveyed in a south to north direction with readings taken every 1 metre along lines 1 metre apart. The data was downloaded to a PC and processed using TRCIA Resistance Meter software Interface V1.32 and Adobe Photo Deluxe Edition 4.0.

Figure 1 shows the TRCIA combined data output.

Figure 2 shows this data following enhancement using the Adobe software.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

The survey data clearly demonstrates the outline of the Abbey church foundations, together with substantial foundations of other structures / structural elements to the north, north east, south, and south west of the Abbey church.

This information will facilitate the location of the Abbey church and further confirm previously published findings. It also provides the basis for further investigation of other previously un-recorded related buildings and structures.

Whilst we are satisfied with the robust nature of the obtained data, it is suggested that confirmation of these findings by test pitting would provide further valuable evidence of the situation, nature, and relationship of the noted Abbey remains.



APPENDIX 1
SITE PLAN



Site of

Coggeshall Abbey (circled)



Area surveyed – North ↑



APPENDIX 2
SURVEY RESULTS



Figure 1: TRCIA

output

software data

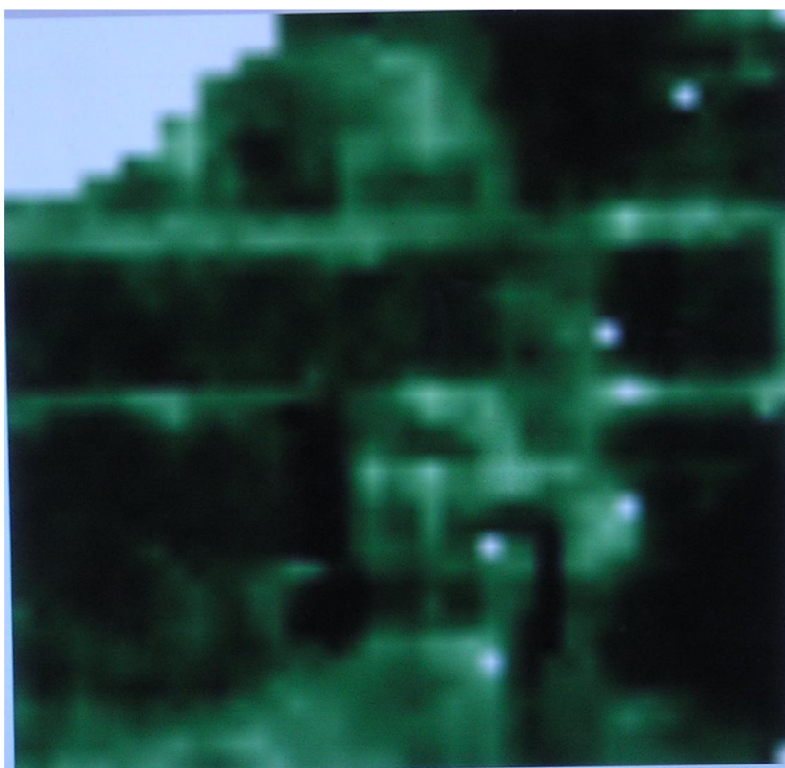


Figure 2:
image

Enhanced



APPENDIX 3
HISTORICAL INFORMATION



The gatehouse chapel of St. Nicholas is the most complete of the abbey buildings and was built about 1220. Locally made bricks were used in its construction and it is the earliest post-Roman brickwork in England. A little further past the chapel and you will pass a hedge on your left and some stables on your right. Directly in front is a 16th Century farmhouse, which is a private residence not open to the public. Follow the track round to the right and into a farmyard. Here you will see the only remaining parts of the original abbey buildings

The Mill, built as a fulling mill in the mid -16th century, still stands on a site developed by the monks.

Founded by King Stephen and Queen Matilda in 1140, Coggeshall Abbey was one of the thirteen English houses of the order of Savigny, the whole of which joined the Cistercians in 1147. Savigny itself was situated within the Norman county of Mortain, and to this connexion with Stephen, as count of Mortain, the selection of the order of the new abbey was no doubt due. The choice of the site, on the other hand, came from the queen, Coggeshall being one of the manors held by her father, Count Eustace of Boulogne. In her foundation charter she granted the manor to the monks to hold as fully as she and her father had held it, and the grant was confirmed by charters of Stephen and their son William, count of Boulogne.

The date of the foundation is given in different annals in years varying from 1137 to 1142; but the most probable seems to be 1140, as given by the historian Ralph, the sixth abbot, who states that the convent assembled on 3 August. He is certain to have had good evidence, and moreover correctly records an eclipse in the same year. This date is consistent with the evidence of the queen's foundation charter. Ralph tells us that the high altar was dedicated to St. Mary and St. John the Baptist on 15 August, 1167, by Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, who on the same day solemnly celebrated mass at that altar, Simon de Toni being the abbot. Later, we learn from him that on the day of the Circumcision, 1216, while tierce was being said, some of King John's army violently entered the abbey and carried off twenty-two horses of the bishop of London and others. But he gives no further information towards the history of the abbey beyond mentioning the succession of the early abbots and a mysterious occurrence, which was never cleared up, in the time of Peter, the fourth abbot. A lay brother, Robert, who had the care of the guests, entered the guest hall as usual before the hour of refection and there found several persons dressed as Templars. He conversed with them and reported their arrival to the abbot, but on his return found no one, and the porters said that no such persons had passed the gates.

Henry II, by a charter dated at Rouen early in his reign, granted protection and liberties to the abbey, and confirmed several grants made to it; and Edward I in 1290 confirmed this charter. Richard I on 15 September, 1189, granted a charter of liberties; John on 1 January, 1204, granted licence for the abbot and convent to enclose their wood in their manor of Coggeshall; and Henry III on 2 April, 1257, granted licence for them to enclose woods in Tolleshunt Major, Tolleshunt Tregoz, Inworth, Childerditch and Little Warley, with various detailed provisions. The same king also on 26 May, 1247, granted to them free warren in their demesne lands at Coggeshall; on 10 October, 1250, a fair at Coggeshall on the vigil and day of St. Peter ad Vincula and the six days following; and on 6 April, 1256, a market there on Saturdays. All these charters, as well as Queen



Maud's foundation charter, were confirmed by Edward II in 1325, and by Richard II in 1389.

The Taxation of 1291 mentions temporalities of the abbey amounting to £131 11s. 6d. yearly, of which £67 11s. 10d — or more than half — came from Coggeshall itself. The next largest sums were £14 3s. 2d from Tolleshunt Major, £9 9s. 1d from Childerditch, £8 from Barkway in Hertfordshire, and £6 13s. 4d from Inworth. Goldhanger, Warley, Feering, Tolleshunt Tregoz, Springfield, Easthorpe, Horndon, Colchester and Marks Hall each contributed over £1, and fourteen other places smaller amounts.

Not long after its foundation the abbey had a dispute about the church of Coggeshall with the Cluniac priory of Rumilly, near Boulogne, which Count Eustace of Boulogne had founded in 1105, and to which he had probably granted the church. The matter is referred to in two letters from John of Salisbury to Pope Adrian IV (1154-9). The abbot and convent said that they had the church canonically by agreement with Prior Theobald and the convent of Rumilly, for a pension to be paid to Rumilly, and that certain monks of Rumilly would bear witness to this. These were not to be found, and the Coggeshall party alleged that they had been sent away by the prior lest they should testify to the truth. The abbey retained the church, and the tithes were appropriated to it by Eustace, bishop of London, on 8 January 1223; but a yearly rent of 10 marks was paid to Rumilly. The abbot and convent were pardoned in 1385 for having obtained a release of this without licence.

The manor of Childerditch belonged to the abbey, and a complete inventory is preserved of the farm utensils, goods, stock, grain, etc., there on the Nativity of St. Mary, 1295, with the amounts of wages paid to the farm labourers. The manor of Tillingham Hall in Childerditch was acquired in 1377, for the maintenance of a taper burning daily before the high altar at high mass. The church of Childerditch was appropriated to the abbey on 13 June, 1380, by Simon, archbishop of Canterbury, in accordance with a bull of Pope Urban VI dated 17 Kal. September, 1379; and on Thursday after Easter week, 1382, the abbot and convent granted to Sir John Thornbery, knight, Master William Bryon and John Myte, for expenses incurred in this matter at the Roman court and elsewhere, a yearly pension of 10 marks until the death of John de Haverhulle, a monk of the monastery, and also to John de Haverhulle for life the whole solar at the old hall in the monastery, the grantees agreeing to defend the right of the abbey to the rectory. This grant was confirmed by the abbot of Warden at his visitation at Coggeshall on the same day, and by the king on 16 October, 1384; but the royal licence for the appropriation of the church had not been obtained, and for this the abbot and convent had to pay a fine of 100s in 1406.

The manor of Tolleshunt Major was granted by charter by Philip son of Nicholas de Boville to Abbot Thomas Quintyn and the convent in 40 Henry III. These held the manor and had view of frankpledge there as Nicholas and Philip had done; and on the death of Thomas his successor William de Tolleshunt, abbot, and the convent had the same for twenty-six years and more, until in 20 Edward I the king's bailiff in Dengie hundred prevented their having the view. But the abbot and convent never released their claim, and their right was eventually upheld by inquisition in 1327, when Richard de Pantfeld was abbot. It was not, however, until 12 February 1341, that they got a formal grant of the view of frankpledge at the manor, for a fine of 60s made by Abbot William Joldayn.



In 1260 the abbot is mentioned as going beyond seas as the king's envoy; and in 1308 and in 1311 as going to the chapter general at Citeaux, being allowed to take £20 with him for expenses on the latter occasion.

The crown claimed corrodies in the abbey. Richard de Ry was sent there by the king on 23 May 1299. The abbot and convent granted that he should eat in their house, and though nothing was said of robes and shoeleather, they afterwards gave him this at the king's request. He was still not satisfied, however, and used threats; and they wrote to the king for compassion, declaring that they were in debt to the amount of £540. Walter le Ewer was sent there in 1312 for maintenance in the place of John de Totehill.

In 1308 the abbot was charged with the repair of the bridge of Stratford between Braintree and Coggeshall, but proved that neither he nor his predecessors had ever repaired it, and no rents or tenements had ever been given to the abbey for its repair.

Pope Clement VI on 18 June, 1352, granted to Abbot Roger an indult to eat out of his monastery and give licence to two monks his companions to eat flesh on lawful days, there being few fish in these parts; and Pope Boniface IX on 12 May, 1402, granted that as often as any of the monks left the monastery for a reasonable cause they might eat flesh on lawful days.

Pope Martin V on 17 April, 1427, granted an indult to the Abbot John to wear the mitre, ring and other pontifical insignia; and to give solemn benediction after mass, vespers and matins in the monastery and the churches belonging to it, provided no bishop or papal legate be present. There is no mention of his successors, so probably the grant was only for life.

Edward III on 11 January, 1345, granted a tun of red wine yearly to the abbot and convent, they having undertaken to find a monk to celebrate divine service daily in their church for him and his queen Philippa and his children; and this grant was confirmed in 1379, 1400, and 1463. On 27 January 1408, they had licence to acquire rent in Springfield and Sandon for the maintenance of a monk to celebrate likewise for the souls of Sir Hugh de Badewe and Margaret his wife and Thomas Coggeshale.

In 1370 the abbey was reported to be greatly impoverished by grants of corrodies, excessive expenditure and improvident alienations of lands, and the king on 26 October directed the escheator to inquire into the matter. Inquisitions were taken accordingly at Chelmsford, Brentwood and Rayleigh, and several facts were brought to light. Rents in Leighs and Chelmsford were considerably in arrear. Abbot Roger and the convent had granted a parcel of the manor of Kewton Hall in Springfield, which manor the Earl Mandeville had given to the convent, to Roger Sawene for ever at a rent below its value for a payment of 10 marks. Abbot Roger Porte in 26 Edward III without the king's licence had granted 40 acres of land in Chadwell and Thurrock to William Horneby for 100 years at a rent of 12d, though worth 40s, and for this William had paid him £18. Abbot Thomas and the convent in 1257 had granted a marsh in Little Wakering, formerly in the possession of the abbey of the gift of Peter de Hebreg and Walter de Barkyng, to Robert de Bohun and his heirs and assigns at a certain rent, and Abbot William and the convent had released this rent to Giles de Stanbregg, into whose possession the marsh had come.



During the peasants' revolt in 1381 some of the insurgents entered the abbey and carried away goods and charters, writings and other muniments; a fact which appears to indicate its unpopularity at the time.

The rents from the possessions of the abbey in Coggeshall are given in great detail in the account of the bailiff for the year ending Michaelmas, 1531. We have only a part of the complete return to the Valor Ecclesiasticus in 1535. In this the gross income of the abbey amounts to £298 0s. 8d; and deductions of £12 6s for rents, £8 0s. 8d for pensions, £20 13s. 4d for fees, including those to John, earl of Oxford, and Henry, earl of Essex, as chief stewards, and £5 18s. 8d for alms on three anniversaries, reduce the net income to £251 2s. The abbey was thus rich enough to escape the first dissolution in 1536.

Thomas, abbot of Ford, was commissioned to visit Coggeshall and other Cistercian houses in 1535, but nothing is known of his visitation. The abbey was visited at the end of 1535 by Doctor Thomas Legh. The report of the visitation has not been preserved; but it appears that there were serious dissensions between some of the monks and the abbot. Definite articles of accusation were brought against him: -

1. Knowing that he should be visited, he counselled the brethren not to be known of certain plate that was in the house, that the king might not have it.
2. Expecting that the king would have the lands of the house, he let many under their value.
3. He neglected to say a collect at high mass for the king and Queen Anne, though the king is our founder.
4. He read a book of a certain prophecy amongst us, his brethren, containing words such as Novus papa erit a Deo electus.
5. He practised immorality.
6. He has used divination.

Richard Clerke, alias Brayntre, monk, aged 31, was examined on 23 January 1536, and gave details, quoting the late abbot in support. John Bokkyng, monk, also examined, corroborated his evidence. Another document gives depositions of certain of the convent against the abbot, supplementing the above: -

1. For maintaining the power of the pope contrary to our oath and the statutes.
2. For secreting jewels and evidences belonging to the place, in anticipation of the king's visitation.
3. For using unlawful means to know of things to come, by means of a key and a book and a man's name.



4. For having obtained his office by simony. He says himself it cost him 300 marks, which is a great charge to the house.
5. He pretends that the house owes him 300 marks, though hospitality was never so ill kept.
6. He is an ill husband for our commonwealth, having sold all the corn and cattle we had on our farms and much more than we know of, while divers of the brethren have been like to perish for lack of keeping. He has been heard to say he cares not to go to the devil for money. He has often betrayed confession. Of late, when there was conversation about heretics, in which Luther, Barnes and others were mentioned, the abbot said the maintainers of all heretics were Master Cromwell and Friar George Browne. 'Wherefore help good Master Doctor for a charitable reformation' and get us a head who will be true to the king's succession.

It is difficult to say how much truth there was in these charges. The earl of Essex writes to Cromwell on 13 January that the abbot is accused of misdemeanour by a simple person, supported by one who was formerly abbot there, as Doctor Lye, the visitor, will certify. He himself and the earl of Oxford have examined the abbot, and find him a true subject. The two earls can hardly be regarded as impartial judges, for they were both connected with the abbey, having held the stewardship of it successively. But that the dissensions originated with Abbot Sampford is highly probable. The charge of simony probably refers to nothing more than the usual bribery and payments in connexion with the election, that of immorality was very likely exaggerated or even groundless, and that of divination simply raises the question whether the credulity of the abbot or the monks was greater. On the other hand, the charges of sedition, concealment of goods, and cheap letting of lands are likely enough to have been true.

The decision went against the abbot; and on 31 August the abbot of Tower Hill was granted the abbey to hold in commendam when it should be vacant. He appears to have taken charge immediately, for two days later he tells of treasonable words spoken by the porter. After this, with the exception of a significant note in Cromwell's remembrances — 'to speak with the abbot of Tower Hill for Coggeshall for Thomas Seymer'— we hear little more of the abbey until 5 February, 1538, when it was finally surrendered, heavily in debt.

Besides the manors already mentioned those of Lyons (in Great Leighs), Chedingsell and Tutwyke (in Inworth), Holfield Grange (in Coggeshall), and Wiston Hall (in Suffolk) belonged to it at the time of the dissolution. The abbey itself and all its possessions were granted in fee to Sir Thomas Seymour on 23 March 1538, at a rent of £25 2s. 2½d yearly. Part, including the site, was sold back by him to the crown on 12 May 1541. In a survey taken preparatory to this in April it is noted that the church is prostrate and defaced, but that the lodgings and cloister yet remain untouched. The charges on lands included pensions of £5 and upwards to the three last abbots, John Sampford, William Love and Henry More, and four other monks, Thomas Brykelsey, John Roydon, George Cokenell and Thomas Bysshom.



Abbots Of Coggeshall:

William; occurs 1148.

Simon de Toni; the second abbot, occurs 1267, resigned 1168.

Odo, the third abbot; elected 1169, died 1176.

Peter, the fourth abbot; elected 1176, died 1194.

Thomas, the fifth abbot; elected 1194, died 1207.

Ralph, the sixth abbot; elected 1207, resigned 1218.

Benedict, the seventh abbot; elected 1218, died 1223.

Geoffrey, the eighth abbot; elected 1223.

Richard; occurs 1236, 1248.

Thomas Quintyn; occurs 1256, died circa 1262.

William de Tolleshunt; elected circa 1262, occurs 1292.

John; occurs circa 1300.

William; occurs 1310.

Richard de Pantfeld; occurs 1327.

William Joldan; occurs 1341.

Roger Porte; occurs 1352.

Robert; occurs 1364, 1380.

John; occurs 1392, 1406, 1417, 1445.

John Taseler; occurs 1437.

Simon Pakenham; occurs 1448.

William [Draper]; occurs 1457, 1469.

John; occurs 1469, 1472.

Laurence; occurs 1475, 1480.



John; occurs 1480.

William; occurs 1482.

John; occurs 1492.

William Cowpere; occurs 1506.

John; occurs 1507.

William; occurs 1508, 1510.

John Sampford.

William Love; elected 1527, deprived 1536.

Henry More; appointed 1536, the last abbot.

The seal of the abbey (about 1235) is a pointed oval of green wax, 1¾ in. by 1 in., representing an abbot standing with a crozier with the legend:

SIGILL' ABBATIS DE COGGESHLE.

The seal attached to the deed of surrender is of white wax, measuring about 2 in. The Virgin crowned is seated in a canopied niche, with the infant Jesus on her knee; and in a smaller canopied niche on each side is a group of six kneeling monks. In the base, under an arch, is a shield of arms, France and England quartered. The other side is now broken, but according to the Monasticon there was there a shield of arms of the abbey consisting of three cocks with the legend:

SIGIL DE CO



APPENDIX 4
HER SUMMARY SHEET



Site name/Address: Coggeshall Abbey, Abbey Lane, Little Coggeshall, Essex CO6 1RD	
Parish: Coggeshall	District: Braintree
NGR: TQ 960962	Site Code: MAHG / CA
Type of Work: Geophysical survey of suspected area of Abbey church and its location in relation to standing remains.	Site Director/Group: MAHG (Maldon Archaeological & Historical Group)
Date of Work: 20 th May 2006.	Size of Area Investigated: Four 20mx20m grids (approx.. 1,600 m ²)
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: MAHG	Funding source: None
Further Seasons Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos: None
Final Report: Produced by MAHG on 08th January 2010.	
Periods Represented: Medieval c.12.	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four 20m x 20m grids were set out for the purposes of a resistivity survey. • The survey data clearly demonstrated the outline of the Abbey church foundations, together with substantial foundations of other structures / structural elements to the north, north east, south, and south west of the Abbey church. • No intrusive site investigation(s) were undertaken. 	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Bernie Steel, MAHG	Date of Summary: 06.02.2025