

The Hemley Project: Student-Led Archaeology in a Changing Coastal Landscape

What is the Hemley Project?

- ➔ student/early career-led archaeological research project
- ➔ launched by the Durham University Archaeology Society in late 2025
- ➔ investigating High House Farm in Hemley, Suffolk
- ➔ providing a range of accessible experience



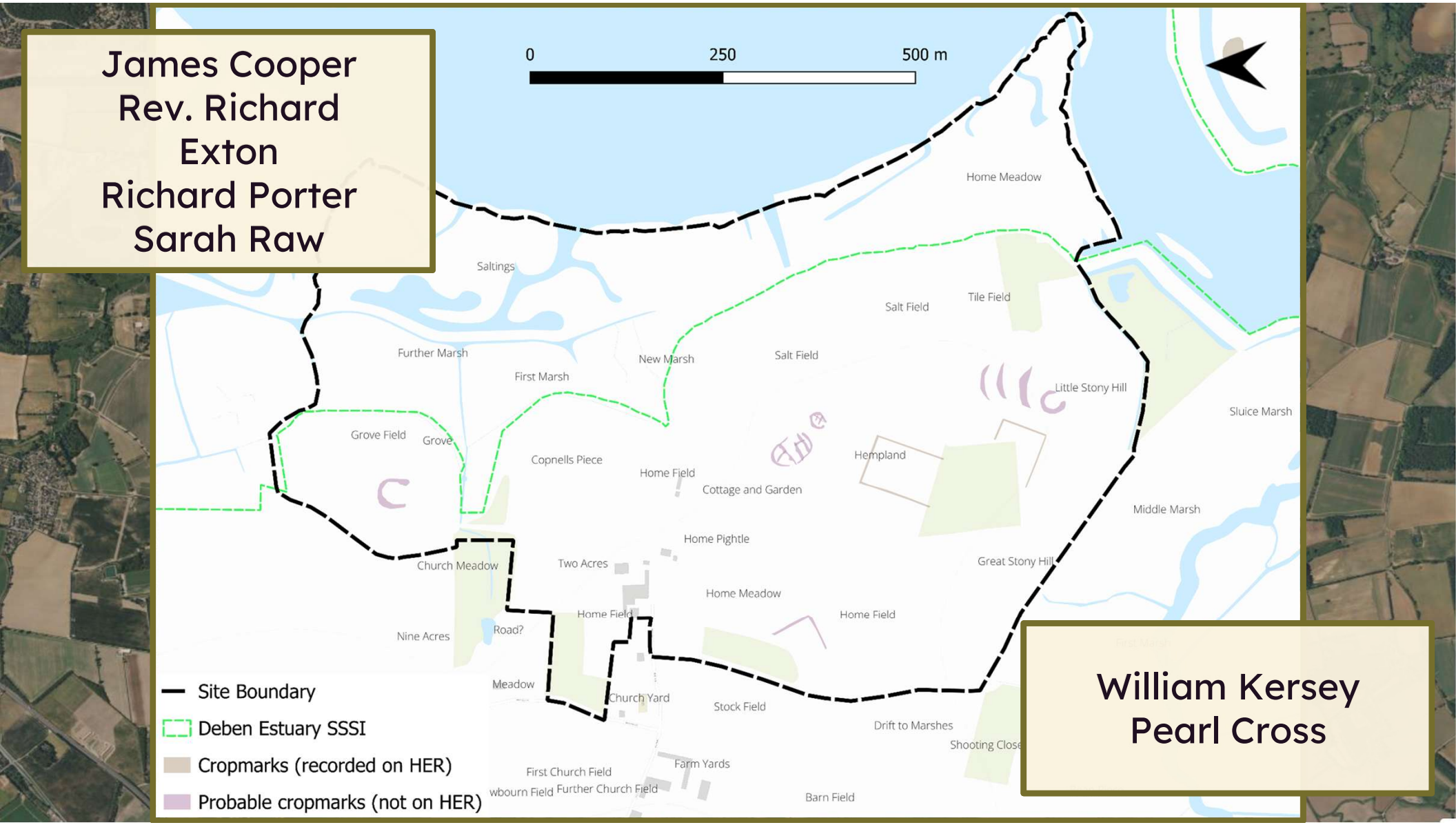




The Archaeological Landscape

- ➔ Late Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic flintwork
- ➔ Moderate late prehistoric activity, with field systems, pits and ring gullies identified in developmental trenching north, south and west of the farm.
- ➔ Deben Valley survey (1987-88): light scatters of late prehistoric lithics alongside Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery
- ➔ Suffolk Intertidal Field Survey (2003): remains of sea walls and wooden posts on the foreshore, potential for more across the saltmarsh
- ➔ Cropmarks: enclosures, trackways, and ring ditches?




James Cooper
Rev. Richard Exton
Richard Porter
Sarah Raw
0
250
500 m
Home Meadow
Saltings
Salt Field
Tile Field
Further Marsh
First Marsh
New Marsh
Salt Field
Little Stony Hill
Sluice Marsh
Grove Field
Grove
Copnells Piece
Home Field
Hempland
Cottage and Garden
Middle Marsh
Home Pightle
Church Meadow
Two Acres
Great Stony Hill
Home Meadow
Home Field
Home Field
Nine Acres
Road?
Meadow
Church Yard
Stock Field
Drift to Marshes
Shooting Close
Farm Yards
First Church Field
wbourn Field
Further Church Field
Barn Field
Site Boundary
Deben Estuary SSSI
Cropmarks (recorded on HER)
Probable cropmarks (not on HER)
William Kersey
Pearl Cross

Surveying The Saltmarsh



Orthomosaic, 25 April 2026 at low tide

Palaeoenvironmental Reconstruction

only ~50-200 years of saltmarsh

=

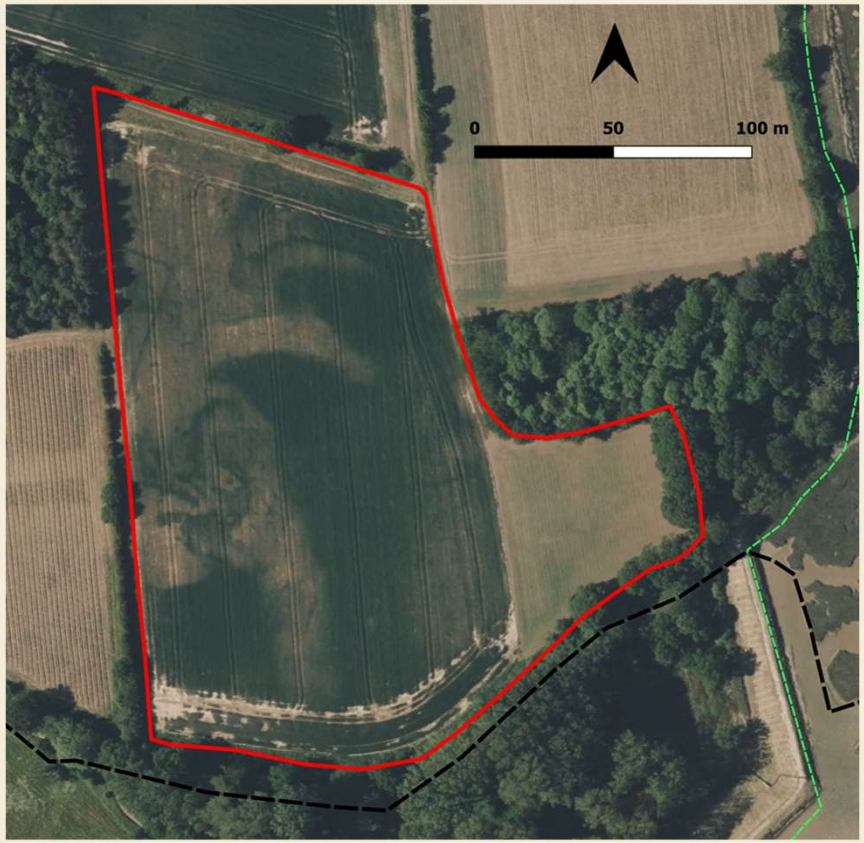
0-13cm
saltmarsh peat



Fieldwork and analysis led by Joshua Harley

Fieldwalking

- 24th-26th April 2026
- Systematic survey of a c.3.1ha field on the south-east of the farm.
- Results:
  - Light scatter of Neolithic / Early Bronze Age flintwork
  - Post-medieval tile and bottle glass
  - Possible Bellarmine (c.1650) and early med pottery
  - Concentration of flints in Area A, ceramics in Area C

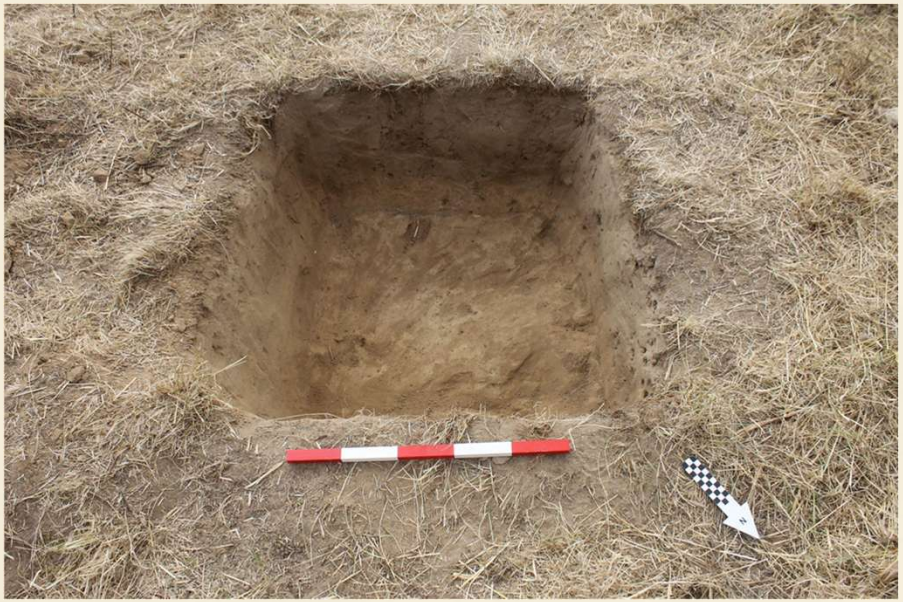



0
50
100 m
Area B
Area A
Area C
Site boundary
HMY 028 - Possible enclosure
Cropmarks not on HER
Worked flint
Probable worked flint
Possible worked flint
Pot/Tile
Glass
Shell


0
50

Test-pitting

- 14th-15th August 2026
- Two test pits (TP1-TP2) opened on the saltmarsh edge; abandoned due to mechanical disturbance.
- TP3 and TP4 excavated to natural geology close to Neolithic axe findspot.
- Finds: struck flint, burnt flint, CBM and occasional ceramics
- Heavy plough disturbance, but flint generally in good condition.

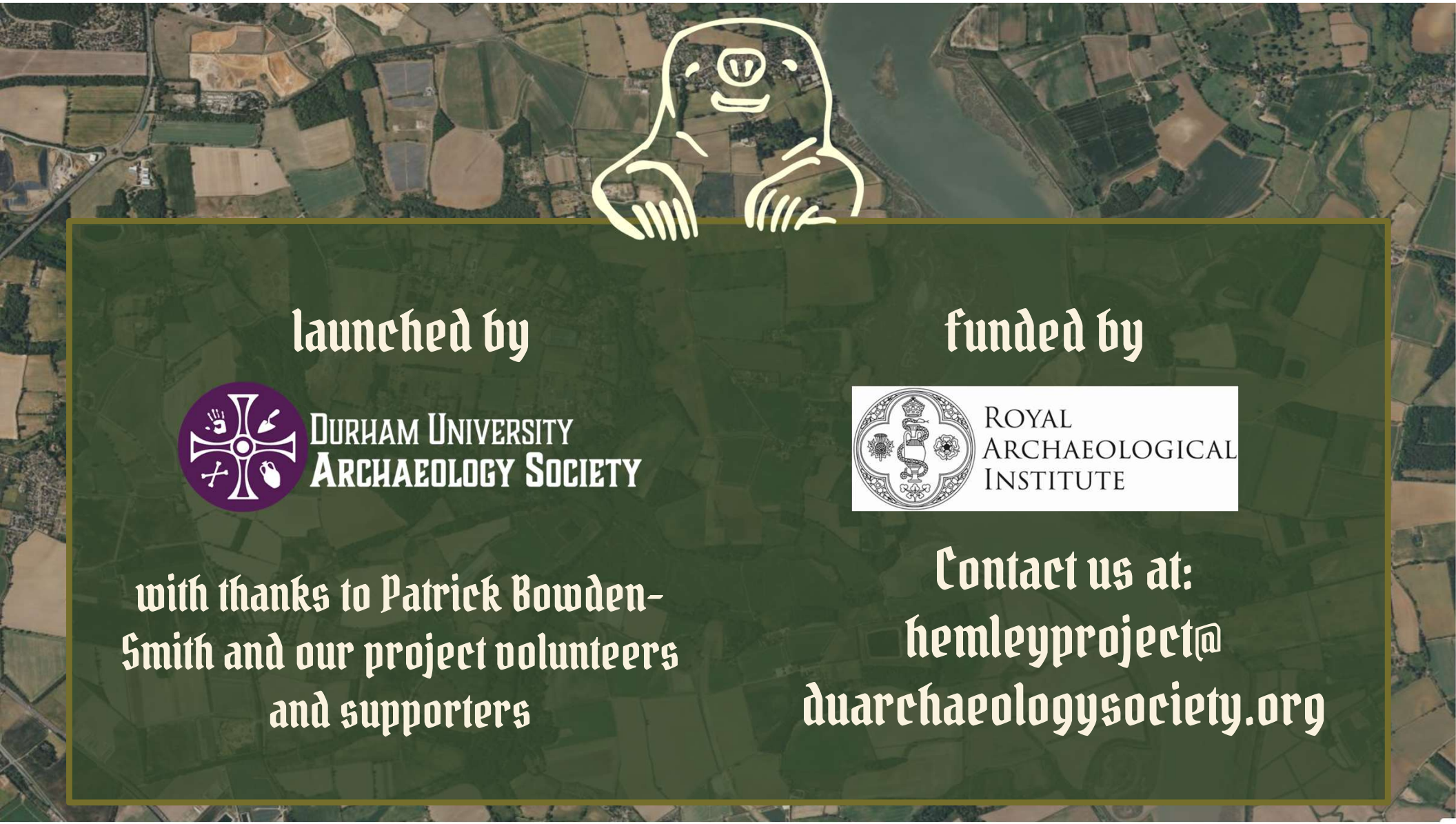


Geophysical survey

Future Plans

- ➔ Repeated drone survey
- ➔ Presentation at the Lithic Studies Society conference, 14th November 2026
- ➔ post-ex analysis and publication of results
- ➔ recruiting, training and handing over to the next project team!
- ➔ development of the next year of research





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