

archenfield archaeology ltd

project ref AA_86_4



High Street, Much Wenlock
post-excavation assessment and up-dated project
design

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2007

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*High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire:
post-excavation assessment and up-dated project design 2007*

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Cover Photograph: architectural stone from Wenlock Priory



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Summary

In July and August 2006 Archenfield Archaeology Ltd carried out excavation and monitoring work on a parcel of land between High Street and St Mary's Lane, Much Wenlock. The area of the site was approximately 5,700 square metres.

The thin, rectangular, north-eastern part of the site appeared to have been a burgage plot fronting onto High Street. The rest of the site was the area bounded by the rear of occupied properties facing both High Street and St Mary's Road. This part of the site was wasteland, covered in self-seeded scrub and small trees and possible grown-out hedges that may have represented former property boundaries.

Previous archaeological work at the site included two phases of evaluation. In 2000 three trenches were excavated in the area behind the occupied plots. No important archaeological features were recorded and it was suggested that if ever there had been, they were probably of low intensity or truncated by later activity (Horton, 2006). Further evaluation trenches excavated in 2006 concentrated on the empty plot that ran back from High Street (Lewis, 2006).

The main area of the present archaeological work was within the High Street plot. The evidence - features such as pits and ditches containing dateable pottery - suggested that it was occupied from the 12th to the 14th centuries. The medieval features also extended to the rear of the occupied plots where back boundary ditches and a malt drying oven were uncovered. The oven was inside the line of the ditches.

The pottery dates suggested a period of abandonment in the later medieval period, possibly due to the effects of the Black Death. Many of the buildings that front High Street date from the 15th century, including the two buildings adjacent to the site. High Street has been suggested as the latest of the medieval suburbs in Much Wenlock.

The foundations of a building were uncovered at the front of the plot and the date of the pottery suggested that it was occupied during the post-medieval period: no medieval pottery was retrieved from contexts within or around the building and cartographic evidence suggests that the building had been demolished before 1882.

Most of the post-medieval features were truncated by modern buildings and services. The Much Wenlock telephone exchange had been located on the site and a large service trench ran north/south through the High Street plot. This service trench truncated a pipe-makers' kiln. Within the collapsed debris of the kiln were hundreds of clay pipe bowls marked by the maker John Roberts. He was known to be making pipes in Much Wenlock between the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

1 Introduction

Site name: Land between High Street and St Mary's Road

Location: Much Wenlock, Shropshire

NGR: SO 6223 9977

Type: excavation and monitoring

Date: July 2006 – January 2007

Location of archive: The Ludlow Research Museum

Planning authority: Bridgnorth District Council

Planning reference: APP/FUL/05/0499

Site Code: AA_86

From July 2006 to January 2007 Archenfield Archaeology Ltd carried out excavation and monitoring work on land between High Street and St Mary's Road, Much Wenlock. The work was commissioned by Bennett Homes Ltd to fulfil a condition attached to the planning consent for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

The excavation was undertaken in accordance with a brief for a programme of archaeological work prepared by Mike Watson, Historic Environment Officer (HEO) for Shropshire County Council. A subsequent detailed project design (Written Scheme of Investigation) was produced by Archenfield Archaeology Ltd (Lewis, 2006a) and subsequently approved by the HEO.

The fieldwork conformed to the standard practice for fieldwork as used by Archenfield Archaeology Ltd; the *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) (2001) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) known as MAP2 (English Heritage, 2006).

Site location

The town of Much Wenlock, Shropshire lies off the A458 between Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth. The town is within a shallow valley at the north-west end of Wenlock Edge.

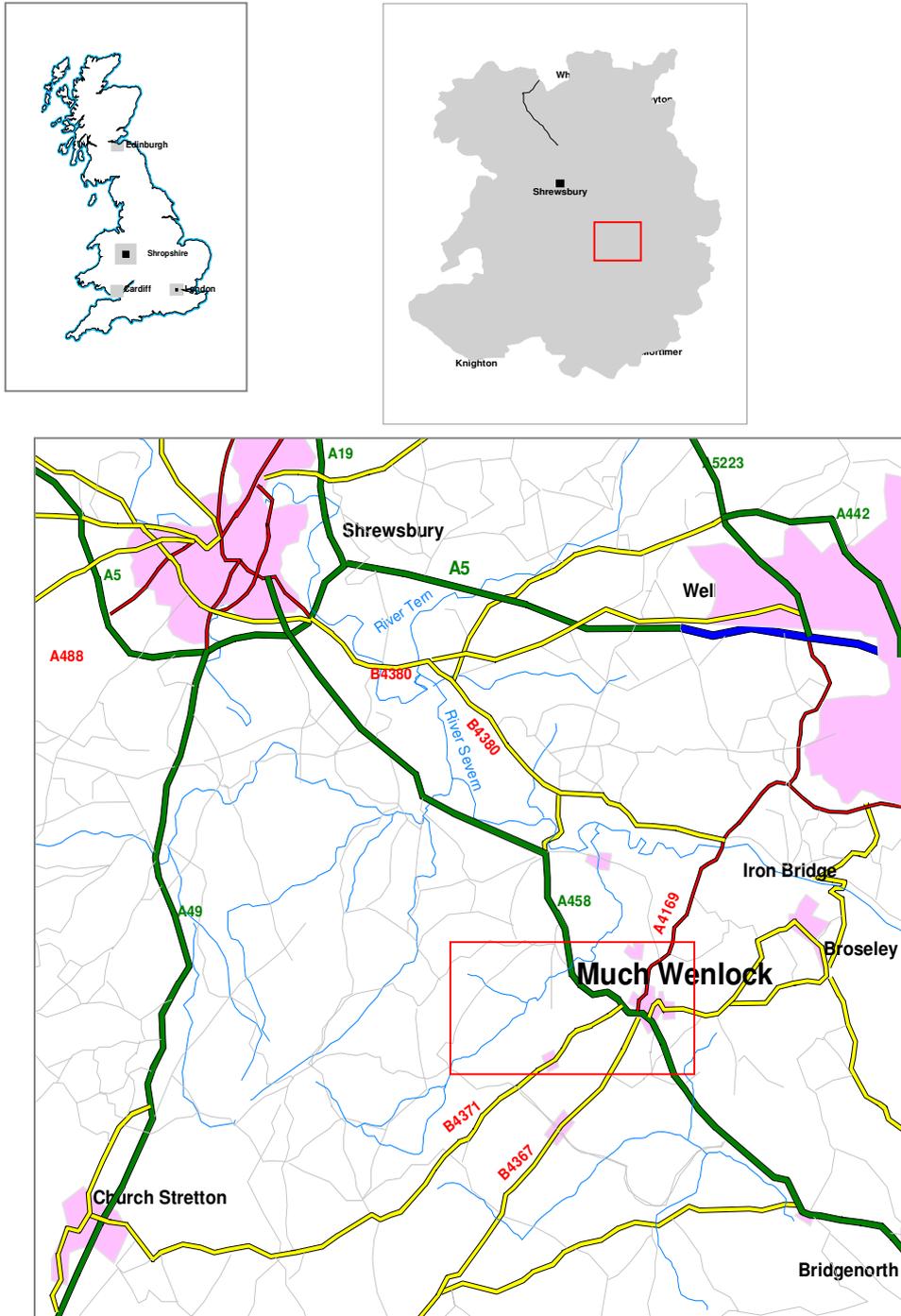


figure 1: Shropshire and Much Wenlock in its geographical setting

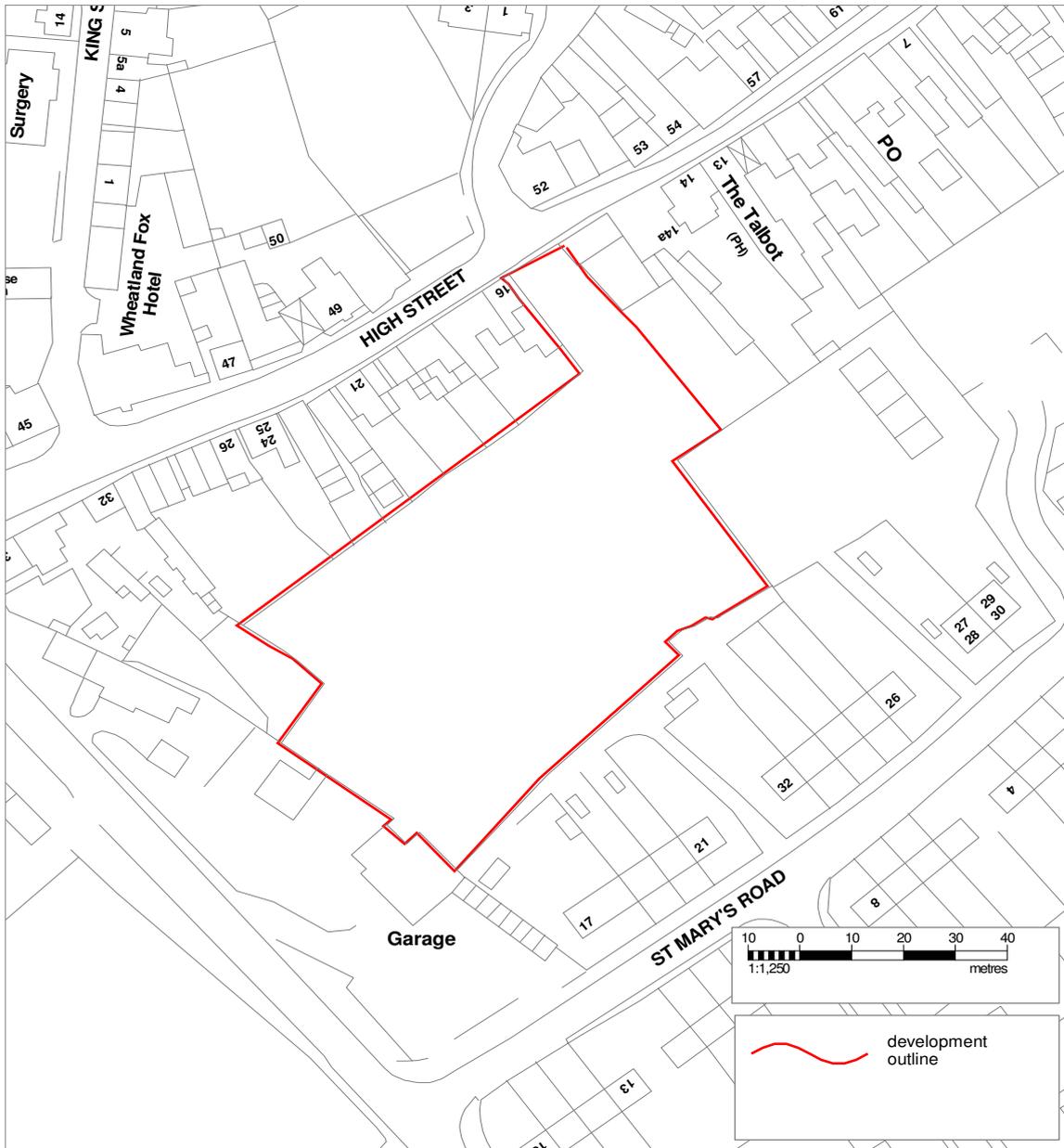


figure 2: the site in Much Wenlock (reproduced under licence ref no_00779800)

The site is located off High Street, where medieval burgrave plots front onto the street. High Street runs north-east past the site to a T-junction with Willmore Street (B4376) and the Town Square. To the west High Street meets a junction between Victoria Road (A458) and Bourton Road (B4378).

The plot that fronts onto High Street has no frontage building. To the south-west of this plot the site extends to the rear of current garden plots of properties which still front onto High Street. St Mary's Road runs parallel with High Street south of the site.

2 Geological, historical and archaeological background

Geological background and land use

Much Wenlock is at a height of c150 metres OD and its main watercourse (formerly known as the 'Shit Brook' runs from Wenlock Edge down High Street and Back Lane, through the Bull Ring and north of the medieval priory to join the River Severn.

The local soils are mainly seasonal waterlogged typical stagno-gley soils of the Clifton association overlying Silurian Lower Ludlow Shales.¹

Historical and archaeological background

The site was first identified as an area for the potential survival of archaeological deposits in one of the early archaeological appraisals of the town (Watson, 1988a). It was topographically analysed by Croom (1991) and surveyed as part of the Central Marshes Historic Town Survey. This established frameworks for the town development with the aim that they would be tested by data from future excavations (Buteux, 1996). The history of the county has been comprehensively covered in Volume 10 of the Victorian County History.²

A list of the archaeological interventions in Much Wenlock is shown in table 13.

Prehistoric

Neolithic and bronze age finds indicate early settlement in the area and the town's holy wells may have stemmed from former pagan water cults. A Romano-British sculpture of a Celtic deity was stored with medieval sculptural fragments at Wenlock Priory.

Roman

Possible Roman building remains have been recorded on the site of the 11th century priory church where a room believed to Romano-British may have been part of a continuous range. The building of a later church over this room may suggest that it was used by early Romano-British Christians within a larger house complex. Burials of late Roman and early medieval period have been identified at 23 Barrow Street. All other Roman remains are of residual finds, including a sherd of Samian ware of first to second century date from the 1993 excavations south of Raven Hotel in Barrow Street (Horton, 1993).

Early medieval

An estate was conveyed to St Mildburg in the late 7th century as a nunnery under the name of Wininicas by Merewald, king of a people known as Westehanorum or Westan Hecanorum. St Milburga, his daughter, later became the Abbess of Wenlock.

1 British Geological Survey 1:50,000, sheet 152

2 Much Wenlock, A History of the County of Shropshire: Volume 10: Munslow Hundred (Part), The Liberty and Borough of Wenlock (1988)

Early medieval building remains have been uncovered at the priory and Holy Trinity Church and the area of this settlement is probably around the Square and Wilmore Street where 3 timber-lined pits cut into blue clay. A sherd of late Stafford ware pottery was retrieved from the site (Watson, 1988b).

Urban components of this period identified by Buteux (1996) included a religious house, a street system and house plots. The western extent of the settlement defined by Buteux ran along this site at its western boundary.

Later medieval

The Cluniac priory, re-built on the site of the early medieval abbey, had established the borough of Wenlock by 1203. There was a weekly market and a fair.

The town was enlarged with the addition of a second market street, High Street, formerly Spittle Street, which was at a right angle from Wilmore and Barrow Street. It is possible that High Street was formed around 1224 when the local market was transferred (Croom, 1991). A later date for this medieval suburb has also been suggested – it may have been the latest of the medieval suburbs of Much Wenlock dated to the 14th to 15th century (Horton, 2006). The buildings along High Street seem to confirm this date with those adjacent to the site dendrochronologically dated: 15 High Street 1407 – 8; numbers 16 – 21, a possible cruck terrace, to the 15th century (Moran, 2003). Most of the buildings along the High Street date from this period.

The High Street suburb is seen as the latest of the medieval developments. Plots along the east side of Shinton Street and plots adjacent to the Bull Ring market place are probably 11th century; while the plots along Barrow Street have been suggested as being laid out in the early 13th century. Excavations along Barrow Street at the Raven Hotel encountered medieval deposits (Horton, 1993) while excavations at the end of Barrow Street at Carver's Cottage, suggests medieval occupation originally extended the entire length of the street but that the southern end came to be abandoned due to the laying out of High Street in the 15th century. It was not reoccupied until the 19th century (Horton, 1994).

A total of 8 interventions have produced evidence of medieval deposits. Excavations have been conducted within the Priory.¹ Salvage recording in the Square recorded medieval surfaces and waterlogged deposits (Watson, 1988b). Medieval or earlier burials were recorded in the rear of properties fronting the Bull Ring and were probably associated with the parish church of Holy Trinity.²

Medieval urban components identified by Buteux included religious houses, a churchyard and market place, a street system, tenement plots and garden plots.

Post-medieval

In the post-medieval period the market areas north and south of Holy Trinity began to be infilled and High Street expanded westwards. Evaluation of the current site dated the street frontage building and outbuildings in the plot to the post-medieval period (Lewis,

1 SA 4693

2 SA 3767 and SA 5016

2006b). Although the pottery evidence suggests a post-medieval date the building may have been contemporary with the two buildings either side.

It may be that around this time the Shit Brook was culverted. By 1656 it was referred to as '*cloaca*' meaning sewer or canal (Mumford, 1977). The culvert was of limestone rubble and built piecemeal between the late 17th and the late 19th centuries (Hannaford, 2000).

Two interventions have recorded the presence of post-medieval deposits. These were in the Priors Chapel (Horton, 1991) and in The Square (Watson, 1988b).

Post-medieval urban components identified by Buteux include the churchyard, market, guildhall, street system, tenement plots and farms and agricultural land.

Modern

The 1882 1st Edition OS plan (figure 4) shows agricultural buildings and a number of possible privies on the site. At the time of the field project the High Street plot was vacant, with demolition of the street frontage building pre-dating 1882.

In the 1950s the Much Wenlock telephone exchange was built in the plot: this was demolished sometime in the 1990s.

At the start of the project, the area to the rear of High Street was largely open abandoned ground covered by brambles, self-seeded shrubs and trees. Within these shrubs and trees were traces of grown-out hedges, slight earthworks and a single stone boundary, probably relating to boundaries shown on the 1882 plan (Horton, 2006).

3 Aims and objectives

The primary aims and objectives of the excavation and monitoring can be summarised as follows:

- to compile a full and detailed record of the site
- to analyse the detailed record and provide an interpretative synthesis
- to disseminate the results of the project and deposit the archive with the designated body / appropriate repository

The site specific research aims were:

- to examine the extent of early medieval occupation and boundaries (the suggested extent of early medieval occupation in this area runs through the development – a possible physical boundary may run through the site])
- to date any evidence of medieval occupation to test the proposed 14th – 15th century date for the layout of the plots
- to identify domestic and industrial activity within the plot
- to re-assess previous archaeological projects and the historical and cartographic records

The research aims were designed to test the archaeological framework for Much Wenlock suggested by Buteux (1996) and Horton (2006).

4 Methodology

The site was initially cleared of vegetation and buildings, which included some old sheds and garages and a rather more substantial stable and pigsties built of brick and stone. The initial site clearance was archaeologically supervised and all exposed features were recorded.

On the High Street burgage plot modern deposits were removed by machine. The deposits exposed were then hand-excavated to natural deposits.

Ground disturbance on the land at the rear was archaeologically monitored. Where appropriate, features were archaeologically excavated.

5 Fieldwork summary

Although modern disturbance across the site was fairly extensive, the survival of archaeological deposits from both the medieval and post-medieval periods was generally good, the majority of which medieval and post-medieval features were recorded during the excavation of the High Street burgage plot and in the intervention excavations to the rear of the plots.

The recorded contexts from the site have been grouped into the following periods:

Phase 1: pre-archaeological deposits

Phase 2: medieval (13th and 14th century)

Phase 3: post-medieval (16th to 18th centuries)

Phase 4: modern (19th and 20th century)

Summaries of the fieldwork results for each phase are given below:

Phase 1: pre-archaeological (natural)

The natural horizons recorded during the excavation were variations of pale orange boulder clay that overlies the Upper Ludlow Shales. The natural clay, together with the overlying deposits, sloped north down towards the High Street frontage and the Shit Brook.

Phase 2: medieval (13th to 14th century)

Medieval features were encountered in the High Street plot and in the land to the rear. In the High Street plot the features were mainly sub-circular pits cut into the natural clay. The contents of these pits suggested rubbish pits rather than cesspits. No features identified as cesspits were found within the High Street plot.

Three shallow ditches were recorded in the plot. Two of the ditches which orientated east/west were relatively small and did not fully extend across the 10 metre width of the site. One of the backfills from ditch 348 contained possible waste from industrial activity – iron slag and hammerscale were present within fill 349.

The third ditch (40) was more substantial but largely truncated by later features. It was also orientated east-west and dating evidence retrieved from its backfill (51) dated to the 13th and 14th century.

More substantial ditches were recorded outside the High Street plot. In the rear area which was monitored a series of east to west orientated ditches were recorded where ground was reduced for house platforms (see Figure 5).

This series of ditches (contexts 518, 526 and 537) possibly represent the back boundary markers of burgage plots. The artefacts retrieved from their backfill suggest a date from the 13th to 14th centuries – earlier than the predicted date for the suburb.

There was evidence for medieval structures. A medieval oven (context 533) was recorded in the land to the rear. It was orientated roughly north to south with the semi-circular shape of the oven to the south. The two linear walls that formed the flue were 2.20 metres long and the diameter of the oven at the base was 0.70 metres and 2.10 metres at the top of the surviving structure. The structure survived to a height of 0.90 metres. The oven was to the north of ditches 518, 526 and 537. If these are interpreted as the rear boundaries to the High Street plots then the oven would have been placed within the burgage plot of one of the current High Street buildings.

Phase 3: post-medieval (16th to 18th century)

There were two areas on site where post-medieval deposits survived – immediately along the street frontage the finds retrieved from house structure 13 dated generally to the 18th century (see figure 7 for details of the building). The second main area of post-medieval deposits survived between the west limit of excavation and a north to south pipe trench that ran the entire length of the burgage plot. The deposits were associated with clay tobacco pipe manufacture. A kiln structure survived with abundant kiln furniture and pipe bowls and stems. The pipe bowls within the kiln were stamped by the maker John Roberts.

Towards the rear of the High Street plot and outside of the truncation caused by the Much Wenlock telephone exchange were the remnants of several stone buildings – possibly associated with some of the auxiliary preparations of clay pipe manufacture. Structure 503 was rectangular and roughly orientated east to west and measured 1.70 metres by 0.70 metres. The floor and walls were of roughly coursed dry stone. Below the floor of the structure was evidence of extreme heat. Clay 499 was baked solid and white in colour. Below this was oxidised bright orange clay, again affected by the extreme heat. Very few finds were retrieved from the excavation of the floors and hence interpretation is difficult. The feature was heavily truncated by the later pipe trench.

On the south-east corner of 503 was a smaller square structure measuring 0.60 by 0.60 metres. From the north-east corner of this structure (510) a stone drain headed south towards the High Street frontage. The backfill of this drain contained artefacts that date it to the 18th century.

Post-medieval features were also recorded during monitoring work in land to the rear of the current back boundaries to the High Street properties.

Phase 4: modern (19th to 20th century)

The modern deposits included buildings that truncated both medieval and post-medieval deposits. The buildings were a stable with a loft, a wainhouse and pig sties. There were mainly burials of farm animals that were presumably kept in the buildings that used to occupy the site. There were also modern rubbish pits.

Other modern features included service trenches. The most substantial was a north/south water pipe trench that ran along the entire length of the High Street burgage plot. The trench truncated post-medieval buildings and the clay pipe kiln.

Evidence for shoemaking industry came from either a pit or ditch that extended beyond the limit of the exaction area. Five shoe lasts were retrieved dating from the 19th and 20th centuries.

6 The excavation record: quantification and potential

The stratigraphic record

Following the completion of site work the primary data capture documents, were used to create a relational database in accordance with standard Archenfield Archaeology practice.

The survival of stratigraphy across the site was generally good. However, truncation by modern buildings and services did affect important archaeological deposits. The majority of the contexts have been assigned to a preliminary phase.

The 594 contexts recorded during excavation and monitoring have been assigned to the following provisional phases:

phase 1: pre-archaeological	2
phase 2: medieval (13th and 14th century):	130
phase 3: post-medieval (16th to 18th centuries):	215
phase 4: modern (19th and 20th century):	192

The stratigraphic sequence established in the site database and matrix will be kept fully up-dated with the integration of the artefactual dating evidence. This will form the main body from which the spatial and temporal framework for the site will be established.

The medieval evidence from Phase 2 is important in terms of the development of the High Street burgage plots. The well-stratified remains from this phase have the potential to identify possible industrial activities related to structures recorded during excavation. Dating material retrieved from the site will be used to test the proposed 15th century date for the development of the High Street burgage plots.

Post-medieval deposits were limited to two main areas – the street frontage property and the area of the clay pipe makers' kiln. The stratigraphic sequence in the area of the street frontage will help to determine the nature of the building that used to occupy the plot and interpretation of the kiln will shed light on the development of clay tobacco pipe production and tie down at least one maker, John Roberts, to the kiln. Their potential to identify other pipe makers to the kiln is possible and the establishment of trade routes for raw material (clay) and the finished product (the pipes). The finding of the kiln will improve the regional and national understanding of clay tobacco pipe production.

The modern remains relate to the latter day use of the site with a shoe-making industry represented by a single cut feature and as a smallholding – the stable and pigsties – which were recently in use.



figure 3: the site shown over the 1840 map of Much Wenlock



figure 4: the site shown over the 1882 1st Edition OS plan



figure 5: phased archaeological features at the site



figure 6: excavated features at the site

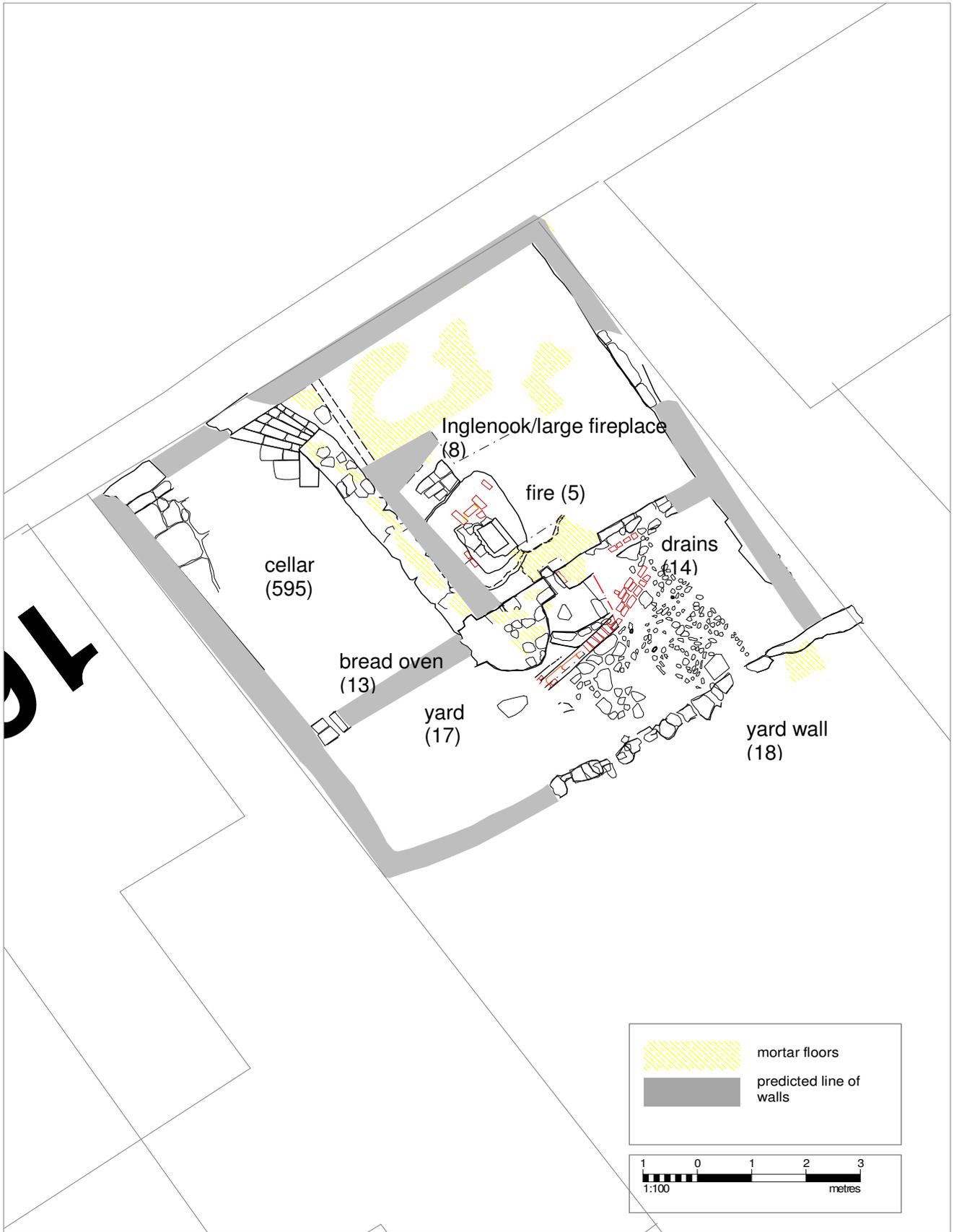


figure 7: building remains along the High Street frontage



figure 8: kiln 414 cut by later water pipe trenches 312 and 338



figure 9: collapsed remains within the kiln



figure 10: the excavation and sampling of the collapsed material – the boards close off the site from High Street



figure 11: the cleaned remains of the kiln (pipe trench 312 cut through its upper brick floor)



figure 12: the lower floor of the kiln



figure 13: the completed excavation of the kiln – the stain in the natural clay was caused by the oxidation of clay during firing



figure 14: the rear of the site with the house to the right fronting onto High Street – monitored with some small scale intervention excavation mainly in the area in the immediate centre of the picture. Several ditches (C) were recorded running parallel with the modern fence line and may represent rear boundary plots. A medieval malt-drying oven (see A and figure 16 below) was also found in this area and post-medieval buildings also stood here (see B and figure 15 below). These were demolished as part of the current development.



figure 15: the demolition of the former farm buildings (see figure 4) was recorded as part of the monitoring – the position is marked A above



figure 16: the malt-drying oven excavated from one of the areas reduced for house platforms – the position is marked B above

7 The artefacts: quantification and potential

Although no prehistoric or Roman features were encountered during the fieldwork, five re-deposited worked flints and two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered across the site. Two of the worked flints were diagnostic and from the mesolithic period. All other finds were from the medieval period onwards.

The proposed 15th century date for the development of the High Street burgage plots and any industry within the burgage plot excavated are significant in any assessment of the artefacts. Another significant group of artefacts are the clay tobacco pipes and related kiln material. The kiln and its associated material are of regional and potentially national importance. The information will add considerably to our understanding of the products of the industry, the way in which the pipe makers were dealing with technical problems relating to kiln design and operation and how this relates to the broader picture of kiln development in the British Isles.

Architectural stone

A total of three architectural stones were recovered from site. All were of sandstone and re-used in later buildings and boundary walls.

The stones (SF 95, context 447; SF 96, context 464 and SF97, context 18) are fragments of architectural elements such as column, window or door arches and a possible window sill with a chamfer. All the stones probably date from between the 13th to 15th centuries.

Although the stones have merit in that full investigation could determine their original architectural function, they were simply re-used as stones in structures and walls on the site and will not aid the interpretation of the function for the structures they were part of.

Apart from cataloguing in the site archive (to include a full photographic record) no further work is recommended.

Pottery and ceramic building material – Alan Jacobs

Aims

The brief required an assessment of the quantity, range and potential of artefactual material from the excavation. The aims of the finds assessment were:

- to identify, sort, spot date, and quantify the pottery and ceramic building material
- to describe the range of artefacts present
- to preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts.

This report covers the pottery and ceramic building material from Roman to modern date.

Methodology

Artefacts

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees, 1992) where parallels or descriptions match, whilst only local fabrics have been assessed. The latter broadly fit the descriptions of the fabrics in the Shrewsbury Abbey report (Bryant, 2002) and these are indicated by the prefix '*Bryant*'. Where more localised variations of the Worcestershire fabric series have been identified, these have been prefixed '*local*'.

Results

Artefactual analysis

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and of their associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

type	material	total	weight
Roman	pottery	4	39
Medieval	pottery	571	5,657
medieval/post-medieval	pottery	2	24
post-medieval	pottery	464	10,249
Modern	pottery	288	9,180

table 1: quantification of the pottery assemblage

Roman

fabric	fabric common name	total	weight
12	Severn Valley ware	2	18
14	fine sandy grey ware	2	21

table 2: quantification of the Roman pottery by fabric

The Roman pottery formed the smallest part of the ceramic assemblage, comprising less than 1% of the assemblage by sherd count and less than 1% by weight. The only form definable consisted of a small everted-rim jar (fabric 14) dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries. Only two sherds of abraded Severn Valley ware (fabric 12) were recovered; these could only give a very general 1st to 4th century date. All of this material was residual in later contexts and clearly present in insufficient quantity for any potential significance to be drawn from its presence.

Medieval

fabric	fabric common name	total	weight
local 55	sandy ware (cooking pot)	130	1,147
local 64.2	sandy white ware	2	19
Bryant 67_79	fine sandy grey ware	274	2,594
99 (buff)	buff ware	3	7
99 (unid)	unusual fabric	8	76
Bryant 3-4	early sandy ware	155	1,786
Bryant 77	sandy ware	1	52

table 3: quantification of the medieval pottery by fabric

The medieval pottery formed the largest part of the ceramic assemblage, comprising 43% of the assemblage by sherd count and 23% by weight. This assemblage has largely been defined through comparison with the fabrics and forms present at Shrewsbury (Bryant, 2002) due entirely to the lack of current ceramic research in the area of Much Wenlock. The assemblage is dominated by a buff-coloured ware, which fits the general description of fabrics 67 to 79 at Shrewsbury. This ware at Much Wenlock is dateable to the 13th –15th centuries from the forms present. No very late medieval forms were present, the latest being a fragment of 14th to 15th century chafing dish and fragments of a dripping dish (Bryant, 2002, figure 58 number 7). Earlier forms predominate (thumbed-based jugs, strap handles from jugs or pitchers) and this would indicate a predominantly 13th – 14th century date range. The second largest fabric group consisted of a lighter buff colour fabric with a distinct light green glaze. This fabric is described in the report as early glazed sandy ware (fabrics 3 and 4; Bryant, 2002, p93), and the forms within this fabric would support the same date range, with examples of decorated rims and body sherds of tripod pitchers with chevron and incised decoration.

A sandy cooking pot fabric very similar to Worcester type (fabric 55) cooking pot fabric was present and date to the 12th – mid 14th century. The presence of possible Worcester-type wares has been remarked upon by Phil Barker (Vince, 1982, p82) at Hen Domen, but may be indistinguishable from local copies being from similar geological deposits. A range of cooking pot rims were present giving the possibility of tightening up date ranges, however, the lack of local pottery reports limits this aspect. A few definably different fabrics are present, again giving a general mid medieval date range.

Post-medieval

fabric	fabric common name	total	weight
75	North Devon gravel tempered ware	20	984
77	Midlands yellow ware	3	4
78	post-medieval red wares	119	2,233
82	tin-glazed ware	4	84
81.7	possibly Staffordshire stoneware	2	25
84	cream ware	25	230
89	agate ware	1	1
91	post-medieval buff wares	136	2,338
local 78	post-medieval red sandy wares	84	2,502
local 91	post-medieval buff wares	56	1,583
108	Midlands purple ware	1	22
100_101	miscellaneous post-medieval and modern wares	3	117

table 4: quantification of the post-medieval pottery by fabric

The post-medieval pottery was nearly as common as the medieval, comprising 35% of the assemblage by sherd count and 41% by weight. The assemblage was dominated by post-medieval red sandy ware (fabric 78), and a locally distinct variation of similar date range (fabric local 78), two distinct glazes being present a brown black streaky glaze and a darker more regular black glaze. Both of these fabrics were present in a wide variety of forms including large storage jars or pancheons and many variations of small hollow ware vessels, cups, bowls and chamber pots. The examples with the brown black streaky glaze would appear date from the 17th to early 18th century, a range supported by the clay pipe dating.

In addition both fabric groups also contain examples of slip-glazed vessels in the form of large pie dishes or bowls, and many of these had piecrust rims and elaborate cream, brown and orange decorative styles. Examples of trail-slipped, combed and feathered decoration were present in the assemblage, dating from the late 17th or 18th century. The second most common fabric group were variations of post-medieval buff wares (fabrics 91 and local 91), the local buff ware being a very distinct white local fabric that can be dateable by form to the late 17th to 18th century, again with examples of pancheons and large storage jars, butter pots and smaller hollow ware vessels, many with a brown speckled decoration dating to the later 18th century. Similar slip-glazed bowls or pie dishes were present in this fabric.

Early post-medieval fabrics are little represented in the site assemblage with relatively few sherds of North Devon gravel tempered ware (fabric 75) dating from the late 16th to early 18th century, and Midlands yellow ware (fabric 77), of 17th century date. Only a single sherd of Midlands purple ware (fabric 108) was present, this highly fired and distinctive fabric dating from the late 16th to 17th centuries. A few sherds of tin glazed ware (fabric 82) were also present, dating from the 17th – 18th century, and mostly in the form of jars or plates. Only a single example of post-medieval stone ware (fabric 81.7) was present in the form of the base of a Staffordshire, again of 17th –18th century date.

A small amount of cream ware (fabric 84) was recovered; this was in the form of small drinking bowls or plates and dates from the late 1750s to around 1795. A single sherd of unusual agate ware (fabric 89) was recovered; this is a very distinct laminated fabric dating from around 1740 to the 1750s.

This is a distinctive assemblage therefore, lacking some fabric types particularly stonewares, with no white salt glazed stoneware being recovered, and only a single sherd of Staffordshire stoneware.

Modern

fabric	fabric common name	total	weight
81.4	miscellaneous late stoneware	62	6,501
83	Porcelain	16	172
85	modern china	214	2,495
101	miscellaneous modern wares	6	138

table 5: quantification of the modern pottery by fabric

The modern pottery comprised 22% by sherd count and 36% by weight. A wide range of table and tea wares was recovered, primarily of modern stone china (fabric 85). Although most of this fabric is only definable from the 19th – 20th centuries, specific examples of Mocha ware and sponged ware dating to the late 18th to early 19th and early to mid 19th century were identifiable. In addition a few fragments of pearl ware were present along with early transfer-pattern decorated plates. By contrast, relatively little porcelain was recovered (fabric 83) in the form of tea wares, small bowls or cups again dating to the 19th –20th centuries. Miscellaneous late stone ware (fabric 81.4) was largely in the form of bottles, including several complete forms that date from the 19th to the first half of the 20th century. A few fragments of modern plant pot (fabric 101) were also recovered; these most likely date from the later 19th – 20th century.

The modern assemblage, therefore, is largely indicative of domestic activity in the 19th – 20th centuries but with a few more unusual examples.

Ceramic building material – Alan Jacobs

material	type	total	weight
Brick	Modern	37	1,635
Brick	post-medieval	17	8,586
Brick	post-medieval to modern	3	11,414
Brick tile	Modern	9	315
Brick?	post-medieval	3	88
ceramic drain	modern?	13	1,298
edger	Modern	1	728
floor tile (glazed)	Medieval	7	887
floor tile	Modern	2	238
fossil	royal coral	1	890

material	type	total	weight
land drain	Modern	3	121
malting tile	post-medieval to modern	1	333
malting tile	post-medieval	1	78
mortar	post-medieval	1	25
Pipe	Modern	5	340
saggars	Modern	1	840
sewer pipe	Modern	2	117
stone	Burnt	1	25
stone	Tile	6	2,891
stone	Worked	1	1,636
Tile	medieval to post-medieval	25	837
Tile	Modern	36	3,196
wall tile	Modern	1	25

table 6: quantification of the ceramic building material

The ceramic building material consisted primarily of fragments of post-medieval to modern brick, dating from the 18th to 20th centuries; although the presence of highly fired fragments of post-medieval brick from the pipe kilns could be skewing the dating. Considerable amounts of red and purple tile were present generally of 10mm, indicating a 19th to 20th century date. Examples of 17th to 18th century bricks were present in the assemblage, although several fragments of two inch thick brick removed from the kiln structures were likely to be re-used and therefore of earlier date. A single fragment of clay pipe saggars was recovered from an unstratified context, again relating to the kiln.

Earlier roof tile fragments were also recovered of a broad 13th to 18th centuries date range, as well as a number of medieval decorated floor tiles dating from the 13th to 16th centuries. In addition, there were fragments of stone tile and an unusual trough or birdbath fragment, probably dating from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Significance

This assemblage is clearly significant in the context of Much Wenlock. There are good dateable contexts and pottery forms and fabrics dateable by association with tobacco pipe fragments from the kilns and phasing data. This is an unusual assemblage from an area where little ceramic work has been undertaken and would clearly benefit from further work in defining both the pottery and tile fabrics. A more in-depth comparison of the groups from the site with Shrewsbury, Haughmond Abbey and Hen Domen could well illuminate the development of pottery in this region through the medieval period. Late medieval activity is little represented in this assemblage, and as such is of significance in understanding this site. Virtually no work has been undertaken on the post-medieval pottery fabrics in this area and as such further analysis of the post-medieval fabrics and forms is essential.

Clay tobacco pipes and associated kiln material – Allan Peacey

The town of Much Wenlock has long been recognised as the focal birthplace of the Broseley clay tobacco pipe industry. This industry grew from simple beginnings in the third decade of the 17th century, survived the nationwide decline of the 18th and became one of the most influential producers of the 19th century finally to succumb in the middle of the 20th century. In the latter part of the 19th century the term '*a Broseley*' had become the sobriquet of quality. The products of this industry are found all over the West Midlands, were shipped down the River Severn to the West Country, Wales and Ireland and also exported to the Americas.

The assemblage under consideration offers the first major data set from Much Wenlock to be studied in recent years. It includes a substantial amount of structural material relating to a pipe makers' kiln, pipes associated with this and a sizeable collection of other pipes produced in the area. One of the defining features of the Broseley industry in the late 17th and early 18th century was the use of full name pipe makers' stamps, usually in a rectangular frame, placed on a distinctive large round heel with a tail tapering along the underside of the stem. At this time a very high percentage of all pipes made in this locality were marked in this way.

The pipes associated with the Much Wenlock kiln are of this type and predominantly the work of one maker, John Roberts. There were however other makers represented in the assemblage and clearly some of these are linked to the production site.

The immediate fore-runner of the type described above, again unique to this production 'school' also features full name stamps on a large round heel. These differ however in that the stamps generally include random mixtures of upper and lower case letters frequently arranged in a circular frame and the pipes are without the tail on the underside of the stem. The collection of un-stratified material includes a number of these types by several different makers. These make a significant contribution to our understanding of the Much Wenlock industry and its place relevant to Broseley in the history and development of pipe making in the region.

It is not only the stamps and pipe form that provide information. The chemical analysis of the manufacturing clay may determine different manufacturing locations or source material locations. A selection of pipes will be sent to the Alan Vince Archaeology Consultancy to determine which clay types were used for this collection.

The kiln

Pipe kilns developed over time from simple cylindrical muffles to highly specialised structures incorporating several distinctive internal and external features. These developments began to take effect in the last years of the 17th century. The speed with which they were introduced varied throughout the regions and is a point of ongoing research. Contemporary excavated material from Benthall Lane, Broseley included sufficient muffle fragments for a model interpretation of form and features and recent work at Pipe Aston has provided detail of substructure and muffle supports together with significant muffle detail.

The material excavated from Much Wenlock (see figures 7 – 12) provides further pieces to the jigsaw. Not only is there surviving kiln substructure but also a considerable amount of dislocated material from the muffle and its supporting elements. It offers for

the first time evidence of internal features to support and separate the pipes within, thus allowing a greater number of pipes to be fired at one go.

A full analysis and report of these findings will add considerably to our understanding of the products of the industry, the way in which the pipe makers were dealing with technical problems relating to kiln design and operation and how this relates to the broader picture of kiln development in the British Isles.

Archaeometallurgical residue – Tim Young

Abstract

This assemblage comprised 16 pieces of archaeometallurgical residue weighing approximately 2kg. The assemblage was probably all derived from ironworking (blacksmithing). The assemblage included three substantially complete smithing hearth cakes (SHCs). These had weights of 164, 670 and 830g. The presence of SHCs with weights over 0.5kg is typical of smithing assemblages of medieval and early post-medieval age.

Several of the pieces in this assemblage, including both the large SHCs, show clear evidence of coal having been used as fuel (in addition to charcoal in some instances). The timing of the adoption of coal as fuel for smithing is variable. After a period of common usage in Roman times, coal becomes employed again in the middle ages, but does not rise to prominence until post-medieval times, with charcoal usage persisting in some areas and for some purposes into the 20th century. The large size of the SHCs is in contrast to modern forge clinkers however, and probably indicates the use of a ceramic tuyère or a blowhole in a clay wall, rather than the iron tuyère which became adopted in the 19th century.

Methods

All the material from the collection was inspected visually (and with a low-powered stereo-microscope where necessary) and recorded to a spreadsheet (the content of which is presented in table 7). As this was only an evaluation the materials were not subjected to any high-magnification optical inspection or to any other form of instrumental analysis (with the exception of representative examples of the crucible sherds). The identifications of materials in this report are therefore necessarily limited and must be regarded as provisional.

Results

The material includes material which can either be assigned to with certainty to an origin in iron-working (blacksmithing). Accordingly it is not anticipated that the material contains inclusions from other processes. The most significant components of the assemblage are the three SHCs. One of these is small (164g) and only yields evidence for charcoal fuel. The other two are large (670g and an interpreted original weight of about 830g). Both of these large cakes and one of the smaller slag fragments showed evidence for coal-shale inclusions, both as well-preserved superficial inclusions, and as pale, partially-melted fragments incorporated within the body of the slag.

The smaller slag fragments were all either certainly or possibly fragments derived from broken SHCS. One piece within the collection was a corroded iron fragment. This piece

was labelled a '*gromp*', a term more properly reserved for the detached pieces of bloom formed in a smelting furnace, rather than iron debris from the smithing process.

Interpretation

The material can all be referred to blacksmithing. The observation of the use of coal as a fuel is important, particularly if the material is actually medieval rather than later. The introduction of coal as a smithing fuel is not well documented. The relatively large size of the SHCs would place them at the upper limit of the size observed in Roman blacksmithing assemblages (eg the largest SHCs at Marsh Leys Farm, Beds, was 824g and at Carmarthen 820g, with average SHC weight of those assemblages 333g and 227g; Young, 2005 and Crew, 2003 respectively). Large collections of medieval blacksmithing residues do, however, include a significant proportion of larger cakes. Average SHC weight in period 8 (11th – 13th century) at Deansway, Worcester was 492g, rising to 499g in period 9 (13th –15th centuries), with maximum SHC weight 1490 and 1800g for the two periods respectively (McDonnell and Swiss, 2004). At Burton, Dasset McDonnell (1992) recorded a maximum SHC site of 1,670g with an average of 550g, for a 14th – 15th century assemblage.

The present material compares favourably with these medieval assemblages. Late post-medieval coal-fired forges tend to produce rather poorly consolidated 'clinker' rather than the dense SHCs of the type seen here. This probably reflects the greater fluxing of the iron-rich debris by molten material derived from the hearth lining and/or the ceramic tuyère in early forges when compared with the modern system employing a cast-iron tuyère. The date of introduction of iron tuyères is not well known, but would appear to be late 18th or 19th century. The small volume of material recovered would indicate smithing nearby, but probably not within the immediate area of the excavated site.

context	weight (g)	notes
53	24	vitrified and vesicular piece with very low density – probably a vitrified stone rather than a slag
	38	small piece of broken vesicular slag, similar to other pieces here, fractured along large coal inclusion
	216	probably deformed small SHC fragment. Textures similar to large lump below
	62	dense vesicular slag, broken from the large SHC below
	662	incomplete SHC, probably less than 20% missing (of which 62g piece above is part). Top with flow lobes with maroon sheen in places. Base rough to microdimpled, strongly convex. Fuel residues include both coal and probable charcoal debris. 85 x 115 x 65mm of which dense bowl is 50mm. Top shows curved smooth margin, 62g fragment attaches to this edge which suggests it was the distal side.
330	82	corroded iron lump
	48	vesicular indet slag fragment
	90	7 fragments of indet vesicular slag
558	164	small SHC, 65 x 70 x 40mm, of which bowl 30mm, mainly flat topped with some marginal lobing, base lumpy but details obscured by accretion, this contains flake and spheroidal hammer scale and charcoal. Slag contains thin stick like charcoal pieces.
	670	probably an essentially complete SHC, 95x105x70mm, slightly irregular biconvex form. Has clear coal residue inclusions (shale), upper surface not well preserved, has small area suggestive of a non-wetted contact (tongs?)

table 7: metalworking residue summary catalogue

Evaluation of potential

The potential for small smithing assemblages to yield useful information on analysis is rather limited, and detailed analysis of such an assemblage would not normally be recommended. However, if the large SHCs can be firmly dated as being medieval, then documentation of their composition would have potential for assisting with understanding of the introduction of coal into the smithy.

Small finds – Lynne Bevan

Introduction

A total of 134 numbered and registered 'small finds' (SFs) were recovered from the site. Leaving aside five worked flints of prehistoric origin, the earliest small finds are medieval in date, though the majority of the assemblage comprises Victorian or modern objects, with many items simply being un-diagnostic. The majority of finds are made of either iron (64 items) or copper alloy (29 items).

The finds are discussed by material below, as the assemblage is too small to analyse and discuss on a functional basis. This assessment was undertaken in cognisance of the procedures of assessment as set out in MAP 2 (English Heritage, 1991), to provide both a quantification of the assemblage and a qualitative overview of its potential for further analysis.

Conservation statement

Most of the non-ferrous artefacts from the site were in a stable condition in contrast to the iron objects which were heavily corroded. In terms of further work, no exploratory conservation work is recommended on the assemblage, but x-raying is recommended for several of the iron objects.

Worked flint

Five items of prehistoric worked flint were recovered, comprising a blade core fragment (SF 83, context 536), a scraper (SF 48, context 999), and three flakes (SF 73, context 534, SF 63, context 347 and SF 84, context 527) the largest of which (SF 73, context 534) has probably been retouched on one side. The condition of the flint was glossy and fresh, with no evidence for edge-damage or abrasion caused by post-depositional factors.

Recommendations

Although removed from their original contexts of use and discard, the flints are interesting in terms of the evidence they provide for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site. The blade core fragment (SF 83, context 536) and possibly also the scraper (SF 48, context 999) are datable to the later mesolithic period, whereas the other flints are less chronologically diagnostic. Nevertheless, further research is recommended on the flints in order to chronologically relate them to other flint assemblages and isolated flint finds from the local area and broader region. As such, full cataloguing and publication, including illustration, of the two datable flints is recommended, together with cataloguing of the three less diagnostic pieces.

Coins and tokens

Four coins and one coin/token were recovered, all of which were in a poor condition, exhibiting a great deal of wear which had resulted in substantial surface loss in most cases. One coin was of silver and the others were all of copper alloys. Two of the coins were broadly identifiable. These were a 15th century silver coin of Edward I (SF 58,

context 339) and an 18th century Georgian halfpenny, the surface of which is very degraded, apart from traces of the figure of Britannia on the reverse (SF36, context 459). An unidentifiable coin or token, the surface of which has been completely obliterated (SF 59, context 452), probably dates to the late 19th century. The other two coins (SF 65, context 544 and SF 64, context 999) both appear to be medieval or early post-medieval in date despite considerable surface loss.

Recommendations

Identification, cataloguing and publication will be required for the coins, including closer identification for those which have been broadly dated, above. If possible, the coin/token with the smoothed, obliterated surface should be identified as either a coin or a token.

Copper alloy objects

Twenty-five small finds of copper alloy were recovered, all of which were in a good, stable condition. Identifiable finds included: a buckle (SF 71, context 544), a thimble (SF 61, context 382), a pin with a coiled wire head (SF 112, context 584), a ring (SF 13, context 182), a brass purse frame of late Victorian or early 20th century date (SF 21, context 192), a decorative knob, probably from furniture (SF 72, context 527), a bell-shaped fitting with an attachment hook (SF 49, context 481), a cufflink with a bone or mother of pearl centre (SF 6, context 54) and a screw head (SF 75, context 527).

Less identifiable finds included a possible candle snuffer with curvilinear decoration (SF 66, context 443), two possible fittings from books (SF 60, context 418 and SF 70, context 544), a buckle fragment (SF 82, context 558), a leaded-ridged object, broken across the shaft (SF 68, context 544), four lengths of wire, two of which were plaited, four perforated oval plate fittings, and three fragments of plate.

Recommendations

Further research, cataloguing and full publication, including illustration, will be required for the more complete and earlier finds. These include the buckle (SF 71, context 544), the thimble (SF 61, context 382) the pin with a coiled wire head (SF 112, context 584), the possible candle snuffer (SF 66, context 443) and the two possible book fittings (SF 60, context 418 and SF 70, context 544). Other finds, such as the purse frame (SF 21, context 192), the possible buckle fragment (SF 82, context 558), the bell-shaped fitting (SF 49, context 481), and the leaded bronze-ridged object (SF 68, context 544), will require identification, cataloguing and a search for dated artefactual parallels.

A summary listing by context will be required for the more recent and/or fragmentary material listed above.

Iron objects

The iron objects were very badly preserved, mainly fragmentary, and with a high incidence of corrosion products which precluded identification in several cases. The majority of identifiable objects date to the 19th century. These include two keys, one of which was a large Victorian door key (SF 109, context 999); and the other of which was larger and more corroded (SF 3, context 54); five shoe lasts (SF 53; SF 57, context 95); part of a watch mechanism (SF 16, context 102); and a pair of scissors (SF 99, context

582). Less well-preserved and identifiable items included a possible latchlifter (SF 12, context 178); two fragments from door latches (SF 2, context 20 and SF 18, context 80); a possible tool with a tapering blade (SF 88, context 544); a possible 'D' shaped buckle (SF 37, context 71); a small iron ring (SF 32, context 999); a small horseshoe-shaped object (SF 41, context 357); part of a key shank or rod (SF 8, context 20); a 20th century industrial fitting comprising a ring with a rod through it (SF 11, context 102); and 25 corroded nails. In addition two fragments of coiled strip; four fragments of iron sheet and 14 corroded unidentifiable lumps were recovered.

Recommendations

Further research and cataloguing will be required for the better-preserved items, including the complete keys and shoe lasts. A summary listing by context will be required for the less identifiable items, several of which, along with the corroded lumps, could be x-rayed if this facility is available. Illustration is not recommended for any of these items.

Lead objects

The most interesting lead small find was a decorated spindle whorl (SF 69, context 544) which probably dates to the medieval period. Other identifiable finds included a musket ball (SF 67, context 559); a possible circular seal (SF 108, context 410); and a fragment of window leading (SF 80, context 559). The remaining lead finds consisted of a perforated rod (SF 93, context 544) and a ridged fragment (SF 79, context 559), (the latter of probable modern date), as well as nine fragments of lead sheet and seven irregular-shaped blobs of manufacturing waste, the latter from contexts 544 and 999.

Recommendations

Identification, cataloguing and full publication, including illustration, will be required for the spindle whorl (SF 69, context 544) and cataloguing and listing of the other lead finds.

Other non-ferrous metals

Finds of non-ferrous metals consisted of a button or stud of a silver-coloured base metal (SF 44, context 313), and some items of EPNS cutlery: two spoons (SF 26 and SF 62, context 999) and a fork (SF 17, context 102) all of which date to the 20th century.

Glass objects

Glass objects comprised a bead of French jet (SF 74, context 559), a type of black glass popular during the late 19th and earlier 20th centuries, and a faceted stone (SF 76, context 999) from a ring of 20th century date.

Ceramic object

One ceramic small find was recovered, a triangular, hard-fired ceramic tile (SF 15, context 119) dating from the 20th century.

Stone objects

Stone objects comprised a possible whetstone (SF 89, context 534), three fragments from slate pencils (SF 86, context 559, SF 14, context 105 and SF 34, context 313), and two fragments of marble (SF 98, context 999) a millstone and a small square shaped stone, probably part of a garden trough or similar garden furniture (SF 113, context 18 and SF 94, context 418).

Recommendations

Further research, cataloguing and illustration will be required only for the quernstone (SF 113, context 18).

Recommendations for further work on miscellaneous materials

A summary catalogue will be required for all finds of miscellaneous materials (other non-ferrous metals, glass, ceramic and stone).

Discussion

The small, core assemblage of c95 recognisable prehistoric, medieval, post-medieval, Victorian and modern artefacts from the Much Wenlock site represents an interesting group of local significance. It is recommended that for publication a full catalogue is produced of the recognisable artefacts from the site, accompanied by a short summary discussion of the material, citing researched parallels [in principal catalogues such as Biddle, 1990; Egan, 1998 and 2005; Egan and Pritchard, 1991; Margeson, 1993; Saunders, 2001, and Saunders and Saunders, 1991 etc] and setting the assemblage in context. No further analysis needs to be undertaken of the remaining items recovered beyond a summary listing by context, as described above under the material headings. The publication report text should be accompanied by a small number of illustrations.

8 The biological record

Animal bone – Ian Baxter

Methodology

This assessment is based on material dating from phases 2 – 4. The bones from 20th century, phase 5, which account for approximately 60% of the total by weight, have been scanned. Approximately one third (34%) of the phase 2 – 4 assemblage was used as the basis for the assessment. Numbers of *countable* bones, ageable mandibles and measurable bones are recorded in Table 1. The counting system is based on a modified version of the system suggested by Davis (1992) and used by Albarella and Davis (1994).

Quantity

The total weight of the hand-collected bone is 25kg.

Preservation

In general bone quality ranges between good and fair.

Variety

The most common domestic mammals dominate all the assemblages. Domestic cattle remains are far more frequent than those of the other species in the medieval deposits of phase 2. Pig fragments are more common than those of sheep/goat. Horse, hare, chicken and goose are also present at low frequency. In phase 3 sheep/goat are twice as frequent as cattle and no pig bones were seen in the sample assessed. Horse, dog (including a partial skeleton), dog or fox and goose are also present. In phase 4 cattle remains are three times as frequent as the other species, which include sheep/oat, pig, horse, dog, cat (including a skeleton) and chicken. The phase 5 material primarily consists of buried domestic livestock including cattle, sheep, pigs, dogs and cats.

Quantity

This is a relatively small assemblage with limited interpretative value. However, it may produce some useful information about site usage in the medieval and earlier post-medieval periods.

Potential

This material can be usefully compared with other assemblages from Much Wenlock and Shropshire in general.

Recommendations

All countable (see above) bone fragments from phases 2 – 4 should be fully recorded. The analysis should primarily focus on the difference between assemblages dating from different periods of occupation at the site.

The recording of the animal bones should only start when final information about residuality can be provided. Final phasing will be essential to undertake the analysis of the data.

period	countable bones							comments
	cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	other	bird	total	fish	
phase 2 medieval assessment	17	+	8	1	1	27	0	includes horse, hare, chicken and goose
phase2 medieval estimated total	51	+	24	3	3	81	0	
phase 3 post- medieval assessment	3	6	0	1	1	11	0	includes horse, dog, dog/fox and goose
phase 3 post- medieval estimated total	9	18	0	3	3	33	0	
phase 4 post- medieval assessment	3	1	1	1	1	7	0	includes horse, dog, cat and chicken
phase 4 post- medieval estimated total	9	3	3	3	3	21	0	
total (assessment)	23	7	9	3	3	45	0	
total (estimated)	69	21	27	9	9	135	0	

table 8: number of 'countable' bones used for assessment and estimates of their total. The estimated total is calculated on the basis of the percentage of bone weight used for assessment: this is 34% of the total

period	ageable mandibles				measurements					
	cattle	sheep/goat	pig	total	cattle	sheep/goat	pig	other	bird	total
phase 2 medieval assessment	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	1	5
phase2 medieval estimated total	0	0	3	3	9	0	3	0	3	15
phase 3 post- medieval assessment	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
phase 3 post- medieval estimated total	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	9
phase 4 post- medieval assessment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
phase 4 post- medieval estimated total	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	6
total (assessment)	0	0	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	10
total (estimated)	0	0	3	3	15	3	3	3	6	30

table 9: number of 'ageable mandibles' with measurements

Environmental remains – Elizabeth Pearson

Summary

Samples from 5 deposits of medieval to post-medieval date were selected for analysis. All samples, except for context 574 were rich in charcoal/clinker, but little environmental evidence was associated with this. Only low levels of fragmented large and small mammal bone, fish and charred cereal grain were noted.

Project parameters

The environmental project conforms to relevant sections of the Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (IFA, 1999a); Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation (IFA, 1999b) and Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (English Heritage, 2002).

Aims

The aims of the assessment were to determine the state of preservation, type, and quantity of environmental remains recovered, from the samples and information provided. This information was to be used to assess the importance of the environmental remains.

Methods

Fieldwork and sampling policy

Samples were taken by the excavator from deposits considered to be of potential for the recovery of environmental remains. A total of two samples were taken during the evaluation and six samples during the excavation, from which a total of five samples were selected for analysis (table 10).

Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation followed by wet sieving using a Siraf tank. The flots were collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammerscale. Where residues were large, a sub-sample of 1 litre was fully sorted. The flots were scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and a seed identification manual (Beijerinck, 1947). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the *New Flora of the British Isles*, 2nd Edition (Stace, 2001).

Results

The results are summarised in tables 10 and 11.

All samples, with the exception of pit fill 574 (which was a relatively small sample), were rich in charcoal or clinker fragments and contained occasional to moderate quantities of fragmented large mammal bone. The latter comprised mostly small unidentifiable fragments. Occasional small mammal and fish bone were also found in some contexts, the former probably representing a 'pit fall' assemblage and the latter deriving from domestic or trade waste.

Seeds of elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) were noted in hearth fill 62 (post-medieval) and layer 421 (medieval) and blackberry/bramble (*Rubus* sect *Glandulosus*) in context 62. These were uncharred, but as they are robust seeds may have survived in well-sealed deposits since the medieval period, or later. Single charred grains of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp free-threshing) and oat (*Avena* sp) were also recovered from context 62.

Low levels of hammerscale were noted in the residues from all contexts (table 11).

Discussion

Only limited environmental evidence was recovered from these samples from which little interpretation can be made. In particular, there is no environmental evidence that obviously relates to the function of the hearths. Elderberry and blackberry are commonly found in medieval samples from urban sites, and where the evidence for cess waste is lacking (as is the case here), they are most likely to derive from vegetation growing in neglected overgrown areas in the vicinity. The low levels of hammerscale noted in all contexts suggest some smithing activity in the locality.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on these samples.

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 5 sample record sheets AS17
- 5 flot record sheets AS21
- 1 box of residues and flots

context	sample	type	description	period	phase	sample volume (L)	volume pro (L)	residue assess	flot assess
033	1a	layer		Modern	18th-20th	20	0	N	N
062	2a	layer	Hearth	post-med		10	10	Y	Y
070	1	layer	charcoal and ash fill associated with oven	post-med		27	27	Y	Y
349	4	layer	Ditch	Medieval		0	0	N	N
398	3	misc	Kiln	Undated		0	0	N	N
421	2	layer		Medieval	13th-14th	10	10	Y	Y
455	5	pit		?post-med		16	16	Y	Y
574	6	misc	pit for kiln or oven	Medieval	13th-14th	3	3	Y	Y

table 10: list of environmental samples from evaluation and excavation

1a & 2a are from evaluation stage

pro = processed

assess = assessed

context	sample	large mammal	small mammal	fish	bird	mollusc	charcoal	charred plant	waterlogged plant	hammer-scale
062	2a	occ		occ				occ	occ	occ
070	1	occ	occ	occ	occ					occ
421	2	occ		occ				occ	occ	occ
455	5	occ-mod	occ			occ				occ
574	6						occ			occ

table 11: summary of environmental remains

occ= occasional; mod = moderate; abt = abundant

Latin name	family	common name	habitat	062	070	421	455	574
charred plant remains								
triticum sp (free-threshing) grain	poaceae	free-threshing wheat	F	+				
cereal sp indet grain	poaceae	Cereal	F			+		
avena sp grain	poaceae	Oat	AF	+				
galium aparine	rubiceae	cleavers_goosefoot	ABC	+				
sambucus nigra	caprifoliaceae	Elderberry	BC	+				
unidentified seed	unidentified			+				
Uncharred plant remains								
sambucus nigra	caprifoliaceae	Elderberry	BC	+		+		
unidentified root fragments	unidentified			++	++		+_++	+_++

table 12: plant remains from selected contexts

Key:

habitat	quantity
A = cultivated ground	+ = 1 - 10
B = disturbed ground	++ = 11- 50
C = woodlands, hedgerows, scrub etc	+++ = 51 - 100
D = grasslands, meadows and heathland	++++ = 101+
E = aquatic wet habitats	
F = cultivar	

9 Storage and curation

The site records and finds (excepting those finds and environmental samples being analysed by specialist) are currently held by Archenfield Archaeology Ltd at their offices at Fownhope, Herefordshire. Subject to agreement of Bennett Homes (the landowner) the archive (including all artefacts) will be deposited with an appropriate repository agreed by the Curator of Archaeology at the Community and Environmental Service of Shropshire County Council.

10 The documentary record

The most prominent name that we can relate to the area excavated is that of the pipe maker John Roberts. In 2004 excavations by Marches Archaeology at the Town Wall Garage site in Shrewsbury recovered a single pipe bowl stamped with by the maker John Roberts. A report was commissioned on the bowl and the historical research suggested that the John Roberts was a Much Wenlock pipe maker. Some of the primary documentary sources that will be consulted for the next stage of work are listed below:

Domesday records the manner of Wenlock as being held by the priory of St Milburga – it had 20 hides and 9½ ploughs. Its recorded population consisted of 9 villeins, 3 radmans, 46 boarders who between them had 17 ploughs, but another 17 would have been possible. There were 15 surfs. Also recorded are 2 mills which served the monks, 1 fishery, 2 hedged enclosures and woodland for fattening 300 pigs. In 1066 the manor had been worth £15 but 20 years later Domesday recorded the value at £12.

1672 – Hanah Mason, widdow had a leasehold tenement in Spittle Street and paid four pence in Hearth Tax for two hearths.¹

1678 – a John Roberts married into a pipe-making family based in Spittle Street and worked as a pipe-maker in the town by this time.²

1704 – John Roberts and two others attested to the legality of the settlement of the Binale family in Much Wenlock.³

c1714 – A survey of this time lists John Roberts as holding one acre in Edgfield for three shillings a year.⁴ With Francis Morrall he held the Tith Corn [Rents] for twenty Pounds a year.⁵ John Roberts held a messuage in Spittle Street, Late Widdow Mason [and late Widdow Hager] containing four Ground Rooms, three Chambers, one Malthouse with two rooms over the same, one Backside & Hemplott. Area: 0a – 0r – 1 perch for seven pounds a year.⁶ There may have been two John Roberts in Much Wenlock at this time. In Wilmore Street a John Roberts held Cleevey's Tenement, also known as the Almoner's House, containing six ground rooms, six chambers, a closet and a garden for one pound ten shillings per year.⁷ This building was probably near the priory gateway, was perhaps once part of the priory complex and it stood at least until 1785.⁸

1715 – John Roberts was assessed at two shillings for Houses & Windows [Tax]. A John Reynolds was assessed at six shillings and may well have been a near neighbour to John Roberts.⁹ This assessment [if it lists people in order of address] suggests Reynolds was five doors down the road from Roberts. He may have been the John Reynolds that held the White Hart and a probable forebear of Edward and Richard Reynolds who later held the Cruck Row.

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- 1 The Shropshire Hearth Tax Roll, 1672
 - 2 David Higgins, 2004, p.2.
 - 3 HRO WBQ1_4_18, Settlement Examination, 1704
 - 4 NLW Wynnstay M2529, Survey, C1714, p.4
 - 5 NLW Wynnstay M2529, Survey, C1714, p.7
 - 6 NLW Wynnstay M2529, Survey, C1714, p.8
 - 7 NLW Wynnstay M2529, Survey, C1714, p.11
 - 8 History of the County of Shropshire, Volume 10, 1998, p.407
 - 9 SRO WBQ2_3_65, Window Tax, 1715

1719 – John Robberts [and John Reynolds] were similarly assessed for windows this year.¹

1721 – A house called Furnice Banck, a cottage, and 57 acres of land and coppice in Madeley were mortgaged to John Roberts of Much Wenlock, pipemaker, mortgage now discharged and paid up²

1726 – John Roberts [and John Raynolds] were similarly assessed for Windows this year.³

c1736 – Mark Horton suggests that the Cruck Row [now 16 – 21 High Street] was lived in by John Roberts, John Reynolds and Thomas Ropier.⁴ A survey of this time, similar to Wynnstay M2530, gives a brief description of each of these threes' accommodations.

They are:

15 – John Roberts. House and garden. 0a – 1r – 10p. 'A poor old timber dwelling with slate cover, now a kitchen, & wheeler's shop in front with a stable and garden at the back' [Richard Reynolds at will] £2,10s,0d per annum.

16 – Joseph Reynolds. House and garden. 0a – 0r – 30p. 'A small stone dwelling with tile and straw cover, in good repair, a kitchen and weaver's shop in front with a brewhouse and garden at the back'. [Richard Reynolds Lease 99 years, granted 1727].

17 – Thomas Ropier. House and garden. 0a – 0r – 30p. 'Two small dwellings with a brewhouse and garden at the back thereof. Timber building, noged and plais[te]r walls with Tile cover in good repair'. [Edward Reynolds at will] £3 per annum.⁵

This could suggest that John Roberts once lived in all or part of a biggish house [Almoner's/Cleevey's] and worked in the Spittle Street premises, which may have been 'downgraded' to workshop status as it had a roof of local Harnage 'slate,' a flaggy calcareous sandstone⁶, unlike some of its neighbours with later tile, or there were two John Roberts around at the same time, such as father and son. There is no mention, however, of 'the Elder' or 'the Younger', so, related people called John Roberts may be the reason.⁷ All three premises [four dwellings] were held by people called Reynolds. The acreage of Roberts's tenement is different in each document – thirty perches in M2530 and one rood, ten perches in L1288. There may well be a relationship between the Wynnstay L1288 survey and Wynnstay M2530, as the numbers of the houses are, in each document, the same. Two other close neighbours, also in the same east to west sequence, with the same numbers as M2530 were:

18 – Gilbert Adlington, house and garden, 0 acre (a) – 1 rod (r) – 0 perches (p). 'A dwelling with a brewhouse and cellar to both, lately built with brick and tile cover'. [Gilbert Adlington at will] £6 *per annum*.

1 SRO WBQ2_3_66, Window Tax, 1719
2 SRO 1987_19_7 – 8, Mortgage & Counterpart, 1721
3 SRO WBQ2_3_67, Window Tax, 1726
4 Mark Horton, 2006, p6
5 NLW Wynnstay L1288, Survey, c1736
6 History of the County of Shropshire, Volume 10, 1998, p406
7 David Higgins, 2004, p2

21 – John Ball, house and garden, 0a – 2r – 0p. ‘A good dwelling with a Kitchen in front, and brewhouse, malthouse and stable backwards and a good garden’. [Edward Pratt lease 99 years]. £10 per annum.

1831 – By this time, adjacent to the north, the Falcon had a theatre, probably to the rear of the inn. A playbill of this time has survived.¹

1841 – There was one shoemaker in Spittle Street, George Moreton, but he occupied the sixth household from the beginning of Spittle Street.² There was a tannery yard on the north side, east end of the street, in the 17th and 18th centuries.³

1847 – The Tithe Apportionment contains only partial information for the site. Although all enclosures have a number on the Tithe Map⁴, not all pieces are described. There are two separate lists in the Apportionment, one of land subject to Tithes and one for land not subject to Tithes, leaving many numbered pieces un-described in either. The site was part of the ancient Manor of Wenlock, the lordship of which passed from Robert Bertie [d 1698] to Thomas Gage who sold it to Sir John Wynn in 1714. It passed to Watkins Williams Wynn in 1719 and then to the Gaskells in 1858.⁵

A large collection of records pertaining to Lord Forester’s estates in Much Wenlock are held at Shropshire Record Office. The Forester Collection [ref 1224] can only be viewed by permission of Lady Forester. Not all Borough of Wenlock records are held at the SRO, some of these are retained in Much Wenlock.

Cartographic sources:

1714 Town Map shows the back plots and houses in pictorial style.⁶ The Talbot Inn has rear access but the Falcon Inn does not, perhaps the Falcon opened or became a coaching inn between 1714 and 1736. A building behind the modern Number 21 possibly corresponds with the one on the 1847 town plan [SRO] and the shape of enclosure Number 692 on the Tithe Map.

1840 Tithe Commissioner’s Map

1847 Town map shows a building at the street frontage and a small building to the rear of the plot

1882 1st Edition OS plan and later editions

1 Wenlock Borough Archives M8_23A [Held in Much Wenlock], Playbill for Falcon, 1831
2 Census return, 1841
3 History of the County of Shropshire, Volume 10, 1998, p431
4 HRO L128, Tithe Map of Much Wenlock Township, 1847
5 History of the County of Shropshire, Volume. 10, 1998, p.417
6 NLW Wynnstay Map 2, 1714

event no (ESA)	event name	dates	NGR
309	1901 excavation by Rev Cranage	01_01_1901 -31_12_1901	SJ 625 000
328	1970 watching brief at Guildhall, Much Wenlock	01_02_1970 - 28_02_1970	SO 6234 9994
313	1977 excavation by Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society	01_10_1977 - 31_10_1977	SO 6070 9822
139	1983 watching brief by Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service	01_01_1983 - 31_12_1983	
3195	1983 watching brief by Shropshire County Council	01_11_1983 - 30_11_1983	SJ 6238 0002
3196	1986 excavation	(01_01_1983 - 31_12_1983	SO 6237 9990
313		01_01_1981 - 31_12_1986	SO 625 000
32	1988 salvage recording in the square by Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service	01_01_1988 - 31_12_1988	
33	1988 by Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service	01_01_1988 - 31_12_1988)	
34	1991 excavation by IGMTt	01_01_1991 - 31_12_1991	
35	Undated excavation by IGMTt		
4693	1991 excavations in Priors Chapel	01_01_1991 - 31_12_1991	
47	1991 excavation by IGMTt	01_01_1991 - 31_12_1991	
5475	1993 evaluation of the Raven Hotel site, Much Wenlock	01_01_1993 - 24_07_1993	SO 6243 9985
4958	1994 evaluation of 5-7 Sheinton Street, Much Wenlock	10_12_1994 - 12_12_1994	SO 6229 0006
4959	1994 evaluation of Carver's Cottage Barrow Street, Much Wenlock	10_01_1994 - 12_01_1994	SO 6261 9970
4963	1994 evaluation Royal Oak carpark, Barrow Street	24_06_1994 - 24_06_1994	SO 6260 9979
4967	1994 evaluation of Barrow Street	01_06_1994 - 31_07_1994	SO 6265 9974
5450	1993 - 1995 archaeological recording during repairs to Holy Trinity Church	01_01_1993 - 31_12_1995	SO 6237 9999
5017	1998 watching brief on new visitor access in NE corner of Wenlock Priory	01_02_1998 - 31_03_1998	SO 6252 0015
5016	1999 watching brief on water mains work in road around N and W sides of monastic precinct	01_03_1999 - 31_03_1999	SO 6244 0010
4887	2000 watching brief on the refurbishment of the town culvert, Much Wenlock by Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service	01_01_2000 - 31_05_2000	SO 6219 9991
4727	2001 WB at 65 High Street, Much Wenlock by Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service	01_09_2001 -31_10_2001	SO 6234 9993
4769	2001 evaluation of land off 43 Barrow Street by Shropshire County Council Archaeological Service	01_07_2001 - 31_07_2001	
5838	2003 inspection of culvert renewal works	26_03_2003 - 26_03_2003	SJ 6237 0006
6021	2005 High Street, Much Wenlock, Archenfield Archaeology Ltd	01_01_2005 - 31_12_2005	SO 62241 99780

table 13 : archaeological interventions in Much Wenlock

11 Overall statement of potential

The above sections have provided detailed assessments of the data retrieved and indicate which data sets require full analysis.

The analytical potential of the data and a study of the documentary evidence (that includes past archaeological projects) will inform the research aims set out in the project design.

These are discussed in the following section.

Updated objectives for analysis stage

The identified research aims in the project design were set to test the framework for research established by Buteux (1996) in the Central Marshes Historic Town Survey and identified in the project design (Lewis, 2006a).

These aims can be seen in section 2 and are discussed below.

Aim 1

- to test the extent of earlier medieval occupation and boundaries (the suggested extent of the early medieval occupation in this area runs through the development – a possible physical boundary may run through the site)

No evidence for pre-Conquest occupation was found within the site and no background artefacts were found re-deposited in later features. As residual prehistoric and Roman artefacts were found, the lack of artefacts of an early medieval date may be significant. Although this is negative evidence it possible suggests that the area of contemporary settlement did not extend this far up High Street.

A re-examination of previous archaeological projects may help to re-define the extent of this occupation.

Aim 2

- to date any medieval occupation to test the proposed 14th – 15th century date for the layout of the High Street plots (SA 5008 – from Buteux 1996)

The amount of pottery and the spot-dates it has provided are sufficient to at least date the medieval activity within the area excavated. The initial spot-dates indicate that the bulk of medieval activity was from the 13th – 14th centuries with a distinct lack of later medieval forms – possibly indicating a period of abandonment. However this is in contrast to the available dates for the timber buildings that front onto High Street. Further research and comparisons with other pottery assemblages can tie down the pottery dates and achieve the aim of testing the date for the layout of the High Street plots.

Aim 3

- to identify domestic and industrial activity associated with the plot

Evidence of both medieval and post-medieval industrial activity was recorded at the site.

Ironworking

A small assemblage of 16 pieces of archaeometallurgical residue were analysed and probably all derive from ironworking or blacksmithing. The assemblage included three almost complete smithing hearth cakes (SHCs) of medieval and early post-medieval age. Small amounts of hammerscale were noted in all of the environmental samples analysed for this report.

Further research into firmly established medieval SHCs may add to the understanding of the introduction of coal into the smithy and give some technical insight to the ironworking at the site (see section 6 – Archaeometallurgical residues).

Agriculture

A medieval malt drying oven was recorded in the land to the rear of the High Street plots. Pottery dates the structure to the 13th or 14th century.

Malt would have been extensively used in the production of ale and several post-medieval brewhouses are recorded as outbuildings of the High Street properties (see section 9).

Clay tobacco pipe production

The largest industrial activity on the site was the post-medieval production of clay tobacco pipes (see section 6 *Clay tobacco pipes and the kiln material*). A kiln was excavated and the collapsed remains of internal kiln fittings were found within. It is possible that clay pipes from other makers found at the site were also fired in the kiln.

There were two other buildings close to the kiln which may have been associated with clay tobacco pipe production. A rectangular building was roughly aligned east-west. At its east end it was butted by a smaller square building that had a stone culvert attached to its north-east corner. The culvert headed north towards the High Street frontage. The exact purpose, function and date of these buildings are unknown. They were of stone and the floor one of building showed signs of intense heat.

Pottery retrieved from the backfill of the culvert dates to the 18th century.

Shoe making

There was one feature dating to probably the 19th to 20th century that contained at least 5 shoe makers' lasts.

The assessment reports concerning the above mentioned industries have proved that the research aim of identifying of industrial activities from the site is possible. More detailed analysis of the relevant stratigraphy and artefacts will further inform the industrial activities of the site.

Comparisons with other assemblages, especially clay pipe assemblages, will help to understand regional and national trade routes for John Roberts and other Much Wenlock pipes.

Aim 4

- to reassess previous archaeological projects and of primary historical and cartographic records

A search of the Shropshire SMR has identified 27 archaeological interventions in Much Wenlock. These have been identified in section 10, and will be reassessed in relation to the current project. The results will be used to test the town model established by Buteux (1996) and test the date for occupation along High Street.

12 Publication

Draft publication synopsis

The following outline publication will be prepared:

Excavations between High Street and St Mary's Road, Much Wenlock, Shropshire, by Daniel Lewis

Introduction	3	pages
Historical and archaeological background	5	
Site narrative	5	
Chronological synthesis (interpretation)	5	
Specialist reports, various	30	
Conclusion	8	
Bibliography	3	

13 Project team

The overall direction of the post excavation and publication programme will be under the management of Daniel Lewis (BA, AIFA) who will co-ordinate the work of the following personnel:

Alan Jacobs	Pottery and CBM
Allan Peacey	Clay Tobacco Pipes
Elizabeth Pearson	Environmental samples
Ian Baxter	Animal bone
Lynne Bevan	Small finds
Nico Vaughan	Small finds illustration
Tim Young	Metal residue

14 Task list

The following task list has been compiled for the completion of the project. All tasks have been allocated to the relevant person and an estimate of time given.

table 13: estimated task list for the next phase of works

task	name	days/quantification
project management		
	Huw Sherlock (AA)	2 days
	Daniel Lewis (AA)	5 days
stratigraphic analysis and report		
	Daniel Lewis (AA)	10 days
GIS illustration		
	Daniel Lewis (AA)	5 days
animal bone		
full recording of all countable animal bone from phases 2-4	Ian Baxter (freelance)	5 days
environmental sampling		
	Elizabeth Pearson (WHEAS)	0 days
clay tobacco pipes and kiln furniture		
full analysis of the entire assemblage	Allan Peacey (freelance)	20 days
chemical analysis of pipe clay and report	Alan Vince for Allan Peacey	1 day
pottery and CBM		
fabric and form analysis of the medieval pottery	Alan Jacobs (WHEAS)	3 days and one day for report
fabric and form analysis of the post-medieval pottery	Alan Jacobs (WHEAS)	3 days and one day for report
fabric analysis of the post-medieval brick and tile	Alan Jacobs (WHEAS)	1 day
full report on brick and tile	Alan Jacobs (WHEAS)	1 day
full report on the overall assemblage	Alan Jacobs (WHEAS)	2 days
pottery illustration	Nico Vaughan (freelance)	40 items – 9 days
small finds		
research, cataloguing and reporting of small finds	Lynne Bevan (freelance)	2.25 days
small finds illustration	Nico Vaughan (freelance)	15 items – 3 days

documentary records and report		5 days
preparation of publication text		
introduction		0.5 days
historical and archaeological background		8 days
site narrative		10 days
illustration (excavation drawings)		5 days
chronological synthesis		5 days
phase plans		5 days
compilation of specialist reports		4 days
finds illustration - arrangement	Nico Vaughan (freelance)	8 days
conclusions		2 days
acknowledgements and bibliography		1 day
edit 1 and proof	Julie Phillips (AA)	1 day
edit 2 and proof	Daniel Lewis and Julie Phillips (AA)	1 day
peer review	Huw Sherlock and PJ Pikes (AA)	1 day
	Nigel Baker?	
final edit	Daniel Lewis and Julie Phillips (AA)	1 day
preparation of publication		
	To be arranged	
print and distribution		
	To be arranged	
archive preparation		
	Jennifer Gwynne	2 days
box rate (£5.00)	C 50 boxes	£250.00

15 Timetable

For a publication of this size and nature Archenfield Archaeology Ltd would aim to have completed a draft publication text within 12 months of the acceptance of the updated project design.

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