



*Staffordshire Hoard
Research Report 24*

A Survey of the Sources for Possible
Contemporary Activity in the Vicinity of
the Hoard Find Spot

Jon Goodwin

2016

This report forms part of
The Staffordshire Hoard: an Anglo-Saxon Treasure
edited by C. Fern, T. Dickinson and L. Webster
and published by the Society of Antiquaries of London

Information about this report

This report was produced in the summer of 2016 as part of Stage 2 of the project. It consists of this document and six appendices available as Excel documents with the following file names.

SHRR24_App1a_SHER.xlsx (the Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Records).

SHRR24_App1b_WWHER.xlsx (the Walsall/Wolverhampton Historic Environment Records).

SHRR24_App1c_PAS.xlsx (the Portable Antiquities Scheme Database records).

SHRR24_App1d_PMAG.xlsx (the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery Modes database records).

SHRR24_App1e_ADS.xlsx (the Archaeological Data Service Archsearch records).

SHRR24_App2_WWHER_later.xlsx (Charter or Domesday records in the the Walsall/Wolverhampton Historic Environment Record).

The work was carried out in the Heritage and Design Department of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and is copyright the Stoke-on-Trent City Council unless otherwise stated.

1.0 Introduction

To facilitate a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding the deposition of the Staffordshire Hoard, a search was undertaken for all archaeological data relating to the period c. AD 550-750 recorded within a 10km radius of the Hoard's findspot. Given the relative scarcity of archaeological evidence for this period,¹ the identification, classification and quantification of sites etc. within the immediate environs of the Hoard represents an important step in establishing a local historical context for the find.

This exercise was carried out intermittently between July and September 2016.

2.0 Methodology

Following discussions with the project management team, it was decided that information would be gathered from a 10km radial search centred on the findspot of the Hoard (NGR SK 06390 06401) (Fig. 1). A smaller search area of 5km radius was discussed, but it was felt that 10km would increase the chances of a positive and meaningful return, whilst maintaining a sufficiently tight geographical focus on the Hoard findspot.

Five primary sources of information for the study area were identified at the outset of the project:

- **Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (SHER)** (search conducted: 07/07/2016)
- **Walsall/ Wolverhampton Historic Environment Record (WWHER)** (search conducted: 21/07/2016)
- **Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PASD)** (search conducted: 05/09/2016; West Midlands Finds Liaison Officer also contacted to ascertain the existence of any finds yet to be added to the online database)
- **The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (PMAG)**, MODES database (PMAG is the designated repository for archaeological material from Staffordshire) (search conducted: 15/07/2016)
- **Archaeological Data Service (Archsearch) (ADS)** (search conducted: 27/07/2016)

To ensure contemporary relevance to the Hoard and its deposition, the search would concentrate on results of mid-sixth to early eighth century date (c. AD 550 – c. 750). Whilst this specific date range would provide the primary search criterion, it was recognised that, to compensate for variations in the recording of historical periods across the selected data repositories, it would also be profitable to employ more general terms such as 'late Roman', 'early-mid Saxon', 'Saxon' and 'early medieval'. In the event, a considerable degree of flexibility was required in order to produce search results relevant to the specified geographical and chronological boundaries (see 3.0 below).

3.0 Search Results

The five data repositories generated a total of 976 results that met both the geographical and temporal search criteria. Table 1 presents a summary of the search results by data source and indicates the search terms used in each instance. The full list of search results is presented in Appendices 1a-1e.

¹ Hooke 2011, 149.

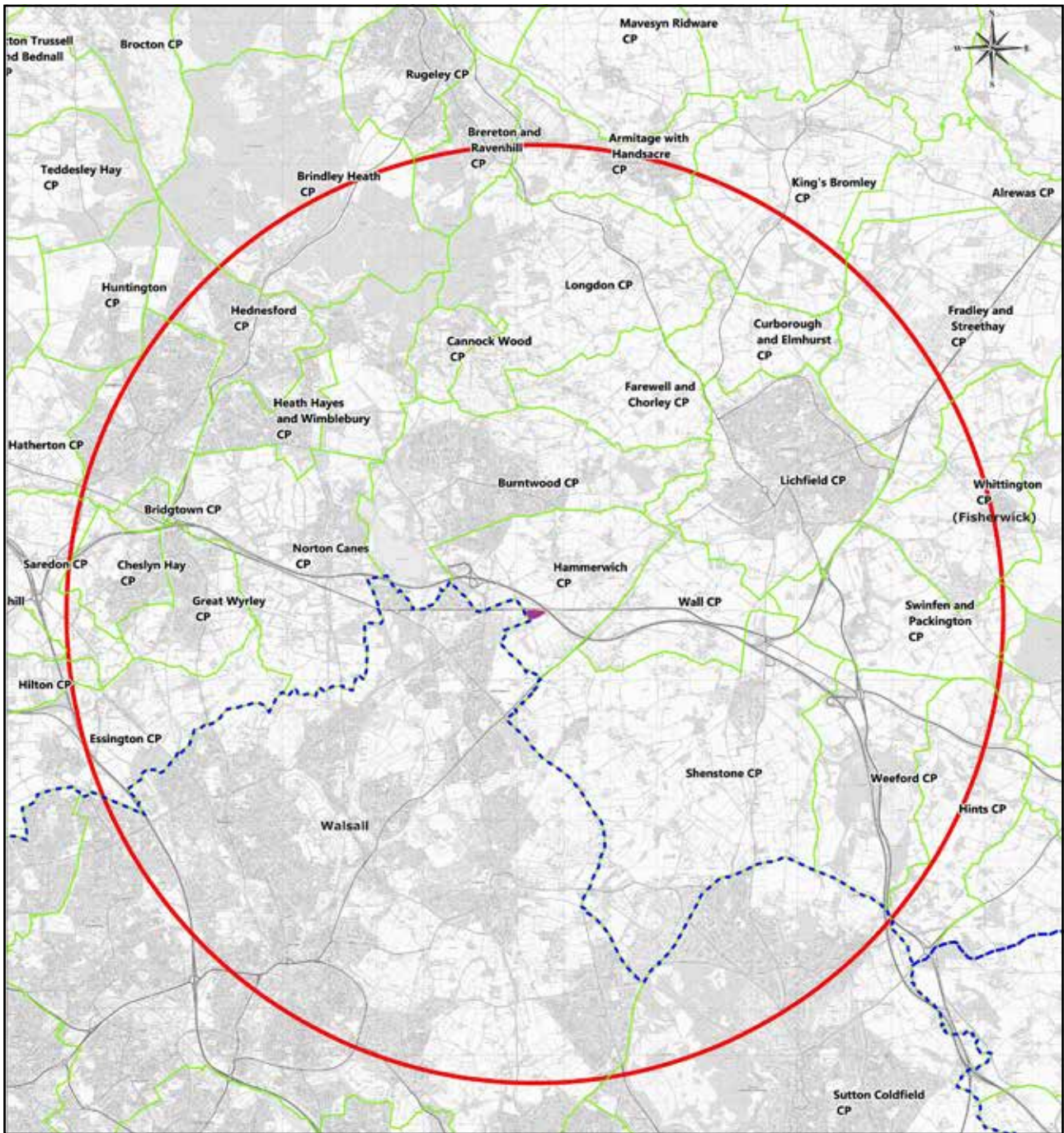


Fig. 1. The survey area shown in red with the parish names. The location of the field in which the hoard was found is shown in purple.

This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Stoke-on-Trent City Council Licence number 100024286 2016.

As anticipated, it was necessary to tailor the temporal search criteria to accord with the terminology employed by each repository. For example, the chronological search terms outlined above (2.0) were submitted to the SHER and WWHER, but neither was able to employ them without modification. SHER utilised the term ‘Saxon’, which covered the period AD410 – 1065, whereas WWHER searched on both ‘Roman’ and ‘Saxon’ in order to capture all relevant data within the specified date range. The PASD’s advanced search facility could accommodate both the specified date range and the term ‘early medieval’, but could not produce results for the 10km radial study area only. Instead, the search was applied to Staffordshire (concentrating on the districts of Lichfield, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire and Tamworth), Walsall Metropolitan District and the City of Wolverhampton, and the results checked manually. A similar methodology was employed for the ADS search. PMAG’s MODES records could not be interrogated effectively using period classifications and also features a limited geographical search capacity. To overcome these problems, a search was undertaken of each individual civil parish within the study area for archaeological finds of all periods, the results of which were then checked manually.

The quality of spatial data varied considerably, with most entries on the SHER, WWHER, PMAG and ADS featuring ten-, eight-, six- or four-figure grid references. The PASD, however, generated only eleven results with a four-figure grid reference, the rest, including all records related to the Staffordshire Hoard, offered only a district and/or parish for the find. Although precise location data for some of these entries, including the Hoard, was provided by other sources (notably SHER and PMAG), a small number of finds were placed within the search area purely on the basis of the parish or district within which they were found.

In an attempt to standardise the results from the selected data sources, the summary provided in Table 1 utilises the broad categories of monument/building, findspot or place name/documentary reference employed by the SHER and WWHER.

Source	Search criteria	Results			Total No. Results
		Mon/Bld	Find Spot	PN/DR	
SHER	<i>Saxon</i> (AD410 - 1065) (10km radial search around NGR SK 06390 06401).	18	17	12	47
WWHER	<i>Roman, Saxon</i> (10km radial search around NGR SK 06390 06401).	11* ¹	-	-	11
PASD	<i>Early medieval; c AD550-750</i> (Staffordshire, District of South Staffordshire, District of Cannock Chase, District of Tamworth, District of Lichfield, City of Wolverhampton, Walsall Met. District).	-	901* ²	-	901
PMAG	All archaeological finds from civil parishes within the study area (Armitage, Brownhills, Burntwood, Cannock Chase, Cannock, Cheslyn Hay, Elmhurst, Gentleshaw, Hammerwich, Handsacre, Hednesford, Hopwas, Lichfield, Littleworth, Longdon, Norton Canes, Shenstone, Wall, Weeford, Whittington).	-	7	-	7
ADS	<i>Early medieval</i> (Staffordshire).	6* ³	4	-	10
					976

TABLE 1: Summary of search results (precise search terms are italicised). Abbreviations: Mon/Bld – monument or building; PN/DR – place name or document.

*¹ Although the WWHER categorises all of the search results as monuments, at least five are actually place names/documentary references. The source classification has, however, been preserved here

*² 875 results relate to the Staffordshire Hoard.

*³ Four of the six results relate to Lichfield Cathedral.

Although the majority of results belong to the mid-sixth to early eighth century (unsurprising given that approximately 90 per cent relate to the Hoard itself), thirty-nine feature wide date ranges that span the period of the Hoard, but are not confined to it. Such results include Offlow Bowl Barrow (SHER PRN 01093), which probably originated in the Bronze Age, but had significance into the late Saxon period. Similarly, the now-destroyed earthwork of Knaves Castle is dated by WWHER (PRN 2664) as early-Neolithic to Medieval (c. 4000BC – AD1539), but was possibly used as a burial mound during the seventh century or, at the very least, would have been a prominent feature in the landscape at the time of the Hoard’s deposition. Watling Street, recorded as of Roman-post-medieval date by the SHER and exclusively Roman on the WWHER was also included within the search results as its likely importance in the Saxon period is noted by Hooke.²

The search results also contain a high degree of duplication, as twenty-one assets are recorded more than once across multiple datasets. The Staffordshire Hoard, for example, accounts for two entries in PMAG’s accession register, features once in the SHER and is the subject of 875 individual records in the PASD. In all likelihood, therefore, the search results represent a total of **seventy four** discrete monuments/ buildings, findspots (including the Hoard) or place names/ documentary references. Table 2 summarises the results with duplications excluded.

Source	Results			Total No. Results
	Mon/ Bld	Find Spot	PN/ DR	
SHER	18	16	12	46
WWHER	10	-	-	10
PASD	-	12	-	12
PMAG	-	2	-	2
ADS	-	3	-	3
Total				73

TABLE 2: Summary of search results omitting the Hoard and duplicate assets.
(Abbreviations as for Table 1)

Notes for Table 2. The numbers from the Portable Antiquities database (PASD), the MODES data from the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (PMAG) and the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) have been adjusted from those given in Table 1 to remove duplicates already recorded within the two HERs. The entry for Watling Street has also been removed from the Walsall/ Wolverhampton HER (WWHER), but retained within the SHER. Both HERs record the road, but it has been counted only once within the quantification of assets within the search area. No column totals have been provided given the different ways in which the two HERs record monuments, place names etc.

² Hooke 2011, 161

Twelve finds discovered in Lichfield District between 2005 and 2011 and recorded on the PASD, do not appear on the SHER.

Finally, five results generated by the WWHER were recorded with date-ranges that commence in the early medieval period (AD410+), but actually relate to charter or Domesday references to late-Saxon activity. Although not included within the main search results, these references could have some value in indicating potential early-mid-Saxon activity and, as such, have been listed in Appendix 2.

Fig. 2 shows the distribution of the sites recorded by the SHER and WWHER. Given the lack of precise location information in the PASD, PMAG and ADS data these has not been plotted on Fig. 2. Instead the reader is referred to Fig. 1 which locates the parishes that data was found in.

Bibliography

Hooke, D 2011. 'The post-Roman and the early medieval periods in the west midlands: a potential archaeological agenda' in S. Watt (ed), *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A framework for research*, 149-172, Oxbow Books, Oxford

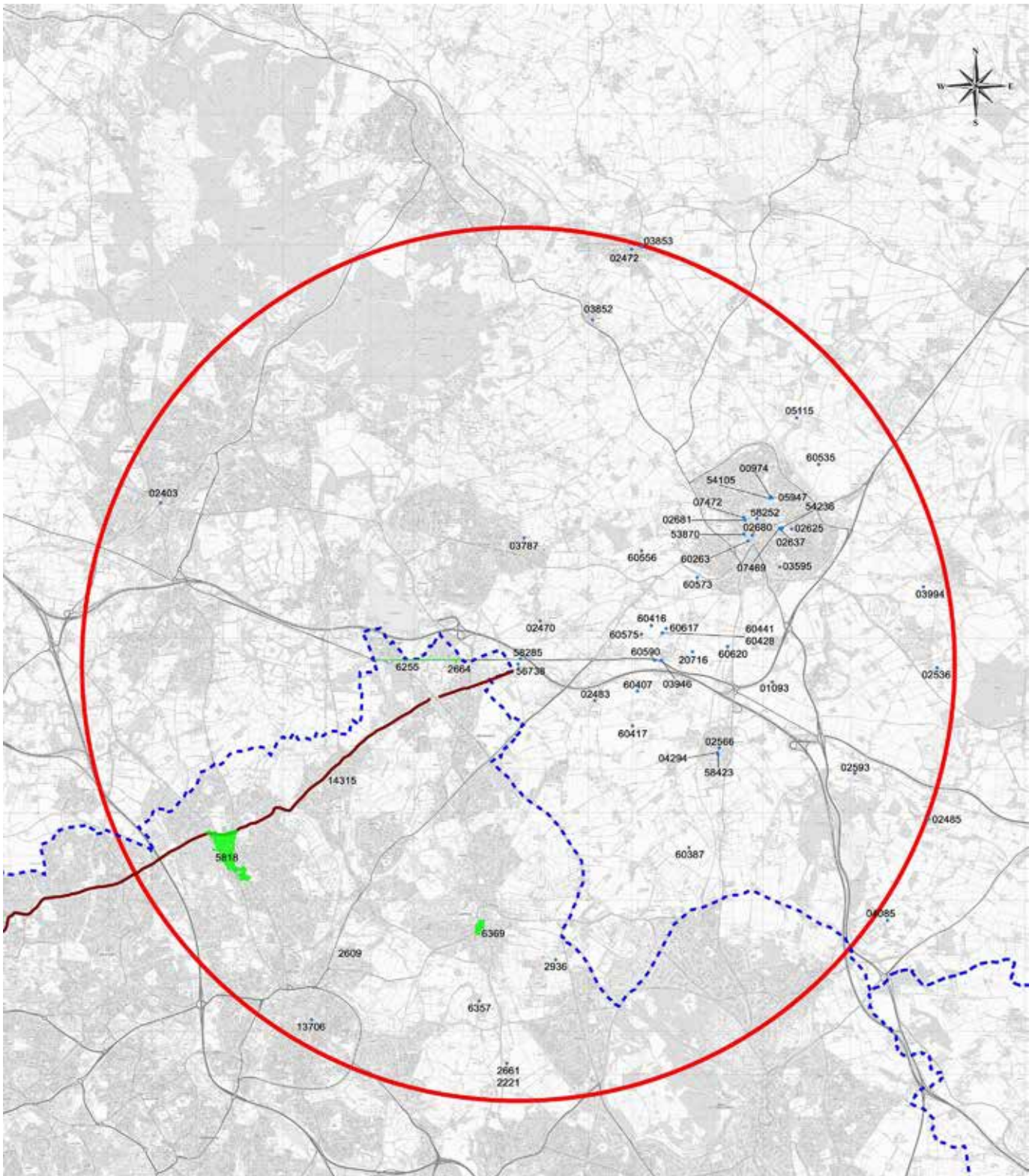


Fig. 2. The survey area showing the reference numbers of the sites located in the HER records. See Appendices 1a and 1b

This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Stoke-on-Trent City Council Licence number 100024286 2016.



Staffordshire Hoard Research Reports

Staffordshire Hoard Research Reports were produced by the project

Contextualising Metal-Detected Discoveries: Staffordshire Anglo-Saxon Hoard

Historic England Project 5892

The Staffordshire Hoard is owned by the Birmingham City Council and the Stoke-on-Trent City Council and cared for on their behalf by Birmingham Museums Trust and The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery.

The Staffordshire Hoard research project was conducted by Barbican Research Associates Ltd and funded by Historic England and the owners.



City of
Stoke-on-Trent



The
POTTERIES
museum
art gallery