

Assessment of the pottery and other finds from Shenley Lodge End (SLE02)

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Finds from seven contexts were submitted for identification and assessment. These finds allow a *terminus post quem* for each context to be established. On this basis, we can say that contexts 5 and 7 are potentially the earliest, containing pottery of 11th to 13th-century date. Context 3 contains only material dating to the medieval period, of which the latest sherd is probably later 13th-century or later in date. Context 8 contains post-medieval material most of which is consistent with a 17th-century date. An unusual lead object, however, may indicate a later date. Finally, contexts 1, 2 and 9 all contain modern material (although context 1 also contains earlier, post-medieval finds).

Description

Animal Bone

Two fragments of animal bone were present, in context 1. They show no signs of working and are probably kitchen refuse.

Ceramic Building Material

A fragment of a brick and a land drain were recovered. Both had a similar fabric, which is micaceous, has a variegated groundmass and abundant rounded micaceous red clay pellet inclusions. Both the exterior and interior of the land drain show signs of being machine-made rather than the potters wheel or a mould. This probably indicates a mid 19th century or later date. Because of the similarity of fabric the brick is likely to be a similar date.

Copper alloy

A copper alloy spigot was recovered from context 2. Such spigots are still used today for extracting beer from a barrel and this example appears to be well-made and in good condition. It is probably therefore of 19th century or later date.

Iron

A complete barrel padlock key was recovered from context 1. Such keys were used from the Viking period onwards and are particularly common in the 11th to 13th centuries. The form is of Ward-Perkins' Type C and is similar to an example from Dyserth Castle, Flintshire (Ward Perkins 1940 #25533, 148, Fig. 45 No.9). However, this item too has very little corrosion and this, together with its context, suggest a post-medieval or early modern date.

An iron (?) rumbler bell from context 3 is complete and bears traces of decoration. X-radiography and a conservation assessment of this item is required before its true significance can be assessed.

However, it is likely to be of medieval date, which is in agreement with the other finds from its archaeological context.

A undatable nail came from context 8. The other objects in this context are of post-medieval date and this probably applies to the nail, which would have been used for minor structural carpentry (ie not major structural timbers, which would have been secured by joinery and trenails).

Lead alloy

Three items of lead, or lead alloy, were recovered from context 8. Two of these were lead shot, both of which had flattened faces, perhaps from being fired at close range at a hard surface. The third object appears to be a tie, as used to secure lead piping, lightning conductors, telephone lines and the like to the exterior or interior of buildings in the 19th century and later (until their replacement by plastic). The object has a flat, square face with a central hole and on the opposite site four, folded-over arms which would have been wrapped around the pipe or wire. The author has never seen such an item in any context earlier than the late 19th century but an earlier date cannot be ruled out.

Post-medieval glassware

A fragment of a tall wine bottle, in a dark green metal, was recovered from context 1. It dates to the mid 18th century or later.

Pottery

Fifteen fragments of pottery were recovered. They range in date from the 11th/13th century to the 19th century.

Sherds of oxidized shell-tempered ware of the type produced at Olney Hyde (but also elsewhere) were recovered from contexts 5 and 7. The overall date range for this type is probably the later 11th to the 13th centuries. A similar sherd from context 3 includes rounded fragments of shelly limestone as is thus probably from a different source since the Olney Hyde ware is made from a shelly facies of the Oxford Clay.

A fragment of a handmade sand-tempered vessel from context 3. This ware probably dates between the 11th and the 13th centuries.

Fragments of Potterspurty ware were found in contexts 3 and 8. This industry had a long life starting in the later 13th century and finishing, perhaps, in the 16th or 17th century.

Post-medieval wares of three fabrics were present. Two of these are probably local and have similarities to the fabric of the ceramic building material. The third is of a type made in the Stock and Harlow regions of Essex alongside Metropolitan slipwares and post-medieval redwares. The vessel is a black-glazed cup or tankard of early to mid 17th-century date.

Sherds of early modern pottery (ie dating between the later 18th and the 20th centuries) were recovered from context 1. They are likely to be of 19th century date and include a miniature porcelain saucer, probably a child's toy.

Tarmac

Two fragments thought to be slag from contexts 1 and 2 are actually bitumen with angular acid igneous rock aggregate. The latter indicates the use of Mountsorrel granodiorite from the Charnwood Forest in northeast Leicestershire. Surfacing with Tarmac dates back to the late 18th century but a more recent date for these pieces is more likely.

Assessment

The Shenley Lodge End finds indicate activity from the medieval period to the 19th or 20th centuries. The character of the finds suggests that in the medieval and post-medieval periods the inhabitants had a relatively comfortable existence and indulged in the keeping of pets (the rumber bell), had goods worth securing (the padlock key) and either hunted or bore arms (the lead shot). In the 19th or early 20th centuries they served their meals from large rectangular serving dishes, drank tea and had children who had manufactured toys.

Appendix. List of Finds

class	Context	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Subfabric	Part	Description
anbn	001	ANBN		2	2		BS	
cbm	001	PMTIL	BRICK	1	1	VARIEGATED;LIGHT ROUNDED CLAY PELLETS;SILTY MICACEOUS FABRIC;SPARSE CALCAREOUS INCLUSIONS	BS	
cbm	009	PMTIL	DRAIN	1	1	VARIEGATED;LIGHT ROUNDED CLAY PELLETS;SILTY MICACEOUS FABRIC;SPARSE CALCAREOUS INCLUSIONS	BS	EXTRUDED;PROBABLY COMPLETE CYLINDER;KT END
copp	002	COPP	SPIGOT	1	1		BS	
iron	001	IRON	KEY	1	1		BS	WELL-PRESERVED BARREL-PADLOCK KEY
iron	003	IRON	BELL	1	1		BS	COMPLETE RUMBLER BELL;DECORATED
iron	008	IRON	NAIL	1	1		BS	
lead	008	LEAD	SHOT	1	1		BS	FLATTENED FACE
lead	008	LEAD	SHOT	1	1		BS	FLATTENED FACE
lead	008	LEAD	OBJECT1	1	1		BS	OBJECT WITH SQUARE FACE WITH CENTRAL HOLE. FOUR PRONGS ON THE BACK ARE FOLDED/WRAPPED/BENT , PRESUMABLY AROUND DECAYED ORGANIC?
pmgl	001	PMGL	TALL BOT	1	1	DK GREEN	BS	
pottery001	PMLOC		PANCH	1	1	MICACEOUS MATRIX;ABUNDANT ROUNDED RED CLAY PELLETS	BS	ABR
pottery001	TPW		RECT DISH	1	1		R	
pottery001	ENPO		MINI DISH	1	1			PROFPLAIN VESSEL;CHILDS TOY?
pottery001	WHITE		DISH	1	1		R	SPONGED
pottery001	NCBW		TPOT	1	1		BS	BROWN GLAZED INT AND EXT

pottery001	PMBL	TANK	1	1	CF STOCK/HARLOW	B	BLACK GL
pottery001	PMLOC	PANCH	1	1	MICACEOUS MATRIX;ABUNDANT ROUNDED RED CLAY PELLETS	BS	ABR
pottery003	EMLOC	JAR	1	1	ABUND RQ >0.5MM;BLACK/REDUCED THROUGHOUT	BS	HANDMADE
pottery003	EMLOC	JAR	1	1	ABUND SHELL AND SHELLY LST >2.0MM	BS	?HANDMADE
pottery003	POTTERSURY?JUG		1	1	GROUNDMASS OF VFINE SA Q;SPARSE RQ, FLINT, RED IRON ORE >2.0MM	BS	STRAP HANDLE;UNGLAZED
pottery005	OLNEY HYDE?	JAR	2	1	ABUNDANT SHELL;NO Q;OXID	BS	
pottery007	OLNEY HYDE?	JAR	1	1	ABUNDANT SHELL;NO Q;OXID	BS	LEACHED
pottery008	POTTERSURY?JAR		1	1		BS	SOOTED EXT
pottery008	PMLOC	JAR	1	1	MICACEOUS MATRIX;ABUNDANT ROUNDED RED CLAY PELLETS	BS	WHEELTHROWN;UNGLAZED;RED SLIPPED EXT?;SOOTED EXT
tarmac001	TARMAC		1	1		BS	FRESH LUMP OF TARMAC WITH MOUNTSORREL GRANODIORITE LUMP
tarmac002	TARMAC		1	1		BS	FRESH LUMP OF TARMAC WITH MOUNTSORREL GRANODIORITE LUMP
