

SMR

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT
CHURCH LANE, MAREHAM LE FEN,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: MLF 98
LCNCC Acc No. 115.98 (
NGR TF 2776,2119

EVENT LI 6242

SOURCE LI 1824
LI 1497

43632 Medieval

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Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Report prepared for Robert Bell & Company
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Summary

- * *An archaeological field evaluation took place on a possible residential development site south of Church Lane, Mareham Le Fen, Lincolnshire. (NGR: TF 2776 2119).*
- * *A single evaluation trench measuring 10m x 1.8m was excavated; with the aim of identifying structural remains of the late Saxon/medieval period.*
- * *The sample excavation exposed a number of pits containing medieval pottery and tile, one possible knife blade and an assemblage of domestic animal bone.*
- * *It is concluded that the trench/site is located within an area of medieval settlement, although the evaluation has not revealed the presence of building remains on the Church Lane frontage*



Fig. 1 1:10,000 site location map section.
(OS copyright reference AL 51521 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

A one day programme of archaeological trial trenching was carried out on land south of Church Lane, Mareham Le Fen, Lincolnshire (Fig 1). The investigation was commissioned by Robert Bell & Company on behalf of their client, and in response to a planning condition issued by East Lindsey District Council.

The results of this report will assist the local planning authority to assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be imposed by a development, and the requirement or non-requirement for further archaeological intervention in advance of, or during, development.

A copy of this report will be deposited at the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and a short text will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, Lincolnshire History and Archaeology; effectively placing the information in the public domain. Reports will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

2.0 Location and description

Mareham Le Fen is a fen-edge settlement approximately 30km south-east of Lincoln. The proposed development site, which measures approximately 25m x 20m, is on the south side of Church Lane. It is defined to the north by Church Lane itself, to the east and west by detached dwellings and to the south by a meadow under proposal for development.

The land, immediately prior to evaluation, was under rough grass and bushes. To the west is a small concrete raft adjacent to the access. Some small, previously felled, trees have created much disturbance to the flat lying topography.

The superficial geology comprises silty sand topsoil with a substantial subsoil accumulation overlying natural orange-yellow sand with chert gravel.

3.0 Archaeological background

The edge of the Lincolnshire silt fens has been a focus of settlement since the prehistoric and Roman periods, although there is limited evidence for these periods in the immediate vicinity of the present site.

Mareham Le Fen was recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and was presumably a settlement of late Saxon origin. In the medieval period, a market and fair was held there, indicating the commercial significance of the settlement at that time.

Archaeological investigations to the east of the village have revealed a 13th century tile kiln, and evidence of a possible manorial site has been located to the north east of the proposed development.

Recent archaeological works to the south west of this site exposed late Saxon / medieval remains; consisting of probable field boundaries and domestic refuse pits containing pottery from the 12th to 15th centuries. These remains were thought to relate to medieval buildings nearer to the church, along the street frontage in Church Lane.

4.0 The objectives of field evaluation

The Assistant County Archaeologist issued a project brief requiring that one archaeological trench should be excavated to determine the character, date, depth, state of preservation, extent and significance of any archaeological deposits within the site. The overall objective of this exercise is to present both the client and the District Council with a set of reliable data from which reasoned planning decisions may be taken regarding future management of the archaeological resource; taking into consideration the needs of the developer. This approach is consistent with the advice set out in 'Archaeology and Planning' *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, 1990.

5.0 Evaluation Methodology

The 10.0m x 1.8m trench was marked-out and a JCB, fitted with a smooth ditching blade, was used to remove all topsoil and overburden to the top of the first significant archaeological level. This was a gradual process involving excavation in spits under constant archaeological supervision. All subsequent excavation was by hand.

Recording was undertaken using standard proforma context record sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations and stratigraphic relationships). All deposits were drawn to scale in both plan and section. Comprehensive photographic recording was undertaken and some prints are reproduced in this report.

Artefacts were coded according to their stratigraphic contexts and were subsequently removed from the site for processing and specialist appraisal, where appropriate.

The excavation was supervised by the writer, assisted by Mr J Albone and Mr J Sneec.

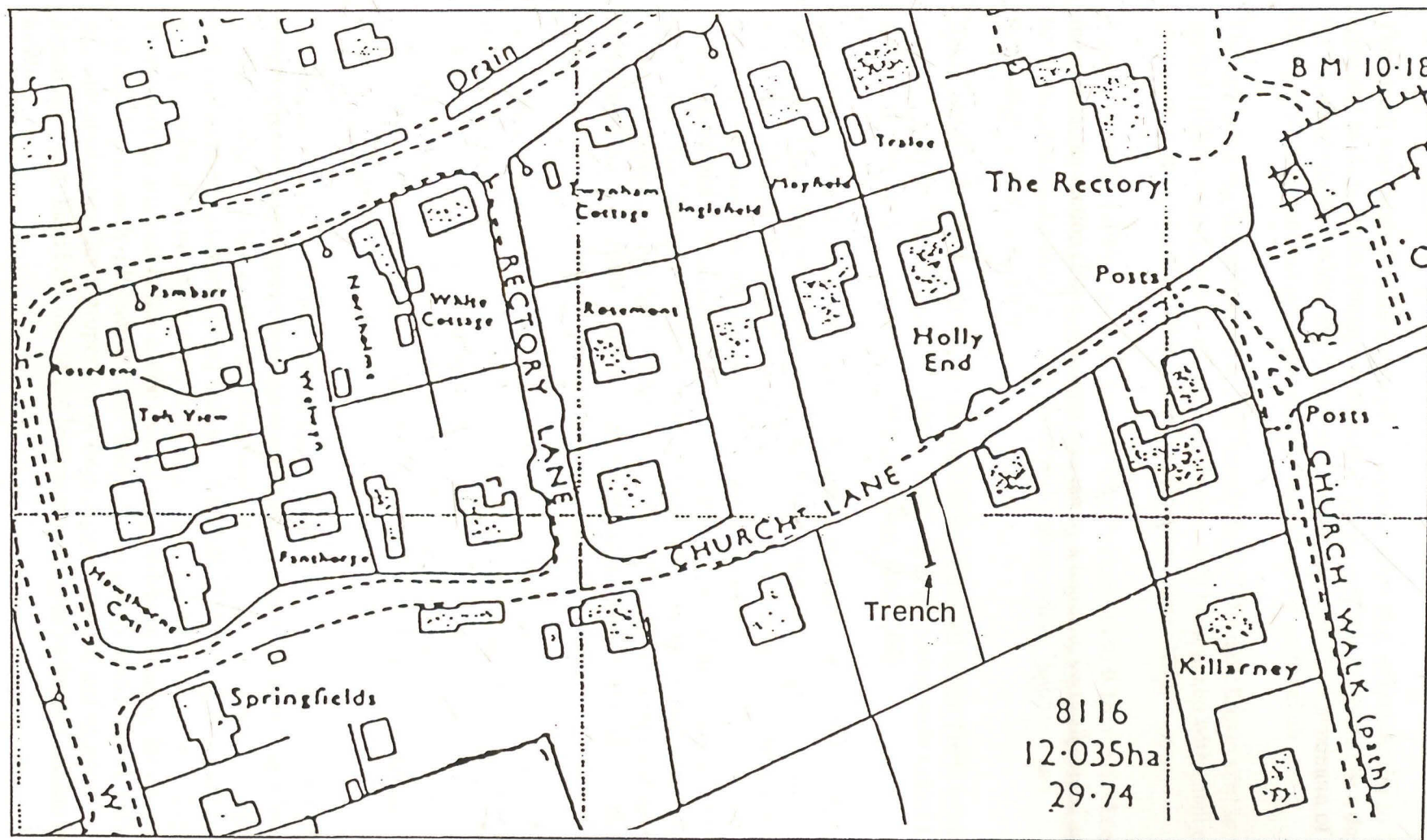
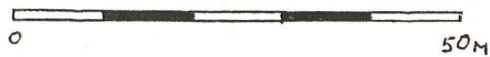


Fig 2 Trench location plan.



6.0 Results (Figs 3 - 6)

The trench was located in the centre of the development plot, perpendicular to Church Lane and as close to the frontage as possible. It was machine excavated to a depth of 0.85m, and features cut into the natural sands were excavated to a maximum of 1.2m below modern ground surface. The trench was orientated north-south.

The sub-strata lay sealed beneath approximately 0.22m of a dark brown silty sand topsoil (100); overlying 0.34m of medium brown sandy loam mixed with small chert gravel and post medieval to 19th century pottery fragments (101).

The above sealed (104), a grey-brown clay-loam horizon up to 0.16m in thickness. In the east-facing section (Fig 4) this layer was cut by a uniform, vertically-sided and flat bottomed rectangular feature, [102], filled with yellow-white, degraded and compacted, chalky clay, (103).

Below (104) was a light yellow-grey sand/silt layer of limited extent (105) (essentially a mix of (104) and the natural sand (106)). Features in the trench were sealed by the above deposits and were cut through orange-yellow sand (106).

Six features were exposed. The first [107] was in the south end of the trench, partially obscured by the south section face. In plan it was sub-circular, approximately 1.2m+ in diameter. The profile (Fig 5) shows steep convex sides dipping south and a depth of 0.66m at the baulk. Its uppermost fill (108) was a dark grey-brown silty clay (0.22m in depth) containing small chalk-flint stones, animal bone and tile fragments (probably products of the Mareham kilns). A notable, thin layer of charcoal delineated the base of this fill, probably a fire debris dump. The primary fill, (109), comprised medium grey-brown silty clay (0.24m in depth) containing small chalk-flint stones, animal bone, and a large quantity of cockle shells.

Adjacent to [107], in the south west corner of the trench, was another shallow, sub-circular, pit-like feature [110]; 1.3m in length, 0.40m wide. It was partially obscured by the south and west sections. In section, it measured 0.30m+ in depth and its fill (111) was cut through by [107]. The fill comprised medium grey clay-sand mixed with small flint inclusions and pottery sherds, animal bone and building materials. The pottery dates within the 13th/14th centuries.

The largest feature, [117], was located approximately 4m from the south end of the trench and continued beyond both the east and west section faces. It was sub-circular, 2.30m in diameter and had a maximum excavated depth of 0.32m. In profile (Fig 6), it had very steep sides cut into (106) and was filled with (118) and (119). (118) was a light grey silty clay containing compacted degraded chalk mixed with chert fragments. There were no artefacts in this context which may have been a 'lining' for the pit. (119) was a dark grey sandy-silt loam 0.35m+ deep. It was poorly consolidated, very mixed, and contained a significant proportion of fresh organic material and charcoal. Some disturbance must have been due to the large tree roots seen in the east section at this location.

Cut through (119) was another sub-circular feature [123], off centre to [117]. The profile of [123] was a shallow concave cut 0.70m long, 0.60m wide, and 0.20m deep. The feature contained a single fill, (120); a light grey-yellow, slightly silty, clay (essentially degraded chalk) mixed with large sub-angular chert up to 0.20m in diameter. There were no archaeological artefacts in this context.

On the west side of the trench, 4m from the south end, was another pit-like feature, [112], most of which was beyond the section face. It was 0.80m in length, 0.13m + wide and its minimum depth was 0.15m. The fill (113) comprised compact dark grey sandy clay with a moderate proportion of chalk fragments, flint and charcoal. Artefactual remains of pottery, shell and tile were recovered; suggesting a date in the 13th/14th century. [112] cut through (119) and into layer (106).

A similar, and stratigraphically later feature [114] was cut through the above. It was steep sided, with a maximum excavated depth of 0.35m. There were two associated fills: the uppermost (115) was a dark grey sandy clay with abundant charcoal and fresh root activity. It contained animal bone and large sub-angular flint fragments, and also a ferrous artefact (awaiting x-ray). The primary fill (116) was a light grey sandy clay with iron mottled staining throughout. There were some chert fragment inclusions, and also some tile fragments but no pottery sherds. This may have been a natural wash deposit.

Approximately 6.5m from the south end of the trench was an east west shallow linear feature [121], 1.8m in length and 1.1m wide. It was cut into [106] to a depth of 0.16m and was filled with (122). The fill was firm, light grey, clay-sand that contained one small fragment of mussel shell.

At the north end of the trench, three patches of degraded chalk clay were planned and investigated. Taking these as a whole, they were all irregular in shape and contained large flint nodules, all apparently cut into (106). After half sectioning these features it is suggested that they represented natural depressions; subsequently infilled with the large flints.

7.0 Summary and Conclusions

The evaluation has produced evidence of medieval occupation in the form of five inter-cutting pits in two groups. It is thought that these are all domestic refuse pits, containing pottery from the 13th to 14th centuries. There were no associated structural remains to be found on the street frontage as anticipated, and it appears that the settlement is still likely to be further to the east. The existence of so many refuse pits from the previous evaluation suggests a sizeable nucleus of occupation, in close proximity to, and possibly beneath, existing buildings.

These features are all overlain by approximately 0.60m of overburden consisting of topsoil and subsoil build up.

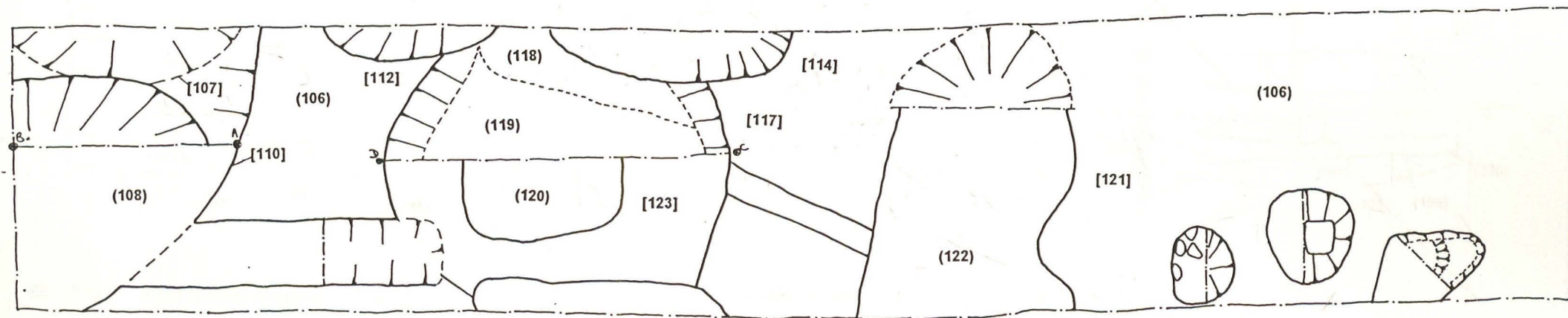


Fig 3 Plan of Trench, Post excavation.

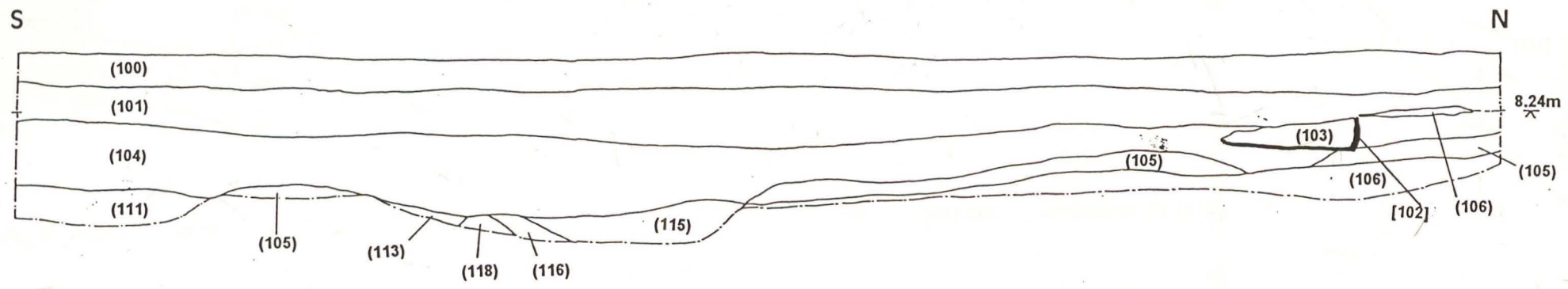


Fig 4 East facing section in Trench.

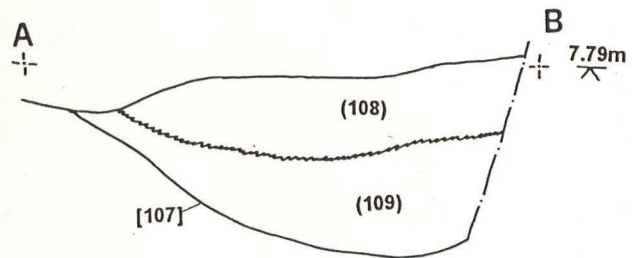


Fig 5 West facing section of Pit [107]. 1:20

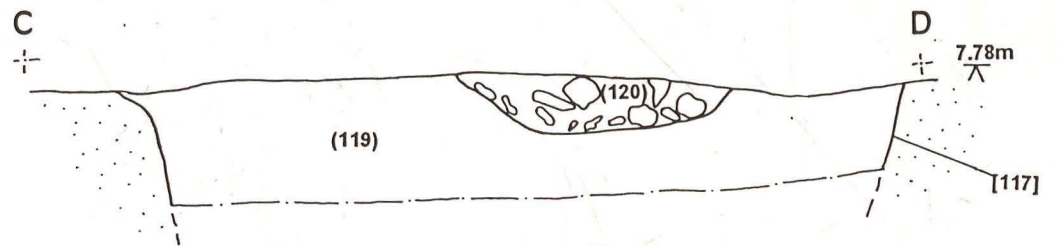


Fig 6 West facing section of Pit [117]. 1:20

8.0 Acknowledgements

PCA would like to thank Robert Bell & Company for commissioning this evaluation on behalf of their client.

9.0 References

- Morris, J (General Editor) 1986 *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire*
- Williams, M 1997 *Land Off Watery Lane, Mareham Le Fen:*
unpublished field evaluation report

10.0 Site archive

Primary records and finds are currently with PCA. A detailed site archive of the paper and physical element is in preparation, and will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln within six months of project completion. A summary of material contained in the archive is as follows:-

- x 23 context record sheets
- x 1:20 Trench plans, x 1 1:20 Section drawing, x 2 1:10 Section drawing
- x 1 colour print film
- x 1 box of artefacts
- interim/developers report
- miscellaneous notes and correspondence.

Following submission, the site archived may be accessed at Lincoln City and County Museum by quoting the global accession number: 115.98

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Colour photographs

11.2 Pottery and tile report/archive by J Young

11.3 Animal bone archive by J Rackham

11.1 Colour photographs



P1. General pre-excitation view, looking north



P2. General post-excitation view, looking south

11.2

Mareham-le-Fen 1998 (MLF98)

Post-Roman pottery archive: ware types by context

By Jane Young

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
104	MEDLOC	1	JAR	THICK INT AND EXT AMBER GLZE; RIM
105	EMLOC	1	JUG	HANDLE; SPL GLZE
105	MEDLOC	1	JAR	BASE; SOOT; NO GLZE; SUB-ROUND QUARTZ
111	MEDLOC	1	JUG	OVERFIRED; EXTERIOR PARTLY BLOW AND SPALLED; ?WASTER
111	TOY	1	BOWL	RIM; PLAIN EVERTED; INT GLZE; ?ID
111	TOY	3	JUG	TRIANGLE RIM; ?ID
111	TOY	1	?	BASE; ?ID
111	TOY	1	?JUG	BS; ?ID
111	MEDLOC	1	BOWL	COULD BE TOY; THICK INT AMBER GLZE
111	MEDLOC	1	JUG/JAR	COULD BE TOY; THICK EXT AMBER GLZE
111	MEDLOC	1	JUG	COULD BE TOY; SPL GREEN GLZE; OVERFIRED; X2
111	MEDLOC	1	?	NO OUTER SURFACE
111	MEDLOC	1	?	THICK UNGLZE HS
111	MEDX	1	JAR	RIM; VERY FINE FABRIC WITH OOLITES
111	MEDLOC	1	?	NO GLAZE
113	MEDLOC	1	JAR/COOK POT	BS; SHELL & QUARTZ FABRIC
116	TOY	1	JUG	SOOT; BS; ?ID; OVERFIRED?
119	MEDLOC	3	DRIPPING PAN	RIM TO BASE; UNDER FIRED INT GLZE. ?SECOND/WASTER
119	MEDLOC	1	JUG	BS; SIM TO TOY
119	MEDLOC	1	JUG/JAR	BS; RIDGED; SIM TO TOY

119	MEDLOC	1	JAR	SOOT; SIM TO TOY; X2
119	MEDLOC	1	JAR	BS; SIM TO TOY

Dates

104	MH5, MH8,-,13-14TH
105	MH3, MH7,-,13-14TH
111	MH5, MH8,-,13-14TH (BRICK IF EARLY INDICATES 14THC)
119	MH4, MH7,-,13-14TH

Group of probably late 13th to 14th century pottery some of which represents possible seconds or waste material. Although some sherds appear to be Toynton-type the firing is not completely similar and these may be products made very locally.

The Tile

Context	Type	Sherds	Comments
111	BRK	1	EARLY?; FINE FABRIC
111	PNR	1	FLAT ROOF; LOCAL; OXID REDUCED CORE; X4
111	PNR	1	FLAT ROOF; LOCAL; OXID
111	PNR	1	FLAT ROOF; LOCAL; EXT PALE SURFACES
113	PNR	1	FLAT ROOF; LOCAL; EXT PALE SURFACE
113	PNR	2	FLAT ROOF; LOCAL; OXID REDUCED CORE; MORTAR
116	PNR	3	FLAT ROOF WITH MORTAR; LOCAL; OXID REDUCED CORE
116	PNR	1	FLAT ROOF; LOCAL; EXT PALE SURFACE

Tiles are all probably products of Mareham kilns and should be kept as there is little of this type which does not come from the kiln site. No direct comparisons of the fabrics have been made but it would be interesting to do this as there is little direct dating evidence for the kiln.

11.3 Animal bone archive by J Rackham

The Environmental Archaeology Consultancy

1

Mareham Le Fen, MLF98
Animal Bone Archive

site	context	species	bone	no.	side	fusion	zone	butch'ry	gnaw'g	tooth-wear	measurement	comment	preservation
MLF98	111	BOS	FEM	1	L		4		DG			JUVENILE-DISTAL SHAFT-PROX CHEWED	5
MLF98	111	BOS	HC	1	R						MAXD-43.3 MIND-28.8	COMPLETE-SMALL-SHORT-SL TWIST	5
MLF98	111	BOS	INN	1	L			CH				ANT ILIUM-CHOPPED LONG AND TRANS-SCAR CHOPPED OFF	5
MLF98	111	BOS	LM	1	F							BROKEN FRAG	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MAN	1	L		4					FRAG CORONOID	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MAN	1	L		13			ABCD		ANT FRAG WITH ALL INC AND CAN-SL WEAR-LOOSE	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MAN	1	R		68					ANGLE	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MAN	1	L							POST VENTRAL FRAG HORI RAMUS	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MAN	1	R		7			K		ROOTS OF M3	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MAN	1	R					FGH11		ANT FRAG TOOTH ROW	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MTC	1	R		12				Bp-62.6 Dp-36.8	PROX END	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MTT	1	L	DF	345				Bd-55.3 Bd-30.7	DISTAL THIRD	5
MLF98	111	BOS	MTT	1	R							ANT FRAG PROX END-SPLIT MEDIO-LAT	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	L							ZYGOMATIC FRAG	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	F							TEMPORAL FRAG	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	R							ANT MAXILLA FRAG	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	F							POST VENTRAL FRAG-BASIOCCIPITAL	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	R							ZYGOMATIC	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	L							POST ZYGOMATIC FRAG	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	R							PREMAXILLA	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	L		9			H12115 J15		MAX FRAG-M3 UP BUT LOST	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	L		9			H10115 J12		MAX FRAG-M3 UP BUT LOST	5
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	L		8					TEMPORAL FACET	5

site	context	species	bone	no.	side	fusion	zone	butch'ry	gnaw'g	tooth-wear	measurement	comment	preservation
MLF98	111	BOS	SKL	1	R					J15K14		POST MAXILLA	5
MLF98	111	CSZ	LBF	2	F							SHAFT FRAG	5
MLF98	111	CSZ	MAN	1	F			B				CALCINED FRAG AND VENTRAL HORI RAMIS	5
MLF98	111	CSZ	RIB	4	F							SHAFT FRAG	5
MLF98	111	CSZ	SKL	3	F							INDET FRAG	5
MLF98	111	DUCK	MTC	1	R						GL-57.4	DOMESTIC ? DUCK	5
MLF98	111	DUCK	MTC	1	R							DISTAL END BROKEN-DOMESTIC? DUCK	5
MLF98	111	EQU	MAN	1	L					fgh15		HORI RAMUS-5 FRAGS-JUVENILE-DECIDUOUS TEETH	5
MLF98	111	EQU	RIB	2	F							SHAFT FRAGS	5
MLF98	111	EQU	RIB	1	L	PF	1					PROX END-2 PIECES	5
MLF98	111	EQU	TRV	1	W	CFAF	12345	CH				COMPLETE-CHOPPED THRU POST CENTRUM	5
MLF98	111	OVCA	SCP	1	L		35					DISTAL FRAG BLADE WITH DISTAL SPINE	5
MLF98	116	BOS	MAN	1	L		123			FG11		ANT PART OF HORI RAMUS	5
MLF98	116	BOS	MAN	1	F		4	B				CALCINED FRAG CORONOID	5
MLF98	116	BOS	PH3	1	L		1					COMPLETE	5
MLF98	116	BOS	SKL	1	F							ANT FRAG NASAL	5
MLF98	116	BOS	SKL	1	R					J14K11		POST FRAG MAX WITH M2 AND M3	5
MLF98	116	CSZ	RIB	2	F							SHAFT FRAG	5
MLF98	116	CSZ	UNI	1	F							INDET	5
MLF98	116	CSZ	UNI	1	F							INDET-POSS INN FRAG	5
MLF98	119	BOS	MTT	1	F							PROX POST FRAG	5
MLF98	119	GOOS	RAD	1	F							MIDSHAFT	5
MLF98	119	OVCA	MTT	1	F							MIDSHAFT	5
MLF98	119	SSZ	RIB	1	R	PN						PROX SHAFT	5
MLF98	119	SSZ	UNI	1	F				DG			INDET-POROUS-CHEWED	5