

KIDPILE MOATED SITE, IN THE MEDIEVAL MANOR OF SOLIHULL

(West Midlands, formerly Warwickshire)
SP 097744. Solihull HER (MS 13108)

Directed by MALCOLM COOK¹

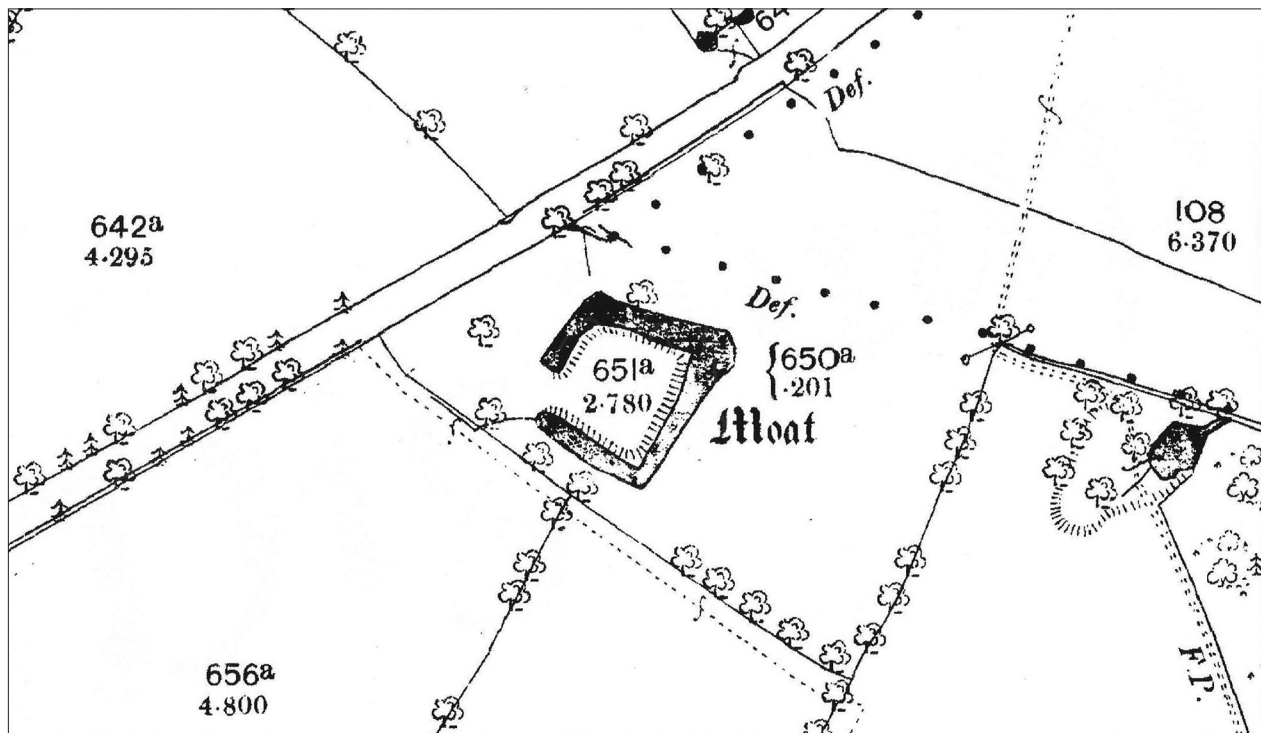


Figure 1 1st Edition OS Map of Kidpile moated site.

The Solihull Archaeological Group has been investigating Kidpile moated site, one of 250 in Warwickshire, in the north-western part of the county where these sites are concentrated. It was in the former Forest of Arden (which was not a royal forest). The site is on the edge of the parish of Tanworth in Arden, and the lords of Tanworth manor were the earls of Warwick, but the moated site belonged to some lesser family. It is located in an area of dispersed settlement, remote from parish churches and major manorial centres. The name Kidpile is of recent origin and is a convenient way to refer to the moat as the field in which it lies is adjacent to Kidpile Farm. The landowners of the site are A.E. Beckett and Sons Ltd.

The moated area is approximately square, and all four arms survive, defining a platform measuring c. 22m by 24m. The moat is approximately 4–6m wide. The site was surveyed for the 1884 OS map (Fig. 1), but in the 1970s some arms of the moat were deepened

with a machine. A ditch runs nearby, and there were two possible feeder channels to bring water to the moat. The soil is a heavy clay that retains water. A pond, which appears to have once been larger, lies a short distance to the east, and may have been a source of fish.

Fieldwork began in 2015 with a resistivity survey of the platform which showed areas of modern disturbance, but also features interpreted as belonging to the medieval occupation, including small areas of low resistance, thought to be pits, and areas of high resistance likely to represent building rubble. On the basis of this information areas were selected for excavation in trenches. A sondage located a buried soil with a worked flint, presumably the ground surface that was covered with upcast to create the platform when the moat was dug. Excavation revealed occupation surfaces of clay with scattered pebbles and pieces of ceramic roof tile. In other parts of the site there was a cobbled area thought to be pathway, compacted clay surfaces, a gully, post holes and a slot. No building plan was visible.

¹ Solihull Archaeological Group

The finds consist of pottery from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, of which most belonged to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some of the sherds were from pots made at Deritend (now part of Birmingham) and other were of Worcester type ware. There was a single sherd of Midland purple. The source of some of the pottery is not known, including a number

of pieces of jug made of a buff whiteware. Small finds included a whetstone of sandstone.

Early modern finds are absent, so the site was apparently abandoned, but quantities of pottery, glass and clay pipes were deposited in the nineteenth century.

Excavation has continued in 2016 and 2017.