



**Herefordshire Archaeology**  
Conservation and Environmental Planning  
Planning Services  
Environment Directorate  
Herefordshire Council

**St Katherine's Car Park  
Archaeological Evaluation.  
Ledbury  
An Archaeological Investigation**  
NGR: SO 707 376

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.263**

Report prepared by  
Tim Hoverd  
Christopher Atkinson

**Contents**

Summary  
Introduction  
Aims and Objectives  
Location and geology  
Previous fieldwork  
Methodology  
Results  
Discussion  
Appendix 1  
Appendix 2  
Appendix 3  
Acknowledgements  
List of Illustrations  
Bibliography

**Herefordshire Archaeology** is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

**St Katherine's Car Park An  
Archaeological Evaluation.  
Ledbury  
Herefordshire:  
An Archaeological Investigation**

NGR: SO 707 376

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.263**

***Summary***

*This investigation was undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology as part of a community project with volunteers from England's Past for Everyone Ledbury and members of the local community. The purpose of the excavation was to provide information concerning the type, depth and survival of archaeologically significant deposits and features within the site prior to the design of the proposed new Library. The excavation formed part of a project already underway in Ledbury run by Herefordshire Archaeology and members of The England's Past for Everyone, Herefordshire Project (Victoria County History), which was investigating the growth of the medieval core of the town.*

*This report provides the process and results of the excavation carried out within St Katherine's car park during January 2009. The excavations revealed that much of the area investigated has been severely truncated by levelling during the post-medieval and early modern periods. This has resulted in only the very basal deposits of medieval features surviving over the site. Despite this, an assemblage of medieval pottery was recovered from securely stratified deposits.*

*Much of the northern portion of the site has been excavated into the natural marl by the construction and later demolition of an 18<sup>th</sup> century pool and associated garden features. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this area was further truncated by the insertion of a brick cistern and drain.*

*A post-medieval rubbish pit was encountered containing a substantial quantity of bottle glass and pottery. This material appears to have come from "The Feathers" public house immediately to the south of the site.*

*The base of a stone wall foundation was encountered running across the centre of the site on an east – west axis, the location, scale and form of which suggests that this represents either the remains of a Medieval burgrave plot boundary or one of a succession of precinct boundary walls. The presence of this wall footing, together with the remains recorded in the 2008 excavation and the current boundary wall between the site and the Feathers Hotel have provided a number of possibilities concerning the medieval development of this part of the town.*

## ***Introduction***

This report provides an overall account of the excavation carried out within St Katherine's car park, south of the Master's House Ledbury, as part of the planning process for the proposed construction of a new Library.

The excavation formed part of a project already underway in Ledbury run by Herefordshire Archaeology and members of The England's Past for Everyone, Herefordshire project (Victoria County History), which was investigating the growth of the medieval core of the town (N Baker, forthcoming). The excavation was supervised and directed by Herefordshire Archaeology staff and provided an exciting opportunity for volunteers both local to Ledbury and from further afield to take part in and be trained in the sample excavation and preliminary recording of the St Katherine's site.

The excavation provided a preliminary insight into the nature of the archaeological deposits across the site; these were subsequently uncovered, recorded and sampled but not totally excavated. The purpose of the excavation was to provide information concerning the type, depth and survival of archaeologically significant deposits and features within the site prior to the design of the new Library. It is anticipated that further excavation will need to be undertaken by an archaeological contract unit in the normal way prior to the construction of the library building.

The excavation took place from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January through to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

**Disclaimer:** It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50, and 0.02m at 1:20.

Figures contained within this report contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (OS Licence 100024168). This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

Contact details: Herefordshire Archaeology, PO Box 230 Hereford. HR1 2ZB.  
Copyright Herefordshire Council 2009.

## *Aims and Objectives*

The excavation by Herefordshire Archaeology was undertaken in advance of the development of an architectural design for a new library building in Ledbury. It was carried out as a community linked project both to support and extend the England's Past for Everyone Project, but also because there was a perceived need to gain information in advance of the gaining of grant-aid towards library construction which might influence the design specifications for a new building. This was a departure from normal practice, in that the county archaeology service does not undertake development linked excavations. As such, it represented an unusual 'stage' in the site evaluation process inserted between initial evaluation and mitigatory investigations undertaken as a requirement following the grant of any planning permission.

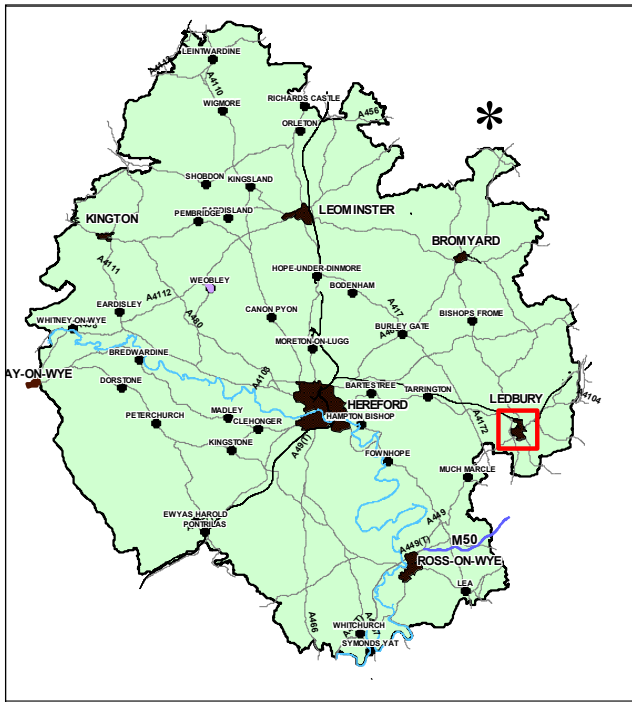
The purpose of the excavation was to provide information concerning the type, depth and survival of archaeologically significant deposits and features within the site prior to the design of the new Library. The excavation was designed to provide a preliminary insight into the nature of the archaeological deposits across the site. These were uncovered, recorded and sampled but not totally excavated.

It was hoped that the deposits and features revealed during these investigations would provide additional information concerning the features discovered during the small scale preliminary excavation carried out within the flowerbed immediately to the north of the site, during 2008 by Worcester County Council, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service.

It was believed that the excavation area formed part of the site of the medieval Hospital of St Katherine, one of the most important institutions in the history of Ledbury. The hospital was founded by Hugh Foliot, Bishop of Hereford, about the year 1230, for the support of pilgrims, wayfarers, and the poor and needy. Some of the medieval hospital principal buildings survive: its chapel and hall on the High Street frontage dating from c.1300, and the former Master's House built in 1487-8. The present almshouses along the High Street frontage were built in 1822 and extended in 1866.

It was assumed that the hospital would have occupied the entire site of the present car parks. Historical documents, in particular an inventory of 1316, offer a few clues as to what this large area would have contained: in addition to the hall and chapel there was a dormitory with six beds for the brethren, a communal washhouse, a service area with a kitchen, larder and brewhouse, and a great gatehouse onto the High Street. There would also have been farm buildings, necessary for running the hospital's rural estates scattered outside the town. How these buildings were arranged, how they developed over the centuries, how they were used and what other buildings may have been here are unknown. The limited, exploratory archaeological investigation in 2008 in the flowerbed south of the Master's House unearthed what was thought to have been one side of a masonry wall of a very large medieval building. This was thought perhaps to have been part of the dormitory mentioned in 1316 – but it could equally have belonged to some other, unrecorded structure.

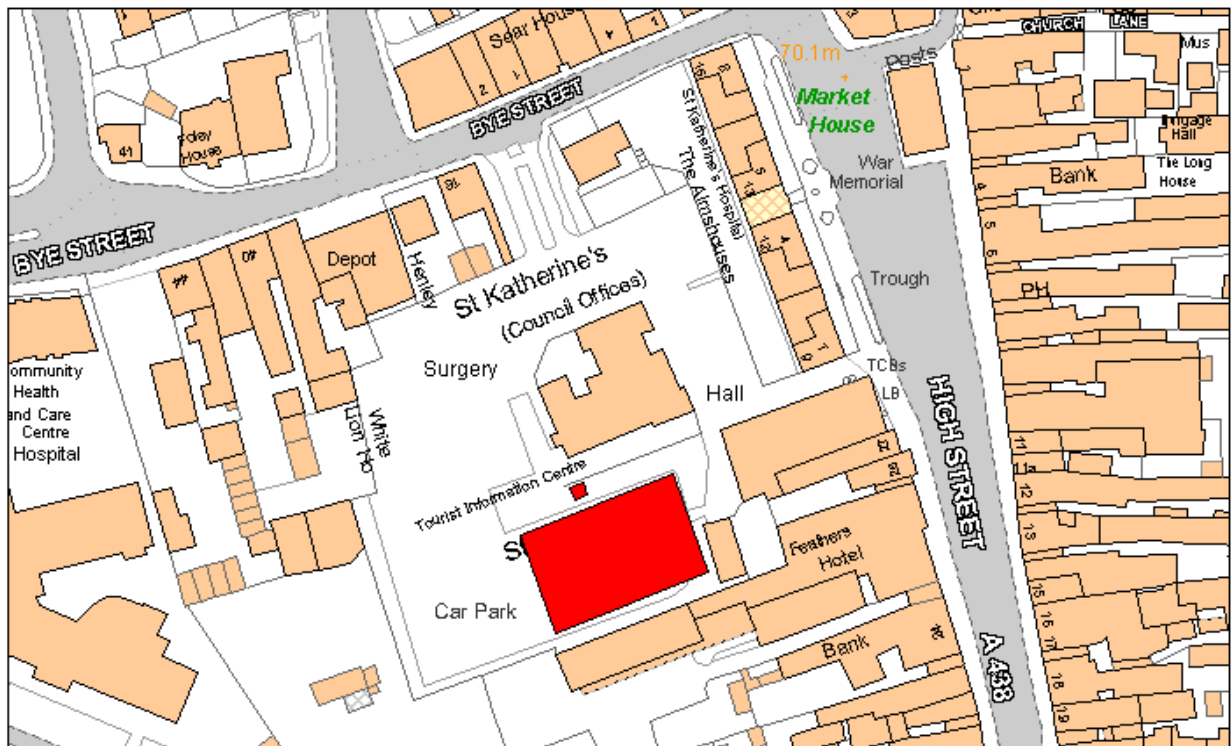
## Location and Geology



The Market Town of Ledbury (NGR SO 70767 37653) is located within the east of Herefordshire, 4.9 kilometres due west of Midsummer Hill that lies within the south of the Malvern Hill formation. Ledbury is largely sited upon a gentle west-facing slope attributed to a north-south aligned ridge.

The underlying geology consists of a natural marl raglan Mudstone of the Lower Old Red Sandstone (BGS, 1988, 1:50 000, sheet 216)

**Figure 1:** Location of Ledbury within Herefordshire © OS Crown Copyright (OS Licence 100024168) & Herefordshire Archaeology



**Figure 2:** Location of the archaeological investigation (highlighted red) located within the grounds of St Katherine's car park to the south of the Master's House. © OS Crown Copyright (OS Licence 100024168) & Herefordshire Archaeology

### *Previous fieldwork / records*

A search of the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) revealed the following entries for St Katherine's Ledbury:

#### **SMR record 11322**

<b>Site name</b>	St Katherine's Hospital, Ledbury	
<b>Parish</b>	Ledbury	
<b>NGR</b>	SO 7108 3764	
<b>Description</b>	<p>Founded 1232 by Bishop Hugh Foliot, dissolved c.1547 and later refounded. Chapel and hall under one roof. Appears to have been rebuilt c.1330-40. Masters house built in the 15th century but enlarged in the 16th century. Much altered in the 18th and 19th centuries. Almshouses are modern. (1)</p> <p>Founded in 1232. Holliday suggests that it was founded on the site of the early Bishops Palace and that the 14th century house on Bye Street (SMR 1228) now demolished was called the Bishops Palace because of this. (2) There is no archaeological or documentary evidence for this theory. (3) (4)</p> <p>The hospital had 'beds for masters and brethren' and had a wide range of service and farm buildings within its precinct. In 1316 barns, byres, malt houses and cider houses were noted. The service buildings also included a kitchen, larder, cellar and warehouse, wash house, stable, cattle shed, byre, piggery, barn. In the 15th century the master removed himself from the common dormitory and built the mansion house (SMR 16623). The institution continued into the post medieval period. (2)</p> <p>Other references (5), (6), (7).</p> <p>An evaluation trench was excavated in the car park to the rear of Rai Fashions in Bye Street, which is within the precinct of the hospital. Well-preserved early Post-medieval features and deposits were revealed at a depth of 1m below the existing ground level. Although evidence for surviving Medieval material was limited, it seems likely that Medieval deposits lie intact beneath the Post-medieval remains. (8)</p>	
<b>Compiler</b>	White, Hilary	
<b>Date of record</b>	1991	
<b>Period and site type</b>	MEDIEVAL	HOSPITAL
	MEDIEVAL	CHAPEL
	19TH CENTURY	ALMSHOUSE

### SMR record 19891

Site name	St Katherine's Almshouse, Ledbury	
Parish	LEDBURY	
NGR	SO 7105 3765	
Description	Post medieval form of St Katherines Hospital (SMR 19873). In the post medieval period there was encroachment onto the area of the hospital (1). In the 16th century individual accommodation was provided for the brethren and sisters and these almshouses may have been the dilapidated old buildings replaced at the beginning of the 19th century (2). In 1569 the medieval hospital was described as a "deserted or relinquished hospital". New buildings in the later 16th century included a kitchen, privie, offices, stable, pigeon and saddle houses, ox-houses, and some of the older buildings were restored. The courtyard was paved and a new well sunk. (1) In 1819 an act empowered the Dean and Chapter of Hereford to rebuild St Katherines almshouses and by 1821 the almshouses had been demolished. (2)	
Compiler	Roseff, Rebecca	
Date of record	06/09/1999	
Period and site type	MEDIEVAL	ALMSHOUSE

### SMR record 19873

Site name	The Master's House of St Katherine's Hospital	
Parish	LEDBURY	
NGR	SO 7110 3766	
Description	An intact 15th century timber-framed house with two cross-wings, four oriel windows/spaces, and a possible contemporary detached kitchen. One of only two surviving master's houses of medieval hospitals in the country. Part of St Katherine's Hospital (SMR 11322).(1) 22 tree ring samples from the hall range, service wing and solar wing were tree ring dated, nine of them retained complete sapwood. In every case the last complete sapwood ring, and thus the felling of the tree was dated to 1487. Trees were about 120 years old. (2)	
Compiler	Roseff, Rebecca	
Date of record	6/5/2004	
Period and site type	MEDIEVAL	HOUSE

### ***Historical background.***

The hospital was founded, about the year 1230, in a town that had been established for three generations, and was still growing fast. The site chosen for it reveals how important it was to its founder, Bishop Foliot, the manorial lord of Ledbury. Almost universally, medieval hospitals were founded on town margins, usually placed at the ends of suburbs. In part this was because such sites had a particular symbolism, representing a position on the boundary of this world and the next, in part because a site on a main road would remind passers-by of the consequences of sin, held to be the cause of disease, while also emphasising the dignity and importance of the town. But in Ledbury, the hospital was given a completely atypical, centrally located site, opening directly off the busy market place. The parish church, market-place, bishop's hall and the hospital would together have formed an urban core of a distinction unmatched in the county anywhere outside Hereford itself. (Hillaby, 1997).

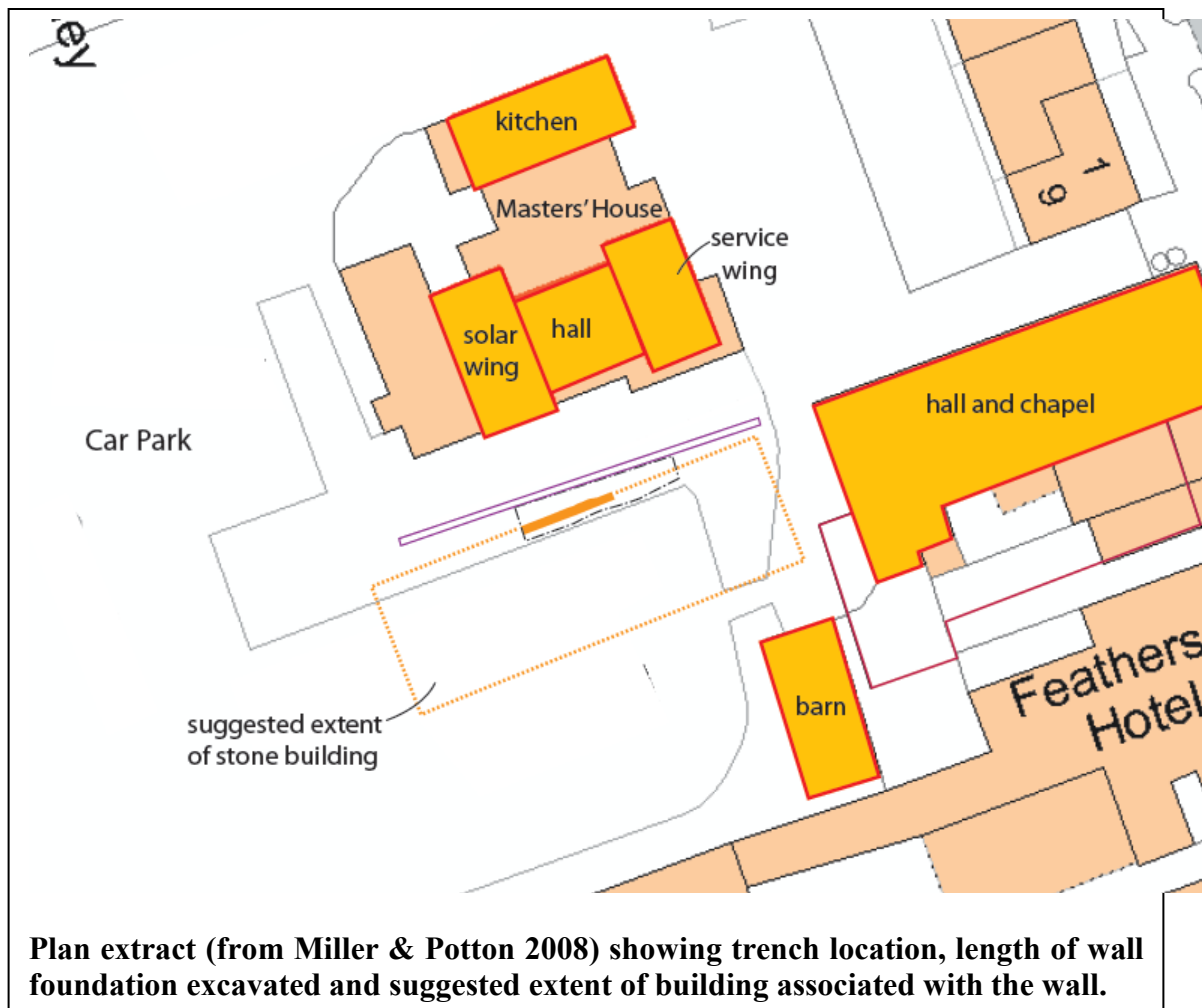
The full extent of the bounds of the hospital precinct are uncertain, but it is probable that it lay at least partly behind a screen of commercial properties facing the market place; possibly only its gatehouse and chapel impinging on the frontage, minimising the potential loss of valuable rents to the bishop. It was certainly tucked behind the burgages on Bye Street to the north (where another market place was being developed) and those on New Street to the south. (Baker, 2009).

### **Archaeological Background**

Archaeological evidence suggests that building on Bye Street got off to a slow start with natural hollows being filled in before construction took place, but by the time of the 1288 town rental there were 56 tenants holding plots on both sides of the street. New Street had begun to be developed by 1174/86 but was never completely urbanised: there were 35 tenants living there in 1288, but only a few years later some agricultural strips were recorded there. (Marches Archaeology, 2002). A watching brief undertaken in 1997/8 to the rear of The Feathers Hotel, (immediately to the south of the site) recorded a garden or agricultural type soil dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century but no medieval features or structures were observed. (Wichbold, 1998).

In 2008, as an initial investigation on the St. Katherine's car park site, Worcester County Council, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service excavated a trench within a flowerbed between the Master's House and The Feathers Hotel (Miller & Potten, 2008). Within the trench a section of what was thought to be medieval wall foundation from one of the Hospital buildings was uncovered and recorded.





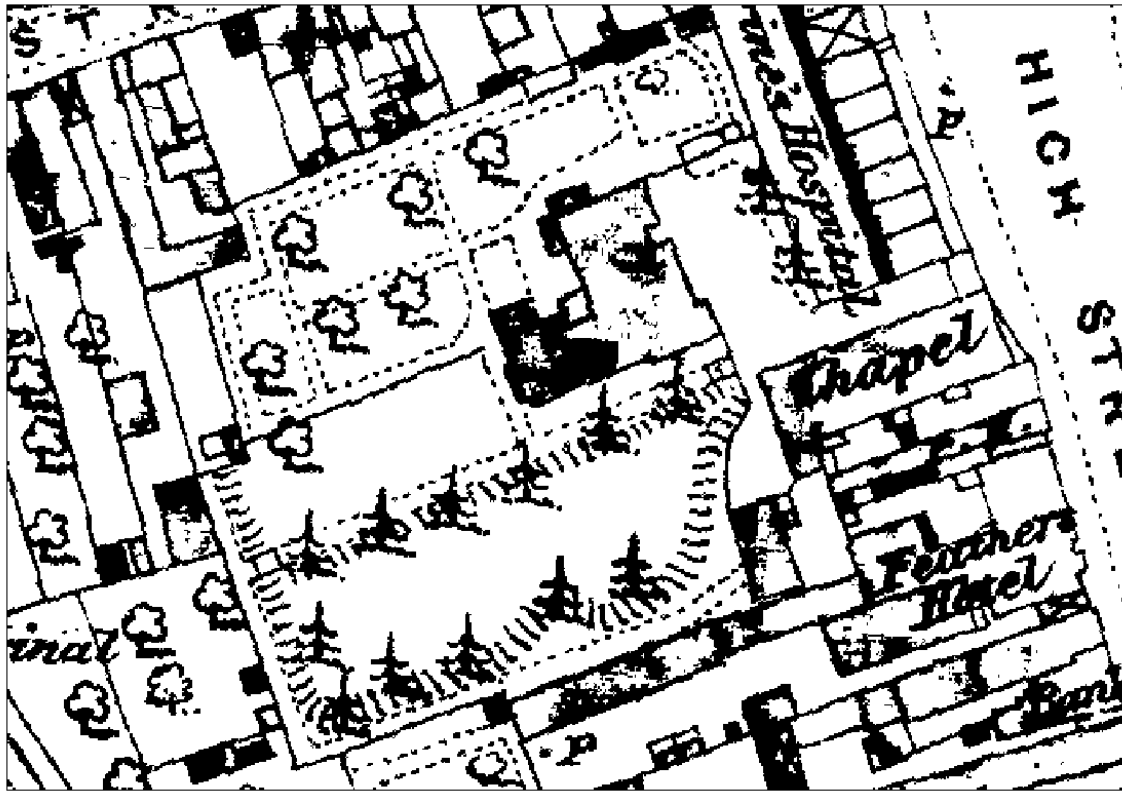


Figure 3: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Map 1887 showing the site surrounded by conifers and heavily landscaped.



Figure 4: Postcard of 1905 showing the site under lawned tennis court and (with the exception of a bank at the eastern end) the whole area on one level.

## ***Methodology***

The initial ground works on the site were carried out using a mechanical digger to remove modern deposits associated with the levelling of the site and the construction of the present car park. On average a 0.6m of material was stripped mechanically over the entire site at which depth archaeology was encountered. The site was systematically cleaned and then excavated using hand tools to reveal the full extent of the archaeology. Archaeologically significant features and deposits were then investigated and recorded. Each of the features encountered received a written context record, a photographic record and a drawn record.

Site plans and levels were generated using a Leica TCR110 Electronic Distance Meter (EDM).

An area 24m east-west by 21m north-south was stripped by machine under archaeological supervision to an average depth of 0.6m. This resulted in the complete removal of the modern make-up for the present car park together with the underlying late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century deposits. The resulting spoil was removed from site and the excavated area was then cleaned by hand. During the early stages of the excavation three sondages were excavated by machine in order to ascertain the nature and extent of substantial areas of post-medieval disturbance. These were also cleaned and recorded by hand.

A 1m square test pit was excavated by hand within the flower bed close to the north west corner of the site, in an attempt to trace the wall recorded during the 2008 excavations. This was excavated to a total depth of 0.85m. No wall was recorded and it appears that this part of the site has been disturbed to a considerable depth due to levelling and the insertion of a 19<sup>th</sup> century field drain.

The machine stripping was undertaken between January 5<sup>th</sup> and January 9th 2009 and excavation by hand and recording ran between January 12<sup>th</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>.

## ***Results***

During the machining phase of the excavation it was immediately apparent that a substantial amount of levelling and landscaping had taken place across the entire site. The modern make up for the car park extended to a depth of 0.15m below which was a 0.4m thick layer of loamy garden soil, containing much brick and 19<sup>th</sup> century debris. This overlay a number of features and deposits which were deemed to be of archaeological significance to the site and its development.

Immediately visible upon the removal of the car park levelling material was a brick vaulted cistern (011), 3.5m long and 1.25m wide running on an east-west axis. This had survived almost completely intact, despite the apex of the vault being directly below the tarmac for the car park. This was 1.2m deep and was fed by a stone capped, brick drain, (040), which entered its eastern end. A brick arched drain (010), exited its western end and ran in an easterly direction for approximately 11m before terminating. This was 0.6m wide and 0.8m deep and may well have had a pipe at its western end.

Both cistern (011) and drain (010) cut a fill of re-deposited, marl subsoil and bedrock fragments (009). Deposit (009) filled a sub-rectangular cut (008) which measured 16.5m (east-west) by 9m (north-south). A sondage was excavated by machine into (009) close to its south-western corner and a second on its south-eastern corner. Both sondages confirmed that the cut (008) was vertically sided and flat bottomed and was consistently 1.10m deep. This feature had been brick lined but had been systematically robbed, leaving only the bottom three courses of brick *in situ*. The base of this feature comprised a 0.03m layer of black, humic silt (044) containing leaves, twigs and a small quantity of brick and 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery fragments. This overlay a levelled, natural clay / marl. Immediately next to the eastern end of this feature were a series of four semi-circular brick bases with flat stone pads, each approximately 0.4m in diameter, (045 – 048). It is possible that a fifth was removed by the later insertion of the brick cistern (011) and that these represent the bases of brick pillars forming part of a loggia, (or other ornamental structure), running around the eastern end of structure 008. It is suggested that, due to the size and shape of this feature and the nature of the brick sides and presence of deposit (044) that (008) was a pond or fishpool. Such a feature was recorded in a court case brought against one Master Birt in 1800. He was accused of having claimed the cost for expensive repairs 'to a large fishpond in the Master's garden inclosed round with brickwork'. His reply was that it had been there when he was installed on 28 March 1785 and that it was therefore his duty to maintain it. (DCA 3564 unnumbered file of deposition papers c. 1800; information courtesy of Dr. Sylvia Pinches, Ledbury EPE)

A line of footings for a brick wall (006) running roughly north-south, close to the eastern end of the trench' are thought to represent the foundations for a revetment wall to hold a garden terrace. It does not appear to have been constructed as part of a building as it is only two bricks thick (0.26m wide) and therefore could not have been a constructed to a great height or carried a great weight.

The presence of these essentially brick built features, together with the documentary and cartographic evidence would suggest that during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the northern and eastern parts of the excavated area were under a series of terraced and landscaped gardens. These were removed prior to 1887 (see 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map,

figure 3) and a softer terraced garden laid out with fir trees on its eastern edge. It appears that this phase of garden had been dramatically levelled by 1905, (see figure 4), and laid to lawned tennis courts. It was probably during these works that the brick cistern and associated drains etc. were inserted.

Underneath the north / south terrace wall footing (006) was a well defined and vertically sided pit (020). This comprised a 1.6m long and 0.8m wide rectangular pit which continued to a depth of 1.10m. The pit contained considerable quantities of building rubble, post-medieval pottery, bottle glass and animal bone. Although only one bottle survived intact, a large number were recovered with only minor breaks and these appeared to have been broken upon their deposition. Four of the glass bottles were stamped "*Thomas Pantell 1709*" with a plume of three ostrich feathers in the centre of the stamp (see figure 6). A quick internet search of the national archives suggests that this is the Thomas Pantall which rented a public house called "The Plume of Feathers" between 1696 and 1736, (information courtesy of Dr. Sylvia Pinches, Ledbury EPE). This is now "The Feathers Hotel" which borders the southern side of the site. A scan of the pottery and clay pipe suggests that the assemblage of artefacts contained within this pit (010) span a 40-50 year period and suggest that an out-building or store room had been demolished or cleared out some time in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its contents put into this pit. This is supported by the style of the onion bottles which would have been out of date by the mid 1700's and would have had the wrong landlord's stamp on by this time.

The eastern end of this pit (which runs under the brick terrace wall (006)) cut a roughly circular pit (021), which was also cut by the terrace wall. This comprised an oval pit approximately 1.4m in diameter and surviving to a maximum depth of 0.25m. The fill of this pit (002) contained large fragments of unabraded medieval pottery together with animal bone. The lack of depth to this feature, particularly when contrasted to its diameter suggests that this pit had been massively truncated by later levelling / terracing.

Running through the centre of the excavated area, on an east – west axis, was the foundation trench for a substantial stone wall, (022). This comprised a 0.8m wide cut surviving to a maximum depth of 0.2m. and had clearly been both robbed of almost all of its large stone and very heavily truncated along its entire length. The straightness, form and location of this feature all suggest that this was the base of a footing for a medieval burgage plot boundary. Pottery fragments recovered from amongst the small angular stones left after robbing, appear to date from the 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century suggesting perhaps, that this feature was demolished and robbed at a relatively early date. Cutting into the northern side of the wall footing was an oval pit (043). This was filled with post-medieval building rubble, including ceramic roof tile, brick and stone roof tile fragments. A small quantity of domestic pottery was also recovered from this pit.

To the north of the wall foundation, in the north – eastern corner of the site were a series of heavily truncated and therefore very shallow pits and / or post holes. Pits (030), (032) and (028) contained small quantities of post medieval pottery and animal bone along with some abraded, (and therefore re-deposited), medieval pottery. Feature (036) appears to have been the truncated base of a drain or small soakaway of late 18<sup>th</sup> century date. All

features cut into a hard yellow / brown clay subsoil (019), which covered the entire site and which, in-turn, overlay a hard clay marl.

The 1m square test pit, within the flower bed close to the north-west corner of the site which was in an attempt to trace the wall recorded during the 2008 excavations (Miller & Potten 2008) was excavated to a total depth of 0.85m. No wall was recorded and it appears that this part of the site has been disturbed to a considerable depth due to levelling and the insertion of a 19<sup>th</sup> century field drain

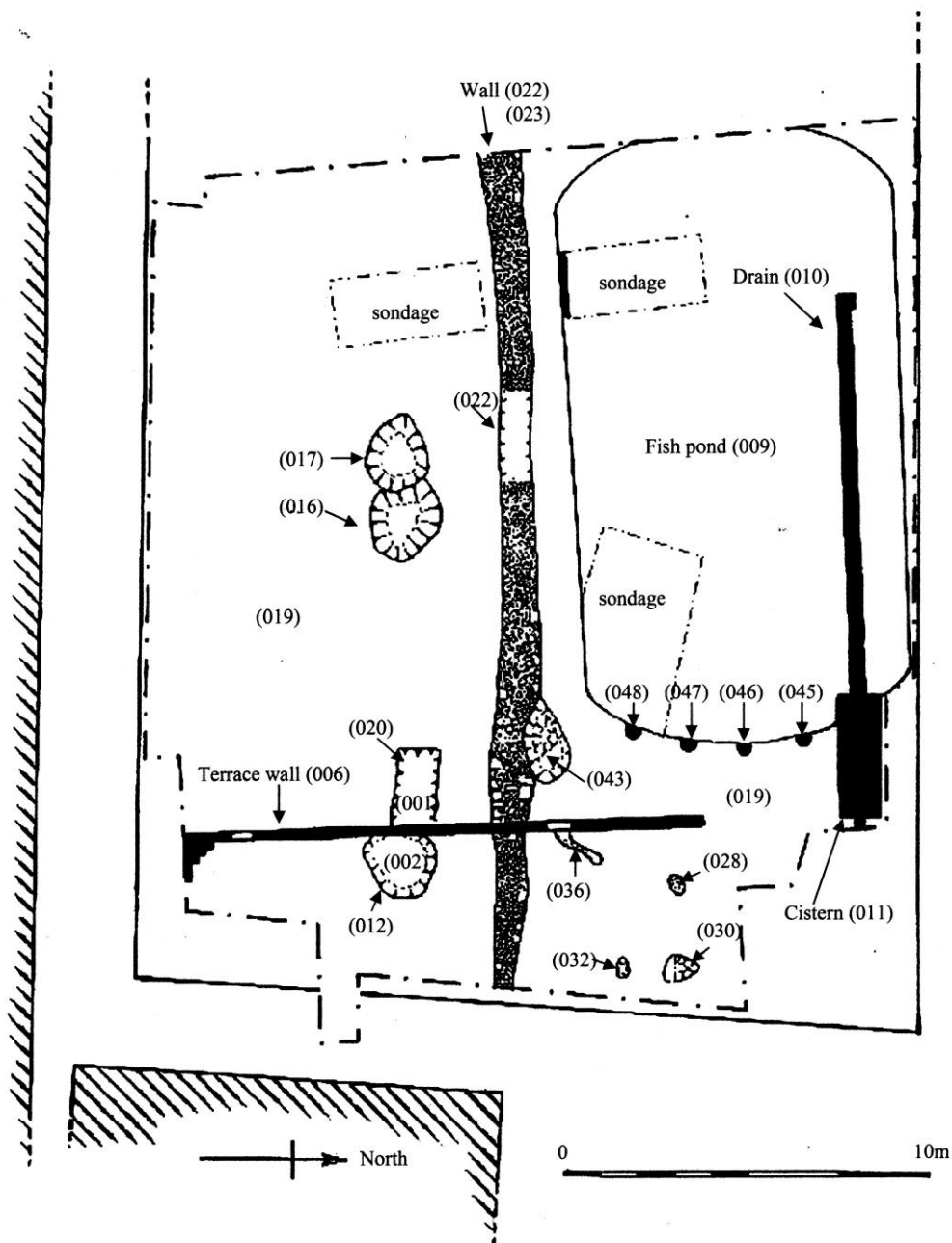


Figure 5: Site Plan showing contexts and features referred to in the text.

## *Discussion*

This evaluation excavation has illustrated that a considerable amount of levelling has occurred across the site on a number of occasions. This has resulted in the majority of the medieval and late-medieval / early post-medieval deposits being destroyed leaving only the very bottom of the deepest features intact. It is clear from the degree of preservation of later deposits and features that the majority of this levelling downwards occurred between the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The significance of the impressive wall that now forms the northern boundary of the Feathers Hotel, on the southern edge of the site remains unclear. There would appear to be three possibilities concerning the series of parallel walls encountered on the site:

Was it the precinct boundary? If so, what was wall (022) which appears to be a burgage plot width away and parallel to the feathers boundary wall? Could it be that the precinct boundary was wall (022). The nature of the stone foundation uncovered, (its length, together with the lack of any adjoining walls running off it), suggests a boundary wall rather than a wall forming part of a building.

It cannot however be ruled out that the medieval hospital precinct did extend over the area investigated and may have resulted in the removal of the upstanding portion of the stone wall (022) to accommodate a period of expansion for the hospital. This may explain the presence of what appears to be a series of fairly similar (in width, form and orientation) walls. Particularly if the stone footing recorded in the area excavated in 2008 is the remains of a similar boundary wall. This would therefore suggest either, a systematic expansion of the hospital precinct over this part of the site as successive back plots are taken in, or, the removal of very substantial stone burgage plot boundaries to make room for the precinct.

In addition to these explanations, it should also be noted that no structures, features, deposits or artefacts were recorded / recovered during the excavation which were indicative of originating from a medieval hospital precinct. This may mean that the precinct never extended over the investigated area and that the precinct boundary may have been bounded by either wall (022) or the wall recorded during the 2008 excavation (Miller & Potten, 2008).

To the south of wall (022) was a layer of clay subsoil relating to a back plot within a medieval burgage, which would have fronted onto the market square. Contained within the burgage plot are a series of rubbish pits. Although only the basal deposits of many of these pits survive a reasonably sized assemblage of medieval pottery was recovered from this portion of the site. This is the first medieval pottery assemblage of any size to be recovered from well stratified archaeological deposits under archaeological excavation in Ledbury.

The pit containing building rubble, pottery, clay pipe and the large quantity of glass bottles is of particular interest as it links directly with documentary evidence and to a building which still exists and which is still used as a public house. The range of artefacts from this assemblage contained from within this pit implies that all of the material was

deposited at the same time and that it represents a “clearing out” of a room or building associated with “The Feathers” shortly after the premises changed hands in the 1730’s.

To the north of the robbed out wall (022), all medieval features and deposits have been removed by the construction of the 18<sup>th</sup> century pool or fishpond and the 19<sup>th</sup> century drains and brick cistern.

The location of the disturbance created by the construction of the pool, cistern and drain in relation the excavation area is unfortunate in that no archaeologically significant deposits encountered during the 2008 trial excavation within the present flower bed could be investigated in the wider area uncovered in 2009.

The presence of a substantial pool in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the construction of a cistern with associated drains during the 19<sup>th</sup> century may be seen as attempts to take advantage of in the case of the pool, and cope with, in the case of the cistern, the propensity for large volumes of ground water to percolate across the site from east to west. During the course of the excavation, all negative features, (pits, post holes etc), had to be constantly bailed out or syphoned off due to the unusual amount of ground water which could be seen to flow across the site. The fact that a ceramic field drain was found in the base of the test pit is also testament to this excess of ground water and these may relate to successive measures employed in various attempts to intercept and divert ground water away from the Master’s House.

<b>Statement of significance.</b>
-----------------------------------

This excavation has resulted in a number of archaeologically and / or historically significant findings. These are summarised below:

A sealed group of medieval rubbish pits were investigated. Although only the basal deposits survived due to late medieval and / or post-medieval truncation, a small but significant assemblage of pottery was recovered from the primary fills of these features. It would appear that these pits relate to an early phase of development within this part of the town and may therefore shed light on the date of burgage plot construction. This is the first assemblage from Ledbury that can be isolated in this way and will need further appraisal and study following on from mitigatory works.

The presence of the medieval boundary wall (022), which ran on an east / west alignment through the centre of the site, raises a number of questions regarding the size, shape and location of the medieval hospital precinct. If the wall recorded during this excavation is one of a series of walls which include the length of wall recorded in the 2008 excavation and the surviving wall which forms the northern boundary of the Feathers Hotel, this could imply that these were burgage plot boundaries (see figure 6).

The excavation of a sealed bottle group from pit (020) is of significance as it can be directly linked to detailed documentary evidence containing named individuals to which this assemblage belonged. The glass and pottery from this sealed deposit will provide an



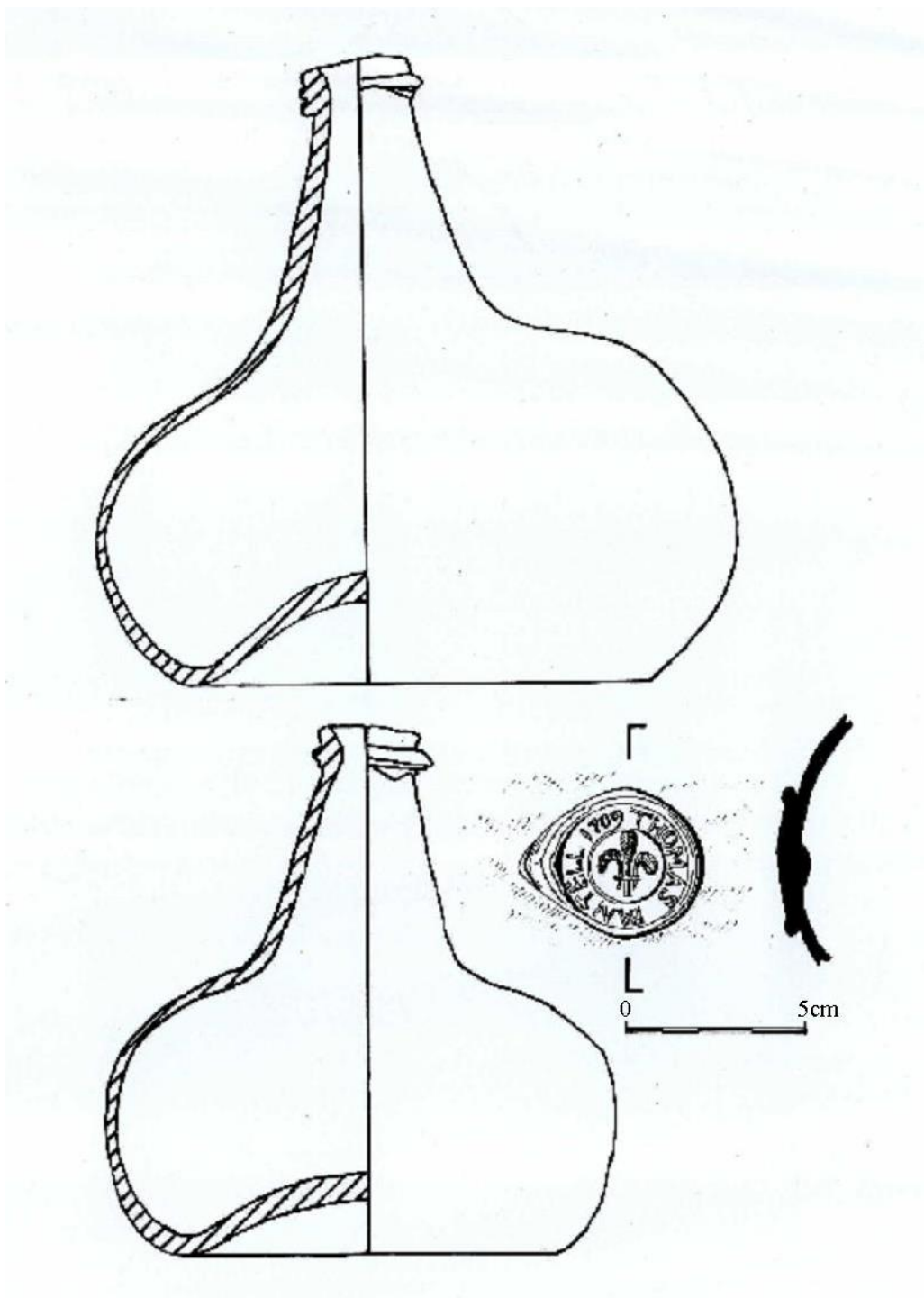
interesting and rare insight into the socio-economic history of the site and its environs in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The degree to which steps seem to have been taken to intercept and utilise the large quantity of groundwater is also of significance and both the construction of the ‘fish-pool’ and the later cistern and drains points to attempts to solve this problem by employing a series of early civic enterprises.

This piece of fieldwork has highlighted important information concerning the landscaping and development during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods.



**Figure 6: Location of stone built walls showing consistent alignment and regular spacing.**



**Figure 7: The two sizes of bottle recovered from pit (020) together with glass seal. A total of seventy eight complete or near complete bottle bases were recovered suggesting that in excess of one hundred bottles were deposited in the pit. Four seals were recovered all of the same form. Two sizes of bottle were present, the larger held one and a quarter pints whilst the smaller held three quarters of a pint. A total of 76.6 kilos of bottle glass was recovered from the pit.**

**Appendix 1:****Context descriptions for the Masters House, Ledbury Site Code: MH09**

Context	Type	Description
001	Fill	Fill of cut 020. Much building rubble, stone and clay roof tiles, animal bone, pottery and onion bottles.
020	Cut	Rectangular cut for fill 001. Vertical sides and flat base to a depth of 1.10m. Overlain by wall 006.
002	Fill	Fill of truncated medieval rubbish pit. Dark earth loam matrix containing large fragments of conjoining lack cooking pot and occasional bone frags.
021	Cut	Circular and steep sided base of pit, 0.18m deep and 1.15m in diameter.
004	Cut	Cut for brick wall 006. 0.35m wide and 0.10m deep, flat base.
005	Fill	Fill of wall 006 foundation cut 004. Mix of dark earth with small charcoal fragments.
006	Wall	Brick wall two bricks thick and London Bond. Runs on a north south axis and has one opening with a threshold.
007	Deposit	Grey / brown silty clay, well compacted with charcoal and frequent rounded and angular stone. Cut by 008, 020, 021, 004.
008	Cut	Rectangular with rounded corners, approximately 18m long and 8m wide aligned east / west. Cut for 18 <sup>th</sup> century brick lined fish pond. Filled by 009.
009	Fill	A compacted mix of red / green redeposited marl and bedrock with occasional 19 <sup>th</sup> century pot and glass.
010	Culvert	Brick culvert, 8.5m long and 0.6m wide, aligned east / west. Cuts 009 and 008 and 007.
011	Cistern	Brick cistern, 2.6m long and 1.12m wide aligned east / west and attached to eastern end of 010.
012	Fill	Grey / green silty loam containing much small gravel and some brick and tile. Probable 19 <sup>th</sup> century cess pit
013	Deposit	Orangey / brown silty clay, well compacted and quite clean. Cut by / butts wall 022
014	Cut	Triangular post Hole, (originally square) 0.25m square and 0.35m deep. Cut by fishpool pit 008, filled by 015.
015	Fill	Grey / brown fill of post hole. Very loose with some small charcoal and brick fragments present.
003	Fill	Grey / brown silty clay with much building rubble. Fill of cut 116
016	Cut	Semi-circular, vertical sided and rounded based cut. Cuts 019 and 022.
017	Cut	Secondary cut, cuts 016, 003 and 022. Circular pit cut vertical sides and level base approx. 1m in diameter.

018	Fill	Fill of cut 017. Dark brown quite compacted with much charcoal and stone
019	Deposit	Red/brown silty clay similar to, if not the same as 013 but on the other side of 022
022	Cut	Cut for medieval wall foundation. 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep aligned on a east / west axis across the centre of site.
023	Fill	Angular stone in a yellow clay matrix, fill of 022. Stone foundations of heavily robbed out and truncated wall.
024	Deposit	Red / brown loamy silt with charcoal and general mix of rubble and bone. Only apparent in north eastern corner of trench. Cut by 004.
025	Cut	Cut for circular pit 0.8m in diameter and 0.25m deep. Cuts 024
026	Fill	Dark brown loamy clay with much charcoal and stone. Fill of 025.
027	Deposit	Red / brown loamy clay with charcoal flecks. Cut by 021, 004 and 022. Same as 024.
028	Cut	Oval cut for pit, 0.45m long and 0.2m wide, 0.05m deep. Cuts 024
029	Fill	Fill of 028. Grey / brown silty clay.
030	Cut	Circular 0.7m diameter cut 0.2m deep. Cuts 024 and filled by 031
031	Fill	Fill of 030. Grey / brown silty clay.
032	Cut	Oval / sub-rectangular post hole base. 0.20 long and 0.10m wide 0.05m deep. Cuts 024.
033	Fill	Fill of 032. Grey / brown silty clay.
034	Cut	Oval, flat based 0.3m by 0.2m and 0.2m deep. Cuts 024
035	Fill	Fill of 034. Grey / brown silty clay.
036	Cut	Possible drain / soak-away pit
037	Fill	Fill of 036 mid brown, silty clay
038	Feature	Remains of cobbled surface, very fragmentary
039	Structure	Stone and brick drain runs into eastern end of 011 cistern
040	Cut	Cut for culvert and drain (010)
041	Feature	Probable tree throw / root disturbance
042	Cut	Oval cut for pit, 1.4m long and 0.8m wide and 0.4m deep, cuts 022.
043	Fill	Fill of pit 042, post-medieval building rubble and pot
044	Deposit	0.03m thick layer of humic material in base of 009
045	Feature	Semi-circular brick built pillar base with flat stone base
046	Feature	Semi-circular brick built pillar base with flat stone base
047	Feature	Semi-circular brick built pillar base with flat stone base
048	Feature	Semi-circular brick built pillar base with flat stone base

**Appendix 2:**

**MASTERS HOUSE, LEDBURY (MH09): finds per context**

TRENCH NO.	CONTEXT NO.	POTTERY	SLAG	FE	PB	AG	BONE/ SHELL	GLASS	CLAY PIPE	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	FLINT	ANTLER
1	001	190				1(token)	68	796	37	9		3
1	002	32	1				15				1	
1	003	22		2			Shell11	17	3	3		
1	018	7					7	2	6	10		
1	023	9					34					
1	024	14					14		7			
1	026	3					10			12		
1	031	4		1			7		3	13		
1	033	16		2			10,shell3					
1	035	1					2	3				
1	037		1	7		1	33, shell3		17			
1	043	7		2			49	2	2	9	1	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>306</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>160 (s17)</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

### **Appendix 3: Ledbury clay tobacco pipe assemblage.**

A A Peacey.

This assemblage is of particular interest as it is the first from Ledbury to come to notice. The town lies almost equidistant from Gloucester, Ross on Wye, Hereford, Bromyard, Worcester and Tewkesbury all within 15 to 17 miles. The products of these towns are already known in some detail thus providing a backdrop against which the assemblage can be studied.

The assemblage consists of 80 clay tobacco pipe fragments. These have been divided into four categories; 19 bowls, 5 bowl fragments, 2 mouthpieces and 54 stem fragments. The stem fragments, mouthpieces and stem attached to bowls have a combined length of 2344 mm (c. 123mm of stem for every bowl recovered). The bowl count is taken at the junction between stem, bowl and heel, or spur, regardless of the degree of completeness.

On the site of The Plume of Feathers, now occupied by The Feathers Hotel, context (001) is of particular interest, it being the fill of a large rubbish pit containing nearly one hundred wine bottles with named and dated seals. The pit must have been filled sometime between 1709, the date on the seals, and 1736, the last reference to Thomas Pantell renting The Plume of Feathers. Late in this range rather than early is more likely for the dumping of such a quantity of sealed bottles. It is rare to encounter a context with such a reliable independent date. The pipes are illustrated in Figure 1, numbers 1 to 10.

Figure 1, number 1, is equivalent to Gloucester type 8 originally dated 1670-1700 when the Gloucester typology was published in 1979<sup>1</sup>. This is now thought to be a little too late and a revised range of 1660-90 is suggested. At the Key Street production site this form with its distinctive small rounded spur was made in equal numbers with an otherwise identical form bearing a flat round heel. The spurred type does not feature on any of the published Hereford sites, neither are any similarly dated spurred forms made at either Pipe Aston or Broseley. Out of well over ten thousand bowls recovered from Pipe Aston only one such pipe is present; clearly a visitor loss. The form is also absent from Worcester, where 483 pipes from three sites have been studied (Sansome Street, 54 pipes, The porcelain factory, 117 pipes and Newport Street, 312 pipes). From Bromyard a small assemblage of 38 pipes included 2 incomplete bowl forms of this type. It is therefore most likely that this Ledbury example is a Gloucester product.

Figure 1, number 3, is a more or less contemporary form. The more open upper bowl and the very low milling are features more consistent with forms from Broseley or Hereford. The low placement of milling was never adopted by Gloucester makers.

Figure 1, number 5, is equivalent to Gloucester type 11, dated 1690-1720. This form has previously only been recorded from Gloucester and its immediate environs.

Figure 1, number 8, although incomplete can be allocated Broseley type 4, dated 1690-1720. It has been given a stroke burnished finish, a mark of quality most usually applied in the Broseley region. Although pipes of similar form were produced in north Herefordshire, they invariably display no more than a smooth mould finish. This is the

earliest spurred form to be produced by Broseley makers and to find its way into Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester and beyond.

Figure 1, numbers 9,10, 14 and two others, not illustrated, bearing three line full name stamps are of Broseley type 5, a form current from c.1680 to 1730. Although Broseley is the epicentre for pipes of this type they were produced over a considerable area with outlying production as far distant as Carmarthen<sup>2</sup> and Buckley<sup>3</sup>.

It is not possible to allocate any of these pipes to a particular documented maker or to a place of origin, with any degree of certainty. Although there are entries for both Morris Decon and William Harper in the Broseley parish registers and pipe finds from the area indicate production in the general vicinity, the names are common and those recorded may not be those of the pipemakers.

As for the crude RV in a heart, variants recorded over a wide area may not all be the work of one maker. Although the initials have been linked to Richard Upton, known from full name stamps, there is no hard evidence to confirm this. A similar example has been recorded from Tewkesbury.

The small stamp BI does not appear in The National Clay Tobacco Pipe Stamp Catalogue compiled by David Higgins. It seems unlikely that it is a Broseley product as the area has been extensively studied. It is possible that this is the work of an as yet as yet unrecorded local maker.

#### Summary.

This small this assemblage has shed new light on the impact of the clay tobacco pipe industry in Ledbury. It has shown clear links with Gloucester, little traffic to or from Hereford and a smattering of Broseley influence. This latter is the norm all along the Severn corridor both as conventional trade and the gradual dispersal of makers outwards from the south Shropshire heartland. The new stamp, BI, might yet prove to be evidence of the latter; a maker trained in that area, familiar with its the forms, setting up shop in Ledbury to exploit new territory.

If the pipes in this assemblage were current forms when the fill of the pit was deposited then this is likely to have taken place no later than 1730. Some of the pipes were already archaic when the bottles were new and must be considered as residuals. It may be that all of the pipes predate the abandonment of the bottles, certainly none of the pipes are likely to date as late as 1736.

#### Documentary references to tobacco and associated material in Ledbury.

I am indebted to Dr Sylvia Pinches, of Englands Past for Everyone, Herefordshire Victoria County History, for kindly supplying the following information. Volunteers have transcribed all Ledbury wills and inventories, in the Hereford RO, for the period 1550-1700. Although no pipe makers have come to light the following references to tobacco and tobacco boxes are of interest.

Thomas Hall, shoemaker,1694 had cloth, thread, buttons, sugar, ginger and tobacco (HRO 119/4/15).

Richard Rudge 1700 (no occupation given) also had cloth, buttons, thread and tobacco (HRO 135/1/27).

Joseph Spencer, of Ledbury foreign (i.e. rural) 1689 also had a quantity of tobacco (HRO 105/3/12).

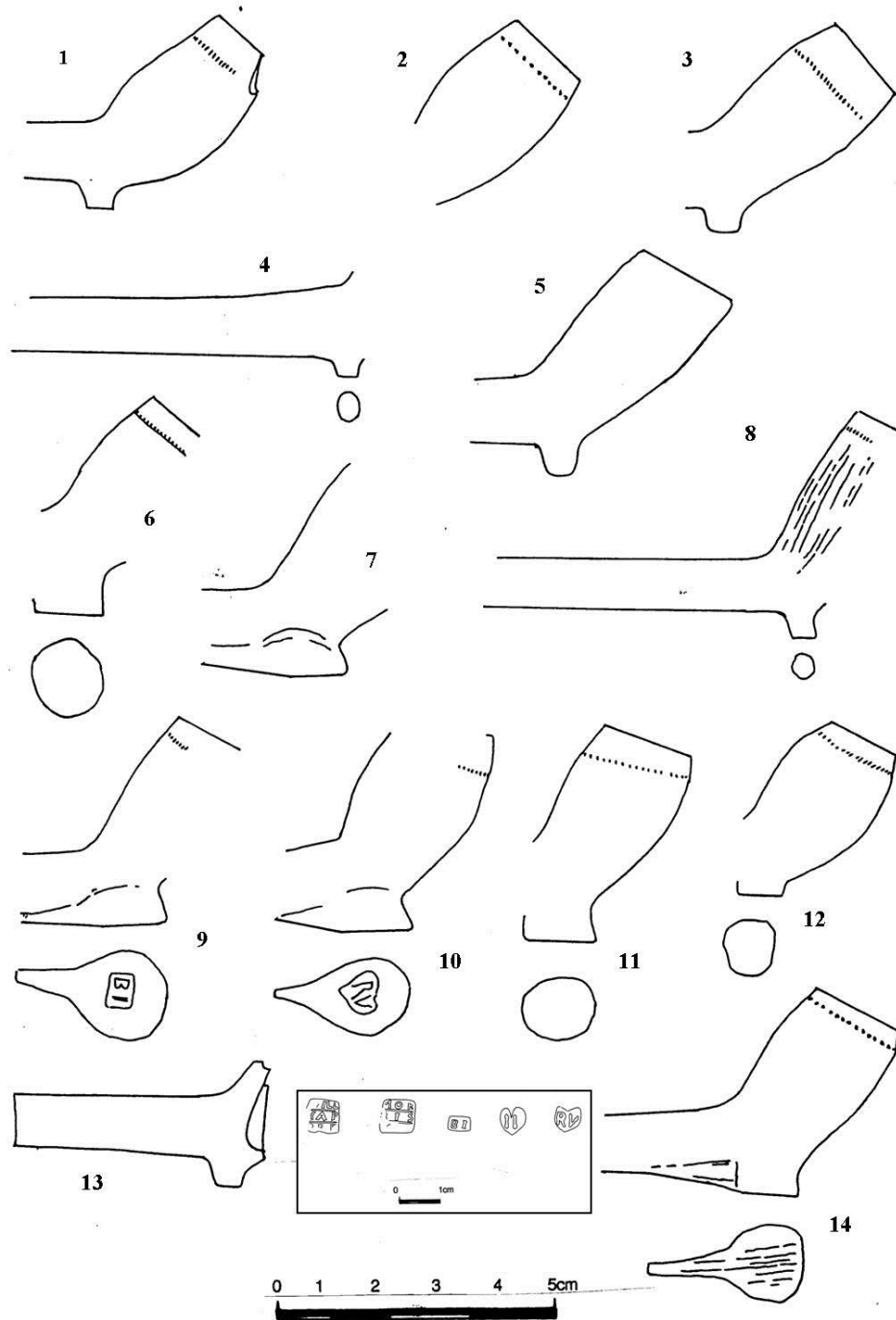
Hugh Jones, 1692, no occupation given, but shop full of small wares, horn combs etc., included 6 tobacco boxes worth 6s. 6d. and 13 tobacco boxes worth 2s. 8d., and five pairs of tobacco tongs worth 1s. 4d. (HRO 105/3/12).

None of them seemed to have pipes for sale, or at least, not of sufficient quantity or value to be inventoried.

#### Footnotes.

1. Peacey, A A 1979 *Clay Tobacco Pipes in Gloucestershire*, Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset. Occasional Paper 4. Bristol
2. Fordy, M 1987 'A Group of Broseley Pipes from Carmarthen', *Soc for Clay Pipe Res* 15, 4-5
3. Bentley, J Davey, P J and Harrison, H M 1980 'An Early Clay Pipe Industry in North Wales', in P J Davey (ed) *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe III*, (BAR 78), 273-282, Oxford





## ***Acknowledgements***

I would like to acknowledge the support and commitment of the England's Past For Everyone Project.

Herefordshire Archaeology would particularly like to thank: Jane Green, Terry White, Robert Wadding, Patricia Tierney, Kirsten Lloyd, Geoff Steel, David Tombs, Tom Elliot, Chris High, Peter Tattershall, Matt Williams, Evelyn Whitfield, John Robinson, M. Williams, Garry Williams, Richard Snead, Ben Willaims, Tom Cochrane, Jane Jinks, Ethan Lee, Owen Fleet, Mike Bowden, Christina Hills, John Roberts, Will Roberts, and Mike Tattum, for their dedication under extremely cold and wet site conditions which made archaeological excavation even more difficult and time consuming than usual!

## ***List of Illustrations***

### ***Figures***

Figure 1: Location of Ledbury within the county. © OS Crown Copyright (OS Licence 100024168) & Herefordshire Archaeology

Figure 2: Site Location within Ledbury. © OS Crown Copyright (OS Licence 100024168) & Herefordshire Archaeology

Figure 3: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1887. © OS Crown Copyright (OS Licence 100024168) & Herefordshire Archaeology

Figure 4: Scan of 1905 postcard of The Master's House Gardens. © England's Past for Everyone.

Figure 5: Trench plan showing major contexts. © Herefordshire Archaeology

Figure 6: Location of stone built walls showing consistent alignment and regular spacing. © OS Crown Copyright (OS Licence 100024168) & Herefordshire Archaeology

Figure 7: Illustration of onion bottles and bottle seal. © Herefordshire Archaeology

## ***Bibliography***

British Geological Survey; England & Wales Sheet 216. Solid & Drift Geology, scale 1:50 000. 1988

Baker, N. in: England's Past For Everyone Ledbury Volume, Chapter 3 : The foundation and growth of the bourough.

Hillaby, J. Ledbury: A Medieval Borough. Logaston Press 1997.

Marches Archaeology, The former Cattle Market, Ledbury: A Report on an archaeological Watching Brief. Marches Archaeology Series 254, 2002.

Miller,D and Potten, S. Archaeological Evaluation at St. Katherine's Precinct, Ledbury. Worcestershire County Council, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service Report 1630, 2008.

Wichbold, D. Salvage Recording at The Feathers Hotel Ledbury. Worcestershire County Council, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service Report 632, 1998

### **Validation**

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

Dr. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist.

