



Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Ramsey, Cambridgeshire in 2009

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Access
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1 Summary

A two-day test pitting even was undertaken in the small town of Ramsey in Cambridgeshire in July 2009, when a total 10 1m² archaeological test pits were excavated by 35 school pupils from five local secondary schools as part of the Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) programme run by Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) out of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge.

The test pitting in Ramsey revealed a range of activity dating from the later prehistoric period through to the modern day, both supporting what has already been found through the parish as well as providing new archaeological evidence. The nature of the test pits allows excavations in otherwise inaccessible places for the normal methods of commercial archaeological investigation, and it showed that some earlier phases of occupation in Ramsey still exist under the present settlement, despite modern developments.

Settlement evidence in Ramsey from the test pitting prior to the construction of the abbey is limited, consisting of only a small number of lithics only, with then only a single small sherd of Late Anglo-Saxon pottery was found on Hollow Lane. The development of the town during the medieval period was recorded through the test pitting, with the highest concentration of activity again noted close to the abbey on Hollow Lane as well as the High Street and by the then site of the market. The various socio-economic factors of the 14th century influenced the settlement at Ramsey, the test pit data supporting historical documents, after which the scope of settlement expansion can also be seen, with land reclamation and the draining of the fens.

2 Introduction

A total of 10 1m² archaeological test pits were excavated over a single two-day digging event in 2009 in the town of Ramsey in Cambridgeshire. All the test pits were excavated by 35 Year 9 and Year 10 pupils from five local secondary schools as part of the Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) designed to investigate currently occupied rural settlements (CORS) that was organised and supervised by Access Cambridge Archaeology, based in the Department of Archaeology, at the University of Cambridge. Funding was provided by Aim Higher Cambridgeshire and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

2.1 Access Cambridge Archaeology

Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) (<http://www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/>) is an archaeological outreach organisation based in the Department of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge, which aims to enhance economic, social and personal well-being through active engagement with archaeology. It was set up in 2004 and specialises in providing opportunities for members of the public to take part in purposeful, research-orientated archaeological investigations including excavation. Educational events and courses range in length from a few hours to a week or more, and involve members of the public of all ages.

Thousands of members of the public have taken part in scores of programmes run by ACA, including teenagers involved in Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) test pit excavation programmes intended since 2005 to build academic skills, confidence and aspirations. More widely, ACA has involved thousands of members of the public of all ages and backgrounds, including those with special needs, in a wide range of archaeological activities including field-walking, excavation, analysis and reporting. These have included projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and events in 2011-12 as part of the Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

2.2 The Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA)

The Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) programme aims to raise the aspirations, enthusiasm and attainment of 14-17 year-olds with regard to higher education by making a valuable contribution to current academic research at the University of Cambridge. The three-day learning-extension course has been run by Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) since 2005, aimed at UK students in state school years 9, 10 and 12. HEFA was developed as a collaboration between ACA, AimHigher and the Assessment Research Division at Cambridge Assessment.

On HEFA, participants spend two days running their own small (1m²) archaeological excavation within living villages, just like thousands did in TV's Big Dig in 2003 and Michael Wood's Great British Story in 2012, with the aim of applying and developing a wide range of learning skills, boosting their academic confidence and giving them a taste of life and learning at university level. They make new discoveries for and about themselves, and in the process contribute to the university's CORS research into the development of rural communities and settlements in the past. The third day is spent in the University of Cambridge analysing the excavation results in discursive learning

sessions, which aim to engage and challenge participants, prepare them to produce a written analysis for assessment as well as provide an inspirational and positive experience of higher education. After the field academy, learners receive detailed individual feedback on their data collection, personal, learning and thinking skills developed during the fieldwork as well as their reporting and research skills exhibited in the written assignment, which will support applications to further and higher education.

2.3 Test pit excavation and rural settlement studies

Rural settlement has long been a crucial area of research for medieval archaeology (Gerrard 2003; Lewis et al 2001), notably since the pioneering work of W. G. Hoskins, Maurice Beresford and John Hurst in the 1940s and 1950s (Hoskins 1955; Beresford 1957; Beresford & Hurst 1971), but until recently attention was focused largely on the minority of medieval settlements which are today deserted or extensively shrunken. Currently occupied rural settlements (CORS), overlain by domestic housing and related buildings of living secular communities – the villages, hamlets and small towns of today – were generally largely disregarded as targets for research-driven excavation. Very few regions have seen any systematic research-driven primary investigation aimed at CORS, and most of that which has taken place has not involved excavation, including those of a survey based nature (Roberts 1987; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000; Roberts and Wrathmell 2003). However, recent attempts to redress this bias in favour of the majority of medieval rural settlements which are still inhabited have opened up new areas for debate which are beginning to call into question established theories about the development of rural settlement in the historic period (Aston & Gerrard 1999; Jones & Page 2007). However, despite these recent advances, the number of CORS to have seen methodical research-orientated investigation including excavation remains very small. In order to begin to resolve this problem, Access Cambridge Archaeology, working with members of the public including school pupils, has carried out test pit excavations in more than 30 CORS, most in eastern England. This will help allow the evidence upon which knowledge and understanding of the origins and development of the medieval rural settlement pattern of eastern England is based, to be more representative of the entire range of medieval settlements, not just on the minority of sites which are currently deserted (Lewis 2005, 2006; 2007a; 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013).

3 Aims, objectives and desired outcomes

3.1 Aims

The aims of the test pit excavations in Ramsey were as follows:

- Raise the educational aspirations of participants by providing the opportunity to acquire, develop, refine and demonstrate new skills, experience and confidence.
- Increase learners' capacity to succeed in applying to and studying at university by providing activities which enable them to reinforce generic skills in team-working, problem solving, communication, presentation and planning.
- To engage with local communities and widen the participation of people in the heritage of the area.
- To increase knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the setting, origins and development of Ramsey and its environs.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of test pit excavations in Ramsey were as follows:

- To provide the opportunity for participants to learn and develop cognitive, practical, personal and technical skills.
- To support and engage with members of local communities through involvement with the project.
- To investigate the archaeology of the environs of Ramsey through test-pitting carried out by school students in properties throughout the settlement.

3.3 Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the test pit excavations in Ramsey were as follows:

- Raise the educational aspirations of participants.
- Provide an educational and vocational challenge allowing participants to develop transferable skills for life and learning in school and for higher education.
- An improved knowledge and understanding of the archaeological resource of the area of Ramsey.

4 Methodology

The four-years of test pitting in Ramsey was organised by ACA in conjunction with local residents with both the excavation and recording following the standard Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) instruction handbook and recording booklet.

The test pit digging took place over two days, which began with an initial lecture explaining the aims of the excavation, the procedures in digging and recording the test pit and the correct and safe use of equipment. Participants were then divided into teams of three or four individuals; (the school groups were split up so there was a mix of students from different schools). Each team was provided with a complete set of test pit excavation equipment, copies of the HEFA instruction handbook and a record booklet into which all excavation data was entered.

The test pits are all 1m² and the turf, if present, was removed in neat squares by hand. Each test pit was excavated in a series of 10cm spits or contexts, to a maximum depth of 1.2m. The horizontal surface of each context/spit was then drawn at 1:10 scale before excavation, a photograph taken and the colour recorded with reference to a standardised colour chart, included in the written handbook. This comprises a 16-page pro-forma *Test Pit Record* booklet, which was developed by ACA for use with students and members of the public with no previous archaeological experience. The site code is RAM/09.

During the excavation, 100% of the spoil was sieved through a 10mm mesh (with the occasional exception of very heavy clay soils, which have to be hand-searched). All artefacts were retained, cleaned and bagged by context. Cut and built features were planned at 1:10 and excavated sequentially with latest deposits removed first. Pottery and most other finds are identified promptly by archaeological experts who are on site for the duration of the field academy and visit the test pits regularly; and at the same time provide advice and check that the excavation is being carried out and recorded to the required standard. Test pits were excavated down to natural or the maximum safe depth of 1.2m, whichever was encountered first. A minority of test pits will stop on encountering a feature, (ancient or modern) which archaeological staff deem inadvisable or impossible to remove, and occasionally excavation may cease at a level above natural due to time constraints. On completion of each test pit excavation, all four sections were drawn at 1:10 along with the unexcavated base of the test pit prior to backfilling by hand and the turf replaced neatly to restore the site.

After the two days of excavation are completed, the archaeological records and finds (all of which are kept and cleaned on site) are retained by ACA at the University of Cambridge for analysis, reporting, archiving and submission to HER's, publication and ongoing research into the origins and development of rural settlement. Ownership of objects rests in the first instance with the landowner, except where other law overrides this (e.g. Treasure Act 1996, 2006, Burials Act 1857). ACA retain all finds in the short term for analysis and ideally also in the longer term in order that the excavation archives will be as complete as possible, but any requests to return finds to owners will be agreed.

5 Ramsey

5.1 The Settlement today

Ramsey is a small market town situated in west Cambridgeshire, under the district of Huntingdonshire, in East Anglia (figure 1). The town is 16.4km southeast of Peterborough and 31.1km northwest of Cambridge as the crow flies. Ramsey sits along the southern boundary of the parish, which extends far into the fens in the north and encompasses the settlements of Ramsey St Mary's, Ramsey Mereside, Ramsey Heights and Ramsey Forty Foot (figure 2). The town is centred on NGR TL 28694 85258.

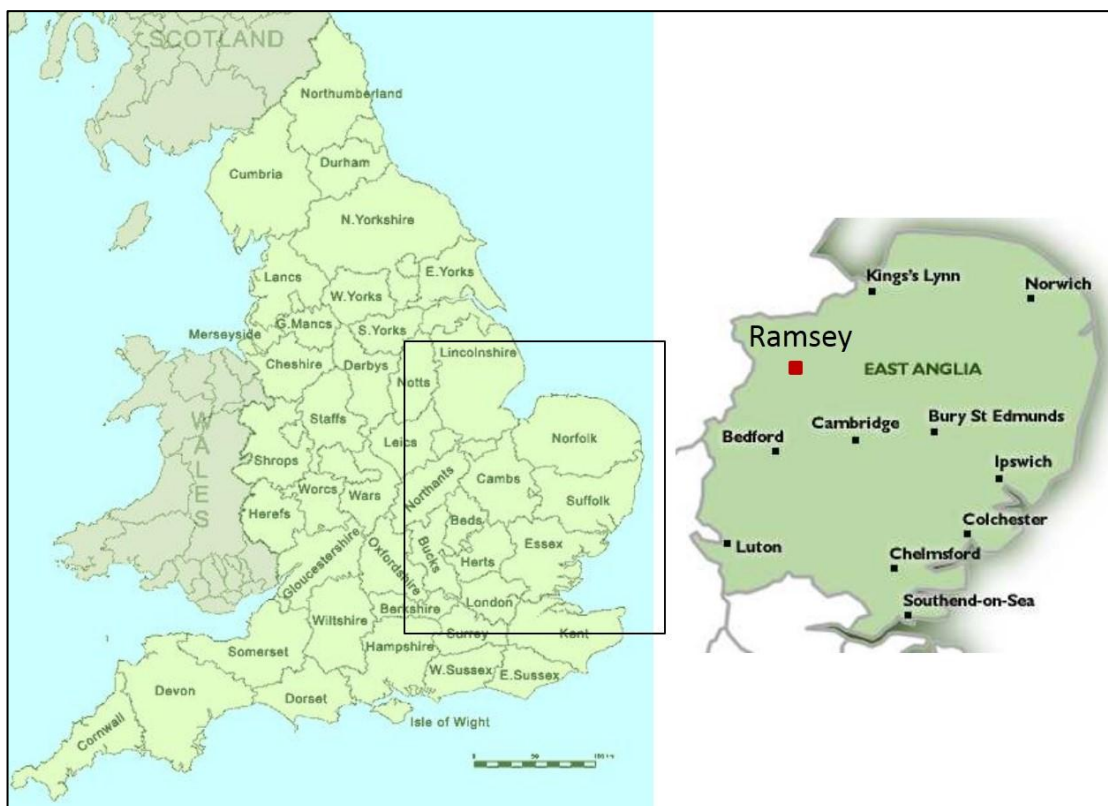


Figure 1: Map of England with a close up insert of East Anglia and the approximate location of Ramsey highlighted in red

Ramsey is sited along the B1040, on the fen edge, between Warboys to the south and Whittlesey to the north. The fens are an expanse of open, low-lying farm- and wet-land extending north through Cambridgeshire into both Norfolk and Lincolnshire. Prior to the drainage of the fens from the 17th century, Ramsey sat on a peninsular of land, jutting out into the fens, although it was surrounded by wetland with only limited access.

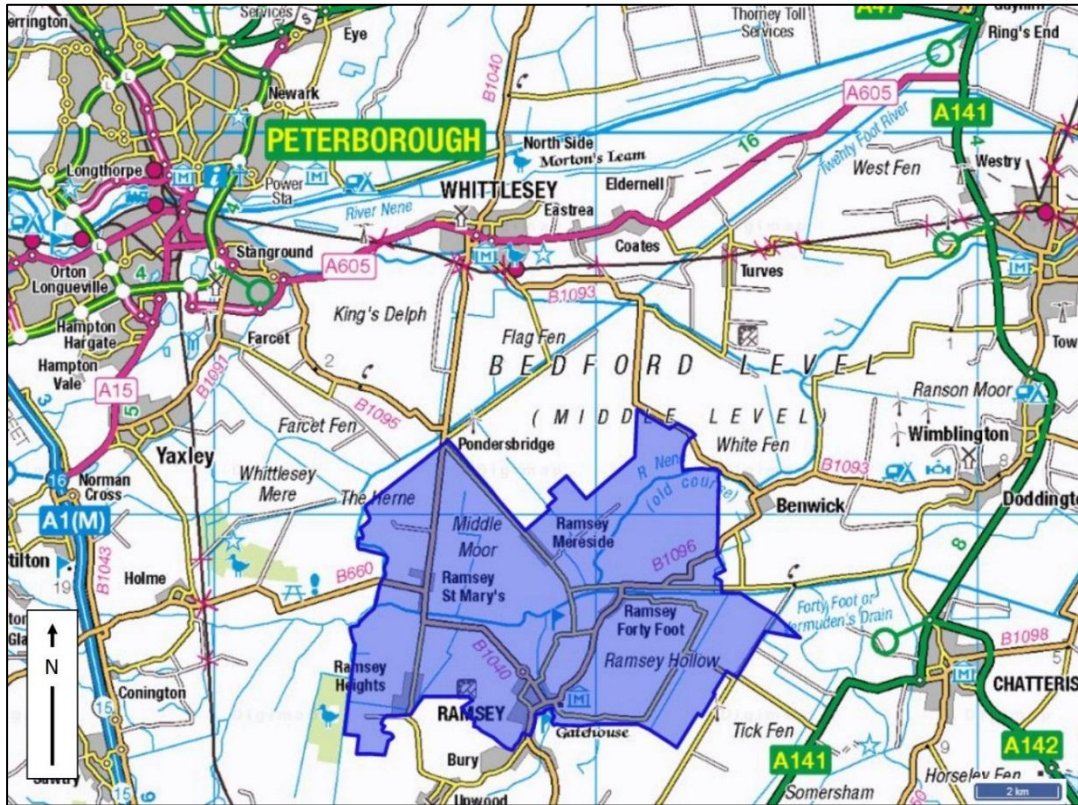


Figure 2: The extent of the parish of Ramsey © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 250,000

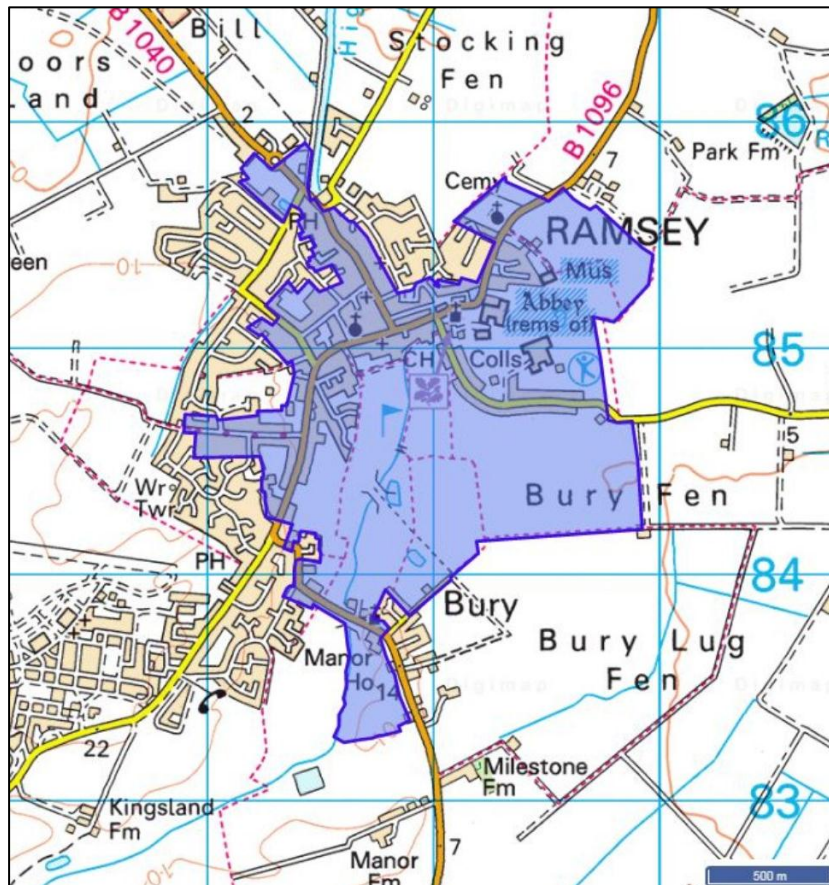


Figure 3: The extent of the Ramsey conservation area © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 50,000

Sixty listed buildings are recorded in the parish, the full list of which can be found online.¹ Within the conservation area (the extent of which can be seen in figure 3), a total of seven individual character areas have been recorded, the historic core now defined by the buildings along both the High Street (roughly running east-west) and Great Whyte (extending north from the High Street). The narrow High Street leads to the abbey at its eastern extent and the broad street that is Great Whyte, was created during the 19th century, when the High Lode (or Bury Brook) was culverted and covered over, but still continues to flow under the road today. The original settlement in Ramsey, developed alongside the abbey and Hollow Lane and the area known as the Abbey Greens is its own character area. The remaining five character areas are: Blenheim Road, Ramsey and Bury Peripheral Estates, the Southern Green Fringe, the High Lode Industrial Area and RAF Upwood (Ingram 2007).

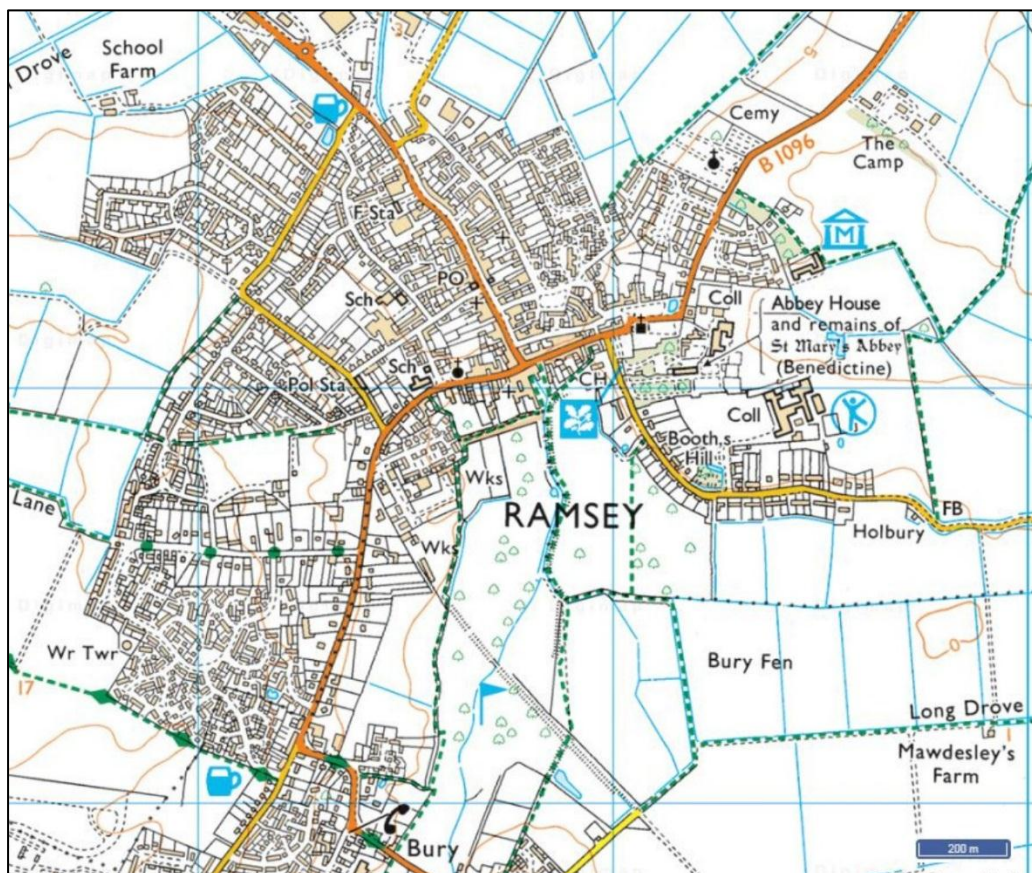


Figure 4: The town of Ramsey © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 25,000

The population of Ramsey town during the 2011 census was recorded at 7,829 individuals, which rose to 8,479 when all the hamlets within the parish of Ramsey were included.² The town today has a large number of retail outlets, covering all the needs of its residents, including café's, bars and restaurants with additional industrial and agricultural trade services.³ There is a vets, medical centre, dentist, garages, post office, library, three schools, a museum, a community centre and a number of places of worship. There are facilities for a wide range of community groups and activities for all ages, outdoor and recreation areas as well as sports facilities. The town is also very well connected with numerous bus routes to the hamlets in the parish as well as further afield.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search/> (Accessed December 2018)

² <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?search=ramsey> (Accessed December 2018)

³ <http://www.ramsey-town.co.uk/> (Accessed January 2019)

5.2 Geology and Topography

Ramsey town sits on the border of two National Character Areas (NCA), as defined by Natural England, with the settlement itself within 'No.88. Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands' on its far western boundary, whilst the rest of the parish is within 'No.46. The Fens'.⁴ The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire claylands are classified as a 'gently undulating, lowland plateau of chalky boulder clay that is divided by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east. The landscape is predominantly open, utilised for arable, with planned and regular fields bounded by open ditches and hedgerows. There is variable and scattered areas of woodland'.⁵ The Fens NCA, for which Ramsey lies on the south-western limit, is an 'extensive area of flat, open and low-lying wetland landscape influenced by the Wash estuary to the north. The clay bedrock is overlain by rich, fertile calcareous soils on the coast and centrally, with peat fen further inland. Woodland is sparse and the predominant land use is arable, made possible by actively draining reclaimed areas of land. These exist as large open fields bounded by a network of drains'.⁶

The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Township Assessment (Ingram 2007), classifies Ramsey along 'Landscape Character Area 2: Fen Margin', to mark the boundary between the Fens and the rise of 'Landscape Character Area 3: Central Claylands' to the west. This is a gently sloping area of land toward the fens, although still in a low-lying area, has a mix of arable and pasture landscape with settlements on the slightly higher ground. This leads to a larger and more open landscape of arable fields over the claylands to the west.

The whole parish is generally low-lying, with the majority of land at or just above sea-level and in Ramsey itself, rising to between 5m OD and 17m OD to the southwest. The underlying bedrock geology consists of Oxford Clay Formation of mudstone, formed by shallow seas. The superficial geology comprises a number of different elements, with areas of peat, glacial Oadby sediments, and patches of clay, silt, sand and gravel, accumulated on subaerial slopes as well as the results of shallow marine shorelines and tidal flat deposits.⁷

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-the-east-of-england> (Accessed December 2018)

⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5091147672190976?category=587130> (Accessed December 2018)

⁶ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6229624?category=587130> (Accessed December 2018)

⁷ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?> (Accessed December 2018)

6 Archaeological and Historical Background

6.1 Historical Background

The name of Ramsey is thought to derive from the Old English words of ‘*hramsa*’ and ‘*eg*’ to mean ‘island where wild garlic grows’ (Mills 2011), although other definitions have been put forward. One suggests that Ramsey derives from two English words ‘*ram*’ and ‘*aie*’ to mean ‘Ram Isle’, whilst another ‘*insular ramarum*’ to mean the ‘island of branches’ (DeWindt and DeWindt 2006). The first recorded spelling was in c.1000 AD at *Hramesege*, which had a number of written variations, as recorded between the 11th and 13th centuries and documented online.⁸ In 1034 the settlement was recorded as *Ramesige*, in 1050 it was *Rammesege* and in c.1060 it was changed to *Ramesege*, which further developed as *Ramesia*, *Rames(eie)* and *Rammes(eye)* by the early 13th century. Ramsey was not included in the Domesday Survey of 1086, most likely because a settlement did not exist here until around the 12th century (*Ibid*), but Ramsey Abbey is mentioned with numerous land holdings (42 manors recorded in seven counties, the majority in Huntingdonshire with 24 (Page *et al.* 1926)) and recorded as the fourth richest religious house in England in 1087, following Glastonbury, Ely and Canterbury.⁹

The abbey itself was founded in AD 969 by Aethelwine, an Aelderman; the equivalent to a later Earl or Duke,¹⁰ of East Anglia, who had built a small hermitage for three monks on his island at Ramsey. Upon meeting Oswald, the Bishop of Worcester, who told Aethelwine he should build a religious house, was impressed by the story told at how Aethelwine had received guidance from St Benedict himself that he immediately promised to send 12 monks from his own monastery at Westbury. Oswald wanted to see the land for himself and was apparently so impressed with the setting of the existing hermitage, surrounded by fenland, that he immediately found local stone masons to set to work building a church, dormitory and refectory on the site. Aethelwine and his wife donated land from their many estates, as did Oswald, which also encouraged other noblemen to do the same, so that by AD 974 Ramsey was a richly endowed monastery (DeWindt and DeWindt 2006).

It was dedicated by two archbishops to the Virgin Mary, St Benedict and all other Holy Virgins and by the following year had also received a royal charter of confirmation and grants of liberties. It was these benefits and continued endowments that made the monastery one of the richest in the region and became known as ‘Ramsey the Golden’ (and the fourth richest in England) at the time of the Domesday Survey. During the 12th and 13th centuries it is also estimated to have had at least 80 monks residing there. The abbey had also gained such a renowned reputation for learning that the children of local noble families were sent to Ramsey to learn (Page *et al.* 1926), and it also attracted scholars from further afield, including Abbo de Fleury, a scholar from France who instructed the monks at Ramsey in all liberal arts. The abbey was said to fair well again the Danish raids of the later Anglo-Saxon period and even the transition to Normal Rule did not seem to affect everyday life at the abbey (Carroll *et al.* 2015). The abbey also had two daughter churches at both St Ives (Slepe) and Chatteris (Oosthuizen 2000).

The abbey had three main periods of construction; the initial wooden structure during the Late Anglo-Saxon period was replaced in the early 11th and 12th century with a

⁸ <http://placenames.org.uk/id/placename/99/000587> (Accessed January 2019)

⁹ http://www.ramseyabbey.co.uk/ramsey_the_rich.html (Accessed January 2019)

¹⁰ <https://ahgray.wordpress.com/2013/11/24/anglo-saxon-social-ladder-from-kings-to-slaves/> (Accessed January 2019)



period of rebuilding in stone as well as landscaping within the monastic precinct that was followed by further re-modelling during the 13th and 14th centuries as the town also continued to grow (Spoerry *et al* 2008). It was only during the anarchy period, under the rule of Stephen in the early- to mid-12th century that Ramsey Abbey suffered its first setback, at the hands of soldiers during this civil war. It was seized at one point by Geoffrey de Mandeville, who drove the monks out of the abbey and turned it into his own fortress against King Stephen. The motte at Booth's Hill on Hollow Lane to the south of the abbey is thought to have been constructed by de Mandeville as part of his defences at Ramsey, the 'castle' here, likely for his own personal use. Upon Geoffrey's death in battle, his son immediately withdrew the troops from Ramsey and the abbey was returned to Abbot Walter, albeit in a severely impoverished state, as there had been no maintenance and cultivation of the abbey lands during his occupation (Page *et al.* 1926). The lands owned by the abbey included extensive areas of fenland (which was often the subject of many an argument between the great fenland monasteries), deer parks as well as three granges known as Biggin, Bodsey and Hingey that would have provided a range of dairy and garden products to the monks and their guests.

The abbey did however recover with a succession of wealthy abbots, although this reportedly started to lead the monastery down a 'financially and morally decayed route' (*Ibid*). This was further aided by the Black Death, but by 1431, stability to the abbey was again re-established and then continued to thrive until 1538 and the dissolution. The monks surrendered the abbey without protest at the dissolution and were rewarded with a high pension and the land was brought by the Cromwell family who bought about the destruction of the abbey by the following year. At least three of the colleges in Cambridge benefited from its dissolution, as Kings, Trinity and Gonville and Caius reused the abbey stone in their construction. Stone also helped build Hinchingsbrooke House in Huntingdon (Spoerry *et al* 2008) and even the tower on St Thomas a Becket church utilised some of the abbey stone in its construction. The destruction was so thorough that the exact location of the abbey buildings are still conjecture.¹¹

Ramsey as a settlement, remained small, but was established enough that it was granted a weekly market on Wednesdays in 1267 by King Henry III and a fair for two days following the vigil and feast of the Translation of St Benedict each July (Page *et al.* 1932). It was due to the position of Ramsey in the fens as to why it remained a small market town, never reaching the status of a borough (Carroll *et al* 2015), combined with the fact that it does not sit on any major traffic routes. The current layout of the town was likely based on the medieval settlement, perhaps part of the re-planning during the 13th century (*Ibid*) with a focus of activity along the High Street to the open space outside the church and connected to the abbey over a causeway. The market area was sited to the north, between the High Street and Little Whyte, around which the town developed and grew, also expanding along the Great Whyte (DeWindt and DeWindt 2006). The Great Whyte (CHER MCB18435) prior to 1852, was an open stream, known as Bury Brook (that would have also been navigable during the medieval period) and flows from Broughton through Wistow and Bury and then Ramsey to become the High Lode to the north of the Great Whyte. The stream was covered by three great culverts, between 1852-54 and still flow under the road today.

There were two major fires recorded in Ramsey; the first in 1636, focused on Little Whyte, when 15 tenements burnt down and a second, larger fire in 1731, along the High Street, as well as the those structures on the west side of the Great Whyte. Very few post medieval buildings are present in the town today because of this fire (Carroll *et al* 2015) and the town and its surroundings continued to change and grow, aided by the

¹¹ http://www.ramseyabbey.co.uk/newest_developements_of_ramsey_abbey.html (Accessed February 2019)

drainage of the fens. Smaller scale water management would have certainly been prevalent through the medieval period, as initiated by the abbey to make the most of the surrounding natural resources and create fertile grazing and agricultural land. The Forty Foot Drain to the immediate north of Ramsey was constructed during the 17th century, connecting with other drainage channels and the original course of the Rivers Nene and Ouse (Page *et al* 1936). Wind pumps would have aided the early post medieval water management, the sites of many of which are recorded on the HER, see section 6.2.5 below (Carroll *et al* 2015).

As well as the draining of the fens, the Ramsey Enclosure Act was passed in Parliament in 1842, which divided up the large open common fields into parcels of individually owned land (HDC 2005). A lot of these parcels eventually also became building plots with the population expansion noted through the first half of the 19th century. At the first National Census, the population of the parish of Ramsey was recorded as 1,894 and rose rapidly through the first half of the 19th century to 4,645 in 1851, after which the population appeared to level off as it was recorded as 4,823 in 1901. By 1951, the parish contained 5,770 individuals¹² which again rose steadily to a record of 7,667 people in the 2001 National Census.¹³

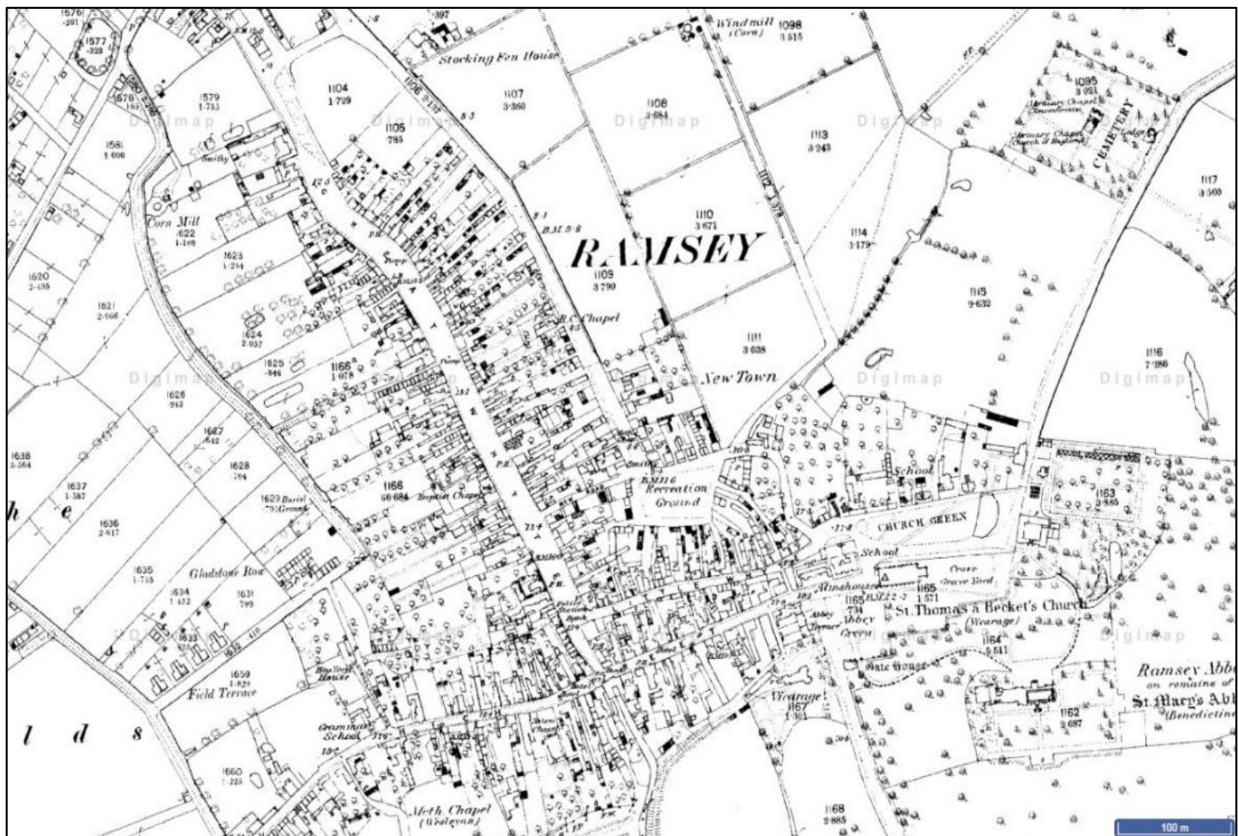


Figure 5: 1880's Ordnance Survey (OS) map of Ramsey © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 2,500

¹² http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10259733/cube/TOT_POP (Accessed February 2019)

¹³ <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/uk-england-eastofengland.php?cityid=E34003541> (Accessed February 2019)

Two railways served Ramsey, the earliest of which connected Ramsey to Somersham as a branch line of the Great Eastern Joint Railway (CHER 03696) from Cambridge and St Ives to Chatteris and March and was opened in July 1863. This was subsequently closed to passengers in September 1930, although Ramsey East Station was not closed until September 1956. The second branch line connected Ramsey to Holme (CHER 03696) as a Great Northern Railway venture on the Huntingdon to Peterborough line in 1897 and was closed to passengers by autumn of 1947. This line also had a station in Ramsey St Mary's (CHER MCB20742), classed as an intermediate station. It was also closed to passengers in October 1947, although the line continued for freight until 1971.¹⁴ Despite a joint committee formed between the Great Northern and the Great Eastern companies in 1897, a connection between the two Ramsey termini was never implemented. Both railway lines are now gone.

6.2 Archaeological Background

The following paragraphs summarise the finds and monuments listed on the Historic Environment Record (HER), accessed via the Heritage Gateway Website and based on a 'quick search' for Ramsey.¹⁵

6.2.1 Prehistory

The earliest recorded finds from the parish date as Palaeolithic (800,000-10,000 BC) with the single find of a handaxe during extension work to the original vicarage (CHER 02877), now the site of the golf clubhouse, just south of the High Street.

There has been a number of artefacts recorded from Ramsey dating to the Mesolithic period (10,000-5,000 BC), consisting of relatively dense lithic scatters at the site of St Bennett's Cross (CHER 03743A, 03741A and 03737A) to the east of Ramsey at the parish boundary with Chatteris. These included a number of flakes, some of which were patinated, as well as a microliths, cores and blades. Another area of possible Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic activity was identified during fieldwalking and a test pit evaluation at 'Honey Hill' in Ramsey Heights. The extensive lithic scatter included a number of burnt flints, an axe, cores, a leaf arrowhead, scrapers, microliths and flakes (CHER 07811), suggesting settlement activities were likely located nearby as well as this area providing a focus for flint tool production.

Additional Neolithic (4,000-2,200 BC) lithics have been found in Ramsey in the form of Greenstone axes at Ramsey North Station (CHER 01899) and as a surface find in Ramsey Heights (CHER 02860). Another flint axe was also recorded by a local farmer in the Ramsey Heights area (CHER 07809), also dated as Neolithic.

At the site of St Bennett's Cross, and in the area where a number of Mesolithic lithics were also found, considerable quantities of worked flints characterised as Neolithic in date were also recorded (CHER 03741 and 03743). A few Neolithic flints were found on a small island just northeast of Ramsey Heights (CHER 07810) and perforated stone were recorded from Ramsey Mere, dating as either Neolithic or Bronze Age (CHER 07805).

¹⁴ http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/r/ramsey_north/ (Accessed February 2019)

¹⁵ <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> (Searched in January 2019)

The first prehistoric structural remains found in Ramsey, date to the Bronze Age (2,200-700 BC) and include five bowl barrows just to the north of Waypost Farm at Ramsey Forty Foot (CHER 03740) and is also a Scheduled Monument (1013946), even though there is damage caused by ploughing. The location of this cemetery is deemed unusual, given its position on clayey gravel, compared to the 'more normal' location on the sands and gravels within the fens. Additional information about the listing can be found on the Historic England website.¹⁶ The above scheduling includes an additional two barrows, located a further 300m away to the northwest but are recorded separately on the HER as (CHER) 03738. Additional cemetery remains have been identified to the north of Ramsey St Mary's, in the form of cremation urns (CHER 10855), potentially part of a larger 'urn field' and a Bronze Age Beaker was found with a skeleton in a gravel hillock in the fen at Ramsey St Mary's during the early 20th century (CHER 02869).

Also following on from the Mesolithic and Neolithic activity recorded at Bennett's Cross, the remains of a probable Bronze Age round barrow have also been identified (CHER 03737) that is thought to be part of a larger cluster of eight barrows. Associated with these, were a quantity of roughly worked, unpatinated flints, including scrapers, burnt stone (CHER 03668) and a polished knife (CHER 03742), assumed to be of a Bronze Age date. Another small quantity of worked flint, including again both scrapers and burnt stone were identified to the east of Ramsey (CHER 10884).

Finds that have been dated to the Bronze Age, consist of a bronze palstave or chisel (CHER 02810) found from the centre of Ramsey, with an additional palstaves found at Middle Level, with a bronze rapier blade also recorded during cutting of the Middle Level drain (CHER 02952) and at the site of St Bennett's Cross (CHER 07958). Additional metalwork finds have been identified as socketed bronze spearheads, dating to the Middle Bronze Age, and found just to the south of the old course of the River Nene (CHER 10746) and to the west of Ramsey Heights (CHER 02027).

Evidence for Iron Age (700 BC- AD 43) occupation in Ramsey was found during an evaluation where a series of Early to Middle Iron Age intercutting pits were excavated in the west of the town and found with Iron Age pottery (CHER MCB20288) (Clarke 2014).

A small amount of lithics also recorded from the parish have only been assigned a date of 'prehistoric' and include the struck flint found during an evaluation at St Mary's Road (CHER MCB 19139) and the find of flint flakes, cores and scrapers to the west of Ramsey Heights (CHER 02864).

6.2.2 *Romano-British*

Previous archaeology dated as Romano-British (AD 43-410) is limited in Ramsey, consisting of a relatively small number of both pottery and metalwork. In the late 19th century a vase and coin hoard were ploughed up along the northern side of the moat at Worlick Farm, to the east of Ramsey (CHER 03867). Additional coin finds have been recorded from the golf course (CHER 02822) as well as from within Ramsey itself, with an associated pavement (CHER 02888).

Fragments of Roman pottery were also found through the parish (CHER 07807), with specific sites including the find of a Samian bowl during the foundation digging at the Infants School in the early 20th century (CHER 01550) and two locations close to the Secondary School (CHER 02874 and 08016A).

¹⁶ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013946> (Accessed January 2019)

6.2.3 *Anglo-Saxon*

As mentioned in section 6.1, Ramsey was not recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, although the Benedictine Abbey was founded in Ramsey in c.969 AD, on the site of the current secondary school (CHER 02781). Two open area excavations were undertaken in the precinct of the original Abbey (CHER MCB 16055) with 10 smaller test pit excavations and geophysical survey (CHER 11953), which were able to identify some of the original timber 10th century buildings, including a Late Saxon pit and Saxo-Norman pottery that were also within an enclosure, although the exact layout of the original abbey is not known, the excavations were likely sited with the outer court of the abbey (Atkins et al 2008). The site of the abbey is also a Scheduled Monument; No. 1006838.

6.2.4 *Medieval*

The medieval settlement of Ramsey developed around the abbey, which continued to expand and thrive through the medieval period (AD 1066-1540). The abbey itself was re-planned after the Norman Conquest, which also showed a shift in the layout further to the north, with rebuilding, alterations and additions, including a surrounding bank and ditch (CHER MCB16055 and 02781), with walls and foundations also identified through test pitting within the now school grounds (CHER 11953). The gatehouse was added in the later medieval (CHER 02782) and the now parish church of St Thomas a Becket was built in 1180 (CHER 02832) just outside the abbey gate that was thought to have originally been utilised as a hospital until the late 13th century. Its churchyard is recorded separately on the HER from its use as a parish church (CHER MCB 17092). A 13th century park associated with the abbey has also been recorded (CHER 12329). Bodsey House, at Ramsey Forty Foot, was originally founded at the same time as the abbey for use as a hermitage, which by the 13th century was being utilised as a summer retreat for the abbot and senior monks (CHER 01033).

An evaluation and subsequent excavation at Ailwyn Community School (CHER MCB16933) recorded part of the original medieval precinct boundary to the abbey, with evidence for reuse through the post medieval and later, along with water channels and small scale quarry pits, floor and roof tile fragments and later medieval pottery (Mortimer 2006). The precinct boundary was also thought to continue on land at 43 Hollow Lane, as identified through an evaluation there, with also a fence line running alongside the ditch (Wilson 2008). To the south of Ailwyn School, a kiln site was identified in the 1960s/1970s (CHER MCB16875) and as the abbey is known to have had its own kilns to produce both pottery and tile (CHER 06163), an assumed medieval date has been applied here. An evaluation at 6 Wood Lane revealed the presence of a large pit or part of a ditch (CHER MCB17875) that contained late medieval household waste and likely stable manure and so was suggested that this area would have been peripheral to the original abbey gardens. The feature was subsequently filled with material after the dissolution as the abbey was stripped of all valuable building material (Muldowney 2008). Also to the north of the abbey precinct was a likely midden area, as suggested by the abbey court rolls and recognised during the Fenland Survey of the 1970s (CHER 10886), which identified gravel terraces and a pond with building material and pottery. A large quantity of medieval pottery was again also recorded when the site was redeveloped during the 1980s for housing. An archaeological evaluation on land opposite 11-17 Tower Close (Webb 2015), was originally in the north of the abbey precinct and recorded a later medieval watering hole that was later utilised for the deposition of midden material and a large pit that also contained general late medieval waste.

To the south of the abbey, is Booths Hill, a Scheduled Monument (No. 1004643), and is a small motte contained in a moat, believed to have been utilised by Geoffrey de Mandeville until his death in the mid-12th century (CHER 01777). Another moated site is known to the west of Ramsey, although it is now levelled, and the site re-used during the 16th century to build Biggin House. The HER records this as the site of a medieval hospital (CHER 01033). The probable site of St Bennett's Cross, dating to the 14th century (CHER 03868) is indicated on the modern OS maps and is believed to have been an important boundary marker, as it would not only have marked the borders of the properties of the Abbots of Ramsey and Thorney and the Bishop of Ely, but it is also where the Ramsey and Warboys parish boundary leaves the county boundary. Also found close to the site of St Bennett's Cross was an iron locking key (CHER 07829), thought to date to the 13th century.

Numerous small-scale archaeological investigations undertaken elsewhere in Ramsey have also recorded medieval remains. At 50-52 High Street (CHER MCB16483), a significant sequence of medieval dumping and levelling was recorded with structural remains, from which it was concluded that prior to the 13th century, this land had not been previously developed as it was repeatedly prone to flooding. Nicholson (2006) goes on to suggest that by the end of the 14th century, this area was built up enough to form a dry land surface that went on to be occupied by simple timber framed buildings and utilised for domestic occupation. Further west along the High Street, also on reclaimed land, an evaluation and excavation at numbers 42, 46 and 48 identified further periods of levelling during the 12th and 13th centuries, utilising domestic refuse, shell and building stone. The area of the site was thought to have been part of the back gardens to properties along the High Street that may have also been still prone to flooding, which why there was little in the way of finds. At 40 High Street (CHER MCB19193), a medieval buried soil layer was found with a dump or medieval clay, pottery and other post medieval and updated features (Barlow et al 2010). A trench sited at the eastern end of the High Street at no.102 (CHER MCB 20434), found multiple numerous sherds of pottery, tile, shell and animal bone, dating both to the medieval period and later (Webster 2015).

An evaluation at 96-98 Great Whyte (CHER MCB16899) recorded activity from the later medieval, including evidence for the reclamation of land from the very late 14th century onwards, including pits and ditches with associated domestic finds as well as evidence for small scale activities, such as metal working and fishing (Cooper 2005). The remains of a 15th century timber structure were identified at 88 Great Whyte (CHER MCB16664) that was also found to continue to 90-92 Great Whyte. Dendrochronology carried out on the timbers put forward a felling date of AD 1460. Also noted were that the structure had reed floors and there were also hearth stones present. A ditch recorded at 30 Great Whyte (CHER CB15038) found with pottery and animal bone, could have been an original property boundary, running toward the stream. Also on Great Whyte at the new library site, an evaluation recorded an un-mortared limestone wall that could have originally held a timber box frame building (CHER MCB17478).

Evaluation work at Ramsey Garden Centre (CHER CB15006) revealed further evidence for land reclamation during the later medieval, with associated medieval deposits including animal bone, shell and tile and an evaluation at Newton Green revealed a single medieval pit with 12th-14th century pottery (CHER CB15414). A medieval rubbish pit was also recorded from an evaluation at 1 Bury Road (CHER MCB20326) that also contained sherds of 12th- 15th century pottery, from nearby residential dwellings (Woolhouse 2014). Sherds of residual medieval pottery were identified from an evaluation at 3-5 Old Station Road with small undated boundary ditches (Brook et al 2008).

A geophysical survey on land to the west of Field Road and Blenheim Road (CHER MCB20288) recorded a series of medieval ridge and furrow (Fisher 2014) and confirmed by a subsequent excavation (Clarke 2014).

Multiple spot finds dating as medieval are also recorded on the HER, including the presence of 6 medieval coins found in a field to the south of the golf course with medieval buckles, a thimble and lead fishing weights (CHER 02822). During building work along Wood Lane, a number of sherds of mostly 14th century fineware pottery were identified with additional undated finds (CHER MCB16663) and the Fenland Survey recorded a number of medieval occupation layers and debris further north along Wood Lane (CHER 03744). A medieval 15th century copper alloy seal matrix was found through metal detecting at an undisclosed location (CHER MCB16765). The decoration depicts a cross, a Bishop's mitre, a sword and a key above the figure of praying cleric.

6.2.5 *Post Medieval and later*

The start of the post medieval (AD 1540-1799) period in Britain follows the Dissolution of the Monasteries by King Henry VIII and in Ramsey the abbey was almost entirely destroyed when the Cromwell family bought the land. The building stone from the abbey was utilised elsewhere, both in Ramsey and further afield; the west tower on St Thomas a Becket's church was built in 1672 of stone from the abbey (CHER 02832). The abbey building that did survive was converted into a house (CHER 02781b) and after 19th century alterations, is now the basis of the Grammar School. The grounds of the abbey were also changed to become the new gardens for the house, more particularly so during the 19th century (CHER 12319) and again these are part of the school grounds today as playing fields. More recent investigations at the school has revealed a number of post medieval features and finds, including walls, ditches and pits with changes to the ground surface, as part of the levelling and creation of the gardens (CHER MCB19839) (Gilmour 2012) as well as drains, architectural material, and metalwork (Atkins et al 2008). A pipeline investigation also within the school grounds, recorded a stone wall, with post medieval pottery, glass and smoking pipe (CHER MCB20189), although the land had already been greatly disturbed (Haskins 2014). An archaeological evaluation on land opposite 11-17 Tower Close (Webb 2015), found a series of plot boundaries running across the site that date from the dissolution and the land likely utilised as part of the properties fronting Church Green.

Archaeological investigations at Ailwyn School has also recorded the post dissolution changes on the abbey land, including evidence for deliberate backfilling and levelling of the medieval ditches and the cutting of new boundary ditches (CHER MCB17467). On land at 43 Hollow Lane, an evaluation identified building stone from the dissolution of the abbey, as well as probable Tudor bricks, made at the nearby kilns (Wilson 2008), which was followed up in 2009 by an excavation (Kaye) that illustrated further the boundary ditches, some of which had been re-cut, associated both with the abbey and after its dissolution.

To the east of Great Whyte, a post medieval probable masonry pier was recorded during an evaluation at 11a New Road (CHER MCB19552) that may have been part of a much larger causeway structure that may have continued across the back of the plots along Great Whyte or provided part of a 'hard standing' for access to the wetter land further west (Snee 2011). Evidence for post medieval 'levelling' was also recorded during archaeological monitoring at 56 Little Whyte, further to the east (Jackson 2016) and to the rear of 18 Little Whyte, evidence for repeated flooding as well as standing water was found with attempts to build up the land. These likely date from the 17th century, based on the few artefacts that were also recovered, although it may have still been



uninhabitable (McConnell 2014). At 50-52 High Street, occupation was recorded following on from the medieval activity identified, through to the late post medieval (CHER MCB16483) and was similar to the results at 42, 46-48 High Street, which by the 18th century, the ground surface had been raised by 1m (CHER MCB16326). Levelling and stabilising the ground was seen further along the High Street at 102 with domestic rubbish found (Webster 2015) and during an evaluation at Ramsey Garden centre, where medieval and post medieval deposits of shell, bone and tile were utilised as an attempt at land reclamation (CHER CB15006).

An evaluation undertaken as part of the Ramsey Millfields Flood Alleviation Scheme on the recreation ground (CHER MCB 19805) recorded a cluster of probable marling pits, given their relatively low-lying and damp location with field boundary ditches and post medieval pottery (Bush 2012). A post-medieval pit was excavated during an evaluation at 1 Bury Road (CHER MCB20326) that contained sherds of 19th century pottery (Woolhouse 2014).

A possible post medieval park has been suggested by both surviving earthworks and field boundary shapes to the north of the original abbey precinct, around Park Farm today (CHER 12182). There is reference to a 'new park' or 'red deer' park' in 1544, which hints at the creation of a new park at this time, separate from the existing Ramsey Park. A number of wind pumps have also been recorded from cartographic evidence, in particular on the 1838 tithe map with specific locations recorded at St Bennett's Cross (CHER 03667), on the Forty Foot drain (CHER 03654), at Bevill's Leam (CHER 02900), along the High Lode out of Ramsey (CHER 02791) and the majority of sites identified along the old course of the River Nene (CHER 03709, 03656, 02792, 02793, 02794 and 02789). The remains of a mere drainage wind pump, just south of the old course of the River Nene and south of Ramsey St Marys (CHER MCB16643) had a wind pump built here in 1872, that was replaced by a three-storey tower mill, with an engine house and in use until 1916. The former site of a water wheel (CHER MCB20782) is known from the west of Ramsey Heights at Great Raveley Drain and was also recorded on the First OS Map and the site of a disused 19th century windmill is known from the north of Millfields in Ramsey (CHER 02880).

An evaluation at the new library site at Great Whyte found medieval building remains as well as a 19th century brick wall of a building, where it was determined that to the east of the wall, was the interior floor surface and to the west were demolition layers (CHER MCB17478). A house was recorded on a gravel island close to Daintree Farm in Ramsey St Mary's (CHER 02786) that prior to its demolition in 1970 was recorded as being constructed from Barnack stone. An additional two post medieval/modern features were also identified at 86 High Street during an evaluation, when a brick culvert and a modern foul drain were both recorded (CHER MCB20202). A modern ditch and pit were identified at 143 Great Whyte, with a couple of residual sherds of both medieval and post medieval pottery (Thompson and Smith 2010) and hints that this area of the town had very little in the way of activity until the 19th century and later. A steam mill, also sited to the north of Great Whyte (CHER MCB16642) was built in 1892 and in use until 1940, when it was utilised as a grain store, before being converted into flats in 1984.

On the site of Booths Hill, the motte thought to have been originally built by Geoffrey de Mandeville in the 12th century, was constructed a Cup and Dome Ice House in c.1832 (CHER MCB20636). The 'cup and dome' type of construction was the most common at the time, but was also the most expensive and were common on large estates to preserve food (Fairbairn 2015).

A number of features on the HER also date from the Second World War with a series of pillboxes crossing the fens (CHER CB15190 and CB15187), some locations of which

have been specified at Forty Foot Drain (CHER MCB16462) and at Wellsbridge (CHER MCB16461). A searchlight emplacement is also located at Forty Foot Drain (CHER MCB17105), a spigot mortar base from Church Green (CHER MCB16456) and several gun emplacements are also known from Bodsey Bridge (CHER MCB16460) and Bodsey House (CHER MCB16459), with a destroyed gun emplacement at High Lode (CHER MCB16457) and a military depot and anti-aircraft site are known from Ramsey (CHER CB15171). The airfield at Upwood (CHER CB15153) was in use during the First and Second World Wars and a since destroyed World War Two site at High Lode, just north of the town has been recorded on the HER (CHER MCB16458). The Royal Observer Corps had an observation post just to the west of the town (CHER MCB16438), which opened in June 1960 but closed in September 1991.

6.2.6 *Undated*

A small number of records remain undated on the HER, due to the fact that they have had no archaeology undertaken. A geophysical survey undertaken at Ailwyn School (CHER 08016), recorded parchmarks of a three-celled building and a possibly related ditched enclosure. A watching brief at Ramsey Abbey School (CHER MCB17361) recorded a sequence of layers, containing both worked stone and plaster but no datable material. Three additional features were also recorded, one with worked stone again, but were still not able to be dated. An area of rough-hewn cobbles were found during trench digging in a garden in New Road (CHER 08418), but had no associated finds or features.

Prior to the construction of a supermarket off St Mary's Road in the north of the town (CHER MCB19139), an archaeological evaluation recorded a number of later prehistoric struck flints as well as undated probable marl pits and a ditch (Hogg 2009). During monitoring of a pipeline at Biggin Hill (CHER MCB19364), a post hole, linear feature and a buried soil layer were all identified but remain undated (Hutton 2010) and to the south of Biggin Lane at Upwood Airfield (CHER MCB20815), an evaluation recorded seven undated ditches, all on a similar alignment and interpreted as likely field boundaries and land divisions (Morgan-Shelbourne 2015).

A single undated earthwork survives in Ramsey as a raised bank close to Park Farm (CHER 11637) and was recorded on the first OS maps of the town and on more recent aerial photographs appears as a ditched feature with a track to the east. The cropmarks of a 'dubious ditch' have been recorded at Daintree Farm (CHER 06826) that may be related to its position on a slight rise.

7 Results of the test pit excavations in Ramsey

The approximate locations of the 10 1m² test pits that were excavated in Ramsey between the 1st and 2nd of July 2009, as part of ACA's Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) can be seen in figure 7 below. The test pits were excavated by 35 HEFA participants from Orton Longville School, Bushfield Community College, Stanground College, St Peter's School and Hinchingsbrooke School (school names correct at time of participation).

The data from each test pit is discussed in this section and set out in numerical order. Most excavations were undertaken in spits measuring 10cm in depth, but in cases when a change in the character of deposits indicated a change in context, a new spit was started before 10cm. An assessment of the overall results, synthesizing the data from all the pits, including deductions about the historic development of Hessett and the potential of the buried heritage resource of the village is presented in the following Discussion section (Section 8). Finds from each test pit are discussed in summary in this section, and listed in detail in the relevant appendices (Section 12). Photographs of sites under excavation and of all finds are included in the archive, but not included in this report for reasons of space.

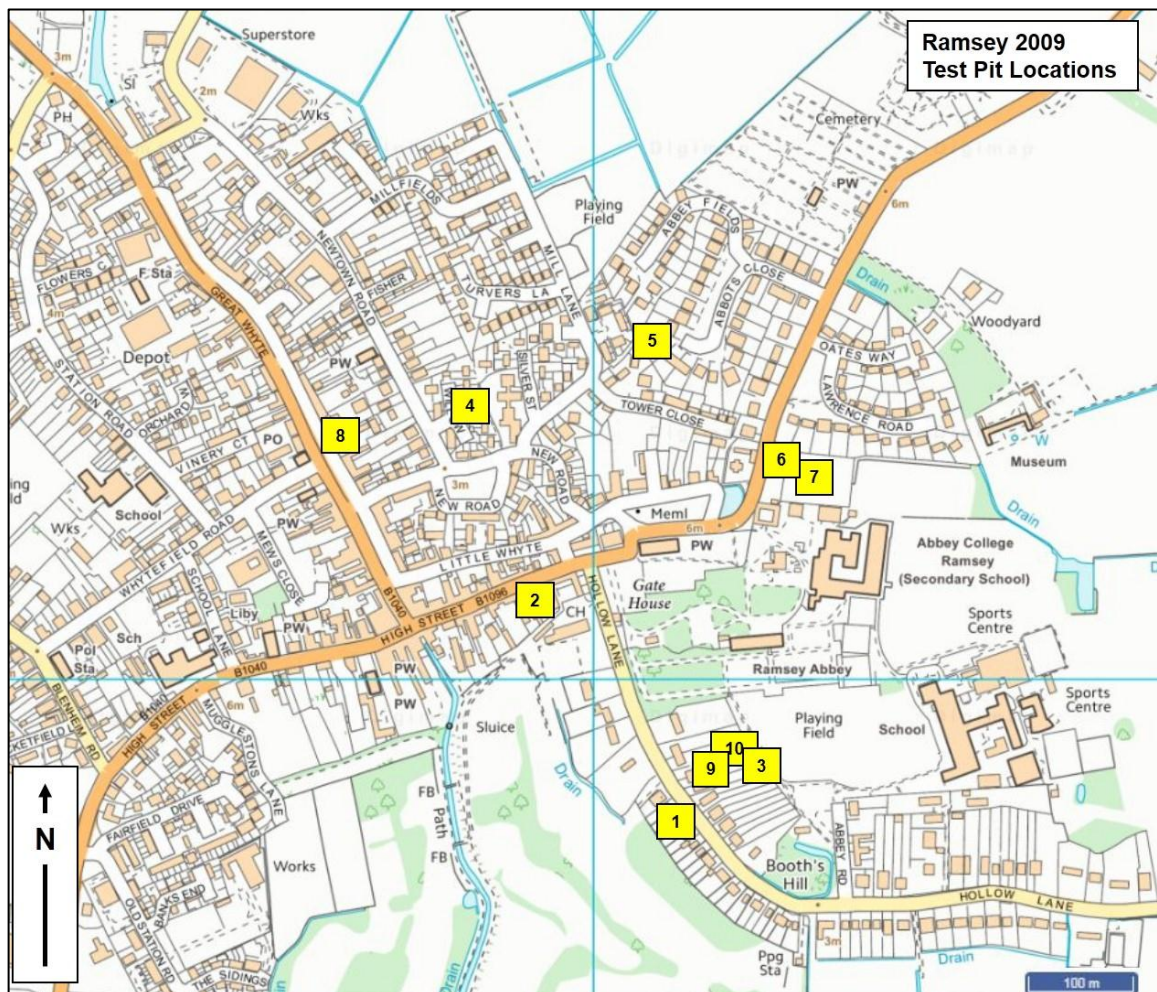


Figure 6: The approximate locations of all 10 test pits excavated in Ramsey (NB: Test pits not shown to scale) © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 5,000

Test Pit one (RAM/09/1)

Test pit one was excavated in the enclosed rear garden of a modern house to the south of the Abbey (28 Hollow Lane, Ramsey. TL 529090 284824).

Test pit one was excavated to a depth of 0.6m. Natural was not recorded at this depth but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.



Figure 7: Location map of RAM/09/1

A single small sherd of Stamford Ware was excavated from context three of RAM/09/1, which was mixed in with a wide range of medieval pottery types, including Early Medieval Sandy Ware, London Ware, Stanion Ware, Grimston Ware and later medieval Bourne 'D' Ware and Cistercian Ware – the majority of which were found from the upper half of the test pit. Two sherds of Glazed Red Earthenware were also recovered with a small amount of Victorian pottery from the middle contexts of test pit one.

TP	Cntxt	STAM		EMW		LW		STB		GRIM		BD		CW		GRE		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	1			2	13					2	4	2	4			1	2			1100-1600
1	2			1	7					1	2	1	1	1	1			4	17	1100-1900
1	3	1	1					1	8	2	8	1	1			1	4	2	6	1000-1900
1	4																	2	5	1800-1900
1	5					1	5			1	8									1200-1600

Table 1: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/1

From the pottery excavated from RAM/09/1 there appears to have been activity on site during the late Saxon and high medieval periods. The late Saxon occupation was the only activity of this date so far identified through test pitting in Ramsey, but being just south of the abbey may indicate an earlier origin. The medieval occupation is quite intense expanding around the abbey, but does tend to drop off again into the later and post medieval periods. An increase of activity was again evident into the 19th century, but the site likely remained open fields until the current house was built in the 20th century. The finds consist of coal, scrap iron, CBM, oyster shell, iron nails and concrete with glass, snail shells, clay pipe, tile and a flat rounded magnet.

Test Pit two (RAM/09/2)

Test pit two was excavated in an area of scrubland at the back of a house that fronts the high street in the centre of the village (97 High Street, Ramsey. TL 528924 285075).

Test pit two was excavated to a depth of 0.8m. Natural was not recorded at this depth but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

A wide range of pottery types were excavated from RAM/09/2, with the medieval pottery found from the lowest contexts of the test pit – Early Medieval Sandy Ware, Grimston Ware and Brill Ware. The later medieval pottery of Bourne ‘D’ Ware and Cistercian Ware were identified with the post medieval types in the centre of the pit. Small numbers of Glazed Red Earthenware, Midland Blackware and Staffordshire Manganese Ware were mixed in with a large number of Victorian sherds that were found through the upper half of the test pit.

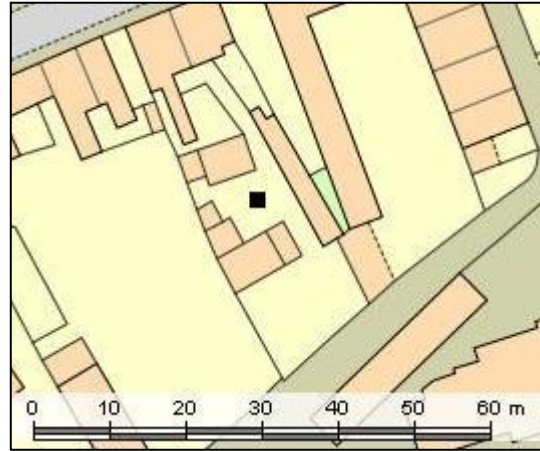


Figure 8: Location map of RAM/09/2

TP	Cntxt	EMW		GRIM		BB		BD		CW		GS		GRE		MB		SMW		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1																			8	187	1800-1900
2	2																			15	35	1800-1900
2	3							2	32					4	147			1	45	3	6	1450-1900
2	4									1	3	1	5			1	2			5	11	1470-1900
2	5					1	1	1	3					1	1					2	8	1200-1900
2	6	1	8	2	13	3	28															1100-1500
2	7	4	30	1	6	1	3															1100-1400

Table 2: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/2

The pottery indicates quite intense occupation at RAM/09/2 during the medieval period, which is probably due to its location along the High Street and just to the west of the Abbey. The activity does appear to decrease into the later medieval and through the post medieval; suggesting a shift in occupation and perhaps the site was open fields until the 19th century with a sharp rise in activity causing a lot of disturbance, which continued as an area of redeposited clay was identified within the test pit. A lot of modern finds were also found, including a dog ball, glass, slate, tile, scrap metal, iron nails, wire, CBM, coal, two one penny coins dated to 1988, modern nails and modern CBM, concrete, plastic with oyster and mussel shell and clay pipe.

Test Pit three (RAM/09/3)

Test pit three was excavated toward the back of a rear garden to a modern house, set to the south of the Abbey. It was the south-eastern of three pits excavated in the property; see also RAM/09/9 and RAM/09/10 (7 Hollow Lane, Ramsey. TL 529166 384910).

Test pit three was excavated to a depth of 0.1m. Natural was not recorded at this depth but due to the presence of concrete under the turf the test pit was abandoned, fully recorded and backfilled.

No finds or pottery were excavated from RAM/09/3, due to the presence of concrete, likely a previous base for a greenhouse, was identified just under the turf, so the test pit was abandoned.

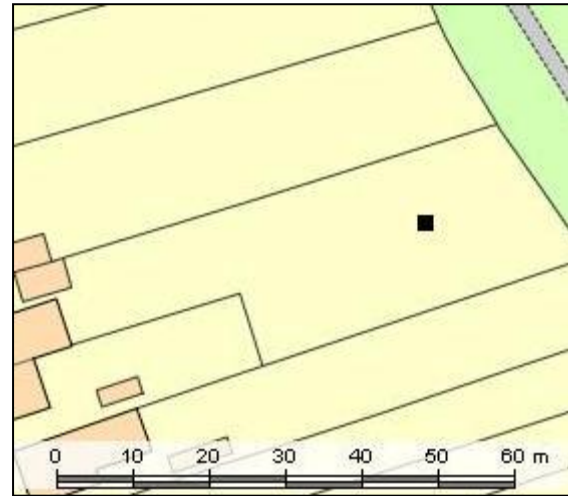


Figure 9: Location map of RAM/09/3

Test Pit four (RAM/09/4)

Test pit four was excavated in the enclosed front garden of a modern house, north of the Abbey, quite central in the village (7 Bankers Walk, Ramsey. TL 528870 285313).

Test pit four was excavated to a depth of 0.5m due to a pipe, only the eastern southern half of the pit was excavated to a depth of 0.8m, at which natural was found. Excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.



Figure 10: Location map of RAM/09/4

The vast majority of the pottery excavated from RAM/09/4 dates to the post medieval period, with single sherds of Staffordshire Slipware, Staffordshire Manganese Ware and Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware, which all mixed through the test pit with a large number of Victorian pottery. Two sherds of later medieval Cistercian Ware and Bourne 'D' Ware were also recovered.

TP	Cntxt	CW		BD		SS		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
4	1			1	6	1	6					2	4	1450-1900
4	2											1	5	1800-1900
4	3	1	3					1	5			6	34	1470-1900
4	4									1	5	21	86	1720-1900

Table 3: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/4

The small amount of late and post medieval pottery excavated from RAM/09/4 suggests limited on site activity during that time, with the site likely to have been open fields, most probably due to the presence of heavy clays. Activity increased into the 19th century that also caused a lot of disturbance on site, including the construction of a brick path. A lot of 19th and 20th century finds were excavated from the test pit, including concrete, coal, tile, CBM, modern nails, slate, glass, mortar, asbestos, part of an ESSO can, modern drain, iron nails and scrap iron with clay pipe, oyster shell and slag, which may suggest metal working on or near site.

Test Pit five (RAM/09/5)

Test pit five was excavated in the enclosed rear garden of a modern house, north of the Abbey, in the east of the village (18 Abbots Close, Ramsey. TL 529063 285391).

Test pit five was excavated to a depth of 0.45m. Natural was not found, but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

A small amount of pottery was excavated from RAM/09/5, with single sherds of Medieval Shelly Ware, Hedingham Ware and Grimston Ware, all of which were recovered through the middle contexts of the test pit.

A single sherd of post medieval Glazed Red Earthenware was also identified mixed with three sherds of Victorian pottery.

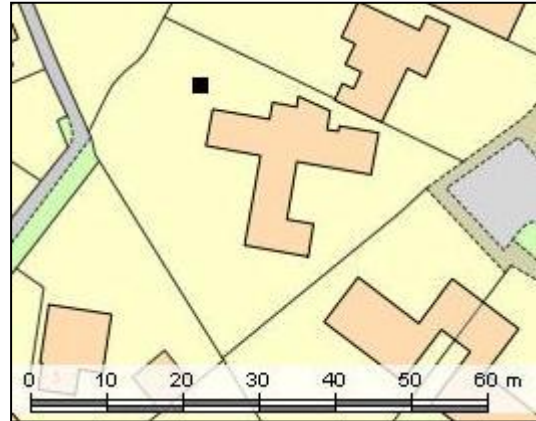


Figure 11: Location map of RAM/09/5

TP	Cntxt	SHW		HED		GRIM		GRE		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
5	2	1	13			1	6			1	1	1100-1900
5	4			1	1			1	1	2	40	1200-1900

Table 4: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/5

Much like RAM/09/4, RAM/09/5 is set in the north of the village away from the main focus of occupation and due to the presence of heavy clay soils has minimal activity on site through the medieval and post medieval periods. Activity increased slightly into the 19th century, but only a small amount of later pottery and finds were excavated. The finds consist of concrete, CBM, glass, coal, melted plastic, oyster and mussel shell with iron nails.

Test Pit six (RAM/09/6)

Test pit six was excavated in the north eastern corner of an enclosed garden of a large 19th century Grade II listed detached house, set just north of the Abbey (Abbey Garden House, Wood Lane, Ramsey. TL 529213 285261).

Test pit six was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. Natural was not found, but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

Three sherds of pottery were excavated from RAM/09/6 to date to the medieval period, with two sherds of Early Medieval Sandy Ware and a single sherd of later medieval Bourne 'D' Ware. The vast majority of the pottery identified however, dates to the Victorian period, with large numbers excavated from the upper five contexts of the test pit.

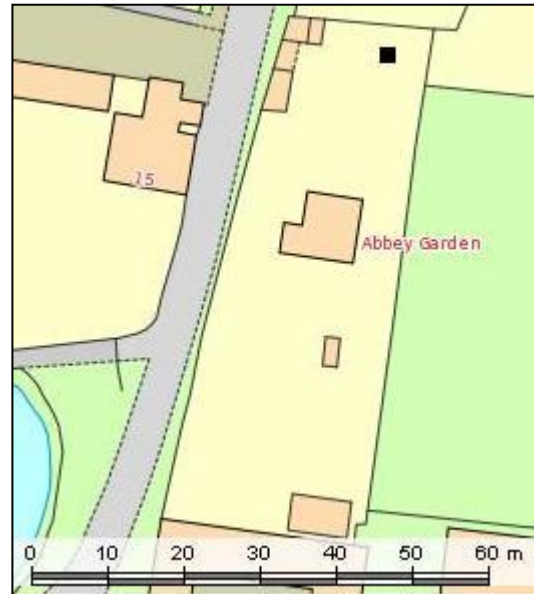


Figure 12: Location map of RAM/09/6

TP	Cntxt	EMW		BD		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
6	1					23	52	1800-1900
6	2	1	17			2	15	1100-1900
6	3					6	24	1800-1900
6	4			1	3	27	106	1450-1900
6	5					1	8	1800-1900
6	6	1	31					1100-1200

Table 5: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/6

Possible stone wall foundations were identified at c.05m in depth that may relate to an earlier structure on site and also potentially part of the Abbey which is just to the south. The large pieces of medieval pottery indicate activity on site during that time, but the site was unlikely to have been fields as the sherds would have been broken up by the plough, so may have been gardens or allotments during that time. There seems to be no further activity on site until the 19th century, which was probably when the current house was built. The finds also relate to this increase in later occupation with concrete, slate, coal, CBM, glass, tile, iron nails, mortar, with oyster shell and clay pipe. A large amount of slag was excavated which suggests quite intense metal working on or close to site also. A single possible worked flint was also excavated that may be of a later prehistoric date, although analysis of the lithics would be needed to confirm this.

Test Pit seven (RAM/09/7)

Test pit seven was excavated towards the south western corner of the large walled Abbey garden, to the north east of the Abbey (Walled garden of Abbey Grounds, Wood Lane, Ramsey. TL 529233 285209).

Test pit seven was excavated to a depth of 0.6m. Natural was not found, but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

The vast majority of the pottery excavated from RAM/09/7 dates to the Victorian period with a number of sherds recovered from every context. A single small sherd of Early Medieval Sandy Ware was also identified mixed into context five.

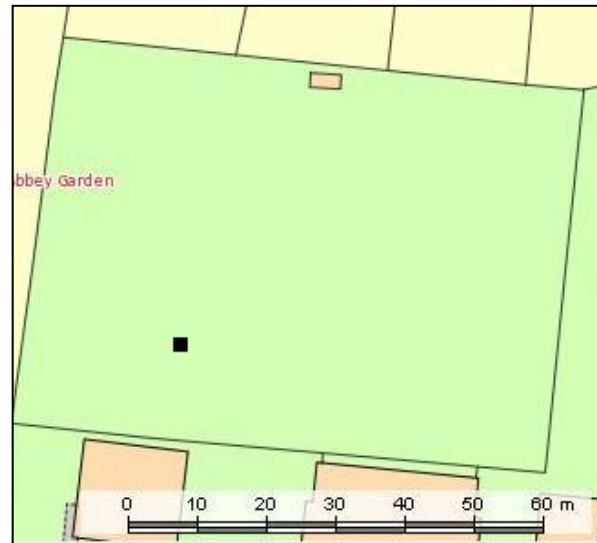


Figure 13: Location map of RAM/09/7

TP	Cntxt	EMW		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
7	1			18	56	1800-1900
7	2			16	90	1800-1900
7	3			10	32	1800-1900
7	4			2	4	1800-1900
7	5	1	1	13	55	1100-1900
7	6			6	74	1800-1900

Table 6: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/7

Given the small amount of medieval pottery excavated from RAM/09/7 it seems likely that the site was open fields or grassland during that time until the 19th century when there was a sharp increase in activity. A mix of finds were also excavated from test pit seven, including coal, CBM, mortar, slate, clay pipe, snail shell, Perspex, glass, oyster shell, iron nails, tile and a number of pieces of slag indicating metal working on or near site. Burnt stone was also identified and may suggest the presence of later prehistoric activity on site.

Test Pit eight (RAM/09/8)

Test pit eight was excavated in the enclosed rear garden of the antiques shop fronting the main road, quite central in the village. The house was originally a 14th century hall house, Grade II listed that was much altered in the 19th century (63 Great Whyte, Ramsey. TL 528701 285323).

Test pit eight was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. Natural was not found, but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

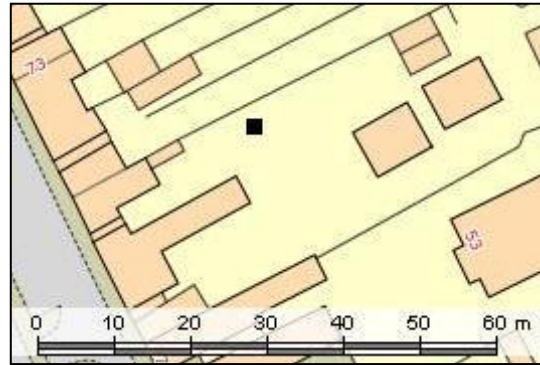


Figure 14: Location map of RAM/09/8

The vast majority of the pottery excavated from RAM/09/8 dates to the post medieval, with a range of wares identified, including Glazed Red Earthenware, Midland Blackware, Delft Ware, Metropolitan Slipware, Cologne Stoneware, Staffordshire Slipware, Staffordshire Manganese Ware and Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware. A large number of Victorian sherds were also found mixed through the test pit with a single sherd of Early Medieval Sandy Ware and four sherds of later medieval Bourne 'D' Ware.

TP	Cntxt	EMW		BD		GRE		MB		TGE		HSW		WCS		SS		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
8	1																					7	14	1800-1900
8	2							1	3			1	12					2	8	1	7	19	30	1580-1900
8	3			2	14	8	46	2	4			1	13					2	8	4	7	53	124	1450-1900
8	4					3	33									3	11					45	125	1550-1900
8	5	1	16	1	5	1	4							1	4			2	5			60	178	1100-1900
8	6					2	65			1	3											14	24	1550-1900
8	7			1	5	6	233											2	6			42	170	1450-1900
8	8					2	20																	1550-1600

Table 7: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/8

The small amount of medieval pottery excavated from RAM/09/7 suggests minimal activity on site during that time, which may be due to its location away from the core of the village around the Abbey to the south east. As the expansion of the village during the post medieval there is a great increase of occupation that also peaks into the 19th century. A large number of finds were also recovered, mixed through the test pit due to the more recent disturbance and include coal, slate, concrete, CBM, glass, part of a battery, modern nails, tile, plastic, buttons, iron bolts and nails, slate pencil, a metal ring pull, mortar, oyster shell with clay pipe and slag.

Test Pit nine (RAM/09/9)

Test pit nine was excavated close to the back of a modern house, in the enclosed rear garden. It was the south-western of three pits excavated within the property; see also RAM/09/3 and RAM/09/10 (7 Hollow Lane, Ramsey. TL 529131 284904).

Test pit nine was excavated to a depth of 0.5m. Natural was not found, but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

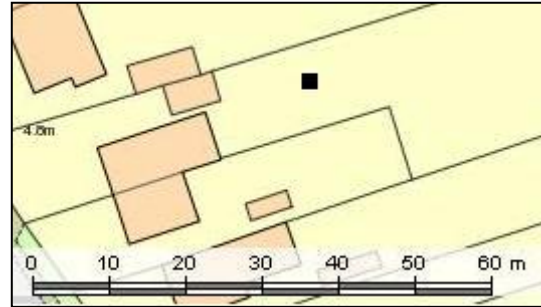


Figure 15: Location map of RAM/09/9

A small number of Victorian pottery was excavated from RAM/09/9 and was found through the five contexts of the test pit. Three sherds of medieval pottery were also identified mixed through the test pit with both Grimston Ware and later medieval Bourne 'D' Ware recovered.

TP	Cntxt	GRIM		BD		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
9	1			1	1	1	13	1450-1900
9	3	1	6			2	12	1200-1900
9	4					2	4	1800-1900
9	5	1	4			1	28	1200-1900

Table 8: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/9

A possible area for iron smelting was identified at c.0.5m, with flat slabs of burnt limestone, patches of burnt sand and clay with the edge of a fire pit also recorded although only a couple of pieces of slag were found in the upper contexts of the test pit. The medieval pottery was identified just above the feature suggesting that if it is an area for metal working it is likely to be medieval in date and also most likely related to the Abbey given its location immediately to the south. Much like RAM/09/1, the site was probably open fields from the later medieval with an increase of activity into the Victorian period until the current house was built in the 20th century. A range of finds were also recovered and include concrete, CBM, tile, animal bone, iron nails, snail shell, coal, glass, oyster shell, slate, scrap iron and clay pipe. A single possible worked flint was also recorded from RAM/09/9, hinting at the presence of later prehistoric activity on or close to site, although analysis of the lithics are needed to confirm this.

Test Pit 10 (RAM/09/10)

Test pit 10 was excavated towards the back boundary in the enclosed rear garden of a modern house. It was the northern of three pits excavated within the property; see also RAM/09/3 and RAM/09/9 (7 Hollow Lane, Ramsey. TL 529175 284911).

Test pit 10 was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. Natural was not found, but due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this level and the test pit was recorded and backfilled.

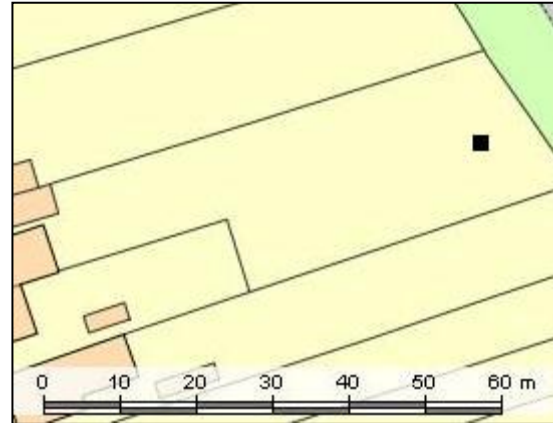


Figure 16: Location map of RAM/09/10

Two sherds of medieval Grimston Ware were excavated from RAM/09/10 and were also mixed in with six sherds of Victorian pottery.

TP	Cntxt	GRIM		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
10	1			1	25	1150-1900
10	2	1	13	4	43	1200-1900
10	3			1	45	1800-1900
10	4	1	8			1300-1400

Table 9: The pottery excavated from RAM/09/10

Much like RAM/09/9, a small amount of medieval pottery was also excavated from RAM/09/10, suggesting that there was occupation on site during that time being just south of the Abbey. After which again the site was probably open fields with only an increase of activity into the 19th century until the house was built in the 20th century. A small number of finds were also recovered, with glass, concrete, CBM, oyster shell, iron nails and a 10 pence coin dated to 1994. A single piece of burnt stone was also found and may suggest the presence of later prehistoric activity on or close to site.

8 Discussion

The test pitting in Ramsey has contributed to the wider understanding of the history and archaeology of the town and the results from the 2009 excavations in the settlement are included in the analysis below. The pottery has been utilised as the main source of dating in this report, as pottery can be the most accurately dated, often within a hundred years of so and it is one of the most frequent finds recovered from the test pitting strategy. The results will be discussed in historical order below.

8.1 Prehistory

Evidence for prehistoric activity was very limited from the test pitting in Ramsey, no prehistoric pottery or features were identified and only a very small number of possible worked flints were recovered. These include two flint flakes, one each from RAM/09/6 and RAM/09/9 and two pieces of burnt stone from, again one each from RAM/09/7 and RAM/09/10. As the format of this writing is at the grey report stage a full analysis of the lithics has not been undertaken so a definitive date cannot be assigned to the test pit lithics at the time of writing. A later prehistoric date is the most likely for the lithics, such as Neolithic (4,000-2,200 BC) or Bronze Age (2,200-700 BC), particularly given that the majority of the prehistoric finds and monuments in Ramsey are later prehistoric in date on the HER, including the known Bronze Age activity in the form of a barrow cemetery on the fen-edge to the north and east of the current town.

Interestingly though is the distribution of these lithics, although they were from four separate test pits, they appeared in two clusters. RAM/09/6 and RAM/09/7 at Abbey Garden House and within the walled garden of the Abbey grounds respectively and RAM/09/9 and RAM/09/10 were both excavated in the same back garden along Hollow Lane, and hints at the possibility of two distinct areas of later prehistoric activity within the original abbey precinct. It has been suggested that the site of the abbey was initially chosen as it sits on a natural contour at about 5m (Carroll *et al* 2015) and during the Fenland Survey (Hall and Coles 1994, Hall 1992), it was noted that the prehistoric sites 'clung to the fen edge and ancient river courses around the Ramsey peninsula' although were still sparsely settled, mainly due to the presence of heavy clays, but this idea would support the test pitting results with prehistoric settlement in this fen-edge area.

Peat formation in the fens developed early, often covering Neolithic remains and continued up to the 17th century (Hall 1992). Evidence of medieval and later 'levelling' as part of land reclamation has been found during previous many excavations in Ramsey (Cooper 2005, Brook *et al* 2008, Snee 2011, Webster 2015, Webb 2015, Jackson 2016, Rees 2018 etc.) and may be partly why limited prehistoric remains have so far been recorded on the HER. The few lithics found through the test pitting were residual, found in the top and sub soil so may also have derived from elsewhere in Ramsey, or are too deeply buried in the build-up of material to stabilise this once marshy landscape.

8.2 Romano-British

No evidence for Romano-British (AD 43-410) activity was recorded during the 2009 test pitting in Ramsey. This supports the significant lack of Roman material recorded on the HER, despite Ramsey being just over 11km east of Ermine Street, a well utilised Roman road.

8.3 Anglo-Saxon

A single sherd of Late Anglo-Saxon (AD 850-1066) Stamford Ware pottery was excavated from RAM/09/1, a garden along the west side of Hollow Lane, weighing just 1g that was found in context three. The Anglo-Saxon pottery found here is contemporary with the foundation of the abbey here in the 10th century, and therefore related to activity there, rather than the settlement, which wasn't yet established. The site of RAM/09/1 may have been just outside the precinct boundary, with Hollow Lane following the perimeter of the abbey, as well as the natural contour of the 'island' upon which the abbey was established.

8.4 Medieval

The pottery dating to the high medieval (AD 1066-1399) was the third most populous type of pottery excavated from the Ramsey test pits (after post medieval and 19th century 'Victorian' wares). A total of 35 sherds of locally made pottery were recorded from eight out of the 10 test pits and accounting for 6.22% of all the pottery found. The pottery derived from a number of sites across the east of England including Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Essex and Norfolk and were the most common type found during the excavations, with additional wares deriving from slightly further afield from both London and along the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire border.

The distribution of the high medieval pottery can be seen in appendix 12.3, but for the first time through the test pitting strategy, evidence for occupation outside the abbey was recorded, and in particular from two test pits that contained over five sherds of high medieval pottery, which likely demonstrates occupation close to or at these locations (Lewis 2014). Both RAM/09/1 on Hollow Lane and RAM/09/2 on the High Street, yielded 11 and 13 sherds respectively of high medieval pottery, whereas the remaining six test pits also yielded between one and three sherds each. Four of these test pits were likely within the original precinct boundary (RAM/09/9, RAM/09/10 to the south of the abbey and RAM/09/6 and RAM/09/7 to the north) and so likely derive from everyday activities being undertaken at the abbey. The remaining two test pits also found to contain small amounts of high medieval pottery were RAM/09/5 excavated from Abbots Close and RAM/09/8 sited along the eastern edge of the Great Whyte. It may be that these northern areas of the town were still too wet, perhaps utilised as fen meadows and so not suitable for settlement at this time, which is known to have originated along the High Street, adjacent to the market and led directly into the abbey.

There is a significant drop in the amount of later medieval (AD 1400-1539) pottery recorded from the Ramsey test pits, with a total of just 18 sherds recorded from six of the 10 test pits and a decline of just under 50% (Lewis 2016). The types of late medieval pottery that were found were also made relatively locally in the east of England as well as from Lincolnshire, and are similar to other pottery assemblages excavated in Ramsey (Spoerry *et al* 2008), although imports were noted for the first time during this period. The decrease in pottery between the high and later medieval could be due to a number of social and economic factors and events that took place during the 14th century. The century began with a population boom, which then subsequently led to over population in some areas as well as land shortages and depleted soils. This was not helped by a series of both poor harvests and bad winters and subsequent famine which had already started to decrease the population, which was then accelerated by the Black Death that swept through the country (Nightingale 2005). Although the amount of pottery found from the test pits cannot be equated to population figures at that time, it seems likely

that there was some contraction or shifting of the settlement after the 14th century, although further excavations would be needed to prove this (appendix 12.3).

German Stoneware pottery was made at a variety of sites along the Rhine Valley, and has a production start date in the later medieval, but continues through the post medieval (appendix 12.1). However, as manufacture began during the late medieval, and as the exact date of the German Stoneware found in Ramsey are not known, they are included in this section. A single sherd was excavated from RAM/09/2 along the southern side of the High Street that also yielded a range of other pottery types dating from the 12th century onwards, hinting that there has been continual occupation on site that would have also been in a very good location opposite the market and along the routeway into the abbey precinct. Often as German Stoneware pottery is usually in the form of mugs, it is possible that there may have been a put at RAM/09/2 or that the owners during the 15th century had mercantile connections.

Water transport was important for fen and fen-edge settlements and in particular with the added construction of artificial canals or lodes to aid transport, it is perhaps surprising that more imported pottery was recorded from the Ramsey test pits. Although as Oosthuizen (2012) has concluded with the development of fenland towns, three criteria were utilised in establishing a settlement. The first was the opportunity to capitalise of passing traffic using the waterways, to site the suitable intersections of road and water and to find a site that allows for a short a distance as possible between the port and the market. The success of the market at Ramsey and the amount of wealth attributed to the abbey could partly be attributed to the construction of additional lodes for ease of access and transport as well as the construction of the Great Bridge over the Bury Brook to aid road access from Peterborough and Huntingdon (*Ibid*). It may be due to the dispersed and small nature of the test pitting strategy as to why more evidence for trade was not recorded.

Another factor influencing the amount of finds recorded from the test pitting may be related to the amount of land was 'reclaimed', particularly from the medieval period onwards. The former marsh land that originally surrounded the peninsula of Ramsey was raised with the deposition of rubbish, not only covering up any earlier activity, but also increasing the depth at to which the test pits would have been needed to be excavated, to get through the layers. This may extend over the 1.2m limit for safe test pit excavation, so the full range of data cannot be identified in the limits of a test pit excavation.

8.5 Post-medieval and later

The post medieval (AD 1540-1799) pottery excavated from the Ramsey consisted of a total of 58 sherds recorded from five test pits, accounting for 10.32% of all the pottery identified. The majority of the pottery (45 sherds) actually derived from a single test pit (RAM/09/8) situated along Great Whyte, and including wares produced all over England, and specific sites identified in Essex, Norfolk and Staffordshire as well as one sherd of imported Cologne Stoneware, made in the Rhineland region of Germany from the 17th century onwards (appendix 12.1). It is perhaps surprising that again only one small sherd of post medieval imported pottery was recorded from all the test pits, as again similar to the medieval period, a market would have likely continued, although the wealth of the 'island' was lost after the dissolution of the abbey which would have affected trade to the town.

The vast majority of all the pottery excavated from Ramsey dates to the 19th century as 'Victorian' wares, with 450 sherds found from all the test pits apart from RAM/09/3, accounting for 80% of the entire pottery assemblage. This increase in the amount of more recent finds support the historical references to the draining of the fens, enclosure, an increase in the population to the town and the coming of the railways.

9 Conclusion

The 10 archaeological test pits that were excavated in Ramsey, as part of the University of Cambridge's Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) with the help of local residents, have yielded archaeological evidence for settlement in the parish dating from later prehistory through to the modern day. All the test pit results have also added to the 'bigger picture' of the development of Ramsey on the fen-edge, adding to both the previous archaeology and historical references to the settlement as well as also providing a new insight into the level of archaeological remains that are still present under the village.

Evidence for later prehistoric activity was very limited from the test pits to just a few lithics, although these were concentrated around the slightly higher ground at the site of the later abbey. No Romano-British or Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon finds were excavated, with the first evidence for settlement recorded during the Late Anglo-Saxon period, contemporary with the formation of the abbey. The results dating to the medieval period, showed a focus of activity around the abbey but also for the first time extending along the High Street, close to the site of the market. A likely contraction and probable shifts in the settlement were also noted during the later medieval after the various socio-economic factors of the 14th century, including the Black Death, after which the town recovered relatively rapidly, despite the dissolution of the abbey during the 16th century. Post medieval and later growth of Ramsey is evident through the drainage of the fens and the reclamation of additional land, which also led to better transport links, especially with the coming of the railway during the 19th century.

There is plenty of scope for further archaeological work in Ramsey. It is recommended that the lithics from the test pits are analysed by a lithic expert, which will more accurately pin point the date and spread of the prehistoric activity in the parish. The test pitting strategy is also heavily reliant on people volunteering gardens and open spaces for the excavations so there is also scope for additional excavations in the village to 'fill in the gaps'. Re-examining some of the test pits that did not reach natural (nine of the 10 pits were not excavated to natural in the time available) would also add to the picture of the archaeology in Ramsey. Although some of the archaeology in the parish has been disturbed by later developments, there is still plenty of archaeological evidence surviving under the extent of the current settlement.

10 Acknowledgements

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Our local coordinator in Ramsey for all the test pit excavations was local resident Jane Yardley and we were based at Ramsey Rural Museum, for which we were very grateful. Our gratitude must go to all the property owners in Ramsey who allowed the excavations to continue in their gardens. Thank you also to the 35 Year 9, and 10 school students who excavated the test pits and the staff and volunteers who supervised them. The schools involved with the excavations were Orton Longueville School, Bushfield Community College, Stanground College, St Peters School and Hinchingsbrooke School (school names correct at the time of the excavations).

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12 Appendices

12.1 Pottery reports - *Paul Blinkhorn*

All pottery types (in chronological order)

STAM: Stamford Ware. Made at several different sites in Stamford in Lincolnshire between AD850 and 1150. The earliest pots were small, simple jars with white, buff or grey fabric, or large jars with painted red stripes. By AD1000, the potters were making vessels which were quite thin-walled and smooth, with a yellow or pale green glaze on the outside, the first glazed pots in England. These were usually jugs with handles and a spout, but other sorts of vessel, such as candle-sticks, bowls and water-bottles are also known. It appears to have been much sought after because it was of such good quality, and has been found all over Britain and Ireland.

EMW: Early Medieval Sandy Ware: AD1100-1400. Hard fabric with plentiful quartz sand mixed in with the clay. Manufactured at a wide range of generally unknown sites all over eastern England. Mostly cooking pots, but bowls and occasionally jugs also known.

SHW: Medieval Shelly Ware. AD1100-1400. Made at several different places in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. The clay that the potters used has a lot of small pieces of fossil shell in it, giving the pots a speckled appearance. Sometimes, in acid soils, the shell dissolves, giving the sherds a texture like cork. Mainly cooking pots, although bowls and jugs were also made.

HED: Hedingham Ware: Late 12th – 14th century. Fine orange/red glazed pottery, made at Sible Hedingham in Essex. The surfaces of the sherds have a sparkly appearance due to there being large quantities of mica, a glassy mineral, in the clay. Pots usually glazed jugs.

LW: London Ware. Late 12th – 14th century. Fine orange/red sandy glazed pottery, made in London. Pots were mostly jugs, usually decorated with slip, and often imitating French pottery of the time. Rare in Cambridgeshire.

GRIM: Grimston Ware. Made at Grimston, near King's Lynn. It was made from a sandy clay similar with a slight 'sandpaper' texture. The clay is usually a dark bluish-grey colour, sometimes with a light-coloured buff or orange inner surface. It was made between about AD1080 and 1400. All sorts of different pots were made, but the most common finds are jugs, which usually have a slightly dull green glaze on the outer surface. Between AD1300 and 1400, the potters made very ornate jugs, with painted designs in a reddish brown clay, and sometimes attached models of knights in armour or grotesque faces to the outside of the pots. It is found all over East Anglia and eastern England. A lot of Grimston ware has been found in Norway, as there is very little clay in that country, and they had to import their pottery. Nearly half the medieval pottery found in Norway was made at Grimston, and was shipped there from King's Lynn.

BB: Brill Ware, AD1200 – 1600. Very high quality pottery made at the village of Brill on the Oxfordshire - Buckinghamshire border. Main product was highly decorated glazed jugs, usually with lavish decoration.



STB: Stanion ware. AD1200 – 1600. Made in the village of Stanion, in northern Northamptonshire. Clay has lots of small, egg-shaped white fossils called ooliths mixed in it. Vessel usually glazed jugs, often painted with yellow slip stripes.

BD: Bourne 'D' Ware: 1450-1637. Made in the village of Bourne in Lincolnshire, until the place was destroyed by a great fire in 1637. Fairly hard, smooth, brick-red clay body, often with a grey core. Some vessels have sparse white flecks of shell and chalk in the clay. Vessel forms usually jugs, large bowls and cisterns, for brewing beer. Vessels often painted with thin, patchy white liquid clay ('slip'), over which a clear glaze was applied.

CW: Cistercian Ware: Made between AD1475 and 1700. So-called because it was first found during the excavation of Cistercian monasteries, but not made by monks. A number of different places are known to have been making this pottery, particularly in the north of England and the midlands. The pots are very thin and hard, as they were made in the first coal-fired pottery kilns, which reached much higher temperatures than the wood-fired types of the medieval period. The clay fabric is usually brick red or purple, and the pots covered with a dark brown- or purplish-black glaze on both surfaces. The main type of pot was small drinking cups with up to six handles, known as 'tygs'. They were sometimes decorated with painted dots and other designs in yellow clay. Cistercian ware was very popular, and is found all over England.

GS: German Stonewares. First made around AD1350, and some types still made today. Made at lots of places along the river Rhine in Germany, such as Cologne, Siegburg and Frechen. Very hard grey clay fabric, with the outer surface of the pot often having a mottled brown glaze, with some having blue and purple painted decoration, and others moulded medallions ('prunts') with coat-of-arms or mythical scenes on them. The most common vessel type was the mug, used in taverns in Britain and all over the world. Surviving records from the port of London ('port books') show that millions such pots were brought in by boat from Germany from around AD1500 onwards.

GRE: Glazed Red Earthenwares: Fine earthenware, usually with a brown, orange or green glaze, usually on the inner surface. Made at numerous locations all over England. Occurs in a range of practical shapes for use in the households of the time, such as large mixing bowls, cauldrons and frying pans. It was first made around the middle of the 16th century, and in some places continued in use until the 19th century.

MB: Midland Blackware. AD1580 – 1700. Similar to Cistercian ware, but clay fabric is softer, with much more sand in it. Vessels usually tall cups, jugs and bowls.

HSW: Metropolitan Slipware. Similar to glazed red earthenware (GRE), but with painted designs in yellow liquid clay ('slip') under the glaze. Made at many places between 1600 and 1700, but the most famous and earliest factory was at Harlow in Essex

TGE: Delft Ware. The first white glazed pottery to be made in Britain. Called Delft ware because of the fame of the potteries at Delft in Holland which first made it in Europe, although it was invented in the Middle East. Soft, cream coloured fabric with a thick white glaze, often with painted designs in blue, purple and yellow. First made in Britain in Norwich around AD1600, and continued in use until the 19th century. The 17th century pots were expensive table wares such as dishes or bowls, but by the 19th century, better types of pottery was being made, and it was considered very cheap and the main types of pot were such as chamber pots and ointment jars.

WCS: Cologne Stoneware. Hard, grey pottery made in the Rhineland region of Germany from around 1600 onwards. Usually has lots of ornate moulded decoration, often with blue and purple painted details. Still made today, mainly as tourist souvenirs.

SS: Staffordshire Slipware. Made between about AD1640 and 1750. This was the first pottery to be made in moulds in Britain since Roman times. The clay fabric is usually a pale buff colour, and the main product was flat dishes and plates, but cups were also made. These are usually decorated with thin brown stripes and a yellow glaze, or yellow stripes and a brown glaze.

SMW: Manganese Ware, late 17th – 18th century. Made from a fine, buff-coloured or red clay, with the pots usually covered with a mottled purple and brown glaze. A wide range of different types of pots were made, but mugs and chamber pots are particularly common.

SWSG: White Salt-Glazed Stoneware. Delicate white pottery made between 1720 and 1780, usually for tea cups and mugs. Has a finely dimpled surface, like orange peel.

VIC: Victorian. A wide range of different types of pottery, particularly the cups, plates and bowls with blue decoration which are still used today. First made around AD1800



Results

No = number of sherds

Wt = weight of sherds in grams

Test Pit 1

TP	Cntxt	STAM		EMW		LW		STB		GRIM		BD		CW		GRE		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	1			2	13					2	4	2	4			1	2			1100-1600
1	2			1	7					1	2	1	1	1	1			4	17	1100-1900
1	3	1	1					1	8	2	8	1	1			1	4	2	6	1000-1900
1	4																	2	5	1800-1900
1	5					1	5			1	8									1200-1600

This test-pit produced a wide range of pottery, which shows that people were living at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 until after the end of the medieval period, perhaps to AD1600. After that, the site appears to have been abandoned until the 19th century.

Test Pit 2

TP	Cntxt	EMW		GRIM		BB		BD		CW		GS		GRE		MB		SMW		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1																			8	187	1800-1900
2	2																			15	35	1800-1900
2	3							2	32					4	147			1	45	3	6	1450-1900
2	4									1	3	1	5			1	2			5	11	1470-1900
2	5					1	1	1	3					1	1					2	8	1200-1900
2	6	1	8	2	13	3	28															1100-1500
2	7	4	30	1	6	1	3															1100-1400

This test-pit produced a wide range of pottery which shows that people were living at the site from just after the Norman Conquest in 1066 until after the end of the medieval period, perhaps to AD1600. After that, the site appears to have been largely abandoned until the 19th century.

Test Pit 3

No pottery excavated

Test Pit 4

TP	Cntxt	CW		BD		SS		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
4	1			1	6	1	6					2	4	1450-1900
4	2											1	5	1800-1900
4	3	1	3					1	5			6	34	1470-1900
4	4									1	5	21	86	1720-1900

This test-pit produced pottery which suggests that people did not start using the site until late in the 15th century, and then abandoned it until the late 17th or early 18th century, after which time it was used extensively.

Test Pit 5

TP	Cntxt	SHW		HED		GRIM		GRE		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
5	2	1	13			1	6			1	1	1100-1900
5	4			1	1			1	1	2	40	1200-1900

This test-pit did not produce very much pottery, but that which was found shows people were using the site in the earlier part of the medieval period, perhaps from AD1100 – 1300, but after that it was perhaps only used as fields.

Test Pit 6

TP	Cntxt	EMW		BD		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
6	1					23	52	1800-1900
6	2	1	17			2	15	1100-1900
6	3					6	24	1800-1900
6	4			1	3	27	106	1450-1900
6	5					1	8	1800-1900
6	6	1	31					1100-1200

This test-pit did not produce much pottery, but the few pieces of medieval pot were very large and well-preserved. They show that the site was used in the medieval period, but then abandoned until the 19th century.



Test Pit 7

TP	Cntxt	EMW		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
7	1			18	56	1800-1900
7	2			16	90	1800-1900
7	3			10	32	1800-1900
7	4			2	4	1800-1900
7	5	1	1	13	55	1100-1900
7	6			6	74	1800-1900

This test-pit only produced one piece of pottery that was not Victorian, but it was medieval. It seems likely that the site was fields at that time, then abandoned until the 19th century,

Test Pit 8

TP	Cntxt	EMW		BD		GRE		MB		TGE		HSW		WCS		SS		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
8	1																					7	14	1800-1900
8	2							1	3			1	12					2	8	1	7	19	30	1580-1900
8	3			2	14	8	46	2	4			1	13					2	8	4	7	53	124	1450-1900
8	4					3	33									3	11					45	125	1550-1900
8	5	1	16	1	5	1	4							1	4			2	5			60	178	1100-1900
8	6					2	65			1	3											14	24	1550-1900
8	7			1	5	6	233											2	6			42	170	1450-1900
8	8					2	20																	1550-1600

This test-pit produced lots of pottery, and lots of different types, and shows that people have been using the site continuously since the 15th century, and the single early medieval sherd hints that it may have been used even earlier. Nearly all the pottery is mixed up with Victorian sherds, showing that the site was extensively dug over at that time, and earlier archaeological deposits disturbed.

Test Pit 9

TP	Cntxt	GRIM		BD		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
9	1			1	1	1	13	1000-1900
9	3	1	6			2	12	1200-1900
9	4					2	4	1800-1900
9	5	1	4			1	28	1200-1900

This test-pit did not produce much pottery dating to before Victorian times, but shows that there were people at the site during a lot of the medieval period.



Test Pit 10

TP	Cntxt	GRIM		VIC		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
10	1			1	25	1150-1900
10	2	1	13	4	43	1200-1900
10	3			1	45	1800-1900
10	4	1	8			1300-1400

This test-pit did not produced much pottery dating to before Victorian times, but shows that there were people at the site during the earlier the medieval period.



12.2 Non-pottery Finds - Catherine Collins

Test Pit 1	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	red CBM fragments x2 = 8g, yellow CBM fragments x2 = 8g, flower? pot x2 = 15g		scrap iron x2 = 8g	coal x3 = 3g	oyster shell fragments x3 = 2g, sea shell x1 = 5g
C. 2	red CBM fragments x5 = 10g, yellow CBM fragments x1 = 2g		iron nails x2 = 12g, scrap iron x1 = 8g	coal x16 = 32g	oyster shell x5 = 10g, concrete x2 = 32g
C.3	clay pipe stem x1 = <1g, red CBM fragments x2 = 17g	clear container glass x2 = 21g	scrap iron x1 = 5g	coal x23 = 112g	concrete x1 = 34g, snail shells x2 = 4g, oyster shell x2 = 8g
C.4	yellow CBM fragment x1 = 3g	clear window glass x3 = 7g	flat rounded magnet = 27g, scrap iron x1 = 1g, metal button = <1g	coal x7 = 31g	
C.5	red CBM fragments x4 = 31g, yellow tile fragment x1 = 75g				oyster shell fragment x1 = <1g

Table 10: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/1

Test Pit 2	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	red/orange curved tile/drain fragment x4 = 289g, clay pipe stem x4 = 15g, red CBM fragments x8 = 85g, flower? pot x2 = 25g, black glazed pot/tile x1 = 31g	clear window glass x3 = 57g	curved strip metal with nail attached to back = 156g, modern nails x3 = 23g, looped metal wire attached to nail = 20g, iron nail x1 = 16g, small square sheet of metal (lead?) = 8g	slate x3 = 74g, coal x5 = 10g	red rubber ball dog toy = 67g, oyster shell fragments x2 = 5g, cockle shell fragments x1 = <1g, grey plastic x1 = 17g
C. 2	red/orange curved and flat tile/drain fragments x3 = 77g, clay pipe stem x2 = 5g, red CBM fragments x1 = 2g	clear container glass x3 = 1g, clear window glass x3 = 6g	modern nails x4 = 28g, modern screw x1 = 5g, one penny coin dated 1988 = 3g, one penny coin dated to 1988 = 4g, iron nails x1 = 4g	coal x1 = 1g	mussel shell fragments x1 = 1g
C.3	modern drain fragment x1 = 45g, red CBM fragments x7 = 71g, yellow CBM fragments x2 = 21g, clay pipe stem x1 = 1g	clear container glass x1 = <1g	iron nails x1 = 3g	slate x1 = 2g, flat grey stone tile? X1 = 29g	snail shell fragment x1 = <1g, black plastic x1 = <1g
C.4	clay pipe stem x1 = 1g, yellow CBM fragments x1 = 292g, modern drain fragments x1 = 15g, red CBM fragments x2 = 45g	green bottle glass x1 = <1g		coal x1 = 4g	oyster shell fragment x1 = 5g



C.5	red CBM fragments x5 = 49g, flat CBM fragment (green outside black inside) = 14g			grey stone flat tile? x1 = 35g	oyster shell fragments x2 = 3g, mussel shell fragments x3 = 2g
C.6	red CBM fragments x3 = 10g, yellow CBM fragment x1 = 8g			coal x1 = 4g	oyster shell x1 = 8g, concrete x1 = 3g
C.7	red CBM fragments x5 = 61g		modern nails x1 = 3g		oyster shell x1 = 14g, mussel shell fragment x1 = 0g

Table 11: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/2

Test pit 3 – No finds excavated

Test Pit 4	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	clay pipe stem x1 = 2g			coal x1 = 2g	concrete x1 = 30g
C. 2	flat red tile fragments x4 = 105g (one roof tile), red CBM fragments x24 = 111g, yellow CBM fragments x12 = 138g, clay pipe stem x1 = 2g	clear container glass x1 = 3g	modern nail x1 = 2g	coal x3 = 5g, slate x8 = 70g	concrete x8 = 100g, mortar x11 = 29g
C.3	modern drain fragments x2 = 291g, red CBM fragments x22 = 364g, slightly curved red tile fragments x1 = 53g, clay pipe bowl fragments x2 = 4g, yellow CBM fragments x9 = 361g	green bottle glass x19 = 71g, clear container glass x2 = 15g, clear window glass x1 = 13g	slag x4 = 240g, modern nails x1 = 17g	slate x3 = 53g, coal x4 = 16g	mortar x6 = 24g, concrete x12 = 282g, asbestos x1 = 26g
C.4	red CBM fragments x15 = 179g, red flat tile fragments x3 = 61g, modern drain x1 = 118g, clay pipe stem x3 = 6g	clear container glass x11 = 97g, green bottle glass x1 = 22g, clear window glass x2 = 2g	fragments of blue and white 'ESSO' can x2 = 15g, slag x3 = 26g, iron nails x5 = 57g, scrap iron x4 = 10g	coal x11 = 93g, slate x11 = 90g, flat light yellow/grey stone tile? = 101g	oyster shell x1 = 8g, concrete x4 = 134g, mortar x6 = 38g

Table 12: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/4

Test Pit 5	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	yellow CBM fragments x1 = 3g	degraded green bottle glass x2 = 4g		coal x1 = 1g	concrete x1 = 7g
C. 2				coal x1 = <1g	mussel shell x3 = 3g, melted plastic x1 = <1g



C.3	red CBM fragments x1 = 2g	degraded green bottle glass x1 = 10g		coal x4 =6g	oyster shell fragment x1 = <1g, concrete x1 = 4g
C.4	red/black CBM fragment x1 = 38g		iron nails x1 = 4g	coal x2 = 1g	
C.5				coal x2 =8g	

Table 13: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/5

Test Pit 6	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal- working	Stone	Other
C. 1	yellow CBM fragments x1 = 3g	degraded green bottle glass x2 = 4g		coal x1 =1g	concrete x1 =7g
C. 2				coal x1 = <1g	mussel shell x3 = 3g, melted plastic x1 =<1g
C.3	red CBM fragments x1 = 2g	degraded green bottle glass x1 = 10g		coal x4 =6g	oyster shell fragment x1 = <1g, concrete x1 = 4g
C.4	red/black CBM fragment x1 = 38g		iron nails x1 =4g	coal x2 = 1g	
C.5				coal x2 =8g	

Table 14: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/6

Test Pit 7	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal- working	Stone	Other
C. 1	red CBM fragments x2 = 9g		slag x1 = 7g	coal x3 = 15g, slate x1=2g, burnt stone x1 = 19g	mortar? x1 = 4g
C. 2	clay pipe stem x1 =2g	degraded clear window glass x1 =2g			cockle shell fragments x2 = <1g, oyster shell fragment x1 = 2g
C.3	clay pipe stem x3 = 8g		slag x1 = 11g	slate x1 = 11g, coal x2 =3g	snail shell x1 = <1g, white Perspex fragments x3 = <1g
C.4	clay pipe stem x2 =4g			coal x3 =5g	
C.5	clay pipe stem x1 =2g, red CBM fragments x3 = 52g, yellow flat tile fragment x1 =51g	clear container glass x1 = 9g, clear window glass x1 = 1g	slag x3 = 58g, iron nail x1 =13g	slate x2 = 6g, coal x5=14g	oyster shell x2 = 7g
C.6	clay pipe stem x2 =4g		slag x1 =6g	coal x6 = 11g, slate x1 = 5g	

Table 15: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/7



Test Pit 8	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	red CBM fragments x2 = 9g		slag x1 =7g	coal x3 = 15g, slate x1 =2g, burnt stone x1 =19g	mortar? x1 = 4g
C. 2	clay pipe stem x1 =2g	degraded clear window glass x1 =2g			cockle shell fragments x2 = <1g, oyster shell fragment x1 = 2g
C.3	clay pipe stem x3 = 8g,		slag x1 = 11g	slate x1 = 11g, coal x2 =3g	snail shell x1 = <1g, white Perspex x3 = <1g
C.4	clay pipe stem x2 = 4g			coal x3 =5g	
C.5	clay pipe stem x1 =2g, red CBM fragments x3 = 52g, yellow flat tile fragment x1 =51g	clear container glass x1 = 9g, clear window glass x1 =1g	slag x3 = 58g, iron nail x1 =13g	slate x2 = 6g, coal x5=14g	oyster shell x2 = 7g
C.6	clay pipe stem x2 =4g		slag x1 =6g	coal x6 =11g, slate x1 =5g	

Table 16: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/8

Test Pit 9	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	red CBM fragments x6 = 27g		slag x1 = 59g		concrete x1 =21g
C. 2	red CBM fragments x15 = 62g, red flat tile fragment x1 =13g		iron nails x1 = 3g, slag x1 =5g		animal bone x1 =3g, snail shell x1 =2 g
C.3	yellow CBM fragments x6 = 31g, , red CBM fragments x13 = 52g	clear window glass x2 =4g, clear container glass x1 = 9g	iron nails x1 =3g	coal x2 =2g, worked flint? x1 =2g, slate x1 =2g	oyster shell x1 =3g
C.4	red CBM fragments x7 = 18g, yellow CBM fragments x4 = 8g			coal x2 = 4g	
C.5	red CBM fragments x6 = 204g, clay pipe stem x1 =2g	clear container glass x6 = 40g	square flat plate of iron with round hole through centre = 245g	slate x3 = 10g	oyster shell x1 =2g

Table 17: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/9



Test Pit 10	Ceramic (excluding pottery)	Glass	Metal & metal-working	Stone	Other
C. 1	red CBM fragment x1 =14g	clear window glass x2 =2g		burnt stone x1 =13g	concrete x1=5g, oyster shell fragment x1 = <1g
C. 2	red CBM fragment x1 =2g		10 pence coin dated 1992 = 5g		oyster shell x2 =5g
C.4			iron nails x1 =17g		

Table 18: The non-pottery finds excavated from RAM/09/10

12.3 Maps

Much of the value of test pit data from currently occupied rural settlements is derived from a holistic consideration across the entire settlement. Maps showing a range of the data from the test pit excavations in Ramsey are included below. These may be read in conjunction with relevant sections of the main report. Some of these maps are available <https://www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/reports/cambridgeshire/ramsey> and these can be used, if wished, to prepare maps showing the distribution of other classes of data not depicted in this appendix.

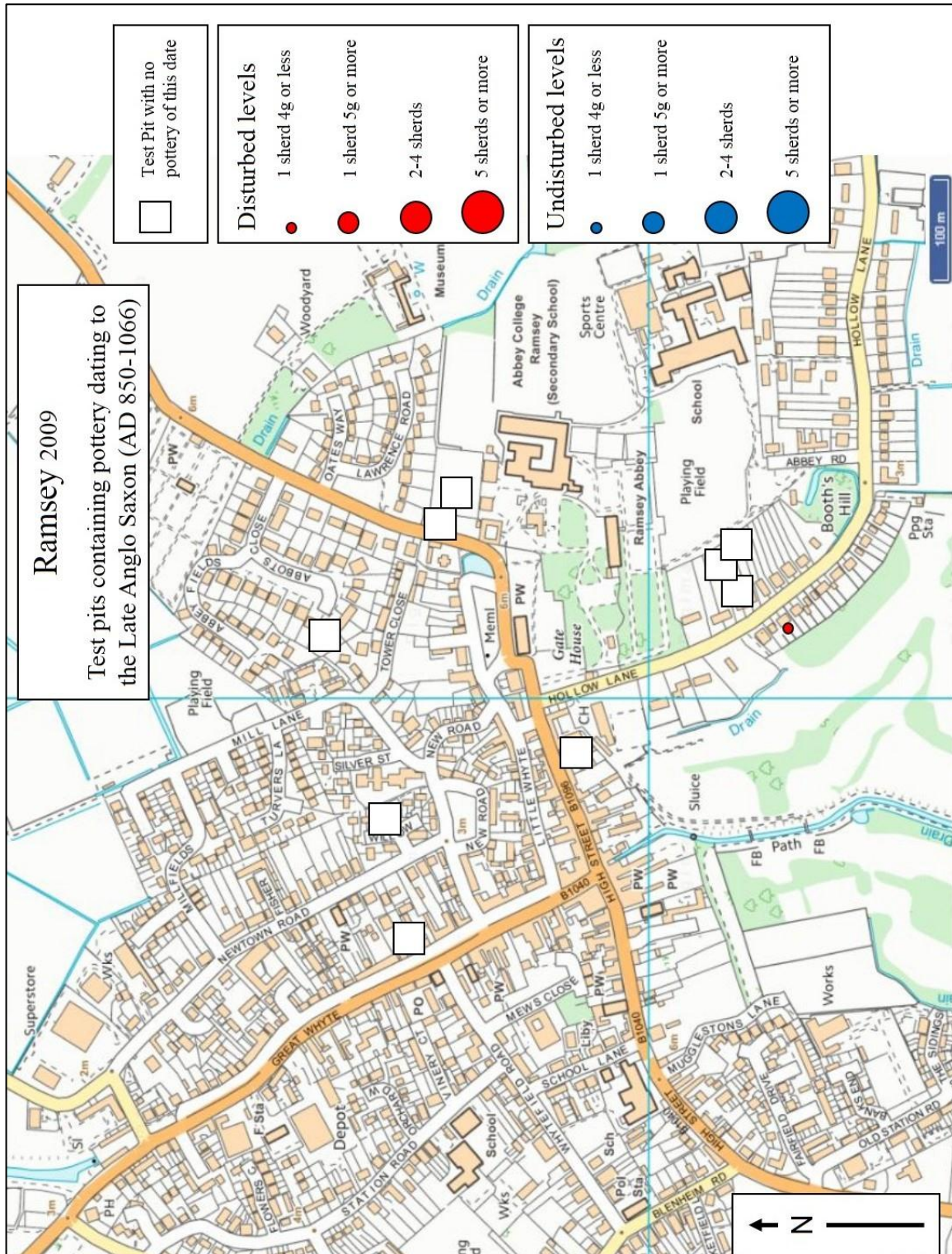


Figure 17: The distribution of the Late Anglo-Saxon pottery excavated from the Ramsey test pits © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 5,000

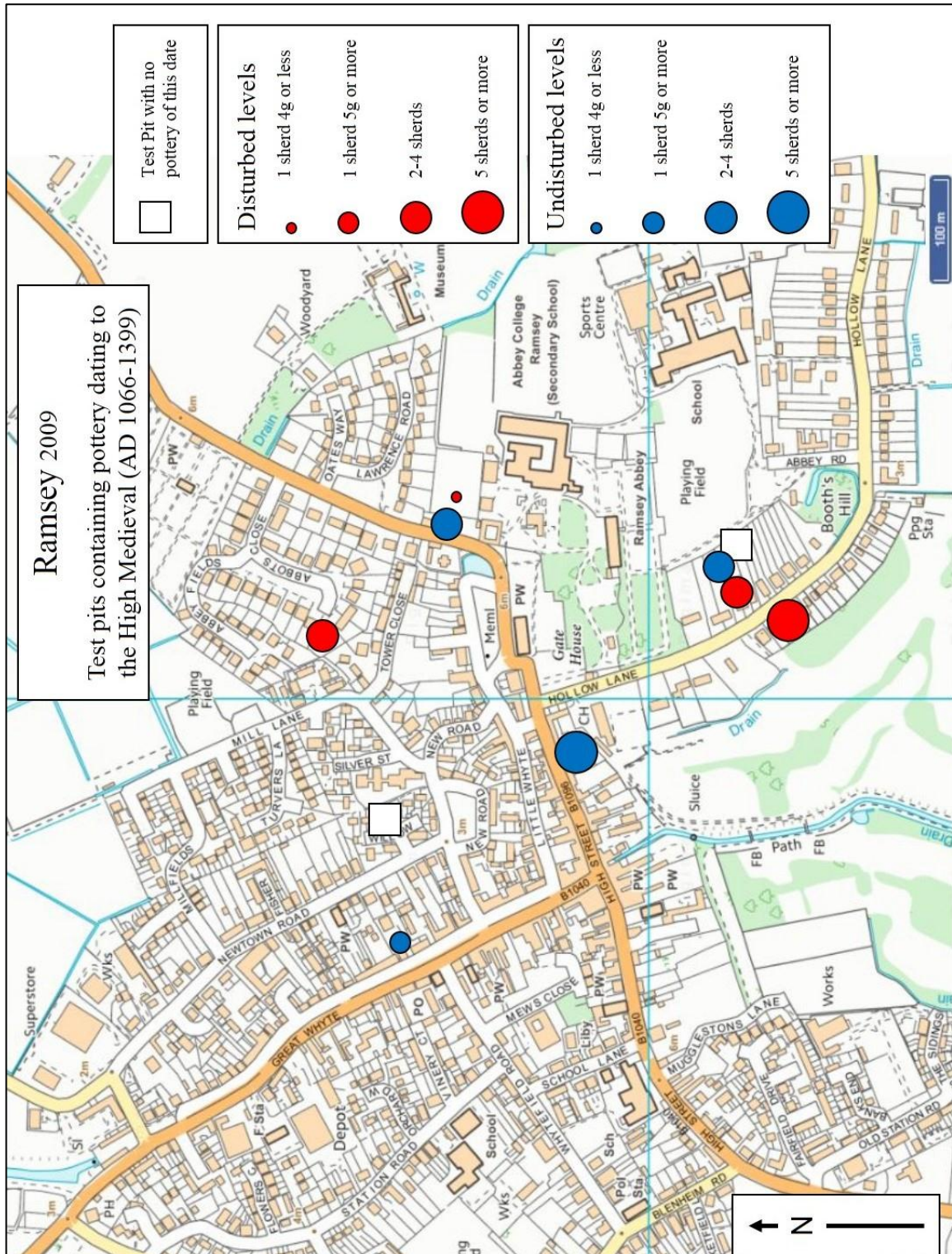


Figure 18: The distribution of the high medieval pottery excavated from the Ramsey test pits © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 5,000

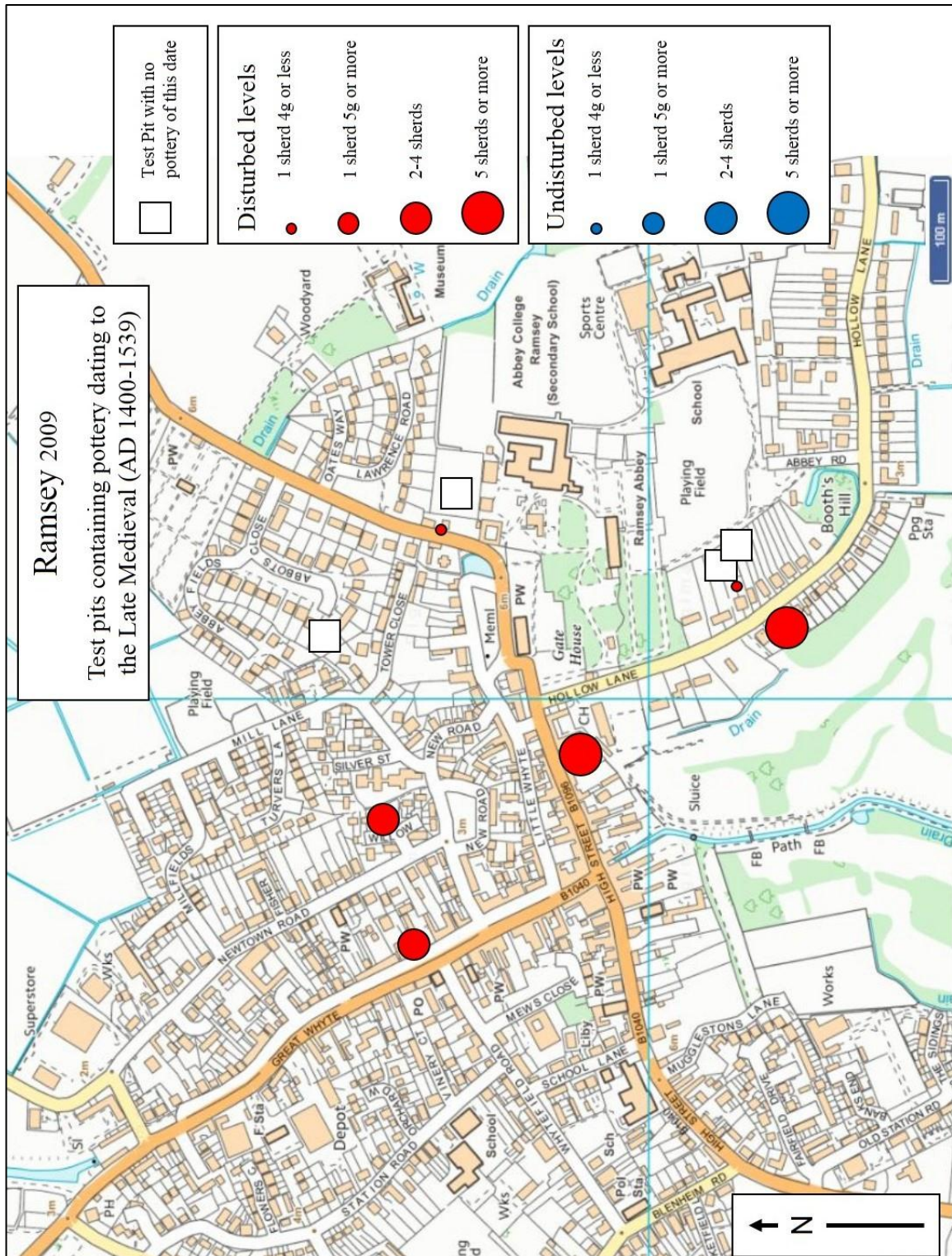


Figure 19: The distribution of the late medieval pottery excavated from the Ramsey test pits © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 5,000

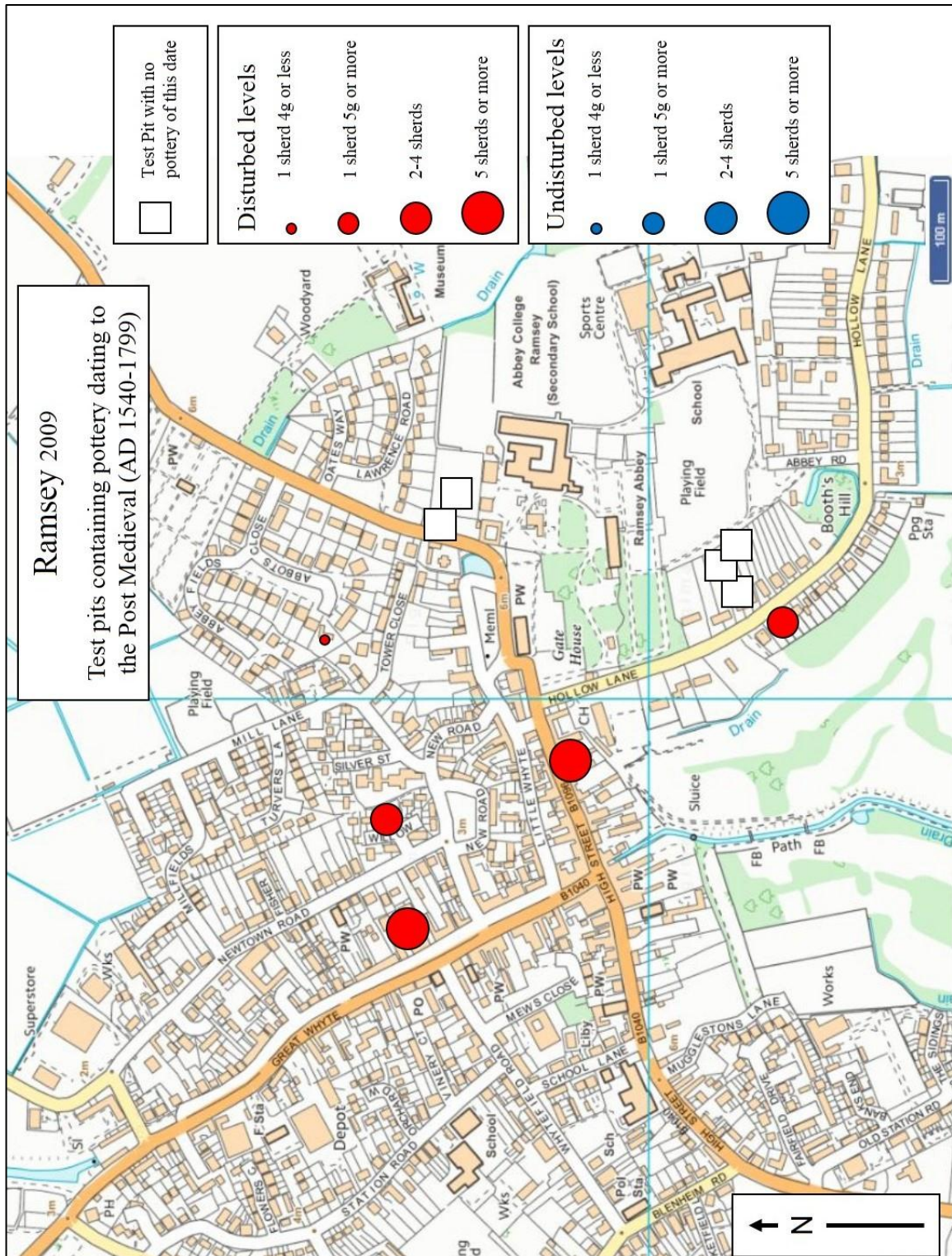


Figure 20: The distribution of the post medieval pottery excavated from the Ramsey test pits © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 5,000

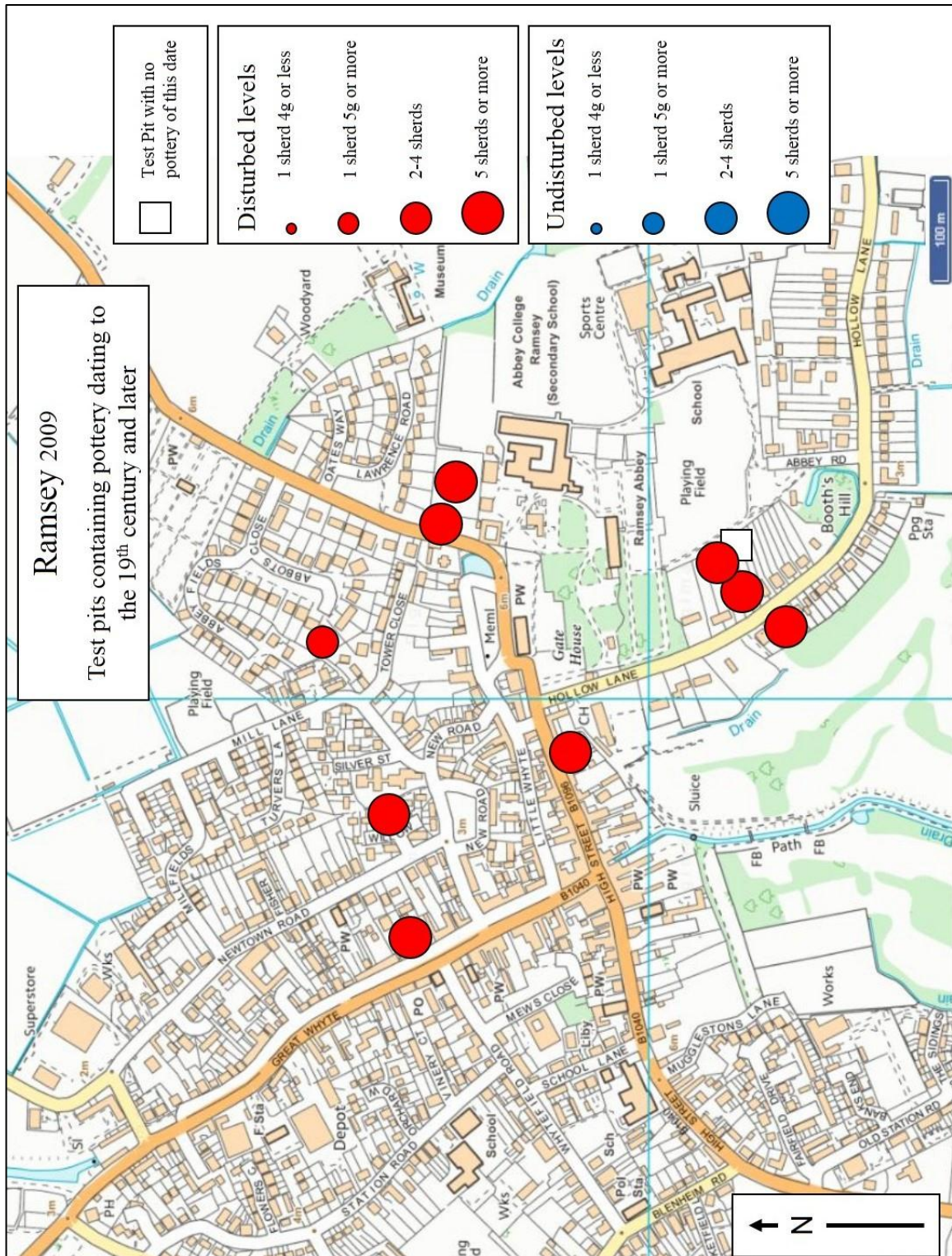


Figure 21: The distribution of the 19th century and later pottery excavated from the Ramsey test pits © Crown Copyright/database right 2019. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service, 1: 5,000