



Corner Farm

School street, Honeybourne, Worcestershire.

Corner Farm

School Street, Honeybourne, Worcestershire, WR11 7PL.

Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: *SP 11415 43911*

Site code: *hon22*

HER ref: *wsm78481*

OASIS ID: *110archa1-512249*

Sean Cook BA (Hons) MCIfA

Illustration; Jill Atherton MCIfA

12th January 2023

Contents

<i>SUMMARY</i>	4
<i>Geology and topography</i>	6
<i>ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</i>	7
<i>EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY</i>	10
<i>Aims of the work</i>	10
<i>Fieldwork methods and recording</i>	11
<i>RESULTS: GENERAL</i>	12
<i>Soil and ground conditions</i>	12
<i>Reliability of field investigation</i>	12
<i>Distribution of archaeological deposits</i>	12
<i>Presentation of results</i>	12
<i>RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS</i>	13
<i>FINDS</i>	15
<i>Environmental data</i>	15
<i>DISCUSSION</i>	16
<i>Summary of results</i>	16
<i>Significance</i>	17
<i>Impact of development</i>	17
<i>Archive Location</i>	17
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	18
<i>PLATES</i>	19

List of Figures

Fig.1: Site location circled in red.

Fig.2: Area of study outlined in red.

Fig.3: Historic environment plan.

Fig.4: Trench location plan.

Fig.5: Trench 1 plan and sections.

Front cover: View of the site from the southwest

SUMMARY

Archaeological evaluation was carried out at Corner Farm, School Street, Honeybourne, Worcestershire, WR11 7PL during December 2022 in connection with the development of four dwellings on the site. Recent discoveries of Prehistoric and Romano British remains in the vicinity is an indication of the general archaeological potential of the area and there was potential that the groundworks may disturb archaeological deposits. Most of the more recent archaeological evidence has revealed Roman deposits surviving to the east of the site and village on land between the village and Ricknild Street.

The evaluation recorded a series of undated linear field boundary/drainage ditches aligned northwest-southeast and northeast-southwest. These features are evidence of an earlier pattern of land division within the site and their alignments are consistent with some of the boundaries identified on the historic maps associated with the adjacent farms developed in the C17 and may be an indication of their origin. Medieval activity within the site was evidenced by two small pits recorded close to the junction of two of the undated ditches, possibly used for refuse, each dated to late C11–mid/late C14 and the C12–C14.

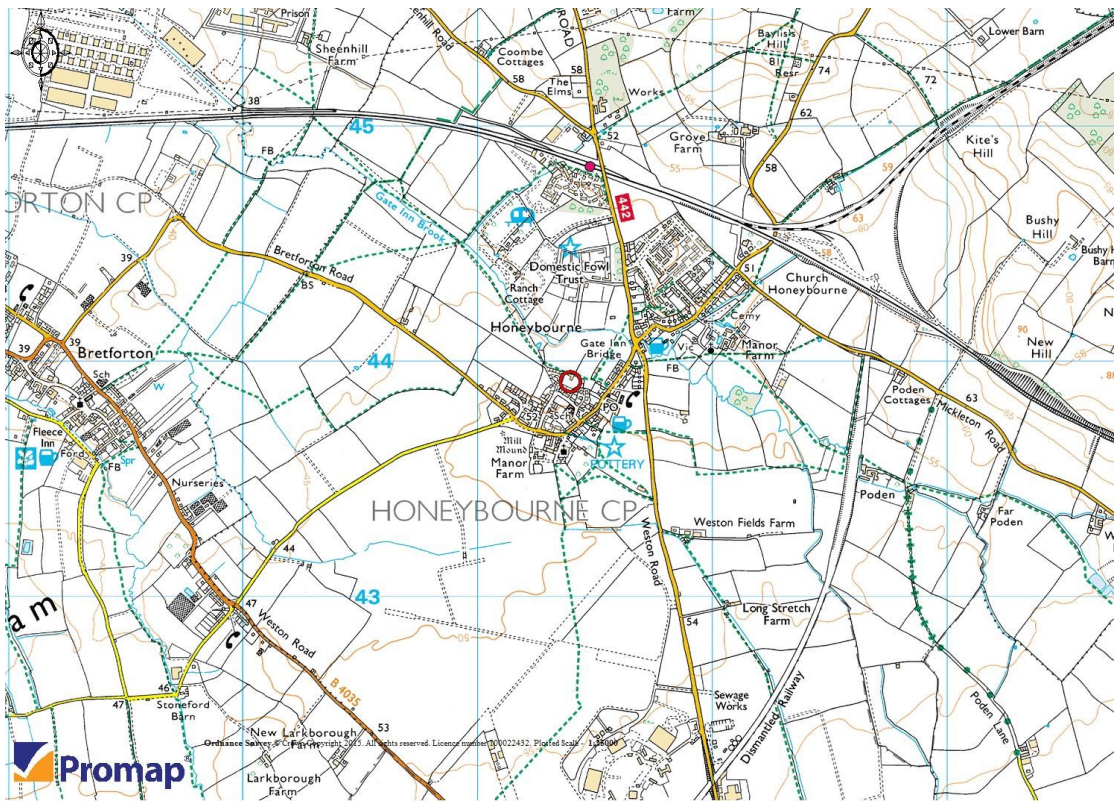


Fig. 1: Site location circled in red.



Fig. 2: Area of study outlined in red.

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of works

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 5-7th December 2022 at Corner Farm, School Street, Honeybourne, Worcestershire, WR11 7PL at the request of the landowner. A planning application (*Planning ref. 20/02370/OUT*) had been granted by Wychavon District Council for the development of four dwellings on the site conditional on the completion of an evaluation (trial trenching) the results of which would, if necessary, inform a mitigation strategy for further archaeological work on site prior to or during the commencement of development.

The proposed development area (PDA) may have affected heritage assets of known archaeological significance ([wsm21576](#), [wsm56936](#), [wsm47987](#)). The PDA is within the medieval occupation area of Honeybourne village ([wsm21576](#)) which was mentioned in Domesday. The land is understood to be within an area of Palaeolithic potential with head deposits from Marine Isotope Stage 12-Stage 1 ([wsm56936](#)). To the north-east of the PDA a substantial area of prehistoric to Romano-British occupation has been identified ([wsm47987](#)). To the south of the PDA a Roman road which ran from Hinton on the Green to Ryknild Street ([wsm30628](#)).

Geology and topography

Honeybourne is a village and civil parish about 5 miles (8 km) east of Evesham in Worcestershire. Much of the parish is farmland. The field systems to the north of the development area are characterised by well-defined ridge and furrow topography. The search area sits within a rolling lowland topography based on bedrock geology made up of mudstone. Superficial geology is made up of deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel. The site comprises a roughly rectangular area of approx. 3,000m² situated at approximately 52m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The underlying geology comprises clay, mainly upper Lias (BGS, 1993).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historical background

Honeybourne was two villages Church Honeybourne was in Worcestershire while Cow Honeybourne was in Gloucestershire. Changes in 1931 moved Cow Honeybourne into Worcestershire and the two parishes were united in 1958. Honeybourne has several historic timber-framed and thatched buildings. The Thatched Tavern in Cow Honeybourne has a cruck truss. The villages of Church Honeybourne and Cow Honeybourne formerly existed in the current parish of Honeybourne when it formed part of Gloucestershire and were separated by Ricknild Street, an ancient route-way crossing the county from north to south.

The manor and hamlet of Cow Honeybourne was annexed to Church-Honeybourne at the Dissolution. Cartographic sources comprising 1778 Enclosure Award and OS 1885 map show the site situated along School Street which probably reflects the western boundary of the historic core of the village with a string of small early farmsteads arranged around the outer edge with access tracks/roads radiating out to the wider agricultural landscape. These farms are generally of C17 and as a group indicate a period of substantial expansion. Stray finds within the area of the site suggest settlement may have started in the Late Iron Age and continued into Romano-British period, this is supported by the results of archaeological fieldwork to the east on land between the village and Ricknild Street where Roman deposits have been discovered.

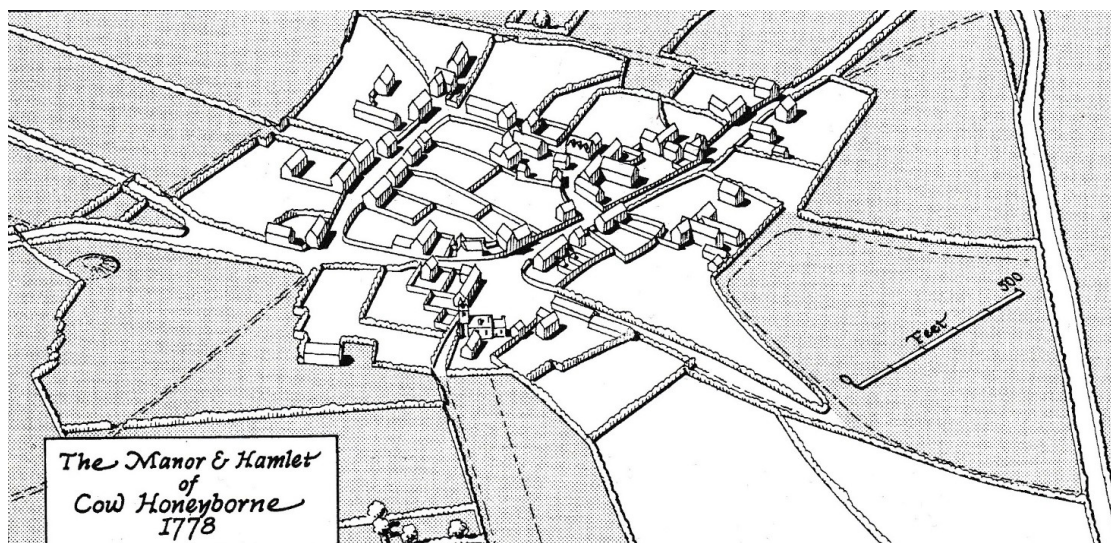


Fig.6; Cow Honeybourne 1778

Archaeological background (Historic Environment Record)

An HER search was carried out on a 500m radius of the provided grid reference on the 22/11/2022, as specified in the search request. There are 26 archaeological activities and 22 HER monuments recorded within the search area. The surrounding region comprises regular, planned enclosure, except for the area around Bretforton where remnants of strip fields remain. Within the search area lie 15 Historic England Listed Buildings and 9 unlisted, historic buildings. The listed structures date to the C15 through to the C18 and include a church, cruck house and farmhouses.

An Historic England funded project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded 4 farmsteads within the search area dating to the C17. In addition to the built environment there are also monument records for Romano-British through to modern archaeological features, which includes a Romano-British site of occupation ([wsm47987](#)), medieval shrunken settlement ([wsm21576](#)). The Portable Antiquity Scheme has identified numerous finds within the search area, including a Romano-British brooch ([wsm77404](#)). The composition of the brooch comprises of a single copper alloy, 37mm in diameter, approx. 3mm wide and weighing 10g. The front displays three concentric rings around a central area inset with a small hole for an attachment such as small stone. Traces of gold paint observed under magnification, but still visible to the naked eye, indicate that the brooch was formerly gilded. The reverse shows fittings with a hinged pin and clasp for attaching the brooch. The 'arts & craft' character of the brooch suggests construction during the 1890s or early 1900s. The object was returned to the landowner.

Further Archaeological investigations have produced Roman through to post medieval coins ([wsm77405](#), [wsm77406](#), [wsm77407](#), [wsm77408](#), [wsm77409](#), [wsm77410](#), [wsm77411](#), [wsm77414](#) and [wsm65400](#)) as well as post medieval seal matrix ([wsm65232](#), [wsm65314](#)). Archaeological investigations have also recovered artefacts including Iron Age through to modern pottery, Roman animal remains, medieval human remains and post medieval nail. There have been numerous archaeological investigations within the search area, which includes desk based assessments, field walking, geophysical survey, building recording, watching briefs, evaluations and excavation. Archaeology in this region centres on cropmarks of enclosures such as ([wsm46641](#)). Previous archaeological investigations seen around Bretforton have uncovered remains of ridge and furrow of probable medieval date ([wsm36012](#), [wsm46217](#), [wsm46222](#),

[wsm46224](#), [wsm46225](#), [wsm46233](#)). The ridge and furrow in this field forms part of a complex of such remains that spread across the fields to the west of Honeybourne.

The HER records that since the 1880s the field has been the site of an annual sheep sale. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 records only a footpath crossing the south-eastern corner of the site. In contrast the second and third editions of 1901-2 and 1923 respectively record the northern two-thirds of the site as an orchard and sheep pens in the south-western corner. There have been 9 scatters of Roman artefacts recorded around Honeybourne, Bretforton and Badsey, suggesting the landscape in this area was populated from the late prehistoric and Roman periods onwards. Within the search area there could be potential for below ground archaeological features and deposits from the prehistoric through to modern periods, with more potential for prehistoric and Roman, given the proximity of recorded finds and features. Just to the north-east of this site a geophysical survey in 2013 revealed a possible rectilinear enclosure and further field systems and outlying smaller pits or ponds.

In 2015 a watching brief to the south-east of the development area also revealed a road surface that was interpreted as the Roman road of Riknild Street ([wsm30300](#)). The Roman Road, Ryknild Street, runs north-south through the search area, separating Cow Honeybourne from Church Honeybourne. A geophysical survey and excavations have revealed that in the south-east part of the search area this Roman road ran parallel to, and west of, the modern road. An archaeological evaluation carried out in a field immediately west of this road, but further north, revealed ditches containing Iron Age and Roman pottery. The Portable Antiquities Scheme records finds within the search area that include Roman brooches. It is considered, therefore, that these or related features could extend into the development area. Finally, a Historic England funded project to identify the potential for Palaeolithic Archaeology in Worcestershire recorded deposits within the search area with potential for archaeology dating back 476,050 years. Statutory and other Designation

In 2011 an evaluation ([wsm46054](#)) at land off Station Road revealed a localised area of middle Iron Age and Romano British deposits (Cotswold Archaeology, 2011). An archaeological Evaluation in 2013 on Land at Grange Farm, Honeybourne ([wsm47433](#)) in advance of housing development targeted with seven 50m trenches geophysical anomalies that were hand sampled. Only one feature was recorded comprising of a linear arrangement of tightly packed rounded cobbles 1.10m wide and containing pieces of Roman roof tile. It was suggested that the feature could be a land drain that incorporated hard core used

on the former Roman road Ryknild Street which runs near to the site. The small amounts of Roman pottery from across the site are also suggested to indicate low level non-settlement activity nearby, most likely also originating from Ryknild Street (Murphy & Mayes, 2013).

An archaeological watching brief in 2014 at Grange Farm, Honeybourne ([wsm66235](#)) revealed a stone packed feature which further investigation showed was linear in plan and likely to represent a Roman road. Following further consultation, a programme of archaeological recording was agreed ([wsm66927](#)) The results showed that the road comprised two to three stone surfaces set in a shallow depression and flanked by roadside ditches and that the road feature continued through the site, surviving less well to the south. It was concluded that the feature represents the original Roman road, known as Riknild Street. The current line of Weston Road/Station Road performs a distinct eastward kink as it passes through the village of Honeybourne and it is now clear that this represents a divergence from the original line (Cornagh & Rogers, 2015).

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional and national context can be made. This information would clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation *in situ* or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

In general, the aims of the investigation included:

- i) establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site.
- ii) recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.
- iii) recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

More specifically the investigation would explore:

- iv) the potential for medieval and Roman-British occupation deposits associated with the early development of Honeybourne.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised four trenches representing an approximate five percent sample of the PDA. All the trenches were 30m long and a minimum of 1.50m wide.



Fig. 3: site plan with trench locations, also showing main archaeological features and a detail of [304]. The blue inset (Fig. 4) details the features in this area. The orange trenches are from the 2015 evaluation. The proposed development including new access road, house plots and their associated driveways are in grey.

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2020). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated

for archaeological features. Plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally wet and dry during the excavation, the soil layers showing some moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth throughout the trench being made through alternate layers comprising of topsoil and an underlying subsoil, leaving a clean and visible surface within the natural substrate, a stiff clay.

Reliability of field investigation

There was some limited evidence of previous truncation of the underlying deposits, mainly resulting from a modern pipe trench aligned northwest to southeast through trenches 1, 2, and 4. Some land drains were also observed.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

Archaeological deposits consisted of 3 undated ditches, one of these comprised of features [104], [204] was recorded aligned northwest-southeast through trenches 1 and 2. A second ditch [206] was recorded also in trench 2 aligned northeast-southwest seemingly joining perpendicular with ditch [104/204]. In trench 3 is another undatable ditch [304] which aligns northeast-southwest. Two pits [208], [210], each dated to the medieval period, were recorded close to the junction of two of the ditches.

Presentation of results

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. Trenches were attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

Trenches 1 to 4

The surface of the natural substrate (contexts 102, 202, 302 and 402) comprised a stiff light yellowish-brown clay and was exposed throughout the length of all four trenches at a level height of about 42.55m AOD (trench 1), 42.50m AOD (trench 2), 42.62m AOD (trench 3) and 42.60m AOD (trench 4).

Within the surface of the natural clay in trench 1 was the truncated remains of a single undated ditch feature [104] aligned northwest to southeast. The ditch was 0.96m wide and 0.30m deep with steep sloping sides and slightly round base. It was filled by a single deposit (103) consisting of a mid-light greyish brown, silty clay. No finds were retrieved from this fill deposit.

Within the surface of the natural clay in trench 2 were the remains of four features [204], [206], [208], [210]. Two undated ditches [204 and 206] were recorded, ditch [204] was aligned northwest-southeast and was a likely continuation of the same ditch [104] recorded in trench 1. The ditch was slightly narrower, measuring 0.74m wide and 0.24m deep with steep sloping side and flat base 0.2m wide. It was filled by a single deposit (203) consisting of a mid-greyish brown silty clay, no finds were recovered from this deposit.

The second ditch feature [206] was 0.70m wide and 0.34m deep with steep sloping, almost vertical sides, and a flat base 0.4m wide. It was filled by a single deposit (205) consisting of a mid-greyish brown silty clay, no finds were recovered from this deposit.

Of the two pit features [208 and 210], also recorded in trench 2, pit [208] was the largest, measuring at least 0.8m wide and 0.8m deep, although only partially exposed, the evidence suggests a sub-square feature. Partial excavation indicates an irregular profile with a stepped edge and a flat base. It was filled by a single deposit (207) a mid-greyish brown silty clay which produced a single fragment of animal bone (sheep) and a single sherd of medieval pottery dated late C11-mid/late C14.

Pit [210] was the smaller of the two, also only partially exposed and seemingly circular. Sample excavation revealed a feature at least 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep with a steep side and flat base, it was filled by a single deposit (209) consisting of a mid-greyish brown silty clay, it produced a single sherd of pottery dated C12-C14.

In trench 3 a single undated ditch feature [304] was recorded aligned northeast-southwest measuring 0.54m wide and 0.22m deep with steep sides and flat base at 0.20m wide. It was filled by a single deposit (303) consisting of a mid-greyish brown silty clay no finds were recovered from the fill deposit.

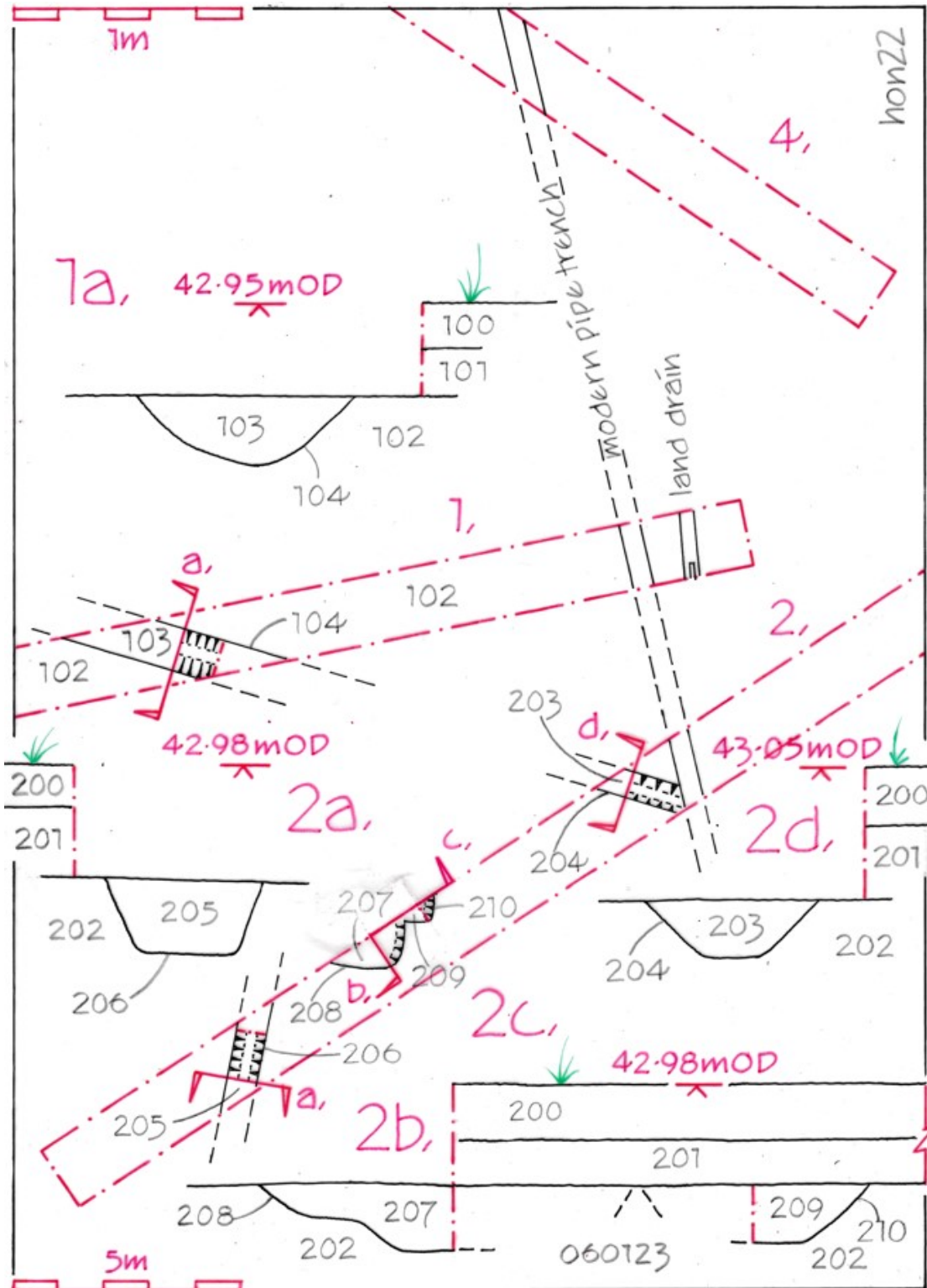


Fig.5: trench plan & sections

In all four trench the surface of the natural clay and the associated fill deposits for the recorded features were sealed by an homogenous relict subsoil deposit (101, 201, 301 and 401) consisting of a brown silty clay to a depth varying between 0.22 and 0.32 in thickness. This in turn was overlain by the existing modern topsoil layer (100, 200,300 and 400) varying between 0.2m and 0.26m in thick.

FINDS

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised two sherds with a total weight of 19g. They are both of earlier medieval date and were recorded using the conventions of the Worcestershire County type-series (e.g., Bryant and Evans 2004) as follows:

F55: Worcester-type Sandy Unglazed Ware, late C11–mid/late C14. 1 sherd, 9g.

F148.1: Evesham Unglazed Micaceous Ware, C12–C14. 1 sherd, 10g.

Both wares are common finds in the region. The sherd of F55 is from context 207 while that of F148.1 is from context 209. The former is a plain body-sherd, the latter rim-sherd from a jar. They are both in good condition and are likely to be reliably stratified.

Animal Bone

A single fragment of animal bone (sheep) weighing of 112g was recovered from the fill of pit [208].

Environmental data

None of the deposits identified during excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

DISCUSSION

The HER shows us that most of the more recent archaeological evidence has revealed Roman deposits surviving to the east of the site and village on land between the village and Ricknild Street. The results of the evaluation on the adjacent land to the west in 2015 (comprising double-width trenches) were negative although an unstratified Roman brooch was found during the evaluation, several footpaths converging within the vicinity of the site may have existed in the Roman period and the brooch find may represent a casual loss associated with their use.

Cartographic sources (Inclosure Award 1778 and the OS 1885 & 1902 maps) show at the end of the C19 that the site was formerly an established orchard opposite Corner Farm. As the name suggests, the farm is situated in the corner of two converging boundaries that mark the north-west and north-east extent of the current village and which are both characterised by a string of small farmsteads with access tracks/roads radiating out to the wider agricultural landscape. These farms are generally of a C17 date and as a group indicate a period of substantial expansion during this period.

The evaluation recorded a series of undated linear field boundary/drainage ditches aligned northwest-southeast and northeast-southwest. These features are evidence of an earlier pattern of land sub-division within the site, their alignments are consistent with some of the boundaries identified on the historic maps associated with the adjacent farms developed in the C17 and may be an indication of their origin. The boundaries are not shown in 1778 suggesting that they had become obsolete by this time.

Medieval activity within the site is evidenced by two small pits each dated to late C11–mid/late C14 and the C12–C14 from a single sherd of pottery from each feature. The function of the pits is unclear, they were recorded close to the junction of two of the undated ditches although any relationship with these ditches, if any, is also unclear.

Summary of results

The evaluation recorded a series of undated linear boundary/drainage ditches beneath the existing soil indicating an earlier pattern of land division. These ditches align with some of the boundaries of the adjacent farmsteads which were

developed in the C17 along the west and north sides of School Road during further expansion of the village in this period.

Significance

The results of the evaluation revealed a series of undated boundaries which may have their origin in the C17 with the development of new farmsteads along the west and north sides of School Road during a period of further expansion of the village. Pottery fragment from two small pits recorded close to the junction of two of the ditches indicate medieval activity within the site. one of the pits was dated to the

Impact of development

The results of the evaluation indicate an absence of archaeological deposits within the application site pre-dating the development of Corner Farm during the C17. It was during this period that further expansion of the village was characterised by the development of a number of farmsteads along the west and north sides of School Road. The core of the earlier settlement lies further to the south near the church and manor.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) via the online portal OASIS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey, 1974. Geological Survey of England and Wales, Stratford upon Avon, sheet 200, solid and drift geology, 1:50,000.

Bryant, V, and Evans, J, 2004. The Pottery in H Dalwood, and R Edwards, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89: Romano-British small town to late medieval city* CBA Research Report **139**

Cornah, T and Rogers, T. 2015. Archaeological works at Grange Farm, Honeybourne, Worcestershire, Worcestershire Archaeology.

CIfA, 2019. Code of Conduct, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

CIfA, 2020. Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Doubleday, A., 1901. A History of the County of Worcestershire, Vol. 1, 214

Glyde, M., 2014, Requirements for a programme of archaeological work at land off School Street, Honeybourne, Worcestershire." Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council,

Hathaway, E, Lake, J and A, Mindykowski. 2012. Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project (The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project). English Heritage.

Evaluation, Headland Archaeology

Evaluation. Cotswold Archaeology.

Murphy, J & Mayes, S. 2013. Grange Farm, Worcestershire, Archaeological

OS 1885, First Edition

OS 1902, Second Edition

Riley, R., 2011. Land off Station Road Honeybourne Worcestershire-

Archaeological

Worcestershire County Historic Environment Service 2022. Historic Environment Record.

PLATES



Plate 1: trench 1 view east



Plate 2: trench 1 view west



Plate 3: fill deposit (103) west view



Plate 4: ditch [104] view east



Plate 5: trench 2 northeast view



Plate 6: fill deposit (203) west view



Plate 7: [204] ditch west view



Plate 8: fill deposit (207) view north



Plate 9: [208] and [210] pit



Plate 10: fill deposit (205) north view



Plate 11: [206] ditch north view



Plate 12: trench 3 view northwest



Plate 13: fill deposit (303) northeast



Plate 14: ditch [304] north



Plate 15: trench 4 view southeast



Plate 16: section 1a



Plate 17: section 2a



Plate 18: section 2d



Plate 19: section 3a