

GREAT BOWDEN HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY



EXCAVATION AT THE STRIP, GREAT BOWDEN

17TH-18TH JULY 2010

GRID REF: SP474650 288800

SITE HISTORY AND LOCATION

The strip is the current field name given to the paddock that lies to the North and east of Great Bowden Village Hall. It is bounded on the North by the cottage, garden and vegetable plots on Dingley Road and to the South by gardens associated with the former farm at Langton House on The Green. East of The Strip lies Christchurch Paddock with the same owner and the site of our previous excavation in June 2010. To the West lies the centre of the village and The Green.

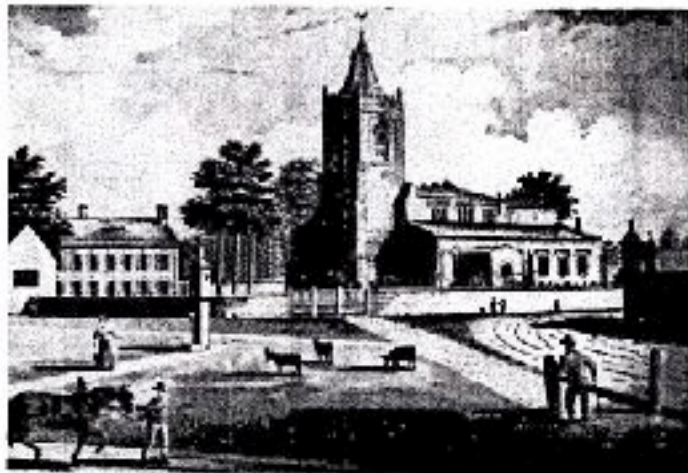
The most striking features of this paddock are the two brick pillared gateposts with pyramidal stone caps and ball finials (Historic Environment Record - MLE14942). These date from the 17th century although the brickwork has been recently restored. There are very similar gateposts on the approach to Rectory House in Sutton Road and also next to the church and forming the boundary wall to 2 Sutton Road. This was formerly the site of the Rectory House stables.

A "coursed ironstone wall with tile coping" (HER) lies between the south-west gatepost and the Village Hall. There are signs that this wall may have extended further south before the Village Hall was built. The eastern gate pier has about a metre of the wall remaining before it abruptly ends and is replaced by a boundary hedge of *Leylandii* trees. The direction of this short piece of wall suggests it originally bordered Dingley Road although there is no sign of it further along.

The existence of these gateposts and the various boundary walls suggest that in the past this was a paddock of some significance and may have been associated with the Rectory at Great Bowden. The area now covered by the Village Hall was sold for its construction by the Dean and Chapter of Christchurch College for £5 in 1902. The land now occupied by 10 Dingley Road has been the subject of many changes of ownership and of several different cottages since the middle of the 18th century (information from the Deeds of 10-12 Dingley Road). To date no further information has been revealed to explain the paddock's earlier history.

*Gateposts are to the right of picture 1835
(GB Village Appraisal 1997-98)*

The gateposts 2010



Engraving of Great Bowden Church and Rectory circa 1835



Nineteenth century maps indicate that the paddock was occupied by a large building occupying most of its width. As no garden area is shown on the maps this was probably a barn with a short piece of wall completing the bisection of the paddock. Nothing remains visible above ground and it was the foundations of this barn that the excavation hoped to discover. It is not clear from the maps whether the barn's main access is from the West, through the brick gateposts or from the East via Christchurch paddock.

The paddock today is used for cattle grazing although the area close to the Village Hall has much hardcore deposited during alterations to the Village Hall. This area of disturbance does not extend as far as the site of the previous barn.

OS Map from 1891
(surveyed during the 1880s)

Arrows indicates former building and area of excavation.



Estate map of late Richard Mitchell dating from 1843 showing division of paddock and barn.

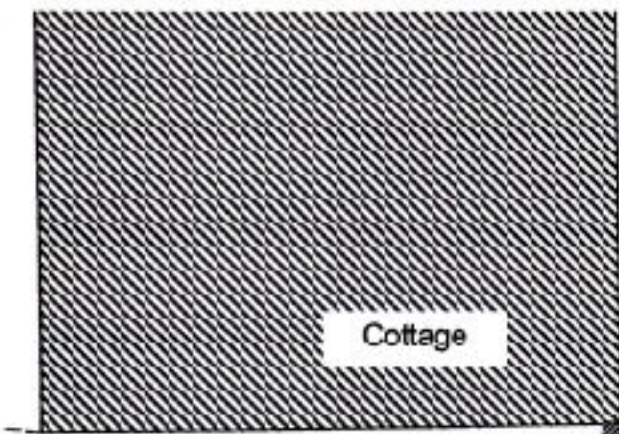
EXCAVATION

A gridded area was laid out to cover the part of the paddock where we expected to find the barn foundations. Grids 3-6 measured 6 metres x 6 metres. Grids 1-2 were reduced in size to 6 metres x 3 metres to allow for access along the south wall of the site.

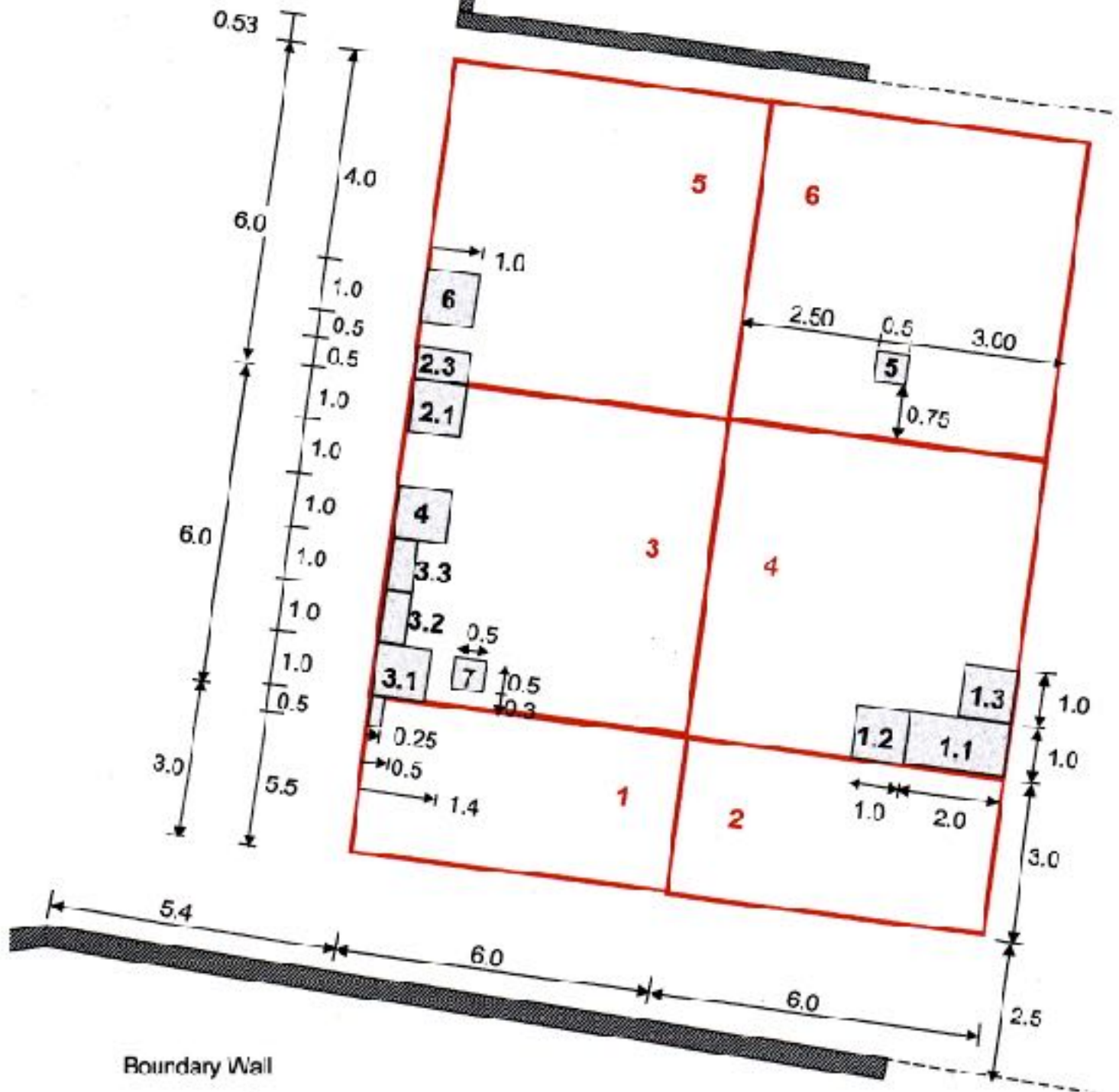
The following plans show the extent and results of excavations carried out by hand over two days. The information has been extracted from the context sheets used during the excavation. Pits were dug within the gridded area where metal probes hit stone surfaces in several places in close proximity. Much of the area was covered in stone or building debris just below the surface and most of the test pits dug revealed this.

The ceramic and other finds have been recorded in the Finds Report at the end of this report. There is also a list of the finds found during a metal detecting survey of the gridded area.





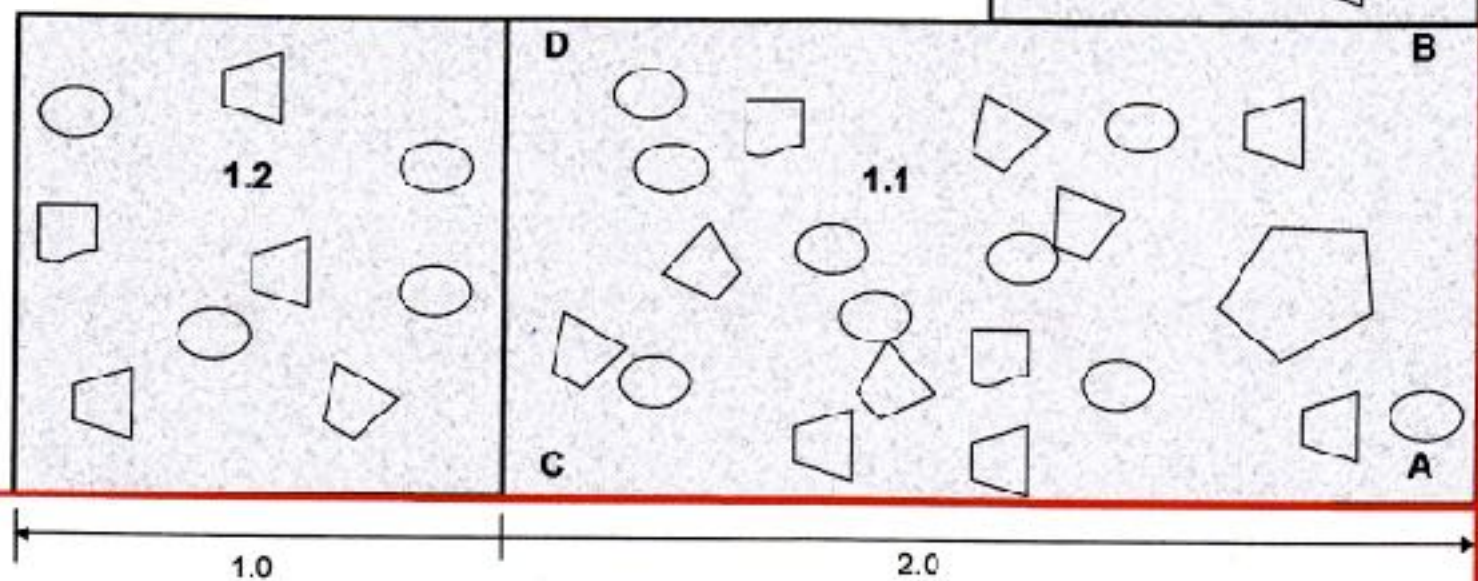
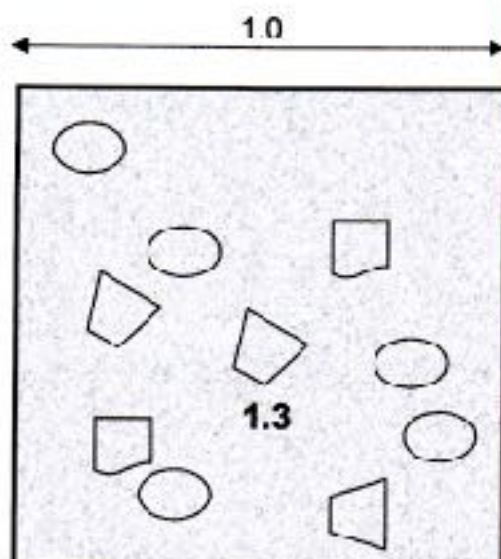
Grid and pit dimensions
and location
Scale 1:100



Pit 1
Context 1.1, 1.2, 1.3



Grid 4



Grid 2

Context 1.1 Grid Ref 4

Dimensions: 2 metres x 1 metre

Start slope: Depth from A 12 cm: From B 12 cm: From C 12 cm : From D 16 cm

Soil composition: Dark brown loam with less than 1% inclusion, some stone, charcoal cobbles large stones and chalk.

Features: Stony surface overall, including random stone, cobble and some brick. No specific pattern

Finds Metal, bone and pot

Context 1.2 Extending 1.1 westwards to same depth as 1.1

Dimensions 1 metre x 1 metre

Soil composition and inclusions as 1.1

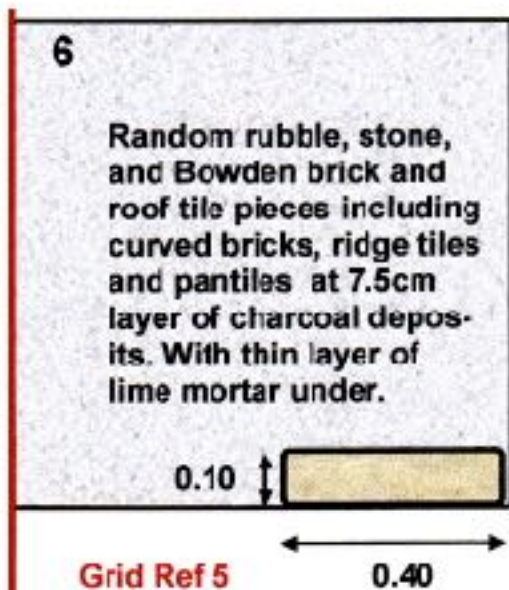
Similar Surface as 1.1. No significant change.

Context 1.3 Extending 1.1 northwards to same depth as 1.1

Dimensions 1 metre x 1 metre

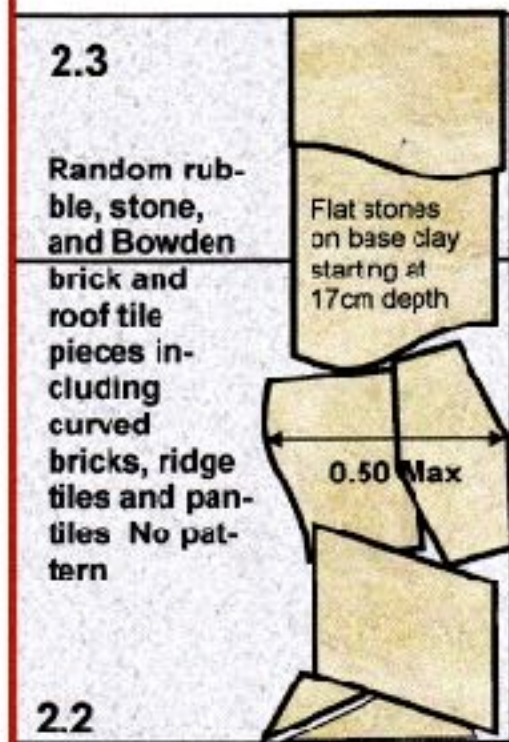
Soil composition, surface etc as 1.1, 1.2

Finds Pottery glass and Bone

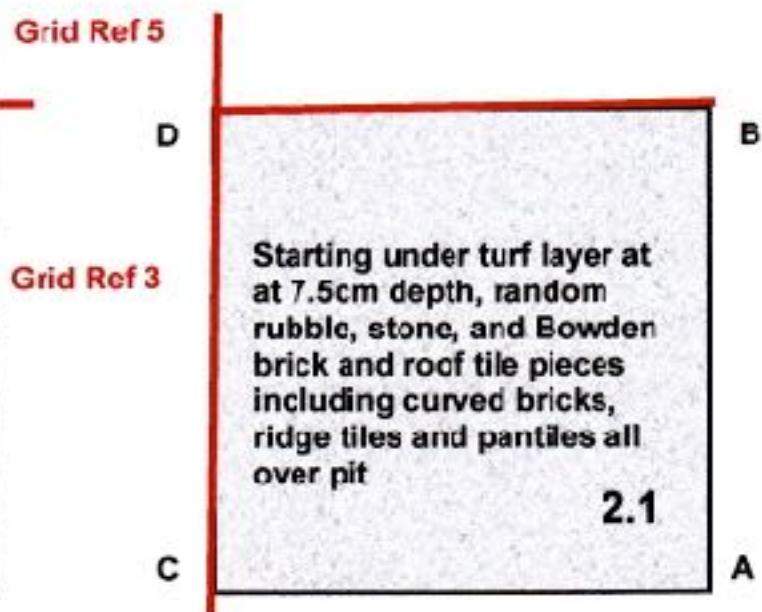


Pit 6

Grid Ref 3, Dimensions: 1 metre x 1 metre.
 Start slope : 6% north / south. Level east/ west.
 Soil - From under turf layer to approx 20 cm depth, dark loam with organic matter, charcoal and ash throughout, but including heavy incidence of random brick and stone as described on drawing all over pit to approx depth of 30cm. Thin layer of lime mortar beneath charcoal layer. Base clay at 35 cm depth
 Feature ; line of flat stone approx 40 cm in width following line of Pit 2 but terminating at 10cm from pit edge..
 Finds: jawbone with teeth, pottery, clay pipe
 Finished depth in centre 35 cm



Pit 2, Context 2.1, 2.2, 2.3



Context 2.1 Grid Ref 3, Dimensions: 1 metre x 1 metre, Start slope : 6%

Soil - Under turf layer, at 7.5 cm depth random brick and stone rubble as described above, all over pit to context depth of 10cm

Finds Metal, bone and pot

Context 2.2 Below 2.1 same dimension. Start depth approx 10 cm

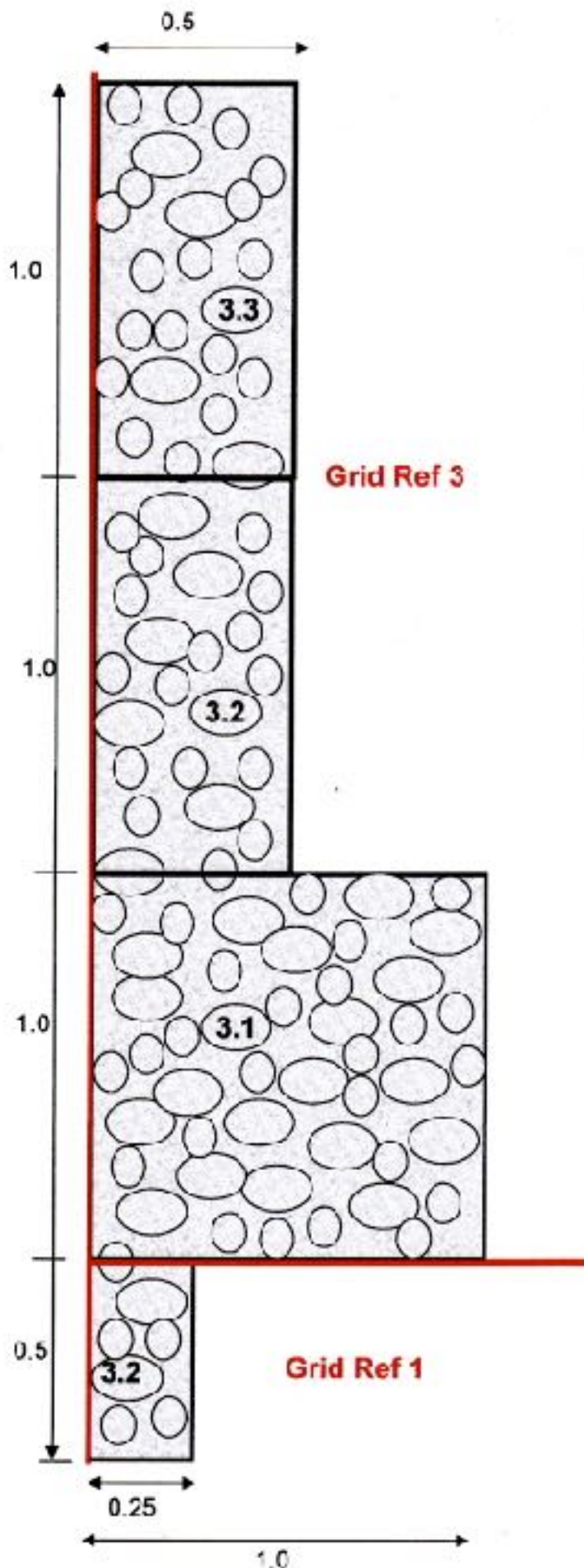
Random brick stone layer continues to 30 cm at D, 20cm at B

Feature ; At approx 17 cm depth line of flat stone, max. width 50cm, running approx north south through eastern end of pit

Finds;

Context 2.3 Grid Ref 5. Extending 2.2 northwards into Grid Ref 5. 1 metre x 0.5

Flat stone line continues as shown, random, brick and stone pieces elsewhere



Pit 3

3.1

Dimensions as shown

Level at start.

Dark Brown friable loam under turf layer with less than 1% inclusions.

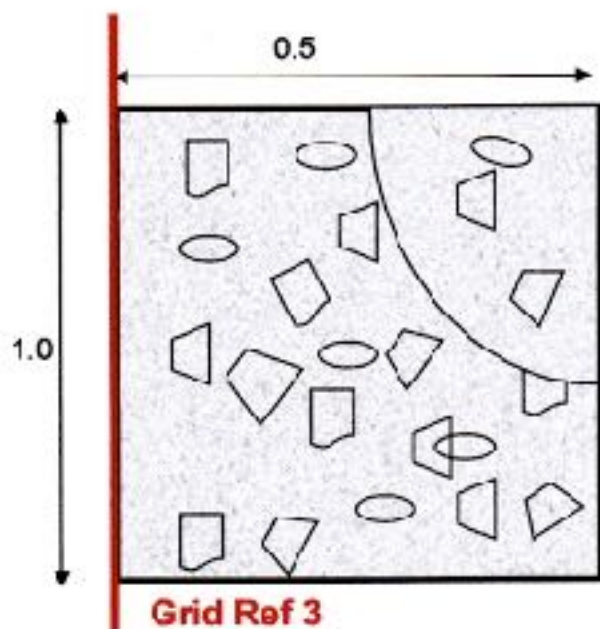
Feature regular cobbled surface all over pit floor.

Finish depth 22cm

Finds: metal, bone and pot

3.2 and 3.3

Extended 3.1 as shown in both directions along grid line. Soil inclusions and feature as 3.1, Slightly less regular cobbles with more disturbed arrangement and some stone pieces included.



Pit 4

Context 4.1 Grid Ref 3

Dimensions: 1 metres x 1 metre

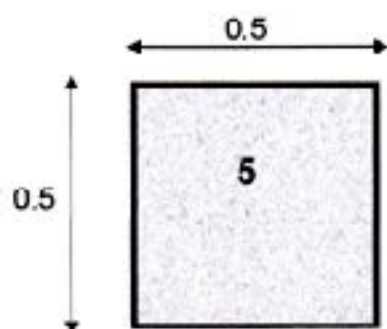
Start level:

Soil composition: Under turf layer, friable loam with few inclusions.

At 100mm depth layer of random rubble and small stones, with some brick pieces and cobbles. All over pit. No discernible pattern.

Charcoal traces in NE quadrant as shown

Depth of context 20cm max



Grid Ref 6

Pit 5

Context 5.1 Grid Ref 6

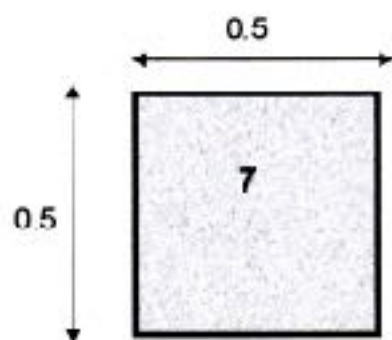
Dimensions: 0.5 metres x 0.5 metre

75 cm north of grid line, 3 metres west of grid line

Start level:

Soil composition: Under turf layer, friable loam with few inclusions.

At 100mm depth random rubble and small stones, with some brick pieces and chalk pieces. No Features.



Grid Ref 3

Pit 7

Context 7.1 Grid Ref 3

Dimensions: 0.5 metres x 0.5 metre

30cm north of grid line, 1.4 metres east of grid line

Start level:

Soil composition: Under turf layer, friable loam with few inclusions. No Features.

Finds: pot glass

Google Earth photograph taken in 2010. Arrow shows the paddock.



PHOTOGRAPHS



Photographs:

1. Pit 1 rough stone surface
2. Pit 2 stone foundations
3. Pit 3 cobbled surface
4. Excavating Pit 6
5. and 6. Team excavating
7. 8. 9. The Festival visitors working on the site

CONCLUSION

As far as the Festival of British Archaeology was concerned this was a very suitable site for a dig to which the public could have access. Being next to the Village Hall, where we had displays and information on our current projects as well as refreshments, and on a level surface it offered easy access to all but the most disabled of visitors.

It had the advantage of being a site on which we knew there had been a building at the turn of the 20th century and that any foundations for this would be near the surface and would not involve deep digging for which we were not equipped with tools or volunteers.

The grid was set out to cover the area of the former building as accurately as possible. The two 19th century maps to which we had access showed the barn in slightly different positions. Both maps showed the paddock cut into two and on the earlier one it seems that the barn was in the eastern section with possibly no access through the brick gateposts on The Green.

The stone foundations found in Pits 2 and 6 would appear to relate to the barn shown on the 1891 map. The large quantity of ceramic tile and brick debris suggests that this barn was brick built and probably with a tile roof. The barn or other building shown the earlier 1843 estate map may have been a different building and the earlier date suggests it could have been of mud and thatch construction, the predominant construction material at the time, similar to the mud barn still in existence in Sutton Road, Great Bowden. (*This barn has been demolished since 2010*) However the brick works in Bowden started around 1811 and so local bricks would have been available for construction perhaps for higher status buildings such as houses but not for barns.

The floor or yard surface at the eastern end of the gridded site was of a rougher nature to the neater cobbled surfaces unearthed at the western side of the site and could be from a different building. If there were mud walls and thatched roofs they would have decayed into the ground leaving no evidence behind.

It is tempting to think that this paddock enclosed by walls and with imposing gateposts could have housed the tithe barn in Great Bowden. Similar gateposts suggest that this paddock was in the ownership of The Rectory when the gateposts were constructed. However later documents from the 18th century onwards and during the period when tithes were still collected give the ownership elsewhere. The calendar of Estate Papers from the Dean and Chapter of Christchurch has a document which appears to put the tithe barn close to the Rectory in 1846 and that after demolition a barn for cattle was to be built in its place. This has to favour the site of the mud barn in Sutton Road as being the more likely site and further research will be done and the full paperwork requested from Christchurch College.

The finds from this site were almost all post medieval and some pottery and other finds were probably deposited after the barn was demolished. The Heritage Group hope to be able to carry out a resistivity meter survey of this area in the future although some building outlines may be obscured by the amount of demolition material present.

Report: R.Culkin

Drawings and Grid References: L Thomas

Update November 2018

The Strip, along with neighbouring paddocks to the east and south have been the subject of two planning applications for housing development since 2016. The second application was finally refused by the Planning Inspector in October 2018 having been previously refused by Harborough District Council in October 2017.

The developers had survey work undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services in 2016 .



An archaeological desk-based assessment for Land at Dingley Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire (SP 74717 88687) Stephen Baker **ULAS Report No 2015-035**

ULAS excavations 2016 in The Strip. Trench revealed deep ditch - no further information

An archaeological earthwork survey by LiDAR study for land off Dingley Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. NGR: SP 74700 88700 By Matthew Beamish **ULAS Report No 2016-070** - OASIS : <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/issue.xhtml?recordId=1161989&recordType=GreyLitSeries>

Geophysical Survey Report (Stratascan) Land at Dingley Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire OASIS: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/issue.xhtml?recordId=1146772&recordType=GreyLitSeries>

Extract from comments on Planning Application from Principal Planning Archaeologist, Leics County Council:

“.....To the north-west of the development area ... archaeological evidence has indicated the presence of a possible cobbled surface or trackway, possibly associated with the 17th century listed (Grade II) gate piers and wall, the latter possibly associated with the Rectory. Previous archaeological investigation of a structure recorded on the 19th century and earlier mapping, undertaken by the local archaeological group, identified the presence of a brick-built barn, or similar structure, situated centrally to the plot, possibly indicating the western end of Field 4, originally entered off The Green/Dingley Road, formed a stable yard carriage house for the Rectory to the north of the church.



ULAS excavations in 2016. Stone surface in similar position to our excavations in 2010. Note the brick gateposts in the distance on Dingley Road.

Great Bowden Heritage & Archaeology



FINDS REPORT (Finds verified by Community Archaeologist, Leics. County Council)

DATE: 17-18th July 2010

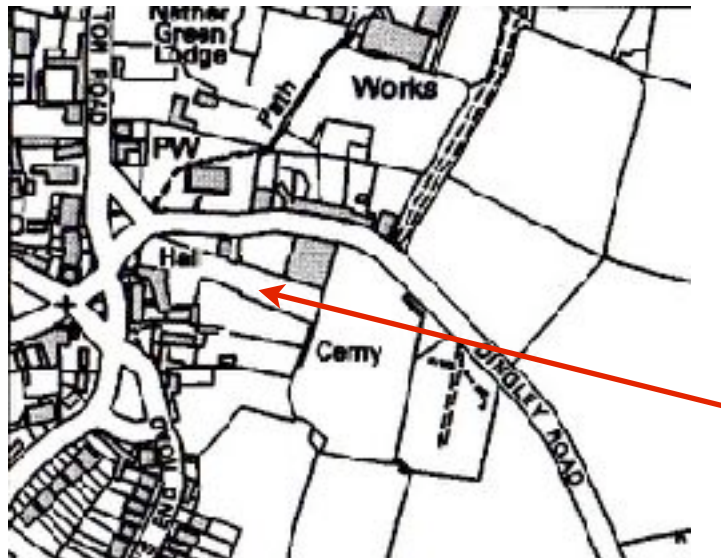
DESCRIPTION: See Full Report. SITE CODE: GBH ST

LOCATION: **The Strip, Dingley Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire**

GRID REF: 474650 288800 CIVIL PARISH: Great Bowden

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS: Leicestershire Historic Environment Record, Estate papers from Christchurch College Oxford, Great Bowden Village Appraisal, local house Deeds, 1843 Estate map Richard Mitchell, 1891 OS m

MAP:



FINDS LISTED BY PIT NUMBER AND CONTEXT

Pit 1

GBH ST 1.1 medieval pot rim x 1 (joins with piece in GBH ST1.2)
GBH ST 1.1 post medieval earthenware (EA2) x 1
GBH ST 1.1 modern china x 2, modern glass black x 3m, modern glass blue x 2
GBH ST 1.1 Welsh slate x 2, metal (nails) x 3, animal teeth and bone x 7

GBH ST 1.2 medieval pottery x 2 (1 pot rim)
GBH ST 1.2 post medieval pot (EA2) x 1
GBH ST 1.2 modern china x 8, modern glass x 2, metal (nail) x 1, animal bone x 2

GBH ST 1.3 post medieval pot (EA2) x 2 (join), post medieval pancheon x 1
GBH ST 1.3 modern china x 3, modern green glass x 4
GBH ST 1.3 metal short nail x 1, oyster shell x 1, animal bone x 2

Pit 2

GBH ST 2.1 post medieval pancheon rim x 1, post medieval stoneware x 1
GBH ST 2.1 modern china x 2
GBH ST 2.1 post medieval 19th century dark grey painted floor tile x 6
GBH ST 2.1 post medieval field drain x 5, modern grey tile x 1
GBH ST 2.1 metal flat pieces, including strap x 3, clinker or industrial waste x 3

GBH ST 2.2 post medieval clay pipe stem x 1, modern china x 10
GBH ST 2.2 post medieval 19th century dark grey painted tile (as in 2.1) x 5
GBH ST 2.2 metal - nail x 1, animal bone x 2

GBH ST 2.3 natural flint pot lid x 1
GBH ST 2.3 post medieval coarse earthenware with grog & grit x 1
GBH ST 2.3 post medieval clay pipe stem, post medieval stoneware x 3
GBH ST 2.3 modern china x 4, post medieval ? hand made brick fragments x 3
GBH ST 2.3 modern tile or flowerpot x 1, clinker or industrial waste x 2
GBH ST 2.3 metal hooks x 2, animal bone x 2

Pit 3

GBH ST 3.1 post medieval pancheon x 1
GBH ST 3.1 modern china x 2, glass clear x 2 (1 bottle neck), field drain (joins) x 2
GBH ST 3.1 metal (flat machine part?) x 1, animal bone x 7(2 are butchered)

GBH ST3.2 no finds

GBH ST 3.3 post medieval brick or tile x 1, modern china x 4, metal nail x 1

Pit 4

GBH ST 4.1 prehistoric blade-like flake with platform preparation x1
GBH ST 4.1 prehistoric struck fragment x 1
GBH ST 4.1 medieval pot with shell x 1, medieval sandyware x 1 (poss. Lyveden Stanion)
GBH ST 4.1 post med. heavy earthenware possibly pancheon x 12 (9 from same vessel)
GBH ST 4.1 post medieval glazed both sides blackware x 1. modern china x 10
GBH ST 4.1 metal circular object poss. button x 1, metal curved blade poss. sickle x 1

Pit 5 no finds

Pit 6

GBH ST 6.1 prehistoric flint flake x 1
GBH ST 6.1 post medieval pancheon x 2, post med. stoneware bottle x 2 recent break
GBH ST 6.1 post medieval stoneware (fine) x 4. post medieval sewer pipe x 3
GBH ST 6.1 post medieval or modern pottery or yellow ware with blue glazed interior possibly large bowl x 17
GBH ST 6.1 modern thick pottery blue and white, same vessel possibly bowl x 15
GBH ST 6.1 modern green and white china tableware x 4, modern fine white china x2
GBH ST 6.1 modern thick clear bottle glass (same bottle) x 4, modern green bottle glass x 2
GBH ST 6.1 slate, 2 x Swithland (Charnwood), 2 x Welsh, animal bone (including jawbone) x 7
GBH ST 6.1 post medieval 2 x claypipe (1 with mouth end with 'gish' - German?)

Pit 7

GBH ST 7.1 post medieval stoneware x 1, modern blue & white glazed x 7

There was a considerable amount of charcoal, debris from a demolished building as well as general debris from 19th century rubbish in most pits. The building debris was mostly in Pits 2 and 6. Some of the debris was probably as a result of bonfires held long after the barn had been demolished. Most of this was returned to the pits and not retained.

Metal Detecting

A metal detecting survey was made of the gridded area and the following hits were recorded.

- Grid 1 No hits
- Grid 2 Modern plug (not retained)
- Grid 3 Iron rod 27 cms long (not retained)
 Horseshoe maximum width 15 cm (not retained)
 Large boot scraper 28 cm x 21 cm (not retained)
- Grid 4 3 pieces scrap iron (not retained)
- Grid 5 Churn top or chicken feeder (not retained)
 Firegrate with burnt brick (not retained)
- Grid 6 Iron ring diameter 13 cm (not retained)

- Random In hedge, (north side of paddock) -
 1 x thin non ferrous metal disc 32mm diameter,

Retained metal detecting finds

