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**An Archaeological Evaluation
on land west of St John's,
Enderby, Leicestershire**

NGR: SP 5492 9901

Wayne Jarvis




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**An Archaeological Evaluation
on land west of St John's,
Enderby, Leicestershire**

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For: Jelson Ltd

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the west of St. John's, Enderby, Leics. (SP 5492 9901). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed development. Archaeological features were only identified in the north-east area of site, where evaluation revealed archaeological evidence probably dating to between the Mid-Late Iron Age (400 BC – 43 AD), and the early Roman period (1st to 2nd century AD). A small amount of worked flint possibly indicating Neolithic to Bronze Age activity in the area was also recovered on site. The Planning authority is Blaby District Council (Planning application No. 11/0065/1/PX), and the site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, with the accession no. XA62.2011.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Jelson Ltd in May 2011 on land to the west of St. John's, Enderby, Leicestershire (SP 5492 9901). This was undertaken in advance of a proposed development involving the construction of new housing.

An archaeological evaluation of the site was requested by Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team (hereinafter LCC HNET), as archaeological advisors to the planning authority. The work was required in order to assess the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which might be present in order to determine the potential impact upon them from future development proposals.

This report presents the results of the trial trenching, with an assessment of the potential impact on buried archaeological remains from groundworks associated with future development.

2. Site Description, Land use, Topography and Geology

2.1 Site Description

The proposed development site lies to the north-east of the centre of Enderby, Leicestershire, and west of St. John's adjacent to the B4114 (SP 5492 9901, centre; Fig. 1). The site is away from the historic core of the village, but close to the site of the church of St. John's (which probably originated in the 9th century), and some 175m east of the line of the Roman road, the Fosse Way. The application area comprised a single field covering 2 ha. An application has been made for residential development comprising 68 dwellings with associated landscaping. Following Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) Policy HE6, LCC HNET as archaeological advisors to the planning authority required that an evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken (their

letter of 15.03.2011 to Blaby District Council ref: CLE7702/TH).

2.2 Land use and Topography

The site is currently in use as a paddock. Hedgelines delimit the north, west and east of the site while the south is bounded by wooden fencing along the rear margins of residential gardens. The north boundary marks the line of a Public Right of Way. Access into the field is in the south-east corner off the B4114. The area exhibits a gentle south-west to north-east gradient that descends by *c.*3.5m from *c.*72m AOD. Faint earthworks and undulations were visible in the field, so these were examined during trial trenching.

2.3 Geology

The soils of the site are of the Salop Association which comprise “slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy over clayey, fine loamy and clayey soils associated with fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging” (711m: Soil Survey 1983; Sheet 3). The solid geology comprises reddish till.

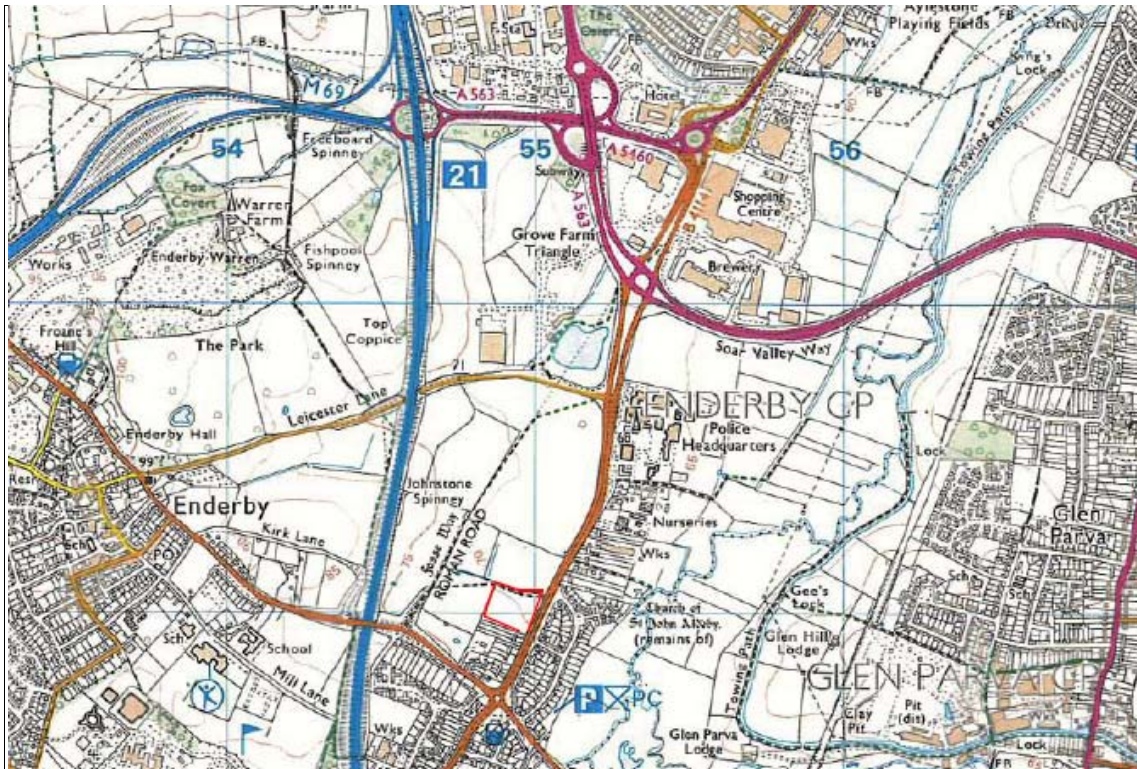


Figure 1: Site Location.

Reproduced from the Explorer 233 Leicester & Hinckley area 1:25 000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2005. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

Although the application area is in an area of considerable archaeological potential close to Iron Age, Roman and medieval remains including the Fosse Way Roman road, geophysical survey results were inconclusive revealing few significant anomalies of archaeological interest (Figure 2, Hancock 2010).



Figure 2: Geophysical survey results and suggested trench location (Hancock 2010, amended 2011).

4. Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- To identify possible areas of archaeological potential liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- To establish the location, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits located.
- To define the quality and state of preservation of these deposits.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The objective was to gain an indication of the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present in order that an informed planning decision can be taken.

5. Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken. The Senior Planning Archaeologist had requested the examination of a minimum sample of 1.5% (c. 320 sq m.) of the 2 ha. area of the development site (equivalent to 10 trial trenches, each 20m in length x 1.6m wide), prior to determination of any planning application to develop the site. The trenches were excavated using a 360 mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket increasing slightly the area covered (360 sq m. 1.8%). The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning. The trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and then were backfilled and leveled at the end of the evaluation.

The work followed the approved design specification (ULAS 2010) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2008).

6. Results

Ten trenches were excavated, ranging in length from 18.3 to 23.6 metres, all being 1.85 metres wide and spread across the development site (Figure 3). Some trenches were located to target possible geophysical anomalies (trenches three, five and nine), while others were to test apparently blank areas (trenches one, seven and ten) and any possible archaeological earthworks (trench three). The topsoil consisted of a dark grey loamy sand with occasional small rounded pebbles, and averaged *c.*0.27m in depth. Below this was a mid-brown yellow clay-sand subsoil also with moderately abundant small rounded pebbles, averaging 0.16m in depth. Descriptions of all archaeological and agricultural features and trench depths are provided in Appendix I.

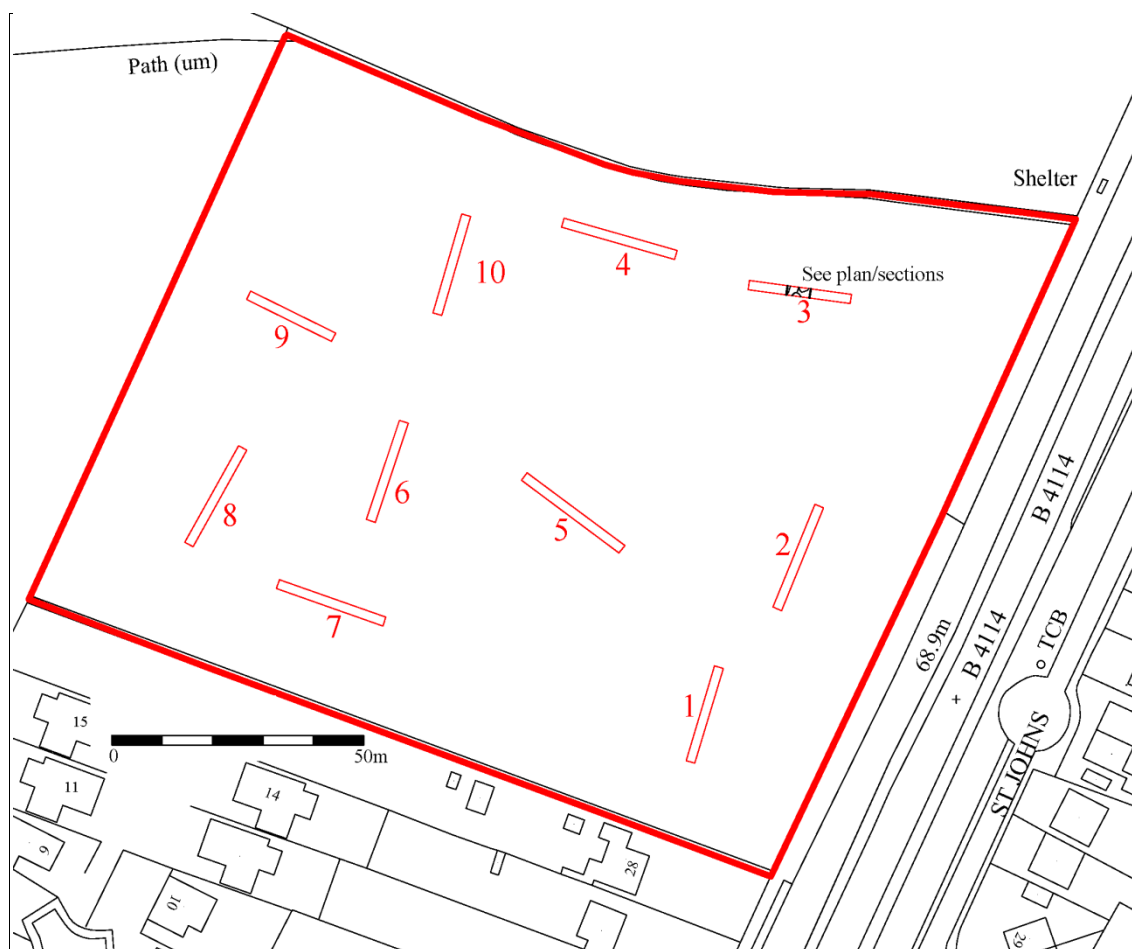


Figure 3: Evaluation trench plan, also showing location of features in trench 3

Definite archaeological evidence was only recorded in one trench, number three, in the north-east of the site. Here, three or perhaps four substantial features were identified in the centre of the trench. Features [6] and [8] may be pits, measuring some 1.75m across and 0.8m deep. Features [12] and [14] could probably also be pits (based on the berm marked *B* on plan, Figure 4a), intercutting with each other. These measure *c.*1.7m across and 0.6m deep. Initially feature [14] was considered to be a north-south aligned ditch. However, the aforementioned berm between this feature and cut [6] to the east makes it somewhat more likely that [14] was a pit and also another feature was cut here too (hence the change in plan of the west edge and therefore cut [12]). It is

actually possible that any of these features are butt ends of linear ditches, but this could not be ascertained from the evaluation trench. The finds assemblage is quite varied between these features. Feature [6] produced four worked flints, one of which is Mesolithic in form. A further Mesolithic flint was recovered unstratified from this trench. Feature [8] produced 15 sherds (34g) of mid-late Iron Age pottery (400 BC – AD 43), though this was very fragmentary (and laminated) and may have originally only been one sherd at deposition. Feature [12] produced two sherds (adjoining) of grey ware of early Roman date (mid-1st to 2nd century AD). From feature [14] to the north, was a relatively good animal bone assemblage (39 bone fragments, cattle and horse represented). The early Roman material probably provides a broad TPQ (*terminus post quem*) for these features, with a mixture of residual material in addition. The most likely explanation is that these features are intercutting pits of Roman date, perhaps quarry pits. Recent excavations on the site c.400m to the north at Leicester Lane, Enderby also produced mid-late Iron Age and early Roman material (Harvey 2009). Interestingly two north-south linear ditches perhaps over 180m long were recorded, with the eastern feature producing Iron Age and the western producing Roman material. It is possible that these are comparable to the east and west features in trench three on the current evaluation, also running on a similar alignment to the east of the Fosse Way.

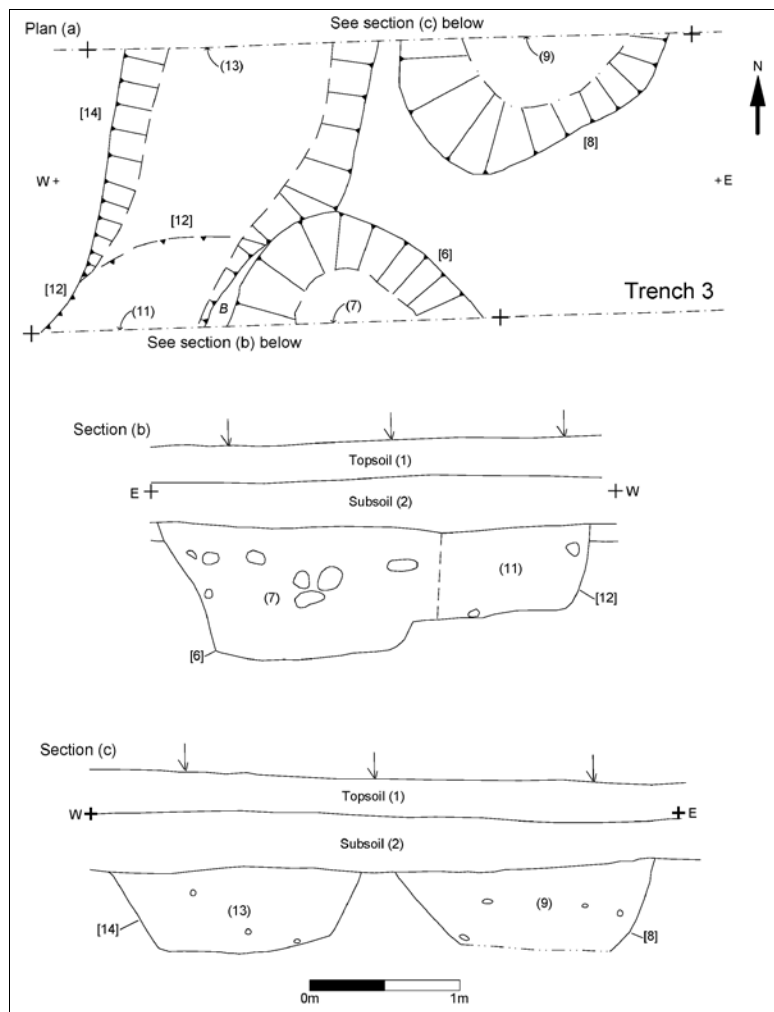


Figure 4: Features in trench 3. (a) plan of centre of trench, (b) south section (c) north section

In the remaining trenches no archaeological features were identified, although unstratified lithic finds also came from trenches five and eight. In many of the trenches the remnants of plough furrows, and more modern stone built land drains were present. There was a clear north-south pattern to both of these features, and indeed a remnant ridge still survived in the centre of site (targeted at the north end in trench three) and it was possible to see further very ephemeral examples parallel to this. It is likely that it is the furrows that were showing up on the geophysical survey in the west and central area of site (cf. trench five and nine results), although these were not originally identified as such (Hancock 2010).



Figure. 5. Site area prior to trial trenching, from entrance. Looking north-west



Figure. 6. Faint ridge and furrow traces in trench 9. Looking west



Figure. 7. Cleaning the features in trench 3. Looking east



Figure 8. Features as seen in north section of trench 3.



Figure 9. Features as seen in south section of trench 3

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The evaluation revealed archaeological evidence potentially of some significance, though only in the north-east area of site. This consisted of a series of substantial features most probably pits, but just possibly butt ends of north-south linear ditch features. These were quite productive of finds including mid- to late Iron Age (400 BC – AD 43) and early Roman pottery (mid 1st to 2nd century AD), (residual) flint and animal bone. It seems possible that these features are related to activity of similar date identified 180 metres to the north (Harvey 2009). The lithic finds are of a very low

density, little more than a background noise, but hint at some activity in the vicinity of Mesolithic, and Neolithic to Bronze Age date.

The evaluation has also confirmed that linear features shown on the geophysical survey results in the west of site are of agricultural origin (i.e. medieval ridge and furrow).

8. Archive

The site archive will be held by LCC HNET, with the accession no. XA62.2011.

The archive contains:

- 10 trench recording sheets
- 1 context summary record sheet
- 14 A5 context sheets
- 2 photographic indices recording sheets
- 1 Survey sheet
- 1 Small Finds index sheet
- 1 sample records sheet
- 1 drawing index sheet
- 1 drawing records index sheet (detail)
- CD containing digital photographs and report and...
- Survey data on CD
- Unbound copy of this report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs
- 35mm black and white contact sheet and negatives (x2 films)

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

ID	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	St. John's, Enderby, Leics.
Summary	The evaluation revealed some archaeological evidence for activity most likely of Roman date, with pottery dating to the Mid to Late Iron Age (400 BC – 43 AD), and the early Roman period (1st to 2nd century AD). Archaeological evidence was seen only in the north-east of the site area, in the form of substantial probable pits. Occasional worked flint was also recovered including material probably of Mesolithic, and Neolithic/Bronze Age date. Additionally medieval ridge and furrow and probable post-medieval stone land drains were exposed.
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Wayne Jarvis
Previous/Future work	Previous: geophysics. / Future: uncertain
Current Land Use	Pasture field
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-application
Site Co ordinates	SP 5492 9901
Start/end dates of field work	05/05/2011-10/05/2011
Archive Recipient	LCC HNET
Study Area	2ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession XA62.2011 OASIS form ID: universi1-101351

9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* and *Rutland Record* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

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11. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was funded by Jelson Ltd and was carried out by Wayne Jarvis, with Roger Kipling and Gavin Speed of ULAS. Patrick Clay managed the project. I am also grateful to James Harvey also of ULAS for discussions on his nearby site at the Enderby Park and Ride. Theresa Hawtin of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

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Appendix I: Trench details

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH (m)	SLOPE DOWN TO?	WIDTH (m)	CONTEXTS	DESCRIPTION	TOPSOIL DEPTH (AVG.)	SUBSOIL DEPTH (AVG.)	DEPTH TO ARCHAEOLOGY (m)
1	N-S	19.4	N	1.85	(1), (2)	No archaeological finds or deposits. Stone land drain & furrow seen running NNE-SSW	0.41	0.12	-
2	N-S	21.5	N	1.85	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.35	0.19	-
3	E-W	20.05	E	1.85	(6)-(14)	Substantial ?pits in centre of trench, N-S stone land drain to E	0.28	0.23	0.54
4	E-W	22.7	-	1.85	-	No archaeological finds or deposits. 2 N-S furrows & land drains seen	0.23	0.29	-
5	NW-SE	23.6	-	1.85	(3)-(5), (10)	2 N-S furrows & to West a further probable N-S linear furrow seen. U/S flint	0.25	0.16	0.52
6	N-S	20.3	N	1.85	-	No archaeological finds or deposits. N-S furrow & land drain	0.26	0.10	-
7	E-W	21.95	E	1.85	-	No archaeological finds or deposits. 2/3 N-S furrows	0.24	0.12	-
8	N-S	21.55	N	1.85	-	No archaeological deposits. N-S furrow. U/S flint	0.24	0.11	-
9	E-W	18.3	E	1.85	-	No archaeological finds or deposits. 2 N-S furrows	0.22	0.11	-
10	N-S	19.9	N	1.85	-	No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.20	0.18	-

Appendix II: The Finds and Plant Remains

Iron Age and Roman Pottery by Nicholas J. Cooper

Introduction

A small assemblage, comprising two joining sherds of Roman pottery and 15 laminated fragments from possibly a single sherd of Iron Age pottery was retrieved. The material was analysed by fabric using low power microscopy and with reference to the Leicestershire Prehistoric Pottery Fabric Series (Marsden 2000) and Roman Pottery Fabric Series (Pollard 1994).

Iron Age Pottery

Fifteen sherds (34g) of Iron Age pottery in Fabric R1 (granodiorite) were retrieved from fill (9) of cut [8]. Granodiorite is used in the manufacture of mid-late Iron Age pottery in this part of the county.

Roman Pottery

Two joining sherds from the lower body of a grey ware jar (Fabric GW5) weighing 35g came from fill (11) of cut (12). The pottery is likely to date from the later 1st to 2nd century.

Prehistoric Flint by Lynden Cooper & Wayne Jarvis

A small assemblage of eight pieces of worked flint was recovered, some unstratified, with five from contexts. All are derived from the local glacial till deposits and mostly have a broad later prehistoric (Neolithic to Bronze Age) date. Two artefacts are technologically Mesolithic in form however, a serrated blade recovered in an

unstratified context from trench three, and a tertiary bladelet from context (7) [6] also in trench three. Also from the latter context were two secondary flakes and one shatter fragment. From adjacent context (13) [14] was an irregular core. Trenches five and eight produced single unstratified pieces, both secondary flakes. Overall the assemblage is not significant, although there is a slight increase in density of flint associated with the area of archaeological features in the north-east of site. This may be simply that the later features provided receptacles for earlier residual material.

***Animal Bone* By Jennifer Browning**

A small number of animal bones (39) was recovered during archaeological evaluation at Enderby. The bones were identified with reference to comparative material held by the University of Leicester, School of Archaeology and Ancient History. Bones were recovered from a single feature, a pit [14] of Romano-British date. The bones are highly fragmented exhibiting evidence of both modern and ancient breaks and with abraded 'powdery' surfaces, likely to inhibit the recognition of butchery marks. Horse (or other *equid*) bones form the bulk of the assemblage, represented by both mandibles and pelvises. Height-wear curves for equid teeth (Levine 1982, 249) suggest a possible age of 7-8 years. Two cattle bones, one with evidence for gnawing were also recovered.

Rural Romano-British sites are rare in Leicestershire and, as such, have been identified as a research priority for environmental archaeology in the East Midlands (Monckton 2006, 272).

No	Species	Element	Fusion	Comments
2	horse	mandible		Fragments (r)
2	horse	pelvis	pf	10 fragments (left and right represented)
9	horse	lower molars		(5 right and 3 left including left and right p2) from same jaw H=39.6 and 38.7
1	cattle	scapula	df	3 fragments, possible chop mark on lateral face (could be later damage) SLC=53.5
1	cattle	femur		Distal shaft (2 fragments), gnawed
23	large mammal	Shaft fragments		
1	medium mammal	cervical vertebra		75% complete

Table: Catalogue of bones recovered from context (13) [14]

***The Small Finds* by Nicholas J. Cooper & Richard Buckley**

A single small find was recovered on site (small find no. 1, unstratified topsoil find). This was a copper alloy coin most likely of 18th-19th century date (*cf.* George III halfpenny).

***Plants Remains* by Anita Radini**

An evaluation was conducted by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services at St. John's, Enderby. During the evaluation, two contexts from two different features were bulk sampled for environmental remains. Sample 1 (13) and sample 2 (7) were then brought to the ULAS laboratory and assessed for potential of environmental analysis. The samples appeared to be pale brown in colour and consisted of fine clay. The samples were scanned for visible presence of charred plant remains (such as charcoal fragments and flecks), animal bone fragments, and any other biological

remains such as insects or snails. It was possible to state that the samples consisted of sterile clay and no further work is required. Despite this assessment being negative, it needs to be taken in to account that both soil conditions and human activity can affect preservation across the same area. Therefore, an appropriate sampling strategy should be adopted if any future work should take place on site.

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