



# University of **Leicester**

## Archaeological Services

**An archaeological field  
evaluation at Holywell Spring Farm,  
Burton Road,  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch,  
Leicestershire  
(SK 3483 1738)**

**Leon Hunt**



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**An archaeological field evaluation at  
Holywell Spring Farm, Burton Road,  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch,  
Leicestershire  
(SK 3483 1738)**

**Leon Hunt**

*for*

Matrix Medical

Planning Authority: North West Leicestershire District Council

Planning Consent: 14/00080/FULM

**Checked by Project Manager**

**Signed:**



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## **An archaeological field evaluation at Holywell Spring Farm, Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 3483 1738)**

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### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land at Holywell Spring Farm, Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 3483 1738). The work was commissioned by Matrix Medical in advance of the erection of a new medical centre and pharmacy at the site.*

*The land lies in a rich archaeological landscape, with extensive medieval and post-medieval remains and close to remains from the Neolithic period through to the Romano British period. There was potential for archaeological remains of these periods to be present within the application area.*

*Six trenches were placed across the proposed medical centre site. All six trenches were negative for archaeological features.*

*A number of pottery sherds from several periods were found within the topsoil of trench 1, including Roman and medieval pottery. The pottery may have been present due to manuring, or may have washed down from the higher ground to the north.*

*The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A144.2014.*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Matrix Medical to carry out an archaeological field evaluation on land at Holywell Spring Farm, Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 3483 1738). The evaluation was undertaken in November 2014.

Matrix Medical have been granted planning permission for the erection of new medical centre with retail pharmacy and associated car parking and landscaping.

Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority require that an evaluation by trial trenching is undertaken prior to development to assess the location, extent, significance and character of any buried archaeological remains.

This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record indicates that the proposed development lies in a rich archaeological landscape, with extensive medieval and post-medieval remains and close to remains from the Neolithic period through to the Romano British period. There is therefore moderate to high potential for archaeological remains of these periods to be present within the application area.



## Location and Geology

The site lies on the north-eastern side of Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch in the North-west Leicestershire District, around 1km north-west of the town centre of Ashby (Figure 1).

The site covers around 0.5ha and lies within a much larger field to the south-west of the farm buildings at Holywell Spring Farm (Figure 2). The site falls from north to south from around 144m aOD to 138m aOD.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to be Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation Mudstone or Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation: Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone.

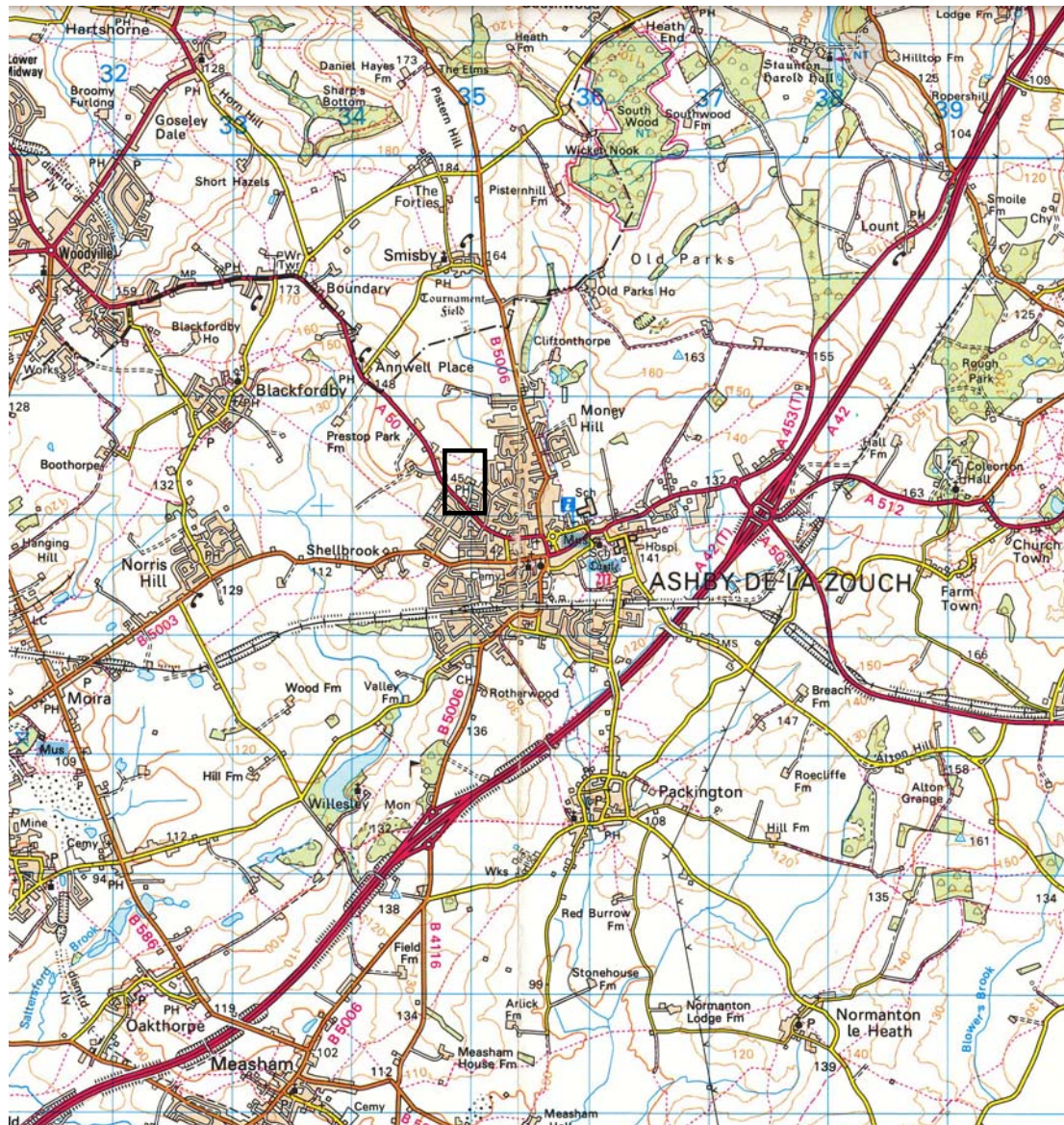


Figure 1: Site Location

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## Historical and Archaeological Background

‘Ashby’ is a place-name of Anglo-Danish origin, meaning "Ash-tree farm" or "Ash-tree settlement" (Mills 2003). The Norman French suffix of ‘de la Zouch’ dates from the years after the Norman conquest of England, when the town became a possession of the La Zouche family during the reign of Henry III.

Ashby is mentioned in the Domesday as ‘Ascebi’ and was held by Ivo from Norman noble Hugh de Grandmesnil (Morris 1979).

It is the 12th century house that was modified, extended and rebuilt over subsequent centuries that forms the core of Ashby Castle. The La Zouche family received a market grant as early as 1219 but there is no evidence of burgess tenure or that it aspired to borough status.

The site itself lies in the agricultural hinterland of the town close to extensive cropmarks identified as prehistoric enclosures. Ceramic building material, associated with a post-medieval building, has also been found to the north of the site.



Figure 2: Proposed development area. Scale 1: 1250. Provided by developer

## Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.



- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.



Plate 1: Work in progress, looking south

## Methodology

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2010). The archaeological work followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological work* (WSI) prepared by ULAS (Appendix I).

The WSI called for a *c.* 5% sample of the 0.5ha site, which would be the equivalent of six 20m by 1.8m trenches (*c.* 300 sq. m.).

The trenches were placed across the site and were excavated using a large tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. After recording the trenches were backfilled.

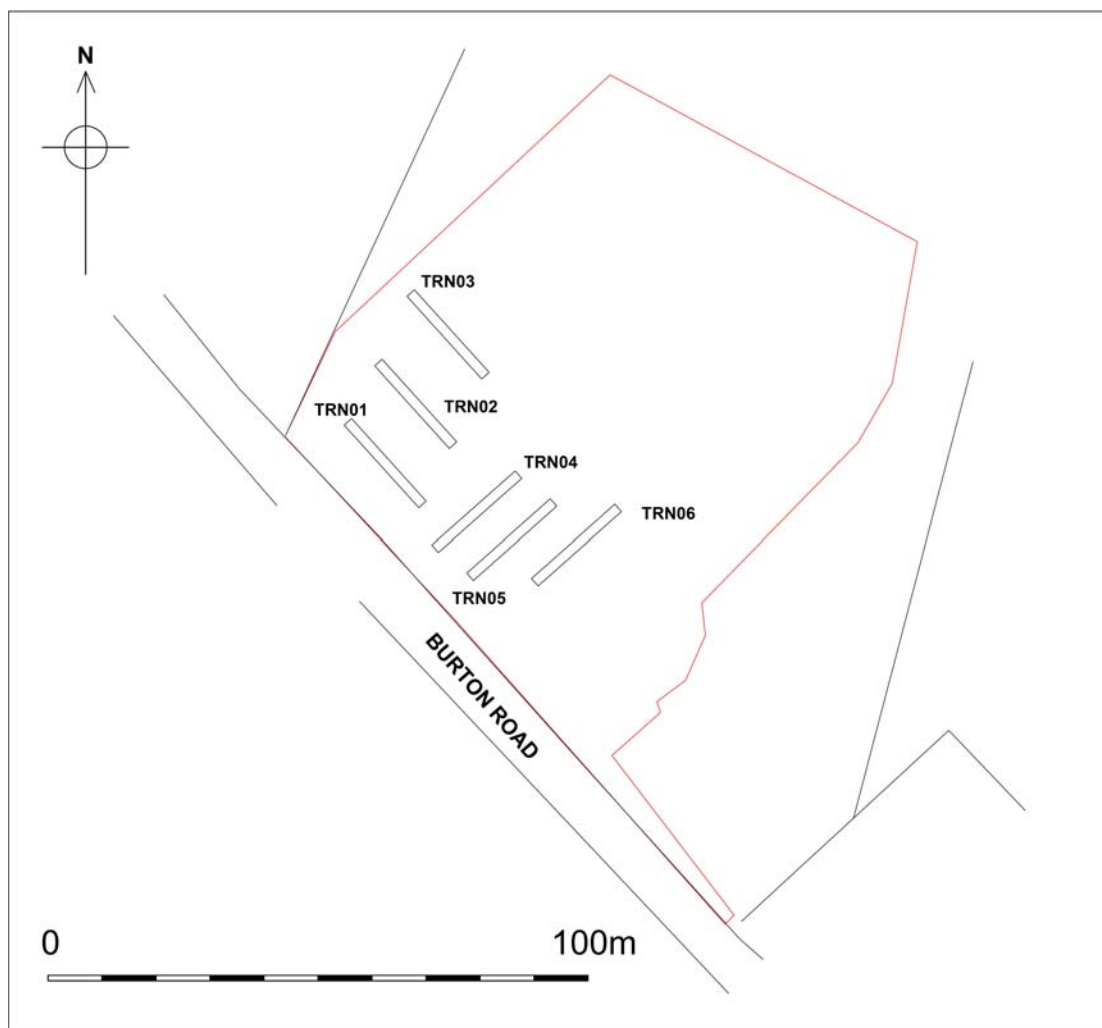


Figure 3: Trench location plan

## Results

The topsoil throughout the site was a mid greyish brown or reddish grey brown loose clayey silt with rare sub-rounded pebbles. This overlay a mid-orange brown silty-clay subsoil with occasional rounded pebbles. There was quite a lot of charcoal in the topsoil and subsoil, possibly from stubble burning.

Some sherds of modern and medieval pottery were retrieved from the topsoil suggesting manuring at some time and one sherd of Roman pottery was retrieved from the subsoil.

### *Trench 01*

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Length: 20.30m

Width: 1.8m

Natural Sub-stratum: Yellowish brown mottled pink and grey clay, with occasional sub-rounded pebbles



Interval	NW 0m	5m	10m	15m	20mSE
<b>Topsoil Depth</b>	0.30m	0.25m	0.25m	0.30m	0.35m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.25m	0.25m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.50m	0.45m	0.45m	0.55m	0.60m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.76m	0.60m	0.55m	0.55m	0.60m

No archaeological features were identified in this trench. A number of pottery sherds from several periods, were found in the topsoil of this trench.



Plate 2: Trench 02, post excavation, looking north-west

### ***Trench 02***

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Length: 19.90m

Width: 1.8m

Natural Sub-stratum: Yellowish orange clay with red patches

Interval	NW 0m	5m	10m	15m	19.9mSE
<b>Topsoil Depth</b>	0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.35m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.15m	0.30m	0.20m	0.25m	0.23m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.35m	0.60m	0.50m	0.55m	0.58m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.50m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m	0.75m

No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

### ***Trench 03***

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Length: 19.80m

Width: 1.8m

Natural Sub-stratum: Yellowish brown mottled pink and grey clay, with occasional sub-rounded pebbles

Interval	SE 0m	5m	10m	15m	19.8mNW
<b>Topsoil Depth</b>	0.25m	0.35m	0.35m	0.35m	0.35m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.20m	0.20m	0.15m	0.20m	0.20m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.45m	0.55m	0.50m	0.55m	0.55m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.55m	0.60m	0.55m	0.65m	0.65m

No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

### ***Trench 04***

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 18.90m

Width: 1.8m

Natural Sub-stratum: Yellowish grey clay, mottled with orange brown, with occasional sub-rounded pebbles

Interval	SW 0m	5m	10m	15m	18.9mNE
<b>Topsoil Depth</b>	0.33m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.35m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.30m	0.28m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.63m	0.58m	0.60m	0.60m	0.25m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.70m	0.75m	0.80m	0.75m	0.90m

No archaeological features were identified in this trench. Two ceramic field drains were identified running north to south.

### ***Trench 05***

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 19.60m

Width: 1.8m

Natural Sub-stratum: Yellowish grey clay, mottled with orange brown, with occasional sub-rounded pebbles

Interval	SW 0m	5m	10m	15m	19.6mNE
<b>Topsoil Depth</b>	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.25m	0.30m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.50m	0.60m	0.15m	0.60m	0.60m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.50m	0.75m	0.70m	0.75m	0.80m

No archaeological features were identified within this trench. Two ceramic field drains were identified running north to south and east to west.

### ***Trench 06***

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 19.5m

Width: 1.8m

Natural Sub-stratum: Mottled yellow and red clay with rare coarse stones

Interval	SW 0m	5m	10m	15m	19.5mNE
<b>Topsoil Depth</b>	0.35m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.25m	0.35m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.60m	0.65m	0.55m	0.60m	0.60m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.65m	0.70m	0.65m	0.80m	0.70m

No archaeological features were identified within this trench. Two ceramic field drains were identified running north to south and east to west.



Plate 3: Trench 06, post excavation, looking north-east

## Conclusion

No archaeological features were discovered during this evaluation. A number of stone and ceramic field drains were identified and a small amount of modern and medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil, along with a single sherd of Roman grey ware, which may suggest a presence from this period in the general area. The Roman pottery may have been washed down from the higher land to the north.



## Bibliography

Morris, J. (ed.) 1979, *Domesday Book: Rutland*. Phillimore, Chichester.

Mills, A.D. 2003 *A Dictionary of English Place-names*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press, Oxford

## Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Patrick Betts at Holywell Spring Farm for his help and co-operation with this project. The project was managed by Patrick Clay and the work carried out by Leon Hunt and Sue Henderson. The machine was supplied by Planters.

## Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

### *OASIS data entry*

Project Name	Holywell Spring Farm, Burton Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Leon Hunt
Previous/Future work	No/No
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	New medical centre
Reason for Investigation	NPPF Section 12:
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 3397 1858
Start/end dates of field work	04-11-2014
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museums
Study Area	0.5ha

## Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A144.2014.

The archive consists of the following:

- 1 unbound copy of this report 2014-191
- 6 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Photographic Record
- 1 Contact Sheet of digital photographs

1 CD digital photographs

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18-11-2014

## **Appendix I: The Pottery**

### **The Roman, Medieval and later Pottery from Burton Rd Ashby XA144.2014**

*Nicholas J. Cooper and Deborah Sawday*

A single rim sherd (20g) of Roman grey ware pottery from a necked jar (Fabric GW3 Pollard 1994, 110-114), dating between the 2nd and the 4th century was recovered unstratified from Trench 1. Additionally one body sherd of late medieval Midland Purple (15g) (Fabric MP c.1375-1550), one (15g) of early post-medieval earthenware (EA1) and one sherd (5g) of blue and white transfer printed modern earthenware (Fabric EA10) were also recovered unstratified from Trench 1 (Davies and Sawday 1999 Table 30).

## **References**

Davies, S. and Sawday, D., 1999, 'The post-Roman pottery and tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley *Roman and Medieval Occupation at Causeway Lane, Leicester*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5, 165-213. Leicester: University of Leicester School of Archaeological Studies.

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