



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological
Evaluation on Land at
Nether Green,
Great Bowden,
Leicestershire
NGR: SP 74547 88969**

Roger Kipling




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Roger Kipling

For: Mr. Patrick Grady

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in April 2017 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mr Patrick Grady at Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. The fieldwork was undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application for a residential development on land at Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. An examination of HER data indicates that the proposed development area is located within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the medieval settlement core of Great Bowden, and archaeological test-pitting to the immediate east had revealed evidence for use of the land during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods along with a large quantity of Roman pottery.

The archaeological evaluation at Nether Green, Great Bowden, revealed evidence for archaeological activity in the form of ditches, a possible pit and a post hole and dated by pottery to the Roman and Saxo-Norman periods. Environmental evidence indicates the consumption of free-threshing wheat and barley during the Saxo-Norman period. The presence of buried soils across all three trenches in combination with deep overlying subsoils is intriguing and, in tandem with the possible presence of standing earthworks, is suggestive of (potentially deliberate) adaptive changes having been made to the site's natural topography.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A35 2017.

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation on land at Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. The fieldwork has been undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application for residential development.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development area is located in the village of Great Bowden. The site lies within the Great Bowden Conservation Area. Great Bowden is located on the western

valley side of the River Welland immediately to the north of Market Harborough, approximately 0.5 miles, and south of the A6. The eastern border of the parish forms the south-east edge of Harborough District, with Great Bowden lying in close proximity to the borough of Kettering (Figure 1).

The proposed development site comprises an area of circa 0.30 hectares (0.74 acres) and lies at a height of approximately 79.58m aOD.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to be Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone Formation, consisting of mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone. The superficial geology is mainly that of alluvium, consisting of clays, silts and sands.

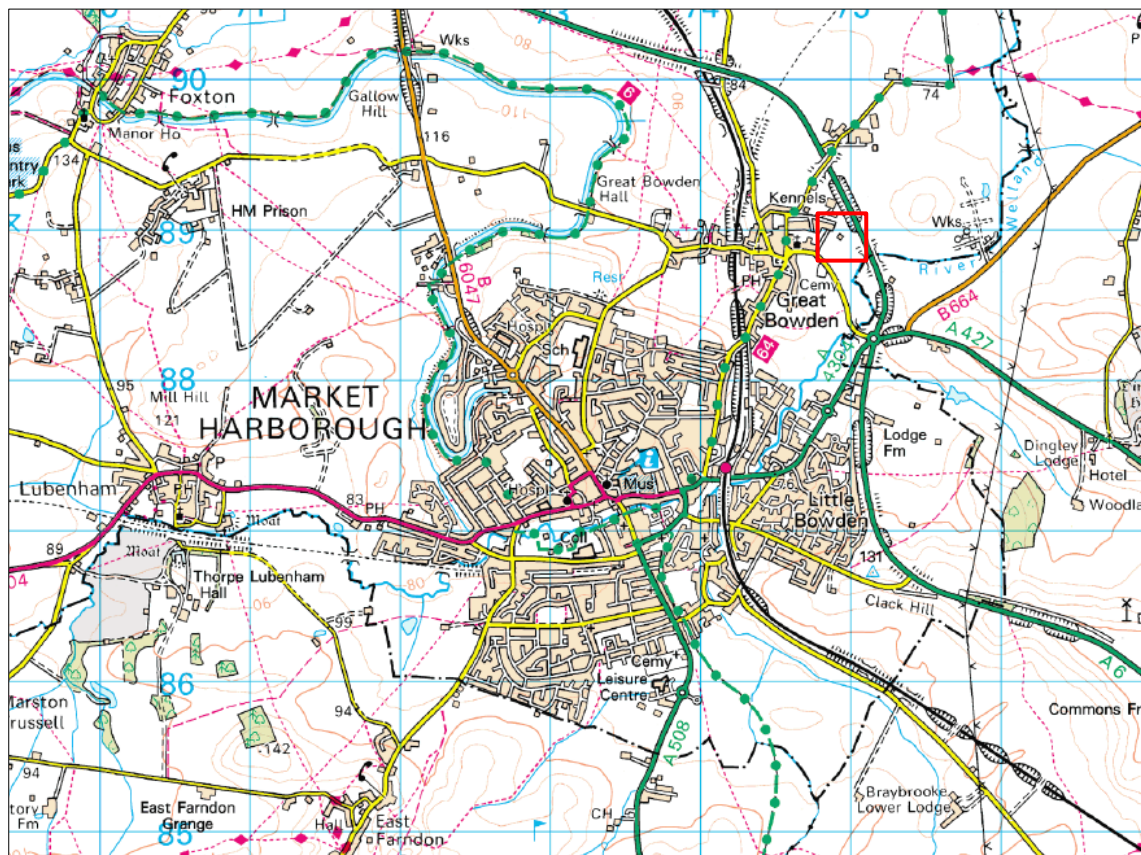


Figure 1: Site Location

Reproduced from 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. ©Crown Copyright 1990. All rights reserved.

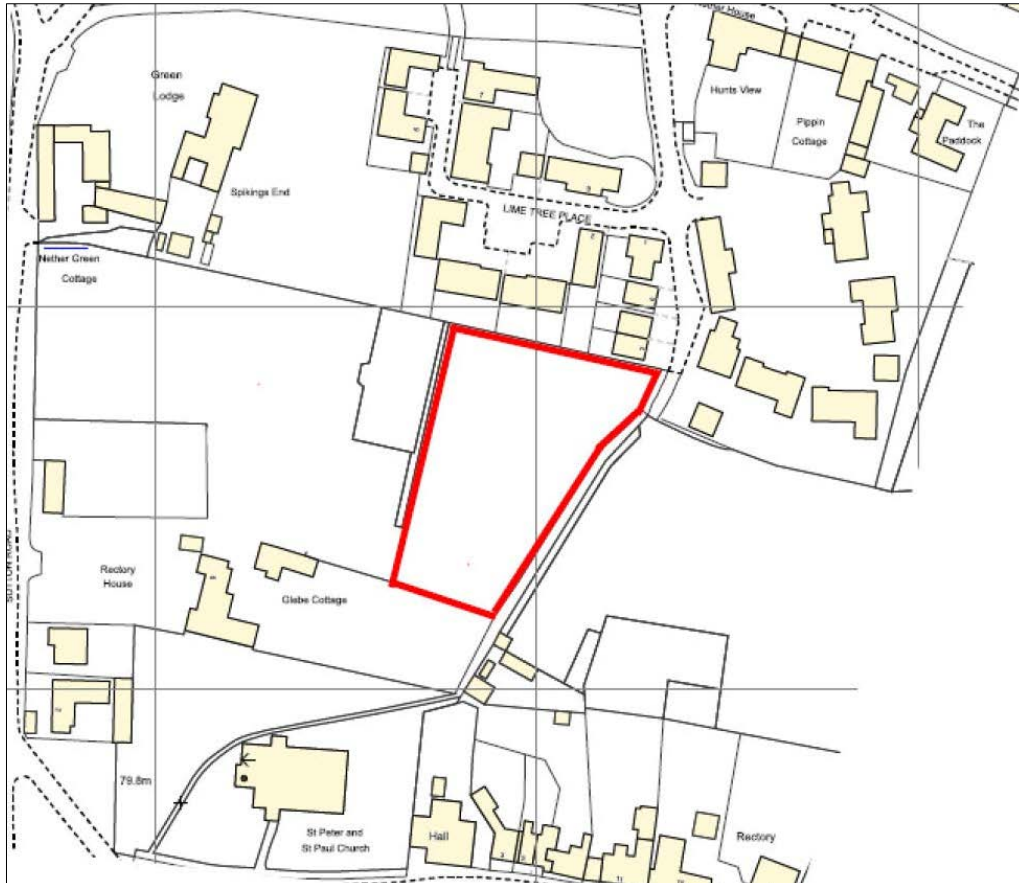


Figure 2: Site location within Great Bowden

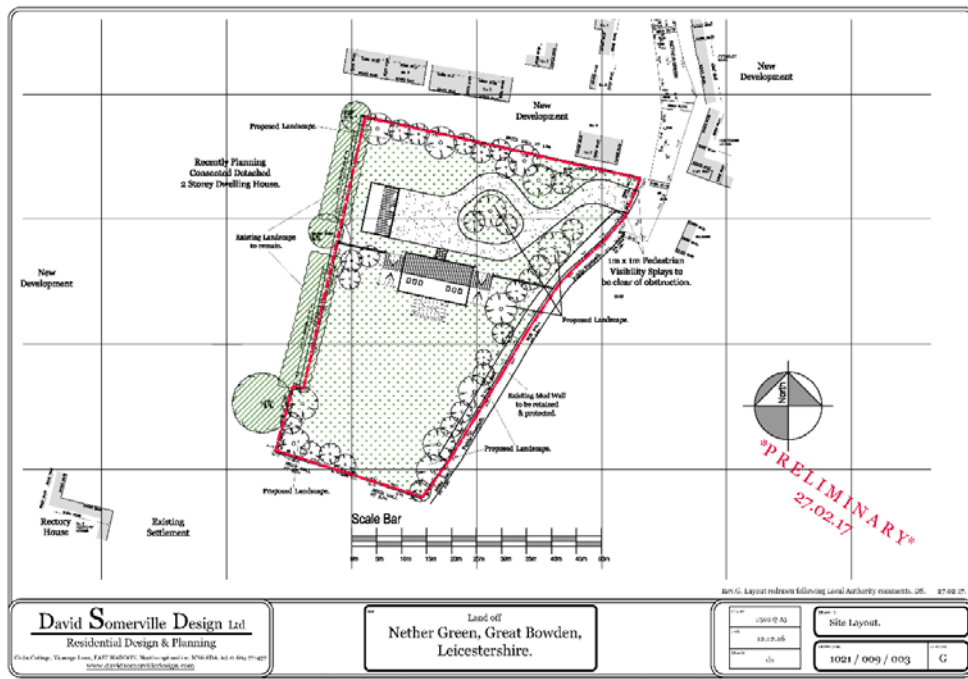


Figure 3: Proposed scheme of development (provided by client)

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the area is located within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the medieval settlement core of Great Bowden (**MLE9021**), close to the Grade I Listed 14th century church of St. Peter and St. Paul (**1061277**). Recent archaeological test-pitting (Lewis *et al.* 2014) undertaken to the immediate east of the application site has revealed evidence for use of the land during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods along with large quantity of Roman pottery (**MLE21602**). Archaeological fieldwork in Great Bowden has demonstrated that archaeological deposits spanning the period from the earliest evolution of the village to its more recent past can be expected. The site is adjacent to Rectory House, which is a 17th century Grade II Listed (**1061278**).

Roman and Anglo-Saxon

A large quantity of Roman pottery was found within the site of the proposed development during recent test-pitting (**MLE21602**). The same fieldwork provided indications of land use during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. Archaeological fieldwork in Great Bowden has demonstrated that archaeological deposits spanning the period from the earliest evolution of the village to its more recent past can be expected.

Medieval

The application site lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the medieval settlement core of Great Bowden (**MLE9021**), close to the Grade I Listed 14th century church of St. Peter and St. Paul (**1061277**).

Aims and Objectives

The objectives are as set out in the *ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation* (ULAS 2017) approved by the Planning archaeologist. Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

1. Identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. Establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by proposed ground-works.
3. Record any archaeological deposits likely to be affected by the ground-works.
4. Produce an archive and report of any results.

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remain unknown until archaeological work is undertaken, it is possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *East*

Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight *et al.* 2012) and *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006).

It was anticipated that the archaeological work could contribute towards the questions in sections 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Updated Research Agenda and in particular could contribute to Research Objectives:

- 5H. *Investigate the landscape context of rural settlements*
- 6C. *Review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies*
- 7E. *Investigate the morphology of rural settlements.*
- 7F. *Investigate the development, structure and landholding of manorial estate centres.*
- 7I. *Investigate the development of the open-field system and medieval woodland management.*
- 8E. *Identify agricultural improvements of the 16th to 18th centuries.*

All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014), and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). All exploratory and mitigation work was considered in light of the East Midlands Research Framework (Cooper ed. 2006) and strategy (Knight *et al.* 2012), along with targeting national research aims.

Methods

Fieldwork was carried out in April 2017 and involved the machine excavation of three evaluation trenches across the potential development area in order to target the locations of the proposed buildings as well as potential archaeological deposits.

The Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2017) approved by the LCC Senior Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the planning authority, who also monitored the fieldwork, dictated a programme of archaeological evaluation consisting of four 15m x 1.6m trenches in order to determine the presence/absence, character and extent of archaeological remains (Fig. 4). In order to maintain access to the field via a gate in the north-east corner, two of the 15m trenches were combined into one 30m trench (T3).

Excavation was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.

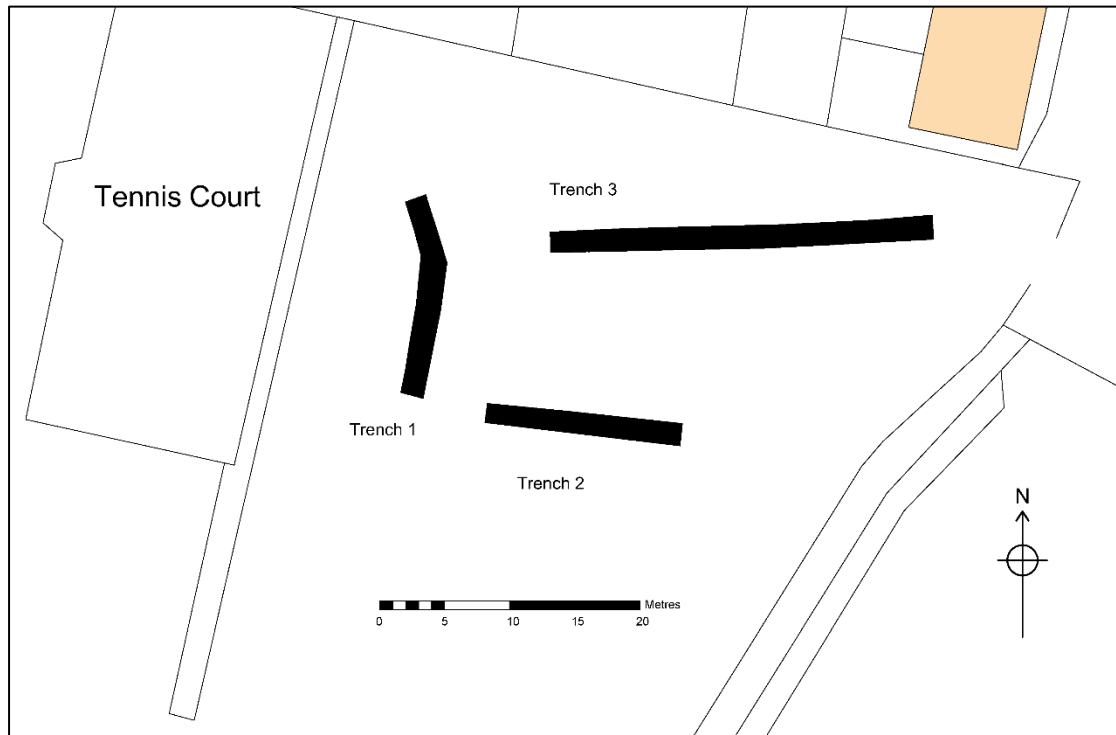


Figure 4: Proposed development area with evaluation trench locations

Results

Archaeological deposits were identified in all three evaluation trenches. Trench details are summarised in Table 1.

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH (m)	TOPSOIL THICKNESS (m)	SUBSOIL THICKNESS (m)	DESCRIPTION
1	N-S	15	0.2	0.6-0.9	Archaeology present but not excavated
2	E-W	15	0.2	0.55-1.0	Pits [03], [07], linear features [09] & [11]
3	E-W	30	0.2	0.5-0.9	Ditch [01] & post hole [05]

Table 1: Trench Descriptions

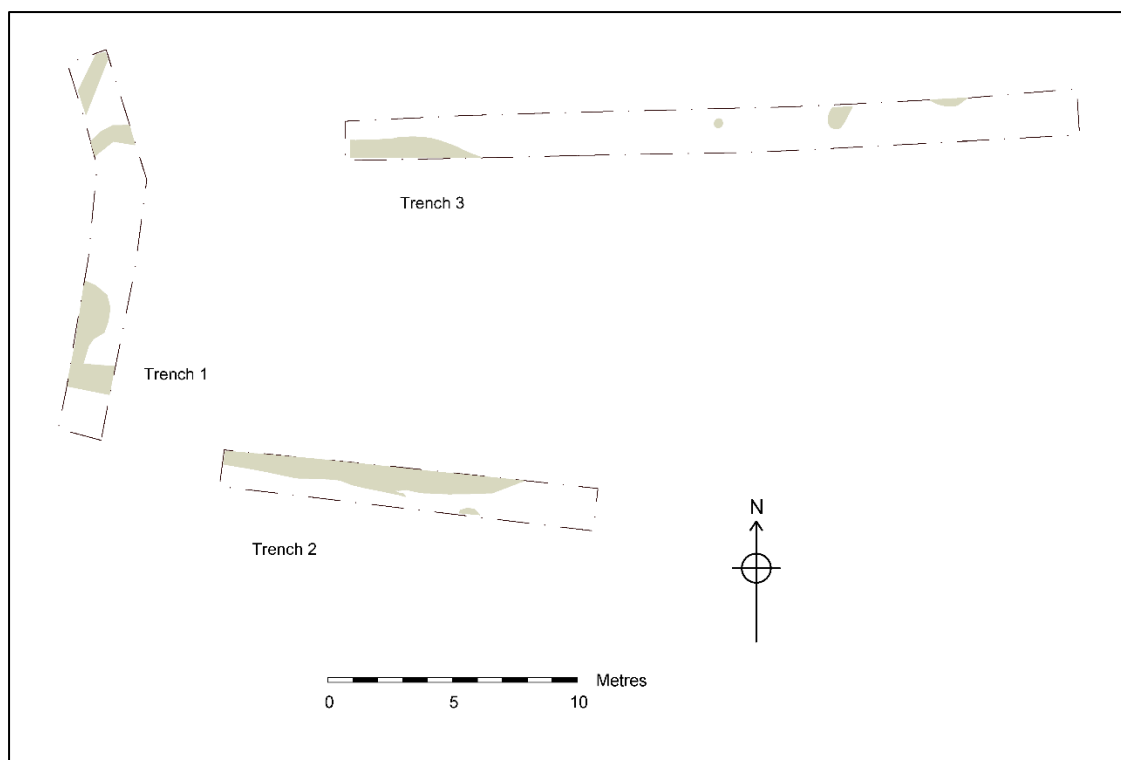


Figure 5: Evaluation trenches with archaeological features

Trench 1

Trench 1 (15m x 1.6m x 0.65-0.9m) was located in the northwest corner of the proposed development site and aligned broadly north-south.

Deposits comprised a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.2m deep) above a yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (0.1 to 0.2m deep) above a greyish brown silty clay (0.15 to 0.25m deep), above a pale greyish brown clay silt (0.2 to 0.25m deep) above natural with archaeological features visible (Figures 6 & 7).

Flooding of the trench, likely due to its probable location adjacent to an area of waterlogged ground, prevented excavation of the archaeology. However, two, possibly three linear features were observed and the edges of these features surveyed.



Figure 6: Profiles S1 (left) and S2 (right), Trench 1; northwest facing (1m scale)

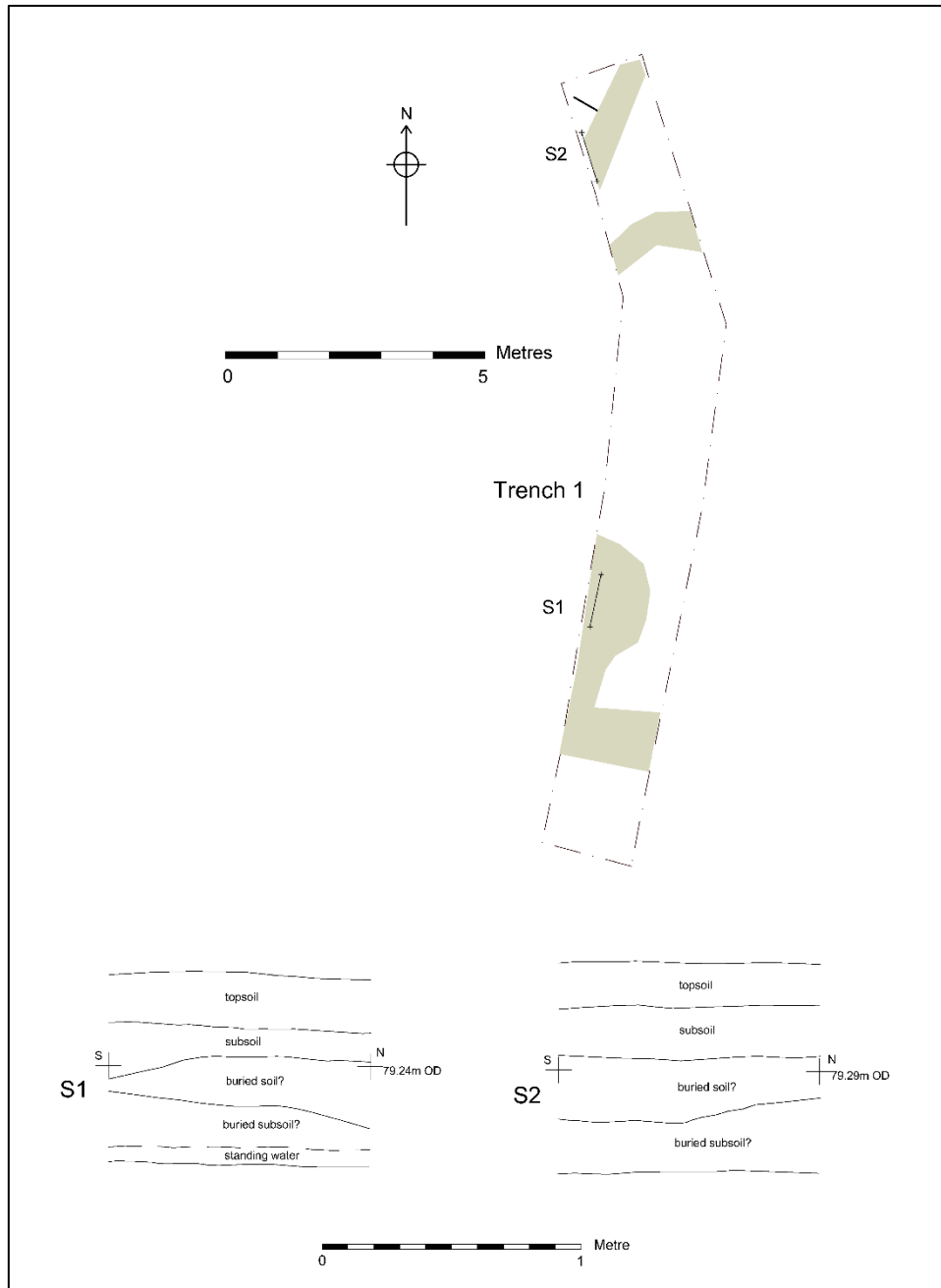


Figure 7: Trench 1 plan and representative trench profiles

Trench 2

Trench 2 (15m x 1.6m x 0.6-1m), located east of Trench 1 and broadly aligned east-west.

Deposits comprised a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.2m deep) above a mid greyish brown clay silt subsoil (up to 0.18m deep) above a pale grey clay silt (0.15 to 0.20m deep) that contained some charcoal fragments, above natural with archaeological features visible (Figures 8 & 9).

A substantial feature, ditch [09], entered the trench from the west, and extended east along the trench for c.10m before curving north and exiting the trench. The ditch had 45° sides to a flat base and contained a single fill (10), a dull orange-brown clay silt which produced a single 2nd to 4th century pottery sherd. The ditch was recut by a shallow gully [11] (0.2m x 0.15m x 3m+) on a parallel alignment on the southern edge of the former (Figures 8-10), containing a Roman tile fragment. The ditch may be a continuation of the probable ditch feature observed in trench 1 to the west.

A third feature, a small pit, [07] (0.72m x 0.22m+ x 0.22m) was observed adjacent to the linear features, with 30°-45° sides to a flattish base (Figure 11) and a single pale grey clay silt with dull orange-brown mottling fill (08) which produced a small quantity of spelt grains.



Figure 8: Trench 2; west end, view east (1m scale)

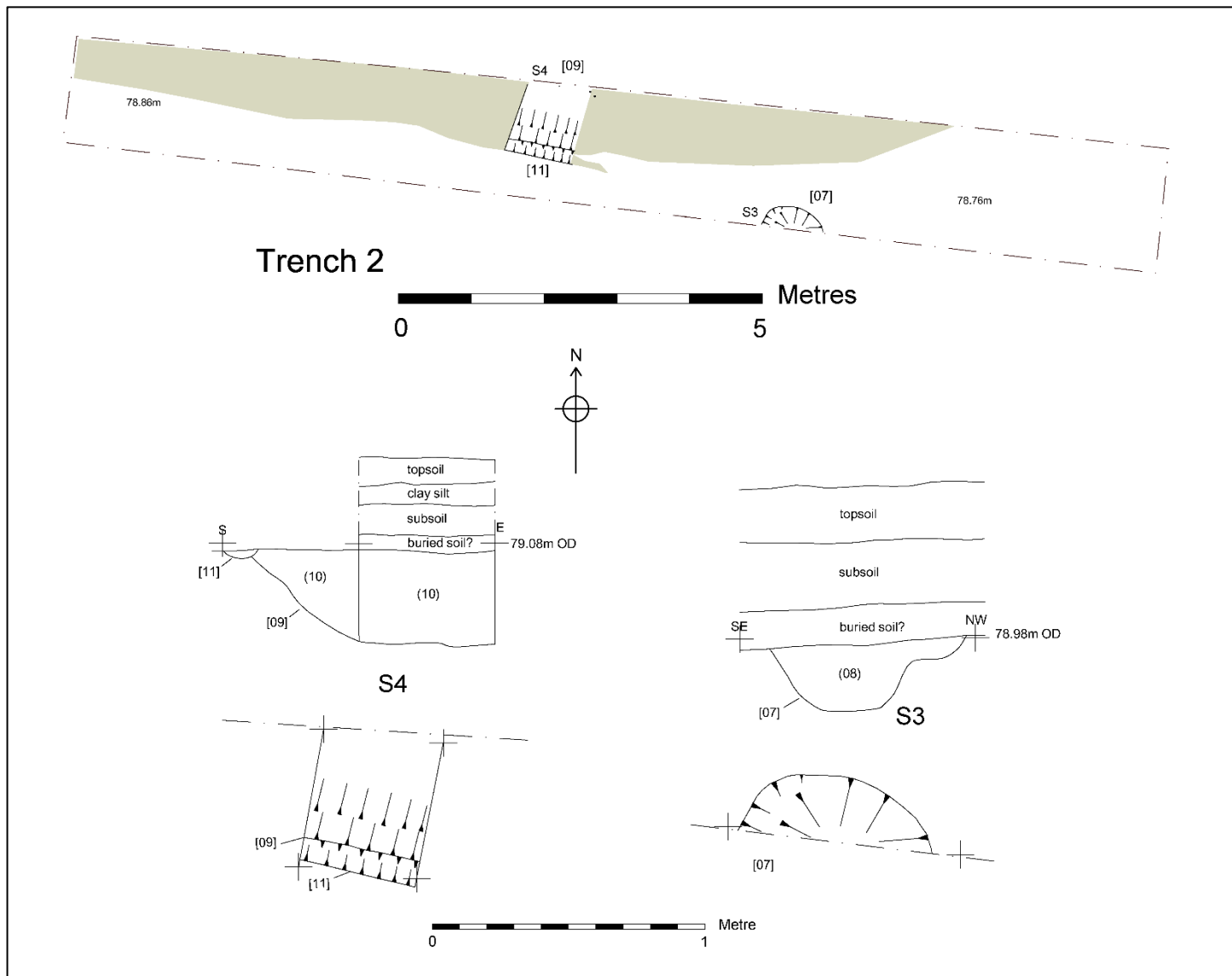


Figure 9: Trench 2: Plan and section



Figure 10: Ditch [09] & gully [11]; view northwest (1m scale)



Figure 11: Pit/post hole [07]; view southwest (15cm scale)

Trench 3

Trench 3 (30m x 1.6m x 0.5-0.96m), positioned close to the northern site boundary, produced further archaeology (Figures 12 & 13) that was sealed below subsoils.

Deposits overlying the archaeology comprised a dark greyish brown topsoil (0.2m deep) above a mid greyish brown clay silt subsoil (0.14m to 0.35m deep) above a pale grey clay silt with orangey brown mottle (0.15 to 0.25m deep) above natural with archaeological features then visible.

Its western end featured a truncated ditch **[01]**, (5.2m+ x 0.81m x 0.37m), which extended east for c.5m before turning alignment towards the southeast (Figure 14). This ditch may also be related to a linear feature recorded at the northern end of Trench 1. The single pale grey clay silt fill **(02)** produced two sherds of Saxo Norman pottery.

Additional features located midway along the trench comprised a small oval pit or ditch terminal and a post hole. The former, **[03]** (1.08m+ x 0.7m x 0.25m), had 45° sides and a flattish base (Figure 15). The single charcoal-rich dark grey silt fill **(04)** produced four sherds of Saxo Norman pottery and a small quantity of wheat grains. The post hole **[05]** (0.36m x 0.36m x 0.0m) (Figure 16) contained a single undated pale grey and orange-brown clay silt fill **(06)**.



Figure 12: Trench 3; view northeast (1m scale)

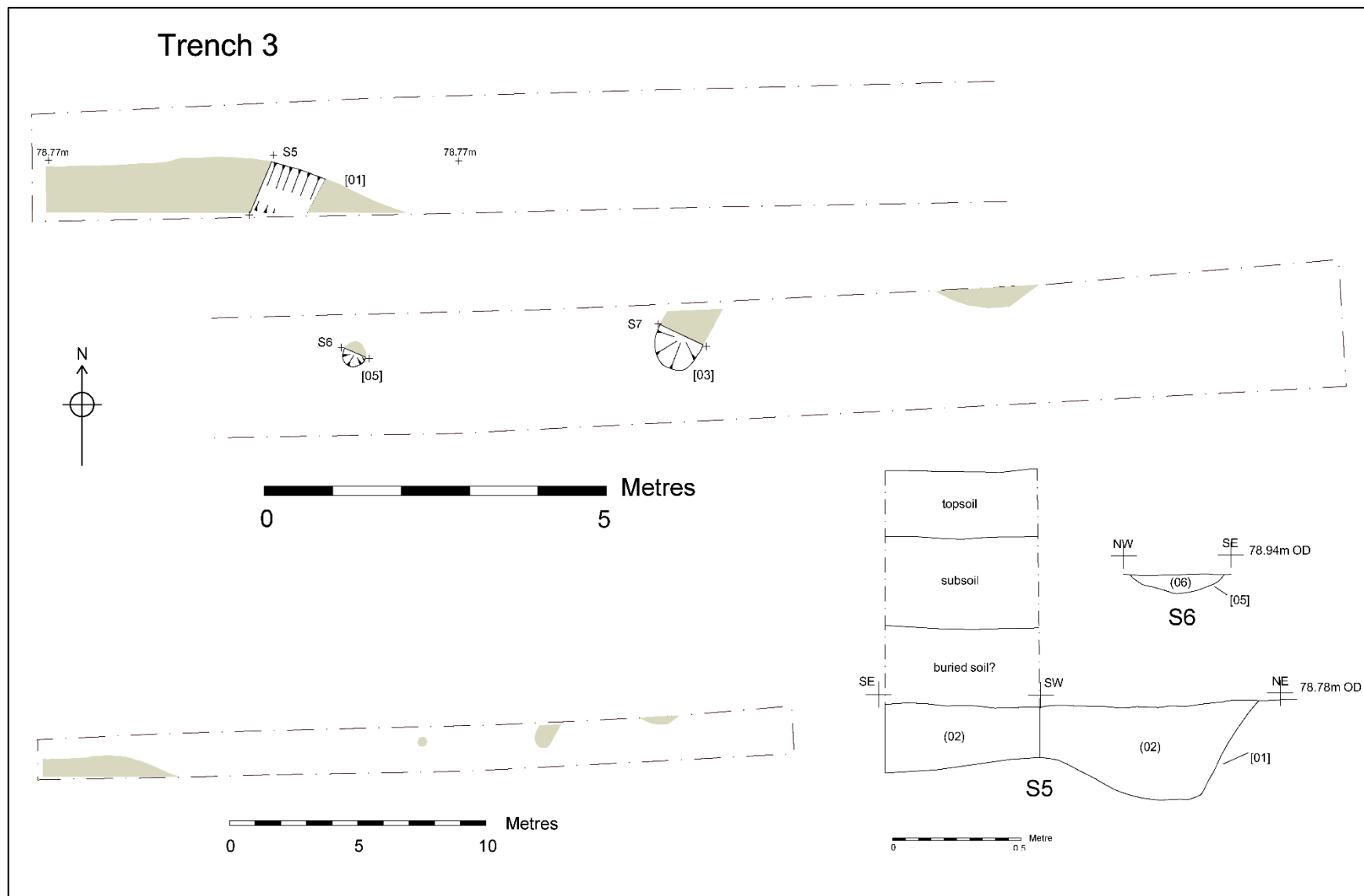


Figure 13: Trench 3: Plan and sections



Figure 14: Ditch [01]; view northwest (1m scale)

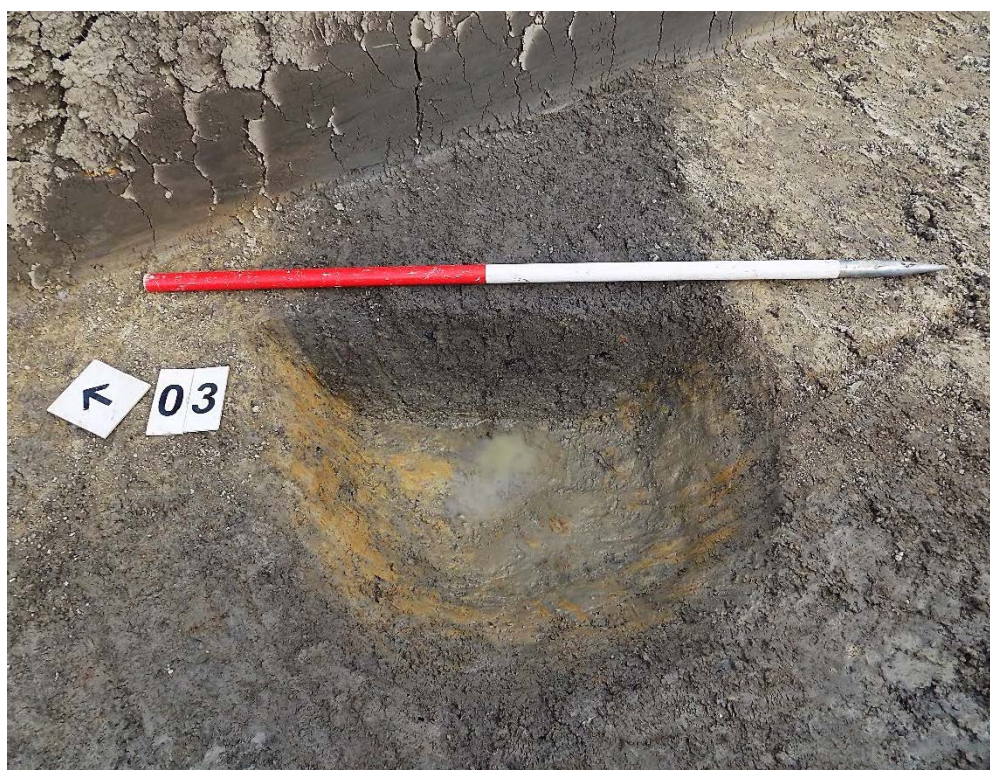


Figure 15: Pit [03]; view northeast (1m scale)



Figure 16: Post hole/scoop [05]; view northeast (1m scale)

Discussion and Conclusions

with Matthew Beamish

The archaeological evaluation undertaken at Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire was undertaken in preparation of a proposed planning application for a residential development on land at Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. A preliminary examination of HER data had indicated that the proposed development area is located in an area of significant archaeological potential, within the medieval settlement core of Great Bowden, and archaeological test-pitting to the immediate east had revealed evidence for use of the land during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods along with a large quantity of Roman pottery.

The archaeological fieldwork provided indications of moderately dense archaeological activity in the form of ditches, a possible pit and a post hole, and dated by pottery to the Roman and Saxo-Norman periods, results reflective of other recent archaeological interventions within the same property. Environmental evidence provided clear evidence of the consumption of free-threshed wheat and barley during the Saxo-Norman period.

The unexcavated features in trench 1 may well be extensions of those recorded in trenches 2 and 3. Similarly, the ditch features recorded at the western ends of trenches 2 and 3 may also be related to each other.

It is of note that all trenches contained subsoil deposits that overlay earlier soils and subsoils that sealed archaeological deposits. There is no direct dating for when this activity took place, and no clear understanding of what objective behind this activity may have been: it is possible that these deposits are a by-product from developments elsewhere rather than represent an intended change to the immediate local topography.

The archaeological deposits recorded cutting natural subsoils were partly truncated and therefore it seems likely that some period of time has elapsed following the end of activity in the medieval period, before the making up of the levels has occurred. There

was no evidence for medieval cultivation recorded in the trenches. Field boundaries mapped on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1886) were not identified where anticipated (Figure 17). Any ditch may have been present in the central section of the westernmost trench 1 where flooding precluded detailed examination, but was not present in the northernmost trench 3.

The recurrence of Saxo-Norman pottery from Great Bowden is of note. From test pitting survey work undertaken across parts of the East Midlands and East Anglia to investigate the development of the medieval village since 2004, the representation of Early and Late Anglo-Saxon pottery from Great Bowden is second to none (Carenza Lewis pers comm.) and suggests that there is a focus of activity in this area in the Saxon and Early Medieval period.

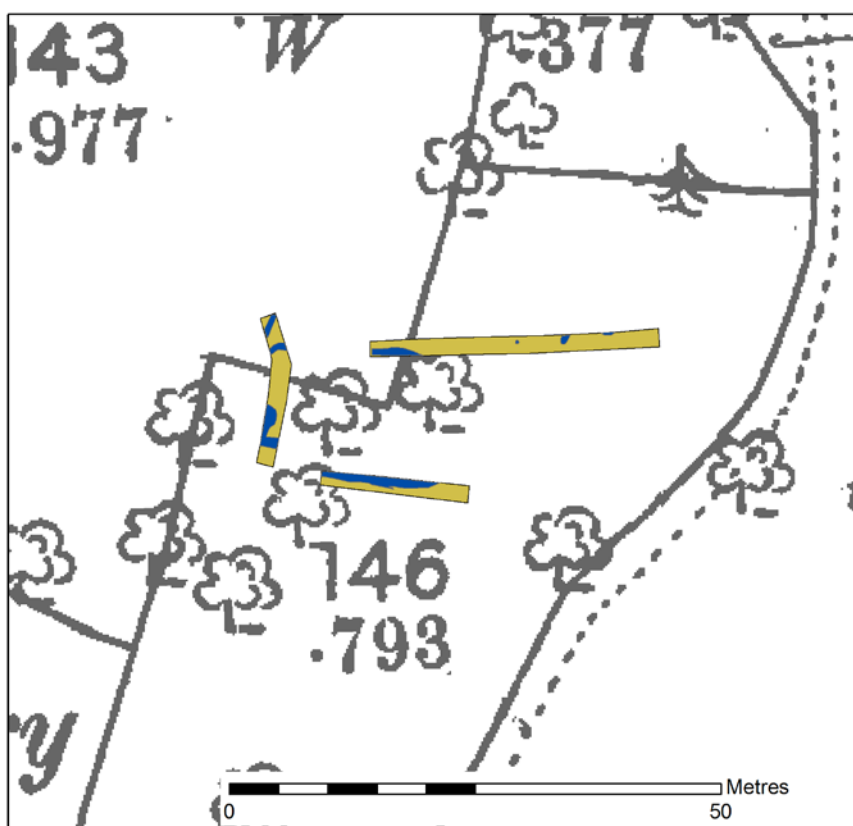


Figure 17 Trenches with archaeological features and 1st edition Ordnance Survey

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A35 2017), consisting of ceramic material plus paper and photographic records, will be housed with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- Ceramic material
- 3 x trench record sheets
- 22 x single context record sheets

Context, drawing and photographic record indices
23 x digital photographs
2 x A3 drawing sheets
Risk assessment form

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling and Matt Beamish of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Mr Patrick Grady. The project was managed by Matt Beamish.

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Appendix 1: The Pottery & Miscellaneous Finds*Deborah Sawday*

The material was examined under a x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Connor and Buckley 1999, Sawday 2009). The results are shown below (table 1).

The finds provided evidence of during both Roman and Saxo Norman activity in the area. Many of the fragments, had a relatively low weight but showed little evidence of abrasion and suggested the survival of archaeological levels in the vicinity

Table1: The pottery.

Context	Major fabric/ware	No	Gr	Comments – terminal date
POTTERY				
2	LI1/2 - Lincoln/Lincs Shelly	1	4	Body – Saxo Norman
2	LI1/2 - Lincoln/Lincs Shelly	1	11	Inturned bowl rim - Saxo Norman
4	CGIA - Calcite Gritted-	1	5	Roman – 1 st – 2 nd century AD
4	LI1/2 - Lincoln/Lincs Shelly	1	7	Jar – everted. externally thickened rim – Saxo Norman
4	LI1/2 - Lincoln/Lincs Shelly	2	11	Body
10	GW5 – Grey ware	1	40	Body – Roman, 2 nd – 4 th C AD
MISC				
12	Earthenware	1	56	Roman tile – tegula flange
4	Earthenware	1	6	Roman daub/fired clay

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Appendix 2: The Environmental Evidence

Rachel Small

Introduction

During excavation at Great Bowden, Leicestershire four bulk samples were taken from a pit, posthole and ditch fills dating from the Roman to Saxo-Norman period. The results of the analysis of the charred plant remains recovered from these samples are presented together with a discussion of what this can tell us about the diet, crop husbandry strategies and environment at the site.

Methodology

The samples were a whitish grey clay and were processed in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm mesh sieve. The flotation fractions (flots) were transferred into plastic boxes and left to air dry before being sorted in their entirety for plant remains and other artefacts under a x10-40 stereo microscope. The residues were air dried and the fractions over 4mm sorted in their entirety and the fractions under 4mm were scanned. Plant remains were identified by comparison to modern reference material available at ULAS and names follow Stace (1991). Counts (table 1) were based on minimum number of remains: whole grains, or grain fragments which included the embryo, were counted as one; rachis internodes were counted as one; whole legumes, i.e. containing two cotyledons, were counted as one; and, seed fragments were counted as one except for those which had clearly fragmented from a larger specimens.

Results

Few plant remains were present in the four samples. Preservation of the remains was generally poor, many were blistered from burning at high temperatures and abraded from soil disturbance. Modern (uncharred) rootlets and seeds were however low in number.

Roman Samples

Sample 4 (10)[9], a ditch fill, did not contain any plant remains. However, sample 3 (8)[7], a fill from a post-hole, contained a small number of grains (three in total). It was possible to identify one of the grains as wheat and it was rounded in appearance. Rounded spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.) grains are known to occur but it is also possible this represents an intrusive free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* spp.) grain from a later Saxo-Norman context. A small number of wild seeds (four in total) were also identified including large grass (Poaceae), vetch (*Vicia* spp.) and black bindweed (*Polygonum convolvulus* L.).

Table 1: Plant remains present in samples.

Sample	1	2	3	4	
Context	2	4	8	10	
Cut	1	3	7	9	

Feature description	Ditch fill	Pit fill	Post-hole	Ditch fill	
Date	Saxo-Norman	Saxo-Norman	Roman	Roman	
Grains					
Free-threshing <i>Triticum</i> spp.	4	1	1		Free-threshing wheat
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L.	2				Barley
Cereal	5	2	1		Cereal
Cereal/Poaceae			1		Cereal/grass
Rachis					
Free-threshing <i>Triticum</i> spp. rachis internode	1	1			Free-threshing wheat rachis internode
Wild seeds					
<i>Rumex</i> spp.	1				Dock
<i>Rumex/Carex</i> spp.		1			Dock/Sedge
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	3	10			Stinking mayweed
Large Poaceae	1	`	2		Large grass
<i>Vicia</i> spp.	3		1		Vetch
<i>Chenopodium</i> spp.		1			Goosefoot
<i>Polygonum convolvulus</i> L.			1		Black bindweed
Total	20	16	7	0	
Sample volume (L)	7	7	6	6	
% of flot sorted	100	100	100	100	
Items per litre	2.9	2.3	1.2	0	

Saxo-Norman Samples

In sample 1 (2)[1], a ditch fill, grains were most common (11 in total) and it was possible to identify four as free-threshing wheat, and two as barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.). Due to the poor preservation it was not possible to conclude whether these were straight or twisted grains. A single free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.) rachis internode was present and similarly poor preservation did not allow for differentiation between bread (*Triticum aestivum* L.) and rivet (*Triticum turgidum* L.) wheat. Wild seeds were present including dock (*Rumex* sp.), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula* L.), large grass and vetch.

Sample 2 (4)[3], a pit fill, contained three cereal grains, one of which could be identified as a free-threshing wheat grain, a free-threshing rachis internode was also present. Wild seeds were most common in the sample (12 seeds), ten seeds of stinking mayweed were present, and also a goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) and a dock/sedge (*Rumex/Carex* sp.) seed.

Discussion

The samples did not contain enough remains for statistical analysis (circa 50 identified specimens per sample is needed - pers. comm. Monckton 2015). Therefore, this does not permit the crop processing stage represented to be ascertained (see Van der Veen 2007). However, the samples seem to represent mixed deposits comprising residues from processing the grain for consumption (seeds and rachis) and accidental food spillages (grains). These were burnt on a hearth and the ash may have been formally deposited or represent a windblown accumulation in the features analysed.

In regards to diet in the Roman period at this site, not much can be concluded as it is likely that the material from sample 3 is intrusive. However, it is clear that in the Saxo-Norman period they were consuming free-threshing wheat and barley. These cereals would have been ground into flour to make bread, biscuits *et cetera* and also used in pottages. The number of grains was not large enough to consider which species played greater importance at the site.

Conclusions about crop husbandry strategies can be drawn from the wild seed assemblage. The wild seeds are all typical agricultural weeds and the presence of stinking mayweed suggests that heavy clay soils were cultivated, whilst goosefoots are typical of spring sown crops (164). The presence of a possible sedge (*Carex* sp.) seed possibly indicates that wet/poorly drained soils were cultivated.

Previous environmental sampling has been carried out in near vicinity at Land of Dingley Road, Great Bowden (see Small 2016). Samples taken from ditches and pits at this sites were slightly later in date (late Saxon – early medieval) but a similar density of remains was found (1.8 was the highest number of items per litre). Bread wheat was also identified, along with oat (*Avena* spp.) and a likely pea (*Pisum* sp.), a similar range of agricultural seeds were identified to the current Great Bowden, including stinking mayweed, dock and goosefoot.

Recommendations for Further Work

No further work is needed on the samples that have been analysed in this report. The results of this report are only significant at a site level, they have aided the understanding of diet, husbandry strategies, and environment, but are not of regional/national importance. However, if further excavation is undertaken, sampling should be carried out and analysis undertaken to provide further insight into plant based activities at the site.

Bibliography

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Appendix 3: OASIS Data Entry

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS ID	universi1- 284251		
	Project Name	Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates of field work	31-03-2017 - 04-04-2017		
	Previous/Future Work	Yes		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Pasture		
	Monument Type/Period	Roman ditches, pit, post hole		
	Significant Finds/Period	Roman, pottery		
	Development Type	Residential development		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination		
	Planning Ref.	N/A		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire LE16 7HW		
	Study Area	0.3ha		
	Site Coordinates	SP 74547 88969		
	Height OD	79.58m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC)		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Matthew Beamish		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Roger Kipling		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Mr Patrick Grady		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	ULAS	ULAS	ULAS
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A35 2017	X.A35 2017	X.A35 2017
	Contents	Pottery	Photos	Site records Field notes Plans
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation at Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire</i>		
	Author	Kipling, R.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2017-056		
	Date	2017		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		



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