



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation in the Ha-  
ha at Launde Abbey, Launde Road,  
Leicestershire LE7 9XB**

**NGR: SK 79706 04375**

Mireya González Rodríguez



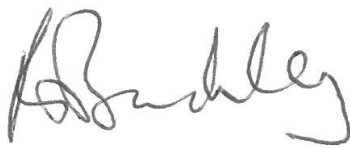
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**An Archaeological Evaluation in the Ha-ha at  
Launde Abbey,  
Launde Road, Leicestershire LE7 9XB  
(SK 79706 04365)**

**Mireya González Rodríguez**

*for*

Mr Ian Andrews

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation in the Ha-ha at Launde Abbey, Launde Road, Launde, Leicestershire LE7 9XB**

Mireya González Rodríguez

### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of the client at Launde Abbey, Launde, Leicestershire between the 1st and 5th of June 2017. Planning permission and Scheduled Monument Consent were sought for the installation of a free standing bronze statue on a concrete base in the front of the house at Launde Abbey. The Ha-ha and the area it encloses is part of a scheduled monument (SAM 137). The excavation of an exploratory 1m x 1m test pit in the Ha-ha area of the gardens was intended to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any heritage assets in order to assess the impact of the proposed installation on such remains and to inform a further phase of mitigation if required.*

*The test pit revealed an infill layer of stone rubble, brick and soil below which was a possible wall on an east-west alignment located on the southern side of the pit. Late medieval and post medieval pottery and ridge tile was recovered along with animal bone, glass and metal.*

*The archive will be deposited with the Historic and Natural Environment Team at Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number X.A69.2017.*

### **Introduction**

Launde Abbey lies at the centre of an extensive historic landscape. The house and chapel are both Grade II listed buildings, the Ha-ha and its urns, stable block, walled kitchen garden and cast iron-framed glass house are also Grade II listed. The grounds to the north and west of the mansion house, including the 19th century Ha-ha and the area it encloses, are a Scheduled Monument (SAM 137). The Ha-ha at Launde Abbey overlies part of the former 12th-century Augustinian priory of St. John the Baptist, its north-south aligned leg corresponding with the inferred position of the western claustral range and the northern east-west one within the area of the nave of the priory church.

Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted by the Secretary of State, Department of Culture, Media and Sport for an exploratory test pit targeting the area to be impacted by the proposed installation of a free-standing bronze statue on a concrete base in the Ha-ha at the west front of the house (Fig. 2). This report covers the results of the initial exploratory test pit in the current flower bed at the west front of the house.

### **Location and Geology**

Launde Abbey is located approximately 21km (13 miles) east of Leicester, in the Harborough District of Leicestershire (Fig. 1) near to the border with Rutland (SK 79706 04375).

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain (Sheet 156) indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Lower Jurassic Marlstone comprising inter-bedded limestone and sandstone deposits overlain by Upper Lias clays.

The proposed installation lies at a height of approximately 148m aOD. The local topography comprises a north-east facing valley to the south of the River Chater, a former spring/watercourse is visible as a series of artificial ponds associated with the historic building.

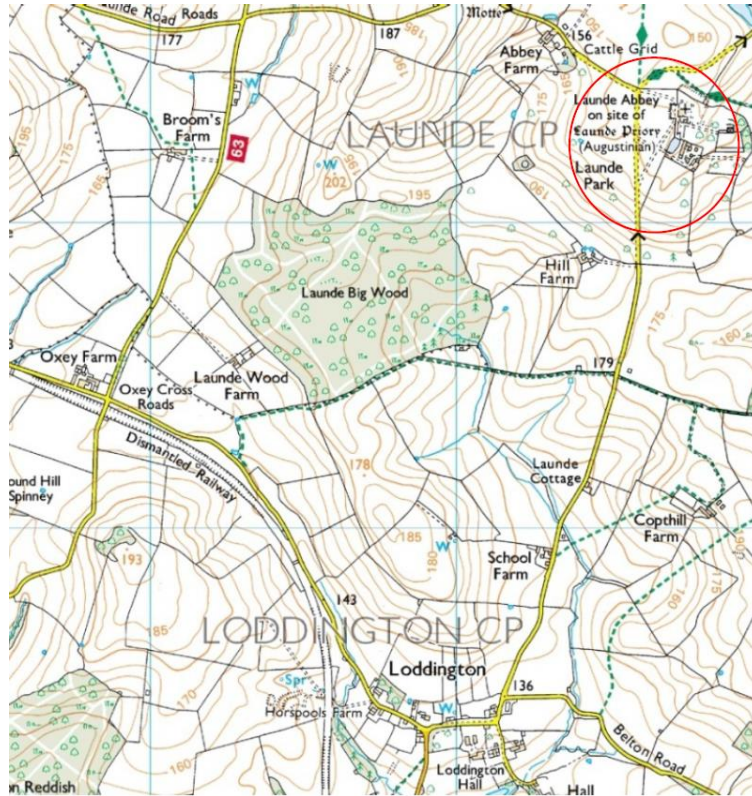


Figure 1. Location of Launde Abbey

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## Historical and Archaeological Background

Launde Abbey is a substantial country house built on the site of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Baptist. Founded in the early 12th century, the priory passed into the possession of Thomas Cromwell at the dissolution and it has generally been referred to as Launde Abbey since then. It was converted into a country house in the second half of the 16th century, utilising elements of the former claustral buildings. The principal west front is attributable to the early 17th century, further substantial remodelling of the house occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries. Launde Abbey lies at the centre of an extensive historic landscape. In addition to the fine 18th-century stable block and other service accommodation, there is a substantial walled kitchen garden and glasshouses, landscaped formal gardens including a ha-ha, fishponds, an icehouse, wooded parkland, prospect and possible windmill mounds. The house and chapel are both Grade II listed buildings along with the Ha-ha and its urns, stable block, walled kitchen garden and cast iron-framed glasshouse.

A Ha-ha is a combination of a sunken wall and a ditch used to create a boundary, usually between a garden and parkland, that does not interrupt the view as a fence or hedge would. It also marks the boundary between the formal gardens where nature is held in check and the rather wilder park beyond. The Ha-ha became a popular feature of country-house landscapes during the eighteenth century and the unusual name is thought to derive from the exclamation of surprise uttered by those who came across these hidden walls for the first time. The Ha-ha at Launde Abbey separates the small garden in front of the house from the more extensive parkland beyond. Its purpose is to prevent sheep grazing in the park from straying into the garden whilst allowing an uninterrupted view of the landscape from the house. The Ha-ha ditch at Launde Abbey is relatively shallow.

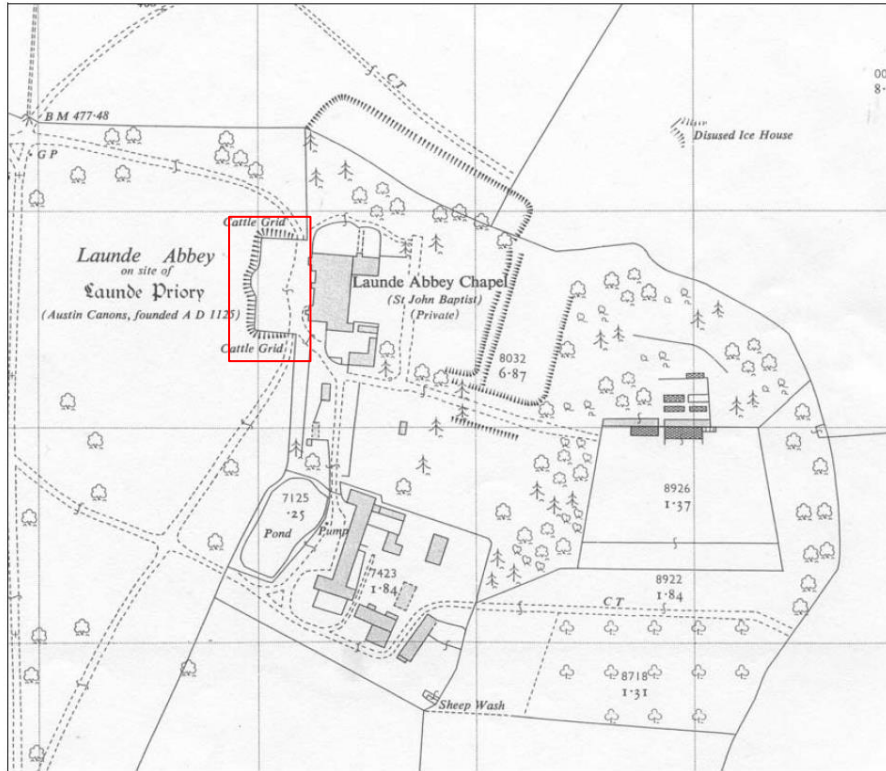
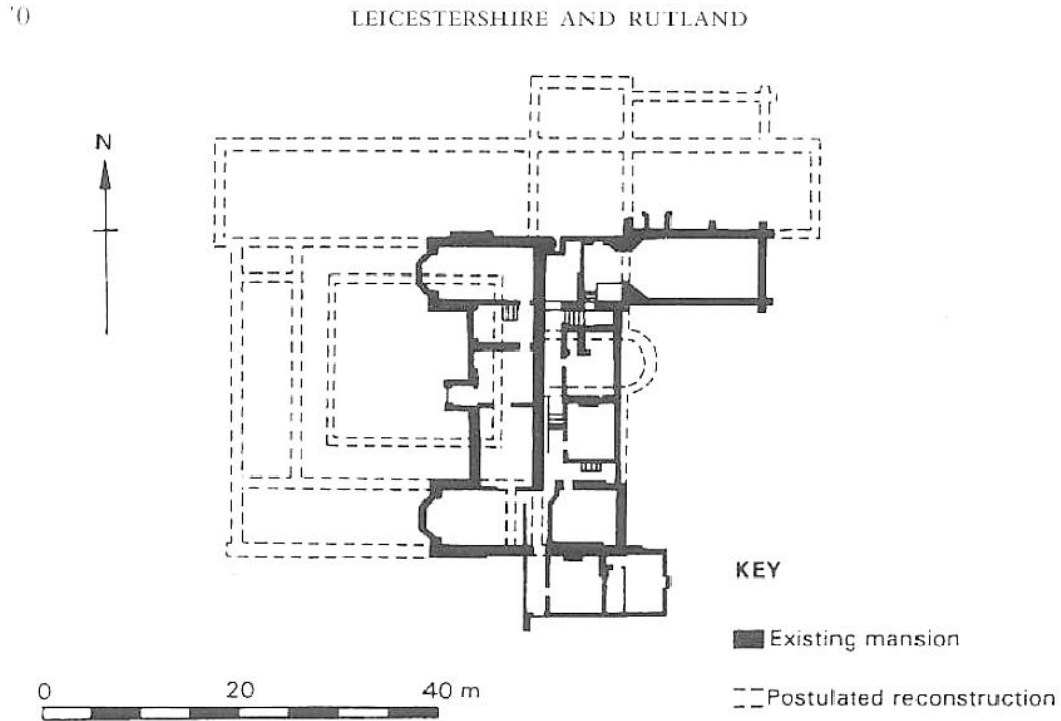


Figure 2. Location plan showing position of Ha-ha on west side of Launde Abbey. Extract from Ordnance Survey 25'' to 1 mile Leicestershire sheet XXXIII.15, published in 1960.



Illus. 12 Launde Abbey: plan with conjectural reconstruction of the priory layout

Figure 3. Launde Abbey plan with conjectural reconstruction of the priory layout (Liddle and O'Brien 1995)

A series of small excavation trenches were opened up in the area of the priory church, to the north and west of the house in the 1960s with the intention of locating the foundations of the Priory Church (*TLAHS* 39, 52). Extensive earthwork and geophysical surveys were undertaken at the site between 1989 and 1992 (Beavitt 1995, 22-31). More recently, a watching brief was carried out on the excavation of a service trench to the north of the house in 1998 (Pollard 1998).

A detailed Historic Building Assessment was prepared by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services in 2005 (Finn *et al.*) in preparation of development proposals for the refurbishment and alteration of the main building and restoration of the Ha-ha to its original depth. Reference to this should be made for further detail on the archaeological, historical and architectural background to the project.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services in 2007 (Hyam 2007). Four trenches around the Ha-ha were excavated in advance of restoration and six trenches at the orchard behind the stable block. Evidence for remains of the Priory walls were found to continue beyond the western limits of the Ha-ha suggesting the original buildings may be more extensive than previously thought. Following this evaluation a programme of archaeological monitoring work was carried out in 2009 (Hyam 2009), revealing the Ha-ha wall to be constructed of a single skin of coursed stone rubble some of which had been well dressed whilst others showed clear chisel marks. No further evidence of the Priory was seen.

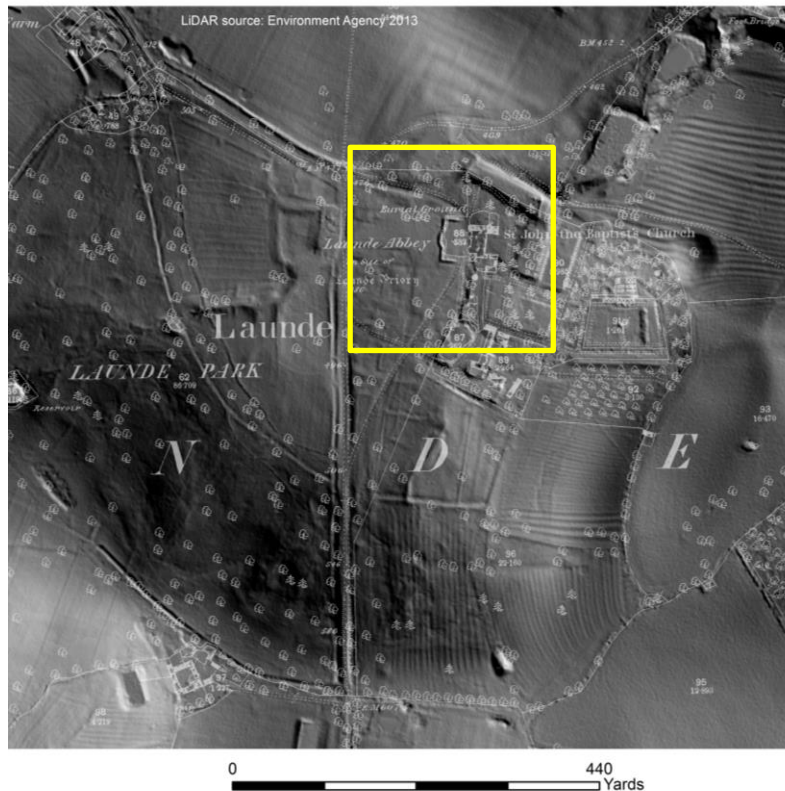


Figure 4. Hillshade plot of 1m resolution Digital Terrain Model LiDAR Data with 1st edition Ordnance Survey mapping overlay (Beamish 21.12.2014).

## Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the excavation of an exploratory test pit 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 record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.



- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of the results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

Additionally, the archaeological programme can contribute to regional research themes and some initial research questions derived from East Midlands Heritage Research Agenda (Knight *et al.* 2012) could be considered:

- Can we discern significant differences in the planning, economy and landscape impact of the different monastic orders?
- How can we refine our understanding of local and regional architectural styles, including sculptured stonework, decorations and monuments?
- What was the impact of the Reformation upon ecclesiastical buildings and monastic estates?
- What was the social role and influence of country houses and estates?



Figure 5. Location of the flower bed within the Ha-ha (1m scale)

## Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014).

General photographs of the area were taken prior the commencement of the excavation of the test pit. The 1mx1m test pit represented a sample of the 2.5m<sup>2</sup> hole that will be required for the concrete foundation supporting the statue. The location of the test pit was discussed in advance with the client and its position within the ha-ha established through triangulation of measured distances from the house (Fig. 5).

The excavation to expose the underlying strata was carried out with hand tools and undertaken with a view to avoid damage to archaeological deposits or features which appear worthy of preservation *in situ* or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of this evaluation.

The test pit was examined by hand cleaning and archaeological deposits recorded on pro-forma sheets using standard procedures as outline in the ULAS recording manual. A photographic record of the investigations has been prepared in order to illustrate in both detail and general context the principal features encountered. Photogrammetry was undertaken in order to create a 3D model of the test pit and draw sections and plans.

Finds were retained, with the exception of building material which was noted on the context sheets and discarded after recording. No environmental samples were taken.

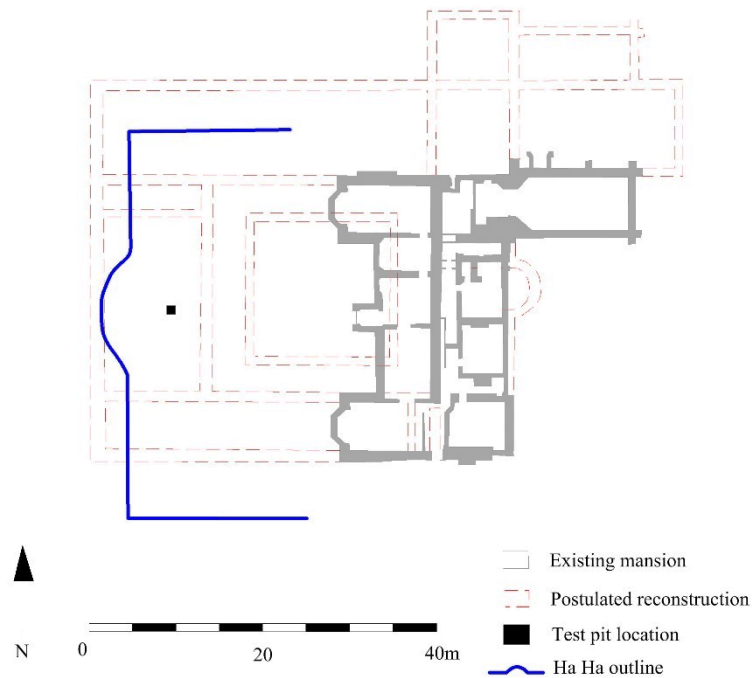


Figure 6. Location of test pit (black)



Figure 7. Location of excavated test pit (left) and pre-excitation of rubble layer (3) (right)

## Results and discussion

One test pit was excavated within the flower bed in the garden area in front of the house at Launde Abbey. The test pit, measuring 1.00 x 1.00m and 0.82m in depth, was located 20.80m from the south corner of the north bay-window and 21.60m off the north corner of the south bay window (Fig. 6).

The garden soil, approximately 0.18m in depth, was a mixed dark brown-grey clayey silt (1), under which was a mixed layer of silty clay (2), between 0.17m and 0.22m in depth, containing fragments of ironstone, sandstone and fragments of brick. The layer below, 0.22-35m thick, consisted of mixed rubble containing broken brick, ironstone and sandstone (Fig. 7). This layer was consistent across the pit, however, larger concentrations of brick were encountered on the northern end, while the southern side was much more compacted with a significant number of stone accumulated on the southeast corner (Fig. 8e). A mid grey-brown clayey silt with rare fragments of brick and charcoal flecks laid below the rubble measuring approximately 0.20m. Immediately below this layer, located to the south of the pit was an earth bonded wall (5) consisting of a band of horizontally laid limestone on an east-west alignment (Fig. 8 and 9). Due to the limitations of the excavation area, it is not possible to ascertain the

dimensions of the wall, nor its character or its relationship to known archaeology, the priory or the manor house without further exploration. The line of this wall it is not indicated in the postulated reconstruction of Liddle and O'Brien (1995). It is however possible for the wall to be an internal partition related to the cloistral complex of the priory, or alternatively to be linked to its conversion into a country house in the second half of the 16th century.



a. West-facing section of test pit (0.5m scales)



b. North-facing section of test pit (0.5m scales)



c. East-facing section of test pit (0.5m scales)



d. South-facing section of test pit (0.5m scales)



e. South-east corner showing concentration of stone above wall)



f. Post excavation of test pit

Figure 8. Post excavation photographs of test pit showing rubble layer (3) and East-West wall (5)

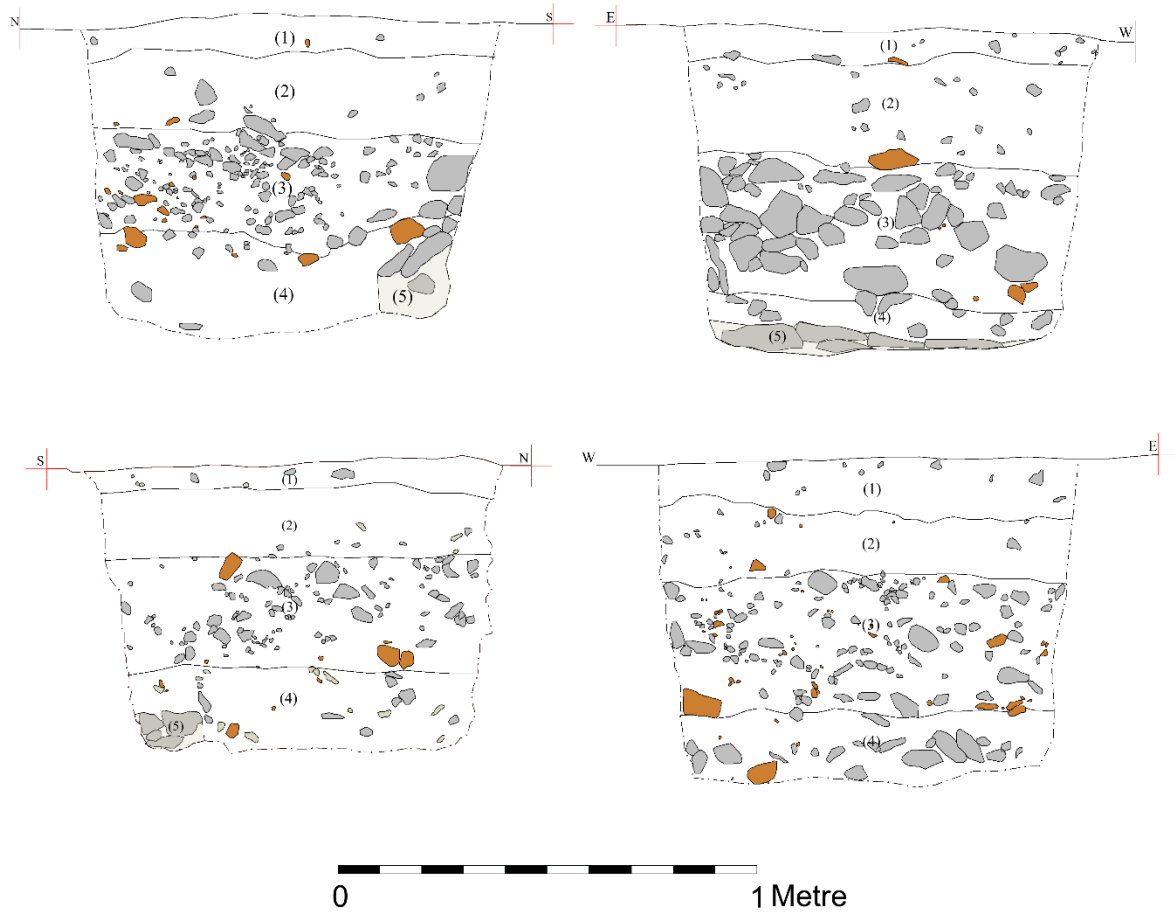


Figure 9. Section drawings of test pit in Ha-ha



Figure 10. Plan of test pit

***The Pottery, Ridge Tile and Miscellaneous Finds from a Test Pit Excavation at Launde Abbey, Leics.*** Deborah Sawday

*The Pottery and Medieval Ridge Tile*

The pottery assemblage was made up of seventeen sherds, weighing 225g and representing a maximum count of fourteen vessels and, for the medieval material, a vessel rim equivalent of 0.07 (calculated by adding together the circumference of the surviving rim sherds, where one vessel equals 1.00). Three fragments of medieval ridge tile, weighing 32 grams, were also recorded.

*Methodology*

The material was examined under an x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to current guidelines (MPRG 1998, MPRG 2016) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 2009). The results are shown below (Tables 1 -3).

Table 1: The pottery and ridge tile fabrics.

<b>Fabric</b>	<b>Common Name/Kiln &amp; Fabric Equivalent where known</b>	<b>Approx. Date Range</b>
LY1	Lyveden/Stanion type - Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware, Northants CTS fabric 320 (1)	c.1200/1225-1500
MS7	Medieval Sandy ware misc. predominantly later medieval coarse red sandy fabrics, misc. coarse hared fired quartz tempered fabrics -? Burley Hill/Allestree/Ticknall, Derbyshire or Staffs (2)	c.1300-1400/1450+
MP1	Midland Purple ware 1 - Chilvers Coton fabric D (3)	c.1375-1550
MP2	Midland Purple ware 2 -? Ticknall, Derbyshire (4)	c.1375-1550
CW2	Cistercian ware 2 -? Ticknall, Derbyshire (5)	c.1450/1475-1550
MB	Midland Blackware - ?Ticknall, Derbyshire (6)	c.1550-1750
MY	Midland Yellow ware - Ticknall, Derbyshire (5) (7)	c.1500-1725
EA3	Mottled ware – Staffs.	1680-1780
EA	Earthenware – Chilvers Coton/Ticknall, Derbyshire (3) (8)	post med/mod
MA1-2	Martincamp Stoneware – Northern France(9)	1475-1550
DE2	Anglo-Netherlandish Tin Glazed Earthenware (9)	c.1500+
WE	Westerwald Stoneware – Rhinelands (9)	c.1675-1750+

(1) Northants CTS	(6) Gooder 1984
(2) Coppack 1980, Cumberpatch 2002-2003, Ford 1995, Soden & Ratkai 1998	(7) Woodfield 1984
(3) Mayes and Scott 1984	(8) Sawday1989
(4) Coppack 1980, Cumberpatch 2002-2003	(9) Hurst <i>et al</i> 1986
(5) Spavold and Brown 2005	

*Discussion*

Overall, the finds have evidently been re-deposited as backfill from various disturbed archaeological levels. The pottery and at least two of the ridge tile fragments in contexts 1 to 4, the latter evidently overlying a wall associated with the medieval priory, date from the later 15th or 16th to the later 17th or 18th centuries. Two sherds of modern flower-pot occurred in context 2; other post medieval or modern finds comprising a land drain, clay tobacco pipe and glass were found in contexts 2 and 3.

*Conclusion*

The date range of the ceramic finds suggest that the later medieval pottery in particular (table 2) may relate to the occupation of the priory which was converted into a country house in the second half of the 16th century. Interestingly however, the fragment of medieval ridge tile in context 3, in Lyveden Stanion B ware, could date from as early as the 13th if not the 14th century; not surprising perhaps, given the well documented use and re-use and even stockpiling of medieval ceramic roofing material in antiquity (Moorhouse 1988).

Most of the pottery and tile fabrics are typical of the region, Lyveden/Stanton, Chilvers Coton and Ticknall all represent major centres of medieval and later ceramic production in the locality. The presence of continental imports from northern France, the Rhineland and possibly the Netherlands, is of note but not uncommon on sites such as this, given the relative wealth enjoyed by the monastic orders, including the Augustinian community, in the Middle Ages (Hall 2016,159-162).

Table 2. The pottery and ridge tile site totals by fabric, sherd numbers and weight grams)

Fabric	No.	Gr	Fabric	No	Gr
POTTERY			RIDGE TILE		
<i>Medieval</i>			<i>Medieval</i>		
			LY1	1	13
			Sub Total	1	13
<i>Later Medieval</i>			<i>Later Medieval</i>		
MP1/2	2	124	MS7	1	7
CW2	2	9	MP	1	12
MAII	1	3			
Sub Total	5	136	Sub Total	2	19
<i>Later Medieval/Early Post-Medieval</i>			<i>Later Medieval/Early Post-Medieval</i>		
CW2/MB	1	1			
MY	1	1			
DE2	1	1			
Sub Total	3	3			
<i>Post Medieval</i>			<i>Post Medieval</i>		
EA3	4	44			
WE	1	12			
EA	4	30			
Sub Total	9	86			
Site Totals	17	225		3	32

Table 3. The medieval and later finds by fabric/material, number and weight (grams) by context.

Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos	Gr	Comments
POTTERY				
1	MP1 – Midland Purple ware 1	1	2	Fine sandy ware hollow ware vessel with a collared rim, possibly a bottle. Estimated rim diameter c.100mm, EVEs 0.07. Later medieval.
1	MAII – Martincamp Stoneware	1	3	Flask body – traces of ash glaze on exterior, c.1525-1550
1	CW/MB – Cistercian/Midland Black	1	1	Glazed internally and externally, c.1475-1550+
1	EA - Earthenware	2	18	Post medieval/modern collared flower pot rim and body
2	EA - Earthenware	2	12	Modern flower pot fragments
3	CW2 – Cistercian ware 2	1	5	Body glazed externally, c.1450/75-1550
3	DE2 – Anglo Netherlandish Tin Glazed Earthenware	1	1	Pink body, traces of thin glaze and red paint, c.1500+.
3	EA3 – Mottled ware	4	44	Plain glazed base and body of hollow ware vessel, probably a mug, 1680-1780
3	WE – Westerwald Stoneware	1	12	Glazed hollow ware – probably a jug with cobalt blue and purple decoration – 1675+
4	MP2 – Midland Purple 2	1	122	Body – hollow ware vessel – probably a cistern. Later medieval.
4	CW2 – Cistercian ware 2	1	4	Body – glazed, c.1450/75-1550.
4	MY – Midland Yellow	1	1	Body – glazed, c.1500+

MEDIEVAL RIDGE TILE				
1	MP – Midland Purple	1	12	Trace of olive green glaze on upper surface, later medieval.
3	LY1 – Lyveden Stanion B ware	1	13	Green glazed, c.1200/1225-1500.
3	MS7 – Medieval Sandy ware 7	1	7	Abraded, c.1300-1400/1450+
MISC				
1	China Clay	2		Clay tobacco pipe stem, post medieval/modern
2	China Clay	1		Clay tobacco pipe stem, post med/modern
2	EA - Earthenware	1		Land drain post med/modern
3	Glass	8		?window glass
3	Glass	1		modern
4	Stone	1		Sandstone roofing slate fragment, maximum thickness c.12mm with circular drilled peg/nail hole c.8mm in diameter.

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Site/ Parish: Launde Abbey, Leics. Accession No.: XA69 2017 Document Ref: Launde abbey4.docx Material: pottery & cbm & misc. Site Type: priory/landscape gardens	Submitter: M. González Rodríguez Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Identification: 13.07.17 Method of Recovery: test pit excavation Job Number: 17-051
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***The Animal Bone from a Test Pit Excavation at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire. William Johnson and Joseph Bartholomew****Introduction*

A very small animal bone assemblage (ten fragments) was collected by hand during excavation at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire. The bones were collected from three contexts, all of which were layers from a test pit within a Ha-ha. The contexts were dated to the modern and post-medieval periods, based on pottery analysis.

*Method*

The bones were identified by comparison to reference material held at the University of Leicester bone laboratory and ULAS. A catalogue of the hand-collected bones was made (Table 4). Condition was scored using the Harland *et al.* (2003) scale.

*Results*

Generally, the preservation of the bone was ‘good’; the surface lacked a fresh appearance but was solid with only localized flaking. One specimen from context two did however display flaking on over fifty percent of the surface. Signs of weathering (cracking) were limited and no root-etching was noted on specimens. One fragment from context two had been gnawed and the mark was a shallow crater which is characteristic of a canine. No butchery marks were visible on the bones. The bones were from large and medium mammals, long bones including the ulna, and flat bones such as ribs and the skull were both represented. Only one bone could be positively identified to species level and this was an equid metacarpal from context three. An ulna fragment from context one was also probably equid but this identification is tentative.

Table 4. Catalogue of hand collected bone

<b>Context</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Completeness</b>	<b>Taxa</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	1	Long bone	Fragment	Medium mammal	
1	1	Flat bone	Fragment	Medium mammal	Probable rib
2	1	Ulna	Proximal	Large mammal	Probable equid
2	1	Rib	Fragment	Large mammal	
2	1	Flat bone	Fragment	Large mammal	Possible pelvis
2	2	Indet.	Fragment	Medium mammal	One fragment with gnaw marks, one with poor preservation
3	1	Metacarpal	Proximal	Equid	
3	1	Skull	Fragment	Medium mammal	
3	1	Indet.	Fragment	Medium mammal	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>				

*Discussion*

The assemblage most probably represents domestic refuse that was deposited into the Ha-ha in the post-medieval/modern periods. However, due to the small assemblage size, detailed conclusions cannot be drawn about diet or animal husbandry strategies at the site in these periods.

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## Acknowledgements

The project was managed by Dr Richard Buckley and the fieldwork supervised by Dr M. González Rodríguez. The ceramics were identified by Debbie Sawday and the animal bone by William Johnson and Joseph Bartholomew.

Thanks are extended to the staff, specially Ian Andrews and Hazel Aucken, and visitors at Launde Abbey for their warm welcome, cooperation and interest.

## Archive

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Code X.A69.2017.

The archive consists of:

- PAPER**        5x ULAS pro forma Context sheets  
                  1x ULAS Context Summary Record sheets  
                  1x ULAS Digital Photography Record sheets  
                  1x correspondence (Scheduled Monument Consent)  
                  1x bound copy of this report
- DIGITAL**      1 CD-R with 36 digital photographs; excel file with copies of the site indices; a  
                  PDF\_A copy of this report
- PHYSICAL**    1 box of finds (pottery; animal bone; glass)

## Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. An OASIS record will also be produced and this report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service website.

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## Appendix: OASIS data entry

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-308636		
	<b>Project Name</b>	An Archaeological Evaluation in the Ha-ha at Launde Abbey, Launde Road, Leicestershire LE7 9XB		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	01/06/2017- 05/06/2017		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Yes/No		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation – Test pits		
	<b>Site Status</b>	Scheduled Monument (SAM 137)		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Garden		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Medieval/Post-medieval		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	Pottery, Ridge tile / Medieval, Post-medieval		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning condition		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	17/00128/FUL			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Launde Abbey, Launde Road, Leicestershire LE7 9XB		
	<b>Study Area</b>	2.5m <sup>2</sup>		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 79706 04375		
	<b>Height OD</b>	c. 148m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Authority Archaeologist		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	Dr Mireya Gonzalez Rodriguez		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Dr Richard Buckley		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Dr Mireya González Rodríguez		
<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Launde Abbey Trust			
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	X.A69.2017	X.A69.2017	X.A69.2017
	<b>Contents</b>	Animal Bone Ceramics Glass	Digital photography Spreadsheets Text	Context Sheets Report
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature		
	<b>Title</b>	An Archaeological Evaluation in the Ha-ha at Launde Abbey, Launde Road, Leicestershire LE7 9XB		
	<b>Author</b>	González Rodríguez, M.		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services Report No. 2017-085		
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