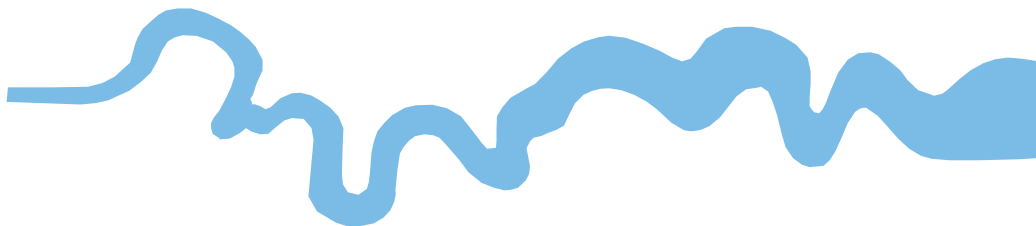


T V A S



NORTH MIDLANDS

**Land west of Battlefield Road,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire**

Metal Detector Survey

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: BRS21/37

(SJ 5135 1651)

Land west of Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

A Metal Detecting Survey and Watching Brief

For Jessup Brothers Ltd

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

TVAS North Midlands

Site Code BRS 21/37

March 2021

Summary

Site name: Land west of Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Grid reference: SJ 5135 1651

Site activity: Metal Detector Survey

Date and duration of project: 17th-19th February 2021

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: BRS 21/37

Area of site: about 6.65Ha

Summary of results: A metal detecting survey was carried out on land west of Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury. A minimum of 10% of the surface was scanned producing a relatively low quantity of finds. A total of 37 items was recovered with a single one possibly dating from the Medieval period. No artefacts relating to the battle of Shrewsbury were found.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited at an appropriate local museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 23.03.21
	Steve Preston ✓ 23.03.21

Land west of Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire A Metal Detecting Survey

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

with a contribution by Aidan Colyer

Report 21/37

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological metal detector survey carried out at land west of Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 4AB (SJ 5135 1651) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Jessup Brothers Ltd, Jessup House, 2 Station Court, Girton Road, Cannock, WS11 0EJ as advised by Ms Helen Martin-Bacon of Avalon Heritage Ltd, Dairyhouse Lane, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 2PW.

Outline planning consent (19/03905/OUT), has been gained from Shropshire Council to develop the site for housing. The consent includes a condition (9) requiring a programme of archaeological investigation. This would take the form of a watching brief during groundworks and metal detector survey prior to groundworks. This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the County's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by Avalon Heritage Ltd and approved by Andrew Wigley, Shropshire County Natural and Historic Environment manager advisor to the planning authority.

This report concerns the metal detector survey only. The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse, between 17th and 19th February 2021 and the site code is BRS21/37.

The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited at an approved local museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the northern outskirts of Shrewsbury, 4km north east of the town centre, in an area mostly devoted to industry and commerce (Fig. 1). The site is trapezoidal in shape with an access path to Battlefield Road at the south-east. It is bordered by the railway line between Shrewsbury and Crewe to the west, a factory compound to the south, by residential properties in the east and the A5124 to the north. It is currently used as a meadow. For most of its part it is flat, lying at about 72-73m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) but drops significantly towards its very south end down to 69m aOD. According to maps (BGS 1978), the underlying geology is recorded as Bridgnorth (Lower Mottled) Sandstone.

Archaeological background

The potential of the site stems from its location, just on the south edge of what is considered as the site of the Battle of Shrewsbury (21st July 1403) between Henry IV, accompanied by his son the future Henry V, and a rebel knight, Sir Henry 'Hotspur' Percy of Northumberland. A chapel to commemorate the royal victory was erected shortly after the battle at its epicentre and is the current St Mary Magdalene church (SMR no. SA981). The site is located 600m to the south of this.

A similar metal detector survey was conducted on a 12.5ha field on the opposite side of Battlefield Road with a low recovery of artefacts of Medieval date (Oakey 2014). A watching brief was conducted on the other side of the A5124 to the north-west of the site (Williams 1998), also included a metal detecting approach, but again with limited results. To note that one episode of the BBC series *Two Men in a Trench* took place more precisely to the north of the church with both a metal detecting survey and an archaeological excavation. Some scant evidence that could relate to the battle was found. Overall this is an area whose archaeological potential remains mainly unknown.

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the metal detector survey was to systematically recover a selection of metal finds which may relate to the Battle of Shrewsbury and inform upon appropriate mitigation measures should significant archaeological remains which require further investigation and/or preservation *in situ* are uncovered

More specifically the project will try to

Results

Metal Detector Survey

The metal detector used was a Minelab Vanquish 540 set in an all-metal mode (targeting both ferrous and non-ferrous objects). The project took place in relatively bad weather, but this did not impede the survey. The field was under pasture and the ground was quite damp.

The metal detecting survey was conducted along lines spaced at 10m intervals aligned parallel to the main road. Some 12 transects were defined like this, orientated SW-NE. The grid is shown on Figure 2 along with the findspots. The artefacts' positions were recorded using a handheld GPS. As the amount of finds recovered was very low, a radius search was usually conducted around any find, thus certain findspots are not perfectly located on the transects. The finds were generally retrieved from depths of between 0.05m and 0.30m but a few deeper targets reached 0.40m deep. They were all contained within the thick heavy topsoil, a brownish grey clay. There was a relatively low amount of modern material (bullets, farming tool pieces, screw, bolts...) except in the north-east corner, where made ground was observed. When identified of recent date directly on site, finds were not retained. At the end of the survey 37 items were kept and are discussed in the finds section below.

Finds

Metalwork by Aidan Colyer

Thirty objects were recovered from the metal detecting. These are 17 copper alloy objects, 7 ferrous objects and 6 lead objects.

Copper alloy objects

Eleven of the copper alloy objects are buttons. These vary in size and thickness and most are missing the rear loops. Two of the buttons ($\Delta 6$ and $\Delta 14$) show possible silver, or similar, plating. Neither of those buttons have any decoration. Eight of the buttons show no decoration, and all but one is flat. The buttons cannot be dated other than to a broad period from the 17th century to the present. These are findspot numbers $\Delta 13$, $\Delta 18$, $\Delta 26$, $\Delta 29$, $\Delta 31$ and $\Delta 35$. Three remaining buttons have some identification. $\Delta 36$ has modern stamping on the rear which allows it to be easily dated to the 20th century. $\Delta 28$ has been stamped with the shape of a crest. Unfortunately, degradation of the piece makes the crest unidentifiable. This is likely a livery button and as such is likely to be a 19th century button. The third identifiable button, $\Delta 20$, 27mm in diameter, bears the crest of the Royal Irish Regiment (Pl. 1). The 1st battalion of the current regiment is based a short distance away from the

site and the town hosted a parade for the regiment in recent years. It is possible that this button is from one of the current soldiers but the crest does not quite fit. The regiment has seen several others amalgamated into its ranks since the first elements were founded in the 17th century. The crests for these are all very similar and the minor damage to the button makes a concrete date impossible. The crown above the harp design has multiple other elements for several of the regimental elements (including the current regiment) the button does not have any of these obvious embellishments. The crown shape and the lack of scroll work and leaves suggests that this is from one of the units that took part in the First World War. The letters 'BATR' are heavily faded but can be seen to the right of the button face around the edge. The abbreviation suggests that this was a button from an artillery battery as BATR is the shortened form. The detail is not clear enough to narrow down the unit beyond a 20th century battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment or a predecessor.

The remaining copper alloy items include several modern or post medieval strap ends ($\Delta 2$, $\Delta 4$, $\Delta 15$, $\Delta 19$ and $\Delta 34$) and a connector as well as a small piece that is likely from modern jewellery ($\Delta 24$).

Ferrous objects

All of the ferrous objects are general late post-medieval to modern discarded items including broken sections of farm machinery, horse riding equipment and unidentifiable scrap. These are items $\Delta 3$, $\Delta 8$, $\Delta 10$, $\Delta 12$, $\Delta 16$, $\Delta 21$ and $\Delta 33$.

Lead objects

The lead objects fall into two categories: discs and shot.

Discs

Two lead discs were recovered, $\Delta 22$ and $\Delta 37$. $\Delta 37$ could be a flattened droplet of lead from minor lead working in the field. This could have been the making of lead shot which is supported by the presence of early lead shot. The second disc, $\Delta 22$, is a medieval gaming token (Pl. 4). The surface is worn but has shallow incised lines. This can be dated to the broad medieval period only.

Lead shot

Four pieces of lead shot were recovered during the survey. Of these, three are or were balls. $\Delta 17$ is a small home-made shot. The size suggests a pistol shot or even large buckshot and there is still flash on one side which suggests a home-made piece. As the flash is still evident it is unlikely to have been shot. $\Delta 9$ and $\Delta 11$ would have originally been the same size (Pl. 3). Both of these are relatively small although they are of the right weight and calibre for 18th century and later pistol shot. There is a small possibility that they could be of an earlier 17th

century date but the quality makes this unlikely as does the size of the shot. A single possible early lead bullet was recovered during the survey, Δ23. It is a small cone of lead, but there is a small ferrous rod through the base of this piece. For that reason it is less likely that this is a bullet and it is possibly a small weight. Neither option dates the piece to earlier than the 18th century.

Summary

A large number of the objects recovered from the survey were of modern date. This included all ferrous objects. There were no objects that were obviously related to the use of Shrewsbury during the civil war. All of the lead shot is later and likely to be from private use of firearms. Several of the buttons could be of an early enough date to be from the civil war but this is highly unlikely considering the nature of the assemblage. What the assemblage does point to is use for farming from the later post-medieval period onwards. The only find of significant date is the medieval gaming token which is likely an item of casual loss.

Coins by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Seven coins were found. It is unsure if Δ1 is a coin as it appears that some ferrous rust was present on it, so maybe it is another flat button. Δ7 differed also from the rest as it was a half portion and its weight was above the others, maybe due to its composition (likely a lead and copper alloy). Again, it is uncertain if it is really a coin.

Only two coins retained some identifiable elements. Δ27 was post-Medieval half-penny while Δ32 was a Victorian “Bun Head” penny (Pl. 2). The rest are too poorly preserved to be dated. Δ1, 5, 25 and 30 are likely very worn milled coins.

Δ27 Bronze halfpenny Mint: London

O: [...]VS [...] : Laureate head left of King George II

R: BR[...] : Britannia seated left

Weight: 7.34g Diameter: 26.5mm Axis: 12h

Δ32 Bronze penny Mint: London 1873

O: V[...] | BRIT [...] F:D: - Draped bust of Queen Victoria left, her hair in a bun

R: [...] PENNY //1873 : Helmeted Britannia seated right, holding a trident in her left hand and resting her left arm on her shield; a lighthouse behind her

Weight: 7.38g Diameter: 30.5mm Axis: -h Ref.: Spink 3954

Δ1 Weight: 3.60g Diameter: 24.6mm Axis: -h

Δ5 Weight: 1.87g Diameter: 16.3mm Axis: -h

Δ7 Weight: 7.00g Diameter: 22.8 x 15.3mm (half) Axis: -h

Δ25 Weight: 0.62g Diameter: 14.7mm Axis: -h

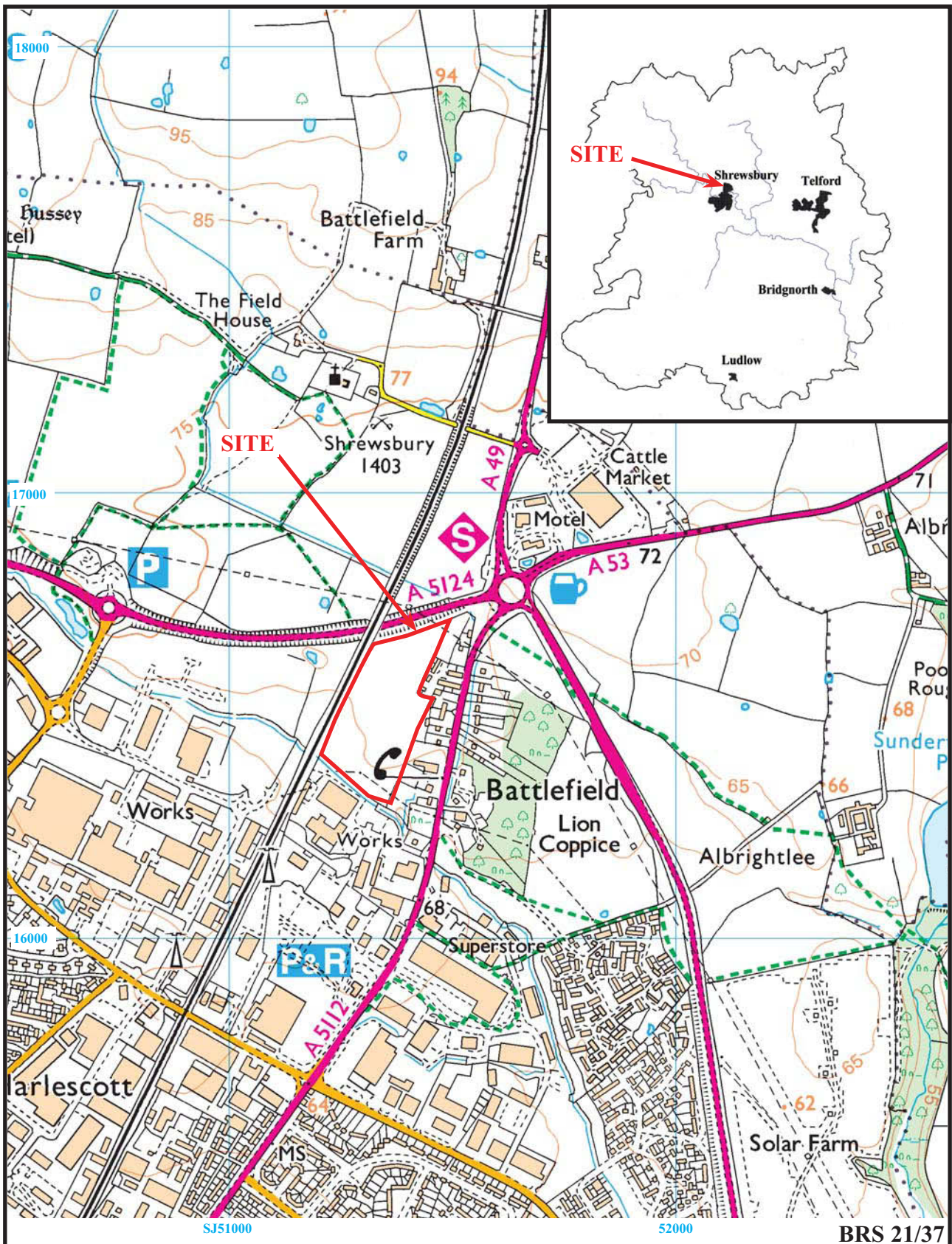
Δ30 Weight: 4.13g Diameter: 26.2mm Axis: 12h

Conclusion

The results of the metal detector survey indicate that there does not seem to be any concentration of artefacts nor any object that could directly relate to the battle. The single item that could be tentatively dated to the Medieval period is a lead token. A modest range of other metal items was recorded.

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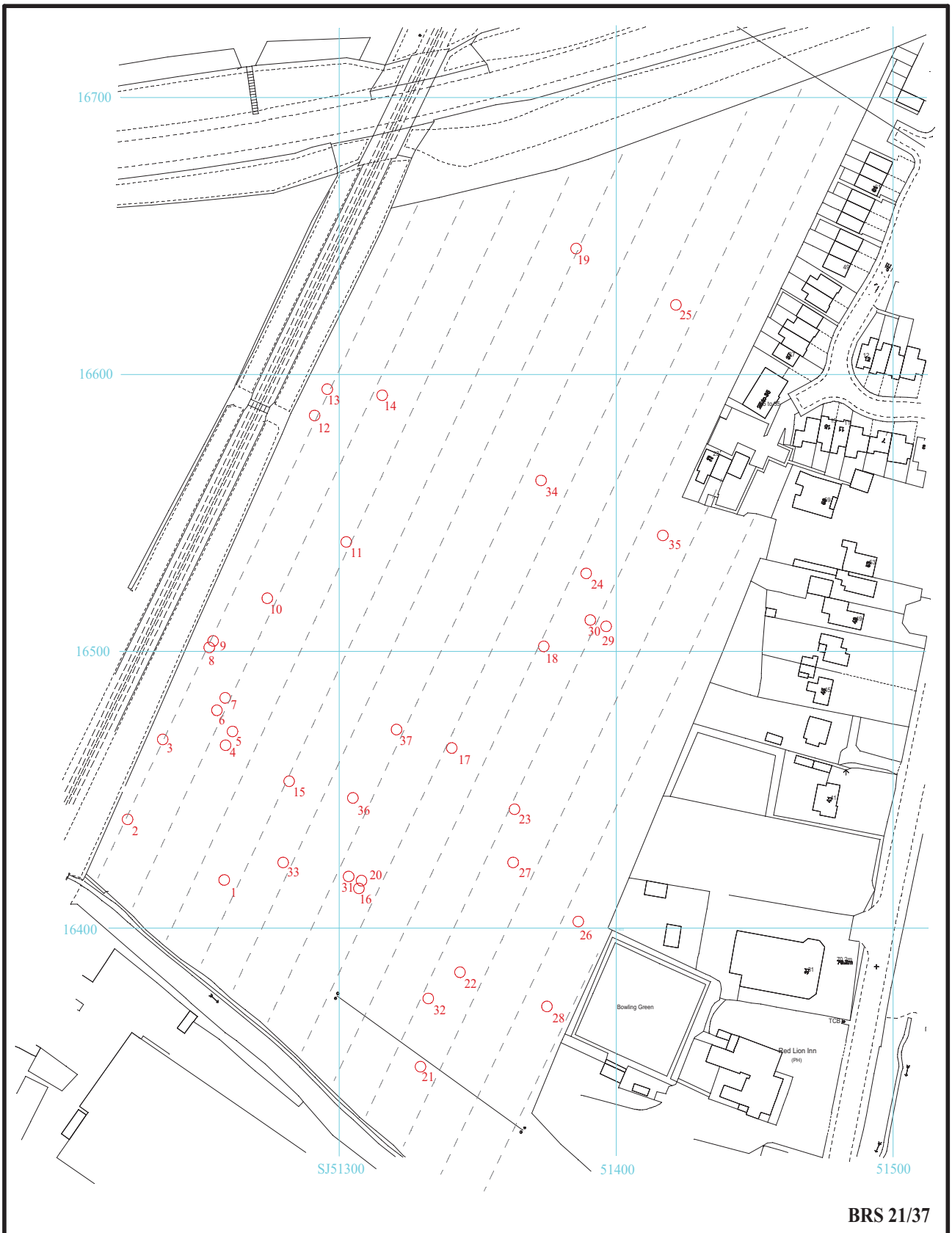
**Land at Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, 2021**

Metal detecting survey

Figure 1. Location of site in north Shrewsbury and within Shropshire.

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**Land at Battle Road, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, 2021
Archaeological metal detecting survey**

Figure 2 Plot of Survey



BRS 21/37



Plate 1. Irish regimental button, Scale 1:1



Plate 2. Victorian penny. Scale 1:1



Plate 3. Lead shots. Scale 1:1



Plate 4. Medieval lead token,, Scale 1:1

BRS 21/37

**Land west of Battlefield Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, 2021
Metal Detector Survey**

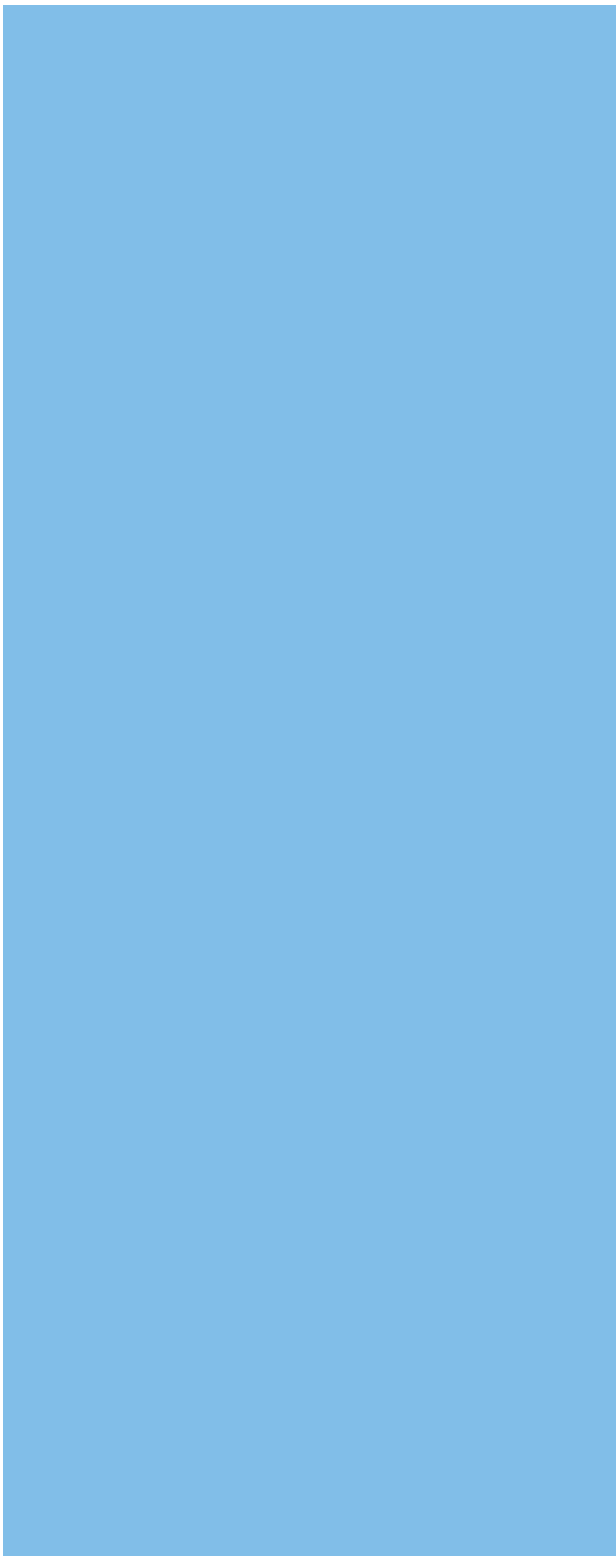
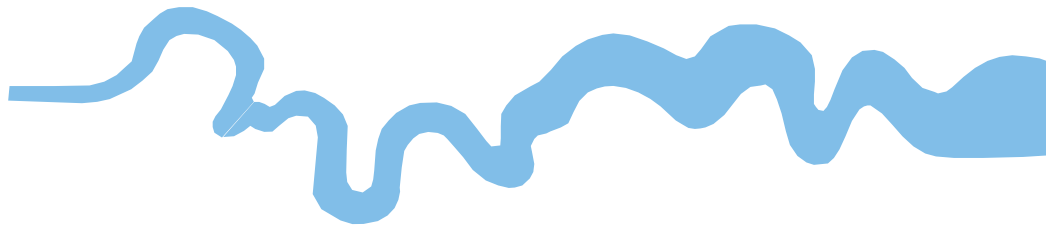
Plates 1 to 4.



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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