ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION & EXCAVATION

THE VILLAGE HALL/READING ROOM
HIGH STREET
LEINTWARDINE
HEREFORDSHIRE

NGR: SO 40330 74092
EHE NO: 1892
JOB NO: BA1106 LCCRR
PROJECT TITLE: LEINTWARDINE COMMUNITY CENTRE PHASE 2
(PLANNING REF: DCNW2009/0615/F)

border archaeology
unearth the past, resolve the future

ISO 9001 REGISTERED FIRM

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Cover: View showing western elevation of Leintwardine Village Hall/Reading Room and northern part of excavation area

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1. Non-Technical Summary

A programme of archaeological observation and excavation carried out by Border Archaeology on behalf of Leintwardine Village Hall & Community Centre Committee in June 2011 produced limited evidence of Roman activity located adjacent to the western elevation of the existing Village Hall/Reading Room.

The manual excavation of an area of some 25 square metres representing the build level of a proposed extension to the rear of the property revealed part of what appeared to be a substantial pit, the contents of which were found to contain quantities of domestic waste in the form of oak and birch charcoal, cereal grains and hazelnut shell.

Also recovered was a small amount of pottery, one piece of which was identified as Roman black burnished ware representing a bowl of early to mid 2nd century AD date; other fragments were recovered but these were of a type that was in general use throughout the Roman period from the 1st to the 4th century and are thus not precisely datable.

Based on the evidence recovered during the course of the excavation, this pit appears to have served a domestic function and may date from a period immediately prior to a reorganisation of the settlement at Leintwardine after about 160 AD, when the earlier 1st century settlement (vicus) was remodelled and defensive works established. It appears to lie on or close to the margin of an area of fairly intensive cereal processing activity dating from around this time which was revealed during previous investigations carried out to the rear of the adjacent Community Centre in 1991, this activity itself evidently being associated with a timber building, traces of which were also uncovered at that time.

Additional to the excavation component of the project, archaeological observation of groundworks relating to the installation of an access ramp and electricity cabling along the southern elevation of the building was carried out; however, this revealed no remains of archaeological significance, a result that was not entirely unexpected in view of the extensive disturbance affecting this area due to previous groundworks activity.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology carried out a programme of fieldwork at The Village Hall/Reading Room High Street Leintwardine Herefordshire (NGR SO40330 74092) (Planning Ref: DCNW2009/0615/F) (*figs.1 & 2*) under instruction from Michael Collins Esq. on behalf of Leintwardine Village Hall & Community Centre Committee (LVHCCC) between June 1st and June 14th 2011. The programme comprised, firstly, the observation of groundworks activity along the southern elevation of the existing building undertaken prior to the lowering of an existing power line, the relocation of three electricity cable stays and construction of a new access ramp.

The second part of the programme comprised manual excavation of an area measuring roughly 25 sq. m representing an extension and access path located to the rear of the existing building. This included 1) 9.5m of foundation trenching to a depth of 0.45m below finished floor level, 2) 1.2m of trenching to a depth of 0.8m below existing ground level to connect a drainage pipe to an existing soakaway and 3) a pathway running to the rear of the existing building to a depth of 0.3m below existing ground level.

The Village Hall/Reading Room is situated within the Scheduled Area of the Roman station of *Bravinium* (SAM HE28) and a WSI representing a methodology for consent to undertake the work was submitted to Tony Fleming Esq. of English Heritage by Neil Shurety of Border Archaeology and subsequently approved by him.

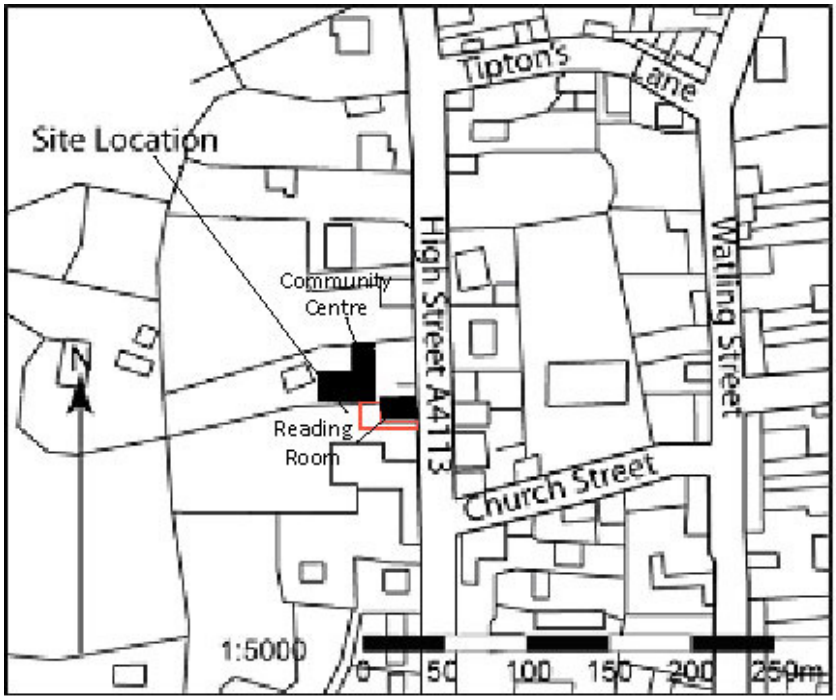

Fig.1: Plan showing location of site

Copies of this Report will be submitted to Michael Collins Esq. on behalf of LVHCCC, Tony Fleming Esq. English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Julian Cotton Esq.

Archaeological Advisor Herefordshire Council. A copy will also be sent to the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

2.1 Soils & Geology

The predominant soil type in the immediate vicinity of the site consists of typical argillic brown earths of the ROWTON (571A) series comprising well-drained fine silty and fine loamy soils, locally over gravel, and some fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and seasonal waterlogging. The underlying geology consists of glaciofluvial or river terrace gravel and till, while the underlying solid geology is of undivided Old Red Sandstone (SSEW, 1983).

2.2 Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

Leintwardine Village Hall/Reading Room is located in an area of high archaeological sensitivity, within the centre of the Roman defended urban settlement, designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Significant evidence of Roman and (to a lesser extent) medieval occupation has been identified in the immediate vicinity.

The present building dates from 1887 (as commemorated by a stone plaque on the exterior of the building) and stands immediately to the south of the School, now a Community Centre with associated car park adjoining to the east. The Village Hall/Reading Room is shown on the OS 2nd edition map of 1904 aligned east-west and marked 'Jubilee Hall'. Later OS mapping shows the schoolhouse and the Hall to have remained essentially unchanged until the early 1990s, when extensive alterations were carried out with the removal of the old washhouse and associated yard and the erection of new public conveniences.

The earliest record of archaeological fieldwork carried out in the immediate vicinity of the study area consisted of brief observations made following the excavation of a service trench to the rear of the Village Hall/Reading Room in 1982 (Lovibond, 1982; Roberts & Sawle, 1982).

No cut features were observed within the trench itself (approximate measurement 3.6m length × 2.1m depth) which was cut into a bank of unknown origin to the rear of the Village Hall, however a rubble spread including 'Roman tile' was apparently identified at a depth of 1.2m, while a large piece of a shallow samian ware dish was found in the spoilheap adjacent to the trench. The remains of two rubble walls identified at the N end of the section presumably represented the foundations for modern brick outhouses that are visible on the OS 1:2500 map. Other unstratified finds from the trench included several sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery

Excavations and a resistivity survey undertaken in 1959 and 1962 to the rear of No. 22 High Street, immediately south of the study area, has also revealed evidence of Roman and early medieval occupation. A series of gravel surfaces were exposed and tentatively identified as the remains of the *via principalis* or east/west axial roadway, together with a series of stone-filled trenches interpreted as the possible remains of a *principia* or headquarters building.

3. Methodology

The programme of archaeological work detailed below has been carried out in accordance with *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2008) and relevant components of the English Heritage *MoRPHE* (*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment)* process, namely, *The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (2006) and *PPN3: Archaeological Excavation* (2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the IfA *Code of conduct* (2010) and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology* (2008) and to Herefordshire Archaeology's *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire (Issue 1)* (Herefordshire Council, 2004).

The specific areas to be excavated were identified using the site plan 4319-2-10c supplied to Border Archaeology by the architect.

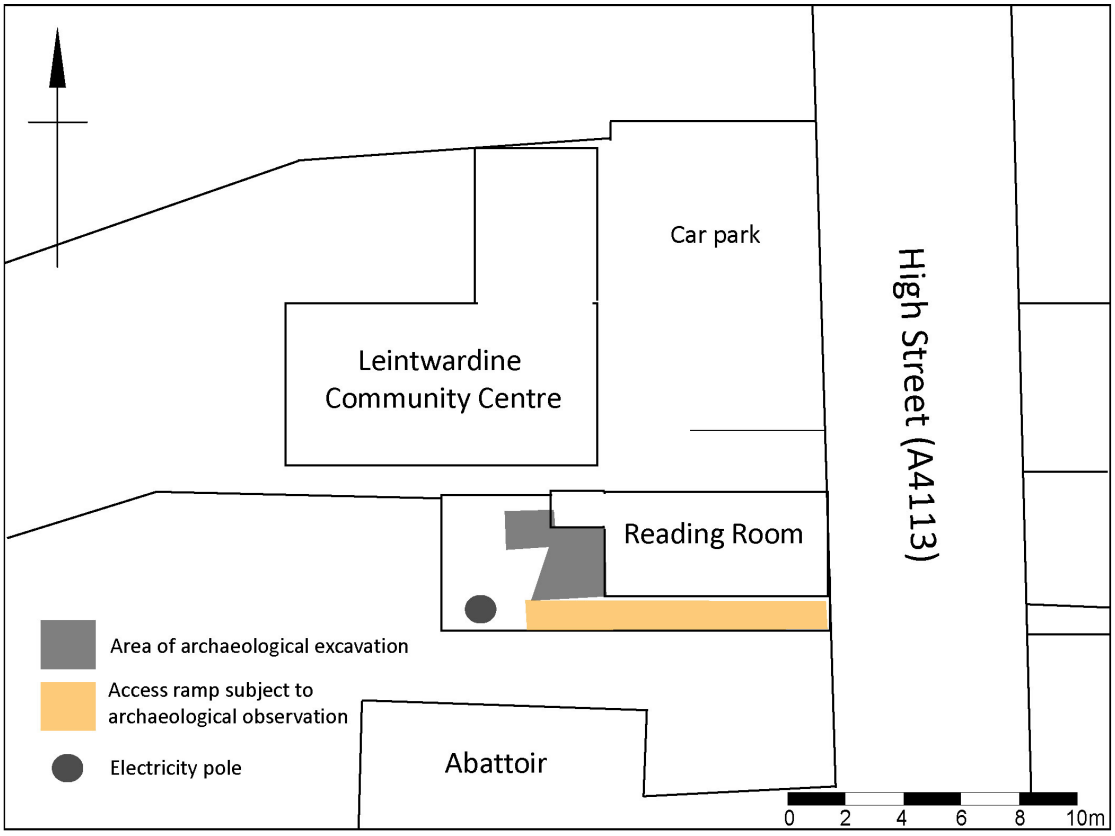

Fig. 2: Detailed site location plan showing extent of excavation area and location of archaeological observation

The initial phase of the archaeological programme of work consisted of the removal of soil from an existing ramped access area extending some 12m east-west and 1.75m north-south between the southern elevation of the Reading Room and the existing boundary wall. This was carried out by contracting staff using a mechanical excavator and toothless bucket under archaeological observation. All spoil was visually inspected during removal before being transported off-site.

Due to access difficulties as work progressed, machine excavation was discontinued for the final part of the groundworks in this area and a trench measuring 0.25m wide and 0.3m deep was excavated by hand in order to lower an existing electricity cable. Manual excavation was also employed for the relocation of three cable stays to secure the existing electricity pole located at the southwest extremity of the site.

During the subsequent phase of archaeological work, an area to the rear of the existing building identified as having being of potentially high archaeological importance was excavated wholly by Border Archaeology to supplied engineering specifications.

The principal area of hand excavation measured approximately 6m (north-south) × 3m (east-west) × 0.25 (north), 0.6m (south). Within this area, a single foundation trench was dug measuring roughly 8.5m (north-south) × 0.5m (east-west) × 0.45m. To the west of the northern end of the main area, a path was excavated to a depth of 0.3m below existing ground level running 3.8m (east-west) × 1.2m (north-south) × 0.3m along the southern elevation of an existing brick extension, turning north at the western end to run a further 1.5m (north-south) × 1.2m (east-west) × 0.3m, terminating at the rear entrance of the existing building. Finally, a short east-west section of trenching measuring 1.2m × 0.3m × 0.8m was dug by hand to connect a plastic drainage pipe to an existing soakaway.

Two cut features [103, 109] were identified during the course of the excavation phase of the project and were excavated to the designated engineering depth in order to allow their stratigraphic recording.

Feature [109] comprised a sub-ovoid pit, which appeared to extend laterally beyond the western limit of the excavation area, and each of its three fills (106, 107 & 108) was sampled for palaeo-environmental assessment. Sample numbers were entered into a register and cross-referenced with context sheets.

4.1 Recording

Written, graphic and photographic records adhere to established professional standards and set out in Border Archaeology's *Field Recording Manual*. A stratigraphic record using a context numbering system was compiled and a 'running matrix' maintained for both areas.

An overall site plan was produced at a scale of 1:50 together with a single drawn section at a scale of 1:20. These were produced on *pro-forma* gridded archivally stable polyester film and contain grid and level information relative to OS data. Drawings are numbered and registered.

A high-resolution digital camera was used to produce a comprehensive photographic record, with all images indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view are recorded in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

The progress of the fieldwork was evaluated using the Company's ISO 9001 procedures.

4.2 Recovery, processing and curation of artefactual data

The archaeological excavation resulted in the recovery of a small ceramic assemblage. This assemblage was quite fragmented reflected in a low average sherd weight of just 9.4g. However, sherds were generally well preserved in terms of surface finish and edge abrasion.

Pottery was recorded from two contexts: (107) and (108), both comprising fills from a single pit [109]. A very small finds assemblage of eight sherds of pottery weighing 75g dating to the post-medieval and Roman periods was recovered, together with three small pieces of ceramic building material/fired clay and a single iron nail. Some unstratified material was also collected, comprising a sherd of 1st century South Gaulish samian and a bodysherd of post-medieval iron-glazed ware of 18th-19th century date together with two masonry fragments. Artefacts were bagged and labelled with the site code and context number before being removed off-site for assessment.

Retained finds were cleaned, labelled and stored prior to assessment according to *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2001) and *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 2001). These will eventually be incorporated to form a material archive and deposited as a resource for current and future research purposes (IfA 2001).

The material was examined by J. Timby MIfA according to typological or chronological criteria; no conservation needs were identified.

No artefacts falling within the scope of the Treasure Act 1996 have been recovered.

The finds form one component of the *Primary Site Archive* (P1) with processed assemblages boxed according to archiving and deposition requirements issued by Hereford City Museum, specific advice being sought from the curator Judy Stephenson.

4.3 Human remains

No evidence of human remains was identified during the course of the fieldwork.

4.4 Environmental strategy

This was developed with reference to *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2002). Samples were taken from deposits believed not to be contaminated or of mixed/secondary origin (e.g. backfills or deposits with a high degree of residual/intrusive artefactual material); those thought to contain well-preserved biological remains; deposits likely to be closely datable and those interpretatively important at the context or site level. Samples from selected contexts were assigned sample numbers and these appear in a sample register cross-referenced with context sheets.

4. Results

4.1 Archaeological Observation

The uppermost context (200) consisted of loose dark greyish-brown gritty silt ranging in thickness from 0.3m to 1m containing frequent medium/large angular/sub-angular stones and moderate small/medium rounded/sub-rounded stones. This comprised a substantial post-medieval/modern make-up deposit associated with construction of an east-west access ramp some 12m in length running between the existing boundary wall (of post-medieval brick and modern concrete block construction) and the southern elevation of the Reading Room.

This material overlay (203) a deposit of uncoursed and un-mortared stone packing around (204), a post-medieval ceramic drain pipe running east-west along the southern elevation of the existing building. The channel itself [202] was cut into (201), a firm mid pinkish-brown gritty silt with frequent small rounded and angular stones and occasional medium rounded stones, which continued beneath the designated engineering depth and which may equate to natural deposit (111) revealed during the excavation phase of the project (*Plate 1*).

Plate 1: View east showing exposed north-south section across existing access, with drain (204) shown at the bottom of the photograph cutting (201)

Plate 2: Detail of post-medieval drain construction

4.2 Archaeological Excavation

Overlying the excavation area to a maximum depth of 0.18m was a turf/topsoil deposit (100) composed of friable dark brown very humic/gritty silt, containing frequent flecks and fragments of modern construction waste, principally CBM, slate, clay and asbestos. Beneath this was a spread of rubble (101) covering the area/void previously occupied by a small boiler-room, now demolished, measuring up to 0.28m thick. This consisted of friable heavily mixed grit, gravel and silt with humic patches containing abundant mortar/plaster lenses, moderate fragments and flecks of CBM, coal, asbestos, slate and stones, although the full extent of this material was not established.

The base for the boiler (102) survived in the form of a concrete pad measuring approximately 2.5m east-west, 1.5m north-south and 0.15m thick, placed within a straight-sided, east-west cut [103], up to 0.36m deep, although its upper section may have been truncated (*Plates 4 & 5*). This feature was presumed to be rectangular in plan, although its full extent was not revealed during the course of the excavation. The construction of the boiler house cut through a thin layer of loose black cinder (104) evidently extending over much of the site to a thickness of some 0.05m, which contained occasional flecks/fragments of CBM, slate, glass and burnt bone.

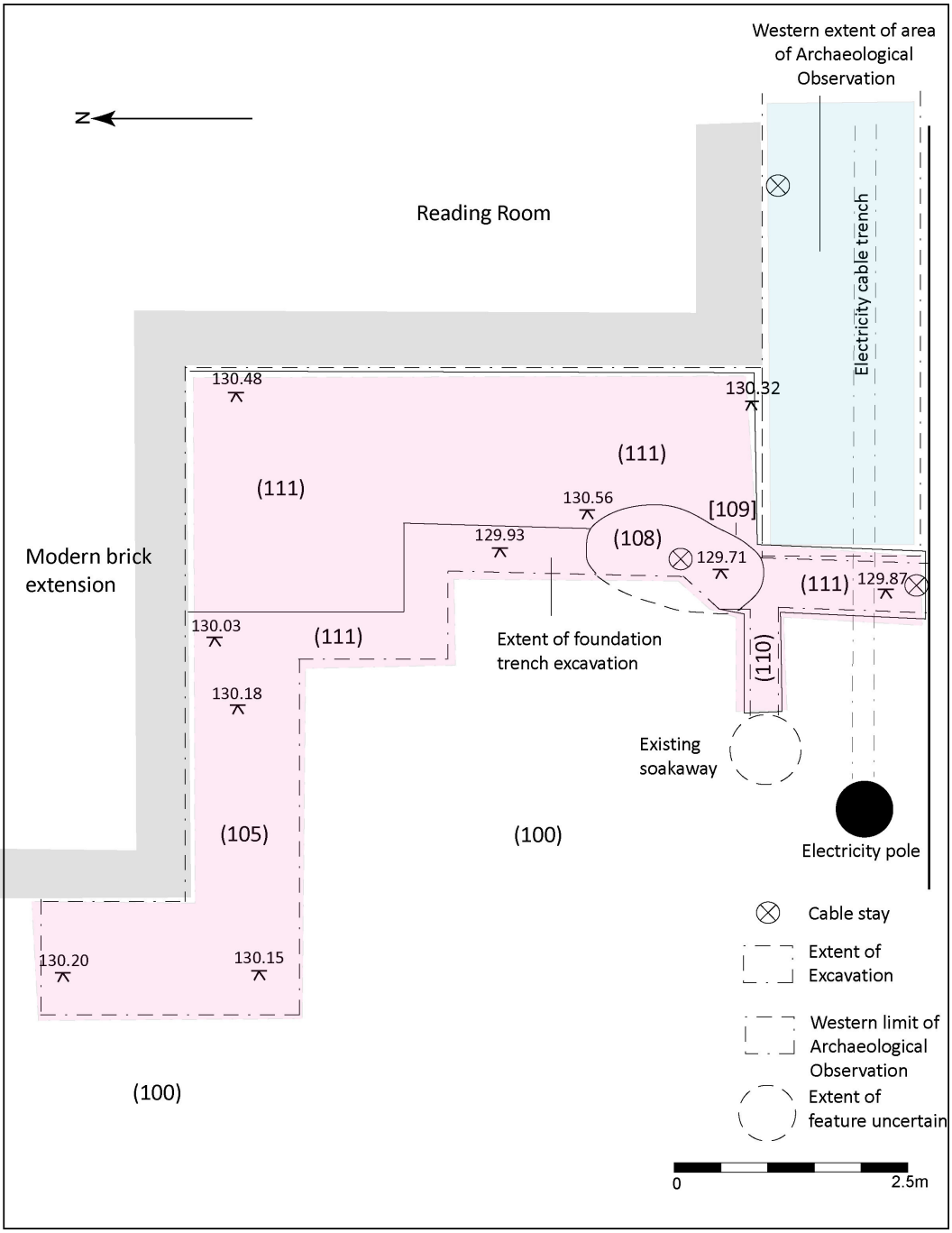

Fig. 3: Plan of site showing extent of excavation, archaeological and modern features & levels

This overlay (105) a 0.06m-thick layer of friable grey concrete and sandy bedding material, which appeared to form a fairly insubstantial surface extending across much of the site, although petering out to north. This bedding material overlay (110), evidently comprising a post-glacial geological deposit composed of firm mid yellowish-brown gritty silt, with frequent small gravels and occasional charcoal and CBM flecking, presumably introduced by means of bioturbation, although there is a possibility that this material formed part of a make-up layer and was thus anthropogenic in origin. The deposit measured up to 0.4m thick, although its boundary with the lower horizon (111) was somewhat unclear.

Plate 3: View west showing northern extent of east-facing section

Plate 4: View south showing north-facing section & remains of cut [103]

Deposit (111) itself lay at the base of the exposed sequence and consisted of firm mid greyish-brown gravelly silt/mid pinkish-brown gritty silt, presumably extending over the entire area of the site, although actual dimensions could not be ascertained. This may be compared with deposit (201) identified at the base of the sequence exposed during the

observation phase. If this is indeed the same deposit, the absence of (110) or its equivalent along the southern elevation may imply either that this had been removed during previous groundworks activity or that (110) is indeed a cultural layer, of unknown date, found only in the area to the rear of the existing building.

Plate 5: View west of east-facing section showing concrete pad (102) & fills of pit [109]

Cutting (110) was part of what appeared to be a substantial pit sub-ovoid pit feature [109] measuring up to 1.9m (N-S) and >0.84m deep (*Plates 5 & 7, Figs 3 & 4*); its full lateral extent was not revealed within the scope of the investigation and in terms of depth the feature extended below the level of construction impact and was thus not fully excavated. The top of the profile revealed a sharp break, although it is possible that the upper portion of the feature had been removed through truncation by the later concrete base (102)/[103]. The sides were steep with some undercutting evident at the northern extent whilst the base, as stated, remained unexcavated and its form unknown. The pit was evidently oriented north-south, although, again, this could not be confirmed as [109] lay partly outside the excavation area.

Pit [109] contained three fills, the composition of which strongly suggests domestic waste (Elliott 2011) with coal and clinker/cinder present in each. The uppermost fill (106) consisted of friable pale yellowish-/greyish-brown (mottled) gritty silt up to 2.02m wide (as revealed) and up to 0.34m thick. A small amount of modern intrusive material was recovered through flotation from this and the other fills, consisting of roots, uncharred seeds of elder and a snail, and, again in common with each of the fills, (106) contained a quantity of poorly preserved and highly fragmented unburnt, burnt and calcined animal bone charcoal fragments. Charcoal recovered from environmental samples appeared to be predominantly oak stemwood and branchwood, although birch was also identified with some evidence of ash present in (106). There was a relatively low frequency of poorly preserved charred botanical remains. These included grains of wheat and barley, grass seeds and small fragments of hazel nutshell. A barley grain from (106) was of the hulled

variety. Animal tooth enamel was also present, examples of which were noted as cattle-sized in (106). The homogeneity of fill (106) suggests it may represent a single depositional event.

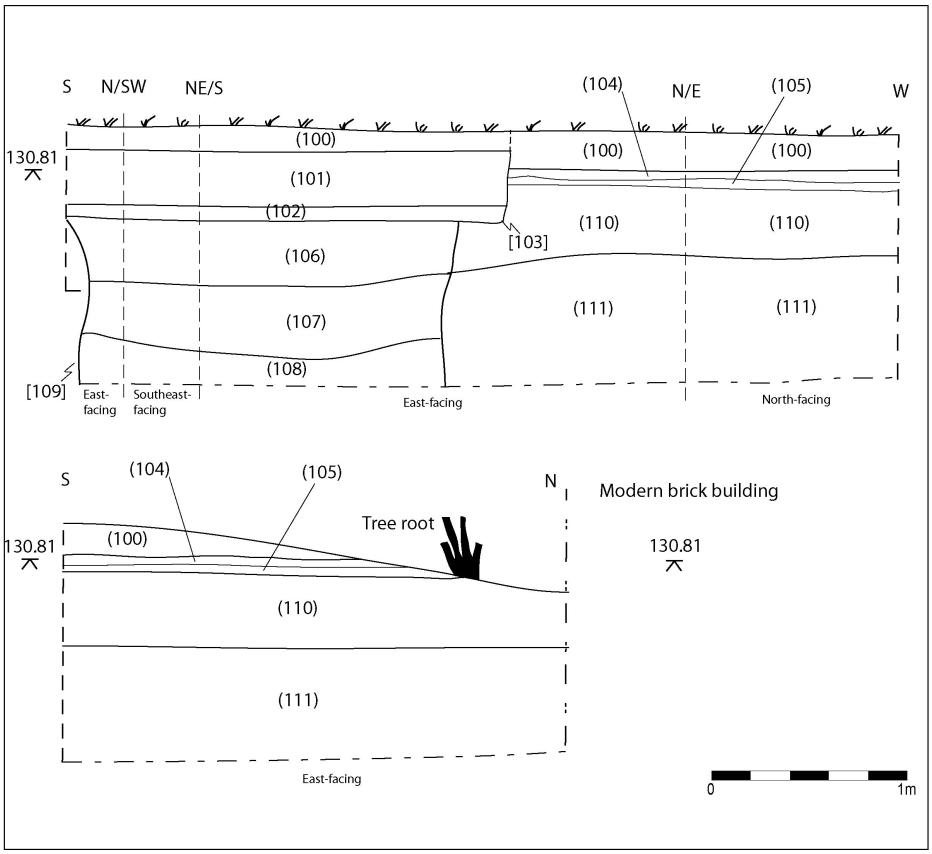

Fig. 4: Section along western perimeter of excavation area

Underlying (106) was a secondary fill of firm mid greyish-brown gritty gravelly silt (107) which measured up to 0.37m thick & 1.84m wide and contained a similar range of domestic charred and calcined material. Coal/clinker was present and small fragments of fired clay, one piece with a vitrified surface, a small piece of lead, probably a piece of window came, were also identified. A small ceramic assemblage included four sherds of Severn Valley ware (SVW OX) potentially of 1st-4th century date, the only featured sherd being a rim from a tankard.

The primary fill (108) was a cohesive dark brown humic gritty silt measuring up to 1.9m wide; the thickness of this deposit could not be ascertained as it continued below final excavation depth. The deposit contained frequent coal and clinker/cinder, unburnt, burnt and calcined animal bone and charred wheat, barley, grass seeds and hazelnut shell. A sherd of Severn Valley ware (SVW OX) was recovered from fill (108), accompanied by a bodysherd of Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) from a bowl decorated with burnished line lattice. Its form and decoration suggest this was a flat-rim deep bowl and that the deposit itself was likely to date to the first half of the 2nd century (Timby 2011).

Plate 6: View south showing southern extent of hand-excavated foundation trenching

Plate 7: View showing excavated extent of pit feature [109]

A fragment of daub, fired clay/CBM, semi-vitrified fuel waste and several nails were also found in (108). One heavily corroded ferrous nail from this deposit bore similarities to Manning's 'Type 2' (1985, 135), comprising a rectangular-sectioned tapering stem and triangular head sloping up to form a diamond-shaped profile (*Plate 8*).

Plate 8: Heavily corroded iron nail recovered from pit fill (108)

Charcoal fragments again appeared to be predominantly of oak, with birch also present, with these particular samples exhibiting radial cracks and vitrification which are generally associated with smaller pieces of wood, such as branchwood and twigs, although such effects may result from specific combustion or taphonomic conditions and may suggest the use of damp or green wood or possibly rapid combustion at high temperatures (Elliott 2011). Additional to oak, charcoal representing holly and *Maloideae* (hawthorn, whitebeam and apple) was also present.

Two further areas were excavated, these being a short east-west trench to accommodate a pipe linking to an existing soakaway and a shallow right-angled strip extending around the modern brick extension as far as the existing doorway to accommodate a new access path.

The first of these was a trench measuring 1.2m × 0.3m × 0.8m, excavation of which revealed no significant archaeological deposits, finds or features. Similarly, the pathway extending to the west of the northern end of the main excavation area revealed no archaeology, due partly to its very shallow depth of 0.3m below existing ground level, which extended only to removal of surface deposit (100) and cinder layer (104). This pathway was 1.2m wide and terminated at the rear entrance of the existing building.

Plate 9: View west showing extent of hand-excavated trench to existing soakaway

Plate 10: View east of hand-excavated area for path to rear of existing building

Plate 11: View north showing termination of pathway at rear doorway of existing brick structure

In addition to the stratified material, several unstratified finds were also recovered. These included a sherd of South Gaulish samian ware from a dish (Drag 15/17) of 1st-century date, almost certainly connected with the early military presence in the town, and a sherd of post-medieval black (iron) glazed earthenware of 18th-19th century date. Two fragments of stonework were also recovered (*Plates 12 & 13*), these evidently being part of a masonry moulding (*Plate 12*) and a roofing tile (*Plate 13*).

Plate 12: Unstratified fragment of moulded masonry

Plate 13: Probable stone tile

5. Conclusion

The watching brief and excavation carried out immediately to the south and west of the existing Reading Room building yielded limited results; however, assessment of the samples recovered from a pit feature [109] exposed during the excavation phase of the project to the rear of the building confirmed the presence of domestic waste material, which, combined with the results of the ceramic assessment, indicates this feature may indeed be of some significance.

The full lateral extent and depth of [109] were not revealed during the course of the excavation, as the western portion lay outside the engineering parameters of the works. Furthermore, the upper portion of the feature appears to have been truncated during the insertion of a concrete plinth (102), evidently to support a small boiler-house structure, at some point in the recent past; however, the remaining fills yielded a small pottery assemblage among which was a single bodysherd recovered from the primary fill (108), which appeared to represent a Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) bowl of secure early to mid 2nd century AD date (Timby 2011).

Pit [109] thus appears to have served a domestic function and may date from a period immediately prior to a reorganisation of the settlement at Leintwardine after about 160 AD, when the earlier *vicus* was re-established as a defended settlement; however, although its date and presumed function can be established with reasonable certainty, the poor condition of the bone and charred botanical remains recovered from its fills unfortunately means that little can be said regarding the origin of the pit or about dietary preferences or the nature of the palaeoenvironment of the site at this time. Wheat and barley were definitely in use, as these were present in the upper and lower fills, but

detailed identification was not possible due to the absence of diagnostic chaff, while hazelnuts also appear to have formed a component of the diet.

All of the fills contained charcoal indicative of stemwood and branchwood of oak and stemwood of birch, possibly reflecting a common use. Radial cracks and vitrification were noted in fragments of oak from (108), which may suggest specific combustion or taphonomic conditions, the burning of damp or green wood or rapid combustion at high temperature (Elliott 2011).

As anticipated owing to the heavily disturbed nature of this area resulting from the previous installation of an access ramp and services (drainage and electricity cabling), the watching brief component produced no evidence of archaeological finds or features, apart from a post-medieval drainage channel presumably contemporary with construction of the building in 1887.

Overall, these findings, although limited in scope, can be compared with the results of other archaeological work carried out both on this site and in its immediate vicinity and to this extent are of some significance. Although no evidence of cut features was identified during the course of a watching brief carried out to the rear of the Reading Room in 1981 but evidence of settlement activity in the form of a rubble spread containing 'Roman tile' was revealed. The more substantial investigations undertaken in 1991 immediately north of the Reading Room to the rear of the Community Centre (Brown, 1991; SMR Record No. 8247) uncovered evidence of a building in the southern part of the site, represented by a linear slot aligned east-west which was interpreted as a trench for the insertion of a sill beam with a number of possibly associated postholes either side (Brown, 1991, 9-10). Pottery evidence recovered from these features again appeared to indicate a construction date in the early to mid 2nd century AD.

To the north of this linear slot, a complex of successive, intercutting pits and postholes were identified comprising a complex of crop processing/domestic waste pit features appeared to date largely to the 2nd–early 3rd century AD of charred plant remains, including cereal species such as *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat), *Triticum aestivum* (club wheat), *Hordeum* (barley) and *Avena* (oats) suggesting that small-scale, widespread processing of cereals took place this area during the Roman period (Brown, 1991, 22-7).

In light of these extremely significant results, it seems possible, based on the admittedly very low incidence of Roman pottery, that pit [109] may have been contemporary with this phase of 2nd or early 3rd century activity, representing an extension of cereal processing activity further to the south. It is interesting to note, however, that the previous investigations carried out by Border Archaeology in June 2010 in the car park at the front of the Community Centre revealed a similar paucity of material, suggesting that the evidence for cereal processing revealed to the rear of the Community Centre in 1991 was centred upon a discrete activity area in the immediate vicinity of the structure and that the intensity of this activity diminished significantly towards the south and east.

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7. References

7.1 Bibliography

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7.2 Cartography

(All maps were obtained from the Herefordshire Record Office unless otherwise stated)

OS surveyors drawing (Scale 2 inches to the mile) - 1816

Leintwardine parish tithe map - 1847

OS 1st edition 25-inch map (Herefordshire 2.7) - 1885

OS 1st edition 6-inch map (Herefordshire 2 NW) - 1889

OS 2nd edition 25-inch map (Herefordshire 2.7) - 1903

OS 2nd edition 6-inch map (Herefordshire 2 NW) - 1904

OS provisional edition 6 inch map (Herefordshire 2 NW) – 195

APPENDICES

8. Context Register

8.1 Archaeological Observation

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION
(200)	Loose dark greyish-brown gritty silt; frequent medium & large angular & sub-angular stones, moderate small & medium rounded & sub-rounded stones; measures 0.3-1m in thickness. Overlies (203)
INTERPRETATION	*Post-medieval/modern make-up deposit associated with construction of access running between the existing boundary wall (partially of concrete block construction) and the southern elevation of building.*
(201)	Firm mid greyish-brown gritty silt; frequent small rounded and angular stones, occasional medium rounded stones & late post-medieval/modern brick. Cut by [202]; same as (?) (111).
INTERPRETATION	*Natural deposition, possibly same as (111) revealed during excavation phase. Continues beyond base of trenching.*
[202]	Cut – linear in form; corners not visible; oriented E-W; break of slope top sharp, sides near vertical, break of slope base sharp, base flat; measures 0.25m wide, 0.15m depth, length unknown. Cuts (201); filled by (203), (204)
INTERPRETATION	*Cut for post-medieval drainage channel, only partially revealed during course of groundworks*
(203)	Masonry – materials irregular/flat angular unworked sandstone; size of materials variable from *c*. 65mm × 60mm × 30mm to 250mm × 75mm × 30mm; no coursing or bonding material; linear in form; ; 0.2m wide, 0.15m depth, length unknown. Underlies (200); overlies (204)
INTERPRETATION	*Stone packing material covering post-medieval ceramic drain, probably associated with construction of existing building*
(204)	Masonry – materials ceramic; size of materials 500mm (l) × 75mm (d); laid in jointed linear sections; linear in form; linear extent unknown. Underlies (203); fills [202]
INTERPRETATION	*Post-medieval ceramic drain pipe*

8.2 Archaeological Excavation

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION
(100)	Friable dark brown very humic/gritty silt, frequent flecks and fragments of CBM, slate, clay, asbestos etc. Overlies excavation area to a maximum depth of 0.18m. Overlies (101)
INTERPRETATION	*Turf/topsoil*
(101)	Friable heavily mixed grit, gravel & silt with humic patches and containing abundant mortar/plaster lenses, moderate fragments and flecks of CBM, coal, asbestos, slate & stones. Measures up to

	0.28m thick, full extent not established. Overlies (102); underlies (100)
INTERPRETATION	*Rubbish/rubble spread covering area/void previously occupied by boiler room (now demolished)*
(102)	Indurated concrete, measures approximately 2.5m (E-W) x 1.5m (N-S) x 0.15m. Underlies (101); fills [103]
INTERPRETATION	*Concrete base for former heating boiler*
[103]	Cut – shape in plan not established, but probably rectangular; corners (visible) 90°; oriented E-W, measures (probable) 2.5m (E-W) x 1.5m (N-S) x up to 0.36m deep; break of slope top probably truncated, sides steep, near vertical, break of slope base sharp, base flat. Cuts (104); filled by (101), (102)
INTERPRETATION	*'Construction' cut for concrete base*
(104)	Loose black cinder, occasional flecks/fragments of CBM, slate, glass & bone; evidently extends over whole site to an average thickness of 0.05m. Cut by [103]; overlies (105)
INTERPRETATION	*Post-medieval spread of fire waste*
(105)	Indurated, friable grey concrete; measures 0.06m thick extending across site, although petering out to N. Overlies (110); cut by [103]
INTERPRETATION	*Thin layer of modern concrete over sandy bedding material*
(106)	Friable pale yellowish-/greyish-brown (mottled) gritty silt, frequent small sub-rounded gravels, moderate flecks/fragments CBM, mortar, charcoal; measures up to 2.02m wide (as revealed) and up to 0.34m thick. Underlies [103]; overlies (107)
INTERPRETATION	*Upper fill of [109], evidently representing a single event, as material is homogenous*
(107)	Firm mid greyish-brown gritty gravelly silt, moderate flecks/fragments CBM, charcoal; measures up to 0.37m thick & 1.84m wide. Underlies (106); overlies (108)
INTERPRETATION	*Secondary fill of [109]*
(108)	Cohesive dark brown humic gritty silt, frequent mainly sub-rounded gravels & small stones, patches of highly degraded bone & possible daub; measures up to 1.9m wide, depth/thickness not ascertained as not fully excavated. Underlies (107); fills [109]
INTERPRETATION	*Primary fill of [109] incorporating very humic material, including bone*
[109]	Cut – shape in plan unknown as only partially excavated but appears based on excavated portion to be sub-ovoid in form; measures up to 1.9m (N-S) & >0.84m deep (not bottomed); break of slope top sharp (possibly truncated by [103]), sides steep (some undercutting evident), break of slope base unknown, base unknown; evidently oriented N-S but unconfirmed. Cuts (110); filled by (108), (107), (106)
INTERPRETATION	*Pit feature of no clear function, although the slight presence of highly fragmented bone in (108) has raised the unlikely possibility of this being a N-S aligned grave and its revealed form and dimensions do not necessarily militate against this interpretation. However, a grave situated within the Roman settlement would be*

	anomalous; it may of course be pre-Roman or even early medieval, but its interpretation in such terms must remain highly conjectural
(110)	Firm mid yellowish-brown gritty silt, frequent small gravels, occasional charcoal & CBM flecking, probably intrusive via bioturbation; measures up to 0.4m thick, although boundary to lower horizon (111) is somewhat unclear. Overlies (111); cut by [109]
INTERPRETATION	*Post-glacial geological deposition; there is a slight possibility that it represents a make-up layer and therefore anthropogenic (in view of the inclusions), but this appears unlikely and the intrusive material can be readily accounted for as resulting from bioturbation*
(111)	Firm mid greyish-brown gravelly silt/mid pinkish-brown gritty silt; dimensions not ascertained. Underlies (110); same as (?) (201)
INTERPRETATION	*Geological/post-glacial spread, possibly the same as (201) revealed during the archaeological observation phase*

9. Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

L. Elliott, Archaeological Services University of Durham

9.1 Summary

The project

This report presents the results of palaeoenvironmental assessment of three bulk samples taken from the fills of a pit [109], during archaeological works at Leintwardine Reading Room, Herefordshire.

The works were commissioned by Border Archaeology and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

Results

The assessment of the residues and flots indicates that pit [109] was used for the disposal of domestic waste. Wheat, barley and hazelnuts were used at the site, although the assessment could not establish a date for the use of the feature due to poor preservation and the absence of diagnostic chaff. Charcoal of oak and birch stemwood and branchwood commonly occurred in the fills. *Maloideae*, holly and ash were also noted.

Recommendations

No further analysis is required for the plant macrofossils due to low numbers and poor preservation. If additional work is undertaken at the site, the results of this assessment should be added to any further environmental data produced.

9.2 Project background

Location and background

This report presents the results of palaeoenvironmental assessment of three bulk samples taken from the fills of a substantial pit [109], during archaeological works at Leintwardine Village Hall/Reading Room Herefordshire. The fills contained highly fragmented animal bone and occasional Roman and medieval pottery. Context (108) is the primary fill, (107) the secondary fill and (106) the upper fill.

Objective

The objective of the scheme of works was to assess the palaeoenvironmental potential of the samples, establish the presence of suitable radiocarbon dating material, and provide the client with appropriate recommendations.

Dates

Samples were received by Archaeological Services Durham University on 14th June 2011. Assessment and report preparation was conducted between 6th and 7th July 2011.

Personnel

Palaeoenvironmental assessment and report preparation was undertaken by Lorne Elliott. Sample processing was carried out by Carrie Drew and Janet Beveridge.

Archive

The site code is **LRR11** for **L**eintwardine **R**eading **R**oom, Herefordshire, 20**11**. The flots are currently held in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. The small-finds have been returned to Border Archaeology.

9.3 Methods

Bulk samples were manually floated and sieved through a 500μm mesh. The residues were examined for shells, fruit stones, nutshells, charcoal, small bones, pottery sherds, flint and industrial residues, and were scanned using a magnet for ferrous fragments. The flots were examined at up to x60 magnification for charred and waterlogged plant macrofossil remains using a Leica MZ7.5 sereomicroscope. Identification of these was undertaken by comparison with modern reference material held in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (1997). Habitat classification follows Preston *et al* (2002).

9.4 Results

All of the samples comprised poorly preserved and highly fragmented unburnt, burnt and calcined animal bone. Animal tooth enamel was present in the upper (106) and middle (107) fills, a few of which were noted as cattle-sized in (106). Several sherds of pottery were noted throughout, while the primary and secondary fills contained small fragments of fired clay/CBM, semi-vitrified fuel waste and nails. A fragment of daub occurred in the primary fill (108). Coal and clinker/cinder were present in all of the fills, particularly in (108).

Charcoal fragments occurred in all three fills and appeared to be predominantly oak stemwood and branchwood. Radial cracks and vitrification were noted in the oak fragments from (108). During a cursory scan of the charcoal, birch was also recorded in all of the samples, ash charcoal occurred in (106), and holly and *Maloideae* (hawthorn, whitebeams and apple) were present in (108). Charred botanical remains were poorly preserved and occurred in low numbers in fills (106) and (108). These included grains of wheat and barley, grass seeds and small fragments of hazel nutshell. A barley grain from (106) was of the hulled variety.

The flots included small quantities of modern intrusive material consisting of roots, a few uncharred seeds of elder, and a snail in (106). Material suitable for radiocarbon dating is available for all of the samples. The results are presented in Appendix 1.

9.5 Discussion

The assessment indicates the pit samples comprise evidence of domestic waste, although due to the poor preservation of the bone and charred botanical remains, it provides little information about the origin of the pit, die or palaeoenvironment of the site. The upper

and lower fills suggest wheat and barley were used; however, further identification is prevented due to the absence of diagnostic chaff. Hazelnuts also appear to have formed part of the diet.

A scan of the charcoal remains indicates stemwood and branchwood of oak and stemwood of birch occur throughout the fills, possibly reflecting a common use. Radial cracks and vitrification were noted in fragments of oak from (108). These characteristics are generally associated with smaller pieces of wood such as branchwood and twigs, although alteration of the anatomical structure and vitrification may result from specific conditions of combustion or taphonomy, and can reveal the state of the wood before combustion, such as burning damp or green wood (Marguerie & Hunot 2007). Schweingruber (1978) suggests rapid combustion at high temperatures can cause features such as tissue deformation, fissures and levels of vitrification.

9.6 Recommendations

No further analysis is required for the plant macrofossils due to low numbers and poor preservation. If additional work is undertaken at the site, the results of this assessment should be added to any further environmental data produced.

9.7 Sources

Marguerie,D.& Hunot, J.-Y., 2007, 'Charcoal analysis and dendrology: data from archaeological sites in north-western France', *Journal of Archaeological Science* **34**, 1417-33

Preston, C. D., Pearman, D. A. & Dines, T.D., 2002, *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora,* Oxford

Schweingruber, F. H., 1978, *Microscopic Wood Anatomy*, Birmensdorf

Stace, C., 1997, *New Flora of the British Isles*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge

Appendix 1: Data from palaeoenvironmental assessment

Sample		**1**	**2**	**3**
Context		**106**	**107**	**108**
Feature No		**109**	**109**	**109**
Feature		**pit**	**pit**	**pit**
Fill		**upper**	**middle**	**lower**
Material available for radiocarbon dating		□	□	□
Volume processed (l)		12	8	10
Volume of flot (ml)		60	70	200
Residue contents				
Bone (burnt)	indet. frags	-	(+)	-
Bone (calcined)	indet. frags	(+)	+ -	
Bone (unburnt)	indet. frags	(+)	++	+
Charcoal		(+)	(+)	(+)

Clinker / cinder		-	-	(+)
Coal		-	-	++
Daub		-	-	(+)
Fired clay / CBM	-	+	+	
Fuel waste	semi-vitrified	-	++	++
Nail (no. of fragments)	(Fe)	-	1	1
Pot (no. of fragments)		2	5	5
Tooth enamel (no. of fragments)	cattle-size	4	-	-
Tooth enamel (no. of fragments)	indet. frags	-	4	-
Flot matrix				
Bone (unburnt)		(+)	++	+
Charcoal		++	++	++
Clinker / cinder		+	(+)	+
Coal		+	(+)	+
Fuel ash	semi-vitrified	+	-	-
Roots (modern)	+	(+)	+	
Snail	terrestrial	(+) -		-
Uncharred seeds		(+) -		(+)
Charred remains (total counts)				
(c) Cerealia indeterminate	grain	1	-	-
(c) *Hordeum* sp (Barley species)	grain	2	-	-
(c) *Hordeum* sp (Barley species)	hulled grain	1	-	-
(c) *Triticum* sp (Wheat species)	grain	2	-	1
(t) *Corylus avellana* (Hazel)	nutshell fragment	1	-	1
(x) Poaceae undifferentiated (Grass family)	<1mm caryopsis	-	-	2

[c-cultivated; t-tree/shrub; x-wide niche, (+): trace; +: rare; ++: occasional; +++: common; ++++: abundant]

10. Ceramic Assessment

J. Timby MIfA

10.1 Introduction

The archaeological work at Leintwardine Reading Room resulted in the recovery of a small assemblage of eight sherds of pottery weighing 75g dating to the post-medieval and Roman periods. In addition three small pieces of ceramic building material/ fired clay were recovered.

The assemblage was quite fragmented reflected in a low average sherd weight of just 9.4g. However, sherds were generally well preserved in terms of surface finish and edge abrasion.

Pottery was recorded from two contexts: (107) and (108), both fills from a single pit [109]. In addition there are two unstratified finds.

The assemblage was scanned to determine the main fabrics present and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1.

10.2 Description

Pit [109] produced four sherds of Severn Valley wares (SVW OX) from context (107) with a further sherd from fill (108) accompanied by a sherd of Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1).

The only featured sherd is a rim from a tankard although the DOR BB1 sherd is from a bowl decorated with burnished line lattice. This would suggest it is probably a flat-rim deep bowl and that the pit is therefore likely to date to the first half of the 2nd century. The SVW OX is less easy to date closely as this was a long-lived industry spanning the entire Roman period.

In addition the pit produced three small fragments of fired clay, one piece with a vitrified surface and from (107) a small piece of lead, probably a piece of window came.

The unstratified finds comprise a sherd of South Gaulish samian from a dish Drag 15/17 of 1st-century date undoubtedly connected with the early military presence in the town and a sherd of post-medieval black (iron) glazed earthenware.

10.3 Potential and further work

This is a very small assemblage of pottery which makes a useful contribution in terms of documenting a Roman presence at the site but is too small to warrant any further work.

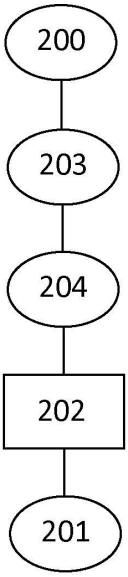
Appendix 1: Results summary

Context	Fabric	Name	Form	No	Wt	Date
107	SVW OX	Severn Valley ware	tankard rim, bodysherds	4	41	C1-C4
108	SVW OX	Severn Valley ware	bodysherd	1	7	C2
108	DOR BB1	Dorset black burnished ware	bodysherd bowl	1	13	C2
108	FCLAY	fired clay	fragments	3	10	no date
us	LGF SA	South Gaulish samian	bodysherd Drag 15/17	1	3	C1
us	PMFEGL	iron glazed ware	bodysherd	1	11	C18-19
TOTAL				**11**	**85**	

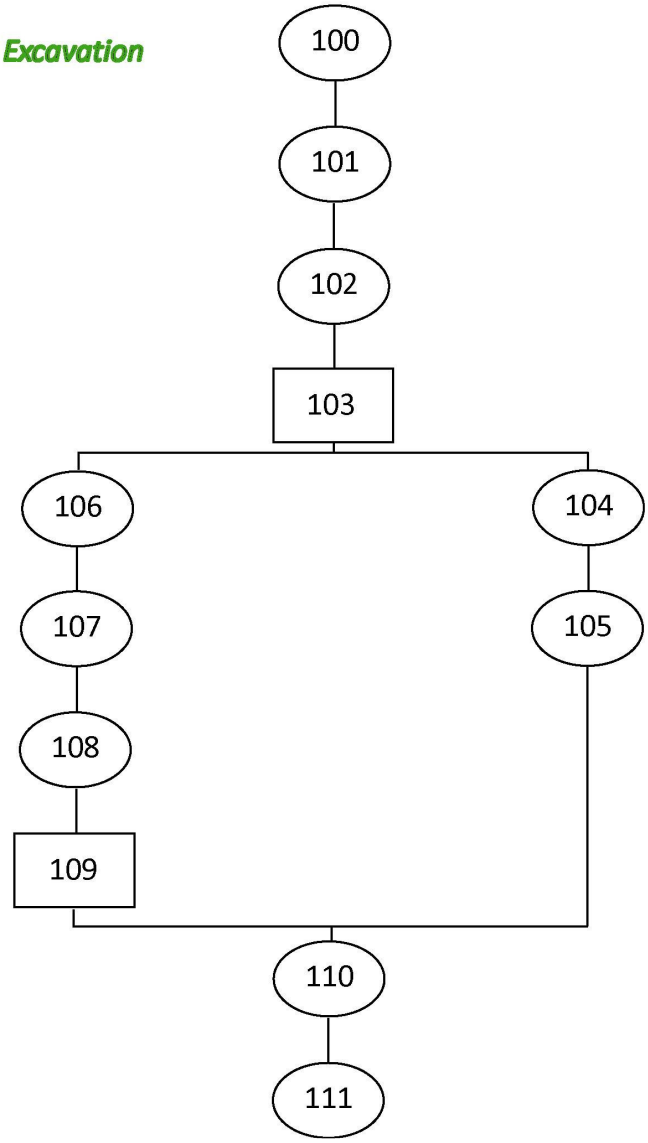
Table 1: Summary of results of ceramic assessment

11. Matrices

11.1 Archaeological Observation



11.2 Archaeological Excavation



Site Summary

Report Title	Archaeological Observation & Excavation at The Village Hall/Reading Room High Street Leintwardine Herefordshire
Contractor's Name and Address	Border Archaeology PO Box 36 Leominster Herefordshire HR6 OYA
Site Name	The Village Hall/Reading Room High Street Leintwardine Herefordshire
Grid Reference	NGR SO40330 74092
Planning Application N°	DCNW2009/0615/F
EHE N°	1892
Date of Field Work	June 2011
Date of Report	July 2011
	NUMBER AND TYPE OF FINDS
Pottery	*Period*: Post-med *No of sherds*: 1
Other	*Period*: Roman *Quantity*: 7
	NUMBER AND TYPE OF SAMPLES COLLECTED
Sieving for charred plant remains	*No of features sampled*: 1 *No of buckets*: 3
C14/scientific dates	*No and Type*: N/A *Result*: N/A
Pollen	*No of columns/spot samples*: N/A *Name of pollen specialist*: N/A
Bone	*Number of buckets sieved for bone*: 3 *Quantity Recovered*: Fragmentary *Period*: Romano-British (?)
Other	*Type and specialist*: N/A
Summary of the report	The archaeological programme of work produced limited evidence of Roman activity located adjacent to the western elevation of the existing Village Hall/Reading Room. Excavation of a 25 sq. m. area representing the build level of a proposed extension to the rear of the property revealed part of what appeared to be a substantial pit, the contents of which were found to contain quantities of domestic waste in the form of oak and birch charcoal, cereal grains and hazelnut shell. Also recovered was a small amount of pottery, one piece of which was identified as Roman DOR BB1 representing a bowl of early to mid 2nd century AD date; sherds of SVW were also recovered. The pit appears to have served a domestic function and may date from a period immediately prior to a reorganisation of the settlement at Leintwardine after about 160 AD, when defensive works established. It appears to lie on or close to the margin of an area of fairly intensive cereal processing activity dating from around this time which was revealed during previous investigations carried out to the rear of the adjacent Community Centre in 1991, this activity itself evidently being associated with a timber building, traces of which were also uncovered at that time. Archaeological observation of groundworks relating to the installation of an access ramp and electricity cabling along the southern elevation of the building revealed no remains of archaeological significance.

Document Control

Job title:	Archaeological Observation & Excavation at The Village Hall/Reading Room High Street Leintwardine Herefordshire		**Job No:** BA1106 LCCRR
Report written by	*George Children MA MIfA*		
Report edited by	*Stephen Priestley MA*		
Issue No	**Status**	**Date**	**Approved for issue**
1	Final	July 2011	*Neil Shurety* Dip.M. G.M. Inst.M