

**Allerton Research Centre
Manor Farm
Main Street, Loddington
Leicestershire**

Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation

for

The Allerton Research Trust

CA Project: 660013
CA Report: 12100

May 2012

Allerton Research Centre
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Main Street, Loddington
Leicestershire

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CA Report: 12100

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Allerton Research Centre, Manor Farm
Location: Main Street, Loddington, Leicestershire
NGR: SK 7912 0239
Type: Strip, map and sample excavation
Date: February 2012
Location of Archive: Leicestershire Museum Services
Accession Number: X.A139.2011
Site Code: ART12

In February 2012, an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology, prior to the construction of a car park and access road at the Allerton Research Centre, Manor Farm, Main Street, Loddington, Leicestershire. Observations were also made of the foundations of a new plant room at the north-west corner of the main building. The work was commissioned by The Allerton Research Trust.

The construction of the car park required the removal of the topsoil to expose the surface of the underlying subsoil; this lay at a depth of c. 0.3m below ground level. No archaeological remains were encountered at this depth and the only visible features were two modern drains. A concrete slab at the east end of the excavation area was probably the remains of an early 20th-century extension to a cottage, as shown on historic maps of the village, that once stood in the area to the east of the new car park. This building burnt down in or around the 1960s and evidence was noted for dumps of burnt material from the house-fire, now covered by turf, in the area of the new car park. In the area of the access road the ground had to be reduced to create a ramp down to Main Street; where the subsoil was removed, this revealed the geological substrate at a depth of c. 0.6m. A metal detector survey of the stripped area recovered a late 15th-century silver coin, a 15th-century brass candlestick and pieces of lead.

To test the thickness of the subsoil near the site of the former cottage and establish the potential for archaeological deposits to survive in the area of the car park, a hand-dug slot was excavated in the south-east corner. This revealed a stony layer, approximately 0.1m thick, beneath the subsoil, from which was recovered a small assemblage of 13th- to 14th-century pottery.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2012, an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology, prior to the construction of a car park and access road, at the Allerton Research Centre, Manor Farm, Main Street, Loddington, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 7912 0239; Fig 1). Observations were also made of the foundations of a new plant room on the north-west corner of the main building. The work was commissioned by The Allerton Research Trust.
- 1.2 Planning permission for alterations to the property was granted by Harborough District Council (ref: 08/01222/FUL), conditional on a programme of archaeological work. The scope of works was outlined in a brief (LCCHNET 2011) issued by Richard Clarke, Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council Historic & Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET), archaeological advisor to Harborough District Council.
- 1.3 The archaeological investigation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2011) and approved by Teresa Hawtin, Planning Archaeologist, LCCHNET. The fieldwork also followed the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2008), and the English Heritage procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

- 1.4 The village of Loddington lies to the north of the A47, approximately 20km to the east of Leicester city centre. The site is located at the eastern end and to the north of Main Street, Loddington, and comprises two former farm buildings, now used as a visitor's centre, situated in the south-eastern corner of a pasture field (Fig. 3). Part of this field, to the south and south-west of the visitor's centre, has been converted into additional car parking space and a new vehicular entrance has been created in the south-west corner of the car park to provide safe access to and from Main Street. The entire development area is c. 0.14ha in extent. The ground, which slopes gently to the south and south-east, lies at c. 135m aOD, and the solid geology comprises Jurassic rocks of the Marlstone Rock Formation (BGS 2011).

Historical and archaeological background

- 1.5 The site is located within the historic core of the village of Loddington, approximately 100m to the north of Loddington Hall, a Grade II* Listed building that dates to the 17th century. The site has not been subject to any previous, recorded archaeological work, although an evaluation carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in 2008, in the orchard in the grounds of Loddington Hall, identified archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods (ULAS 2008). The earliest remains comprised small, residual assemblages of Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flint and sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery (Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) MLE19951 and MLE17952). Of particular interest was a small assemblage of early Anglo-Saxon pottery sherds and a piece of tap slag (MLE17953); if the latter does date from the early Anglo-Saxon period, it provides rare evidence for iron-working at this time. Later remains largely consisted of ditches, pits and the remains of possible buildings dating to the medieval period (MLE17954).
- 1.6 In the medieval period the village lay within the *Gosecote Wapentake*, and lent its name to the Hundred which it formed with the manors of Skeffington, Tugby, Allextun, Thorpe Satchville and East Norton (VCH 1907, 324). In the Domesday Survey of 1087, the entry for Loddington reads:
- ‘The same [Rothbert] holds of Robert [de Buci] 12 caracutes of land in *Ludintone* [Loddington]. In King Edwards time 12 ploughs there. In demesne there is 1 (plough) and 5 sokemen with 3 villeins and 3 bordars have 1 ½ ploughs. There is a mill rendering 16d.’
- 1.7 In 1125 the village, along with a number of churches in the Midlands region, was presented by Richard Bassett and his wife Maud as an endowment to the newly founded Augustinian Priory of St John the Baptist at Launde. The parish church of St Michael and All Saints, which predominately dates to the late 13th and 14th centuries, lies c. 450m to the south-west of the modern village, off Loddington Lane, the village having migrated or contracted northwards over the centuries.
- 1.8 The village remained an agricultural centre throughout the post-medieval period and reference to historic maps of the village shows that the village changed little over the

last 150 years. The only significant change within the site was the construction of a new farm building in the mid 20th century, which has now been converted into the main block of the new visitor's centre, and the destruction of the cottage that once stood in the south-east corner of the site by a house-fire. According to a local resident, this occurred in the 1960s or early 1970s.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.9 The general aim of the strip, plan and sample excavation and watching brief was, with the resources available, to preserve by record any archaeological deposits encountered within excavations associated with the new development, and to ensure the agreed foundation scheme was adhered to.

Methodology

- 1.10 The excavation area (Figs. 2 and 4) was surveyed using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS and the data has been related to OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates.
- 1.11 The topsoil, and in the area of the new access ramp, the subsoil, were removed under archaeological supervision using a JCB-type mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The ground level was reduced to formation level, which on average was at a depth of 0.3m below the current ground surface, and the spoil was stacked in temporary bunds along the northern edge of the site. The car park surface has been constructed from 'Grasscrete', which is self-draining and does not require traditional drains to remove surface water.
- 1.12 The stripped surface was cleaned and the excavation area was planned and recorded in accordance with CA's *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2007). Each context was recorded on a *pro-forma* context sheet by written and measured description; a hand-drawn plan (scale 1:50) and drawn sections (scale 1:10) were produced. Where detailed feature planning was undertaken using GPS, this was carried out in accordance with *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (CA 2009). Photographs (black and white negative and digital colour) were taken as appropriate. All finds were bagged separately and related to the context record. Artefacts were recovered and retained for processing and analysis in accordance with *Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (CA

2010). Due to the large quantities of modern material in the topsoil and subsoil, this material was not collected, although residual sherds of post-medieval or earlier pottery were collected from these deposits to give an indication of past activity on the site. There were no deposits suitable for environmental sampling.

- 1.13 The stripped surface of the excavation area and the spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of archaeologically significant metal objects.
- 1.14 The archive from the excavation is currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes. The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Museum Service, under accession no. X.A139.2011. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-6)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the results of the archaeological investigation; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.

General stratigraphy

- 2.2 The geology within the site comprised the weathered surface of the Marlstone Rock Formation, which occurred as firm light brownish-yellow clay with veins of light greyish-blue clay, occasionally containing ferruginous limestone and ironstone pebbles (1). Close to the hedgerow the surface was mottled with orangey-brown flecks, possibly caused by a bio-chemical reaction between the clay and the roots of bushes and trees forming the hedgerow. The subsoil (2, 4 and 8), which was between 0.3m and 0.4m thick, was firm mid brown silty clay with occasional fine to coarse ironstone and limestone pebbles, and very occasional charcoal flecks. The topsoil (5) was 0.3m thick and comprised soft, dark greyish-brown organic silt with occasional to moderate pebbles.

Layer 3

- 2.3 In the south-east corner of the excavation area, a hand-dug slot was excavated to test the thickness of the subsoil near the site of the former cottage that once

occupied the street frontage to the east of the new car park and to establish the potential for archaeological deposits to survive in this area (Figs 2 and 5). Between the geological substrate and the subsoil, at a depth of 0.36m below the stripped surface, there was a stony layer of mid to dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks containing medium-sized ironstone and limestone cobbles (3). The layer was c. 0.08m thick and contained sherds of early 13th- to 14th-century pottery; the absence of later material from this layer suggests that it dates to this period.

Other remains

- 2.4 Removal of the topsoil down to formation level in the area of the car park revealed a variety of modern features associated with the former cottage. In the north-east corner of the site there was a cobbled surface, edged with red bricks along its northern side (6). The stones were well-rounded river cobbles, up to 150mm in size, and they covered an area of c. 4m²; the bricks had been laid without mortar, end-to-end and edge-down. The surface, which had once been more extensive, is probably the remains of a yard to the rear of the west wing of the cottage.
- 2.5 In the south-east corner of the site and visible at the surface prior to excavation was a concrete slab (7), measuring 4m long north to south by c. 3m wide east to west. Traces of modern brickwork survived on the south and west sides and the east side appears to have been partly broken up as the edge was very irregular. A length of iron pipe, probably a redundant water pipe, protruded from the concrete slab, suggesting that this annexe to the cottage may have been a toilet/bathroom. No other structural remains of the cottage were encountered, although remnants of the house-fire that destroyed the cottage were noted to the north-west of the cottage. They were visible on the surface as irregular, low, grass-covered mounds and when machined were found to contain dumps of charcoal, charred wood, burnt modern pottery, melted glass and rusted metal household objects, including parts of a bicycle (9).
- 2.6 Cut into the subsoil in the northern half of the site were two service trenches, the earlier one packed with gravel and aligned north to south, the other cutting it at right angles. Both features are probably redundant drains associated with the farm buildings and former cottage.
- 2.7 Observation of the footings for the new plant room at the north-west corner of the main building revealed a relatively thick layer of made ground (14), containing 19th-

century pottery, glass bottles and building debris, overlying the geological substrate (1).

3. FINDS by Angus Crawford

3.1 The finds assemblage recovered from the archaeological investigation is summarised in Appendix B. The pottery assemblage consisted of 36 sherds of pottery weighing 568g. Due to the large quantities of modern pottery and glass in the topsoil and subsoil, only post-medieval and earlier pottery was collected from these deposits, to give an indication of past activity on the site. In addition, objects of metalwork, coins and fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered. The level of preservation was good, with the majority of the pottery displaying negligible levels of abrasion.

The pottery

3.2 A single sherd of residual Roman pottery, in a sandy whiteware fabric, was recovered from the subsoil (2). It is a likely product of the Nene Valley pottery industry.

3.3 The medieval pottery assemblage consisted of 28 sherds, or 78% of the total. The dominant fabric type represented is Lyveden/Stanian ware, which was recorded from the subsoil (2, 4 and 8) and a stony layer beneath the subsoil (3). All of the material is residual, with the possible exception of the pottery from layer 3. Most sherds of this type are consistent with the oolitic limestone-tempered 'Lyveden B' fabric, as described by Blinkhorn (2010). Similarly, the recorded decoration is consistent with Lyveden B wares (*ibid.*, 296; Fig 10.26, nos. 175 and 179) and a jar form with a slightly everted rim also compares with published examples (*ibid.*, 297; Fig 10.27, no. 185). An early 13th- to 14th-century date for the Lyveden/Stanian material is considered likely.

3.4 Further medieval pottery fabrics were also recorded from the subsoil (2). These included sherds of Lyveden/Stanian shell-tempered ware; Stamford ware; a mudstone-tempered coarse ware; and a glazed oxidised sandy ware. A Saxo-Norman date (c. 11th/12th century) is likely for the Stamford ware sherd and a 12th- to 14th-century date range for the remainder.

3.5 The post-medieval pottery assemblage consisted of sherds of glazed earthenwares, including a sherd from a platter in a buff fabric (subsoil 8) and a sherd decorated with a mottled manganese glaze (subsoil 2). The majority of this material was generally of 17th- to 18th-century date.

3.6 A single sherd of modern stoneware was retrieved from the subsoil (2). This originated from a stoneware inkpot, or similar vessel, dating to the second half of the 19th or early 20th century.

Other finds

3.7 The most significant single find consists of a substantially complete English pillar candlestick (RA1), which was recovered from the subsoil (2). It consists of a separately cast stem and shallow cylindrical base which is secured by a rivet. The stem features a central knob and the base and cup-like candle holder each exhibit horizontal grooves (Fig. 6). The candlestick is of a form also referred to as a 'bunsen' type and can be dated to the 15th century (Brownsword 1985; type 2). Also from the subsoil (2) and possibly closely contemporary is a silver Edward IV groat, minted in York, c. 1461-8. A second coin, also from the subsoil (4), is a very worn halfpenny of George III, which probably dates to 1799 or slightly later.

3.8 Other objects of copper alloy consist of an unfired rimless rifle cartridge, with a date mark for 1943, recovered from the subsoil (2). It was further identified as an American 30-06 (7.62mm calibre) round.

3.9 Five lead objects were retrieved from the subsoil (2). These included an annular lead weight (RA4), a disc-shaped object (RA5) and a folded sheet fragment (RA8) with a square nail hole. Further lead items consist of sheet fragments (RA6 and 7), probably representing scrap. None of this material can be dated by form.

3.10 Clay tobacco pipe stems were recovered from the subsoil (4) and can be broadly dated from the 17th to 19th centuries. A clay pipe bowl, also retrieved from the subsoil (8), is of late 18th- or early 19th-century date.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The strip and map excavation in the area of the new car park was somewhat limited by the construction methods employed in the development, which only required the removal of topsoil across the greater part of the site to a depth of c. 300mm. The subsoil was only removed in a small area at the new access off Main Street, where the sudden drop in ground level between the site and the street required the grading of the surface to create a ramp. The use of 'Grasscrete' to make the car park surface ensured minimal disturbance to underlying deposits and precluded the need for drains as it is free-draining. The foundation trench for the new plant room was excavated through made-ground that had been laid down around the side and back of the 20th-century farm building, which now forms the main block of the new visitor's centre.
- 4.2 Although no archaeological features, other than a possible medieval layer, were encountered during the archaeological investigation at Manor Farm, Loddington, the range and condition of artefactual material recovered from the subsoil suggests that the site has been occupied since at least the medieval period. Lying within the historic core of the village, it is likely that medieval remains lie beneath the subsoil. This is suggested by the stony layer that was encountered in the hand-dug slot through the subsoil in the south-east corner of the car park. This contained pottery that exclusively dated to the early 13th to 14th century, suggesting that this deposit is medieval in date. Medieval activity is further indicated by the recovery from the subsoil of the silver groat of Edward IV (reigned AD1461-1483) and the 15th-century brass candlestick (Fig. 6).
- 4.3 The site of the cottage, which burnt down in the 1960s or early 1970s, lies immediately to the east of the new car park. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 (Fig. 7), and all subsequent maps and revisions, shows that the cottage had two wings, in an L-shaped arrangement, on the south and west sides of a small yard. Outbuildings were ranged around the north and east sides of the yard and access was gained at the south-east corner. There may have been a well or small building in the centre of the yard. The only building to survive, now part of the visitor's centre, is the small stone outbuilding near the entrance, on the east side of the former yard.

- 4.4 The only part of the building to extend within the excavation area was a concrete slab that may be the remains of a 20th-century extension to the cottage for a toilet/bathroom. The drop in ground level to the east of this slab suggests that the remains of the building were entirely removed to create a new yard in front of the modern farm buildings. The only other remains that may be associated with the cottage are a cobbled surface, which would have lain to the rear of the west wing, and a possible drain or service trench. Some of the debris from the house fire that destroyed the cottage was found in mounds beneath the turf in the area of the new car park.

5. CA PROJECT TEAM

The fieldwork was undertaken and the report was written by Simon Carlyle. The finds were reported on by Angus Crawford and the illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Jeremy Mordue. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.

6. REFERENCES

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ULAS (University of Leicester Archaeological Services) 2008 *An Archaeological Field Evaluation at Loddington Hall, Main Street, Loddington*

VCH (Victoria County History) 1907 *The Victoria History of the County of Leicester, Volume 1*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1	Natural	Firm, light brownish-yellow clay with veins of light greyish-blue clay; orangey-brown mottles occur on the surface near the hedgerow.	-	-	-	
2	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay with occ. fine to coarse ironstone and limestone pebbles and very occ. charcoal flecks.	-	-	0.3-0.4	
3	Layer	Mid to dark brown silty clay with occ. charcoal flecks and mod. small to medium-sized ironstone and limestone cobbles.	-	-	0.08	C13th-14th
4	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay with occ. fine to coarse ironstone and limestone pebbles and very occ. charcoal flecks.	-	-	0.28	
5	Topsoil	Soft, dark greyish-brown organic silt with occ. to mod. pebbles.	-	-	0.30	Modern
6	Cobble surface	Layer of worn, rounded river cobbles (unmortared), with an edging of modern red bricks. Located in NE corner of site, extends beyond limits of excavation area.	1.4	1.9	0.15	Modern
7	Concrete slab	Concrete slab located at E end of site, possibly associated with former cottage. Remains of modern brick walls on two sides.	3.5	2.8	0.25	Modern
8	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay with occ. fine to coarse ironstone and limestone pebbles and very occ. charcoal flecks.	-	-	0.35	
9	Charcoal layer	Layer of charcoal and burnt debris from cottage fire.	4.2	3.1	n/e	Modern
10	Drain?	Linear trench, aligned E-W, cuts .	13.5	0.3	n/e	Modern
11	Fill	Fill of 11	-	-	n/e	
12	Drain	Linear trench, aligned N-S, packed with gravel.	8.1+	0.35	n/e	Modern
13	Fill	Gravel fill of 12.	-	-	n/e	
14	Made ground	Made ground around plant room, contains modern rubbish and building debris.	-	-	0.65	Modern

APPENDIX B: FINDS

Context	Feature	Description	Ct.	Wt. (g)	Date
2	Subsoil	Modern pottery: late stoneware	1	19	LC20
		Post-medieval pottery: glazed earthenwares	3	68	
		Medieval pottery: Lyveden/Stanion oolitic limestone-tempered ware; Lyveden/Stanion shell-tempered ware; Stamford ware; mudstone-tempered ware; miscellaneous oxidised sandy ware	16	226	
		Roman pottery: miscellaneous sandy white ware	1	5	
		Copper alloy RA1: medieval candlestick	1	172	
		Copper alloy: WW2 rifle cartridge case	1	11	
		Lead RA4, RA5, RA6; RA7 and RA8: various lead objects/sheet material	5	211	
		Coin RA2: Edward IV groat; York mint 1461-8	1	4	
3	Layer	Medieval pottery: Lyveden/Stanion oolitic limestone-tempered ware; Miscellaneous oxidised sandy ware	8	142	EC13-C14
4	Subsoil	Post-medieval pottery: glazed earthenwares	2	22	C19
		Medieval pottery: Lyveden/Stanion oolitic limestone-tempered ware	2	10	
		Coin RA3: George III, half penny; 1799	1	13	
		Clay tobacco pipe: stems	2	9	
8	Subsoil	Post-medieval pottery: glazed earthenware	1	28	LC18-EC19
		Medieval pottery: Lyveden/Stanion oolitic limestone-tempered ware	2	48	
		Clay tobacco pipe: bowl	1	16	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Allerton Research Centre, Manor Farm	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>The construction of the car park required the removal of the topsoil to expose the surface of the underlying subsoil; this lay at a depth of c. 0.3m below ground level. No archaeological remains were encountered at this depth and the only visible features were two modern drains. A concrete slab at the east end of the excavation area was probably the remains of an early 20th-century extension to a cottage, as shown on historic maps of the village, that once stood in the area to the east of the new car park. This building burnt down in or around the 1960s and evidence was noted for dumps of burnt material from the house-fire, now covered by turf, in the area of the car park. In the area of the access road the ground had to be reduced to create a ramp down to Main Street; where the subsoil was removed, this revealed the geological substrate at a depth of c. 0.6m. A metal detector survey of the stripped area recovered a late 15th-century silver coin, a 15th-century brass candlestick and pieces of lead.</p> <p>To test the thickness of the subsoil near the site of the former cottage and establish the potential for archaeological deposits to survive in the area of the car park, a hand-dug slot was excavated in the south-east corner. This revealed a stony layer, approximately 0.1m thick, beneath the subsoil, from which was recovered a small assemblage of 13th- to 14th-century pottery.</p>	
Project dates	February 2012	
Project type	Strip, map and sample excavation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	None	
Monument type	None	
Significant finds	15th-century brass candlestick, 15th-century coin and medieval pottery	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Manor Farm, Main Street, Loddington, Leicestershire	
Study area	0.14 ha.	
Site co-ordinates	SK 7912 0239	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology (CA)	
Project Brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	CA	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle (CA)	
Project Supervisor	Simon Carlyle	
PROJECT ARCHIVE		
Accession no.	X.A139.2011	Content
Physical	Leicestershire Museum Services	Pottery, metal objects
Paper	Leicestershire Museum Services	Site records
Digital	HER	Report, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 <i>Allerton Research Centre, Manor Farm, Main Street, Loddington Leicestershire: Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation</i>, CA typescript report 12100</p>		