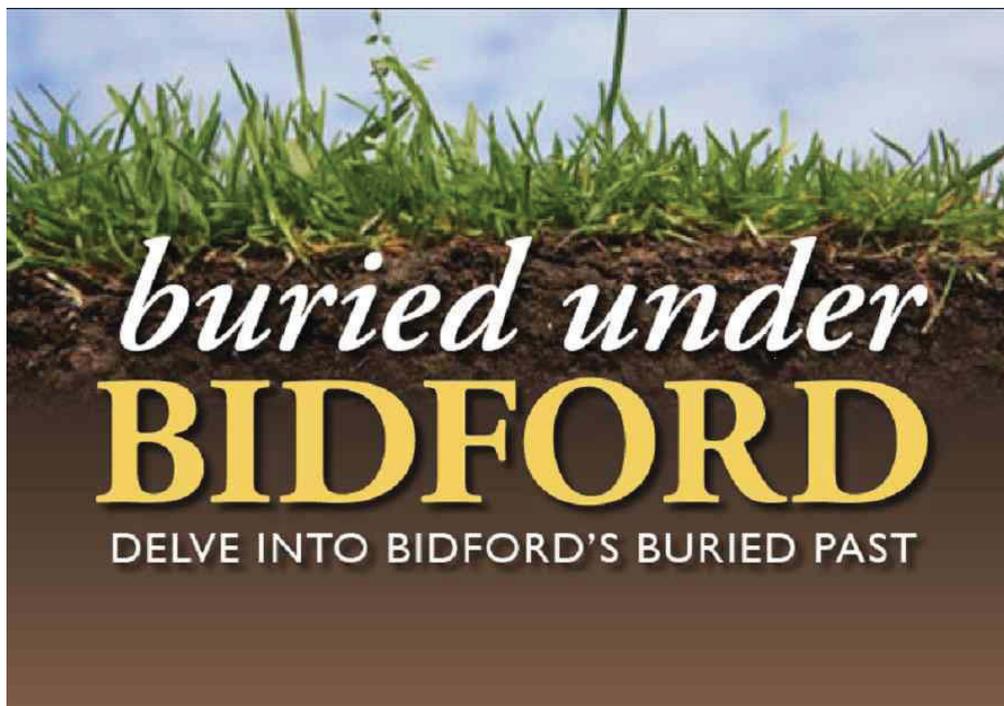


# A Community Archaeological Fieldwalking Project

Wixford Lodge Farm,  
Wixford,  
Warwickshire



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Cover: Buried under Bidford Project image

Figure one: Location of fieldwalking grids and location of finds

Warwickshire Museum Field Services  
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## Summary

Fieldwalking and metal detecting was undertaken at Wixford Lodge Farm, Bidford on Avon. The work was organised as part of the archaeological outreach project *Buried under Bidford*, designed to give members of the community the opportunity to discover more about the archaeology of their local area. The flint finds depict unspecified Neolithic and Bronze Age activity and this was followed by a low status rural farmstead in the Roman period which the pottery assemblage suggests dated to the 1st or early 2nd century AD.

### 1. Introduction

*Buried under Bidford* is a Warwickshire County Council project supported by the English Heritage Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). The project was undertaken between May 2007 and March 2008 and was based in Bidford on Avon, a small village in south Warwickshire. The community of this village are affected by sand and gravel extraction and have strong views about the minerals planning process. It was felt that Historic Environment Record (HER) staff were ideally suited to interact with the community and help facilitate a discussion about the mineral planning process. An HER outreach programme was created to support this interaction and help the local communities in the area. The project included a programme of fieldwalking and metal detecting. This report details the results of the field survey.

The survey was designed to allow members of the public to gain a better understanding of the various fieldwork opportunities that were available in archaeology and the importance of recording finds accurately and consistently.

The project archive will be held at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code BD07.

### 2. Background

#### Location

The survey area was located at Wixford Lodge Farm, Bidford on Avon, centred on National Grid Reference SP 100 535. The site lies within an area of arable farming and is bounded by private property to the west and a minor road, George's Elm Lane to the south (Fig 1)

#### Geology

The underlying geology of the area is Mercia Mudstone, which has been overlain by 4<sup>th</sup> Terrace river gravels (BGS, 1984)

#### Previous archaeological work

The Bidford on Avon environs contain a wealth of archaeological sites and findspots although no previous archaeological work is known to have been conducted in the fieldwalking area. The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows a few sites of archaeological interest in the close vicinity including:

Cropmarks of two ditched enclosures: one located to the north (HER MWA 4916) and the other to the north-west (HER MWA 4933). Both features are undated and their function is unknown.

The line of Rykniel Street (HER MWA 445), a major Roman road, is preserved in the line of Waterloo Road, some 500m to the west of the survey area.

A number of stray finds have been found within a 1km radius of the site. The majority of these finds have been discovered by metal detectorists and include:

- An Iron Age coin (HER MWA 5102)
- A Romano-British strap end fragment with incised line decoration and a bronze bear's head (HER MWA 5625).
- A disc brooch and a bow and fantail brooch, both dated to the 1st/2nd century (HER MWA 5990)
- A fragment of an early medieval copper alloy strap with traces of decoration (HER MWA 8270)
- An heraldic pendant dating to the Medieval period (HER MWA 5625)

Although the limited fieldwork executed in the area leaves the potential for encountering archaeology uncertain, the wealth of finds and sites in the wider Bidford area clearly suggest that the locale was much frequented from the prehistoric period onwards.

### Historical information

The earliest reference to the village of Wixford (HER MWA 9028) is in the Domesday Book.

In Ferncombe hundred

Evesham Abbey holds 5 hides in Wixford. Land for 6 ploughs.

In lordship 2; 3 male and 2 female slaves;

4 villagers and 6 smallholders with 2 ploughs.

A mill at 10s and 20 sticks of eels; meadow, 24 acres;

Woodland 1 furlong long and ½ wide.

Value before 1066, 40s; later 30s; now 50s.

Wigot held this land before 1066.

(Morris, 1976)

The Victoria County History identifies Wixford as a small parish situated in the valley of Hay Brooke, a tributary of the River Arrow (Salzman, 1945:188). Wixford was originally known as Witlakesford, but by the 16<sup>th</sup> century the name had become corrupted to Wicklesford and by 1570 the modern name was in use (*ibid*). Agriculture is recorded as the sole occupation of the parish, with it being enclosed, with Exhall and Broom, by an Act of 1767 (*ibid*).

Documentary sources tell us that there was a deserted settlement (HER MWA 1511) 800m west of the survey site. This settlement dated from the medieval to early post-medieval period and was known as Aspley juxta Wixford. Dugdale was the first to record depopulation here, and it is placed before 1603 by the Victoria County History which also locates the site as Asples Field (Beresford, 1946:87). Evidence to support this occupation was discovered in the early 20th century with the remains of a 'pre 15th century' well and masonry being discovered during gravel digging (Smith, 1908)

Just to the north-west of Aspley juxta Wixford, Moor Hall dates to the 15th century with additions in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. A moat (HER MWA 1519), which would have surrounded the Hall, is still extant in some areas. Documentary and place name evidence also suggest the possible sites of a park, fishponds and rabbit warrens (HER MWA 8698) dating to the post medieval period.

The early Ordnance Survey maps of the area show the site to have been occupied by fields since the 19th century (Ordnance Survey 1886, Ordnance Survey 1924). Both maps show Wixford Lodge with adjacent farm buildings present and an orchard to the north.

### **3. Aims and Methods**

The project was formulated with the following stated aims:

- To discover the date and nature of any archaeological deposits which might be present on the surface of the fields
- To teach local groups in Warwickshire how to conduct a fieldwalking and metal detector survey
- To equip local communities with the skills and capacity to understand their historic environment and engage with the HER
- To encourage people to use their skills in fieldwalking and metal detecting in areas of potential aggregate extraction, such as those identified on the Minerals Local Plan and the Warwickshire assessment of the archaeological resource in Warwickshire (WCC 2007).
- To provide local groups with the tools to investigate the historic environment via fieldwork and post-excavation work and consequently improve the baseline data held by the HER.
- To showcase and develop skills designed to provide baseline data for the HER.

The project began with the examination of historical map evidence as well as aerial photographs, records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications.

The survey was conducted on a recently sown field on two Saturdays in October. The weather was overcast but dry. The first Saturday was supported by the Hinckley Fieldwalking Group and the second Saturday included a metal detecting survey.

As the number of potential participants was unknown when the event was being organised, it was decided that the gridded survey method was to be used. Therefore, in advance of the event, a grid of 20m x 20m squares was staked out. During the first Saturday each square was walked by a group of people (c.6 people for ten minutes), before bagging finds and moving on to the next square. As there were more rows to be walked during the second Saturday and less people per square (c.4 people), each grid square was walked for fifteen minutes.

The majority of participants had no archaeological experience so it was decided that 100% retrieval would be most appropriate given the potential for participants to confuse artefacts from modern debris or natural stone etc.

### **4. The finds**

#### **The pottery**

by Jerry Evans and Stephanie Ratkai

In total 472 sherds of pottery were found and the majority of these dated to the Roman period (see figure one for locations).

Period	Number of sherds found
Roman? Poss late Iron Age	1
Roman	331
Late Medieval	2
Post-Medieval	65
Post-Medieval/modern	1
Modern	72

The Roman material was located throughout the survey area, although distinct concentrations were found within rows F to M. The assemblage reveals the following assessment:

Only one sherd of Black Burnished ware was located. This would tend to suggest that occupation did not start before the 1<sup>st</sup> – early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. There is a peak in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and some activity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The lack of amphora, the one sherd of mortarium and the very small amount of samian and other table wares suggest that the site is not high status. The greater part of the oxidised wares is made up of Severn Valley ware. The main Severn Valley form represented is the large wide-mouthed storage jar and a few sherds can be identified as coming from tankards. This suggests a rural farmstead or settlement, which was not especially Romanised, i.e. the near absence of table wares in favour of more utilitarian items such as storage jars indicates that the occupants had not taken on typical Roman cooking and dining habits. Further evidence for low status is indicated by the absence of box flue tiles and hypocaust fragments which might otherwise have indicated a bath house etc.

The absence of medieval pottery may indicate that this area was used for something pastoral e.g. sheep or cattle or that wooden and leather vessels or possibly pewter were being used in preference to ceramic ones.

The post-medieval pottery is pretty run-of-the-mill and at the poorer end of the spectrum, as would be expected in a small agricultural community.

### **Brick and Tile**

A large amount of modern brick and land drain fragments was collected. Although of no particular archaeological interest it does provide evidence to support the landowner's belief that there was a brick pit in the area (which would have been used when the current Wixford Lodge was built).

### **The flint**

Fifty two pieces of worked flint were collected (see figure one for locations). The flints indicate a multi period prehistoric site. It has to be acknowledged that identifying flint during fieldwalking is quite difficult for the untrained eye. With this in mind, it is advisable for further work to be done in this field to identify the extent of worked flint in the area.

### **The metal work**

Identified by Angie Bolton Portable Antiquities Officer

The metal detecting survey was only carried out on the second day of fieldwalking only as the detectorists were unavailable on the first day.

Period	Number of metal objects
Roman	3
Medieval	2
Post-Medieval	3
Unknown	5

In total twelve metal objects were found (see figure one for locations). These included two Roman brooches and a coin, a medieval penny and spindle whorl and a post-medieval metal stud. Three pieces of metal alloy located could potentially be from an aircraft.

## 5. Conclusions

The primary aim of this fieldwalking exercise was to teach people how to systematically fieldwalk and record archaeological finds. By the end of the two days the majority of participants had understood the importance of using a grid system and realised how much archaeological information can be gleaned from surface finds. To this end, the fieldwork has to be deemed a success.

The flint recovered is mostly Neolithic and Bronze Age and includes tools and waste flakes but no cores. Given the inexperience of the fieldwalkers it probably represents only a fraction of that on the site. Further detailed survey should therefore be undertaken in this area in order to recover a meaningful assemblage.

Pottery sherds suggest that this area was intensively occupied in the 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The lack of 'Romanised' pottery suggests that the site was not high status and is likely to have been a rural farmstead. The lack of medieval pottery suggests that during this period the area had a pastoral use.

People with different ages and abilities were involved in this project so results will be slightly skewed. Further archaeological investigation is recommended.

## 6. Acknowledgements

Warwickshire Museum would like to thank the landowner for allowing us to conduct this fieldwalking survey on his land. This project would not have been possible without the support of the English Heritage Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). The project was managed by Christina Evans and work on site was carried out by Emma Jones, Kevin Wright, Pete Thompson, Caroline Rann and members of the Bidford community. This report was written by Christina Evans and checked by Stuart Palmer.

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# Figures

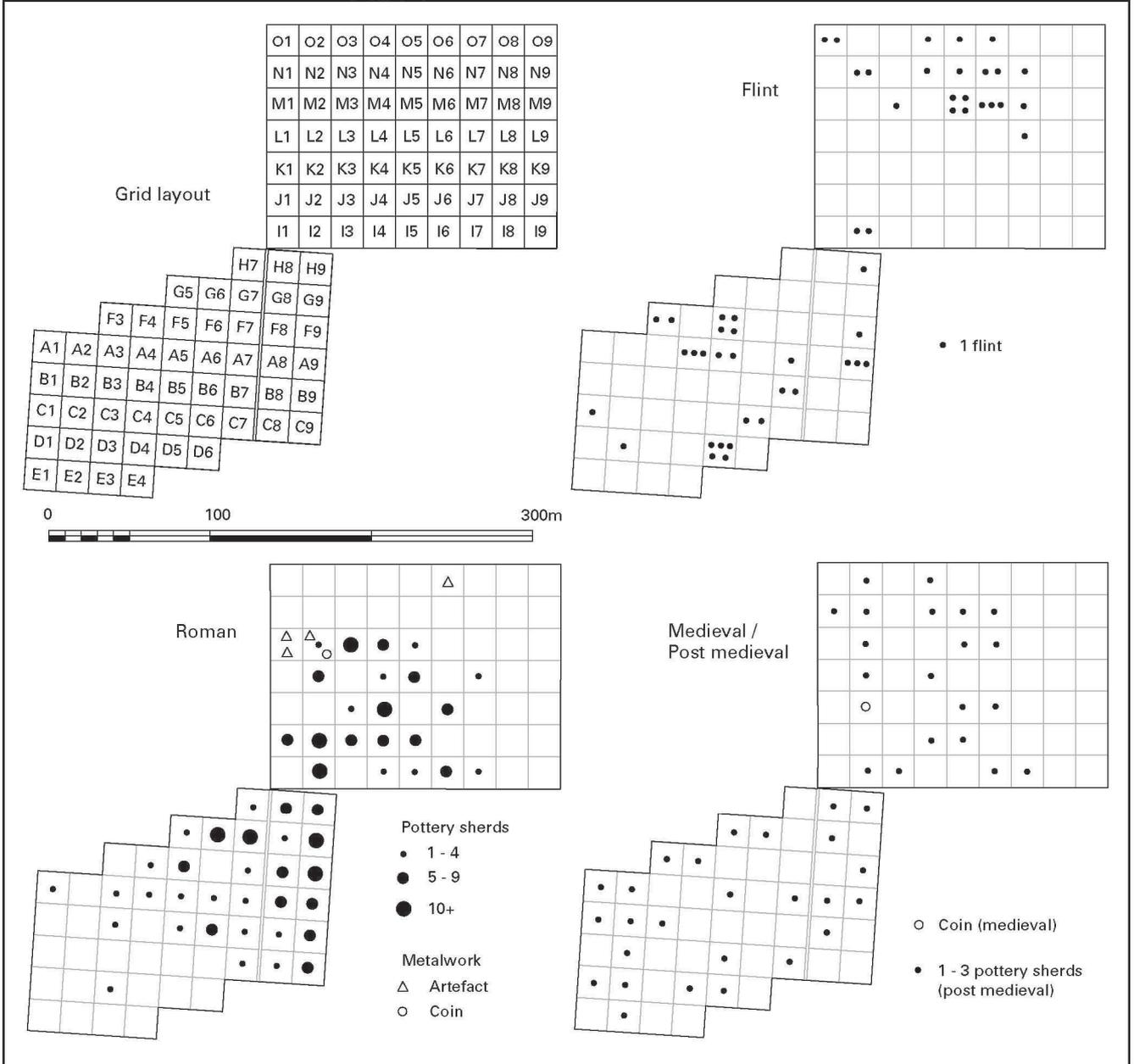
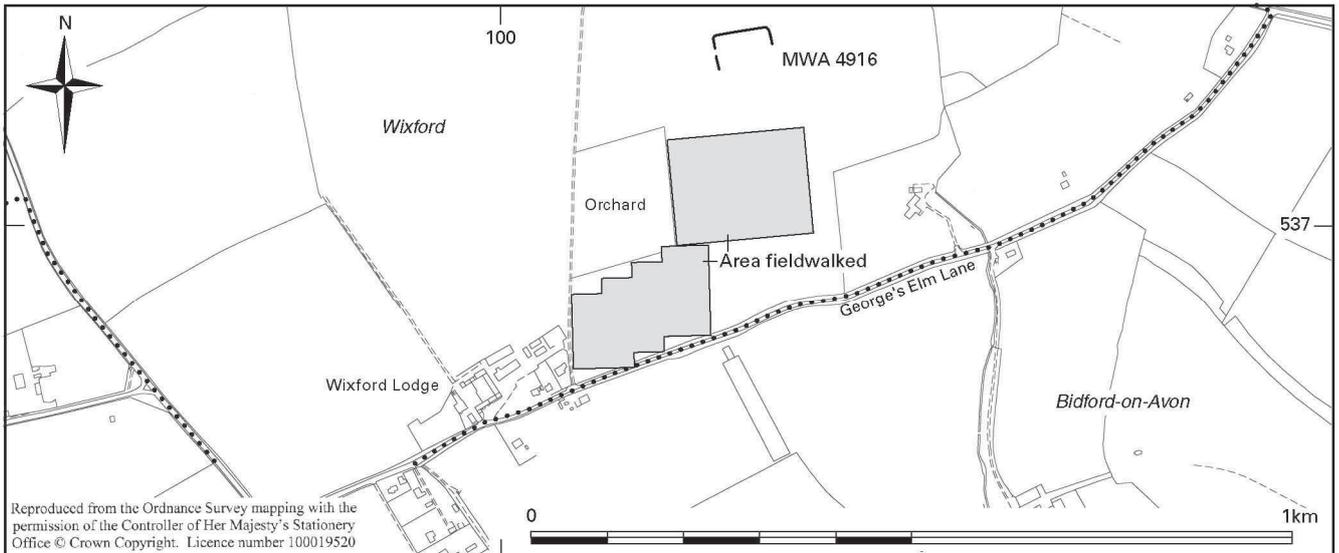


Figure one: Location of fieldwalking grids and location of finds

## Appendix A: The pottery

Grid	Roman? poss late IA	Roman	late medieval	post-medieval	post-medieval/modern	modern	Total
A1		1		2		1	4
A2				2			2
A3		1		1			2
A4		2					2
A5		4		1			5
A6		2					2
A7		4		1			5
A8		9		1			10
A9		7		2		2	11
B1				1		1	2
B2				1		5	6
B3		1		1		1	3
B5		3				1	4
B6		7				1	8
B7		3					3
B8		2		1			3
B9		6					6
C1						2	2
C2				2			2
C5				1		1	2
C7		2		1		1	4
C8		4				1	5
C9		7					7
D1				2		5	7
D2				1			1
D3		1				5	6
D4				1		5	6
D5				2			2
D6						6	6
E2				1		1	2
F3				1			1
F4		1		1			2
F5		8	1				9
F7		3					3
F8		7				2	9
F9		10		1			11
G5		3		1			4
G6		17		1		1	19
G7		14					14
G8		4		2			6
G9		12	1				13
H6		6		1			7
H7/M7		2					2
H8		7		3		3	13
I2		11		2		1	14
I3				1			1
I4		2				3	5

I5		3				3
I6		7		2	3	12
I7		2		1	3	6
J1		9				9
J2		10			1	11
J3		8			1	9
J4		5		1		6
J5		7		2	2	11
K2		1				1
K3		15				15
K4		12				12
K5				2		2
K6		6		1	2	9
L2		7		1		8
L4		2		1	2	5
L5		6			1	7
L7		3				3
M2		4		1	4	9
M3		11			1	12
M4		7				7
M5	1	12		3	2	18
M6		1		1		2
M7		8				8
N1		4		2		6
N2		1		1		2
N3		1				1
N4				2		2
N5		3		1		4
N6		3		1		4
O2				2		2
O3					1	1
O4				1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>72</b>
						<b>472</b>

Grid	Fabric	Form	Date
A6	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar	3rd century
A7	Severn Valley ware	hook-rim jar	3rd-4th century
B7	Severn Valley ware	tankard	late 3rd-4th century
B7	Nene Valley ware	?	AD 160+
B9	Severn Valley ware	hook-rim wide-mouthed jar	mid-late 3rd century
C8	Severn Valley ware	medium mouthed jar	not closely datable
C8	Nene Valley ware or possibly SW brown slipped ware?	uncertain	AD 160+ but 3rd-4th more likely
F4	SW brown-slipped ware F59?	jar	late 4th century???
F5	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar	3rd century
F5	Severn Valley ware	necked jar, triangular-sectioned rim	late rather than early, possibly 4th century
F7	Samian ware CG	cup Drag 27	AD 120-160
F9	Black-burnished ware	jar	mid 3rd-mid 4th century
F9	Severn Valley ware	mortarium rim	2nd century, possibly early 3rd century.
G5	Severn Valley ware	constricted neck jar, bifid rim	3rd-4th century
G6	Samian ware CG burnt	uncertain	2nd century
G8	Samian ware CG	foot-ring dish	2nd century
G8	Samian ware CG?	dish Drag 18/31	2nd century

G9	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar	mid-late 3rd century
I2	Severn Valley ware	hook-rim jar	3rd-4th century
I2	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar	3rd-4th century
I2	Greware R01/R11	bead-rim jar	date uncertain
I5	Severn Valley ware	hook-rim jar	3rd-4th century
I7	Severn Valley ware	jar	2nd-3rd century
J3	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar	3rd century
J3	Severn Valley ware	storage jar	not closely datable
J4	Oxford colour coat	mortarium Young 1977 C97/C100	AD 240-400+
K3	Greyware burnt	necked jar	not closely datable
K4	Severn Valley ware	tankard	not closely datable
K4	Samian ware CG	uncertain	2nd century
M3	Samian ware SG or CG	Drag 18	1st-mid 2nd century
M3	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar	3rd-4th c 4th century more likely?
M4	Severn Valley ware	wide-mouthed jar, slightly hooked rim	2nd-early 3rd century
M4	Severn Valley ware	dish or bowl	not closely datable
M4	Severn Valley ware	constricted neck jar	not closely datable
N1	Severn Valley ware	storage jar	not closely datable
N5	Severn Valley ware	bowl	not closely datable
N5	Severn Valley ware	tankard	1st-mid 3rd century

## Appendix B: The metal finds

Angie Bolton Portable Antiquities Officer

Grid Square	Metal object
K2	<b>Medieval penny</b> Minted in York between 1351-1461. Too deteriorated to see any other detail.
K2	<b>Metal alloy</b> Aluminium or white metal alloy unidentified artefact. Potentially an aircraft fragment due to the type of alloy, but no definite identification.
K3	<b>Metal alloy</b> Aluminium or white metal alloy unidentified artefact. Potentially an aircraft fragment due to the type of alloy, but no definite identification.
L1	<b>Undatable lead weight</b> Possible post-medieval vessel rim or fragment – medieval examples do not have integral studs on their vessels or repairs.
L3	<b>Metal stud</b> Metal stud possibly dating to the Post Medieval period. It may be a furniture or household stud due to the square sectioned shank. Margeson 1993 illustrated similar studs, except these have circular heads dating to the 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> century,
M1	<b>Polden Hill type brooch</b> Probably dates to c.75 to 175AD Worrell, S. 2007. Bayley and Butcher 2004 comment that the distribution of Polden Hill brooches is concentrated in the West Midlands.
M1	<b>Roman Plate brooch</b> Date unknown but Worell 2007 suggests that plate brooches date between c.80 and c.250AD.
M2	<b>Roman coin</b> Nummus of Constantine I minted in Trier between 307 and 319AD. Obverse: IMP CONSTANTINVS AVG Bust facing right, laureate and cuirassed Reverse: SOLI INVICTO COMITI 'To the unconquered Sol, companion of the emperor' sol standing facing left T/F//PTR
N3	<b>Copper alloy circular object</b> Unidentified copper alloy circular object. Not a spindle whorl but does appear to have some age though. Possible date Roman to early post-medieval c.43AD – C.1750AD
O2	<b>Decorative fitting</b> Post medieval decorative fitting. Purpose unknown but it's metal and design suggests post 1700AD date.
O6	<b>Spindle Whorl</b> Spindle Whorl. The dates of spindle whorls are not certain, but were used throughout the Roman and Medieval Geake, 2001.
O6	<b>Metal alloy</b> Aluminium or white metal alloy unidentified artefact. Potentially an aircraft fragment due to the type of alloy, but no definite identification.

**Appendix C: The Flint**

<b>Grid square</b>	<b>Flint pieces</b>
A4	3
A5	2
A7	1
A9	3
B7	2
C1	1
C6	2
D2	1
D5	5
F3	2
F5	4
F9	1
H9	1
I2	2
L7	1
M3	1
M5	4
M6	3
M7	1
N2	2
N4	1
N5	1
N6	2
N7	1
O1	2
O4	1
O5	1
O7	1
	<b>52</b>