

**Archaeological watching brief
at Honeybrook Farm
Shinehill Lane
South Littleton
WR11 8TP**

Martin Cook BA MCIfA

6th September 2019

WSM 71548

Oasis ref martinco1-366376

Sundowner
Circus Field Basin
Stocklake
Aylesbury
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Archaeological watching brief at Honeybrook Farm, Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, WR11 8TP

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Honeybrook Farm, Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, WR11 8TP (SP 08877 46188; Fig 1) at the request of Mr Guy Havemann-Mart. This work was undertaken in compliance with a written scheme of investigation provided by Martin Cook BA MCIfA, (planning reference 18/01508-FUL). The written scheme of investigation was approved by Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council (activity reference WSM 71548) The programme of archaeological work was to comprise documentary research, a watching brief and a report.

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Honeybrook Farm, Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, WR11 8TP. The alignment of a new farm track was stripped to a depth of between 5 and 10 cm. In one area a dense concentration of small angular limestone fragments associated with a low bank, approximately 50m to the north of the existing road, was interpreted as the agger of a Roman road that had been thought to run from South Littleton to Ryknild Street but for which no evidence, up to this point, had been found.

A summary will be published in West Midlands Archaeology.

The documentary material

Geology and topography

The search area sits within a rolling lowland topography based on a bedrock geology made up of mudstone. The surrounding landscape is made up of regular planned enclosures with a nucleated settlement pattern with some 20th century ribbon development seen between the villages. Land use is mostly arable with intensive glasshouse agriculture seen on the outskirts of the villages. Within the search area modern expansion is surrounded by large swathes of Parliamentary enclosure and smaller areas of modern subdivision.

Historic mapping

The earliest available mapping is the 1814 Inclosure Map of North, Middle and South Littleton, transcribed by D Guyatt, which is copyright and cannot be reproduced in this report. However, the transcription shows that the field which includes the current site, shown on the South Littleton tithe map of 1844 (Fig 2.1), was known as Marlbrook. The Ordnance Survey maps of 1885 and 1904 (Fig 2.2) show that the site was a field. The Ordnance Survey map of 1923 (Fig 2.3) shows that the northern part of this field was planted with an orchard.

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

There are a number of historic environment components possibly associated with or nearby the site. These are:

Possibly associated with the site

Monuments

WSM 23364

Conjectural Roman road – 43 to 410

WSM 47165

Ridge and furrow 1066-1539

WSM 50793

Site of New Barn/New Barn Cottage – outfarm – 19th century

WSM 70210

Ridge and furrow earthworks 1066-1539

WSM 70212

Ridge and furrow earthworks 1066-1539

WSM 70229

Ridge and furrow earthworks 1066-1539

Landscape components

WSM 58443

Site of the 19th century outfarm of New Barn/New Barn Cottage, South Littleton. Regular courtyard with L-plan range plus detached buildings to the third side of the yard. Isolated location. The historic buildings appear to now be replaced by large modern sheds located on the site. 19th century

Events

WSM 47419

An archaeological desk based assessment produced by CgMs (Bedford and Patrick 2012) considered land north of Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, comprising approximately 1.85 ha in area, which was proposed for residential development. It established that there were no designated heritage assets within the site. The Gd 1 listed and scheduled medieval tithe barn and grade II* Manor House and Church of St. Nicholas to the north of the Site at Middle Littleton and the Gd II* listed Manor House and Church and cluster of Gd II listed buildings to the west of the site within South Littleton would not be directly impacted by the proposed development and the assessment established that there would be no impact on their settings. It also established that the site had a moderate potential for Roman remains due to the presence of a possible Roman road immediately to the south. Potential was also identified for medieval and post medieval agricultural remains.

WSM 71548

Current project

Historic landscape character

HWR 2902

South Littleton, including Honeybrook Farm was identified by the Victoria County History (Willis-Bund and Page 1971, Vol.2, 412-415) and Tate and Turner (1978, 281) that the parish was enclosed by private act of land 'agreed between the lord and tenants of the whole fields' in the early 17th century (AD 1603 or 1604), but that the subsequent 1811 Enclosure Act only affected a small extent of parish land (location undefined).

Commentary on sites associated with the development site

There is evidence for the area surrounding the site having been under an agricultural regime since the early to late medieval period with the site of a 19th century outfarm lying a short distance to the south-west, on the opposite side of the modern road which may have Roman origins.

Nearby the site

Monuments

WSM 41772

Ridge and furrow 1066-1539

WSM 46665

Ridge and furrow late 11th to 19th century

WSM 47161

Ridge and furrow 1066-1539

WSM 47167

Ridge and furrow 1066-1539

The fieldwork

General

Fieldwork took place on the 7th and 8th August 2019. It comprised monitoring of the excavations for the access road and the sites of the two new aviaries. A full description of the contexts is given in Appendix 1. Contexts are described in summary form below.

Description

General

Excavation began about 10m to the north of Shinehall Lane (Fig 3). To the south of this, the ground level will be raised to bring the new track up to the level of the existing road. Excavation was minimal, being to a depth of about 5cm beneath existing ground level at the south end of the track and reaching

a maximum depth of about 10cm beneath existing ground level at the northern end, where the track turned to the west to pass through an existing gateway in the field boundary. The 'excavations' for the new aviaries amounted to little more than scraping thin vegetation from the surface.

Walk-over survey

It was noted before the excavation began that there was a very low bank (less than 20cms high and about 10m wide) running east to west across the field (Fig 3) at a distance of about 50m to the north of Shinehall Lane. An attempt was made to inspect a section where its alignment crossed a shallow ditch forming the field boundary to the east. Unfortunately, the vegetation was too thick in the relevant place and the sides of the ditch had been churned too badly by animals for this to be possible. However, when viewed from a distance, it was apparent that there was a slight rise in the ground level adjacent to the eastern field boundary (Fig 5).

The contexts

The excavations never penetrated the topsoil and for the most part, the stripping only served to establish the changing nature of the superficial geology across the field (contexts 001, 002, 004, 005, 006) and the need to bolster the constituency of the soil in a gateway (context 007). Once the general nature of the topsoil had been established, however, it was clear that something entirely different had taken place in one particular area. Within the limits of the low bank noted above was an area of common to abundant small angular limestone fragments in a matrix of dark grey brown clayey loam (context 004; Fig 3). A number of ceramic finds were also present within context 004 and these were later identified as fragments of field drain and possible imbrex (see below and Appendix 2).

To the south of context 004, beyond the tail of the bank, was an area of mid grey brown clayey loam which included two fragments of brick wall in lime mortar (context 003). It is known that there was an agricultural workers' hovel in the immediate vicinity and it seems likely that these brick fragments were part of it. Presumably, when the hovel was demolished, its remains were used to fill a hollow in the ground.

The finds: Appendix 2; Figs 9 and 10

Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a *pro forma* Microsoft Access database.

Possible Roman finds

Although recovered from the same context (004) as fragments of modern ceramic drain, two pieces of ceramic were significantly different enough in fabric and general appearance to be separated out as possible *imbrex* fragments. Due to a lack of any other finds of this date and the fragmentary nature of these pieces, it was not possible to give a definitive identification. However, the mixed fabric containing oolitic limestone and soft red inclusions, the roughly finished surfaces and wide curve would be consistent with ceramic building material of Roman date.

Modern finds

The remaining four sherds of ceramic were identified as modern field drain fragments, being machine made and high fired (context 004). All were oxidised and made of a mixed fabric containing white clay pellets and dark red ironstone inclusions. Fragments with a measurable curve indicated the pipe to have been roughly circular in form with an internal diameter of c.70mm

Significance

Although the finds from context 004 indicate a modern date, evidence of Roman activity in Honeybourne is well-documented and therefore the presence of suspected Roman roof tile from this site is not of particular note.

Interpretation

To create a hard-wearing road surface, Roman construction gangs would typically dig out two shallow, U-shaped ditches on either side of the road. It is believed that the backfill of such a ditch could

be seen (context 003; Figs 3 and 7). The excavated earth was then used to build up a central cambered mound, This was known as the *agger*. Such a feature was noted running across the line of the strip and was clearest when viewed against the eastern field boundary (Fig 5).

What surmounted the *agger* depended firstly upon the type of road. There were three types of road (Hosch 2010) :

- *Viae publicae, consulares, praetoriae or militares*
These were public high or main roads, constructed and maintained at the public expense.
- *Viae privatae, rusticae, glareae or agrariae*
These were private or country roads, originally constructed by private individuals, Such roads benefited from a right of way, in favour either of the public or of the owner of a particular estate. Under the heading of *viae privatae* were also included roads leading from the public or high roads to particular estates or settlements.
- *Viae vicinales*
These comprised roads in villages, districts, or crossroads, leading through or towards a *vicus* or village

Viae were distinguished not only according to their public or private character, but according to the materials employed and the methods followed in their construction. Secondly, they were divided in the following fashion:

Via terrena: A plain road of levelled earth.

Via glareata: An earthed road with a gravelled surface.

Via munita: A regular built road, paved with rectangular blocks of the stone of the country, or with polygonal blocks of lava.

From the above it is likely that the feature revealed by the stripping for the new farm track was a *via glareata*.

Bibliography

Bedford, W, and Patrick, C, 2012 *Archaeological desk based assessment for land at Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Worcestershire*, CGMs Consulting.

Hosch, W L, (ed.) 2010 *The Britannica Guide to Numbers and Measurement*, 1st edition

Tate, W E, and Turner, M, 1978 *A Domesday of English enclosure acts and awards*

Willis-Bund, J W, and Page, W, (eds) 1971 *A history of the County of Worcester*, II

Internet sources

<http://blog.english-heritage.org.uk/how-to-spot-a-roman-road/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Roman_units_of_measurement

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_roads

Acknowledgements

The author would particularly like to thank Mr Guy Havemann-Mart and Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council for their kind cooperation.

Archive

The physical archive consists of:

- 7 Context sheets
- 1 Drawing
- 1 Hard copy of the report
- 1 Hard copy of the report illustrations
- 1 Hard copy of the WSI

It will be deposited at Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury upon approval of the report. It is anticipated that the finds will not be of interest to the museum. However, the museum will be consulted in this respect before disposal.

The digital archive consists of

- 1 Digital copy of the report (.doc format)
- 9 Illustrations (.bmp format)

It will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service upon approval of the report.

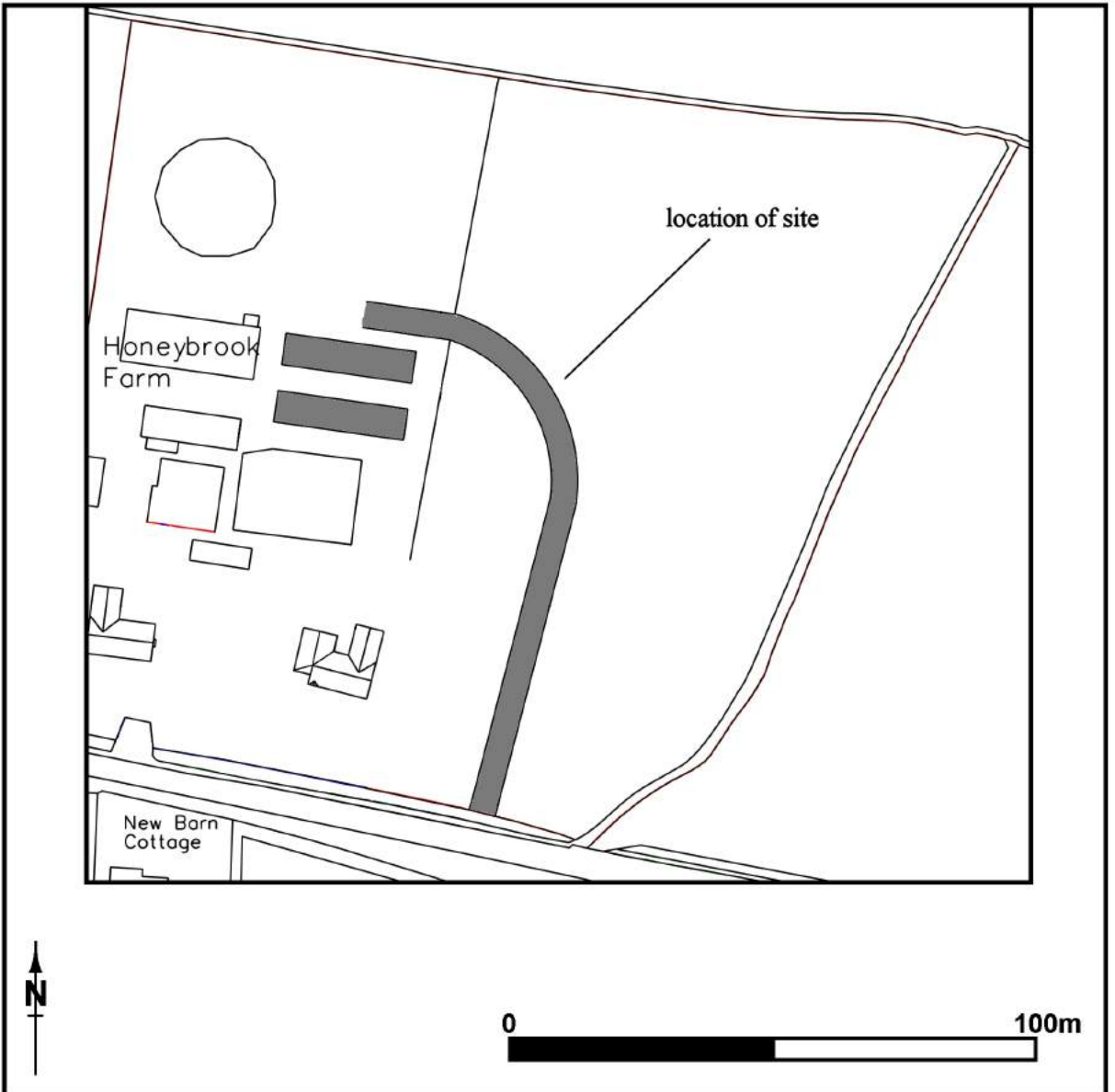
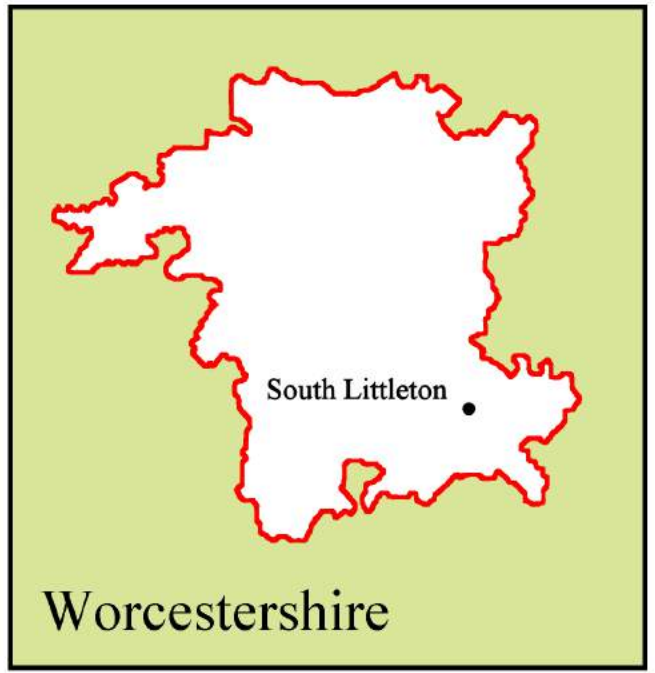
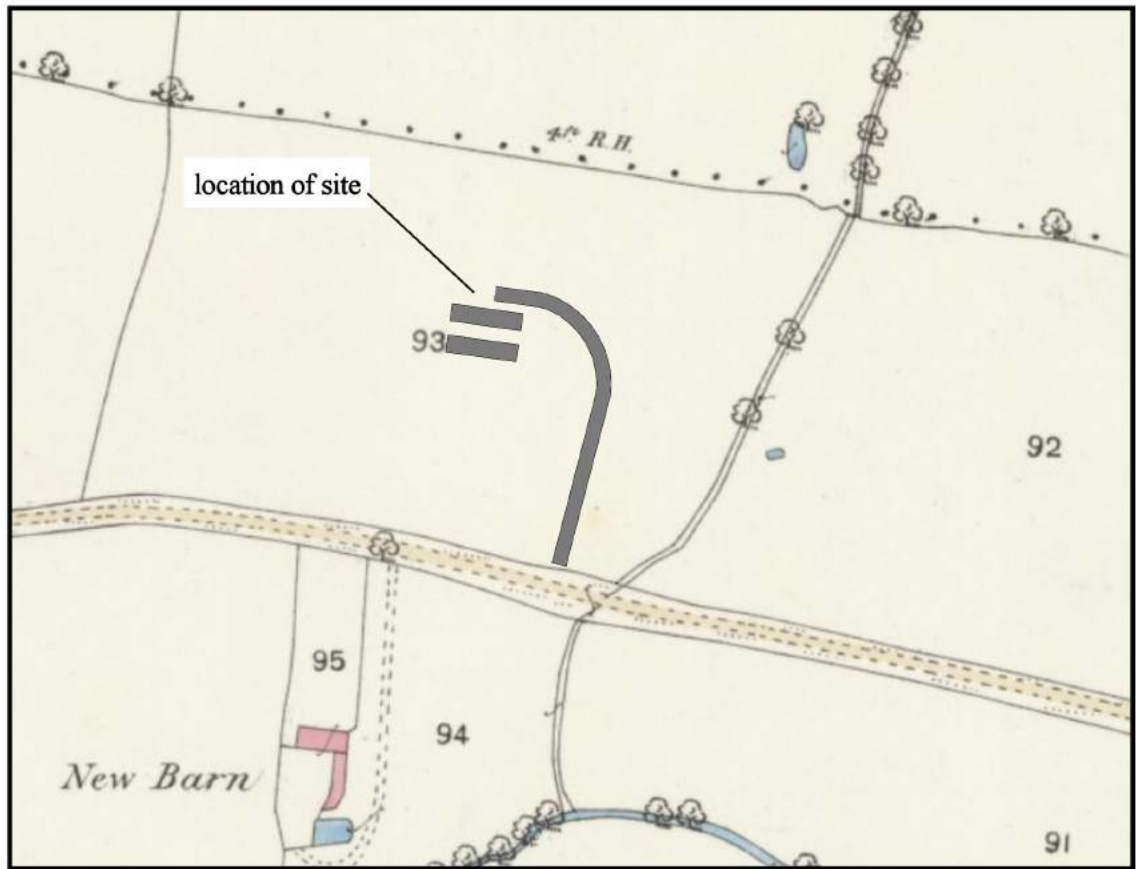


Fig 1: Location of site



Fig 2.1: South Littleton title map of 1844

1885



1904

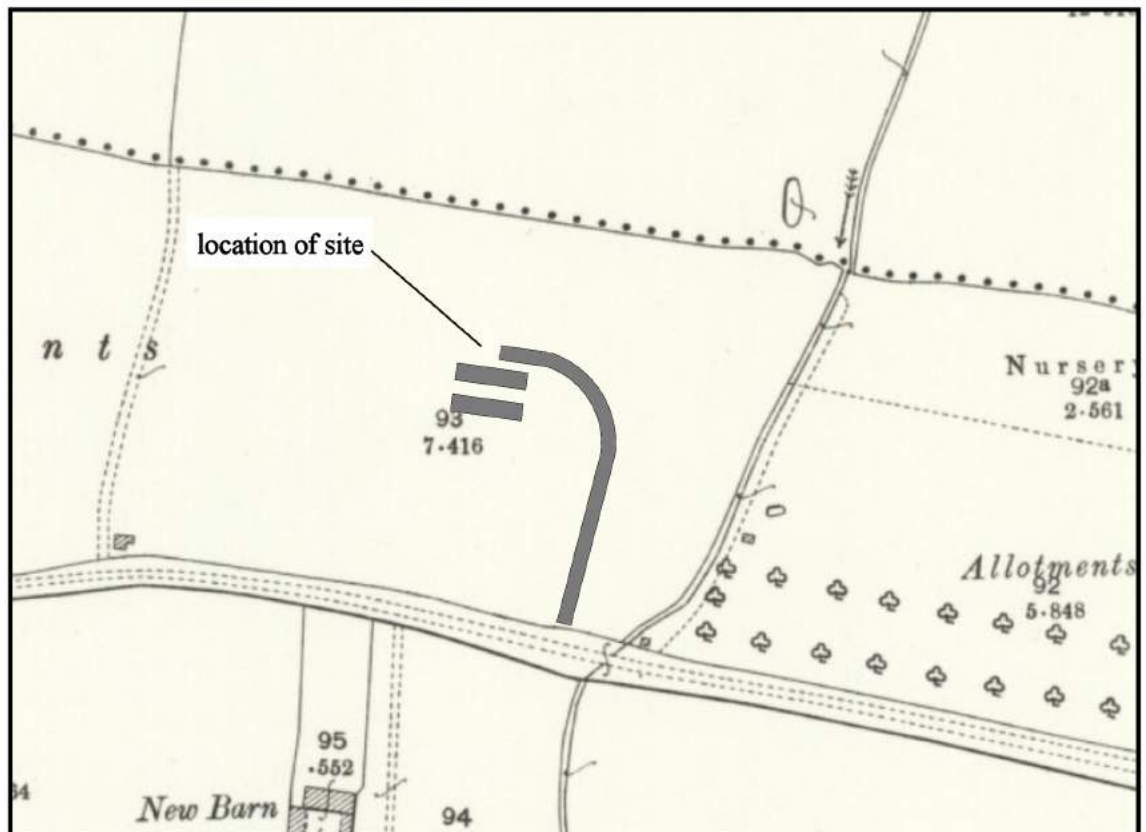


Fig 2.2: Historic mapping

1923

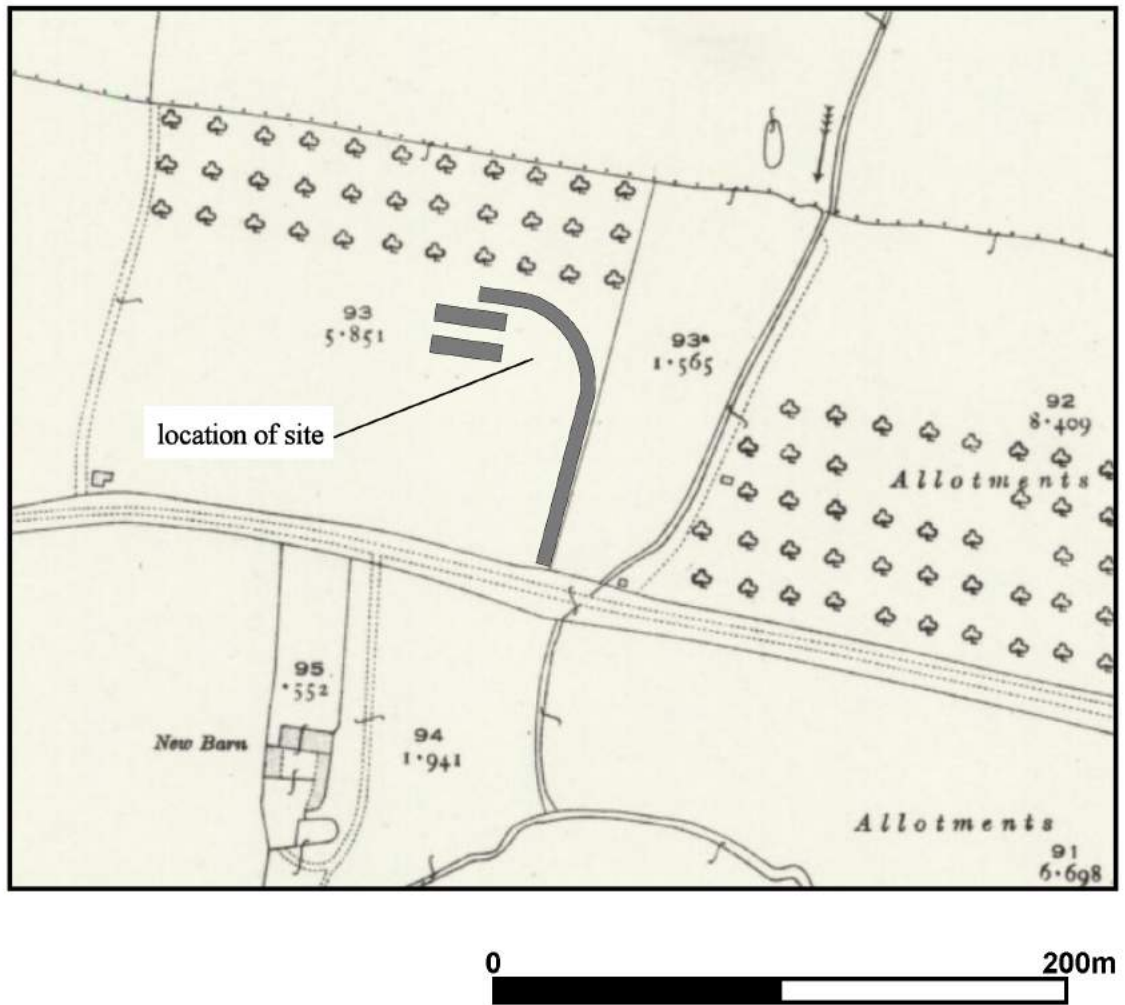


Fig 2.3: Historic mapping

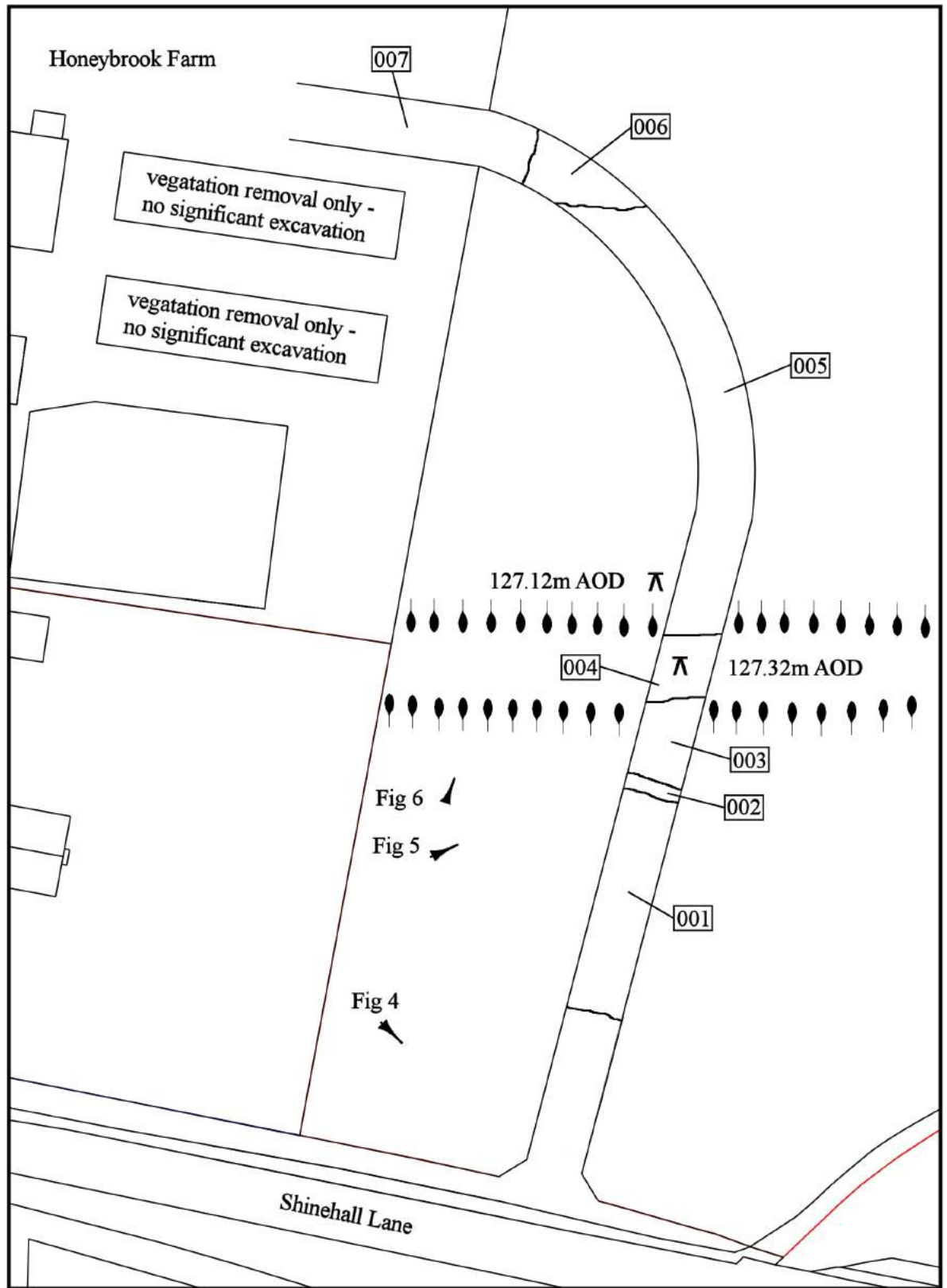


Fig 3: Location of recorded features



Fig 4: Southern part of strip looking south-east



Fig 5: Central part of strip looking north-east across low bank



Fig 6: Northern part of strip looking north-north-east



Fig 7: Context 003 showing fragments of brick wall



Fig 8: Context 004 showing small angular limestone fragments



Fig 9: Ceramic finds from context 004



Fig 10: Ceramic find from context 004

Appendix 1: List of the contexts

Context number	Description	Interpretation
001	Dark grey brown sandy clay loam with occasional to moderate small rounded stones	Topsoil
002	Mid brown grey clayey loam with occasional small and medium angular limestone fragments	Topsoil
003	Dark grey brown sandy clay with two fragments of brick wall in lime mortar	?backfill of road ditch
004	Common to abundant small angular limestone fragments in matrix of dark grey brown clayey loam	? road surface
005	Dark grey brown sandy clay loam with occasional to moderate small rounded stones	Topsoil
006	Mixed layer of yellow orange clayey loam and mid grey brown clayey loam with occasional Small angular limestone fragments	Topsoil
007	Grey green sandy clay with spread of light red builder's sand	Material laid in field entrance

Appendix 2: The finds

Artefactual analysis by Laura Griffin

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (2014), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

Aims

- To identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts;
- To describe the range of artefacts present;
- To preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts.

Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a *pro forma* Microsoft Access database.

Results

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and of their associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled seven finds weighing 556g (see Table 1). All were stratified (contexts 001 and 004) and displayed low levels of surface abrasion.

period	material type	class	total	weight (g)
?Roman	ceramic	imbrex	2	312
modern	ceramic	drain	4	136
undated	animal bone		1	108

Table 1: Quantification of the artefactual assemblage

Summary artefactual evidence by period

All material has been quantified and dated by period (see Table 1).

?Roman

Although recovered from the same context (004) as fragments of modern ceramic drain, two pieces of ceramic were significantly different enough in fabric and general appearance to be separated out as possible *imbrex* fragments. Due to a lack of any other finds of this date and the fragmentary nature of these pieces, it was not possible to give a definitive identification. However, the mixed fabric containing oolitic limestone and soft red inclusions, the roughly finished surfaces and wide curve would be consistent with ceramic building material of Roman date.

Modern

The remaining four sherds of ceramic were identified as modern field drain fragments, being machine made and high fired (context 004). All were oxidised and made of a mixed fabric containing white clay pellets and dark red ironstone inclusions. Fragments with a measurable curve indicated the pipe to have been roughly circular in form with an internal diameter of c.70mm

Significance

Although the finds from context 004 indicate a modern date, evidence of Roman activity in Honeybourne is well-documented and therefore the presence of suspected Roman roof tile from this site is not of particular note.

Recommendations

No further work required.

Bibliography

AAF 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Available at <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>

CIfA 2014 *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Available at <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

PCRG/SGRP/MPRG, 2016 *A standard for pottery studies in archaeology*

SMA 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections*. Available at <http://www.swfed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/selectionretentiondispersalofcollections1-SMA.pdf>

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 71548 (event HER number)

HF/19

Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	count	weight	start date	end date	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
?Roman	ceramic	?imbrex	2	312	M1C	4C	N	N
modern	ceramic	drain	4	136	19C	20C	N	N
undated	animal bone		1	108			N	N

Notes

- 1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Palaeolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001
Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700

18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.
3. This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.

Appendix 3: The OASIS form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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Printable version

OASIS ID: martinco1-366376

Project details

Project name	Honeybrook Farm South Littleton
Short description of the project	Watching brief at Honeybrook Farm, South Littleton, Worcestershire
Project dates	Start: 07-08-2019 End: 06-09-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 71548 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 4 - Regularly improved
Monument type	ROAD Roman
Significant Finds	IMBREX Roman
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON SOUTH LITTLETON Honeybrook Farm, Shinehall Lane, South Littleton
Postcode	WR11 8TP
Study area	900 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 08877 46188 52.113531694251 -1.870352252479 52 06 48 N 001 52 13 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Martin Cook BA MCI(A)
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Martin Cook BA MCI(A)
Project director/manager	Martin Cook BA MCI(A)

Project supervisor Martin Cook BA MCIfA

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient ADS

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Worcestershire County Museum

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Archaeological watching brief at Honeybrook Farm, Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, WR11 8TP

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Date 2019

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