

Wolverley's Big Dig

Community test pitting report

April 2023



Wolverley's Big Dig Small Pits, Big Ideas Worcestershire

Community test pitting report



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Community Test Pitting in Wolverley

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With finds analysis by Rob Hedge

Summary

In June 2022, 15 test pits were excavated across Wolverley, north Worcestershire. This community excavation was part of a wider project – Small Pits, Big Ideas – researching rural medieval settlements across the county.

Medieval artefacts were found in a number of test pits across the village, but most significantly across a cluster of test pits close to the junction of Drakelow Lane and Blakeshall Lane. At Rock Hill a wide range of medieval pottery was found, as well as glazed ridge tile of 13th to 16th century date. This suggests a substantial or specialised building, such as a manor house, as tiled roofs in rural settlements at this time were unusual. Interestingly, a notable quantity of locally produced medieval pottery was found, which has not previously been widely recorded or researched.

The overall distribution of finds suggests that the medieval settlement around Rock Hill is likely to have been the centre of Wolverley at this date, although medieval activity at Wolverley Court implies that further smaller clusters of houses were scattered across the parish. Wolverley village appears to have gradually expanded from the 15th or 16th century onwards, with increased growth and prosperity following the opening of the canal through the village in 1772.

Small pits, big Ideas : Wolverley



Introduction

About the project

Small Pits, Big Ideas helps communities reveal the origins of local villages and their story over time. Relatively little is known about the development of Worcestershire's rural medieval settlements as many are lived in, making large archaeological excavations impossible. By uncovering the archaeology hidden in back gardens, the project brings people directly in touch with their past and shines new light on the story of rural Worcestershire. Between autumn 2021 and summer 2022, six locations were investigated: Beoley, White Ladies Aston, Wichenford, Badsey, Wolverley and Bewdley.

This project follows a [pilot phase in 2017-18¹](#) and [extensive research in East Anglia²](#), where this approach has revealed changes caused by the Black Death in 1348-9. Small Pits, Big Ideas was run by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service on behalf of Worcestershire Archaeological Society, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Big Dig weekend

Over the 11th – 12th June 2022, 15 'test pits' were excavated across Wolverley village. A total of 81 people took part in digging the test pits and processing the finds. For most, this was their first hands on go at archaeology. Support was provided by staff from Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire Archaeological Society and a student supervisor.

What is a test pit?

Test pits are mini excavation areas, just 1m by 1m. They are dug in 10cm layers (called 'spits') with the finds from each spit kept separately, so that it's known how deep down they were found. Test pits were mostly excavated down to the natural, which is the point at which archaeology stops and undisturbed geology begins. In general, this was 30-70cm below ground level in Wolverley.

What were we looking for?

Today our household rubbish is taken away regularly, but in the past rubbish was often thrown out the back of houses. This wasn't just food waste, but broken pots, bits of building rubble and anything else that was old or broken. Back gardens are therefore an ideal place to look for clues. Pottery can be easily dated, as fashions for different styles changed over time. The amount of pottery found in a test pit can give us a rough idea of how nearby people lived at different times in the past.

Where were the test pits?

Take a look at the map on page 4 to see where the 15 test pits across Wolverley were located.

¹ www.explorethepast.co.uk/2017/11/small-pits-big-ideas-investigating-a-worcestershire-village

² Lewis 2016, available online:

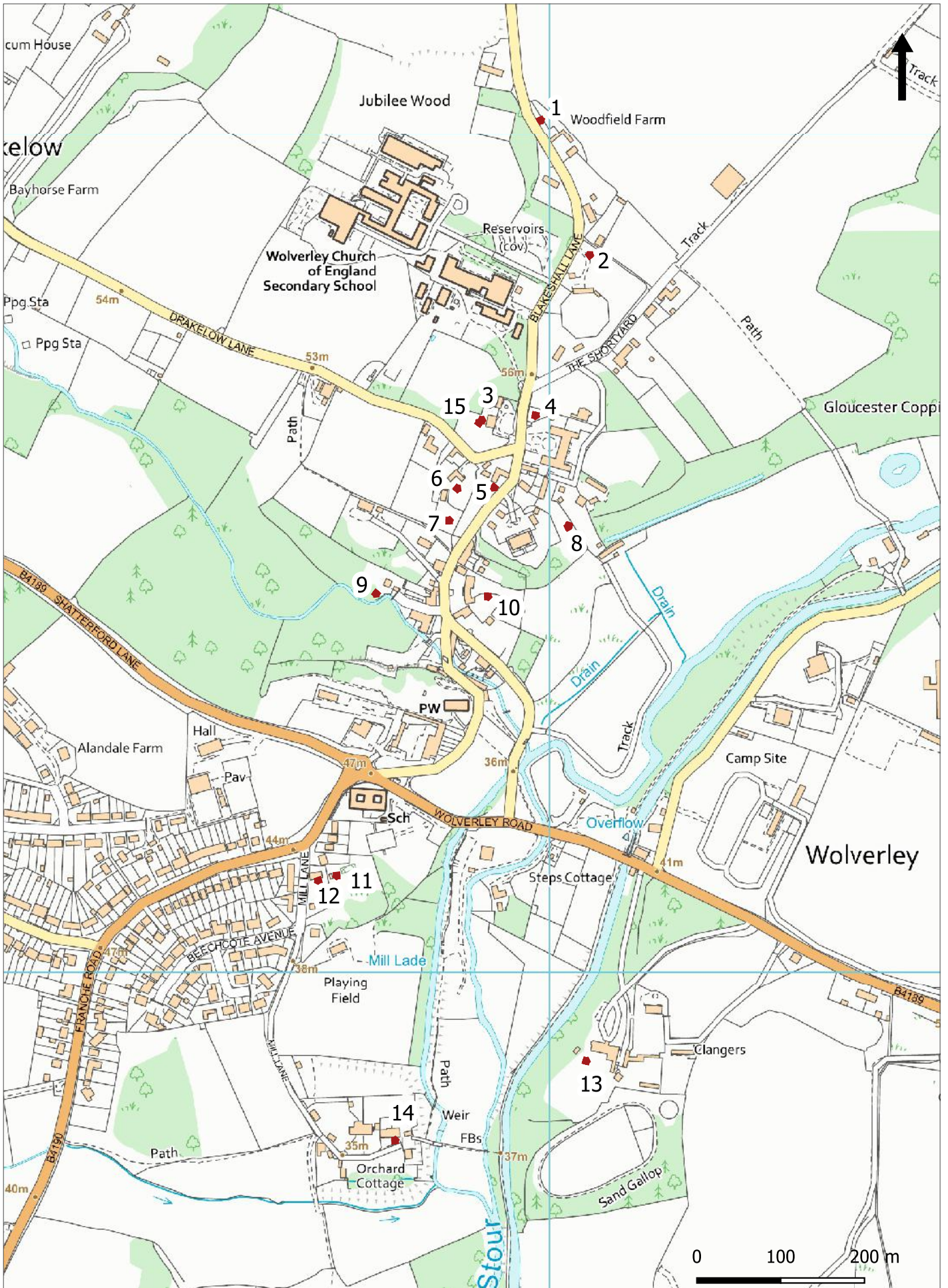
www.researchgate.net/publication/303316768_Disaster_recovery_New_archaeological_evidence_for_the_long-term_impact_of_the_calamitous_fourteenth_century



Photo 1: Test Pit 14 during excavation - test pits were dug in 10cm 'spits' (layers) until the underlying geology was reached



Photo 2: Using a sieve to check for finds at Test Pit 1



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Location of test pits in Wolverley

Figure 1

History of Wolverley

By Elaine Smith (Wolverley & Cookley Historical Society)

The village of Wolverley was first recorded in the 9th century as Uluardele. Today, it is part of a wider parish that comprises of Cookley village and various outlying hamlets, such as Blakeshall and Caunsall. Broadwaters (Upton) was also included before it was merged with Kidderminster in 1912.

The present-day boundary of the Civil Parish of Wolverley and Cookley (named Wolverley until 1970s) deviates very little from the Anglo-Saxon boundaries described in the charters of 866 AD and 964 AD. In a document of 866 Burgred, King of Mercia, granted Wolverley to the church at Worcester but Wolverley was later occupied by the Danes. When they were subdued, it was held by Leofric and he, with the consent of his wife (the famous Lady Godiva) agreed to restore it to the church on his death. The manor then returned to the church in the reign of Edward the Confessor, with Cookley added after the Norman invasion by King William. The Domesday Book of 1085/86 AD records that Wolverley was held by the church and that there was a priest. It is thought that an 11th century church stood on the site of the present church, built in the 18th century.

Bury Hall is thought to be the site of Wolverley's Manor or Court House. During the Middle Ages a court was held several times a year, presided over by a cellarer from the monastery. The Manor Court Rolls date back to 1285 and are kept in the archives of Worcester Cathedral.

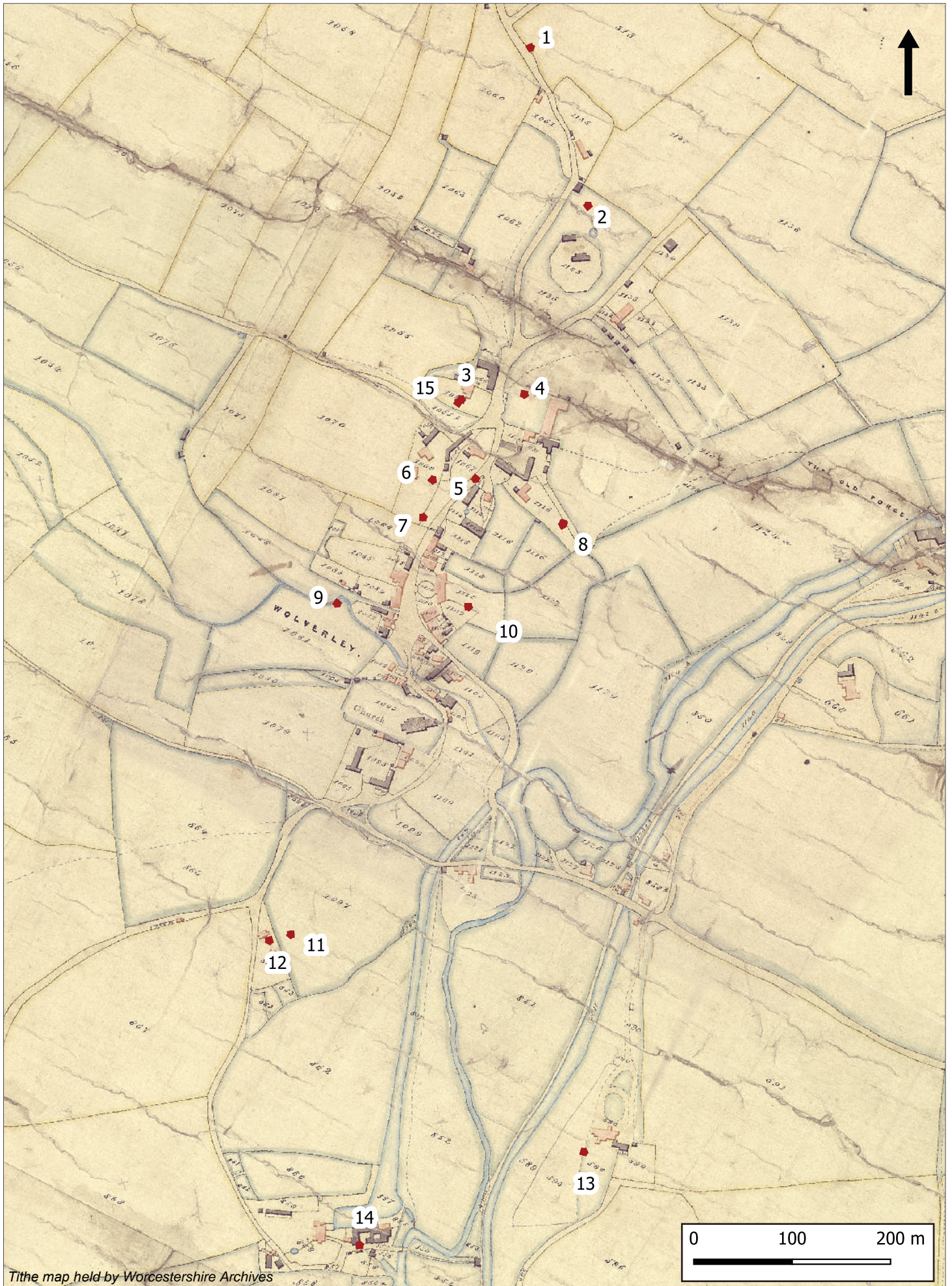
In the 17th and 18th centuries Wolverley saw significant changes. The Lower Mill was established by Philipp Foley and Joshua Newborough, who introduced tin plating. This was later acquired by the Knight family and converted to a wire mill in 1808. Several forges were set up along the Stour valley by the Knight family which brought in workers from elsewhere and increased the local population. Wolverley House was built for Edward Knight in the 18th century and John Knight acquired land and developed Lea Castle, a large mansion house and parkland. John Knight sold Lea Castle in 1818/20 and it was bought by John Brown whose family (the Brown-Westheads) continued to occupy it until the 1930s. The Knight family did not leave Wolverley entirely, however, as Wolverley House was retained and their interests in the iron industry did not end until much later.

The Wolverley Enclosures Act of 1775 would have had an impact on the landscape and farming methods. Hedges were planted and new roadways created. John Knight of Lea Castle became known for his experimental farming.

A characteristic feature of the area is the existence of outcrops of red sandstone and the various caves and dwellings that have been carved out. Even the old animal pound near the church, one of the few remaining in Worcestershire, is sandstone.

What to know more?

See [Appendix 1](#) for a longer history of Wolverley and details of archaeological finds in the area.



Tithe map held by Worcestershire Archives

Test pit locations on 1839 Wolverley Tithe map

Figure 2

Glossary

Abraded: how worn, or not, finds are, is often a good indication of how much they have been moved around in the ground. Pot sherds that have sharp breaks are likely to have been thrown away close to where they were found. The opposite may be the case with abraded sherds.

Ceramic building material: This term covers brick, and roof/floor tiles that are made from clay and fired in a kiln.

Context: This term refers to the precise location on an archaeological site in which a sherd was found, usually marked by a number. Each different soil layer, pit fill, wall, or deposit will have a separate number. The finds within that deposit can then be used to determine a *Terminus Post Quem* date - the earliest possible date that the deposit could have formed.

Form: the shape of a pot. The same potters and kilns often produced lots of different forms for different purposes. Common types include 'cooking pots' or jars, storage jars, pitchers, bowls, and drinking vessels like cups and tankards.

Fabric: the composition of the clay used to make the pot. This varies according to the source of the clay. Each production centre used clay from a different (usually very local) source. Other material like small fragments of stone or shell often occurs within the raw clay. Sometimes, coarse material was deliberately added to the pot to make it easier to fire. This is known as 'temper'. Collectively, non-clay materials within a pot are called 'inclusions'. Inspecting the broken edges of a piece of pottery under a microscope allows us to identify the inclusions, differentiate the fabrics, and match them to pieces of known origin in our reference collection (available at <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/>)

Natural: the 'natural geology' is the point at which archaeological layers stop and undisturbed geology begins. Excavations generally aim to reach the natural, as this means that all archaeological layers have been uncovered in that spot.

Post-medieval: archaeological shorthand for the later 16th – 19th centuries. After the post-medieval period is the modern era (1901 onwards). Many pottery traditions span period boundaries, and are therefore recorded as, for example, "post-medieval/modern". Sometimes the same fabrics or wares are given slightly different dates. This is usually because the individual sherd has characteristics which enable the date to be refined.

Medieval: 1066AD – 1539AD

Post-medieval: 1540AD – 1900AD

Modern: 1901AD – 2050AD

Test pit: a small area excavated in order to sample a location's archaeology.

Slip: a thin layer added to a pot after it has air dried but before it's fired. Slips are usually added for decoration.

Spit: each test pit was divided into 10cm layers, called spits. Spit 1 was 0- 10cm below the ground, Spit 2 was 10 – 20cm and so on. Spits are used to divide up a deposit into fixed depths. They are not the same as a context, which is the name given to an archaeological layer or deposit – spits can be used to divide up a large context or to record the depth in a test pit. Gardens tend to have been dug

over and churned up a lot, so there is usually little difference between the archaeological contexts in a test pit.

Sherd: the term for a fragment of pottery

Ware (for example 'Midlands Purple ware', 'black glazed red sandy ware' or 'earthenware'): The name given to a style of pottery. In the post-medieval and modern periods, pottery fabrics become a lot more homogenous, and the local variations are harder to spot (at least visually). The styles and traditions of potting become more useful than the fabric for identifying the pottery.

Results

The results from each test pit are described separately below, then drawn together in the conclusion. For details about the method of excavation and deposits found, see [Appendix 2](#). A full list of finds is given in [Appendix 3](#) and descriptions of common pottery types can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

Test Pit 1: Woodfield Barn

Test Pit 1 was in the back garden of Woodfield Barn, part of a mid-19th century farm complex located in the north of Wolverley. The test pit was relatively shallow and revealed a layer of sandy soil, which is likely to be an interface layer on top of the natural geology.

Finds

The artefacts from Test Pit 1 were dominated by ironworking slag and related material; fuel ash slag, smithing slag, and large fragments of vitrified hearth-brick suggest that smithing took place on this site. It is difficult to date: the firebricks are of a type belonging to the late-19th or early-20th century, but it is quite possible that parts of the assemblage are considerably earlier.

Other ceramic building material included roof tiles of 18th or 19th century date; the only pottery recovered dates to the mid-19th century onwards.

What does this tell us?

Finds from Test Pit 1 are consistent with the construction of Woodfield Farm and its associated outbuildings during the 19th century. Whilst the lack of earlier artefacts may seem disappointing, it indicates that this area was agricultural until the farm was built, meaning that the medieval settlement is likely to have been located elsewhere.

The large quantity of finds associated with metal working implies that there may have been a smithy on the farm. The first edition Ordnance Survey records a smithy by Test Pit 2, at the Walled Garden, but not within Woodfield Farm itself.

Test Pit 2: Walled Garden

The land immediately north of the octagonal walled garden, which was originally part of Wolverley House, hosted Test Pit 2. Walled gardens were considered an essential addition to any 18th century country estate and this one is thought to be contemporary with the main house. Test Pit 2 was located by a small building labelled 'Smithy' on the 1888 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3). Within the test pit was a thick topsoil layer with a sandier orange subsoil beneath. Artefacts were recovered from the lowest spit excavated (60-70cm down), meaning that the natural geology was not quite reached.

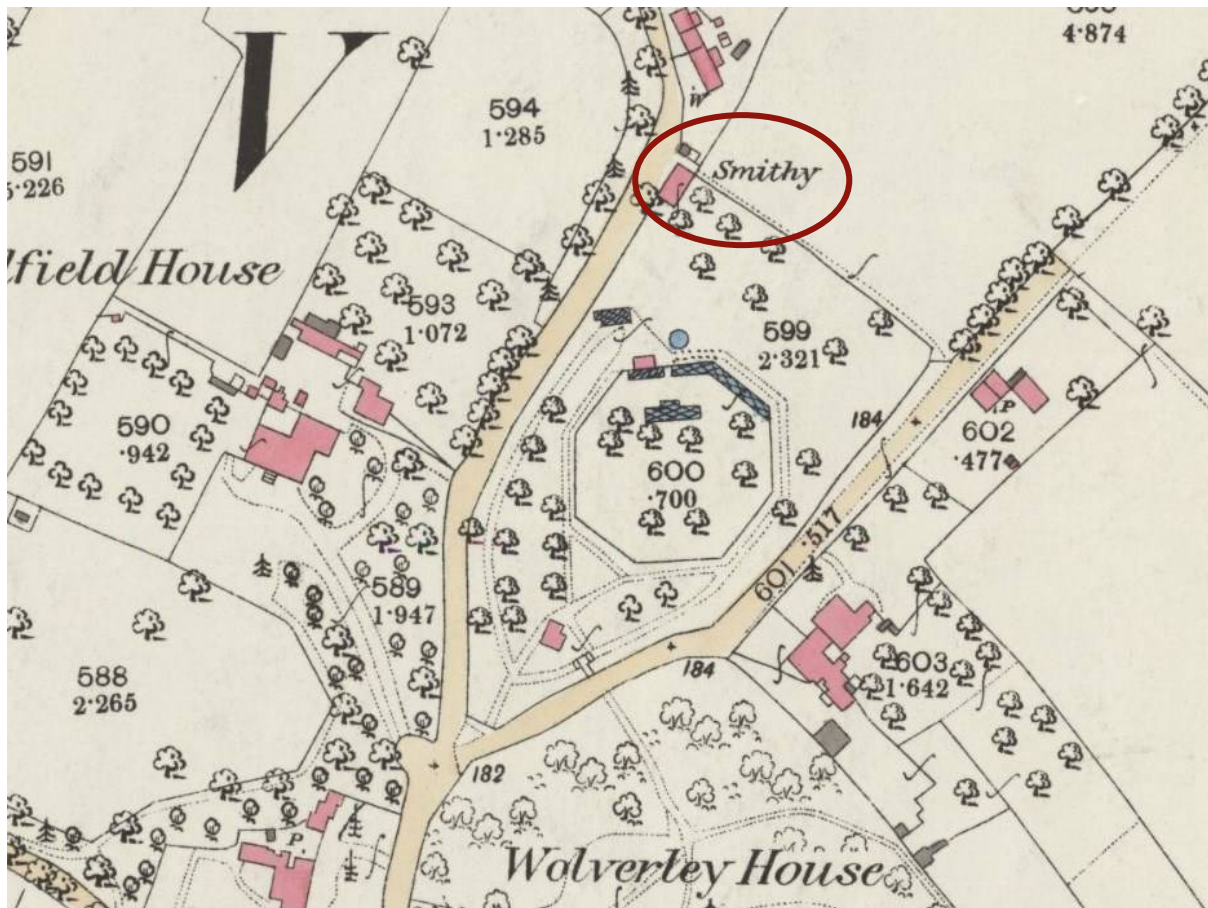


Figure 3: Extract of the 1883 Ordnance Survey with smithy by Test Pit 3 highlighted (Worcs VIII.7, CC-BY NLS)

Finds

Test Pit 2 is notable for one of the earliest finds: a Neolithic or Bronze Age (4000 - 700 BC) worked flint flake.

A complete hand-made brick, 2" thick, was typical of the very earliest bricks in common usage in the area; it is likely to be 16th or early 17th century in date. Prior to the 17th century, bricks tend to be restricted to chimneys.

There was a large number of finds dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, and layers were evidently fairly mixed. Below spit 4, modern material was less apparent, and within spit 7 there was a small group of pottery with a fairly tight date range, likely to have been deposited in the early 19th century.

As with Test Pit 1, metalworking residues were common. Most of these comprised typical smithing waste: clinker; fuel ash slag; hearth fragments; smithing slag with visible traces of flux.



Photo 3: Prehistoric worked flint (Test Pit 2, spit 3)

However, there were several pieces more typical of iron production, including a very dense cake of slag with the rippled surface typical of tap slag from a bloomery. In isolation, these are not enough to conclude that iron production was taking place on the site, but they certainly suggest contact with a bloomery; slags from bloomery production were sometimes used as hardcore or in the maintenance of metallised surfaces.

What does this tell us?

With Test pit 2 located so close to a smithy it is not surprising to find a range of artefacts that relate to metalworking. However, it is unusual to find evidence of iron smelting (production) as well as smithing (shaping into objects). Given the small quantity of smelting waste and Wolverley's industrial links due to the canal, it is perhaps most likely that this material comes from elsewhere rather than being evidence of a bloomery nearby.

The presence of 19th century pottery so far below ground also indicates that the soil around the walled garden has been well worked over, whilst the thick topsoil suggests that the ground may have been built up, probably to improve the ground for growing plants. This is likely to have happened after the cluster of early 19th century pottery became buried, as the tight date range implies that spit 7 is less disturbed than the ground above.

It is intriguing, although perhaps in keeping with a manicured garden, that few 18th century finds from the creation and early days of the walled garden were found. It is possible that older archaeological layers were not reached and remain buried beneath the topsoil and subsoil. The presence of earlier artefacts (a prehistoric flint and 16th – 17th century brick) shows that the ground has been well worked over though, so if any significant quantity of older finds lay below then it is likely these would have been seen.

As for the significance of these two early finds, the worked flint probably comes from people passing through the area rather than settling nearby, whilst the handmade brick intriguingly hints at a wealthy residence prior to the building of Wolverley House and its walled garden in the 18th century. Caution is needed though, as a single brick does not make a wall and it could have moved a long way from where it was originally used.

Test Pits 3 & 15: The Birches

Both test pits were located in the back garden of The Birches, a large brick house along Blakeshall Lane, opposite Wolverley House. It is Grade II listed and recorded as being late 18th to early 19th century, although from discussions with the current owners it is possible that the house contains earlier elements. Test Pit 3 was close to the house and turned out to be relatively shallow, with the underlying sandy geology less than 30cm down. The ground level here appears to have been truncated during building work or landscaping of the garden.

Due to Test Pit 3 being so shallow, Test Pit 15 was opened further away from the house. This test pit contained 25cm of topsoil then a layer of orangey brown sand, so was not substantially different to Test Pit 3 in terms of the layers encountered.

Finds

The assemblage from Test Pit 3 was small and largely comprised of post-medieval pot and ceramic building material. A small quantity of smithing slag, animal bone and glass were present. The pottery included good examples of wares spanning the later 18th and early 19th centuries: Nottingham stoneware ([fabric 81.3](#)), creamwares ([f84](#)), pearlware (f85.11), and later black-glazed redwares ([f78](#)).



Photo 4: Medieval pottery from Test Pit 15, spit 4 – sherd of whiteware (left) and later medieval/ transitional sherd (right)

The flat roof tiles included examples likely to be of 15th to 17th century date.

In contrast, Test Pit 15 contained three pieces of medieval pottery: two [whitewares](#) of 11th to 14th century date, and one later medieval/transitional sherd broadly dating to 1350-1600. Small quantities of ironworking slag and hearth material, as well as a large but fragmentary assortment of brick and tile, were also recovered. Later pottery included 17th/18th century [redwares](#) and a small amount of [Nottingham stoneware](#), and plain 19th century whitewares.

What does this tell us?

The majority of finds from these two test pits are typical of household waste and fit well with a late 18th to early 19th century date for the house. Nevertheless, there are signs of an earlier building on or near to this site, based on fragments of roof tile and pottery that predate the origins (or perhaps remodelling/ renovation) of The Birches. Ceramic roof tiles became increasingly common during the 15th – 17th centuries, yet thatched roofs were still widespread in rural areas. It is therefore possible that these roof tiles indicate a relatively wealthy home or important building.

Evidence of medieval settlement nearby comes from three sherds of medieval pottery. These are relatively small, abraded pieces and few in number, implying that Test Pit 3 and 15 were located close to – but not directly over – medieval occupation. This fits with the medieval activity seen in Test Pits 5 and 6, just to the south.

Test Pit 4: West Wing, Wolverley House

Test Pit 4 was in the garden of the West Wing, Wolverley House. Whilst in keeping with the original architecture, the West Wing is a later addition to the main 18th century house. Built in the late 1940s, it was used as changing rooms when the house was a school.

The test pit encountered a relatively sterile and slightly mottled upper layer, which may be the result of landscaping work. Beneath this was a darker middle layer – possibly a buried topsoil – then orange sandy soil that resembled the top of the natural geology.

Finds

The assemblage from Test Pit 4 was small and included relatively little pottery. The earliest was a body sherd from a medieval cooking pot, probably a [Worcester-type vessel](#), dating from the late-11th to the mid-14th century.

Other early material included a tiny rim sherd from a brown-glazed redware ([fabric 72](#)) mug: these early redwares are most commonly found in 16th century deposits.

A typical range of post-medieval building material — mostly flat roof tile and hand-made brick — spanned the 16th to the 19th century. There were also small quantities of fuel ash slag, coal, and charcoal.

What does this tell us?

Test Pit 4 is one of a cluster of pits that contained medieval artefacts. As with The Birches (Test Pits 3 and 15), the single sherd of medieval cooking pot confirms that occupation was close by, but is not enough to suggest that houses once stood on this spot.

Intriguingly, several finds likely pre-date Wolverley House. These may originate from elsewhere in the village or indicate that an earlier building once stood close by. From the heydays of Wolverley House there are few finds. Whilst initially surprising, the grounds were landscaped and home to an affluent family, so it is logical that household rubbish was carefully disposed of well away from the front entrance.

Test Pit 5: Rock Hill

Test Pit 5 was placed close to the back of Rock Hill, which occupies the corner plot between Blakeshall Lane and Drakelow Lane. A date plate on the house reads 'Isiah Talbot 1769', although the building's age is uncertain – timber framing hidden beneath later alterations implies that it is considerably older than the 18th century.

The test pit revealed a dark topsoil and stoney lower layer, above orange sand and gravel geology. At 60cm deep, Test Pit 5 contained a greater build-up of deposits than seen in Test Pits 1-4. Although the lower layer contained abundant stones of all sizes, there was a layer of large pebbles at 50cm down, which may have been the remnant of an historic yard surface.

Finds

The finds from Test Pit 5 were relatively sparse, but it is nonetheless one of the most productive pits as over ½ of the finds were medieval in date. There was a wide range of medieval pottery, including [Worcester-type cooking jars](#), [Staffordshire whitewares](#) and vessels likely to be products of a local industry (see photo 5). A number of dateable pot rims are of types that span the late-12th to the early-14th century, being most common in the 13th century. Later medieval oxidised wares were also present, alongside early, brown-glazed speckled redwares that are typical markers of 16th century activity.

Building material included glazed ridge tile, of 13th to 16th century date. Tiled roofs in rural settlements in this period were not the norm, and so this is likely to have come from a substantial or specialised building.



Photo 5: Selection of medieval pottery from Test Pit 5 spit 4, including Worcester-type wares (top row), sandy white ware (middle right) and potentially local wares (middle left and bottom row)

What does this tell us?

A substantial quantity of medieval pottery was found in Test Pit 5, including several large sherds that are unlikely to have moved far from where they were thrown away. This strongly points towards a medieval dwelling, or several dwellings, within the immediate vicinity. Spits 3 and 4 (20 – 40cm down) also contained just one early post-medieval sherd of pottery ([Midlands yellow ware](#)) and no later material, demonstrating that this is a relatively undisturbed layer of medieval activity. Added to this are late medieval roof tiles, which point towards a wealthy residence, manor house or other important building.

Little pottery from the 17th – 18th century onwards was found in Test Pit 5. It is possible that the ground has been levelled within the last century or so, resulting in the truncation of 17th – 19th century deposits. Alternatively, this may simply be the result of household rubbish being disposed of elsewhere following Isiah Talbot's 18th century alterations to Rock Hill.

Test Pit 6: Frogmore House

Test Pit 6 was in the rear garden of Frogmore House, which is part timber framed. The house is thought to be early 17th century in origin, with early 19th century extensions. Deep and well worked deposits were encountered within Test Pit 6: the upper layer consisted of a dark garden soil, 50cm deep, and below this was a lighter subsoil that extended down to 85cm below ground level, at which depth the natural orange sand and gravel was encountered.

Finds

Test Pit 6 yielded a large assemblage, much of which comprised later-18th and 19th century material. A small and badly degraded fragment of window glass may have been forest glass, typically pre-18th century in date.



Photo 6: Fragment of possible forest glass (Test Pit 6)

The pottery included a range of medieval material: there was one sherd of 13th/14th century Staffordshire whiteware with a green glaze and roller-stamp decoration, but the majority comprised later medieval Malvernian wares and other late medieval oxidised fabrics. Conjoining sherds from spits 3 and 6 were from an unusual vessel: a bowl (220mm diameter), slightly flared, with a pronounced internal lip and an internal orange glaze. A simple lug protruded 25mm from just below the lip. The form is unusual. Although the fabric and feel superficially resembles later Malvernian products, it is from a different — as yet unidentified — source and is probably later-15th to early-17th century in date. A number of other vessels in the same fabric were also noted.



Photos 7 & 8: Conjoining sherds of an unusual late medieval bowl, found in spits 30cm apart (Test Pit 6)

What does this tell us?

The first points to note are that there has been a considerable build-up of deposits and that the area around Frogmore House has been extensively worked over – as testified by the conjoining sherds of pottery that were found 30cm and 60cm below ground. Combined with a large quantity of finds, this indicates centuries of occupation on the site.

Medieval pottery was present in a lower quantity than next door at Rock Hill (Test Pit 5), implying that this location was towards the edge of where people were living rather than in the heart of activity. Intriguingly, two fragments of early window glass were found. Whilst hard to precisely date due to production methods remaining similar over time, these strengthen the evidence seen in Test Pit 5 for a substantial and important building. The two fragments of glass broadly date from 1200 – 1700 and 1500 – 1800 respectively, which are centuries when glazed windows were rare in rural areas.

The unusual late medieval pot, with conjoining pieces, brings to light how little is currently known about pottery production in north Worcestershire. Was this vessel a local style or simply a one-off experiment?

Test Pit 7: Frogmore Cottage

Frogmore Cottage, visible on the 1839 Tithe map, is thought to have formerly been a Rectory and part of the Frogmore estate. The garden is terraced due to being on a steep slope and the test pit



Photo 9: Test Pit 7 at the end of excavation, showing the dark topsoil above the natural orange sand

was located one terrace down from the house, close to where a footpath off Blakeshall Lane joins the garden.

Within Test Pit 7 was a dark topsoil, then a layer of orangey brown sand which was found in many of Wolverley's test pits. This is the underlying geology and was considerably closer to ground level than in Test Pits 5 and 6, where centuries of occupation have led to a build-up of deposits.

Finds

Test Pit 7 yielded relatively few finds, but among them was a sherd of 13th to 16th century pottery. Within the post-medieval pottery were some good examples of late-18th and early-19th century [engine-turned wares](#), including annular [creamware](#) and a rouletted pearlware vessel.

What does this tell us?

The single sherd of medieval pottery indicates that the medieval settlement seen around Rock Hill and Frogmore House (Test Pits 5 and 6) did not extend south down the slope. Based on the finds assemblage and historic map evidence, Frogmore Cottage is likely to have been built around the late 18th century and is the first dwelling on this plot.

Test Pit 8: Haybarn

Haybarn is a converted agricultural building, built as part of the 18th century Wolverley House estate. The building sits on the edge of high ground, with the garden and land beyond sloping away to the River Stour in the southeast. Test Pit 8 contained a thick build-up of dark garden soils (80cm) over the local orangey brown sand. The location of the test pit on a steep slope accounts for its depth. Extensive landscaping work has also taken place on the edge of as the site, as part of construction work for the modern Woodhamcote Manor.

Finds

One small chip of prehistoric worked flint was recovered.

The pottery included small quantities of 16th to 18th century [Midlands Yellow](#) and late-17th to late-18th century Manganese Mottled wares alongside the ubiquitous [redwares](#). Among the roof tiles, one example with a reduced core is likely to be medieval in date.

Among more recent finds was a fragment from a late-20th century printed circuit board.

What does this tell us?

It is apparent that the ground around Test Pit 8 has been recently disturbed, as demonstrated by the fragment of circuit board. Below 40cm there was relatively little modern (20th or 21st century) material, although these layers do appear to have been relatively well dug or worked over in the past.

Whilst the majority of finds likely originate from Wolverley House and its estate, there are several potentially earlier artefacts, including Midlands Yellow pottery and a probable medieval roof tile. Despite being few in number, these do suggest that a building was in the vicinity before Wolverley House was built in the 18th century. A tithe barn, believed to have been [built in 1539 and burnt down in 1937](#)³, is known to have stood on the site now occupied by Woodhamcote Manor, along with two houses that are depicted from the 1839 Tithe map onwards. The dwelling immediately south of the Haybarn is labelled as 'Manor House' on the 1883 – 1938 editions of the Ordnance Survey (Figure 4). It is likely that the pre-18th century finds within Test Pit 8 relate to these buildings. However, the total lack of medieval pottery implies that medieval settlement did not extend in this direction.



Photo 10: Earliest pottery from Test Pit 8 (clockwise from top left) – slipware, Manganese Mottled ware, black glazed redware and Midlands Yellow.

³ Historic England Archive, photo collection 'England's Places' card no 2039/158, 2039/159 and 2039/156. Available online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/gallery/5601>

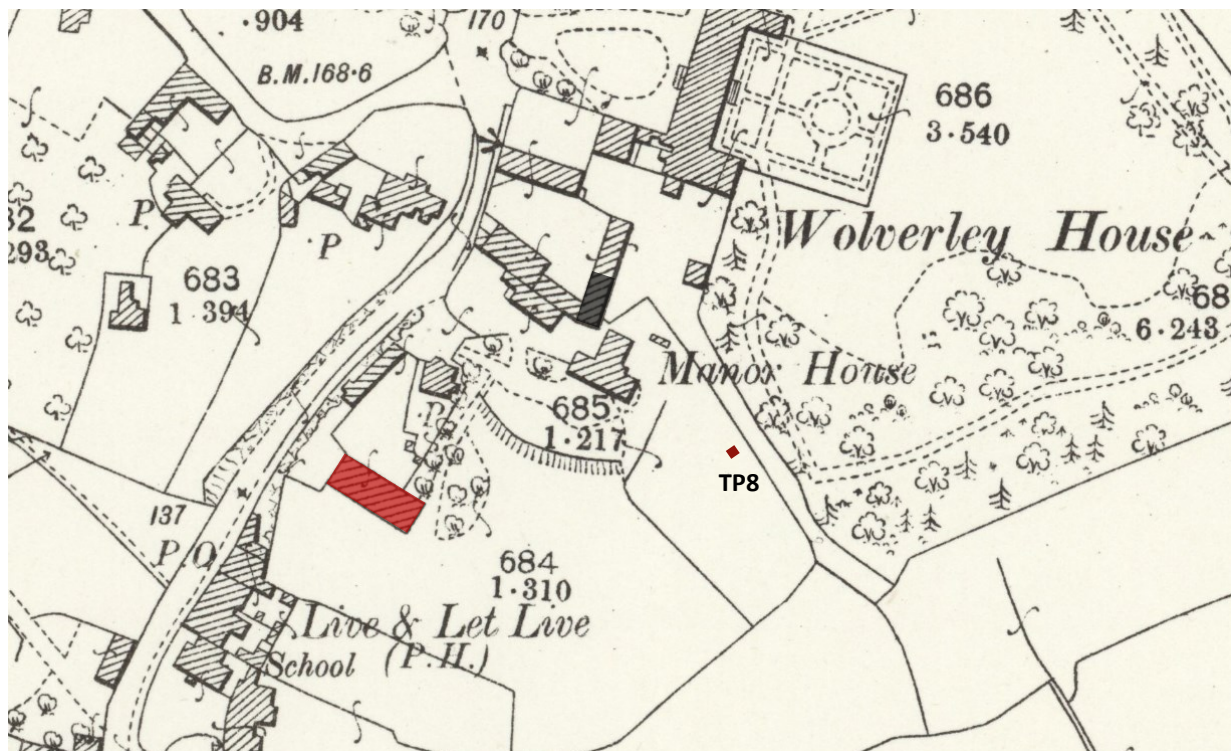


Figure 4: Extract of the 1902 Ordnance Survey showing the location of Test Pit 8 and the Haybarn (in grey), Manor House and Wolverley tithe barn (in red) (Worcs VIII.7, CC-BY [NLS](#))

Test Pit 9: Willow Cottage

Willow Cottage is timber framed and thought to date from the 16th century, with a 20th century extension. Due to the area immediately around the house being disturbed by building work, the test pit was located on the south side of the garden, close to the Horsebrook. Below 20cm of topsoil was a disturbed layer of subsoil and redeposited natural with areas of burning. It is unlikely that the natural geology was reached in this test pit, especially as flooding from the brook may have caused a deep accumulation of deposits.

Finds

Test Pit 9 contained some hard-fired, nibbed roof tiles dating from the later-15th to the 17th century. Pottery was a typical range of post-medieval wares, notably including multiple conjoining sherds from one late-18th or early-19th century [creamware](#) plate. Part of the face of a [porcelain](#) figurine of 19th-century date was also present, along with clay tobacco pipe fragments.

What does this tell us?

The early roof tiles found in Test Pit 9 broadly match the date for the timber framed part of Willow Cottage, so are most likely to come from the cottage itself rather than another house nearby. Tiled roofs, rather than thatch, were not necessarily the default choice in villages during the 15th to 17th centuries, so it may be this dwelling was not the average home, or simply that the owners had a particular reason to use roof tile or ready access.

No artefacts predating the cottage were found. Given that the test pit did not reach the bottom of the archaeological layers, it is possible that earlier clues have been missed. However, the ground did appear to have been heavily churned up, so if a significant quantity of medieval pottery was present

then it is likely that some would have been found within the spits excavated. On balance, it is therefore more likely that this site was unoccupied until the present cottage was built.

Test Pit 10: Old School House

Built in 1829, originally as part of a school, the Old School House was constructed to mirror Oak House and form a symmetrical range of buildings. Test Pit 10 was in the back garden and one of the deepest test pits excavated. The upper 40cm was a silty topsoil whilst the lower 60cm was a silty clay layer. Due to the depth of deposits, the natural geology (i.e. bottom of the archaeological layers) was not reached.

Finds

Test Pit 10 contained a typical range of pottery spanning the late-17th to the 19th century. Late-18th and early-19th century pearlwares (fabric 85.11) and creamwares ([fabric 84](#)) were well represented. A wide range of 19th century whitewares included gilt-decorated wares; [transfer-printed wares](#) with red, black and blue decoration; and sponged wares. Unusual within this assemblage, there was one sherd of 17th/18th century tin-glazed earthenware ([fabric 82](#)). One other ceramic find of note was a later-17th or 18th century pipeclay wig-curler.



Photo 11: Pipeclay wig curler (Test Pit 10)

A small quantity of smithing slags and hearth material was present throughout the test pit. Soils were well mixed, with 19th century material in even the lowest level.

What does this tell us?

It is evident that a great deal of household (and probably school) waste was dumped in this area during the 18th and 19th centuries. Subsequently, the ground has been well worked over, pushing Victorian objects down 1m below ground level and bringing older artefacts nearer to the surface.

The presence of late 17th and 18th century artefacts is interesting, as these predate the supposed construction date of the school. It is possible that the school buildings replaced earlier ones or are slightly earlier than thought. Either way, there appears to have been houses on or by this site since the late 17th century. Whilst the majority of finds are typical of household rubbish, the wig or hair curler stands out as unusual. The Georgian fashion for curled, often elaborate, hairstyles and white powdered hair led to wigs being commonly worn by those who could afford to own one. A curler is an unexpected discovery within a village where few households could probably afford to own such an item. It may be a product of the growing metalworking industries established around Wolverley and opening of the canal in the late 18th century, which led to the Knight family building Wolverley House and Lea Castle.

Earlier archaeological layers are likely to have been missed in Test Pit 10. However, given the top 1m was so well churned up, it is probable that any significant quantities of earlier finds would have been disturbed and therefore seen within the excavated layers.

Test Pit 11: Pan Shop Cottage

Pan Shop Cottage was built in the 20th century on the north side of Rose Cottage, the original Pan Shop Cottage. Test Pit 11 was located in an area immediately east of Rose Cottage, on a plot of land formerly occupied by greenhouses. The test pit encountered a thick dark topsoil with a greyish subsoil below, extending down to 60cm. Below this was orangey sand, which appeared to be the top of the underlying geology across Wolverley.

Finds

Test Pit 11 yielded a relatively small assemblage, but in character it was typical of later post-medieval domestic occupation. Lower levels yielded a wide range of domestic pottery from the late-18th and 19th century, including examples of [porcelain](#), rare elsewhere in the assemblage. One 20th century find of interest was a complete mid-20th century rubber beer bottle stopper, bearing the name of the 'Bath Row Bottling Co Ltd Birmingham'.



Photo 12: Bottle stopper (Test Pit 11)

What does this tell us?

Historic mapping indicated that the area around Test Pit 11 was farmland until the mid-20th century. The finds assemblage is typical of the low-level scatter found on farmland, where pottery and other household waste often ended up on manure heaps that were then spread over fields. The date range of artefacts from Test Pits 11 and 12, next door at Rose Cottage, are the same. This strongly suggests that the area around these two test pits was unoccupied until the 18th century.

Test Pit 12: Rose Cottage

Test Pit 12 was in the garden of the Grade II listed Rose Cottage (formerly known as Pan Shop Cottage). Built in the early 17th century as a commercial premises, presumably for making pans, it was converted into two residential cottages in the 18th century. The 20th century saw the building reconfigured into a single residence and the demolition of a building immediately to the south – possibly two further cottages – between 1902 and 1924.

Within the test pit was a dark topsoil with a lighter greyish brown layer beneath. At a depth of 50cm below ground level, the soil became sandier and orangey. Artefacts were still present 70cm down, showing that the natural geology had not been reached. A small area was excavated down to 1m and appeared to be close to the underlying geology, although this remains unconfirmed.

Finds

Finds from Test Pit 12 included one of the earliest from the dig: a prehistoric worked flint flake. The majority of the finds were domestic pot and clay pipe, mostly dating from the later 18th – early 19th

century. Sherd size was small, but the variety of material was high. One later 18th century clay pipe bowl was present. Finds were well-mixed throughout, with 19th century material in spit 7. The most intriguing find was the first phalanx (toe bone) of a horse, modified with two connecting drilled holes. Modification of horse toes like this is highly unusual, and its function is uncertain.

In addition to the material from the test pit, a large quantity of artefacts collected from the garden were scanned. These were of a similar range and date as those recorded from the test pit.



Photos 13 and 14: Drilled horse toe bone (Test Pit 12)

What does this tell us?

Although Rose Cottage is thought to have been built in the 17th century, the finds assemblage dates from the later 18th century onwards. This broadly ties in with when the building was supposedly converted from a commercial premise into dwellings. More recently, the ground has been heavily disturbed, as the presence of 19th century finds 70cm down shows that the soil has been churned up since those artefacts became buried.

Besides the worked flint, which is a sign of people passing through the area during prehistory, no artefacts pre-dating the 17th century were found. This is very similar to the finds assemblage from Test Pit 11 (Pan Shop Cottage) and indicates that there was no medieval settlement in the immediate vicinity. It is likely that this area, south of Wolverley Church, was farmland until the cottage was built in the 17th century.

Test Pit 13: Wolverley Court

Wolverley Court is Grade II listed and thought to have been built around 1600 for the Attwood family. The sandstone and brick house was extensively remodelled in the first half of the 19th century and remained a residential property until the late 20th century, when it became a nursing home.

Below a dark topsoil was an orange sandy layer. A considerable number of large round pebbles were found 50-60cm below the ground, with a layer of smaller yet more abundant pebbles in bright sand beneath. It is possible that these are the remnant of an historic surface or levelling layer. However, the British Geological Survey shows a small deposit of sand and gravel around Wolverley Court, meaning that this layer of pebbles is most likely to be geological rather than a human creation.

Finds

Test Pit 13 contained the only sherd of Roman pottery to be recovered during the dig. It was highly abraded and within the uppermost spit (0-10cm below ground).

The test pit also contained vitrified brick that is likely to have come from a metalworking hearth, and some smithing slag. A medieval presence on this site is suggested by some early roof tile that is likely to be 13th to 16th century in date, and a small quantity of medieval pottery. The pottery included a rim sherd dating from the mid-12th to early-14th century.

An unusual conglomeration of shattered and partially molten window glass was also found, which is probably the result of an attempt to burn building rubble.



Photo 15: Roman pottery (Test Pit 13, spit 1)



Photo 16: Vitrified brick (Test Pit 13, spit 2)

What does this tell us?

The finds assemblage shows that there has been activity at or near to Wolverley Court from the medieval period onwards. Whilst only four sherds of medieval pottery were found, these are likely to come from people living close by, as other medieval finds from across Wolverley's test pits were found in a cluster, rather than as a low level spread fairly evenly across the whole area. This implies that medieval pottery may have stayed close to where people were living instead of being spread widely across the parish's fields whilst manure spreading, as is sometimes the case.

Added to the medieval cooking pot sherds are a considerable number (29) of early roof tile fragments. These broadly date to between 1200 and 1700, so may come from the original Wolverley Court built around 1600 or from an earlier medieval building. Either way, roof tiles were less common in rural areas during these centuries and the building they once covered was probably an affluent home or important building. The large quantity of tile fragments also implies that this building stood on site rather than some distance away.

Other finds of interest included a Roman pot sherd and vitrified brick. It is not unusual to find a background scatter of prehistoric and Roman finds in rural areas. This piece of Roman pottery is small and heavily worn, so may have moved a considerable way from where it was originally thrown away or lost. It is a sign of Roman activity within the wider landscape, but probably some distance

away. Similarly, it is possible that the metalworking waste and vitrified brick may be rubble brought in from elsewhere as hardcore. This is the most likely explanation given the relatively low quantity of material, although it is feasible that there was a smithy on site in the 18th or 19th century.

Test Pit 14: Wyre Mill Cottage

Wyre Mill, also known as Lower Forge, was founded in 1669 by Joshua Newborough and Phillip Foley. The site closed at the end of the 19th century and the industrial buildings no longer survive. Wyre Mill Cottage lies just to the west of the original mill buildings and is thought to date to the turn of the 19th century, although may be earlier.

Test Pit 14 was located in the front garden. Below the topsoil were two thin layers of building rubble interspersed by layers of charcoal-rich soil, suggesting that several spells of demolition or building work took place between build ups of hearth sweepings and rubbish. Below these, 50cm beneath the current ground level, was layer of large densely packed pebbles. These appeared to be a cobbled surface and sat directly on top of the natural orange sand and gravel geology.

Finds

Test Pit 14 was chiefly notable for a very large quantity of flat roof tile, mostly spanning the 16th to the 18th century. The pottery was sparse but typical of later-18th and 19th century domestic activity.

What does this tell us?

In contrast to most test pits, where the ground has been heavily churned up – often

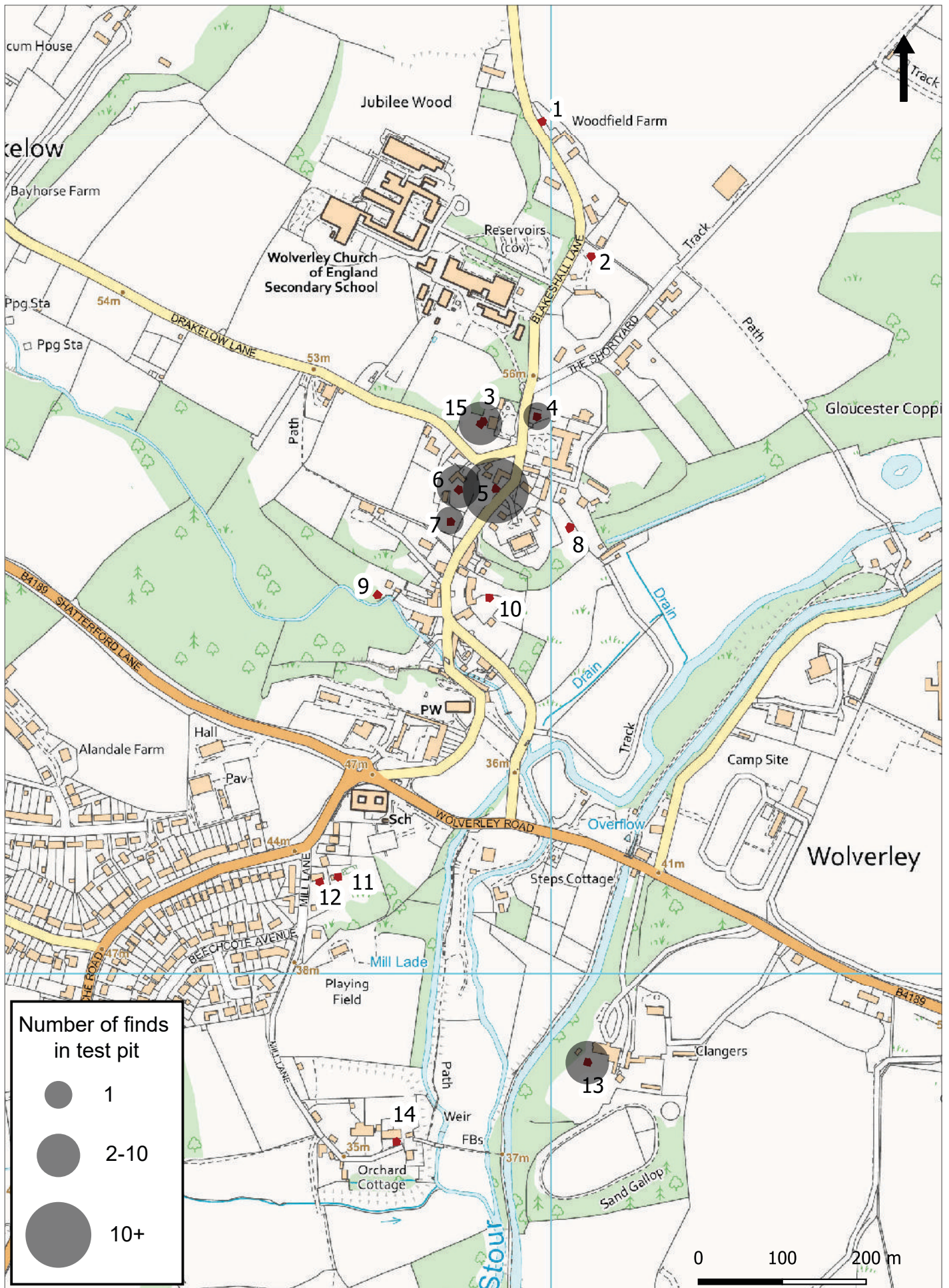
by people digging over their gardens – this test pit contained clear layers, showing that deposits had not been disturbed much by later activity. The charcoal-rich layer directly over the cobbled surface contained pottery dating from 1820 to 1950, indicating that everything above the cobbles has built up since this pot was thrown away.

The surface itself appeared to sit directly over the natural geology, so is hard to date precisely. It is likely to be pre-19th century and may have been in use for some time before being either deliberately covered, or dirt and rubbish gradually building up over it. Given the known history of the mill, it is feasible that the yard or road surface dates from the mill's establishment in the mid-late 17th century. Regardless of its construction date, it was the earliest activity seen in Test Pit 14. Combined with finds that exclusively date from the time of Wyre Mill onwards, this suggests that the mill was built in a previously unused area. If any earlier buildings did once exist in this area, then the ground has since been cut down to the underlying geology and all earlier evidence lost – at least within the small area excavated.

Interestingly, the majority of pottery found dates from the late 18th and 19th centuries, despite the fact that the mill was founded in 1669. It may be that people didn't live on or near to the mill until the late 18th century, or simply that rubbish was thrown away elsewhere before this date.



Photo 17: Cobbled layer in the base of Test Pit 14, with interspersed layers of charcoal-rich soil and rubble visible in the section.



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Finds from 12th-14th centuries

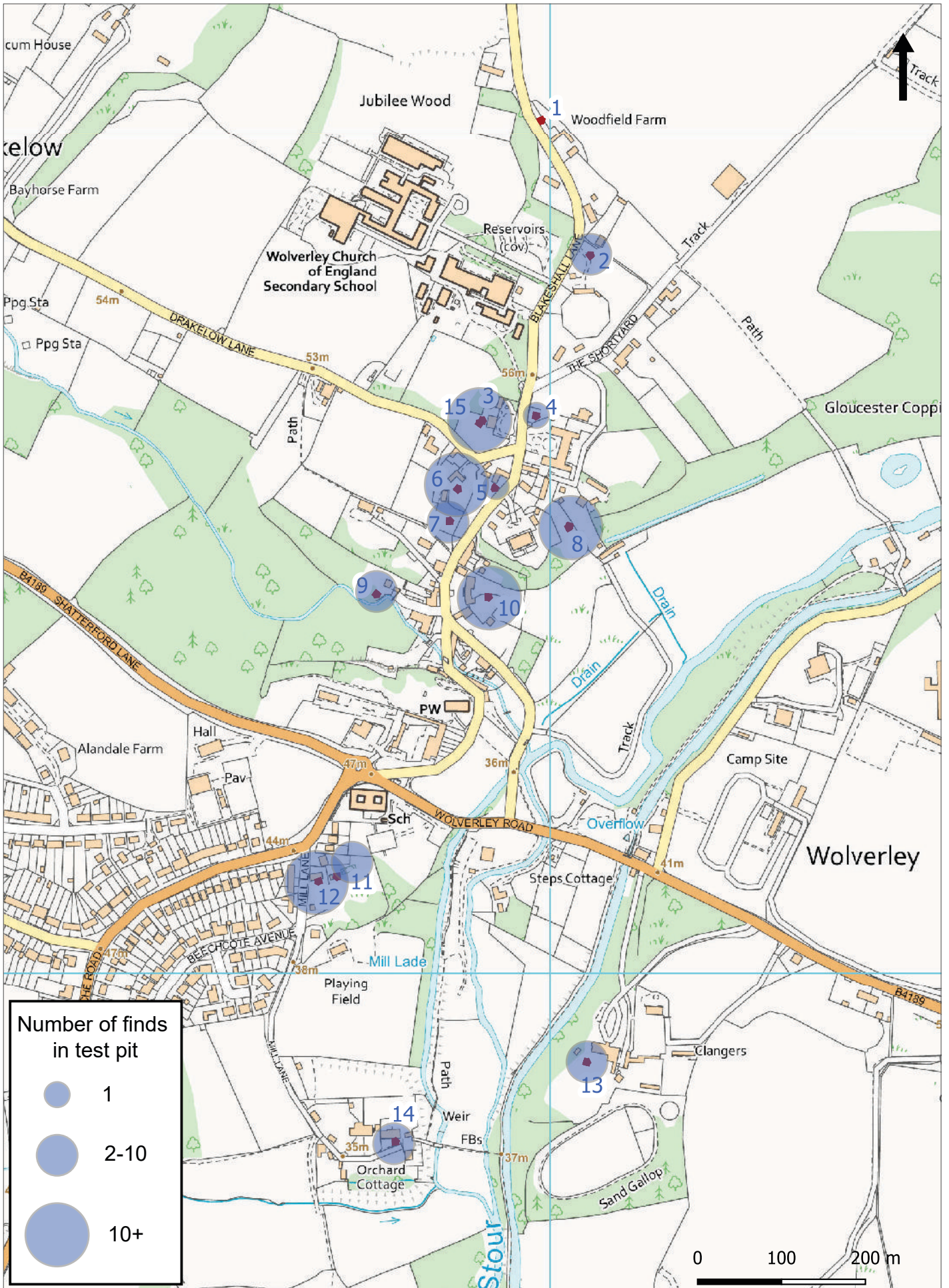
Figure 5



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Finds from 15th-16th centuries

Figure 6



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Finds from 17th-18th centuries

Figure 7

Conclusions

Drawing all 15 test pits together, what pictures emerge about Wolverley village? See Figures 5-7 for an overview of the amount of finds from different centuries.

Early village

The small quantity of prehistoric and Roman material is typical of rural landscapes in the region, reflecting a long history of settlement. Written records document a settlement at Wolverley from the 9th century onwards. Despite this, the first material evidence found within the test pits dates from the 12th century onwards. This is a similar picture to that of other Big Digs across Worcestershire, in Beoley, Wichenford, Badsey and the Bewdley area. It would seem that pottery was not widely used in rural Worcestershire households until the mid-12th century, after the Norman Conquest.

From the 12th to 14th centuries there was relatively little material compared to later centuries, but it was nevertheless present. Its distribution suggests that one focus of the medieval settlement – potentially the largest – was around the junction of Drakelow Lane and Blakeshall Lane, with another settlement cluster around Wolverley Court. Interestingly, the first cluster of medieval finds come from along the edge of a slope and immediately east of a tithe barn, which was at least 16th century in date, and a dwelling called the ‘Manor House’. It is possible that this settlement was Woodhamcote – a name recorded in the Manor Court Rolls and speculated to be in this general area⁴ – although the name ‘Vroggemore’ (Frogmore) also appears in 14th century records⁵. Regardless of its name, the presence of early roof tiles indicates important and probably substantial medieval buildings.

Dating is hampered by an incomplete picture of the pottery industries and supply in the area, but there was evidently domestic settlement in parts of the parish by the 13th century. Medieval pottery from Test Pits 5 and 6 is also in markedly better condition than the pot found elsewhere and of later dates, suggesting that relatively undisturbed medieval deposits survive around Rock Hill and Frogmore House.

The picture emerging of medieval Wolverley is not of a concentrated or neatly laid out village, but of multiple clusters of houses scattered across the parish. Dispersed settlements are commonly seen in wooded areas, although there is no mention of woodland in the manor’s 1086 Domesday entry. In addition to the settlement clusters around Drakelow/ Blakeshall Lanes and Wolverley Court, another might be expected around the church. Assuming that the present church was built directly over the medieval one, there is however little evidence of this at present, as no medieval activity was found south of the church around Rose Cottage.

From this small sample, the effects of the crises of the 14th century (including the Great Famine of 1315-17 and Black Death in 1348-49) are unclear, but the presence of later-medieval and transitional wares suggest settlement continuity into the late-15th/16th century and beyond.

⁴ Fenton et al (1975) and recorded on Worcestershire’s Historic Environment Record as possibly being located around the modern Woodhamcote Manor or Woodfield Farm.

⁵ Victoria County History (1913) entry for Wolverley parish, available at British History Online: www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol3/pp567-573

Later expansion

A large quantity of material dating to the 17th and 18th centuries was found; this is typical of rural settlements and reflects the increasing affordability of ceramic goods as much as the expansion of the settlement. By the 17th century, the village had taken on a linear layout, stretching north from Wolverley Church, past the brook and up the slope, along what is now Blakeshall Lane.

Across the majority of test pits, pot sherds were generally small, heavily worn and battered. This is typical of pottery that was discarded in rubbish heaps or middens, then later disturbed by gardens being dug over or field ploughed. Early 18th century white tablewares and porcelain were relatively uncommon in Wolverley, compared to other Worcestershire villages (such as Wichenford). This may be due to the village's distance from these pottery works and reduced availability of cheaper seconds. The opening of the canal through Wolverley in 1772 will undoubtedly have increased trading links and is perhaps why later 18th century ceramics were seen more widely across the test pits than pre-1760 tablewares.

The large quantities of ironworking slag across many of the test pits reflects the long heritage of industrial activity and rich natural resources of the area. It is likely that some of the material had been moved from its original production site and re-deposited. Although most was typical of smithing (iron working as opposed to production), the presence of small quantities of slag resembling that created during bloomery production could suggest nearby production sites.

What next?

The results from all six test pit locations were drawn together in a touring exhibition in early 2023. After this, the archaeological finds will either be returned to the landowner or deposited with Museums Worcestershire, depending on the owner's preference. The reports and archaeological records will be stored by the [Archaeology Data Service](#) – a publicly accessible digital archive. A copy of each report will also be available on www.explorethepast.co.uk, which is run by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service, and sent to the county's public [Historic Environment Record](#).

Archaeological investigations often unearth as many questions as they do answers: it is an ongoing process of gradually piecing together details about the past. It is hoped that the stories revealed by these Big Digs will be expanded in future. In particular, research is needed into medieval pottery production in the border region of north Worcestershire, south Staffordshire and southeast Shropshire.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the owners who generously hosted a test pit and everyone on the Dig Team and Finds Team, as without your enthusiasm and hard work these stories would not have been unearthed.

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Finds analysis was undertaken by Rob Hedge, along with creation of the illustrated summary. The report was produced and collated by Nina O'Hare, John Jackson and Hazel Whitefoot (WA), with additional historical background kindly provided by Elaine Smith and Janet Oliver (WCHS).

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Appendix 1: Detailed historical background

Location and geology

The village of Wolverley is located 2 miles north of the town of Kidderminster in the north of Worcestershire and lies in an undulating landscape. Wolverley is bounded to the east by the River Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, with the Horsebrook cutting east to west through the centre of the village. The surrounding area is primarily arable farmland with large areas of pasture and woods, some of which are ancient. The underlying geology comprises of Chester Formation Sandstone and Conglomerate that formed 250 million years ago during the Triassic period. These are overlain primarily by superficial deposits of alluvium with areas of Power Station, Holt Heath and Kidderminster Terrace sands and gravels (BGS 2022).

Historical background

Wolverley is mentioned in historic records from the 9th century onwards. It appears to have been a moderately sized settlement by the 11th century and is recorded in the Domesday Survey as comprising of 17 households, including a priest, with a mill (Open Domesday 2023). The parish belonged to the Bishop of Worcester throughout the medieval period and subsequent centuries.

Located at the confluence of two rivers, over time a number of mills developed in Wolverley that provided tin plate production and, later, wire drawing. During the 20th century the village expanded considerably to the west, around Fairfield Lane.

Archaeological background

Introduction

Prior to test pitting, a search of Worcestershire's Historic Environment Record (HER) was undertaken of a 1km area around Wolverley village. Historic mapping was also consulted. A summary of the results of this research are presented below and in Figures 8-12.

Prehistory

No prehistoric sites have been recorded in the area immediately around Wolverley, however, a Palaeolithic axe was discovered in the grounds of Wolverley Lodge in 1931 (WSM00218). Additionally, several flint scatters from the wider area range from the Early Mesolithic and Neolithic through to the Late Iron Age (WSM12238, WSM12243, WSM12244 and WSM12245). An Historic England funded project also identified geological deposits with the potential to contain archaeology material dating back 475,000 years.

Roman (43 – 409AD)

No Roman sites have been recorded in the vicinity, however, there are records of three 1st to 3rd century coins found (WSM66158, WSM74921 and WSM76497).

Anglo-Saxon (410 – 1065)

Settlement activity is recorded at 'Uluardele' from the 9th century onwards (WSM12718), although no archaeological evidence from this era has been recorded to date.

Medieval (1066 – 1539)

Settlement activity continued into the medieval period, with records of the unlocated hamlet of Woodhamcote (WSM06740). A medieval manor may also have existed on the site of the late Wolverley Court (WSM27911), although this suggestion is unsubstantiated. Contemporary farming activity is evidenced at Bury Hall Farm (WSM12721), Wolverley tithe barn (WSM12700) and an area of ridge and furrow to the south of Lea Castle (WSM78224). The Domesday Survey of 1086 shows that there was a mill in Wolverley, with others thought to have been built in the 13th and 15th centuries (WSM24476).

Post-medieval (1540 – 1900)

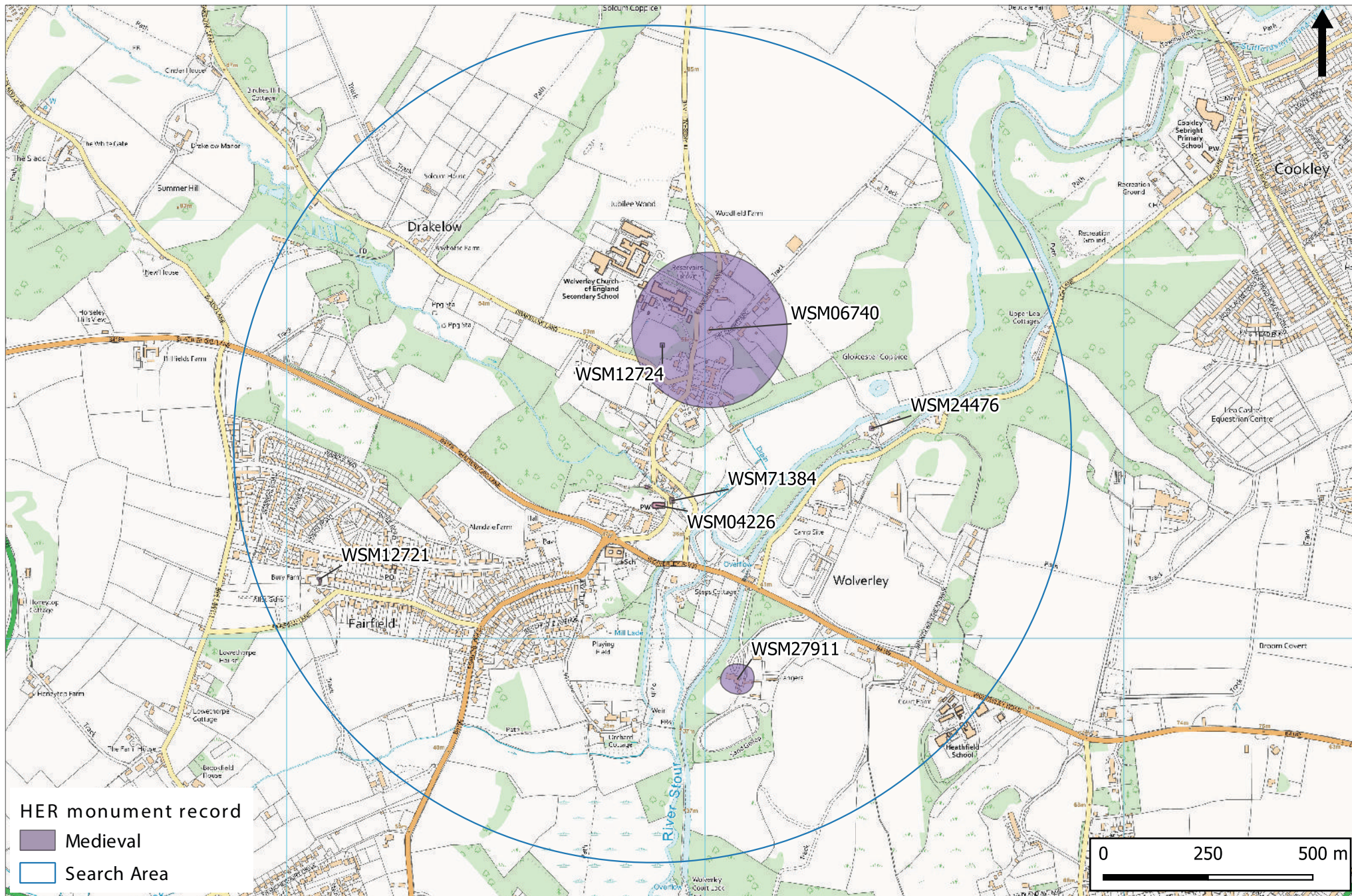
The Wolverley area contains a number of surviving historic buildings, of which 17 are listed. The earliest structures include Wolverley Court (WSM08165), Hill House (WSM41999) and Northend House (WSM73818), which were constructed in or by the 17th century. Other buildings from this period include timber framed and brick cottages, St Johns Church (WSM04226) and The Queen's Head coaching inn (WSM73722). The year 1772 saw the opening of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal (WSM12001) and associated infrastructure, such as the Lock Inn (WSM73714) and Wolverley Forge Bridge (WSM73711). The rise of industrialisation led to wealthy families in the area building Wolverley House (WSM12702) with its walled garden (WSM44992) and Lea Castle (WSM28847), as well as the creation of parkland around Wolverley Court (WSM28936).

Modern (1901 – present)

The 20th century saw an expansion of the village to the south of the B4189. During WWII a hospital was built in the grounds of Lea Castle for American troops (WSM17233).

Archaeological Investigations

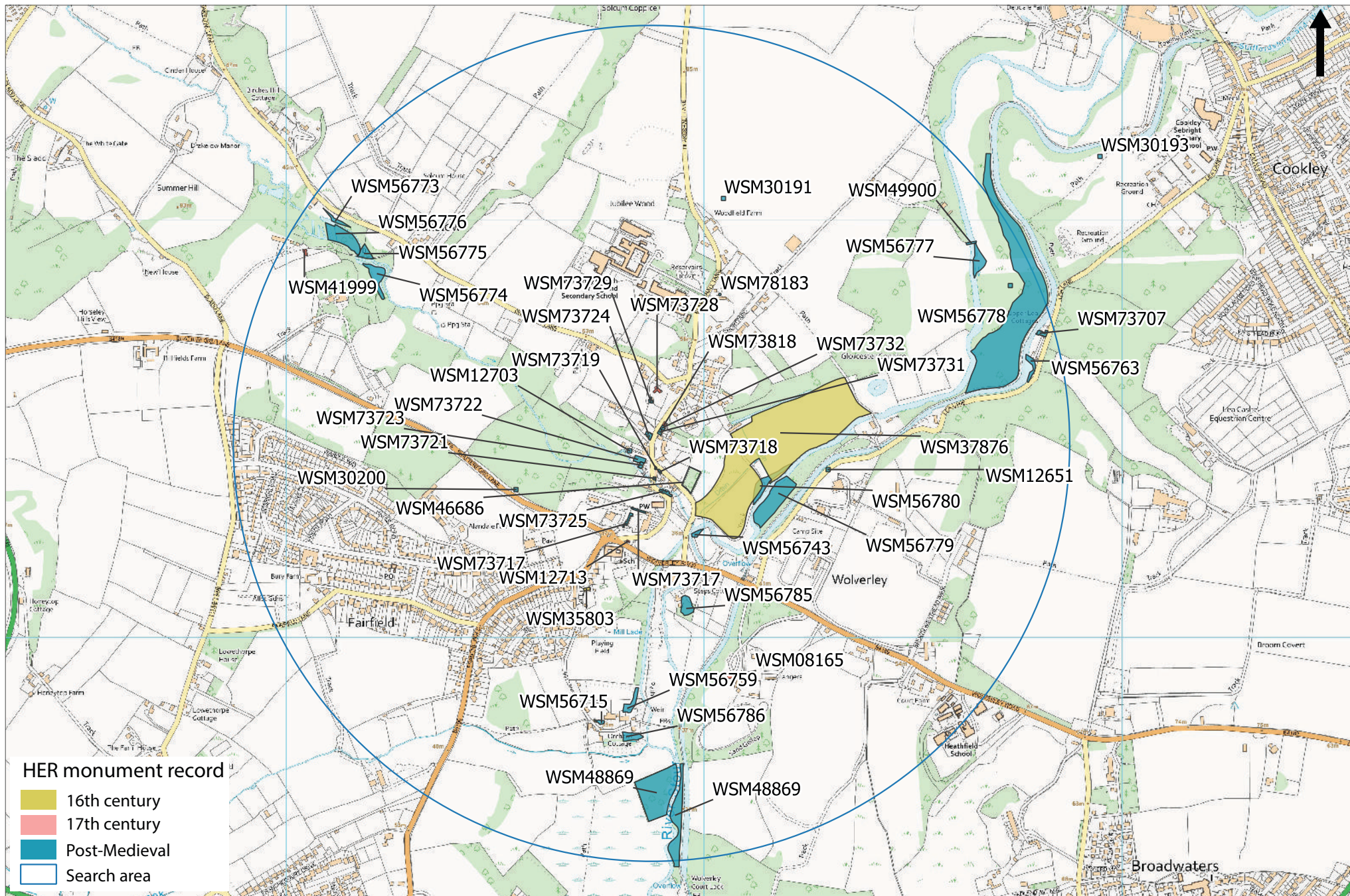
Relatively little archaeological work has taken place in the area and even less fieldwork, as the majority of events recorded with the HER are desk-based assessments or unstratified findspots from chance discoveries. In 2018, a geophysical survey (WSM72954) and evaluation (WSM70894) took place at Lea Castle – the former identified little besides ridge and furrow. A watching brief also took place at the Walled Garden in 2019-20 (WSM72046), which recorded a circular brick structure that corresponds to historic mapping and was likely built as part of Wolverley House estate.



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Medieval monuments recorded on the HER

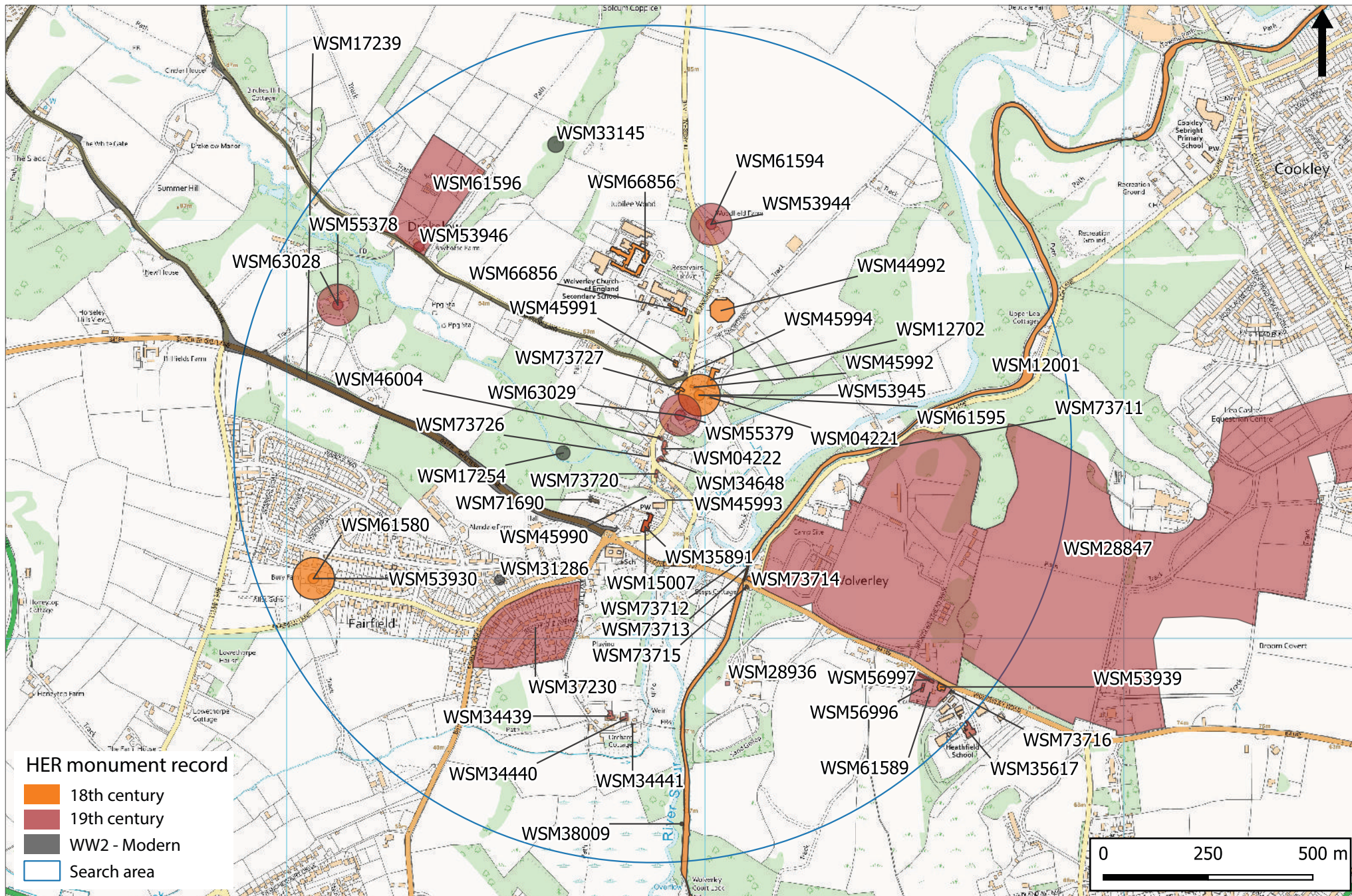
Figure 8



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Post-Medieval monuments recorded on the HER

Figure 9

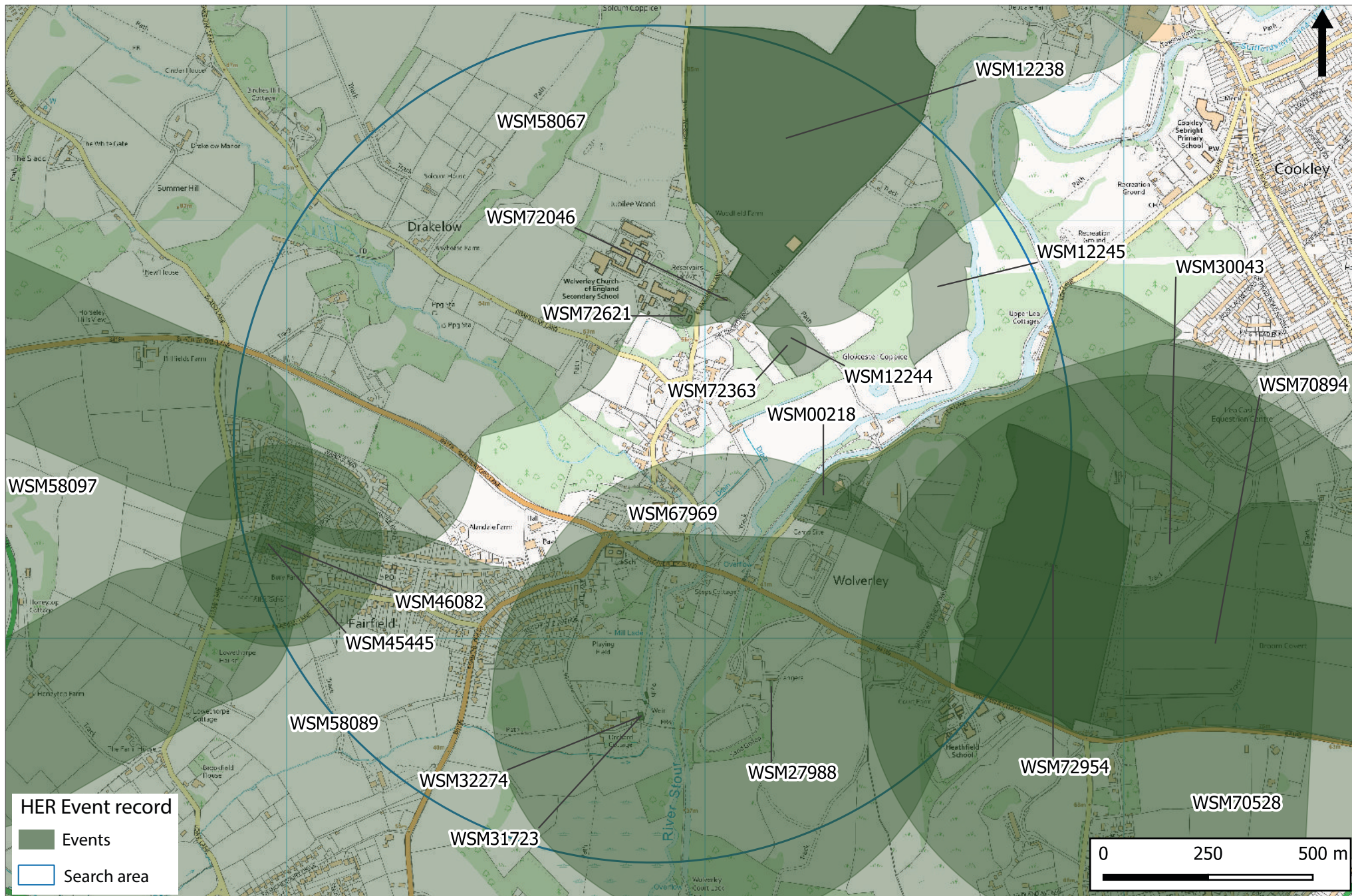


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Modern monuments recorded on the HER

Figure 10





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Events recorded on the HER

Figure 12

Appendix 2: Methodology & spit descriptions

Project methodology

Location

Fifteen test pits were excavated across Wolverley, north of Kidderminster (SO 82881 79413) over the 11th – 12th June 2022. Test pits were randomly spread across the village in private gardens. Test pits were located by preference close to the back of houses where rubbish was historically often thrown.

Aims

The archaeological aims were to:

- Further our understanding of the form, character and development of rural medieval settlements in Worcestershire, as it is an area lacking research (Hunt 2011: 176).
- Investigate where the medieval settlement that is recorded in the Domesday survey for Wolverley may be located.

Fieldwork methodology

The fieldwork model used here follows that developed by Professor Carenza Lewis for researching Currently Occupied Medieval Rural Settlements (CORS) and used extensively in East Anglia with considerable success (for methodology in full, see Lewis 2007). Instead of recording conventional archaeological contexts, excavation focused on the recovery of artefacts and the depths at which they are discovered, as Lewis' methodology uses the presence, quantity and condition of pottery as a proxy indicator for occupation. This method of excavating in spits also makes it easy for those without archaeological training to participate.

Each test pit covered a 1m² area and was de-turf then excavated by hand in 10cm spits. Spoil was checked for finds, using a 1cm mesh sieve where possible, and artefacts separated by spit. A pro forma record booklet was used to record soil descriptions and inclusions within each spit, and photographs were taken regularly. The majority of test pits reached natural, but several were not completed due to time constraints. Test pits were photographed and drawn in both section and plan before being backfilled and any turf reinstated. The precise location of each test pit was recorded by GPS.

Personnel

Fieldwork was undertaken by local volunteers with the support of Worcestershire Archaeology.

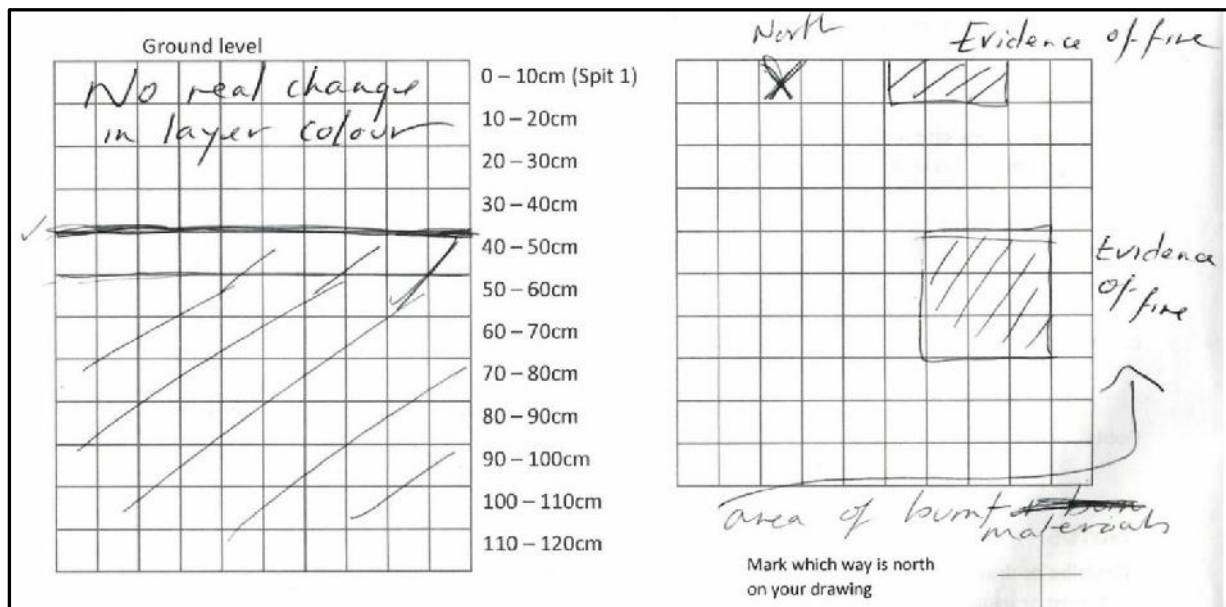
Archive

The HER event number for this investigation is WSM71430 and the WAAS project number is CE004. The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowners it is anticipated that it will be deposited with Museums Worcestershire and the digital archive sent to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

Spit records

Test Pit 1 (SO 82991 80015)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose mid rich brown sand	Abundant small stones, charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
2	Loose mid/dark rich orangey brown sand	Occasional charcoal flecks and abundant small roots	Yes
3	Loose mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small pebbles, rare charcoal and small roots	Yes
4	Loose dark orangey brown sand	Occasional charcoal flecks and abundant small roots	Yes



Drawing 1: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 1. (Each square equals 10cm)



Photo 1: North-facing section of Test Pit 1

Test Pit 2 (SO 83047 79852)

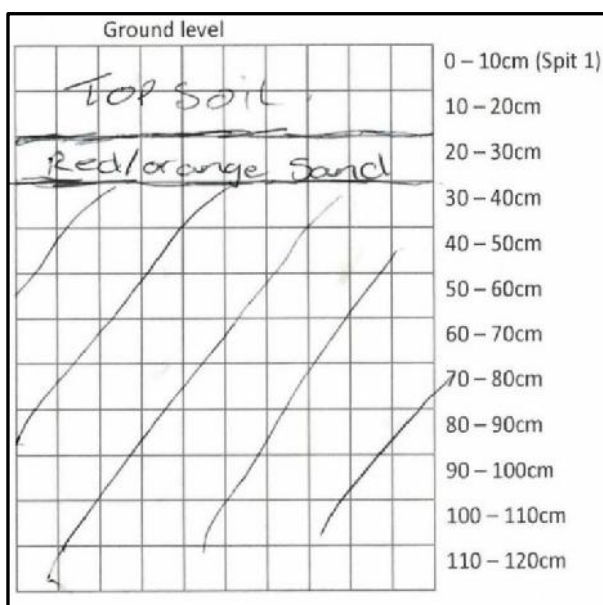
Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Firm mid blackish brown sand	Occasional medium and small stones, small roots and rare charcoal flecks	Yes
2	Firm mid blackish brown sandy silt	Rare small and medium stones and charcoal flecks. Occasional small roots	Yes
3	Firm mid blackish brown sandy silt	Occasional small and medium stones, rare charcoal flecks and abundant small roots	Yes
4	Firm mid blackish brown sandy silt	Occasional small and medium stones, charcoal flecks and small and medium roots	Yes
5	Loose/firm mid orangey blackish brown sandy silt	Occasional small and medium stones, charcoal flecks and small and medium roots	Yes
6	Firm mid orangey blackish brown sandy silt which stains fingers	Occasional small and medium stones, charcoal flecks and small and medium roots	Yes
7	Loose/firm light/mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small and medium stones, occasional charcoal flecks and small and medium roots	Yes



Photo 2: Test Pit 2, spit 7

Test Pit 3 (SO 82921 79658)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose mid orangey brown sandy silt	Abundant small and medium stones and occasional medium charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
2	Loose light/mid orangey blackish red brown	Occasional medium and large stones, rare large and medium charcoal flecks and rare small roots	Yes
3	Loose light orangey blackish brown sandy silt	Abundant small – large stones, occasional charcoal flecks and rare roots	Yes



Drawing 2: Section of Test Pit 3

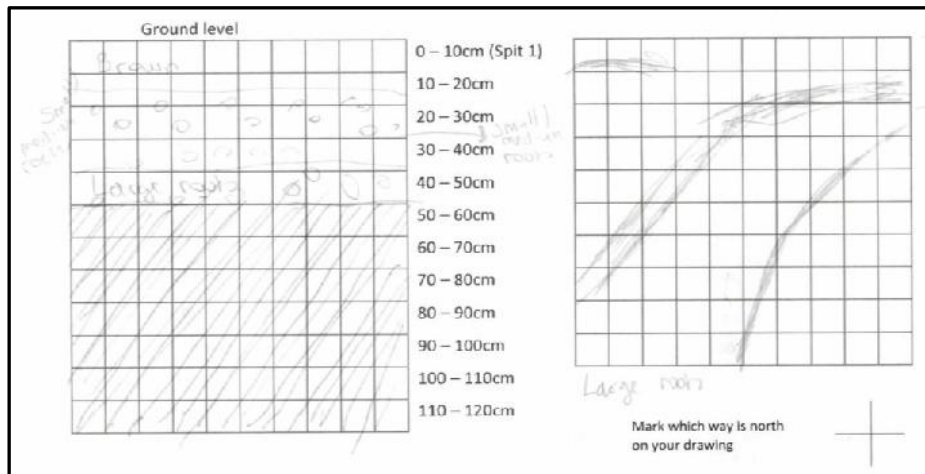


Photo 3: West-facing section of Test Pit 3

Test Pit 4 (SO 82985 79662)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose dark orangey brown sand	Abundant small and medium stones, medium charcoal flecks and small – large roots	Yes
2	Loose dark orangey brown sand	Abundant small and medium stones and small – large roots. Occasional medium charcoal	Yes
3	Loose dark orangey brown sand, small patch of red sand in southern half of pit	Occasional large stones, medium charcoal and abundant small – large roots	Yes

4	Loose light/mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small and medium stones, small and medium charcoal flecks and small to large roots	Yes
5	Loose light/mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small stones and small – large roots, occasional medium charcoal flecks	Yes



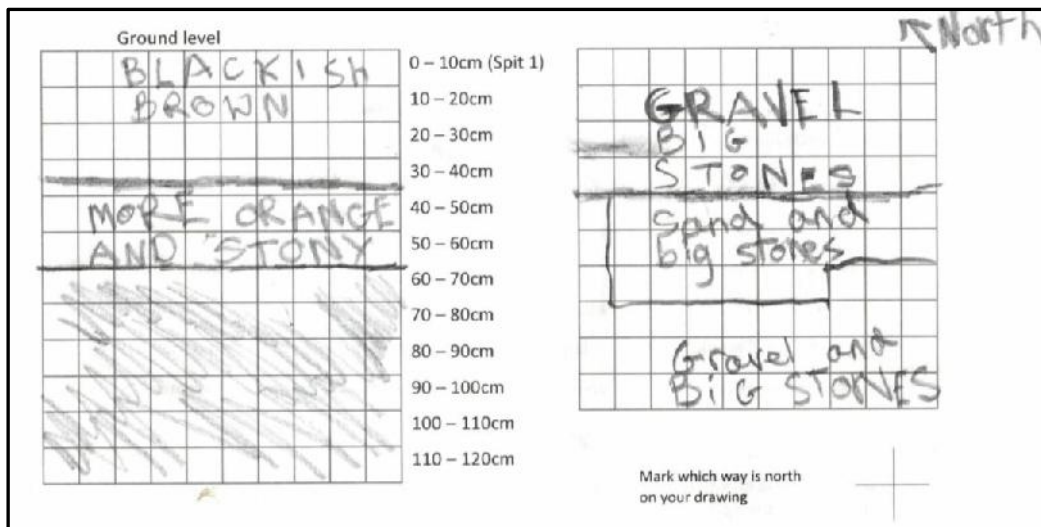
Drawing 3: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 4



Photo 4: North-facing section of Test Pit 4

Test Pit 5 (SO 82934 79576)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose mid blackish brown sand	Occasional small stones	Yes
2	Loose mid blackish brown sand	Occasional medium stones and small roots. Rare charcoal flecks	Yes
3	Loose mid orangey brown sand	Abundant medium stones, rare charcoal flecks and occasional small roots	Yes
4	Loose mid greyish brown sand	Abundant small and medium stones, rare charcoal flecks and occasional small roots	Yes
5	Loose mid orangey brown sand (base of spit was a layer of gravel)	Abundant large stones, rare charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
6			No
7	Loose mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small - large stones, rare charcoal flecks and small roots	No



Drawing 4. Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 5



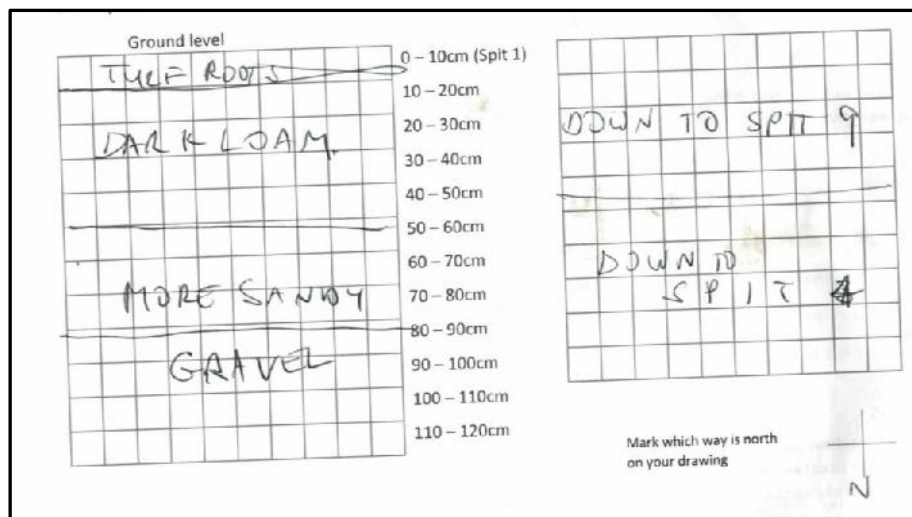
Photo 5: Test Pit 5, spit 6



Photo 6: South-west facing section of Test Pit 5

Test Pit 6 (SO 82892 79576)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose light greyish brown sand	Small and medium stones and rare charcoal flecks	Yes
2	Firm light orangey brown silt	Abundant small – large stones, occasional charcoal and occasional medium and large roots	Yes
3	Firm mid orangey brown silt	Abundant small – large stones, occasional medium charcoal flecks and medium roots	Yes
4	Loose and compact dark blackish brown sand (sondage in southern half)	Abundant small and medium stones, charcoal flecks and occasional roots	Yes
5	Loose orangey brown sand (sondage in southern half)	Occasional small stones, charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
6	Loose sand (sondage in southern half)	Abundant medium stones, rare charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
7	Loose mid orangey brown sand (sondage in southern half)	Abundant small and medium stones, occasional charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
8	Loose mid orangey brown sand (sondage in southern half)	Abundant small stones, rare charcoal flecks and occasional small stones	Yes
9	Loose mid orangey brown sand (sondage in southern half)	Abundant small and medium stones, rare charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes



Drawing 5: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 6



Photo 7: North facing section of Test Pit 6



Photo 8: Test Pit 6 showing sondage to spit 9

Test Pit 7 (SO 82881 79538)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose dark greyish brown silt	Abundant small and medium stones, medium roots and medium charcoal flecks	Yes
2	Loose mid orangey brown sand	Abundant medium stones, medium roots and occasional medium charcoal	Yes
3	Firm mid orangey brown sand	Abundant medium stones and roots, rare charcoal flecks	Yes
4	Loose light/mid orangey brown sand	Abundant medium stones and roots, occasional charcoal flecks	Yes
5	Loose light/mid orangey brown sand	Abundant medium stones and roots, occasional charcoal flecks	Yes



Drawing 6: South-facing section of Test Pit 7



Photo 9: Test Pit 7, spit 5

Test Pit 8 (SO 83024 79532)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional medium stones and small roots, rare medium charcoal	Yes
2	Loose dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional medium stones	Yes
3	Firm dark chocolate brown silt	Abundant medium stones, rare charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
4	Firm dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional medium stones and rare charcoal flecks. Occasional medium and rare small roots	Yes
5	Firm dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional small stones and medium roots, rare charcoal flecks	Yes
6	Firm dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional small stones and medium roots, rare charcoal flecks	Yes
7	Firm dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional small stones and medium roots, rare charcoal flecks	Yes
8	Firm dark chocolate brown silt	Occasional small stones and medium roots, rare medium charcoal flecks	Yes
9	Firm mid orangey brown silty sandstone	Occasional small stones and small roots, rare charcoal flecks	Yes
10	Firm mid orangey brown sand (sondage in northern half)	Occasional small stones and medium roots	Yes



Photo 10: Test Pit 8 showing spit 10 in the northern sondage



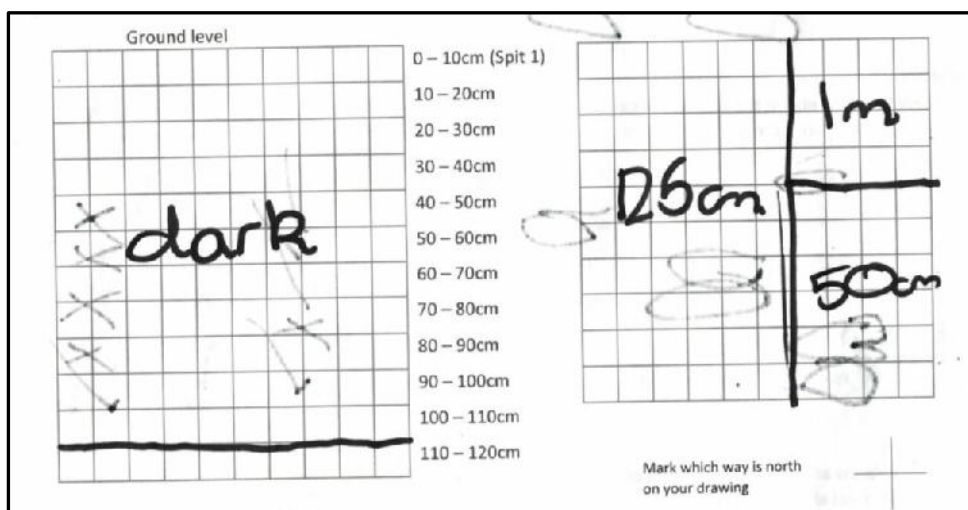
Photo 11: Test Pit 9, spit 10

Test Pit 9 (SO 82794 79450)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Firm mid blackish brown sand with orangey yellowish brown patches	Occasional small and large stones, small and medium roots and rare medium charcoal	Yes
2	Compact mid orangey yellowish blackish brown silt clay	Abundant small stones, large roots and occasional charcoal flecks	Yes
3	Loose mid orangey yellowish blackish brown sandy clay	Abundant large stones, medium roots and occasional large charcoal	Yes
4	Compact mid yellowish orangey brown clay with a heavily blackened area in one corner	Occasional small and medium stones, abundant large charcoal and rare medium roots	Yes

Test Pit 10 (SO 82928 79447)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose dark blackish brown sandy silt	Abundant small stones, large charcoal and medium roots	Yes
2	Firm mid blackish brown silt	Abundant medium stones, charcoal flecks and medium roots	Yes
3	Firm dark greyish brown silt (half sondage from this spit onwards)	Abundant Medium stones, large roots and rare charcoal flecks	Yes
4	Firm dark blackish brown silt	Rare medium stones and medium charcoal	No
5	Firm dark blackish brown silty clay (quarter sondage from this point onwards)	Abundant small stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
6	Firm dark blackish brown silty clay	Abundant small stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
7	Firm silty clay	Abundant small stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
8	Firm silty clay	Abundant small stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
9	Firm dark blackish brown silty clay	Abundant small stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
10	Firm dark blackish brown silty clay	Abundant small stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes



Drawing 7: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 10



Photo 12: Test Pit 10 showing spit 10 sondage in top right corner

Test Pit 11 (SO 82746 79114)

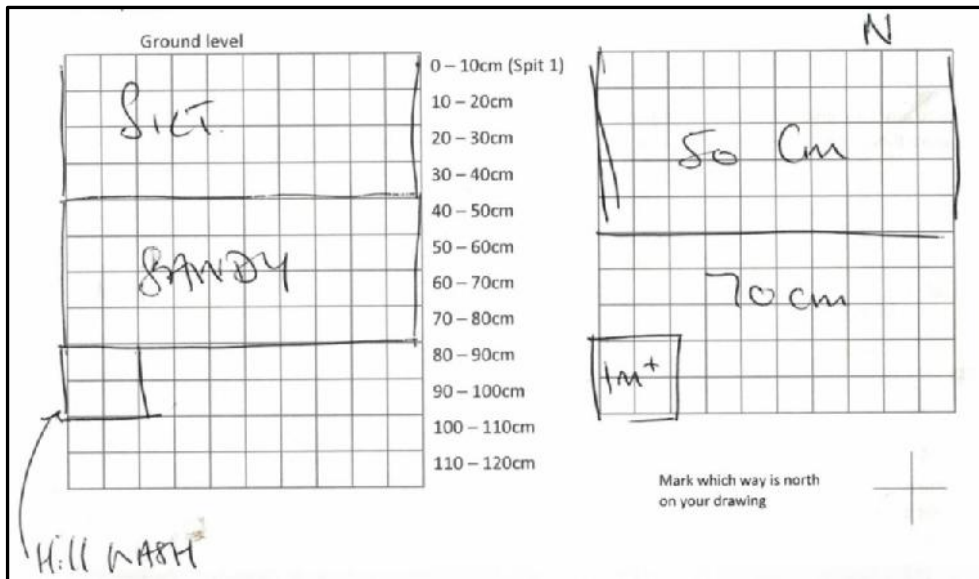
Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose mid blackish brown sand	Abundant medium stones, occasional medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
2	Firm dark greyish sand	Occasional medium stones, occasional large charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
3	Loose mid blackish brown sand	Abundant medium stones, occasional charcoal flecks and medium roots	Yes
4	Loose mid blackish brown sand	Abundant medium stones and charcoal flecks, occasional medium roots	Yes
5	Loose mid blackish brown silt	Occasional medium stones and medium roots, abundant charcoal flecks	Yes
6	Loose mid blackish brown sand	Occasional large stones and medium roots, abundant charcoal flecks	Yes
7	-	-	No



Photo 13: Test Pit 11 showing spit 7 in eastern sondage

Test Pit 12 (SO 82725 79107)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Firm dark blackish brown silt	Abundant medium stones and medium roots, rare medium charcoal flecks	Yes
2	Firm dark blackish brown silt	Abundant medium stones and medium roots, occasional medium charcoal	Yes
3	Loose mid orangey, greyish blackish brown sand silt	Occasional large stones, charcoal flecks and medium roots	Yes
4	Loose mid orangey, greyish brown sand silt	Occasional large and medium stones, medium charcoal and medium roots	Yes
5	Loose mid greyish blackish brown sand silt	Abundant small and medium stones, medium charcoal and occasional medium roots	Yes
6	Loose light orangey brown sand (sondage in southern half)	Abundant small and medium stones, medium charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
7	Loose light orangey brown sand	Abundant small and medium stones, large and medium charcoal flecks and occasional small roots	Yes



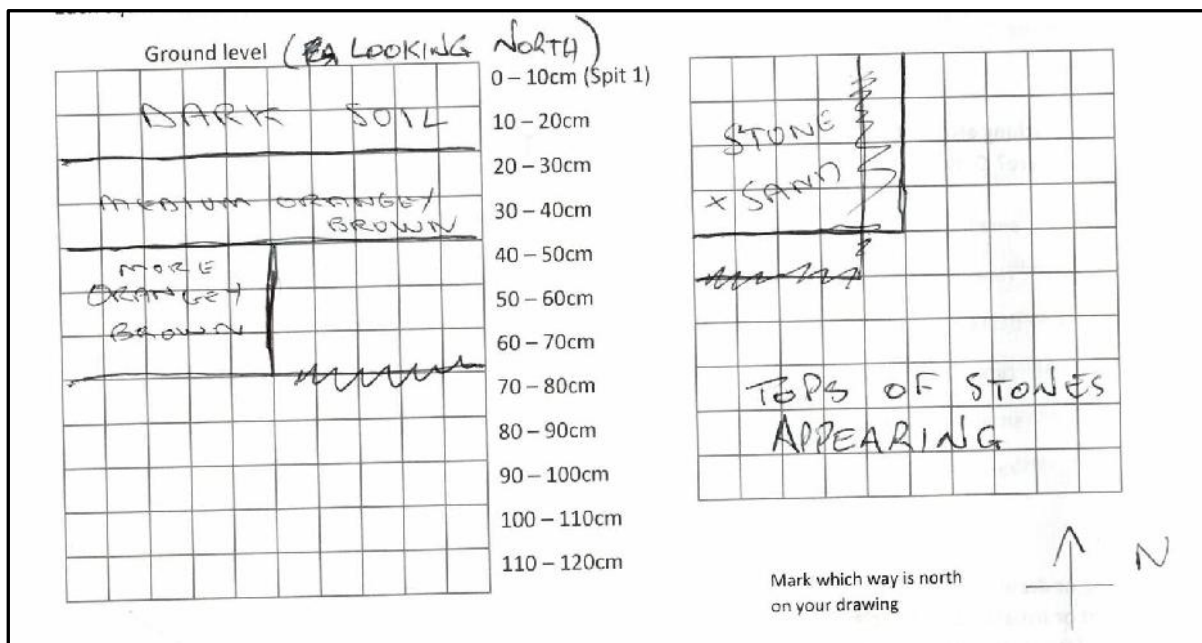
Drawing 8: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 12



Photo 14: Test Pit 12 with spit 7 visible in southern sondage

Test Pit 13 (SO 83045 78893)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Firm dark blackish brown sand	Rare small stones and abundant medium charcoal and small roots	Yes
2	Firm mid orangey brown sand	Small stones and rare charcoal flecks	Yes
3	Firm mid orangey brown sand	Small stones and occasional charcoal and roots	Yes
4	Firm mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small stones, occasional charcoal flecks and small roots	Yes
5	Compact mid orangey brown sand	Abundant small stones, rare charcoal and roots	Yes
6	Compact mid orangey brown sand	Abundant large stones (in a layer), rare charcoal flecks and occasional medium roots	Yes
7	Compact mid orangey brown sand (sondage in NW quarter)	Abundant large stones	Yes



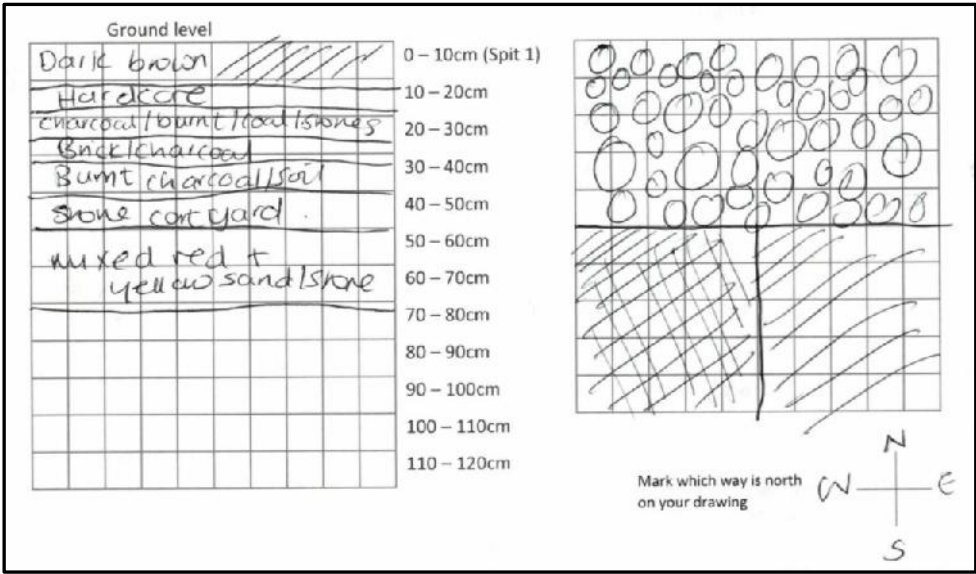
Drawing 9: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 13



Photo 15: Test Pit 13, spit 7

Test Pit 14 (SO 82817 78799)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose dark blackish brown sand	Occasional medium stones and rare charcoal flecks	Yes
2	Loose dark orangey brown sandy silt	Occasional mixed stones, rare charcoal flecks and small and medium roots	Yes
3	Firm dark blackish brown silt	Occasional mixed stones, abundant medium charcoal and small and medium roots	Yes
4	Compact dark blackish brown sandy silt	Abundant medium and small stones, occasional large charcoal and rare small roots	Yes
5	Firm dark blackish brown sandy silt	Abundant large stones and occasional charcoal flecks	Yes
6	Firm red sand	Occasional small stones	Yes
7	Firm yellow sand	Abundant small and medium stones	No



Drawing 10: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 14



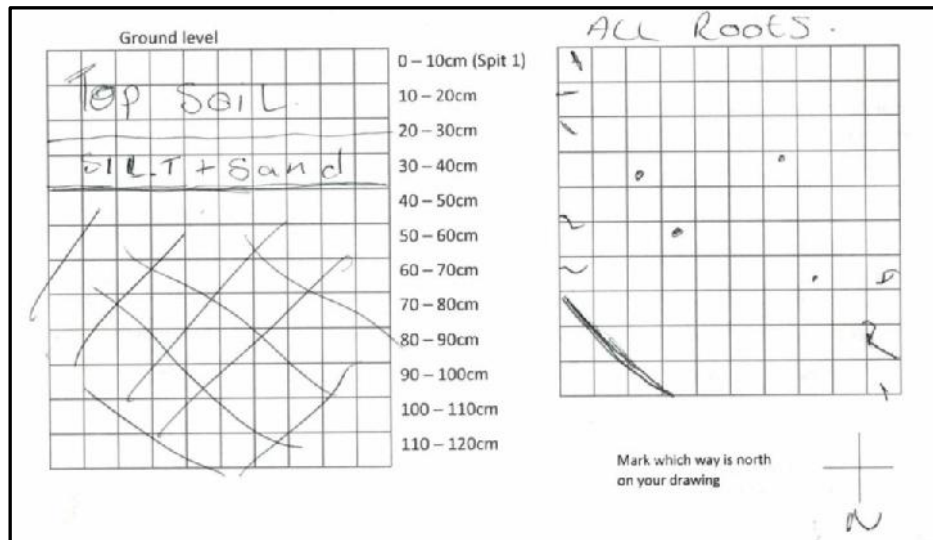
Photo 16: North-facing section of Test Pit 14



Photo 17: Test Pit 14 with spit 7 visible in south-east sondage

Test Pit 15 (SO 82917 79655)

Spit no.	Soil description	Inclusions	Artefacts
1	Loose mid blackish brown silt	Occasional small and medium stones, medium charcoal flecks and abundant small and medium roots	Yes
2	Loose/firm mid blackish brown silt	Abundant small stones, medium and large charcoal flecks and rare small and medium roots	Yes
3	Firm mid orangey greyish brown sandy silt	Abundant medium stones, medium and large charcoal and occasional medium roots	Yes
4	Firm/compact mid orangey brown sandy silt	Abundant mixed stones, Occasional large charcoal flecks and rare small roots	Yes



Drawing 11: Section (left) and plan (right) of Test Pit 15



Photo 18: North-facing section of Test Pit 15

Appendix 3: Finds analysis

By Rob Hedge

Aims

This assessment aims to quantify, spot-date and sort artefacts according to broad fabric groups, to describe their range and significance, and to draw inferences regarding the development of the settlement through the 2nd millennium AD.

Recovery strategy

All artefacts were hand-recovered by volunteers under the supervision of WAAS staff and volunteers from local archaeological societies.

Standards and guidance

The project conforms to standards and guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa 2014) and Cifa's Toolkit for Specialist Reporting, as well as further guidance on pottery analysis, archive creation and museum deposition created by various pottery study groups (PCRG/SGRP/MPRG 2016), the Archaeological Archives Forum (AAF 2011), and the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993).

Methodology

Background

This region, at the confluence of the historic counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire, is somewhat poorly-understood in terms of medieval pottery. In part, this lacuna has arisen because of a paucity of large, modern archaeological excavations of the type that have traditionally allowed specialists to build up an in-depth picture of pottery typology (e.g. Bryant 2002, 2004; Rátkai 2014). It is also likely that many sites of small-scale medieval pottery production in the region are yet to be detected; potting could be informal, may not have formed the entirety of a producer's livelihood, and small medieval 'Musty'-type kilns may have left relatively little archaeological trace.

Shropshire

The study of medieval pottery in Shropshire presents a number of challenges. Barker's (1970) synthesis of 11th to 14th-century pottery in the county set a solid baseline, but the paucity of well-stratified sequences and excavated kiln sites left the chronological sequence 'disappointingly vague' (Barker 1970, 42). In the intervening half-century, significant progress has been made with the publication of a number of large assemblages: key among these is the pottery from the Queen Anne House site, Shrewsbury Abbey (Bryant 2002), which forms the basis for a comprehensive fabric series held by Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. Further work by Rátkai (e.g. 2014) on the pottery of the Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth region has enhanced understanding of the pottery sequence for central and south Shropshire, but it is still centred on towns; knowledge of the dynamics of production and supply in rural south Shropshire remains patchy.

Staffordshire

Although similarly hampered by a paucity of excavated medieval kilns, the overall picture for Staffordshire was outlined by Deborah Ford (1995): a series of iron-rich sandy wares (IRSW) and Midlands white wares (MWW) dominate 13th and 14th century assemblages, giving way to late medieval orange wares (LMOW) and Midlands Purple which dominate 15th and 16th century assemblages. Much of the pottery production was concentrated in Northern and Central Staffordshire. Wednesbury was a significant producer in the later medieval period. Early production in south Staffordshire has been suggested based on place-name evidence at Crockington, near Trysull (20km to the north of Wolverley), but the etymology is somewhat uncertain and there is little archaeological evidence to suggest pottery production there (Horovitz 2003).

Worcestershire

The county-wide fabric system for Worcestershire (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org) has comprehensive coverage of medieval material noted from major sites, but this is inevitably somewhat skewed towards urban assemblages from the central and southern parts of the county. The relative scarcity of large-scale developer-funded archaeological work in the north of the county leaves some gaps.

Reference collections and concordances

Pottery is referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the Worcestershire fabric reference series. Given its limitations (outlined above), supplementary codes and descriptions from other relevant fabric series have been included where appropriate. Numbers beginning from 400 refer to site-specific fabric types. These have been used where fabrics are sufficiently different from anything in the Worcestershire series to warrant their own numbers. Among these, further concordances may emerge with material in Shropshire and Staffordshire series in the future. Pottery sherds that could not be identified, or were too small to be identified accurately by fabric, were grouped as miscellaneous by period.

Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were washed by volunteers. They were examined, classified and quantified under the supervision of David Collier, who summarised the quantification in an Excel spreadsheet and bagged the finds by material type for each spit. These quantifications were used as the basis for the subsequent analysis by Rob Hedge. Due to the large quantity of material, priority was given to those artefacts readily dateable by eye to relatively narrow date ranges, such as pottery and glass. Other material, such as undiagnostic CBM and iron that could not be reliably dated without further specialist imaging, was typically assigned a broad date range. All information was recorded in Google Sheets.

Individual artefacts or groups of artefacts within each spit were assigned calendar date ranges. For clarity and ease of interpretation, these have been grouped into Periods in the tables below. These reflect changing traditions and technological developments rather than strict historical categories. Many types of artefact cross these somewhat arbitrary boundaries, and so the quantification tables (tables 3 and 4) include the period range, e.g. 'transitional to post-medieval' to account for these.

Period	Description	Start date	End date	Centuries
1	Prehistoric	-10000	43	-
2	Roman	43	400	1st to 4th
3	Early medieval	400	1066	5th to mid-11th
4	High medieval	1066	1350	mid-11th to mid-14th
5	Late medieval	1350	1500	mid-14th to 15th
6	Transitional	1500	1600	16th
7	Post-medieval	1600	1800	17th to 18th
8	Later post-medieval	1800	1900	19th
9	Modern	1900	2000	20th

Table 1: Period dates

Results

Quantification

The assemblage comprised 4163 artefacts weighing 48.3kg. Finds were recovered from all 15 test pits, although the volumes ranged considerably across the locations.

The following table quantifies the finds by material class and object type.

material	object type	count	weight(g)
bone	bird bone	2	2
	mammal bone	123	531
	worked bone	1	48
bone Total		126	581
ceramic	brick	33	6170
	brick and tile	967	9304
	clay marble	1	6
	clay pipe	159	325
	drain tile	7	410
	figurine	4	8
	flat roof tile	216	9193
	glazed ridge tile	1	19
	hearth material	2	68
	pot	1092	4896
	pot waster	1	8
	ridge tile	2	230
	tile	1	107

material	object type	count	weight(g)
	unident	3	45
	vitrified brick	2	729
	wall tile	35	404
	wig curler	1	9
ceramic Total		2527	31931
composite	bottle stopper	1	21
	circuit board	2	1
	strap	4	3
composite Total		7	25
concrete	concrete	1	25
concrete Total		1	25
copper alloy	button	1	7
	coin	1	9
	grill	1	1
	pin	1	3
copper alloy Total		4	20
flint	chip	1	1
	flake	1	3
	modified flake	1	3
flint Total		3	7
glass	?window	1	2
	melted glass	6	26
	stopper	1	9
	vessel	220	1156
	window	230	1338
glass Total		458	2531
graphite	battery rod	1	1
graphite Total		1	1
iron	agricultural		
	iron	32	383
	bar/pin	1	36
	fe object	53	1640
	iron plate	4	87
	nail	74	558
	ring	1	6
iron Total		165	2710
lead	?window		
	came	1	10
lead Total		1	10
lead alloy	weight	1	4
lead alloy Total		1	4
mortar	cement mortar	3	37
	lime mortar	12	238
mortar Total		15	275

material	object type	count	weight(g)
organic	charcoal	48	36
	coal	330	644
organic Total		378	680
plaster	wall plaster	7	55
plaster Total		7	55
polymer	molten plastic	1	1
polymer Total		1	1
rubber	codd bottle		
	washer	1	2
	fanbelt	2	18
	rubber	1	14
rubber Total		4	34
sandstone	block	1	113
	stone tile	4	369
sandstone Total		5	482
slag	fuel ash slag	84	328
	iron tap slag	1	134
	slag (unident)	3	11
	slag(fe)	107	1093
	smithing slag	175	5868
slag Total		370	7434
slate	roof slate	57	700
	tile	1	5
slate Total		58	705
steel	window	1	1
steel Total		1	1
stone	burnt		
	?limestone	6	96
	burnt stone	9	71
	calcite block	1	262
	chalk	1	1
	limestone	7	135
	slab	2	133
stone marble	1	7	
stone Total		27	705
tinplate	label	1	1
tinplate Total		1	1
unident	?bitumen	2	40
unident Total		2	40
Grand Total		4163	48258

Table 2: finds quantification by material and type

Pottery

Roman (Period 2)

A single, heavily abraded sherd of oxidised Severn Valley Ware (fabric 12) of 1st to 4th-century date was recovered from the topmost spit of TP13.

Medieval/transitional (Periods 4-6)

Dating

The earliest diagnostic sherds were 'cooking-pot' jar rims dating from the mid-12th to the mid-14th century. These are often difficult to date with precision, but some closely resemble Worcester types dated to the 13th century, and the pronounced internal lip — a 'lid-seat' — visible on a number of examples is typical of this date.

It is possible that some of the undiagnostic body sherds may be slightly earlier, but rural sites in the region do seem to have more access to ceramic vessels from the middle of the 12th century onwards.

There are no diagnostic forms belonging to the late-14th or early/mid-15th century. This pattern is frequently taken to indicate depopulation after the crises of the early and mid-14th century, but caution should be exercised: first, the fact that simple utilitarian ceramic cooking pots cease to be produced by the late-14th century deprives us of one of the most common forms: these vessels broke often, and are thus over-represented in the archaeological record. Second, it is often difficult to separate late-medieval vessels from the 'transitional' vessels of the later-15th and 16th centuries.

That 'transitional' period is represented here by a small quantity of Midlands Purple ware and a range of hard-fired, oxidised, patchily-glazed vessels that span the late-15th to the early-17th century.

Sources

The assemblage is notable for the variety and range of sources: Worcester-type unglazed wares (fabric 55) make up a number of the 12th to 14th century cooking pots, characterised by rounded quartz inclusions. These were produced at a wide range of sites in the Worcester basin; it is likely that among this group are the products of potters named at Elmley Lovett and perhaps even Bromsgrove. But it is clear that these Worcester-type potters did not supply all of the utilitarian vessels in use at Wolverley, for there are a few that are not a good match for any fabric currently within the Worcester series.

Parallels with another rural settlement to the west of the Severn at Stottesdon (Bryant 2014) suggest that Bridgnorth and Ludlow were possible sources for the region. However, both Stottesdon and Wolverley assemblages contain vessels that are not a good match for known products of these towns. In the case of Wolverley, TP 5/3 contained sherds of green-glazed and unglazed Staffordshire whitewares (fabrics 64.2 and 64.4), a common source of bright-glazed jugs in the 13th and 14th century along the Severn Valley. But there are also sherds in iron-poor, micaceous fabrics that are notably different to the Staffordshire products. One (fabric 405) included small fragments of carbonised wood that appears to be coal. An origin close to Coal Measures geology is likely, but it also appears to contain igneous rock. This combination is unusual, though igneous intrusions are

known from Titterstone Clee, some 30 km to the west. It is likely that local pottery production was taking place in a number of locations in North Worcestershire, Southeast Shropshire and South Staffordshire, that have not been identified through archaeological or historical work to date.

Other sources included the Malvernian industries on the Severn, centred in the Hanleys. Early Malvernian ware was noted at Stottesdon, but none is immediately apparent here. But the presence of the later, glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) suggests it was a source in the late-15th to early-17th centuries. At this period, Midlands Purple and Cistercian wares were also evidently arriving in Wolverley, mostly from Staffordshire sources. Perhaps the most intriguing vessel is one dating to this period: 2 conjoining fragments from TP6/3 and TP6/6 are from a straight-sided bowl with a pronounced internal lip, evidently intended to support a lid. One the outside is a small lug, protruding 25mm from the body. The vessel is internally-glazed, and the fabric (403) is hard-fired, sandy, and micaceous. Its origin and function are elusive.

Post-medieval (Periods 7-8)

From the 17th century onwards, the assemblage is dominated by black-glazed redware (fabric 78); these came from a wide range of sources, but most are likely to have originated in Staffordshire. Alongside these were small quantities of black-glazed buffwares, which were evidently from the same tradition as Manganese mottled wares, and are likely to have been contemporary.

Small quantities of Midlands Yellow ware (including one from TP5/4) were of late-16th to 18th-century date. Later-17th and 18th century Staffordshire slipwares and Nottingham stonewares were numerous. The 18th century emergence of white tablewares seems to have arrived relatively late: there is relatively little of the white salt-glazed stoneware that was elsewhere (e.g. Wichenford) a source of refined tablewares before 1760. Relatively little porcelain was observed, perhaps reflecting the reduced availability of seconds in comparison to rural settlements closer to the Worcester factories.

By the late-18th century, creamwares and pearlwares in a wide variety of decorated forms — hand-painted, engine-turned, annular, and marbled — were numerous.

<i>period</i>	<i>fabric code</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>count</i>	<i>weight(g)</i>
2: Roman	12	Oxidised Severn Valley Ware	1	2
2: Roman Total			1	2
4-5: high to late medieval	64.2	Glazed sandy white ware	2	11
	64.4	Unglazed sandy white ware	2	8
	404	Iron-rich sandy ware, sandstone & iron	10	117
	407	IRSW, micaceous & sandstone	7	21
	408	Glazed IRSW, sandstone and iron	1	2

<i>period</i>	<i>fabric code</i>	<i>description</i>	count	weight(g)
4-5: high to late medieval Total			22	159
4-6: medieval to transitional	401	Late med oxidised ware, streaked red-slipped	3	18
	403	IRSW, sandstone & voids	12	355
4-6: medieval to transitional Total			15	373
4: high medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy ware	10	106
	99	Misc medieval	2	7
	400	Medieval white ware, iron ore	1	22
	402	MWW, grey sandstone	1	14
	405	Coarse sandy, coal	3	29
	407	IRSW, micaceous & sandstone	1	31
4: high medieval Total			18	209
5-6: late med/transitional	81	Continental stoneware	1	2
	108	Midlands Purple	2	14
	403	IRSW, sandstone & voids	1	6
5-6: late med/transitional Total			4	22
5-7: late medieval to post-med	69	Oxidised glazed Malvernian	3	35
	99	Misc medieval	1	4
5-7: late medieval to post-med Total			4	39
6-7: transitional / early post-med	77	Midlands yellow	4	27
	78.4	Redware speckled	1	2
6-7: transitional/early post-med Total			5	29

<i>period</i>	<i>fabric code</i>	<i>description</i>	count	weight(g)
6: transitional	72	Redware brown speckled	4	16
6: transitional Total			4	16
7-8: post-med	78	Redwares	1	1
		RW unglazed	90	843
	81	Unident. stoneware	1	4
	83	Porcelain	4	3
		Porcelain gilt	2	3
		Porcelain hand-painted	1	4
	84	Creamware plain	108	243
		CW annular	2	2
		CW annular/geometric/cable	3	6
		CW engine-turned	2	1
		CW hand-painted polychrome	2	2
		CW marbled	2	16
	85.11	Pearlwares (plain)	17	34
		PW blue	1	3
		PW hand-painted blue	6	11
		PW rouletted	1	1
	90	Post-med orange wares	1	1
7-8: post-medieval Total			244	1178
7: earlier post-med	77	Midlands yellow	1	4
	78	Redwares (misc)	2	4
		RW black-glazed	141	841
		RW brown-glazed	7	20
		RW streaked	1	1
		RW unglazed	11	122

<i>period</i>	<i>fabric code</i>	<i>description</i>	count	weight(g)
	78.4	RW speckled	1	2
	81.3	Nottingham stoneware	26	81
	81.5	White salt-glazed stoneware	6	7
	82	Tin-glazed earthenware	4	6
	90	Orange wares	2	8
	91	brown-glazed buff	3	15
		Mang mott	13	39
		Metro slip	1	3
		Staffordshire	2	3
		Staff. comb	10	37
		Staff. comb/trail	2	8
		Staff. Trail	2	35
		Staff. trail/dot	2	9
	100	Misc post-med	1	1
7: earlier post-medieval Total			238	1246
8-9: late post-med to modern				
	78	RW unglazed	71	506
	81.4	Misc late	25	232
	83	Porcelain	1	1
		Porcelain, blue	2	7
	85	Whitewares (misc)	18	26
		WW annular	4	4
		WW blue shell-edge	3	6
		WW plain	187	290
		WW transfer-printed	40	56
		WW transfer-printed black	1	1
		WW transfer-printed blue	70	147

<i>period</i>	<i>fabric code</i>	<i>description</i>	count	weight(g)
		WW transfer-printed red	4	6
	91	Yellowware	21	58
	100	Misc post-med	7	46
8-9: late post-medieval to modern Total			454	1386
8: late post-med	85	Whitewares (misc)	1	1
		WW annular	4	12
		WW blue shell-edge	1	1
		WW blue sponge	1	1
		WW cable-decorated	1	3
		WW engine-turned	5	8
		WW flow blue	3	4
		WW Misc factory slipware	4	28
		WW gilt-decorated	7	24
		WW hand-painted	11	22
		WW hand-painted polychrome	5	11
		WW hand-painted red	1	2
		WW moulded blue	1	2
		WW plain	9	28
		WW red sponge	2	2
		WW rouletted	1	1
		WW shell blue	2	1
		WW sponge blue	2	2
		WW transfer-printed	8	19
		WW transfer-printed black	2	2
		WW transfer-printed blue	8	18
	91	brown-glazed buffware	1	34

<i>period</i>	<i>fabric code</i>	<i>description</i>	count	weight(g)
	100	Misc post-med	1	1
8: late post-medieval Total			81	227
9: modern	101		1	9
		misc modern	1	1
9: modern Total			2	10

Table 3: pottery fabrics by period

Ceramic building material

Ceramic building materials are difficult to date in this region, especially where fragments are small and lack diagnostic features. Generally speaking, brick was rare before the later-15th century, and before the 17th century tended to be restricted to chimneys. From the 17th century onwards it became more common, but there are (as yet) few consistent documented trends in fabrics.

Flat roof tile was widespread within urban areas from the 13th century onwards. Medieval and early post-medieval fabrics are relatively well-documented for Worcester (Fagan 2004), but the majority of tiles in use in Wolverley are more likely to have been locally made. There is, furthermore, a problem of residuality: it is very common to encounter flat roof tile re-used in later structures. Ridge tiles are less common in archaeological assemblages: this is largely due to the difficulty of identifying small fragments, the fact that they are typically less likely to fall and shatter, and the low overall proportion of them within a roof. They were generally glazed, although unglazed examples are also found.

Small undiagnostic fragments can generally only be assigned a broad 13th to 18th-century date. However, there were a number of trends that could be observed from larger fragments.

Roof tile

Although a medieval origin could not be ruled out for much of the tile, the paucity of tiles with a reduced core suggests that the majority were no earlier than the late-15th century. This is typical of rural assemblages and does not reflect the absence of buildings, simply that the majority of rural medieval structures were thatched.

Flat roof tile with small rounded iron slag inclusions (tile fabric 5) is also present across the site. At sites around Worcester (Griffin 2008), this tile is generally associated with deposits of 16th to 18th-century date, and is most common in 18th-century contexts.

Test pit 5 contained both unglazed and glazed ridge tile, of 13th to 16th century date. The fabrics were not a good match for known products of the Worcester and Malvernian industries; sandstone inclusions in the unglazed tile suggest a local origin. The glazed tile was in a sandy fabric with flecks of gold mica and a thick olive-green glaze.

Brick

One complete handmade brick of 2" thickness was recovered from test pit 2: these are traditionally associated with mid-15th or 16th-century construction of brick elements such as chimneys, though bricks of this thickness are likely to have persisted through the 17th century.

Other materials

Slag

Large quantities of slag were present across the settlement, but particular concentrations were noted in TP 1 and 2. Smithing slag associated with ironworking was most common, and TP1 contained heavily-vitrified fragments of 19th or 20th century firebrick, suggesting the presence of a forge nearby. TP2 also contained several examples resembling bloomery slag that are typically products of iron production. Although the quantity is not sufficient to suggest iron production close to the test pit, it may suggest that it took place somewhere within the settlement. The occurrence of ironworking waste elsewhere in the test pits is hard to interpret: it may be the residue of low-level ironworking, but some degree of import of smithing slags as hardcore was a common feature of post-medieval rural settlement.

Glass

A large quantity of window glass and domestic vessel glass was recovered. The majority dated to the 19th and early-20th centuries. Earlier examples included the lip from an 18th-century bottle from TP8. The majority was typical post-medieval lime-rich (HLLA) glass, but several badly-abraded pieces from TP6 may be forest glass and are likely to be medieval or early post-medieval in date.

TP13 contained an unusual conglomeration of shattered and partially-molten window glass, probably the result of an attempt to burn building rubble.

Flint

Three pieces of prehistoric worked flint were recovered, from TPs 2, 8, and 12. None were closely dateable, but all were generally characteristic of Neolithic or later flintworking. The raw material was pebble flint of varying quality. The pieces comprised a small chip and two flakes, one of which had been casually modified to add a serrated edge to the right lateral margin.

Clay pipe

Although clay pipe fragments were numerous, diagnostic bowls and/or stamps were frustratingly scarce. A number of late-18th century examples were noted, including several with an indecipherable initial stamp either side of the spur. The most unusual pipeclay object was a partial wig-curler from TP10, dating from the late-17th or 18th century.

Bone

The animal bone assemblage comprised typical domestic butchery waste, but among the material from TP12 was an unusual piece of worked bone. It comprised the 1st phalanx from a horse, with a neatly-drilled hole extending straight down from the proximal articular surface, connecting with a crudely-drilled hole in the distal portion of the anterior face. No associated marks from wear or

staining were observed, and the object's function remains unclear. Associated pottery suggests a later-18th/early-9th century date.

List of finds by test pit

The following table outlines the quantity and date of each type of material from each test pit.

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
	1 bone	mammal bone	10: undated	1	12
	ceramic	brick	7-8: post-medieval	2	57
			7-9: post-medieval/modern	2	12
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	6	741
		brick and tile	7-8: post-medieval	4	25
		flat roof tile	7-8: post-medieval	4	162
		pot	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	3	30
			8: late post-medieval	3	5
		unident	7-9: post-medieval/modern	1	2
		wall tile	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	46
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	46
	glass	vessel	9: modern	9	45
			9: modern	4	5
	iron	iron plate	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	87
	polymer	molten plastic	9: modern	1	1
	slag	fuel ash slag	10: undated	17	28
		slag (unident)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	3
		smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	109	4859
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	4
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	5
		tile	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	5

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
1	Total			174	6129
2	bone	bird bone	10: undated	1	1
		mammal bone	10: undated	5	29
	ceramic	brick	6-7: transitional/early post-med	1	1836
			7-8: post-medieval	2	242
		brick and tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	3	37
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	5	47
			7-8: post-medieval	3	19
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	4	6
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	1	54
			5-8: late medieval to post-medieval	2	44
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	4	419
			7-8: post-medieval	2	32
			7: earlier post-medieval	2	22
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	28
		pot	7-8: post-medieval	39	425
			7: earlier post-medieval	14	122
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	80	542
			8: late post-medieval	18	58
		unident	10: undated	1	5
	copper alloy	grill	9: modern	1	1
	flint	modified flake	1: prehistoric	1	3
	glass	vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	8
			9: modern	1	7
		window	7: earlier post-medieval	1	2

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	3	10
			9: modern	4	29
	graphite	battery rod	9: modern	1	1
	iron	agricultural iron	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	32	383
		fe object	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	9	135
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	49
	lead	?window came	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	10
	mortar	cement mortar	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	31
		lime mortar	7-8: post-medieval	5	29
	organic	coal	10: undated	12	39
	rubber	fanbelt	9: modern	2	18
		rubber	9: modern	1	14
	slag	fuel ash slag	10: undated	6	35
		iron tap slag	4-7: medieval to early post-med	1	134
		slag(fe)	1-7: prehistoric to post-medieval	1	11
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	16	124
		smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	16	202
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	4	16
	stone	burnt ?limestone	10: undated	6	96
		stone marble	9: modern	1	7
	tinplate	label	9: modern	1	1
2 Total				322	5363
	3 bone	mammal bone	10: undated	2	30
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	13	117

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			7-8: post-medieval	12	211
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	1	1
		flat roof tile	5-7: transitional to post-medieval	2	34
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	2	52
			7-8: post-medieval	9	451
		pot	7-8: post-medieval	8	19
			7: earlier post-medieval	11	41
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	2
			8: late post-medieval	4	9
		pot waster	7: earlier post-medieval	1	8
	composite	strap	9: modern	4	3
	glass	vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	7	22
		window	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	3	6
			9: modern	5	17
	iron	fe object	7-9: post-medieval/modern	1	112
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	3
	lead alloy	weight	7-8: post-medieval	1	4
	mortar	lime mortar	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	3	54
	organic	charcoal	10: undated	3	2
	slag	smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	12	36
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	9
3 Total				108	1243
	4 ceramic	brick	6-8: transitional to post-med	2	177
			7-8: post-medieval	1	926
		brick and tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	18	78

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	30	146
			4-9: medieval to modern	50	275
			7-8: post-medieval	10	194
			7-9: post-medieval/modern	24	369
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	1	1
			7: earlier post-medieval	1	1
		drain tile	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	52
		flat roof tile	6-7: transitional/early post-med	1	64
			6-8: transitional to post-med	1	42
			7-8: post-medieval	4	61
		pot	4: high medieval	1	6
			6: transitional	1	1
			7-8: post-medieval	1	1
			7: earlier post-medieval	3	21
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	4
			8: late post-medieval	1	4
	glass	vessel	7-8: post-medieval	1	1
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	10	30
			9: modern	8	16
		window	7-8: post-medieval	1	1
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	8	10
			9: modern	7	13
	iron	nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	56
	organic	charcoal	10: undated	45	34
		coal	10: undated	23	43

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
	slag	fuel ash slag	10: undated	34	142
		slag (unident)	10: undated	2	8
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	6	43
	unident	?bitumen	10: undated	2	40
4 Total				304	2860
	5 bone	bird bone	10: undated	1	1
	ceramic	brick	6-7: transitional/early post-med	1	161
		brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	15	113
		flat roof tile	7-8: post-medieval	1	15
		glazed ridge tile	4-6: medieval to transitional	1	19
		pot	4-5: high to late medieval	18	139
			4-6: medieval to transitional	4	69
			4: high medieval	12	152
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	1	18
			7: earlier post-medieval	2	5
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	4	7
	ridge tile		4-6: medieval to transitional	2	230
	glass	vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	4
		window	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	1
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	28
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	5
	organic	coal	10: undated	21	26
	sandstone	block	10: undated	1	113
		stone tile	10: undated	4	369
	slag	slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	25

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
	stone	burnt stone	10: undated	1	8
5 Total				97	1508
6	bone	mammal bone	10: undated	10	40
	ceramic	brick	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	11	139
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	269
		brick and tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	2	3
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	33	156
			7-8: post-medieval	38	583
			7-9: post-medieval/modern	14	645
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	16	23
		drain tile	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	3	296
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	6	387
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	28
		pot	4-5: high to late medieval	3	11
			4-6: medieval to transitional	10	294
			4: high medieval	1	4
			5-6: late med/transitional	2	12
			5-7: late medieval to post-med	3	35
			6: transitional	3	15
			7-8: post-medieval	17	51
			7: earlier post-medieval	26	191
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	16	59
	8: late post-medieval		12	18	
	tile	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	107	

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
		unident	4-7: medieval to early post-med	1	38
	copper alloy	pin	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	3
	glass	?window	4-7: medieval to early post-med	1	2
		vessel	7-8: post-medieval	1	23
			7: earlier post-medieval	1	2
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	4	11
			9: modern	1	6
		window	6-7: transitional/early post-med	3	1
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	6	19
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	11	103
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	15	71
	organic	coal	10: undated	26	15
	plaster	wall plaster	7-9: post-medieval/modern	3	4
	slag	fuel ash slag	10: undated	16	69
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	5	12
		slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	3	24
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	25	406
6 Total				352	4175
	7 bone	mammal bone	10: undated	3	12
	ceramic	brick	6-8: transitional to post-med	1	101
		brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	24	235
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	2	2
		pot	4-6: medieval to transitional	1	10
			7-8: post-medieval	9	16
			7: earlier post-medieval	3	51

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	26	48
			8: late post-medieval	1	2
			9: modern	1	1
	glass	vessel	7-8: post-medieval	1	1
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	1
			8: late post-medieval	2	20
			9: modern	8	11
		window	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	4	5
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	60
	organic	coal	10: undated	6	18
	slag	smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	2
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	1
7 Total				96	597
	8 bone	mammal bone	10: undated	20	55
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	14	473
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	25	130
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	9	252
			6-9: transitional to modern	7	481
			7-8: post-medieval	1	22
			7-9: post-medieval/modern	3	73
			clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	4
			7: earlier post-medieval	1	6
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	17	665
			7-8: post-medieval	1	13
	hearth material	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	18	

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
		pot	5-7: late medieval to post-med	1	4
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	3	10
			7-8: post-medieval	12	51
			7: earlier post-medieval	45	211
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	18	27
			8: late post-medieval	3	3
		wall tile	9: modern	27	237
	composite	circuit board	9: modern	2	1
	flint	chip	1: prehistoric	1	1
	glass	stopper	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	9
		vessel	7-8: post-medieval	2	5
			7: earlier post-medieval	2	22
			9: modern	33	266
		window	6-7: transitional/early post-med	2	9
			7-8: post-medieval	6	27
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	4	9
			9: modern	4	16
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	10	80
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	9	58
		ring	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	6
	mortar	cement mortar	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	6
		lime mortar	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	3	151
	organic	coal	10: undated	38	69
	plaster	wall plaster	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	2	6
			7-9: post-medieval/modern	2	45

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
	slag	slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	9	74
		smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	56
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	3	105
	stone	burnt stone	10: undated	5	52
		chalk	10: undated	1	1
		limestone	10: undated	2	50
8 Total				356	3869
	9 ceramic	brick	7-8: post-medieval	1	392
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	1117
		brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	21	81
			7-8: post-medieval	1	21
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	13	20
		drain tile	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	60
		figurine	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	6
		flat roof tile	5-7: late medieval to post-med	1	81
			6-8: transitional to post-med	1	12
		pot	7-8: post-medieval	27	92
			7: earlier post-medieval	3	22
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	46	135
			8: late post-medieval	3	3
	glass	vessel	7-8: post-medieval	2	7
			7: earlier post-medieval	1	6
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	14	59

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			9: modern	6	66
		window	7-8: post-medieval	1	2
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	10	23
			9: modern	8	129
	iron	bar/pin	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	36
	mortar	lime mortar	6-8: transitional to post-med	1	4
	organic	coal	10: undated	14	36
	slag	fuel ash slag	10: undated	6	42
		smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	2	12
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	27
	stone	burnt stone	10: undated	3	11
		limestone	10: undated	4	60
9 Total				197	2562
	10 bone	mammal bone	10: undated	27	56
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	293	2118
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	4	63
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	14	30
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	26	1080
		pot	7-8: post-medieval	21	91
			7: earlier post-medieval	28	101
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	52	96
		8: late post-medieval	11	15	
		wig curler	7: earlier post-medieval	1	9
	copper alloy	coin	9: modern	1	9
	glass	vessel	7-8: post-medieval	4	24

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			7: earlier post-medieval	3	22
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	26	83
			9: modern	7	13
		window	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	6	8
			8: late post-medieval	2	3
			9: modern	27	73
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	7	52
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	2	22
	organic	coal	10: undated	42	89
	slag	slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	21	236
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	8	23
	steel	window	9: modern	1	1
10	Total			634	4317
11	bone	mammal bone	10: undated	1	1
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	15	178
			6-8: transitional to post-med	6	101
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	4	5
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	5	146
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	1	34
			6-8: transitional to post-med	3	71
		hearth material	10: undated	1	50
		pot	7-8: post-medieval	6	15
			7: earlier post-medieval	4	24
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	24	55
			8: late post-medieval	3	6

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
	composite	bottle stopper	9: modern	1	21
	concrete	concrete	9: modern	1	25
	glass	vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	12	185
9: modern			8	34	
8-9: late post-medieval to modern		8	14		
	iron	nail	9: modern	4	12
4-8: medieval to post-medieval			7	73	
7-9: post-medieval/modern			5	48	
	organic	coal	10: undated	23	70
	slag	smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	137
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	46
	stone	slab	10: undated	2	133
11 Total				150	1484
12	bone	mammal bone	10: undated	30	126
		worked bone	10: undated	1	48
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	29	183
			7-8: post-medieval	1	22
		clay marble	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	6
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	86	196
		figurine	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	2
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	2	65
		pot		8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2
	7-8: post-medieval			51	96

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
			7: earlier post-medieval	82	405
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	114	205
			8: late post-medieval	19	93
			9: modern	1	9
	copper alloy	button	7-8: post-medieval	1	7
	flint	flake	1: prehistoric	1	3
	glass	melted glass	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	10
		vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	32	125
		window	7-9: post-medieval/modern	6	7
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	31	59
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	1	5
			7-8: post-medieval	2	55
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	5	39
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	3	24
	organic	coal	10: undated	43	56
	rubber	codd bottle washer	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	2
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	2
12 Total				549	1914
13	bone	mammal bone	10: undated	11	119
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	102	519
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	1	1
		flat roof tile	4-7: medieval to early post-med	29	1233
			4-8: medieval to post-medieval	14	415

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
		pot	2: Roman	1	2
			4-5: high to late medieval	1	9
			4: high medieval	2	11
			5-6: late med/transitional	1	4
			7-8: post-medieval	35	252
			7: earlier post-medieval	4	18
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	11	23
		vitrified brick	7-9: post-medieval/modern	1	688
	glass	melted glass	4-9: medieval to modern	1	2
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	4	14
		vessel	6-8: transitional to post-med	1	4
		window	7-9: post-medieval/modern	37	765
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	3
	iron	fe object	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	2	21
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	2	11
	organic	coal	10: undated	56	69
	slag	slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	28	164
		smithing slag	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	9	135
			4-9: medieval to modern	21	429
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	5
	stone	calcite block	10: undated	1	262
		limestone	10: undated	1	25
13 Total				379	5203
14	asbestos	chrysotile	9: modern	2	1
	bone	mammal bone	10: undated	1	8

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	39	748
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	7	10
		drain tile	9: modern	2	2
		flat roof tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	52	2581
			6-8: transitional to post-med	7	556
		pot	7-8: post-medieval	6	37
			7: earlier post-medieval	3	7
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	43	105
			8: late post-medieval	1	1
		vitriified brick	7-8: post-medieval	1	41
		wall tile	9: modern	7	121
	glass	vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	2	12
		window	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	13	48
	iron	fe object	7-9: post-medieval/modern	5	989
		nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	38
	organic	coal	10: undated	7	56
	slag	slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	24	412
	slate	roof slate	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	1	13
14 Total				227	5786
	15 bone	mammal bone	10: undated	12	43
	ceramic	brick and tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	98	571
			6-8: transitional to post-med	1	15
		clay pipe	7-8: post-medieval	4	9
		flat roof tile	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	9	189
			7-8: post-medieval	3	93

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>object type</i>	<i>period</i>	count	weight(g)
		pot	4: high medieval	2	36
			5-6: late med/transitional	1	6
			6-7: transitional/early post-med	1	1
			7-8: post-medieval	12	32
			7: earlier post-medieval	10	27
			8-9: late post-medieval to modern	14	48
			8: late post-medieval	2	10
	glass	vessel	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	7	15
		window	8-9: late post-medieval to modern	9	12
	iron	nail	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	6	33
			7-9: post-medieval/modern	6	28
	organic	coal	10: undated	19	58
	slag	slag(fe)	4-8: medieval to post-medieval	4	23
15 Total				220	1249
Grand Total				4165	48259

Table 4: Finds from each test pit by period and type

Conclusions

The small quantity of prehistoric and Roman material is typical of rural landscapes in the region, reflecting a long history of settlement. Although there was relatively little medieval material, its distribution suggests that one focus of the medieval settlement was around the junction of Drakelow Lane and Blakeshall Lane, with another settlement around Wolverley Court. Dating is hampered by an incomplete picture of the pottery industries and supply in the area, but there was evidently domestic settlement in this part of the parish by the 13th century. From this small sample, the effects of the crises of the 14th century are unclear, but the presence of later-medieval and transitional wares suggest continuity into the late-15th/16th century and beyond.

The volume of material increased in the 17th and 18th centuries; this is typical of rural settlements and reflects the increasing affordability of ceramic goods as much as the expansion of the settlement.

Across the majority of the test pits, the average pottery sherd size was small, and sherds were heavily worn and battered, with a mean sherd weight of 4.5g. This is typical of pottery that was discarded in rubbish heaps or middens, which were left to rot (sometimes for years) before being spread on the fields as fertiliser. Once within a garden soil or field, the pot could be further disturbed by ploughing or digging of the soil, and by the effects of weathering. Promisingly, the medieval pottery from test pits 5 and 6 is in markedly better condition, suggesting little post-depositional disturbance.

The large quantities of ironworking slag across many of the test pits may suggest a substantial level of industrial activity, reflecting the long heritage and rich natural resources of the area, but it is likely that some of the material had been moved from its original production site and re-deposited. Although most was typical of smithing, the presence of small quantities of slag resembling that created during bloomery production could suggest nearby production sites.

Significance

The assemblage is large and the majority does not warrant retention. However, retaining the Roman and medieval material and a representative sample of the better-preserved post-medieval pottery and clay pipe would be worthwhile, subject to Museums Worcestershire's advice. Local display and educational use in teaching or handling collections would be appropriate.

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Appendix 4: Common pottery types

Fabric 13: Sandy oxidised ware, 1st to 2nd century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/66>

These Roman pots came in a variety of forms, such as jars, bowls, tankards and flagons. They were possibly made in Gloucester, but appear very similar to the more local 'Severn Valley ware'.

Fabric 55: Medieval cooking pot, 12th to 14th century

Coarse, earthenware cooking pots were made in most major towns and cities across medieval England. We often find them covered in soot from cooking fires.

They're often dull grey or brown, with a gritty texture and visible inclusions, and can be hard to distinguish from Iron Age and Roman fabrics at first sight.

In the later medieval period, technological advances and increasing wages (due to labour shortages caused by the Black Death) made metal pots more affordable, and ceramic cooking pots disappear from the archaeological record.

Most found in this area were made in or around:

Worcester (Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware, fabric 55):

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/2>

Malvern (Malvernian unglazed ware, fabric 56):

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/3>

Fabric 64.1: Worcester-type 'sandy' ware, 13th to 14th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/5>

Highly decorated jugs and pitchers covered in splashes of green lead-based glaze were made in most major cities in the medieval period.

They tend to have inclusions, visible by eye, of quartz, stone or shell, and will vary in colour: often with a grey core and buff/orange/brown surfaces

Fabric 64.2: Glazed 'sandy' white ware, 13th to 14th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/23>

Thought to be produced in Staffordshire, these vessels are usually a pale off-white colour with a pinkish orange tinge to the surfaces and a thin speckled green glaze. They tend to have few inclusions that are visible by eye and the core is sometimes grey.

Jugs are often decorated with incised lines and roller stamping.

Fabric 64.4: Unglazed 'sandy' white ware, 13th to 14th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/54>

Similar to the glazed version above (fabric 64.2). Unglazed forms occasionally have spots of glaze, suggesting they were fired with glazed forms.

Fabric 72: Brown glazed speckled ware, 15th to 17th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/48>

Also known as Cistercian ware, these cups were glazed inside and out. Their speckled appearance comes from small pieces of sand in the glaze that haven't fused. The fabric is usually orange when fired at lower temperatures and dark red/ purple at higher temperatures.

Fabric 77: Midlands yellow ware, late 16th to 19th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/191>

Pale yellow was the most sought-after colour, but the lead glaze (which can be shiny or dull) is more often bright yellow. Large vessels tend to be made from red clay and have a white slip between the body of the pot and yellow glaze.

Fabric 78: Post-medieval 'redware', late 16th to early 19th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/196>

Cheap and robust, this earthenware pottery has a red body with few visible inclusions, and glossy dark glaze. It was the staple of a country household, made in a wide variety of forms including 'pancheons' (mixing bowls), mugs, and chamberpots.

It emerged from earlier 'Cistercian'-type wares, the most common form being fine walled drinking vessels with multiple handles, known as 'tygs' <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/forms/441> .

Black or dark brown glazes are common in the upper Severn valley, but further south products from the Ashton Keynes-type industry appear, which tend to have orange glazes.

Earlier examples often have a bubbly or streaky glaze. By the 18th century they tend to have a smooth and even glaze. Although tablewares are largely replaced by other refined earthenwares (such as creamware) by the late 18th century, larger forms like pancheons continue well into the 19th century.

Fabric 81.3: Nottingham stoneware, late 17th to 19th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/195>

This early English stoneware is usually thin-walled with a dark brown surface. It can be identified by the presence of a thin white line visible between the fabric and the glaze.

Other types of stoneware are also found in Worcestershire, including those imported from abroad e.g. Siegburg stoneware <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/40> and Westerwald stoneware <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/194>

Fabric 82: Tin-glazed earthenware, 17th to 19th century

Sometimes referred to as 'Delft' after its most famous production centre, this attractive white-glazed pottery was made in England from the early 17th century, copying the Dutch potters. The fabric is soft and cream-coloured, and the pots often have a pinkish or bluish tint. In the later medieval period, tin-glazed earthenwares were imported in small quantities from Italy, Spain and Holland, although they are difficult to tell apart.

Italian mailica (fabric 82.2): <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/42>

South Netherlands tin glazed (fabric 82.3): <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/39>

Seville ware (fabric 82.4): <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/37>

Italian tin glazed (82.7): <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/201>

Fabric 85: Transfer-printed whiteware, 19th to 20th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/199>

Commonly referred to as 'Victorian china' or 'blue-and-white', this mass-produced tableware is common from 1800 onwards. It has a very fine white core, white glaze and printed patterns in blue, red, black or green.

Watch out for similar-looking earlier pottery such as:

Fabric 83.1: Porcelain, mid-18th century onwards

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/192>

Translucent appearance and hand-painted decoration.

Fabric 84: Creamware, late 18th to early 19th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/193>

Cream-coloured glaze, sometimes moulded. Rarely decorated.

Fabric 91: Post-medieval 'slipware' pottery, 17th to 18th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/189>

Brightly decorated plates and dishes with yellow and brown/red patterns were popular in ordinary 17th/18th century households. They usually have a buff-coloured fabric. The elaborate patterns were made by trailing red and white 'slip' (liquid clay) over the plate before glazing and firing.

Fabric 108: Midlands Purple, late 14th to 18th century

<https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/53>

Common across the midlands, these highly fired pots tend to have a purple tinge and a dark patchy glaze on the outside. They were made in a variety of forms, particularly cups and jars.

Engine-turned dipped earthenwares, late 18th to early 20th century

These brightly-coloured bowls, jugs and mugs are often mistaken for modern pots, but were first made by Wedgwood in the 1760s. Look out for tree-like 'mocha' decoration, multi-coloured 'cats-eyes' and cables, and geometric patterns and bands in different colours, produced by turning on a lathe. The fabric is smooth, white/light-grey, and the vessels are thin-walled.