

FINDS FROM FIELDWALKING BY  
THE FOUR PARISHES  
ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP  
ON  
LAND AT PINVIN,  
WORCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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# **Finds from fieldwalking by the Four Parishes Archaeology Group on land at Pinvin, Worcestershire**

**Erica Darch and Robin Jackson**

## **Part 1 Project summary**

Archaeological fieldwalking was undertaken by the Four Parishes Archaeology Group (4PAG) on land at Pinvin, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9570 4845) as part of a Local Heritage Initiative scheme. A concentration of Romano-British pottery and other finds of mid 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered.

In conjunction with the results from a subsequent geophysical survey, this indicates the presence of a separate Romano-British settlement area to one previously identified only some 300m to the south. The results support those from excavations and other work in the immediate vicinity, which have indicated a previously unsuspected density of former settlement in this area.

## Part 2 Detailed report

### 1. Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

Archaeological fieldwalking was undertaken by the Four Parishes Archaeology Group (4PAG) on land at Pinvin, Worcestershire (centred on NGR SO 9570 4845; Fig 1). This particular piece of work was the second fieldwalking project undertaken by the group. The group are funded by a Local Heritage Initiative grant and are undertaking a community project to investigate, interpret and promote the heritage of four parishes, Pinvin, Wyre Piddle, Hill and Moor and Throckmorton. The group is working closely with Worcestershire Archaeological Service (the Service) who provide advice and support, including the specialist analysis of the fieldwalking finds reported here.

#### 1.2 Aims

The aim of the fieldwalking was to investigate land adjacent to an area of recent excavation (and prior evaluation), undertaken by the Service in advance of construction of the Wyre Piddle Bypass. This revealed evidence of Bronze Age through to Romano-British activity, in particular settlement of the latter period.

The fieldwalking undertaken by 4PAG concentrated on an area to the north-west of the area of Romano-British settlement and aimed to provide further information on the extents and character of the occupation. Subsequent to the fieldwalking, 4PAG commissioned a geophysical survey to further establish the extents and character of this area (GSB Prospection 2002).

The results of both of these pieces of work are considered in this report and will support ongoing work by 4PAG and the Service to develop a better understanding of the character and extent of former settlement and landuse in this area.

#### 1.3 Topography and geology

The site lies on land sloping gently to the south and east and which was under arable cultivation at the time of the fieldwork. The wider landscape is that of the terraces of the Avon Valley which slope down towards the floodplain and the river, lying to the south of the area under investigation.

The overlying soils are stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the Bishampton Series. These are slowly permeable and subject to slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1985 *Soils of the Worcester and Malvern District*, 1:50,000 Series, Sheet **150**). These are mapped as overlying Jurassic Lower Lias (Geological Survey of Great Britain, 1974 *Stratford-upon-Avon*, 1:50,000 Series, Solid and Drift edition, Sheet **200**) which is predominantly clay, however, excavations in the area have revealed pockets of sand and gravel which are probably fluvio-glacial in origin.

### 2. Methods

#### 2.1 Fieldwork

Fieldwalking was undertaken on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2002 by a group 4PAG members, coordinated by Darren Miller from the Service. Conditions were good for fieldwalking, although bright

sunshine may have slightly affected surface visibility. Ground visibility was good, with recent rainfall having fallen and the surface having had time to weather following ploughing.

An area of 50,000m<sup>2</sup> (c 5ha) was covered. This was fieldwalked on the basis of 20m<sup>2</sup> transects and stints, laid out from a baseline running approximately north to south and tied into Ordnance Survey map detail.

All artefacts were retrieved by hand and retained in self-seal bags with appropriate location information written on them (CAS 1995 as amended).

The fieldwalking has been accessioned onto the County Sites and Monuments Record (reference WSM 32126).

## 2.2 Processing and analysis

Washing, preliminary sorting and identification of finds was undertaken by members of 4PAG under the supervision of Erica Darch and Laura Griffin from the Service.

Subsequently analysis was by Erica Darch from the Service. All hand-retrieved finds were examined. Artefacts were identified, quantified, dated and recorded on a Microsoft Access 1997 database.

Pottery was examined and recorded by fabric type according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

Standard Service methods were used to establish statistically sound ranges when plotting finds distributions (Figs 2 and 3).

## 3. Description

The material ranged in date from possible prehistoric to modern. It was mostly fairly to highly abraded and therefore typical of field walking material. The largest groups of material by weight were fire cracked stone, 13<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century flat roof tile and Roman pottery. The pottery fabric totals are presented in Table 01, below, with distribution plots of Roman pottery and fire cracked stone presented in Figures 2 and 3.

Fabric Number	Fabric Name	Date range/period	Total	Wt (g)
12	Severn Valley Ware	Mid 1 <sup>st</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> century	275	1760
12.2	Organic tempered Severn Valley Ware	1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> century	8	124
16	Grog tempered ware	Roman	1	10
28	Nene Valley ware	AD 200 +	1	4
29	Oxfordshire red / brown colour coated ware	AD 240 to 400	2	16
43	Samian	1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> century	2	19
56	Malvernian unglazed ware	12 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> century	1	4
69	Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware	13 <sup>th</sup> to early 17 <sup>th</sup>	2	9
69?	Possible oxidised glazed Malvernian ware	13 <sup>th</sup> to early 17 <sup>th</sup>	1	4
78	Post-medieval red ware	Post-medieval	23	268
91	Post-medieval buff ware	Post-medieval	1	2
98	Miscellaneous Roman wares	Roman	17	45
99	Miscellaneous medieval wares	Medieval	3	10
100	Miscellaneous post-medieval wares	Post-medieval	1	1

Table 1: The pottery fabrics

### 3.1.1 Prehistoric

Apart from one piece of flint, which may have been worked (from transect I, stint 8), the only other probable prehistoric material recovered was the burnt or fire cracked stone. The highest concentrations of fire cracked stone only partly overlay the higher concentrations of Roman pottery, and mostly fell in areas with very little or no Roman pot. The higher concentrations roughly surrounded an area with no fire cracked stone in it at all (compare Figs 2 and 3).

### 3.1.2 Roman

The majority of the Roman material recovered was pottery. The only other material dated to this period was tile.

By far the largest fabric type recovered was locally produced Severn Valley ware (fabric 12) which dates from the mid 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century. Of the seven forms that could be more closely dated, most were 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, although some dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Forms included jars, wide mouthed jars and tankards (Webster, 1976, 24 – 31). The presence of organic tempered Severn Valley ware would indicate at least some activity of 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century date, although there were very few sherds in this fabric.

Samian (fabric 43), Oxfordshire red / brown colour coated ware (fabric 29) and Nene Valley ware (fabric 28) were also present in small quantities and are representative more decorative vessels used as tablewares. They would have had less varied use than the more common Severn Valley ware which could be used for cooking, storage and as a tableware (Laura Griffin, pers comm).

Although the majority of the Roman pottery was abraded, some sherds were in better condition than might normally be expected of material recovered from fieldwalking. This would suggest that they have not been in the ploughsoil for very long and that archaeological material is being freshly disturbed by modern agricultural practices. These less abraded sherds were not concentrated in one area.

Although small amounts of Roman pottery were recovered from across the site (Fig 3), there was a significant concentration in transects C6 – 8, D6 – 8 and E7 – 9, which are indicative of an area of activity, possibly occupation.

### 3.1.3 Medieval

The only medieval pottery identified by fabric was Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) and Malvernian unglazed ware (fabric 56). In total there were only seven medieval sherds which were distributed across the site and did not appear to be concentrated in one particular area. Such a low density of finds would be typically the result of manuring using midden material, and does not necessarily indicate settlement occupation in the immediate vicinity.

A large amount of flat roof tile of a type produced between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from across the site and may have been medieval or post-medieval in date (see below).

### 3.1.4 Post-medieval and modern

Post-medieval material included tile, brick, sagger, land drain and glass. The only modern material recovered was brick, tile, glass and land drain. Much of the tile and brick was heavily abraded and most of the fired clay recorded was probably highly abraded brick and tile fragments. The pottery consisted entirely of post-medieval red ware (fabric 78), one sherd of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91) and one unidentified sherd (fabric 100). Only two sherds could be more closely dated, both were 17<sup>th</sup> century. The post-medieval and modern



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material was found across the field and did not appear to be concentrated in one area. This type of scatter is probably the result of regular use of domestic waste for manuring.

#### 4. Discussion

The Roman pottery suggests that there was Roman domestic activity in the area covered by the fieldwalking. The presence of some relatively large and unabraded sherds in the assemblage indicates that deposits of this date survive beneath the modern ploughsoil and that occasionally ploughing is affecting these deposits, disturbing stratified material from them.

The presence of roof tile might indicate Roman buildings, but there were only six pieces in total. Some of the pottery fabrics and forms dated to the early Roman period (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD), although the predominance of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century types suggest greater activity in the later Roman period.

Although less variety in pottery fabrics would be expected on a rural Roman site than an urban one due to the distance from a market, the dominance of Severn valley ware (fabric 12) may be exaggerated because its orange colour makes it easier to spot when fieldwalking.

Fire cracked stones were also a common find and are usually identified as 'pot boilers'. They were heated in a fire and dropped into a container of water to heat it, which caused them to shatter. It is possible that these are the remains of a 'burnt mound', a site type characterised by fire cracked stones, usually near a stream. Although burnt mounds have been dated to the Bronze Age, fire cracked stones have also been found in significant quantities on Iron Age (J Derek Hurst, pers comm) and Roman sites (Nixon, 1980, 9 – 10). The dating and interpretation of this material must therefore remain open, although in the light of the strong indications of Roman occupation at the site, a Roman date must be considered most likely. The slightly separate area in which the fire cracked stone concentrated may indicate an association with cooking or industrial processing.

Recent excavations in the vicinity (Wyre Piddle Bypass - Furzen Farm site) have identified Roman activity associated with 1<sup>st</sup> through to 4<sup>th</sup> century occupation, immediately to the south of the fieldwalked area, within the bypass corridor (Simon Griffin, pers comm). It was initially thought that the activity represented by the fieldwalking assemblage reflected the continuation of this area of occupation to the north. However, subsequent to the fieldwalking, a geophysical survey commissioned by 4PAG to examine this area has indicated that this assumption is incorrect and that the pattern of occupation is more complex than previously anticipated. The geophysical survey identified a northern limit to the area of occupation identified within the bypass corridor and indicated that the area covered by the fieldwalking co-incides with a separate area of occupation, maybe even a separate settlement, some 300m to the north (GSB Prospection 2002). The geophysical survey did not identify the limits of this further area of activity, however, showed elements of a series of sub-rectangular enclosures and possibly a roundhouse. These are clearly indicative of settlement, supporting the results of the fieldwalking and providing further evidence of the density of former occupation in the area being investigated by 4PAG.

Much of the medieval and post-medieval material may be the result of manuring using midden material, and does not necessarily indicate settlement occupation in the immediate vicinity. The brick and tile may be from demolished buildings in the area, or part of the manuring process.

## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1 Processing and analysis

Some of the material recovered had not completely dried before being bagged. As a result a number of pieces had to be discarded due to mould. Even a small amount of moisture can cause the artefacts to become mouldy once sealed in a plastic bag. The following will help to prevent this:

- When washing tile and brick, not submerging or soaking it in water reduces the amount of moisture it soaks up and will improve the drying time;
- Larger pottery sherds, brick, tile and bone may need to be turned over several times to dry right the way through;
- Place material in a single layer in the tray to dry;
- Avoid stacking the trays as this prevents the circulation of air;
- Replace the newspaper in a tray if it is wet or very damp;
- Also, when the material is put back in the bags, small holes should be punctured in them to help prevent condensation. A hole punch works well if used on several bags at once;
- If possible, store the material away from direct sunlight and at a relatively constant temperature.

### 5.2 Future work

The fieldwalking reported here has produced useful results that supplement and support those from a range of other work in the immediate vicinity. In particular, a new area of activity has been identified and confirmed by geophysical survey. Further research is recommended to investigate the extents of the newly identified area of settlement, which have not presently been established.

Fieldwalking has provided dating evidence for this area of activity and additional fieldwalking may be of limited value. However, geophysical survey has proved particularly effective at identifying extents as well as specific features such as a possible roundhouse. It is therefore recommended that further geophysics be undertaken at this location.

## 6. Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*Archaeological fieldwalking was undertaken by the Four Parishes Archaeology Group (4PAG) on land at Pinvin, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9570 4845) as part of a Local Heritage Initiative scheme. A scatter of Romano-British pottery and other finds of mid 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered.*

*The full extent of the pottery scatter was not established, however, analysis of the results in conjunction with those from a subsequent geophysical survey indicates the presence of a*

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*previously unknown focus of Romano-British occupation. This provides evidence of a separate settlement area to that previously identified only some 300m to the south.*

*The results support those from excavations and other work in the immediate vicinity, which have provided evidence of a previously unsuspected density of former settlement in this area. Overall this will contribute to the development of an understanding of the extents of Romano-British settlement and patterns of landuse in this part of the Avon Valley.*

## 7. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Base map
- 3 Boxes of finds
- 1 Computer disk
- 1 Report

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum  
Hartlebury Castle  
Hartlebury  
Near Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ  
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

## 8. **Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was led by Darren Miller. Reporting and analysis were undertaken by Erica Darch (Finds Assistant) with the assistance of Robin Jackson (Project Manager). Illustrations were undertaken by Carolyn Hunt (Illustrator).

Members of 4PAG undertook the fieldwalking and preliminary processing of finds.

Mr Jonathan Parkes kindly allowed access to his land for the fieldwalking.

## 9. **Bibliography**

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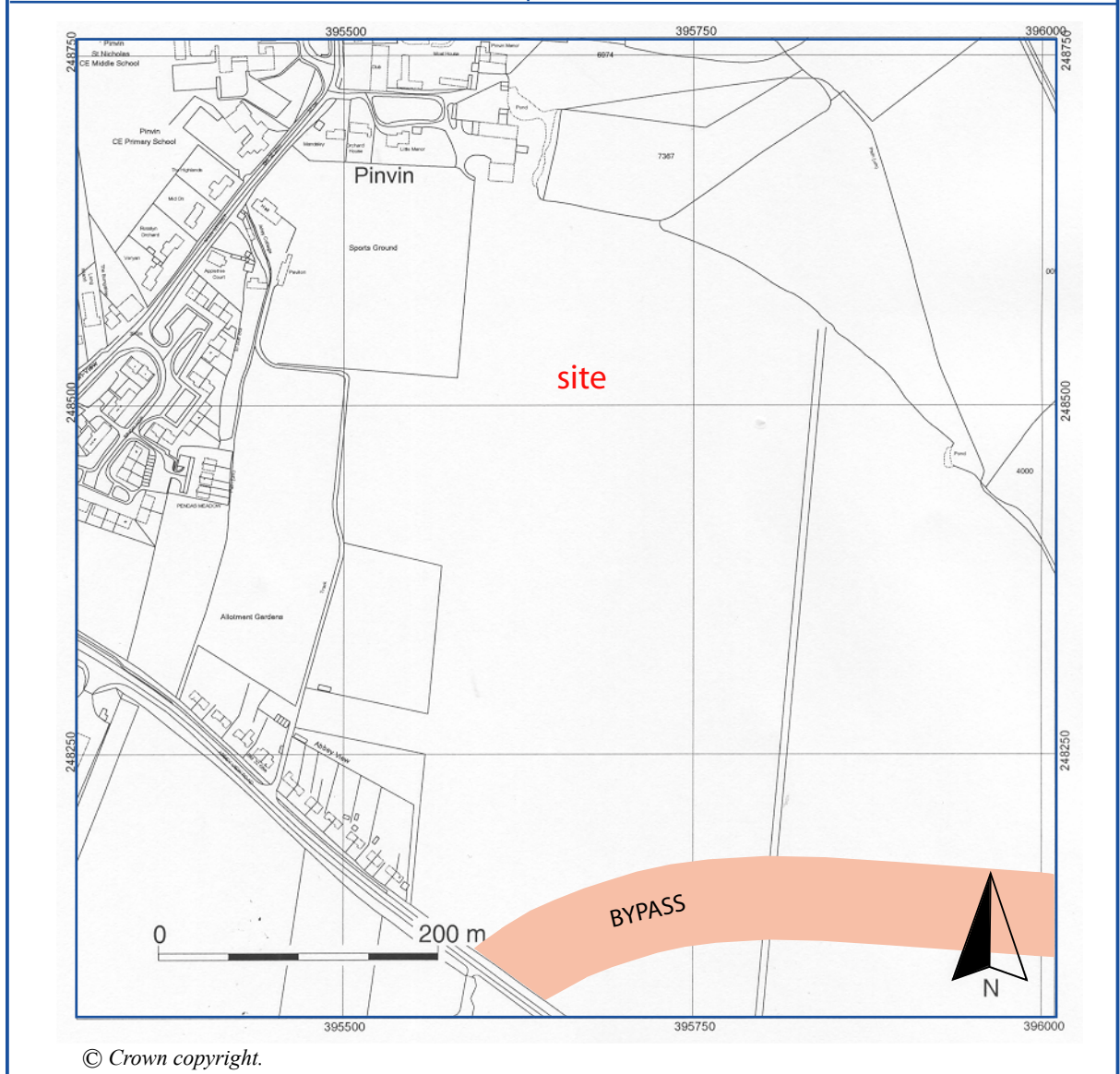
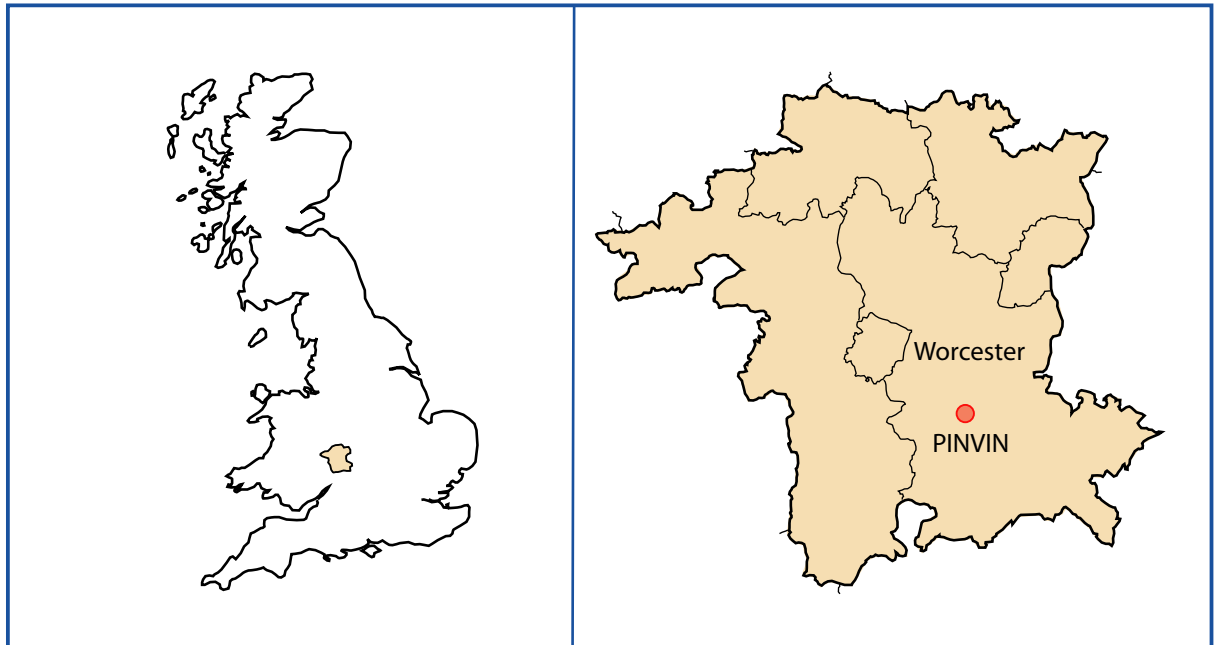
Nixon, M J, 1980 Burnt Mounds in the South Birmingham Area, *West Midlands Archaeology*, CBA Group 8, **23**, 9-13

Webster, P V, 1976, Severn Valley Ware: A Preliminary Study, *Trans. Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Soc*, 1976, 18-46

## 10. **Abbreviations**

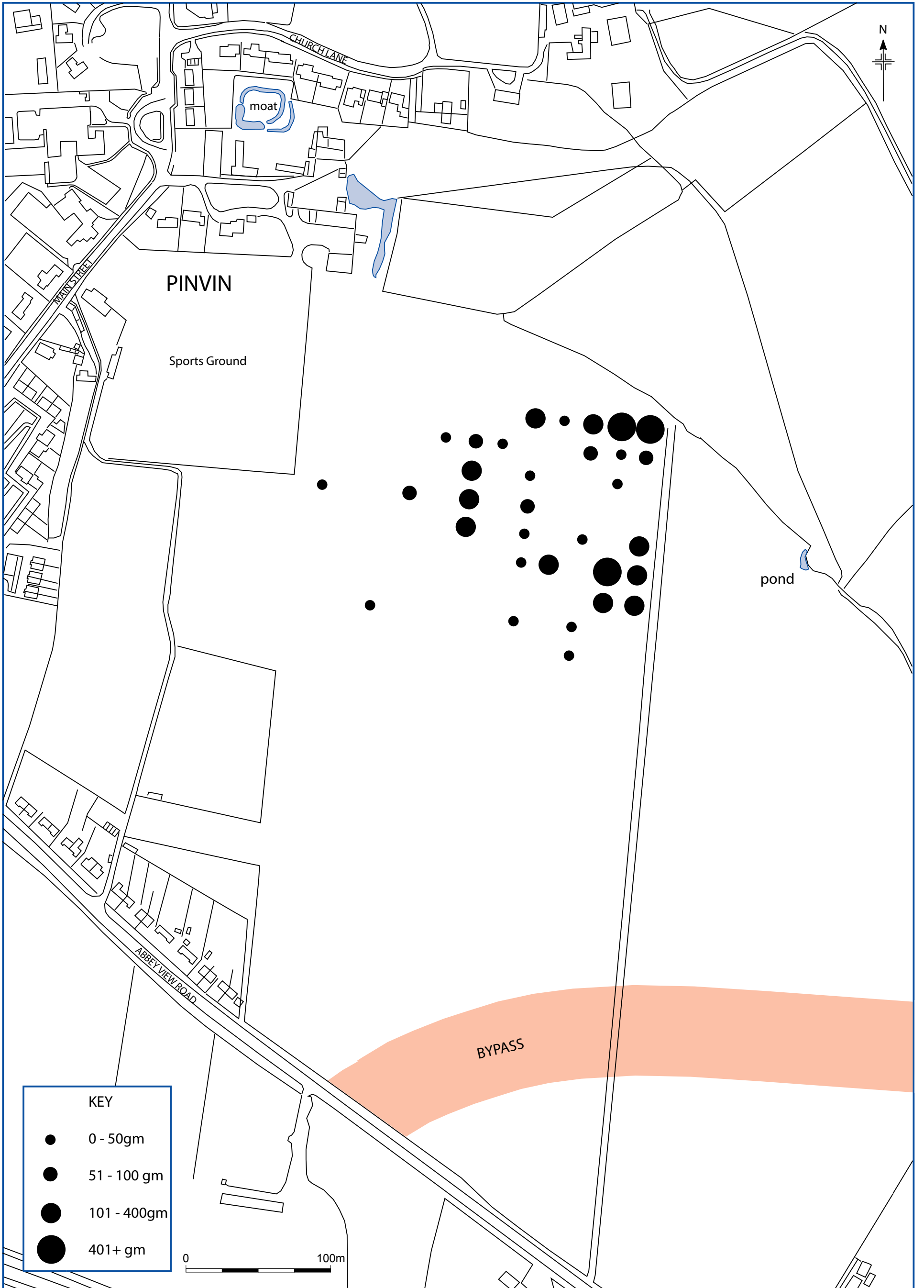
WSM Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record.

SMR Sites and Monuments Record.



Location of the site.

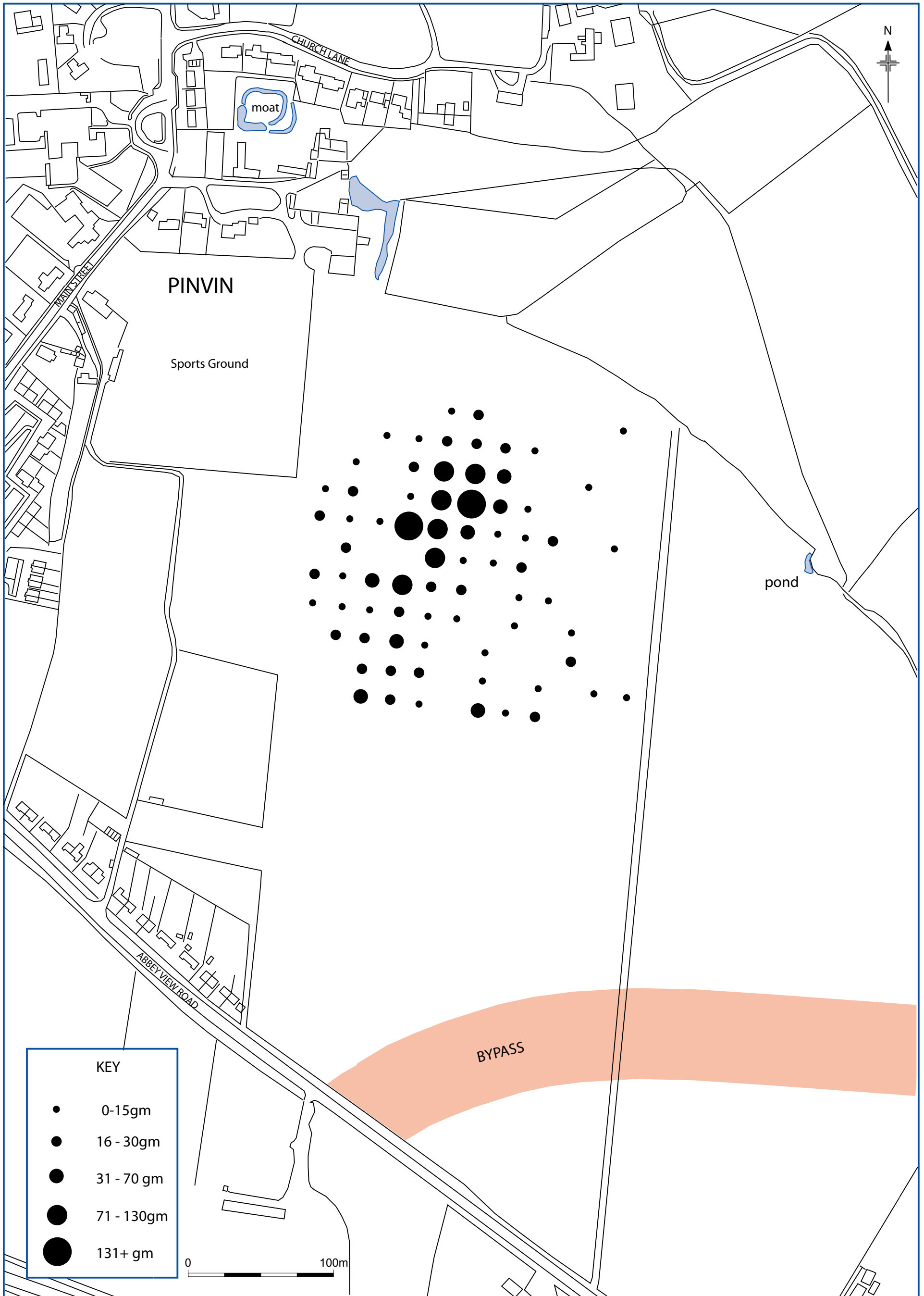
Figure 1



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Figure 2

Distribution of fire cracked stone by weight.



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Distribution of Romano-British pottery by weight.

Figure 3