

The Meadow Croft: A late Saxon cottage, Summer Lane, Wirksworth An Archaeological Assessment Report

On behalf of
Wirksworth Town Council

Report of fieldwork 2020-2022

Meadow Croft Field, Summer Lane, Wirksworth, Derbyshire, DE4 4EB

Grid Ref: SK 2849 5374



Postcard of The Meadows, Wirksworth, in 1910, courtesy of Phil Richards

Wirksworth Archaeological Society:
Anton Shone, Secretary, 20 Norfolk Gardens, Duffield Road, Derby, DE221AJ

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Introduction

Archaeological Context:

The archaeology discovered was largely unsuspected as there have been no previous interventions. Although the field had been subject to a Lidar survey and assessed by aerial photography the main archaeological remains were in a small wood which covers the north-east of the field itself and these were only found when a trial trench was put into an adjacent ditch. The presence of the wood also made the excavation exceptionally difficult as it contained mature trees which could not be removed for the sake of the work. It remains a caveat that the Society is a local community group and there are limits to what can be achieved. Parts of the Croft Cottage site have not been examined: particularly the south-east of the building as well as further stoning features known to exist to the west and south-west. For these reasons it cannot be excluded that the field contains other archaeological features of interest. It would be entirely possible for professional, highly paid and expert archaeologists to do more detailed work if large sums of money were raised. The Society takes the view that we have found these features and further work could always be done by others were it felt appropriate. This, too, highlights the limitations of the Society's expertise and knowledge. It is in the light of these caveats and limitations that this report should be read.

Findings: The Meadow Croft:

The results, for which this is the Society's final outcome, identified the remains of a Late Saxon / Saxo-Norman croft, that is a small cottage and yard, with a later imbricated (dog tooth) path leading northwards towards the town. In many respects this is unusual, as small domestic buildings of this date appear to be very rarely reported and no comparators could be found in searched reports of this part of Mercia.

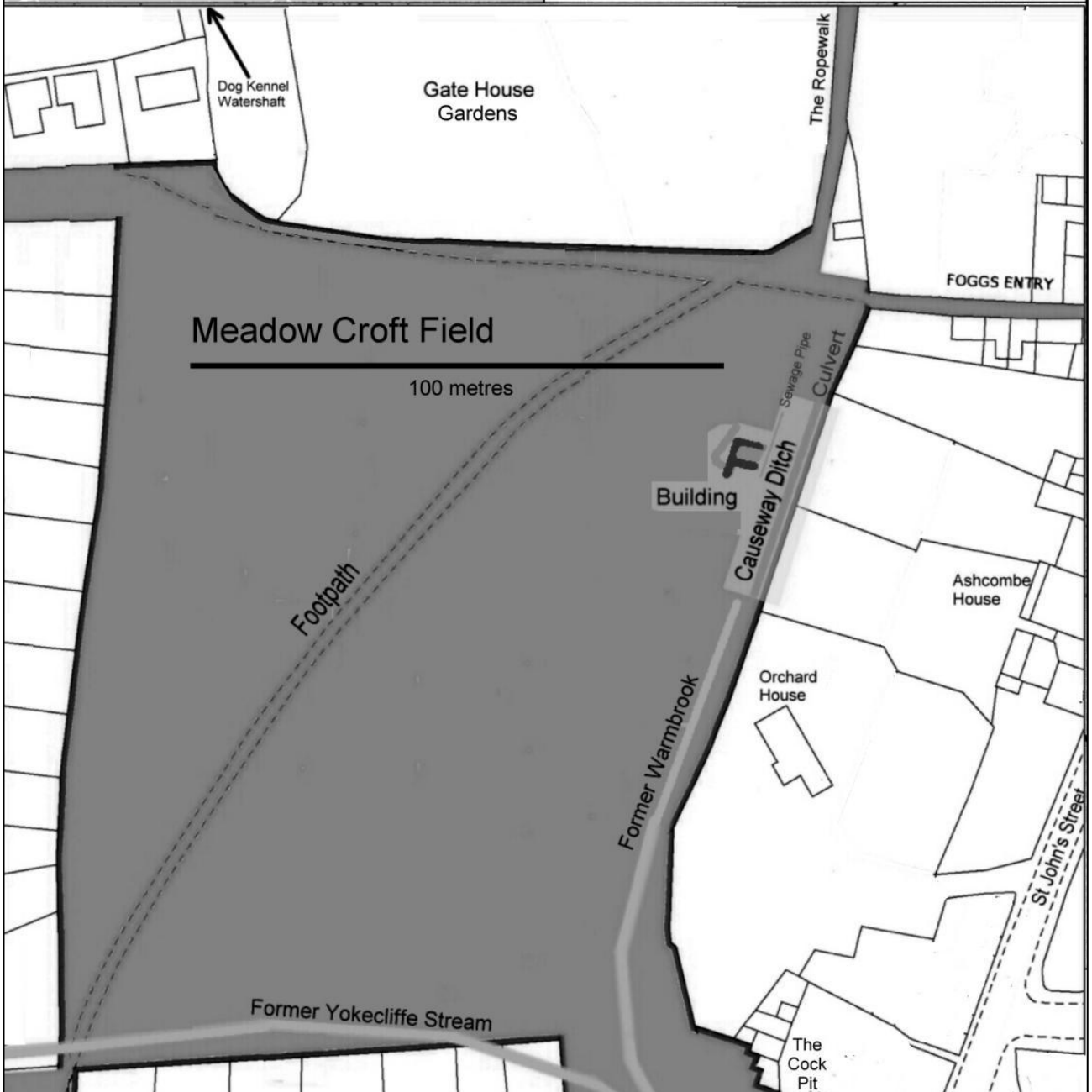
An exceptionally unusual feature of the site was a water supply provided to the building in a stone lined channel. This initially led to speculation that the site might have been an almshouse, brewhouse or a hospital, but the finds from the site don't really support this possibility and no other buildings (such as a chapel) have been found. The croft cottage had a clay floor and was constructed of assorted rough stone in a packed clay matrix and had a sandstone roof. This might also be thought to be unusual for its time, but is entirely consistent with these materials being appropriate in this stony upland area and being the cheapest and most easily available locally, timber in this location in this period being primarily used for lead smelting or high status buildings and thus less common than in (for example) lowland agricultural areas.

In general, the earliest part of the site was underlain by a little Roman pottery and the walls and water channel stoning re-used some finely dressed gritstone which cannot be associated with the Saxon commencement of the site (in addition to a large amount of gathered rough limestone which formed most of the foundations). The implication of this is that another building or robbed structure of a previous time was the source of the dressed stone.

The croft site appears to begin in the middle tenth century and continued in use, given the pottery finds, until the last quarter of the thirteenth century, at which point the pottery record, which is resolutely domestic, comes to an abrupt end. The wall foundations were present on the north, west and south sides, the east side having been destroyed by a Victorian sewer and cut by a ditch.

There were few finds of later medieval or Tudor ages around the site, which appears to become a backwater until after the English Civil War, when the adjacent ditch, once the course of the Warmbrook, became a dumping ground for large amounts of building stone (again from an unknown source) and was then part of the “common midden” of the town at the rear of St John’s Street: a status it appeared to keep until the end of public dumping of rubbish with the coming of urban sanitation in late Victorian times.

There were no finds of industrial, mercantile or specialist artisan activities, suggesting the site had indeed been domestic, with the water supply taken from nearby springs for personal use (broken pot and jug fragment being found in the channel) and for the watering of animals. The Meadows place-name was first recorded in 1420 and there were no indications, with the single exception of the field being recorded as “Meadow Croft” in the Tithe Award, that anything significant was to be found.



Maps of the location Meadow Croft Field

Archaeological and other features of the field

Dimensions of the field

From the north boundary of 8 Summer Lane, five metres east of feature 10, to the south boundary of Gate House gardens is 150.55 metres on a line compass north. From Fogg's Entry on the east boundary of the Meadow Croft, to the west boundary of the houses on Yokecliffe Crescent is 140.30 metres on a line compass west. The field is not a perfect rectangle and is therefore about 1.7 hectares (a little over 4 acres). The field slopes slightly from the north-west corner down to the south-east corner, with Ordnance Datum at 148.00 metres at a point near the central path.

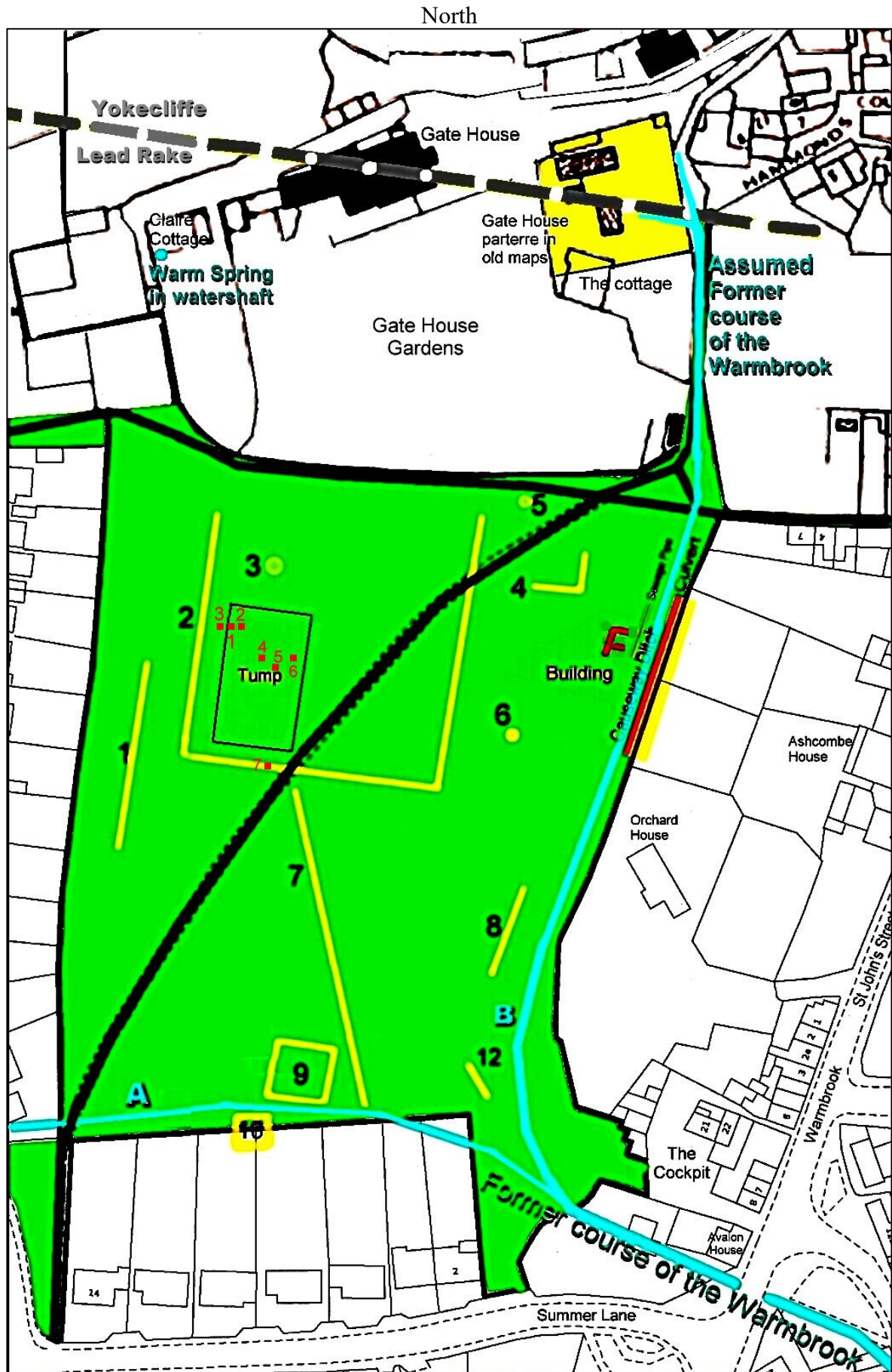
Overview of the features

As an overview, the archaeology of this field is hugely interesting for the history of Wirksworth. The archaeology is much busier than we expected but the field has never been examined before and with the exception of occasional property and place-name references to it, was rather a blind spot in our understanding of the town. Wirksworth, like many of the towns of the Peak District, has never, until the last few years, been archaeologically examined in detail, prior to the founding of the Society in 2005, there had been no formally reported archaeology of any kind in this part of the town.

In the above plan the path which runs diagonally through the Meadows from the town towards Summer Lane can be seen, as well as what appeared to be a building platform on Lidar to the north-west of the path, known as "The Tump". This feature has been investigated and we have not been able to find any building remains on it, though something timber can't be excluded, there was a very little medieval pottery found and only a single sherd of Roman pottery came from under it. In talking to local people it was even suspected from personal comments that the Tump might have been the result of random dumping of clay arising from the construction of the Yokecliffe Estate in 1971. Efforts were made by the Society to collect old photographs but none are exact enough to show the Tump, only a slight rise which appears on the 1900 postcard of the field might indicate it had been there originally. On examination the entire Tump feature seems to be composed of a dark grey, almost black clay which lies on top of the natural field surface. We are not able to confirm any archaeological feature, even though the dark organic colour of the clay suggests human occupation.

This is an important lesson in the interpretation of Lidar features: fieldwork is necessary to support or eliminate their interpretation. A similar lesson applies to features such as cropmarks in the aerial photographs of the field. There were, interestingly, several different cropmarks shown on three available aerial photographs, which had been taken in different years, at different seasons and from different lighting angles. Again, some of these features contained no archaeology, they were geological or topographical features masquerading as human activity. However, there were a number of cropmark features shown on the aerial

photographs which were indeed archaeological and which, on investigation by fieldwork, help shed some light on the history of the Meadow Croft field.



Meadow Croft in 2023 showing identified archaeological features

Note: "Building" outline in red is the location of the Saxo-Norman Croft Cottage

Key to plan

1. Possible ditch or relict boundary. Not examined	2. Possible enclosure ditches in U-shape. Examined probable medieval small boundary ditches
3. Circular feature on Lidar. Not examined	4. Small L shape ditches. Not examined
5. Small circular feature on Lidar. Not examined	6. Further small circular feature on Lidar identified at ground level. Area of medieval stoning.
7. Possible drainage ditch feature may be the line of the former Meadow Croft Sough	8. Possible small drainage ditch. Not examined
9. Square enclosure, possible building remains. Examined, no evidence of remains or any feature	10. Very small square enclosure, possible building remains. Not examined
11a/b. Features beyond the Meadows between Derby Road and Water Lane on old aerial photos. Destroyed by development (not shown on plan)	12. "Possible sough tail" of the Meadow Croft Sough. Examined. Not a sough tail (outfall). Entirely natural.
Red dots 1-7. Test Pits on the Tump.	A. Yokecliffe Stream (assumed course) B. Warmbrook Stream (known course)

In attempting to find the stream bed of the Yokecliffe stream (feature A in blue), two attempts were not successful and we conclude that it is a little further south than shown on the plan, perhaps in the actual gardens of the houses of Summer Lane. Feature B is the former course of the Warmbrook.

Finally, and not apparent on any of the aerial or Lidar images were the below-ground remains of what we initially regarded as a possible defensive ditch - the Causeway Ditch in the course of the former Warmbrook and the foundation remains of a croft - cottage building, in the east side of the Meadows near the boundary wall with the back gardens of St John's Street. In so far as these features were below ground they could only be identified through fieldwork and this took place over three digging seasons, albeit in difficult and restricted circumstances due to the Covid epidemic and the mature wooded nature of the site.

In many respects the late Saxon and Norman date of the croft building remains is extraordinary, because small structures of this time are uncommon finds in themselves and even rarer to be examined or reported in the national archaeological record.

Finds at the site by period

Prehistoric / Iron Age

A very small amount of possible prehistoric pottery has been found, generally underlying other activities, which might be construed as being Iron Age, however, the caveat for this is that some of it might be Saxon, as we are dealing with handmade, rough, poorly fired materials which often have similarities in terms of the two periods.

In addition, a hammerstone was found below the imbricated surface of the yard of the Croft, we cannot date such a stone except to say it would not be later than the yard below which it was found (thirteenth century), indeed you might still hammer something with a stone today. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to regard such hammerstones as being more common from the prehistoric age.

Roman

There is a small amount of Roman pottery from the site as a whole, with the oldest piece dating from the later first century and most pieces being commonly of the second or third centuries. These are not present in large amounts and only a single sherd of Roman Derbyshireware was found in a context adjacent to the foundations of the north-west corner of the croft building. A sherd of Roman floor tile was found under the imbrication of the yard of a type consistent with the fourth century date of the villa at Carsington, whose comparators are kept at Buxton Museum and were examined for this report.

Undated

A curiosity of the foundation of the croft building is that although it is constructed largely of gathered rough limestone, there are several pieces of well-dressed gritstone, one of which is very fine indeed, which gives the impression of being a plinth stone. We cannot date such stonework currently, all that can reasonably be said is that it must pre-date the construction of the croft, for example Eaton (2000) notes a tendency of Saxon builders to re-use Roman stone. A further observation is that such stonework must have come from close by: some of it is extremely heavy and cannot have been carried by a single person. A final observation about the dressed stonework is that there is more than one type of both the dressing and the grit or sand stone used and the very finely dressed piece is of an extremely hard, almost granite quality: the implication is that there may have been more than one nearby building source or ruin from which these worked stones were brought and

the tentative view would be that these pieces may possibly be Roman, but certainty cannot be attributed to them without identifying their source.

Saxon

In considering the pottery finds from the Croft cottage a relatively long beginning of Saxon pottery of handmade types is apparent in the build up to the main period of occupation of the croft site. Some of this pottery is quite excruciating, that is to say it has been made by hand by a person who knew little or nothing about how to make pottery and has simply dug up some clay, left all its imperfections in it, constructed it into some form of pot then fired it by putting it in a bonfire. Nevertheless, this still represents an aspiration or need for pottery rather than using wooden or (expensive) metal alternatives.

Once we get to more recognisable, or more accurately, kiln made pottery by knowledgeable individuals we also begin to get recognisable Saxon types such as Stamford Ware and these suggest that we are not dealing with people using or occupying the croft who are poverty stricken or desperately poor. The pottery sequence continues well into the Norman period and is resolutely domestic: of cooking pots and jugs. It is felt that the start of the croft building is of the second half of the tenth century and continued through to the late thirteenth century.

There were no finds which would indicate any industrial, mercantile, monastic or trading activity of any kind. The building appears to be domestic - a croft or small farm on the edge of the town next to a convenient water supply, in the form of the Warmbrook, which in those days would have passed pleasantly by on the east side of the farm.

The Society excavated the area around the structure to identify it and this revealed part of the foundations and remains of the building. It appears to have stone and clay foundations, a clay floor, stone walls and had a sandstone tiled roof, perhaps in a later phase. Around the building was a wide spread of fallen stone, which is believed to be part of the collapse of the building, there were also rough sandstone tiles and handmade nails lying over the foundations.

This brings us to the real eye-opener about the building. It had a water supply. Running down the west side of the building is a stone-lined channel that served a little covered duct on the inside of the building's north wall. The operative and extraordinary word here is "inside". This caused considerable excitement and it was initially felt that the building should represent something more than a croft, perhaps a small grange, hospital or almshouse. However, this is not the case, there was no evidence to support it and in the end it was felt that

we should take the simplest possible explanation - that the croft had a water supply, primarily for its animals, but also because it would make domestic farm life easier.

The dimensions of the building, as evidenced by the surviving north and west walls, is approximately 4 metres by 5 metres. Much of the east side had been dug away by a Victorian sewage pipe. Overall, the building would have been about the size of a big modern living room. It cannot be said that all the area around was examined in detail, the presence of mature trees in the excavation area made this an uncharacteristically difficult site to deal with. The building was constructed in its final phase at least (there may have been more than one phase) of gathered stone set in wide clay walls and a roof of stone slates nailed to the roof structure. Stone and clay represent the cheapest and most easily available materials in this location of the Peak District of Mercia.

The pottery finds from the Causeway Ditch point to an early date, Saxon or earlier, in terms of the deep ditch and to a late thirteenth century date for the re-cut or shallow element of the ditch.

Norman

The building has been dated from associated pottery, which runs from approximately 950AD to 1250 or a little later, but does not appear to stretch beyond 1300. The pottery suggests that the building originated in the late Saxon period and continued to the Norman age, a date range either side of the Norman Conquest and stretching into the period in which the deFerrers were Lords of the Manor of Wirksworth.

The pottery finds associated with this are typical of the time and include amounts of Burley Hill wares, shelly wares and orange gritty coarsewares. The unity of these finds helps identify pottery sherds which we have not been familiar with, of the same time period and which may be local products as they are not known in the record from some of the better understood parts of Derbyshire.

The end of occupation of the croft site is almost certainly the last quarter of the thirteenth century as the pottery record stops abruptly at this point. This timing coincides with a change in lordship of the manor from the deFerrers back to the King in 1269 and when the Causeway Ditch appears to have been re-cut. It is even possible that the end of the croft as a small occupied farmhouse may be attributable to the re-cutting of the ditch as a defence or major boundary, which would have impinged upon the cottage.

In total, 241 sherds of early medieval and medieval pottery were found in the field, of which 192 were specific to the croft cottage itself.

Medieval and Post Medieval

Thereafter the pottery sequence has to be taken from the surroundings and the site appears to become a backwater just used for agriculture until the watercourse (the Causeway Ditch) begins to be used as a dumping ground, or is being deliberately infilled, in the years immediately following the English Civil War certainly after 1660 or so.

The Causeway Ditch is later referred to as the “Common Midden” and dumping of domestic pottery, fireplace ash etc. continues in it until the early years of the twentieth century.

The field contains medieval ditches and the central path was constructed over one of these, most probably in the Tudor Age when changes in ownership took place and while lead mining was being undertaken around the headwaters of the Warmbrook in what later became the garden parterre of Gate House.

Finds from the ditch and other parts of the field reflect domestic and other life, for example fairs, from the medieval period onwards, with large quantities of pottery of all kinds increasing to huge amounts of dumped pottery in the ditch after the English Civil War, as well as finds of things like gaming pieces and musket and pistol balls in surprising numbers, suggesting the field may have been used for shooting practice or the shooting of small animals such as rabbits for dinner.

The use of the Causeway Ditch as a town dumping ground after the English Civil War has resulted in there being vast amounts of post medieval pottery, ash and small domestic items in it. Samples were taken of this post medieval pottery where it occurred in the topsoil and subsoil of the dig area (the two uppermost contexts) and from the ditch, with a total of 14.7 kilos of samples retained. This is currently beyond the resources of the Society to catalogue.

Modern

Archaeology does not stop for the modern world, that is to say the last 250 years or so. The field was used consistently for agriculture as it always had been in the past: probably wheat or oats as these were two main local crops and the field occurs in documents and maps, as well as within living memory, for the making of hay, the grazing of cattle and sheep. Significant change in these practices only occurred from 1971 when the Yokecliffe estate was built on the Great and Little Meadows and drainage changes were made through the south side of Meadow Croft, which, whilst it remained as a field, lost its agricultural importance and appears to have been used in some parts for dumping of spoil and other materials when the Yokecliffe estate was built.

After that point little or no agricultural activity took place with the possible exception of some hay making for a few years and the field was increasingly used for casual recreation. The archaeological finds from the modern age reflect this in terms of a range of items such as penknives, knives, forks, spoons, plate and cup sherds of modern machine made wares, indicating picnic type activity from the days before disposable plastic.

There were also considerable amounts of modern glass bottles of all kinds including beer and ale bottles, small spirit bottles for products such as whisky, vodka and brandy, indicating the extensive consumption of recreational alcohol. In case this causes any “shock horror” Daily Mail type headlines, we would cordially point out that the date of such items indicates it was inhabitants now of the age of your granny and grandad who were probably drunk, dancing and giggling the late summer evenings away, because the range of such glassware does not extend as far as alcopops. Presumably by the time these came into fashion the Meadow Croft had become too neglected to be comfortable in, that is to say once the mowing and haymaking stopped the field gradually became the four acres of nettles, thistles, brambles and the weeds which so regrettably characterise it today and which do not represent its historic nature as a meadow, which it owed to centuries of human intervention.

In other recreational finds there are large numbers of footballs, the tump in particular was used for recreational and casual football by the miscellaneous pupils of Anthony Gell Grammar School and the Wash Green Secondary Technical School for years and there are also quantities of golf balls and golf tees which suggest the casual practice of golf in the field by local residents. Naturally, there are also finds of small toys lost by children through the ages and the most recent finds are of soft drinks cans and plastic chocolate, biscuit and crisp wrappers of all makes and origins.

From the archaeological point of view, there may be further remains in the field, particularly on the east side, which the Society does not have the further resources to examine. The retention of the field as a meadow is therefore of importance.



The Meadows looking south towards Summer Lane



Wirksworth Archaeological Society carrying out survey measurements in the Meadows

The place-names, historic records and maps of the Meadows.

The Meadows was originally a much larger field than now: most fields around the town were walled into smaller units by different owners and by the Enclosure Acts. “Meadows” is first mentioned as “Meadow Wall” in 1420 (Cameron, 1959). In this case it is not known whether “wall” refers to an actual wall or it may be a dialect corruption of “well” (originally meaning spring). The field was first mapped in 1821 and then occurs regularly in maps of Wirksworth. The first Tithe Award of 1837 calls it Meadow Croft, this would have differentiated it from the Great and Little Meadows, which were where the Yokecliffe estate now is.

Summer Lane, along the south side of the Meadows, was also first recorded in 1420 as Summer Way (perhaps a corruption of Sumpter, the driver of pack horses, it appears to form a diversion avoiding the town, thus the need to pay town tolls in medieval times); The Warm Brook, as le Warmbroke in 1395; Yokecliffe as Zyelcliff in 1415 (perhaps originally Yeldcliff, that is to say “sloping cliff”). Gate House, although its listed building status says “dating from the seventeenth century”, is first recorded in a marriage settlement of Helena Gell in 1553 but is implied as being owned by John Feyrne in a probate of 1550. It is not known if Gate House implies the presence of an actual town gate. The present house appears to be two rebuilds later and the original may not even have been in the same exact location as the current one due to lead mining of the Yokecliffe rake in Tudor times. Looking at the maps, the grounds of Gate House give the impression of being encroachment on the Meadows and this appears to be so, there being a court case in the Wirksworth Court Leet in 1558 against John Wigley, who appears to have enclosed part of the Meadows on the north side near Hopton Lane and West End, once called Marten Ash Green. He was a serial offender and had also been brought before the court for blocking Pittywood Lane, Broadmeadow Lane (now extinct) and the “Queen’s Highway to Hopton” (Hopton Lane).

We can see on the 1821 map, which follows, that Meadow Croft held an avenue of trees in 1821, today there are Linden trees (Lime trees) lining the location where we are carrying out our examination, these trees are not the originals, the current ones having been planted within living memory, after the historic ones were cut down “about 70 years ago”.

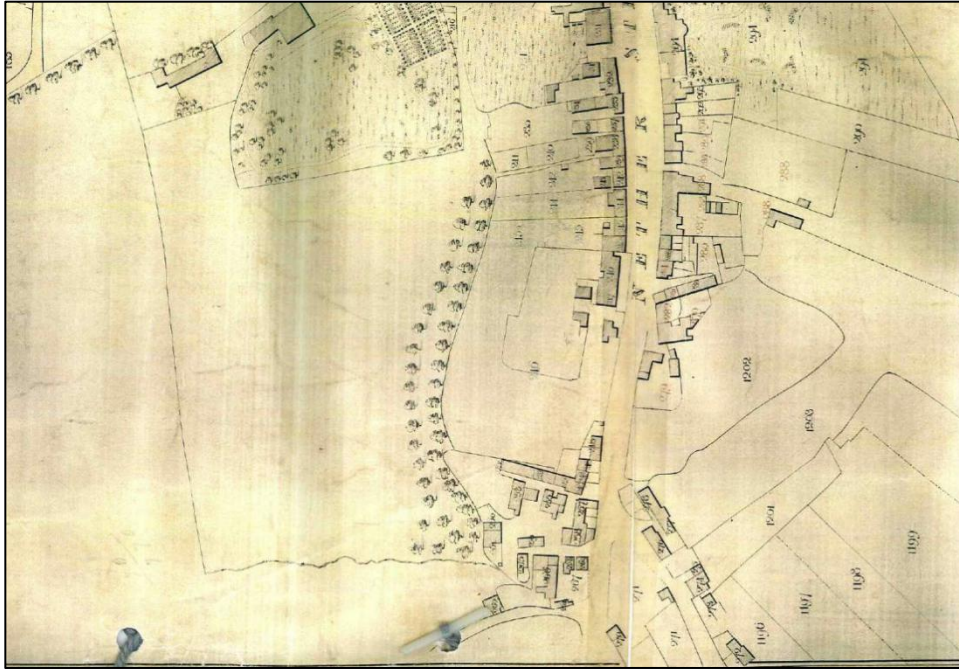
The garden of Gate House in its south-east corner has an entry-way not apparent in the 1821 map, which is now a ruinous gate with a concrete lintel and this apparently gave access in later years to the Gate House stables from Hammonds Court and the narrow lane below Waltham House. This access may be the origin of the local myth that a road or lane ran between the avenue of trees in the Meadows: “The Causeway”. This is the name of the street towards Gate House from Market Place, but which in 1821 was called “Gatehouse Street” and there is some evidence from (the very poorly catalogued) Arkwright archives at Derbyshire Record Office, that prior to that the street had possibly been called “Wellstones” or “Wellstones Street”.

Also in 1821, St John's Street was called Nether Street. We had first thought that "Nether Street" was the older name of this street, but this is not the case, over 100 years before 1821, it was called St John's Street and this must be its correct name: Our attention was kindly drawn by Lyn Murray to two documents in the Gell archive at Derbyshire Record Office. The first, dated 1712, is a Feoffment (a deed) giving John Holloby the rent of a house in St John's Street. The second dated 1795 gives a lease to John Toplis of a cottage in Wirksworth "near Nether Street, formerly known as St John's Street". In the 1790 and 1821 maps the street is called Nether Street, but by the 1841 census it had reverted to St John's Street again (also St John Street or even John Street, in different documents). This is rather baffling, not only that there should be such to-ing and fro-ing with the street name, but also because it is not known at this present time of any reason why it should be called St John's Street. The only church in Wirksworth of any age is St Mary's and none of its chantries were called St John's, as far as is known. *Where, then, is the missing "St John's" of St John's Street?*

The archaeology of the Meadow Croft field is described in the report which follows. In many respects the archaeology of this field is hugely interesting for the history of Wirksworth. The archaeology is much busier than expected but the field has never been examined before.

Map regression: the earliest maps

North



Meadow Croft in the 1821 Duchy of Lancaster map
the oldest map showing part of the field on the left

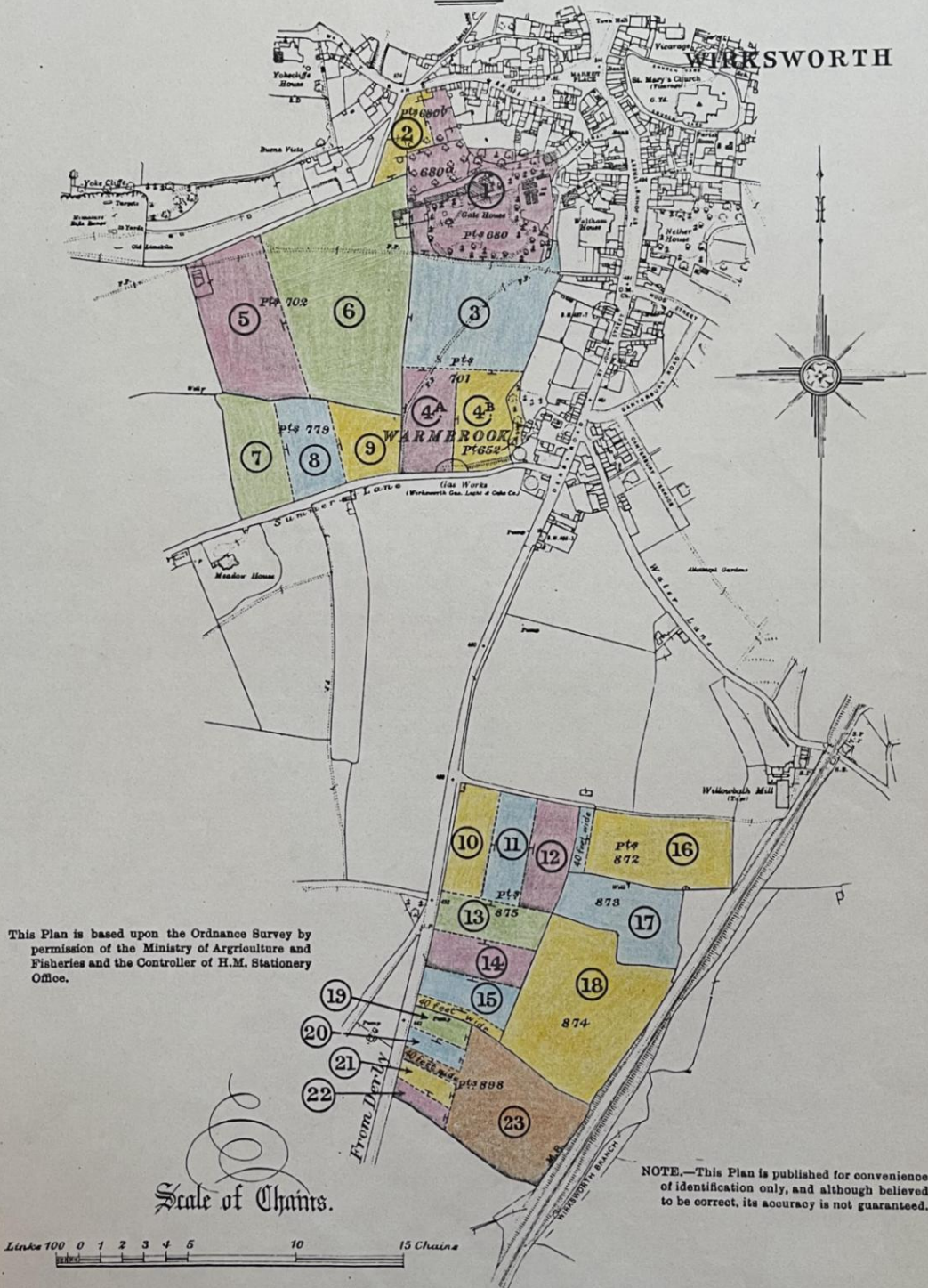
North



Meadow Croft in the 1836 Township of Wirksworth (civil vestry) map
the first map showing the whole of the field

Plan OF GATE HOUSE PROPERTY, WIRKSWORTH.

For Sale by Auction by
MESSRS. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY,
1924



This Plan is based upon the Ordnance Survey by permission of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

NOTE.—This Plan is published for convenience of identification only, and although believed to be correct, its accuracy is not guaranteed.

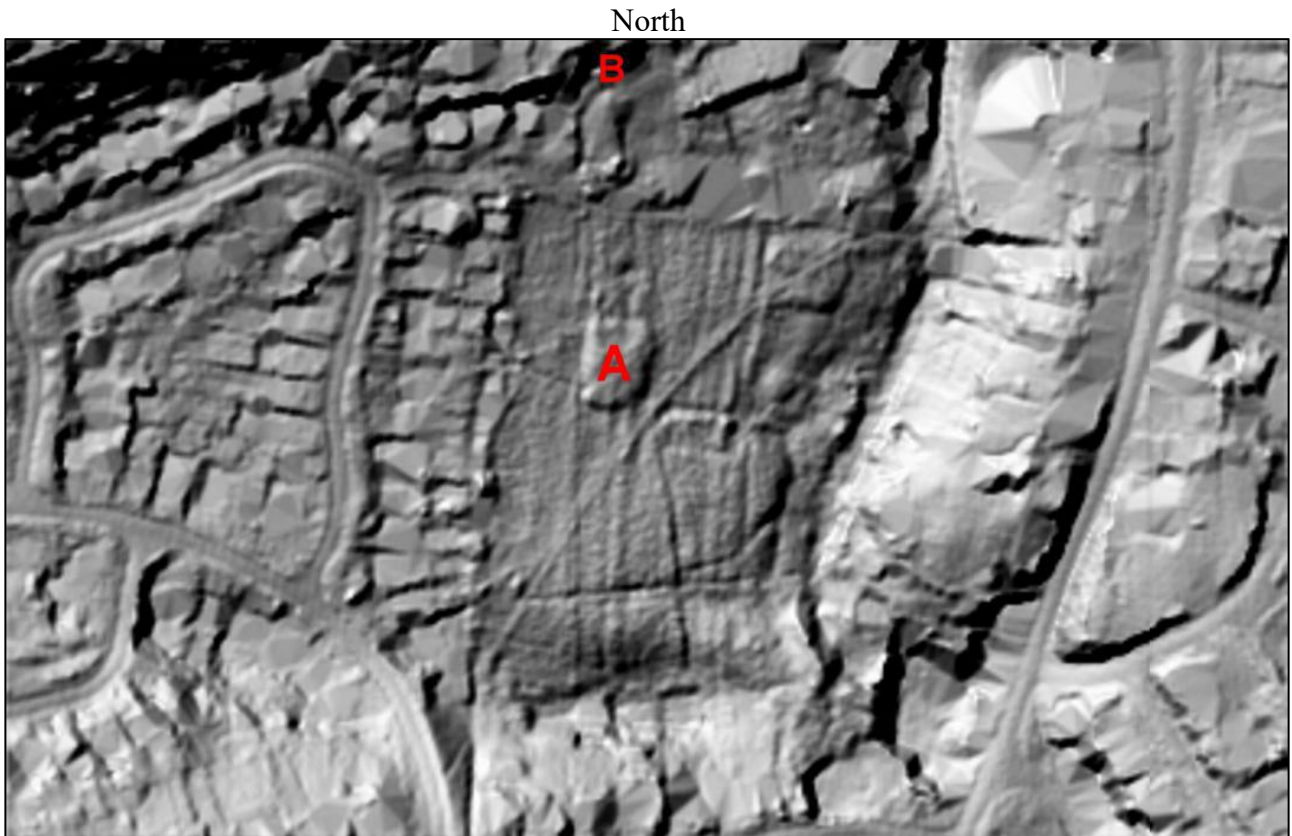
Messrs. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY,
Auctioneers and Estate Agents,
20 HANOVER SQUARE, LONDON, W. 1
90 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH;
78 ST. VINCENT STREET, GLASGOW; and
41 BANK STREET, ASHFORD, KENT.

Martin, Hood & Larkin, Photo-liths., St. Newport St. W.C.

Plan in a 1924 sale document of the Gate House estate
(Courtesy of Barry Joyce) Items 3 and 4A/B are Meadow Croft

Survey and Assessment Work

Possible building platform on Lidar: “The Tump”



Where A shows a possible building platform anecdotally called the “Tump” and B marks the former site of a warm spring in the Gate House grounds

In the Lidar image the path which runs diagonally through the Meadows from the town towards Summer Lane can clearly be seen, as well as what appeared to be a building platform to the north-west of the path, known as “The Tump”. This feature “A” has been investigated and no building remains on it have been found. On examination the entire feature seems to be composed of an almost black clay which lies on top of the natural field substrate of fawn-orange brown sandy clay: there appears to be no archaeology in it.

Work carried included identifying how large the feature was because scaling accurately from the Lidar image wasn't possible. Measuring from its outer edge, that is to say where the feature returns to what appears to be the normal contour of the field, the platform is 25.1 metres wide on the east-west axis and 27.9 metres long on the north-south axis, of which the levelled area on the top is 15.4 metres east-west and 17.6 metres north-south, so about 270 square metres. By way of a comparison, the floor area of a one bedroom house is typically about 70 to 80 square metres, had it actually been proven as a building platform we had conjectured it to be about the size of a large barn.

This feature is constructed of very heavy black clay up to a metre deep over the natural substrate. Let us suppose you were a farmer in antiquity and you wanted to build a house or a barn: in the normal way of

things you would roughly clear and level the ground and spread perhaps 20cm of clay on it to give you a sound floor, you wouldn't (seemingly) lay nearly 300 tons of clay on it a metre deep: this is a lot of work. Secondly, we found no evidence of a spread of building rubble or broken floor tile nor the remains of wattle and daub, mortar or timber beam slots: nothing giving an indication of a building.



Meadows Tump Test Pit 4 looking north-east.

The topsoil (in this example test pit) contains post-medieval items of the usual local nature, of bits of blue and white china, small glass and occasional nails. The sequence of layers is: topsoil 18 cm; 1 cm thin layer of small cherty stone with bits of brick and charcoal which also contained a sherd of thick clay pipe stem pressed into the underlying black clay, which cannot be before the middle of the sixteenth century (1550 onwards). Also in this horizon was a sherd of possible Cistercian ware (1450-1600 or a little later). There were also small slices of sandstone which might imply stone slates, but none of these contained nail holes and they may simply be random occurrences related to stone working. There were no finds from the black clay itself in this test pit, which deepens to 1 metre from the west edge. The black clay overlies another thin layer of cherty material which is the upper horizon of the natural fawn clay substrate.

Only one of the test pits yielded a sherd from in the black clay context, a single sherd of medieval buff oxidised ware.

In terms of finds beneath the black clay, there were three sherds embedded onto the upper surface of the natural substrate: A single shed of Roman first century Gaulish mica-dusted ware (AD70-AD100); a single sherd of Saxo-Norman Stamford ware (850-1100); a single sherd of spot glazed ware (1050-1250). This was the totality of finds from this context out of six test pits on the feature itself. A seventh test put was put in to a small ditch which runs on the south side of the feature and this Test Pit had no finds from any context except a little modern pottery from the topsoil.



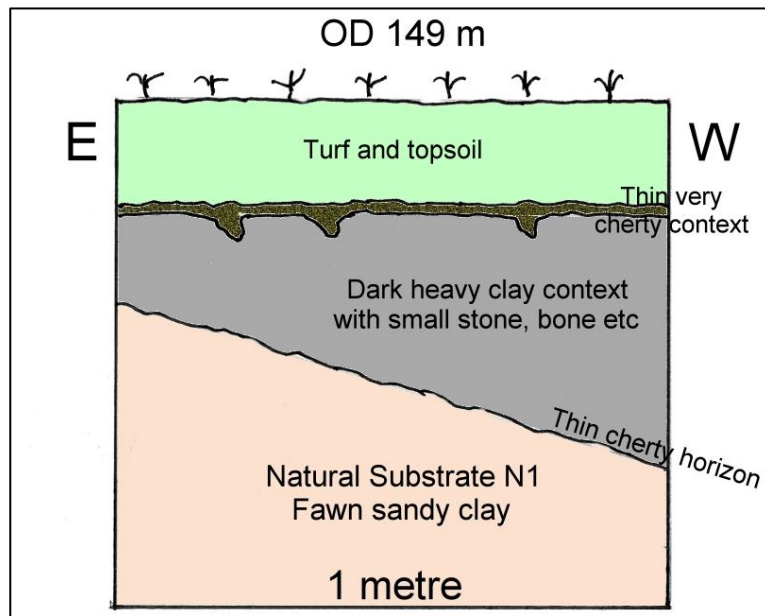
The Meadows in 1910

Courtesy of Phil Richards

The natural condition of the Meadows field is a depth of topsoil about 15-20 cm which then merges gradually into the substrate of entirely natural fawn sandy clay by about 40 cm deep.

The Tump, however, consists of topsoil, then a thin layer of cherty soil, a very defined horizon to black / slate grey heavy clay which overlays the natural fawn / orange sandy clay substrate in another very defined horizon again with a little chert in the horizon.

The finds are very few. The clay itself has almost no datable finds but contains only occasional animal bone and bits of charcoal as well as various apparently random stoning. Were this feature the site of a building, even such as a medieval barn, we would perhaps expect a greater concentration of finds and pottery.



Descriptive cross-section of Meadows Tump Test Pit 1

The small stoning found within in the dark grey clay layer seems too incoherent to represent a structure, although some of it appears to lie in convenient lines, these are suspect for the reasons explained below. In addition, the stone is an unusually mixed bag of different types of stone (limestone, gritstone, sandstone and chert), different sizes and in different states of decay.

It is possible to take the view that the Tump may even perhaps be “modern” and this option may be due to construction work associated with the adjacent Yokecliffe estate: it is conjectured that during 1971 when the estate was being constructed, it was perhaps necessary to remove a large amount of clay from the area of the housing, this could conceptually have been done as follows:

1. An area on the west side of the path in the Meadows field may have been machine stripped of its topsoil (bulldozer).
2. The clay from the estate area was tipped and levelled in the Meadows field by machine, this may account for the apparent lines of mixed stones in the feature, they are seemingly the outcome of bulldozer or heavy vehicle tracks.
3. The original topsoil was then re-spread over the top of the clay to provide a grassed surface.

If so, these activities resulted in the Tump and given the building activity in the Yokecliffe estate, could be dated to late 1971 or early 1972. That the feature appears to be fairly uniform and nearly square may simply be a function of the proposed levelling process.

If this option is wrong and the Tump is indeed the result of prior archaeological activity, the time frame would have to be medieval. Normally a dark grey / black clay of this kind would signify human intervention.

Of the few finds in the lower horizon (on top of the natural and in the natural itself), the earliest is the Roman mica-dusted ware (probably residual) and the latest would be a sherd of Saxo-Norman spot glaze ware which cannot be before the middle of the eleventh century. There is then (mostly) a finds gap until we get to Cistercian ware and clay pipe sherds in the upper horizon and topsoil, the former cannot be before the middle of the fifteenth century. Therefore this would suggest the feature is due to some obscure activity in the medieval age, perhaps farming or even quarrying related (note the odd thin stone slices) between the mid eleventh and the mid fifteenth centuries.



Roman first century Gaulish mica-dusted ware with boss (AD70-AD100)

For some time before the end of its agricultural life in the 1990s the Meadows field continued to be mown and was used for casual recreation by residents. Finds on top of the Tump have included a football, tennis balls, golf balls and a number of quarter Vodka and other small spirit bottles. This kind of activity had probably ceased by 1995 as the Meadows was no longer mowed: had it continued we should have expected to find alcopops bottles, which were introduced to the UK in 1995 from Australia, but there are none. Suggesting that by then the Meadow Croft field had become too overgrown for much leisure activity apart from dog walking.



Sample modern recreational items (Trowel for scale)

The Causeway Ditch:

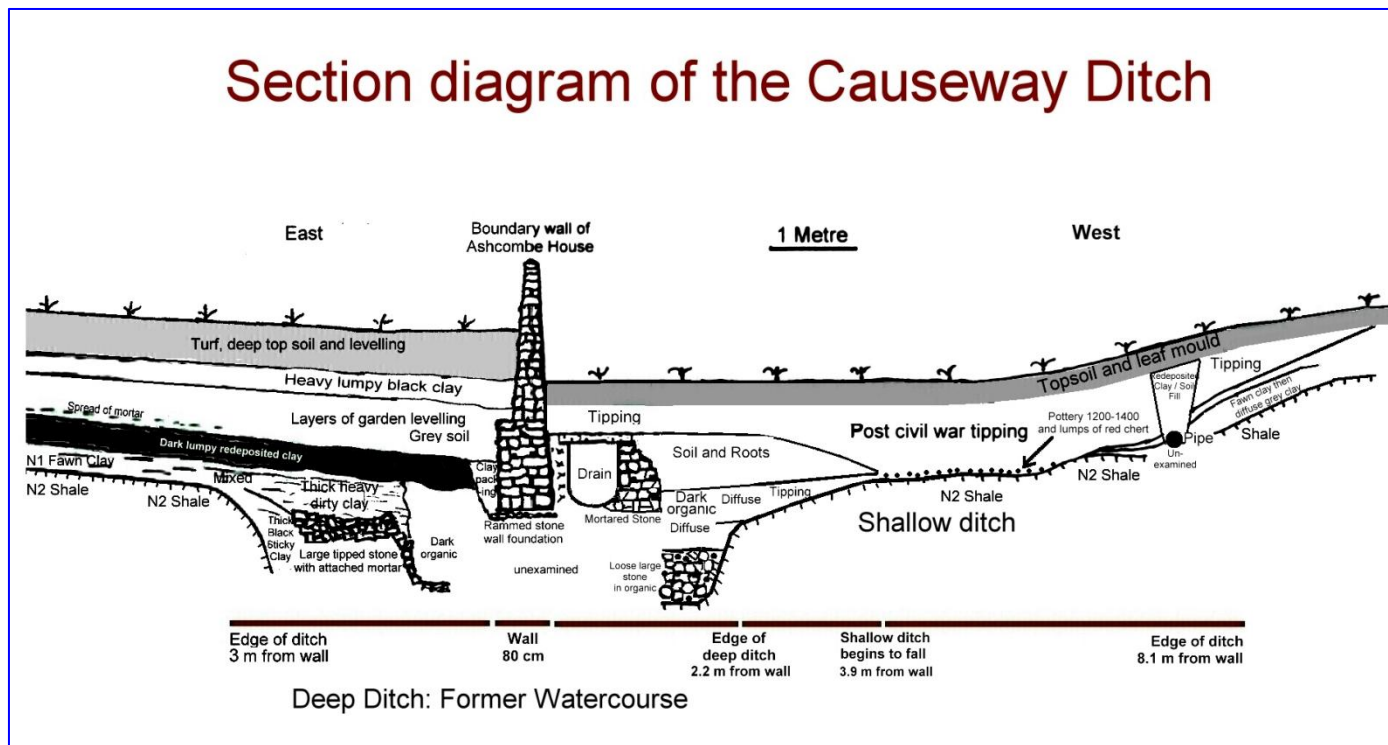
The historic course of the Warmbrook, the fortification ditch and its later use

The next examination work was based on a feature found in the gardens of the west side of St John's Street in 2014 (reported in Shone, 2016) which was thought to be one side of a large ditch and this was separated from the Meadows by the garden boundary wall of the houses there. It had not been possible to examine the Meadows side of the boundary wall until the Meadows came into the ownership of the Town Council. The ditch is not visible on aerial photographs because of trees. Therefore this was the next feature to be examined and several issues emerged.

1. Hard against the boundary wall (on the Meadow Croft side) runs a large seventeenth century culvert drain, which may be fed from old lead mine workings around the former Yokecliffe Rake or from Hammonds Court. The culvert still runs but its connections are unknown, so an assumption is being made about where the water in it comes from, it may drain something else entirely.
2. Some 8 metres from the boundary wall runs a Victorian sewer pipe, this is thought (on personal comments) to run from Gate House and may also be fed from a drain which is known to run west-east under the footpath on the north side of the Meadows next to the south boundary wall of the Gate House grounds.
3. The ditch itself, called anecdotally the Causeway Ditch, proved to be of considerable interest because of its size. Its huge, at about 12 metres wide and over 3 metres deep. This is much bigger than you would need as the boundary of a garden or even a town boundary. The boundary ditch of Gloucester, called the "Kings Ditch" and examined in 2019 by archaeologists, is only 4 metres wide and 1 metre deep.

The Causeway Ditch is overlain by about a metre of tipping which dates from after the English Civil War. This tells us that the ditch was a major feature before 1660 and the ditch is composed of two levels. A shallow level at 6 metres wide and 1 metre deep is a cut which is unequivocally medieval and dates from the late thirteenth century, a period when Wirksworth appears to have been subject to considerable Royal intervention. A deeper level, is also 6 metres wide and more than 3 metres deep, but so deep we could not get to the bottom and still work in safety with the the equipment then available to the Society; It is not possible to date the deep level, what little pottery was extracted by augering points to a pre-medieval date, but essentially the Warmbrook was a natural feature in origin. Therefore, the deeper level of the ditch is almost certainly the historic course of the Warmbrook. Documents related to lead mining identified that lead mining had taken place "at Warmbrook" during Tudor times, the only place where there is a lead rake which could conceivably have crossed the Warmbrook must be at Hammonds Court and the east side of the former Gate House gardens, once a parterre, suggesting that the location had been landscaped by the Gells and Arkwrights of

Gate House after the lead mining had ended. The lead mining would also account for the odd topography of this part of the town, which cannot be its original contour layout and much of which, from examinations and anecdotal evidence, is now made ground both in the Gate House gardens and along The Causeway (street).



Descriptive section diagram of the Causeway Ditch and boundary wall looking south

The ditch runs along the eastern boundary of the field adjacent to the garden walls of numbers 38-42 St John’s Street. The Society had carried out, during 2013 and 2014, an investigation of the garden of Ashcombe House (no 42) in which lower garden there were the remains of an undated (possibly substantial) demolished wall and where, at the bottom of the garden, next to the modern boundary wall, there was the lip of a ditch on that side. At the time it was not possible to investigate the Meadow Croft side of the wall.

On the garden side, the edge of the ditch was 3 metres from the wall and went down at least 2 metres before further work could not be done due to the depth in tight surroundings. The boundary wall foundations themselves are some 80 cm wide and on the Meadow Croft side of the garden wall runs a culvert whose top slab can be seen in the following picture.

The culvert is substantial, it being internally 80 cm deep and 60 cm wide and U shaped. It is still running. Given the materials and pottery overlaying it and around it, it dates from after 1660. It runs north-south and it is not known with any certainty what is feeding it. It may simply be a drain from Hammonds Court or Foggs Entry, but cannot be excluded that it may be a lead mining sough, draining water from the Yokecliffe lead vein which ran on the north and west side of the Gate House grounds and apparently under the main house.



Stone slab top of culvert found on the east boundary of the Meadow Croft.
Garden wall on right (east).

It is known from rather haphazard documentary evidence that there is a sough, called the Meadow Croft Sough or Warmbrook Sough (Rieuwerts, 1980), which is thought to run underground across the field, but that is alleged to be at a deeper level than this particular feature and may be represented on our plan of the Meadow Croft field by feature 7, an apparent small ditch running towards the known location of the warm spring at Gate House. Nevertheless, the feature may be the sough and the view that it runs diagonally across the field could be no more than supposition: we have not been able to prove what feature 7 actually is.

On the Meadow Croft side of the boundary wall, the ditch edge fill lies at 8 m 10 cm from the wall, thus for all intents and purposes, the total width of the ditch feature is some 12 metres. The method of working here, given the ditch is so wide, was to clear, examine and backfill, working from the west end of the feature towards the culvert and the garden wall in order to examine the ditch down to the base of the thirteenth century cut, which is shale.

The west side of the ditch is comprised of two layers of clay, the upper being a lighter brown colour. The ditch is cut to 1 metre 10 cm from the modern ground surface and the first metre of depth contains domestic waste, soil, a huge amount of pottery and small finds such as clay pipe sherds dating to after the English Civil War: post-1660. This is built up in interleaved layers, tipping after tipping, with diffuse horizons: the pottery goes back in time in a quite pronounced way.

Therefore the ditch has two elements: a deep ditch which is regarded as being the original course of the Warmbrook and a shallow ditch on the west side, which is a human-made cut. At this point in the shallow ditch there is a defined medieval context some 10 cm deep comprised of a darker organic fill containing

pieces of red cherty stone up to 5 cm in size, some pebble and medieval pottery, both Burley Hill ware and other wares of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In short, this part of the ditch was cut, or possibly re-cut, apparently in the late thirteenth century.



Causeway Ditch

20cm interval pole showing the west side of the shallow part of the ditch looking north

On its west side it is comparatively shallow at just over a metre deep, at 3 metres from the boundary wall it begins to drop very steeply towards the wall and at 2 metres from the wall is 2 metres deep and drops to 3 metres deep. From the point of view of the examination, in order to date this feature correctly it would be necessary to be at the bottom of it but this did not prove possible, it is too deep and flooded.

Therefore we have a ditch which, given it is full of tipping, domestic waste and vast amounts of post-civil war pottery, gives every impression of being the huge midden which documentary sources for the town note. Prior to that the shallow ditch cut, of the thirteenth century, implies a major, even defensive boundary. Finally, given the surprising depth of the original, the Warmbrook appears to have run in this course and for it to be a serious obstacle to any kind of random entry to the town at this location.



The Causeway Ditch (former course of the Warmbrook) looking south in 2014

We note the anecdotal Causeway place-name locally and we were often told by passers-by that there was “a road to the back of Gate House” along the line of the ditch, but there is no archaeological evidence of a road of any kind: its a local myth. Yet the top slabs of the culvert might have been seen as a causey when built.

In origin, the ditch was a watercourse, it was the primary and historic course of the Warmbrook, which rose in the grounds of Gate House, probably from the warm spring known to be there, nearby in the Yokecliffe lead rake and where its length and surroundings were completely destroyed by lead mining in the late medieval and Tudor Ages, such that the east side of the Gate House gardens and the entire surroundings of Hammonds Court and the rear elements of Waltham House are entirely made ground and landscaping intended to cover up the scars of lead mining. The Warmbrook would have passed along the east side of the Meadow Croft on its way running southwards to the back of the Cock Pit, where a tributary stream, the Yokecliffe Stream, joined it and the Warmbrook turned eastwards to flow under Derby Road and along the south side of Water Lane, where its course is totally obliterated by development, but where, ultimately, it would have flowed in to the Ecclesbourne near Willowbath Mill.

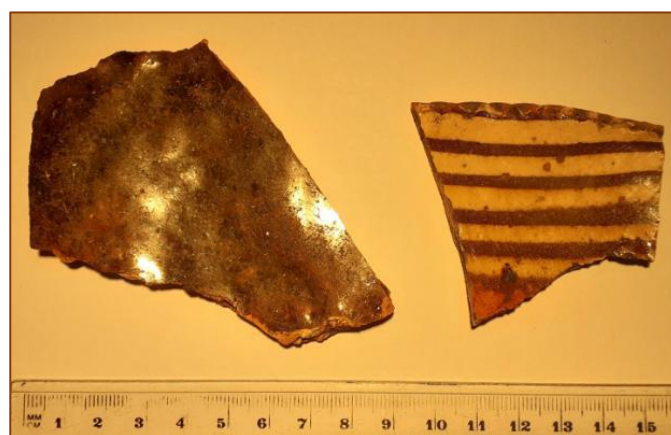
The ditch / course of the Warmbrook is some 12 metres wide and is composed of a shallow ditch about 6 metres wide and a watercourse ditch 6 metres wide. The shallow section is some 1.10 metres below current ground level and the deep ditch is some 2.65 metres below current ground level, these depths are probably not far from the correct original depths relative to the known edge of the ditch now. The shallow section goes down in fairly gentle way, but the deep ditch drops almost vertically.

The whole feature is covered by post civil war domestic tipping, with datable materials including pottery and clay pipe bowls taking us back to 1660. The deep ditch, where it is not overlaid by the culvert which is built on it, has a layer of these types of materials which then overlays a stonier fill of the deep ditch. This lowest fill of the deep ditch is a much grittier dark organic soily fill and contains stone, small chert, small pebble, gravel and bone, this type of material also implies the watercourse ran down the bottom of the ditch.



The ditch trench being dug out.

The pink items are for fall arrest in the bottom of the ditch



Example finds from the post civil war domestic tipping

Brown glazed wares and seventeenth century slipwares, after 1660



Example find Medieval pottery sherd

From the (shallow) causeway ditch, probably made at the kilns at Burley Hill at Duffield 1250-1375

The modern garden boundary wall, which dates from after the English civil war, runs down the centre of the deep ditch and where it bounds number 40 St John's Street, shows indications of having been raised from its original height by a considerable amount, probably due to the rising ground level as the ditch was being filled on the Meadow Croft side by the domestic tipping after the civil war. This tipping continued until the late Victorian age, that is presumably until modern refuse collection was begun by the Wirksworth Urban District Council after 1894.

There are other locations where archaeologists have carried out recent work on ditches. An example is the assessment of the King's Ditch in Gloucester, carried out by Archaeological Research Services of Bakewell.



The King's Ditch in Gloucester, examined in 2019
Courtesy of Archaeological Research Services

The Gloucester ditch is also an example of a ditch in two parts. The upper shallower part being a medieval re-cut of a deeper U shaped Roman ditch. The Gloucester ditch is considered to be a town and burgage boundary ditch. It is 4 metres wide and was originally just over a metre deep. In comparison, the Wirksworth ditch is in total 12 metres wide and more than 3 metres deep (deeper than we could safely examine). The size of the Wirksworth ditch leads to an impression that we are not dealing with a burgage or boundary ditch but with a defence, that is to say its a fortification ditch.

It is also noted that the garden side of the Causeway Ditch (the east side) contains large quantities of demolition building stone, this is less obvious on the west side of the ditch, for which there may be two explanations: Firstly, that the stone was tipped into the ditch from the east side (and/or) secondly, that the construction of the garden wall which is 3 metres high and the culvert which is also stone built, was undertaken by extracting stone already tipped into the ditch. If this were indeed so, the ditch must have had very large quantities of stone tipped into it indeed. This might also imply that the ditch was backed by a substantial wall.

Records assembled by Philip Davis, which now comprise a large and wide-ranging website about medieval fortifications state that there were some 279 proven or probable urban fortifications, such as town or village walls or bank and ditch defences, in England and Wales. Of those, it is thought that only 11% survive substantially (such as Chester, Exeter, Hartlepool). Of the rest, a few have fragmentary remains (such as Bolsover and Castleton) but a very large proportion (such as Chesterfield, Nottingham and Leicester) are completely gone, even if some documentary or archaeological evidence for them exists. In some cases (and this appears also to be true, even of continental towns such as Trier) a defensive wall or bank was demolished into its own ditch, or that the ditch gradually silted up such as at Cirencester or had things tipped into it (Holbrook, 1998).

To additionally confirm this at Wirksworth we would have to find the same feature repeated at another location around the town (that is to say in the conceptual defensive circuit at the contour line which runs around the peninsula on which Wirksworth stands). There is every reason to suppose such a defence work should indeed exist if we take the view that Wirksworth was present as a town before Viking incursions in the 870s: the town would have had to be defended, the short-lived nature of the Viking presence here suggests it was. Indeed Wirksworth is referred to as a town in the 835AD charter from Abbess Cynewaru of Wirksworth to Duke Humbert of Tamworth.

Meadows central path

The last item to be ticked off our investigation of the Meadow Croft Field was the central path, which runs north-east to south-west through it, connecting Hammonds Court and Foggs Entry with Summer Lane at its junction with Yokecliffe Drive and Pillar Butts.

We also had hoped to identify the course of the former Yokecliffe (Meadows) stream which is annotated as “A” in the main plan, however, on investigation, it is believed the course of the stream is actually within the lower gardens of the row of houses on Summer Lane, that is to say a little further south than the main plan shows.

To return to the investigation of the central path, it is 272 metres from Foggs Entry to Summer Lane. The underlying path is 2.7 metres (3 yards) wide and is composed of limestone chatter (dusty gravel) over small limestone. There is no obvious kerb. This construction and width would be capable of carrying a horse and cart. We have not sectioned the path (its in use and very busy) so we cannot say if it overlies anything else. In terms of the surrounding archaeology it is known the path runs over an east-west ditch which one of our prior investigations considered to be medieval.



The Meadows central path

Showing the full width of the path's top dressing, which is capable of accommodating a horse and cart. Two gentlemen of the Society admire it.



Bridge over the Yokecliffe Stream

A photograph kindly sent by Mr Charles Butlin of the little bridge over the Meadows stream in the 1950s, now gone.

The path is first seen on the 1837 Tithe Map of Wirksworth and does not occur in any maps before that (1709, 1806, 1821 or 1836 - but it is a path so its presence or absence on these maps is not decisive). In the 1837 map, apart from a slight kink at Summer Lane, it appears to provide part of a route between the Meadows and Mill Houses, that is to say via what is now Arkwright Street to the Broadmeadow (“Kingsfield” Cricket Ground) and finally to the junction of Wapentake Lane (Miller’s Green on modern street signs) and Cinder Lane near Speedwell Mill. The implication of this destination is that it was a route from the Meadows to the manorial corn mill at Speedwell Mill.

The route of the path which is mapped in 1837 may therefore represent the relict of this lane, called Broadmeadow Lane in a court case of 1558, against John Wigley who had blocked the lane by building a wall over it. Although a lane in those times might not have been much more than a beaten way. We cannot date the origins of “Broadmeadow Lane”, because if it did indeed give access from the meadow fields to the mill, we don’t know if the mill existed before it is first recorded in the 1306 Derbyshire Assize Rolls (Cameron, 1959). Watermills were, however, a technological discovery made in antiquity and were already in use before Roman times and by the time of Domesday book there were ubiquitous throughout Britain. Speedwell Mill

has not been archaeologically investigated and the only known archaeological discovery closely adjacent to it was of Roman pottery in April 2021.

In summary, then, the modern path through the Meadow Croft field may possibly have had its origins in a lost medieval field lane used to take corn (wheat) or other grain to the manorial mill at Millhouses, now called Speedwell Mill, for making into flour. It survives as a walking route and shortcut from the estates around Summer Lane to the town centre. It runs over a ditch which other parts of this investigation also regard as medieval.

The Meadow Croft

Principal Archaeology: The cottage building

In March of 2021 finds of a stoned surface were noted with medieval pottery at the edge of the Causeway Ditch and part of the west end of it was oddly overlain with demolition material. This material overlaying the surface in the trench was comprised of a great deal of random mixed stone of all sizes and types with quantities of small broken sandstone roof slates and nails. There were no whole slates but we surmise that intact ones would have been valuable and would have been taken away by enterprising locals. Once cleared of this collapsed material, the removal of the overburden revealed a line of large stone running up the trench east-west and a further one running across the trench north-south.

The pottery around the collapse was largely eleventh to thirteen century. One large piece of medieval oxidised sandy ware came from the backfill of the wall which runs across the trench in the north-south direction and is stratified: the remains of this wall are three courses high.



First Finds

The west end of the trench on the 17th April 2021 showing the three course retaining wall running across it. Pole of 20cm intervals.

There was no evidence of industrial activity, no slag or other metal residual materials and the pottery, bits of charcoal, coal and animal bone suggested a domestic building.



Large rim sherd of medieval oxidised sandy ware from behind the retaining wall (west)



Examination trench showing the north wall, looking west

Although the building foundation was mainly of rough limestone, both it and the channel retaining wall contain dressed (“cut”) stone, whose date and source raise a further intriguing question about the origins of that kind of stone: which can only be a building or major structure in the vicinity dated prior to it being re-used in this structure. It is a quite modest building, but some effort went into its construction in a number of ways.

Firstly, a fairly level platform was made for it by cutting away at the gentle slope of the ground, which, at this point, rises towards the north west. This levelling was apparently accompanied by building a small revetment wall on the west side next to a stone lined water channel running north to south.

Secondly, once the ground had been made fairly level, the building was constructed using very large but mostly random limestone perhaps from the Yokecliffe nearby and some re-used worn dressed sandstone taken from a previous building, whose source and location is not known. Both the foundations of the north and west walls are made in this way, there is no mortar, the wall foundations are wide at approx 80 cm and held together with clay. There is only a single course of this still remaining on the north side but three courses on the west side. The rest of the walls, judging by the fallen material, were built up using stone of various kinds, generally smaller and often flatter than the wall foundation stones.

On top of this was a stone slate (i.e. sandstone) roof nailed to roof timbers, there are large amounts of collapsed small broken sandstone sherds and nails. Stone roofs were used by the Romans but then didn't recur for most buildings (a common comment in reports) until quite late in the Norman age. The same may be true of Wirksworth but roof stone may have been far earlier and much more prevalent in Wirksworth due to its ease of availability locally - it is the cheapest and easiest local building material - timber would be very expensive because it was used for lead smelting and there was so little local timber that in the medieval period it was being brought by Wirksworth lead smelters from Charnwood Forest and other distant forests. Duffield Frith had been a medieval hunting forest but by the end in Jacobean times it was reported that not a single tree was left in the whole of it. In the much later Tithe Map, there are two locations named as “Slate Pit” fields, one near Wigwell at Hag Wood and one on the south side of Prathall Lane; there may be others not mentioned. One of these might possibly be the source of the sandstone for the roof of the building. There is no natural slate in Wirksworth, these pits are of splittable sandstone.



Sherds of broken roof sandstone showing nail holes

The sequence of disuse of this building is also quite interesting. The fallen stone roof had collapsed in a north-east direction and much of this fallen material overlays the north wall of the building, there was much less collapse on the south or west side. Additionally, examination of the sequence of contexts at this point shows that the collapse overlays a thin layer (perhaps 1-2cm) of darker friable organic soil which is lying directly on top of the original clay floor. This organic layer implies that the building was disused for a time before it collapsed. Given that we know the depth of organic leaf mould which overlays the fill of the main ditch here, we had previously examined, is about 15-20 cm and has developed over 120 years since tipping in the main ditch stopped, this implies that the period of disuse in the building might only have been 10-15 years, quite a short period, before the roof fell in.

The ground level falls north to south at a gradient of one in twenty and similarly from west to east, so the ground slopes gently down towards the south east corner of the structure. Consequently the foundations of the north wall are deeper under the modern ground level and appear to have survived better than the south wall, which seems to have been robbed of larger stones.



The remains of the south wall of the structure running across the picture, looking north

The colour change in the ground makes the interior and exterior more obvious in this picture

The gap between the two large stones might represent a post hole for a centre post holding up the roof as a similar gap existed on the north side originally interpreted as a tree throw

The accurate extents of the building to the outside of its wall foundations are that the structure is 5.10 metres north-south and 3.80 metres east-west (but noting the east wall has gone due to a Victorian sewage pipe). The remaining walls vary in thickness, perhaps an average of 80cm, so the internal area is a bit smaller,



Small metal finds

A spoon and a small lead token with a bee on it.

John Wheeldon, the Society's pottery expert, has undertaken a little experimental archaeology by taking some of the grey clay from the site and making a test piece to see what the pottery would look like in terms of colour and texture, the result was most surprising:



Experimental Archaeology: Test Piece

A fine little piece of orange pottery using clay from the site by John Wheeldon



Recording taking place using a metre grid



The north and west stone and clay foundations of the late Saxon Meadow Croft cottage with the water channel on the west side, looking south towards Summer Lane, Wirksworth.
(Metre rod with 20cm intervals)

All features have been left in situ and re-covered with the soil on the site. Paint dots on stonework represent stones which have been moved or replaced: unmarked large stones are in their original positions.

The west wall is accompanied by both a small drainage channel and a small revetment wall which runs parallel to it.

An astonishing discovery was that a stoned water supply duct runs on the inside of the north wall from the north-west corner towards the east side and the Causeway Ditch. This drain was fed from the channel which we had previously discovered on the west side and appears to fall from a water source apparently from the direction of Gate House.



The stone-built box section water supply duct looking north

The metre pole is lying in the interior of the building

We know that Gate House had a warm water spring (in the "Dog Kennel Watershaft") and it is possible that this channel was fed from the warm spring. There are no interior pumps or taps in this far-off age, but they could easily fill a jug with water by lifting one of the capstones.

The pottery seems mostly of a date range of perhaps 900 to 1200, that is as late Saxon and Saxo-Norman, it does not seem to be much afterwards and there are almost no later medieval wares (such as Midland Purple Ware) of any kind. Here is an example of a Saxo-Norman ware:



Sherd of medieval shelly ware

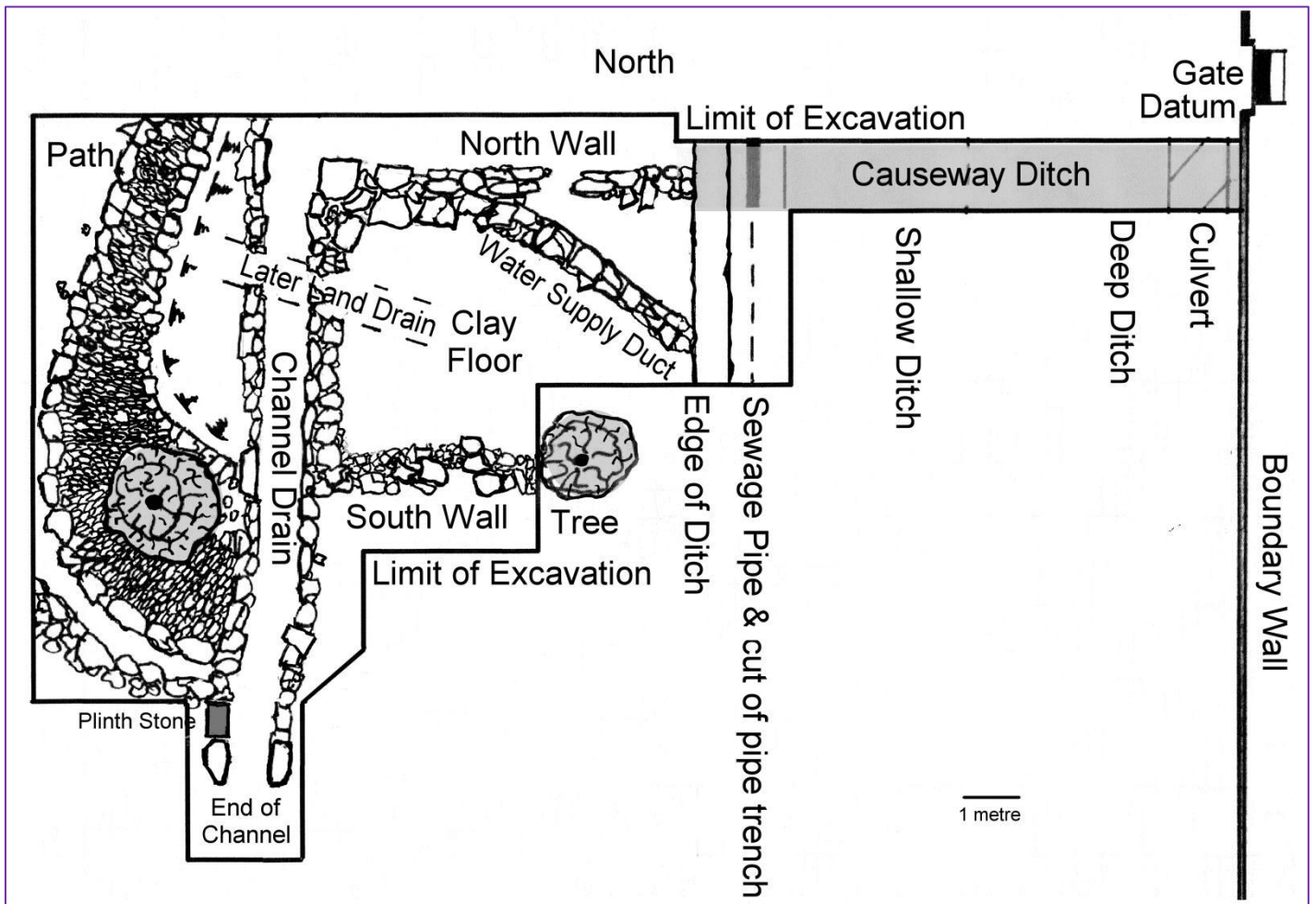
This particular type of pottery, which is tempered with broken or powdered shell, was made in Roman times and in the middle ages (1100-1390s). This particular example is not wheel made, the Romans had wheel made pottery and the fast wheel started to re-appear in places after 900. In this case, the pot is made by hand.

Shell-tempered cooking pots were popular from 1100 to the end of the 1300s (Laing, 2014) in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire: they were originally fairly flat sided but rounded pots took over somewhat after the 1150s. This sherd is of the rounded type and was not found in a stratified context, it had been redeposited from a tree throw (where a tree had been) but its an interesting piece of pottery nevertheless. We also find “splash glazed”wares with the glaze in small rough patches, over a quite fine red-orange kind of pottery. The time period for this kind of pottery in this area appears to be of the range 1100 to 1250. There are also have Stamford wares which are a late Saxon glazed pottery and these cover a date range from 850 to 1150, with jugs being made from it towards the end of its production. See appendix for pottery list.



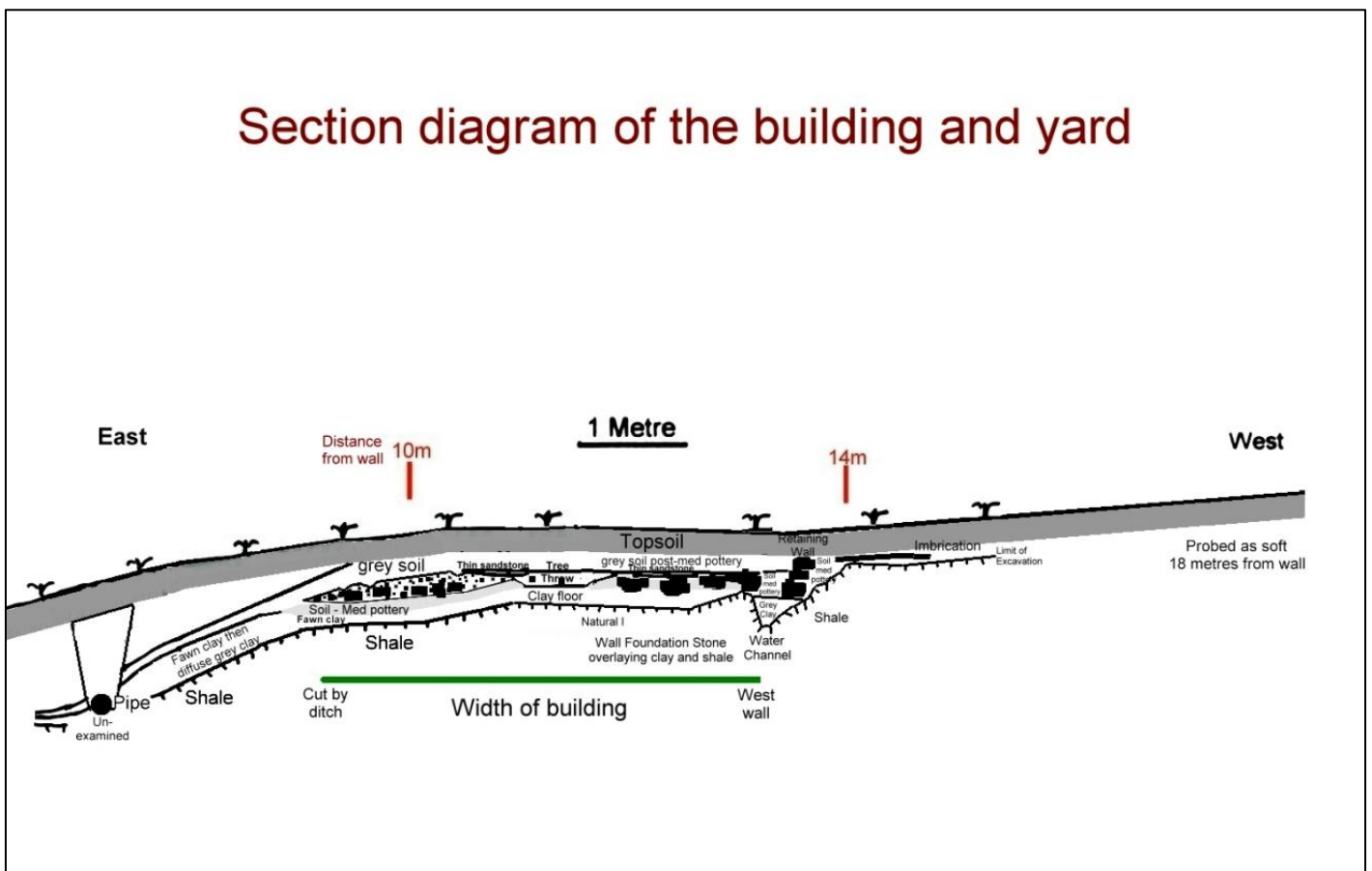
A medieval cooking pot being demonstrated

Photo credit: Hans Splinter on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/archeon/3717691514/>



Descriptive Plan of layout of the building foundations and yard

Section diagram of the building and yard



Cross-section of the Meadow Croft building north wall

The croft cottage has a clay floor which is partly of rammed or trodden grey-brown clay with a slightly green tinge, this overlays the natural fawn clay of this part of Wirksworth which gradually merges to grey shale bedrock. A clay floor would be perfectly adequate given the age of this building and may have had straw lain on it to make it warmer and dryer to walk on: that is to say beaten or threshed straw, hence why your house still has a “thresh-hold” at your door.

The pottery sequence begins with middle Saxon handmade pottery sherds and these tend to be a bit scrubby, or to speak plainly, middle Saxon pottery from say 650AD to about 800 is not very well made. These sherds are from below the structure, so were most likely already there and perhaps residual. The pottery from the contexts of the building proper run from the late Saxon Age, perhaps 950AD but do not appear to stretch beyond 1300. We have compared this with a local pottery collection dated 1200 to 1600 and there is only some overlap at the end of ours and the beginning of theirs. I am also most grateful for the efforts of John Wheeldon and Chris Cumberpatch in relation to the pottery. In short, the pottery sequence implies that this building is a late Saxon building which continued through to the Norman Age - either side of the Norman Conquest. The pottery sequence does not stretch into the fourteenth century and the lack of pottery of later medieval dates suggests this part of the Meadows had become a quiet backwater by then, with the cottage building a collapsed ruin in it.

The real surprise about the little building, given its age, is a water supply. Running down the west side of the building is a stone lined channel and this not only runs into and out of the dig site but serves a little covered duct which runs on the inside of the north wall of the building and which turns somewhat before it is cut in the eastward direction by the Victorian sewage pipe mentioned earlier. The operative and extraordinary word there is “inside”.

It is known, for example, that lead miners lived around Wirksworth “every which way” (Defoe, 1727) and that cottages of all kinds were built haphazardly particularly in the wastes around the town (Arkwright, 1912), although it is not clear to us what the term “in the wastes” really represents, perhaps these are somehow and uncontrolled part of the town. A stone cottage in the wastes was demolished, noted in a court case, in 1616, which was thought by the court as having been built in 1550. This is a long time before the conventional wisdom of stone buildings is ascribed (but usually due to lowland archaeological reports).

The Meadow Croft

The cottage yard - path

The examination was extended to the west in order to examine a further stone spread which was found by probing. The first work on the 16th October 2021 looked like this:



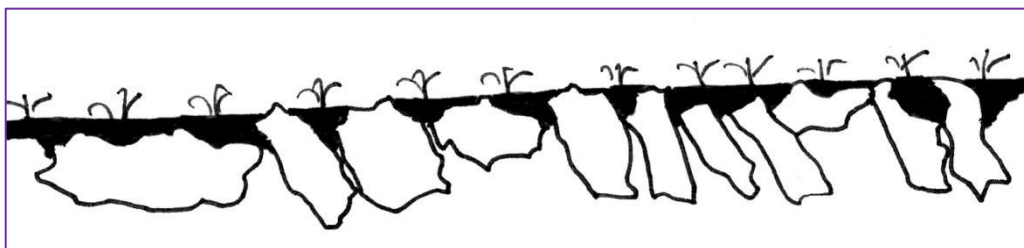
Section looking west with stoned surface

The new section was on the opposite side of the water channel to the cottage building. This was not random building collapse: it's quite coherent and it's also fairly level with maybe a slight slope to the south. It might look rough, but the stone which it is composed of is worn, there are no sharp edges, even though the stone lining the channel next to it has quite sharp edges. So this layer must have been more exposed to the weather or some other wearing action such as walking or sweeping.



Yard surface looking east

On examination the stone is imbricated, this means the stones are laid against each other in a kind of dog tooth pattern:



Imbrication: stones are leant against each other and rammed down.



Medieval Sandy Ware.

These two oxidised sherds appear to be from a pancheon (a large serving dish) in this case in an orange colour with a cream core. It has signs of burning or heating on the underside.

Work in August 2022 sought to identify the north end of the yard which exists on the west side of the site and which appears to be a cheese wedge shape, with the slightly curving thick end of the wedge to the south and the pointy thin end to the north. The thin end of the wedge appears to terminate, more or less, at the baseline 15 metre recording marker (i.e. 15 metres from the Meadows boundary wall with the St John's Street gardens).



Yard surface looking south.

A section of the yard stoning was removed to examine the underlying structure. The stoning lies pushed or rammed into an underlying orange/fawn clay context (207) which contains some charcoal and a single sherd of Burley Hill type ware (the nearest equivalent being fabric 1) (Cumberpatch, 2004, Reference Collection). This sherd has a hard pale grey fabric and dark olive green glaze. It is likely that this context is the same as 107/N1, that is to say its the upper part of the natural clay which is the normal substrate at this site. There was no intervening soil between the stoning and the clay, this implies that the topsoil was removed and the stoning laid directly into the clay.



Sherd of possible Burley Hill ware of context 207

We have considered the dating range of Burley Hill ware before and this type of pottery begins perhaps in the 1160s or 1170s, has a peak production period of perhaps 1200-1250 and continues for some time afterwards, ending perhaps about 1370-80. A single sherd is not enough for us to nail any kind of flag to a mast, but we have to bear in mind that it fits a continuing pattern from the site and potentially implies the yard was constructed much later than the building.



The reconstructed medieval cottage from Hangleton, Sussex,
to give an impression of the size of the croft cottage, if not its construction

Conclusions and thanks

The Meadows, that is the Meadow Croft field, was not originally felt to be of much archaeological interest, apart from the supposed building platform shown on the first Lidar survey and a few ditches on aerial photographs, almost nothing was known.

The three seasons of archaeological investigation by the Society have changed all this. The field is of considerable archaeological interest and the site of the Croft Cottage of local and regional importance: such quiet domestic buildings of the late Saxon age are extremely rarely reported and no others have been found in any reports for Derbyshire at all.

The Causeway Ditch, although it began as the natural course of the Warmbrook stream, appears to be far larger than a boundary ditch would need to be, leading to the suspicion that at some point it became a defensive feature, of at least Medieval and possibly earlier origins, whose purpose ended after the English Civil War.

Of the other features in the field many are older than expected, even the central path appears to be medieval in origin and perhaps earlier than that, if it ran as a route from the town to the manorial corn mill.

I wish to express my considerable gratitude to everyone involved in this examination. I am well aware of the considerable efforts which everyone has put in, especially those involved in the dig, often in wet or boiling hot weather and for which we were ever glad for the close proximity of the town's suppliers of take-away coffee and cake. The lively interest and involvement of all those who have contributed, walked past and wondered, taken an interest in our reports, or helped in any way, is herewith most gratefully acknowledged.



Members of the Society at the croft cottage site

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Appendix 1: Coins, Tokens and Metal Objects


Coins

List No	Date of Find	Find Context	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Denomination	Notes
1	24.04.2021	101	George V	Britannia	1936	Half Penny	
2	26.06.2021	102	George V	Britannia	1927	One Penny	
3	09.06.2021	102	Edward VII	Britannia	1904?	Half Penny	Terrible condition
4	09.05.2021	Spoilheap	Edward VII	Britannia	1907	One Penny	
5	16.09.2021	101	George III	Britannia	@1799	Farthing	Britannia faces left with a trident and laurel leaves
6	23.06.2021	101	George V	Britannia	1912	One Penny	
7	23.06.2021	101	George II	Britannia	1729-1739	Half Penny	
8	23.06.2021	101	Elizabeth II	Britannia	1965	One Penny	
9	31.07.2021	Spoilheap	George V	Coat of Arms	1920	One Florin	
10	20.04.2021	101	George V	Britannia	1927	One Penny	
11.	20.04.2021	101	Bust	Corroded	Victorian?	Farthing?	Wholly corroded. Outline of bust facing left appears to have a short que. Possibly early Victoria

Information and photographs on post medieval coins is extensively available on the internet.

Tokens

List No	Image	Date of Find	Find Context	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Notes
1		23.06.2021	101	Symmetrical design	Blank	Medieval to Post medieval	Lead token 1.75 grams Perhaps Powell Type 3 13mm dia
2		19.06.2021	102	Bee or spider	Blank	Medieval to Elizabethan	Lead Token 2 grams Powell Type 19 15mm dia
3		29.08.2021	Spoilheap	Human	Blank	Medieval to Elizabethan	Lead token 2 grams Powell Type 32 15mm dia
4		15.12.2020	Causeway Ditch SSD	Long Cross Circular	Blank	Last quarter 13 th century to sixteenth.	Lead token 2.25 grams Powell Type 31 17mm dia
(5)		Before 2015	Metal detection Wirksworth	“WL.T” “9.K.”	Short squared cross	1500-1800	Lead token 10 grams Powell Type 8. May be related to cloth working
(6)		Before 2015	Metal detection Wirksworth	Cross with dots	Blank	Medieval to Elizabethan	Lead token 5.5 grams Powell Type 14 Distorted
(7)		2019	Garden works 18 Wash Green	Symmetrical design (shown)	Stylised horse or lion	Fifteenth century	Lead token 6 grams Powell Type 1 20mm dia

8		06.06.2021	Spoilheap	Shield / Lettering	Lettering	Seventeenth Century	Copper alloy Says "Thomas Baguley in Ashurne" (Ashbourne)
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In the case of 1,2, 3 and 4 there is a certain family similarity. Token 4 cannot be before the last quarter of the thirteenth century given the context in which it was found, but it could extend to the late Elizabeth period in terms of design and size. If there were a indeed family similarity, then the date range of tokens 1,2 and 3 should be much the same. The presence of tokens in the topsoil can be accounted for by their relative lightness and that the field had various agricultural activities in it over time. *Items in grey are for comparison from other locations in Wirksworth.*

The Powell typology of Lead Tokens can be found here:


<https://www.thetokensociety.org.uk/leadtokens/newsletters/LTApril05asPDF.pdf> and also

<http://www.colchestertreasurehunting.co.uk/numbers/15thCtokens.htm>

Uses of medieval and post medieval tokens known from records:

As pieces in various games including draughts and hopscotch; As tavern tokens or receipts; As entry tickets to view relics in a church or other kind of event entry; As counters when calculating accounts or counting and recording an activity; As alms given to beggars who came to a charity door seeking the price of a meal; As tallies to record attendance at church services or entitlement to monthly remunerations; As tokens of membership of various charitable organisations; As receipts for dues or tolls paid by traders who set up stalls on market days; as alternate cash.

Silver Object

List no	Image	Date of Find	Find Context	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Notes
1		29.05.2021	101	Inscribed	Blank	Twentieth century	Silver dog tag, oval with holes at either end. Inscribed by hand "H Higton" then "AB" probably a blood group, then "P" probably Protestant and a number "?247740"

Note: Context 101 is topsoil and 102 is subsoil.

Decorative Facet



42 mm long and weighing 22grams with a broken top ring, brass (copper alloy) mould made. This decorative facet found in context 102 at the dig site is probably post-medieval and may be as recent as Victorian. It might be part of a decorative feature on a horse or pony bridle or related leather gear, such as a strap hanger.

Iron Object



55 mm long and weighing 41 grams, this ferrous leaf shaped piece of metal resembles an arrowhead with a broken-off tine, for which it is the correct shape and weight. These are difficult to date, with a date range of Roman to medieval 13th Century. However, this was found overlaying context 107 (natural substrate N1) which might possibly tend towards Roman rather than medieval.

Horse Shoe



134 mm long, approx 111 mm wide and weighing 101 grams, this is a ferrous iron horse shoe found in context 102 at the site. It appears to be a Tongue Shoe dating from the Stuart period to the eighteenth century and is of a size suggesting a horse rather than a pony.

A number of other post medieval metal items were found in the upper contexts of the site, including a ferrous pen-knife, assorted cutlery, metal balls (e.g. musket or pistol balls) of various kinds and sizes and other miscellaneous objects which have been retained. In due course the archive and objects will reside at the Wirksworth Heritage Centre.

Appendix 2: The Pottery

The pottery list here deals with wares found at the Croft Cottage Site which date from before the English Civil War, the list excludes other areas of the Meadows for brevity, but these have been listed in our records. Although large quantities of post civil war pottery were found (mostly post 1660) these are not listed in this report. The Society is most grateful for the assistance and advice of John Wheeldon, Dean Smart and Chris Cumberpatch, for their contributions to understanding these wares and the dating of them.



Medieval orange gritty ware: rim of a cooking pot

Sherd ID no 172, from context 106d: Torksey type ware date range of 1050-1250

Meadows Pottery												
ID No	Date of dig	Context	Type	No of Sherds	Weight grams	Part	Form	Decoration	Date Range	Notes, fabric etc.	Inclusions	Comments
1	10.04.2021	102		1	11	Body	un	Brown colour coat	Med	Orange soft with blue and red inclusions	gritty	
2	10.07.2021	102	Shelly ware	1	24	Body	un		950-1250	Mid Brown with shell; redeposited from tree throw	shell	
3	17.07.2021 (2)	102		1	10	Body	un		Med	Grey oxidised orange margins, fine sandy	sandy	
4	17.07.2021 (2)	102		2	3	Body	un		Med	Brown-grey hard, slightly pimply	various	
5	17.07.2021 (2)	102		3	3	Body	un		Med	Grey, hard, orange margins white outer slip, fine		
6	17.07.2021 (2)	102		4	5	un	un		Med	Possibly brick		
7	11.09.2021	102		1	8	Body	un	possible spots clear glaze	un	Chaff tempered handmade	assorted grits	

8	16.10.2021	102		1	7	Body	un		Med	Soft beige pink streaky fine very small black and red grits	grit	
9	09.07.2022	102		1	2	un	un		Med	thin white ware	sand	TPNorth 1
10	09.07.2022	102		2	3	un	un		Med	thin pink ware	sand	TPNorth 1
11	09.07.2022	102		1	25	rim	pot		Roman?	grey inner beige outer	sand grit	TPNorth 1
12	26.06.2022	102	Nottingham Splashed ware	1	32	Base	pot	clear glaze outer	1170-1230	Buff, gritty slightly orange margins	grit	Southwell 1170-1230?
13	26.06.2022	102		1	3	Body	un	Olive Green glaze	Med	White sandy unglazed interior	sandy	
14	26.06.2022	102		1	3	Body	un		Med	red sandy thin		
15	04.04.2021	102	Midland Purple	1	20	Body	Jar	interior splash glaze	1475-1600	Grey purple hard brown margins		nails
16	04.04.2021	102		2	3	un	un		Med	Grey fine soft orange outer margin	sandy	
17	12.06.2021	103		1	3	un	un		Med	Buff outer, grey inner, fine		
18	12.06.2021	103		2	1	un	un		Med	Brown outer, black inner, very soft		
19	17.07.2021 (1)	103		1	11	Base	un		Med	Grey oxidised brown margins, fine sandy occasional shell	sandy	
20	26.07.2021 a	104		1	30	Rim	pot		Med	Very hard, Grey orange very gritty, metallic encrusted		
21	26.07.2021 b	104		1	6	un	un		Med	Grey hard; orange margins, in three parts		
22	26.07.2021 c	104	Colour coated ware	1	5	un	un		Roman?	Soft orange-pink; possible thin grey colour coat	grey pellet	
23	26.07.2021 d	104		1	7	Rim	un		1075-1225	Grey hard; orange margins, splash of clear glaze		
24	27.07.2021 a	104		1	9	Body	un		1075-1225	Light grey, hard, beige inner margin, pink outer, clear splashes glaze		
25	27.07.2021 b	104	Shelly ware	1	9	Body	un		Med	Shelly brown margins, dark grey	shell, iron	
26	27.07.2021 c	104		1	10	Rim	un		Med	Grey hard; orange margins	grit	
27	27.07.2021 d	104		1	5	un	un		Med	Grey hard; orange outer margin, rough	grit	

28	29.07.2021	104		A	3	Body	un		Med	Hard, thin, orange, beige inner margin, thin slip & green clear glaze	quartz	
29	29.07.2021	104		B	1	un	un		Med	Beige, very gritty, remains of outer black glaze	grit	
30	31.07.2021	104		1	1	un	un		Med	Thin, grey, red margins	grit	
31	31.07.2021	104		2	5	Body	un		Med	Thin, pink, gritty, clear glaze looks reddish on outer		
32	31.07.2021	104		3	6	Body	un		Med	Grey, orange margins, gritty, white interior slip thin glaze.	grit mica	
33	31.07.2021	104		4	5	Rim	un		Med	Grey, partial orange margins, possible white slip, olive green glaze		
34	31.07.2021	104		5	7	Body	un		Med	Dark grey fine, red brown margins, black outer, black paint spots inside		
35	16.10.2021	104		1	22	rim	jar		Med	Orange with orange brown margins or slip	sand	
36	16.10.2021	104	Burley Hill poss type 1	1	4	body	un	patchy clear olive green glaze	1200-1375	grey white outer margin under glaze	fine grit	nail
37	16.10.2021	104		1	6	Body	un	clear brown glaze exterior spots interior	1075-1225	orange pink	assorted grits	
38	09.10.2021	104		1	8	un	un	crazed olive green	Med	grey rough	gritty	
39	09.10.2021	104		1	2	un	un	Thin green glaze	Med	oxidised grey core with buff pink margins	grit	
40	09.10.2021	104		1	5	flake	un		Med	dark brown gritty		
41	09.10.2021	104		1	1	flake	un		Med	White gritty		
42	09.10.2021	104		1A/B	8	un	un		Med	Dark grey core brown margins	fine grit	
43	21.03.2021	105	Buff sandy ware	1A/B	75	Rim	Pancheon	Orange slip inside	1250-1375	Buff oxidised gritty	grit	
44	21.03.2021	105		1	3	cbm	cbm		un	brick flake		

45	21.03.2021	105		1	8	base	un		Med	grey orange brown inner, grass tempered?	assorted grits and shell or limestone	
46	21.03.2021	105	Shelly ware	1	13	Body	un		Med	grey orange margins	lost shell and grit	
47	10.04.2021	105	Stamford ware	1	5	Body	un	Pale clear glaze	850-1150	Fine white	grit	
48	10.04.2021	105	CBM	2	1	un	un		Med	CBM flake	limestone	
49	10.04.2021	105		3	2	Body	un	Olive green glaze	Med	Grey with inner buff margin white slip and glaze	grit	
50	10.04.2021	105	Local sandy ware	4	3	Base	Pot		Med	Grey oxidised with orange margins		
51	10.04.2021	105		5	1	un	un		Med	Grey with iron	iron	
52	10.04.2021	105		6A/B	6	Body	un		Med	Grey with iron, brown margins	iron	
53	12.06.2021	105	Nottingham splashed ware	1	76	Base	Pot	Thin patchy green glaze	1100-1250	White hard gritty; buff outer margin	various	
54	12.06.2021	105		2	5	Body	un	Thick green glaze	Med	White fine gritty		
55	12.06.2021	105		3	1	Body	un	Green glaze	Med	White gritty	various	
56	12.06.2021	105		4	1	Body	un		Med	Oxidised grey; Buff margins	mica	
57	12.06.2021	105	Shelly ware	5	5	Body	un		Med	Soft pale grey; Red outer margin, brown inner	shelly	
58	24.07.2021 (2)	105		1	6	Body	un		Med	White, soft	mica	
59	24.07.2021 (2)	105		2	4	Body	Pot		Med	White, hard, fine		
60	12.06.2021	105		1	12	Body	Jug	Olive green glaze	1250-1375	Grey hard fine; white slip under glaze	fine mica	
61	17.04.2021	106		1	2	Body	un		Med	Orange very fine grey oxidised, possible colour coat		
62	17.04.2021	106		2	2	un	un		Med	Grey soft, orange outer, sandy soft		
63	17.04.2021	106		3	9	Body	Pot	Splash glaze over white slip	1075-1225	Dark grey, orange outer, hard	mica	

64	17.04.2021	106	Hartshorn	4	5	Base	Pot	Interior pale green glaze	Med 13th C	White gritty		
65	17.04.2021	106	Hartshorn	5	2	un	un	Interior pale green glaze	Med 13th C	White fine gritty		
66	17.04.2021	106		6	2	un	un		1075-1225	Grey soft oxidised, orange outer, splashes clear interior glaze		
67	09.05.2021	106		1A/B	10	Body	Pot		Med	Buff outer grey inner, soft gritty	various	
68	09.05.2021	106	Shelly ware	2	1	Body	un		Med	Grey oxidised shelly ware orange margins	shelly	
69	09.05.2021	106		3A/B	9	Rim	un		Med	White, soft	various	
70	22.05.2021	106		1	10	body	un		Med	Thick Grey orange buff outer	fine grit	
71	22.05.2021	106		1	12	Body	un		Med	Grey oxidised with orange margins	gritty	
72	24.04.2021	107	Stamford ware	1	1	un	un	Thin clear glaze	Saxon	Thin white	fine grits	
73	24.04.2021	107		2	8	Rim	Jar		Roman?	Soft buff		
74	24.02.2021	107	Roman Derbyshire ware	1	8	Body	jar		Roman	Hard gritty, pimply; grey orange margins	grits	
75	15.08.2021 (7)	107		1A/B/C/D	5	un	un		Saxon or IA	Dark grey, iron, soft, friable	iron	
76	29.08.2021	109		1	5	Rim	un		Med	grey core red orange margins (part 2 - see 111b)		
77	29.08.2021	109	Burley Hill	1	4	Body	un	Olive green glaze	1250-1375	grey with lighter margin and 2 bobbles		
78	29.08.2021	109		1	5	Body	un		Med	Buff margins grey core	sandy	
79	29.08.2021	109		1	1	un	un		Med	White margins pink core	sandy	
80	29.08.2021	109		1	1	Flake	un		Med	cream very fine and thin		
81	29.08.2021	109		1	2	un	un	Very thin clear glaze	Med	White	sandy	
82	29.08.2021	109		1	12	body	jug	Thin green crazed glaze	Med	White. Thumbed and possible dotted rouletting handmade	assorted grits	
83	22.05.2022	202		1	6	Rim	un		Med	cream fine	fine grit	
84	29.05.2022	202		1	48	Handle	jug	Splash glazed ware	1150-1250	cream outer light grey inner	assorted grits	
85	29.05.2022	202		2	2	flake	un		Med	orange soft	grit	

86	29.05.2022	202		1	2flake	un		Med	beige	grit	
87	29.05.2022	202		1	4un	un		Med	grey inner beige outer	sandy	
88	29.05.2022	202		1	16Body	pot		Med	beige wheaty discoloured margins grey core	sandy	
89	16.06.2022	203		1	4Body	un	rouletted thin brown clear glaze	Med	thin, white, cream inner margin	grit	
90	16.06.2022	203		1	2un	un	possible v painted on outer	Saxon?	thin, orange red	grit and chaff	
91	16.06.2022	203		1	4Body	un		Med	thin, red brown	sand	
92	16.06.2022	203		1	1un	un		Med	thin, grey, orange outer margin	grit	
93	16.06.2022	203		1	3rim	un		Med	thin, beige	grit	
94	16.06.2022	203	Shelly ware	1	5Body	un		Med?	grey core, dark brown outer worn orange brown inner	shell	
95	16.06.2022	203		1	6Body	un		Med	cream	gritty	
96	12.02.2022	204		1	76tile	CBM		Roman	Soft orange beige top	various	Residual ?
97	30.07.2022	206		1	5Body	un	Very small spot glaze	1075-1225	grey inner orange outer	fine sand	Nail and bone
98	30.07.2022	207	Burley Hill Type Ware	1	12Body	un	Brown green glaze	1200-1375	Grey hard fine	fine sand	
99	12.06.2021	103B	Soft Blackware	1	0.5un	un		Med	Might not be pottery		
100	26.06.2021	103B		2	2un	un		Med	Orange soft with blue and red inclusions	gritty	
101	26.06.2021	103B		3A/B/C	15Body	un		Saxon	White soft; cream margins with brown accretions	large grit	
102	19.06.2021	103B	Colour coated ware	1	5Body	un	Buff orange colour coat	Roman?	White fine gritty		
103	19.06.2021	103B		1	8Body	un	Olive Green glaze	Med	mid grey with pale grey margin	very fine grit	
104	19.06.2021	103B	Derbyshire type ware	1	38Body	un		Roman?	oxidised, grey core with buff margins, hard and heavy		
105	26.06.2021	103B	Saxon Blackware	1A/B	13Rim	Pot		Saxon	Black with considerable mixed inclusion, exterior grass marks	various	

106	24.07.2 021 (3)	103B		1	3	Body	un	Clear green glaze	Med 12-13C	Very hard; grey, buff inner, fine		
107	24.07.2 021 (3)	103B	Stamford ware	2	11	Body	Pot	Pale green/yell ow glaze	Saxon 9-12C	Hard white, gritty	grit	
108	24.07.2 021 (3)	103B		3	6	Body	un		Med	Grey hard; orange margins	grit	
109	24.07.2 021 (3)	103B		4	26	Body	Pot		Med	Hard white, gritty	grit	
110	24.07.2 021 (3)	103B		5	11	Body	Pot		Med	Grey hard		
111	24.07.2 021 (3)	103B		6	9	Body	Pot	Brown colour coat	Med	Grey orange very gritty	grit, mica	
112	15.08.2 021 (6)	103B	Colour coated ware	1	10	Body	un		Roman?	Pink colour coat, pink fabric , dark pink interior slip	various	
113	15.08.2 021 (6)	103B		2	6	un	un		Prehisto ric	Beige-fawn		
114	15.08.2 021 (6)	103B	Stamford ware	3	9	Body	Pot	Thin clear glaze	Saxon	White gritty, cooking discolouration outer, glaze inner	various	
115	15.08.2 021 (6)	103B	Shelly ware	4	5	un	un		Med	grey inner, brown outer, shelly inner feels sandy	shelly	
116	29.08.2 021	103B	Stamford ware	1	19	Base	un	Thin clear glaze	Saxon	White gritty, cooking discolouration outer, glaze inner	various	
117	29.08.2 021	103B		1	3	Body	un		Med	grey red margin	sand	
118	29.08.2 021	103B		1	4	un	un		Med	black with brown bits		
119	29.08.2 021	103B	Splashed ware	1	5	Body	un	faint splashed glaze	1075-12 25	thin white pink margin	sand	
120	29.08.2 021	103B		1	7	Body	un	Rouletted	Med 13th C	white pink margin handmade	various	
121	29.08.2 021	103B	Shelly ware	1	4	Body	un		Med	Shelly brown margins, dark grey	various	
122	29.08.2 021	103B		1	0.5	flake	un	Green glaze	Med	grey white margins	sand	
123	29.08.2 021	103B		1	3	Body	un	Thin green glaze	Med	grey white margins	grit	
124	29.08.2 021	103B		1	12	Body	pot	Thin green brown dagger rouletted	Med	very worn fine mid grey fabric orange red margins	fine sand	wheel thrown
125	03.10.2 021	103B		1	8	rim	un		un	Rim sherd poorly made orange ware	various grit	
126	03.10.2 021	103B		2	3	Body	un	Thin brown	Med	fine grey with pink white outer		
127	03.10.2	103B		1	1	un	lamp	thin clear	Med	thin pink buff grey	sand	

	021									core		
128	28.08.2 021	103B		1	5	Body jar	Small square rouletting	Saxon		Light grey buff margins	fine grit	
129	28.08.2 021	103B		2	25	Body jar	dagger tooth rouletting	Med		Grey with thin orange margins, feint worn olive green glaze outer		
130	28.08.2 021	103B		3	5	un un	Small square rouletting	Med		grey with brown outer margin, mixed temper		
131	28.08.2 021	103B		4	5	Body un		Med		black, may not be pottery		
132	24.07.2 021 (1)	104A	Burley Hill Type Ware	1	5	Body un	Dark green glaze	1250-1375		Dark green glaze on thin hard grey fabric		
133	24.07.2 021 (1)	104A		2	5	Body Pot		Med		Orange soft with blue and red inclusions,		nail
134	24.07.2 021 (1)	104A		3	7	Body un		Med		Thick Grey oxidised, buff inner, orange outer soft	grit	
135	03.08.2 021	104A		1	4	Body un		Med		Grey, orange pink margins, possible white slip, olive green glaze	grit mica	
136	15.08.2 021 (4)	104A	Nottingham Splash glazed ware	1	40	Base Jug	Exterior green glaze	1150-1230		Grey, hard, orange margins, decorated, exterior green glaze. Sooting on foot		
137	15.08.2 021 (4)	104A		2	2	un un		Med		White, beige margins, thin, very gritty	grit	
138	15.08.2 021 (4)	104A		3	4	un un		Med		White, gritty	various	
139	15.08.2 021 (5)	104A		1	10	Body un	Very thin clear glaze	Med		White, interior thin glaze	sandy	
140	15.08.2 021 (5)	104A		2A/B	2	Flake un	Thin green glaze	Med		White gritty	grit	
141	15.08.2 021 (5)	104A		3	3	un un		Med		Grey, hard, orange margins	grit	
142	15.08.2 021 (1)	105A		1	39	Base Pot	Interior green glaze	1200-1375		Hard Beige, orange slip inner margin, partial green glaze	grit mica	
143	15.08.2 021 (1)	105A		2	12	Body Pot		Med		Hard Beige, black slip (or cooking discolouration)	various	
144	15.08.2 021 (1)	105A	Burley Hill Ware	3	13	Body Jug	Exterior green glaze	1250-1375		Fine sandy grey fabric handmade		
145	15.08.2 021 (1)	105A		4	5	Body un	Thin clear glaze	Med		Beige, pink outer margin, remains of thin glaze	various	

146	15.08.2021 (2)	105A		1	5	Body	un		Med	Grey, orange outer	grit	
147	15.08.2021 (2)	105A		2	5	Rim	un	Yellow green glaze	Med	Buff orange	sandy	
148	15.08.2021 (2)	105A		3	11	Rim	un		Med	White, different inclusions	various	
149	15.08.2021 (2)	105A		4	5	Body	un	Mottled	Med	White, beige inner margin, thin, mottled possible glaze outer		
150	15.08.2021 (2)	105A	Stamford ware or poss Hartshorn	5	6	Body	Pot	Clear green glaze	1200-1300	Hard white, gritty, cooking discolouration	many	
151	15.08.2021 (2)	105A	Shelly ware	6	4	Body	Pot		Med	Dark grey, red inner margin, brown & cooking discolouration outer	shelly	
152	15.08.2021 (2)	105A		7	11	Body	un		Med	Beige oxidised to orange margins, gritty, handmade	various	
153	15.08.2021 (2)	105A	Burley Hill Ware	8	16	Body	Jug	Green glaze	1250-1375	Pale grey pink margins	sandy	
154	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		1A/B	7	Body	un	Thin splashes clear glaze	1075-1225	White, thin fabric, fine some grit		
155	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		2	14	Base	pot	Thin interior clear glaze	Med	White	various	
156	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		3	10	Rim	un	Patchy yellow glaze	Med	White, gritty fabric	grit mica	
157	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		4	5	un	un		Med	White		
158	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		5	2	un	un		Med	White, very thin beige margins or slip	grit	
159	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		6	2	Body	un	Thin patchy green glaze	Med	White, thin, fine,		
160	15.08.2021 (3)	105A		7	2	un	un		Med	White		
161	15.08.2021 (3)	105A	Shelly ware	8	6	Body	un		Med	Grey, orange-red outer, handmade	shelly	
162	17.04.2021	106b	Medieval sandyware	1	81	Rim	Jar	Thumbled under rim	Med 13th C	Orange soft fine, grey oxidised	sandy	
163	29.05.2021	106d		1	6	Body	un		Med	Soft grey oxidised; orange margins; poss raised decor		nail, lead scrap
164	29.05.2021	106d		2A/B	2	Body	un		Med	Hard grey; brown margins	Big quartz	

165	11.08.2 021	106d		1	3	un	un		Med	Brown outer, black inner	mica	
166	12.08.2 021 (1)	106d		1	2	Body	un	Black-green glaze	Med	Hard grey, thin		
167	12.08.2 021 (1)	106d		2	3	un	un	Black-green glaze	Med	Hard grey	pellets	
168	12.08.2 021 (1)	106d		3	3	un	un		Med	Grey, orange outer	mica	
169	12.08.2 021 (1)	106d		4	11	Body	un	Mottled glaze	1050-1250	Grey hard; buff margins, spotty white slip, splashy thin green brown glaze	grit	
170	12.08.2 021 (2)	106d		1	1	un	un		Med	White, fine	various	
171	12.08.2 021 (3)	106d		1	1	Body	un		Med	Orange thin, lumpy	grit mica	
172	11.09.2 021	106d	Orange sandy ware	1	102	Rim	Jar	Spot of clear glaze Torksey type ware	Med 1050-1250	Orange with grey core well made	sand	
173	11.09.2 021	106d	Orange sandy ware	1	29	Rim	un	Interior green glaze	Med 1100-1250	Orange with grey core well made	sand	
174	11.09.2 021	106d		1	1	un	un	A little green glaze	Med	white pink margin	assorted grits	
175	08.05.2 022	106d		1	4	rim	un	May have spots faint clear glaze	Med	White fine soft		
176	08.05.2 022	106d		1	3	Body	un		Med	grey inner orange outer		
177	11.09.2 021	106e	Burley Hill type	1	13	body	jug	Light green crazed glaze	1250-1375	White handmade	grit and iron	
178	26.09.2 021	106f		1	4	body	un		Med 13th C	grey gritty with buff orange outer margins and white patches on outer with small square rouletting dots.	assorted grits	
179	26.09.2 021	106f		1	1	un	un		Med	grey core orange buff margins thicker than above		Nail
180	08.05.2 022	106f	Burley Hill type	1	8	Body	un	Olive Green glaze	1250-1375	White sandy interior, pink margins	sandy	
181	08.05.2 022	106h		1	11	Rim	un		Med	Orange sandy ware	sand	
182	29.08.2 021	110c		1	2	Body	un	tiny spot clear glaze	1050-1250	Thin grey inner outer buff orange		
183	29.08.2 021	110c		1	4	Rim	un		Med	grey core red orange margins (part 1 -see		Intrusive ?

									109)		
184	09.10.2021	111b		1	6	un	un	Green glazed ware	1200-1375	Sherd of green glazed ware in sandy top of land drain	
185	22.05.2022	201a		1	6	Body	un		Med	Wheaty colour	sand
186	20.04.2022	201a		1	9	Rim	Small jar		Med	Brown grey	very fine grit
187	20.04.2022	201a		1	10	Body	un	Thin very green glaze	Med	White, chaff tempered	grit
188	20.04.2022	201a		1	3	un	un		Med	White	grit
189	20.04.2022	201a		1	3	body	un	Olive Green glaze	Med	buff pink	fine grog
190	20.04.2022	201a		1	3	body	un	Destroyed glaze or colour coat	Med	-	sand grit
191	20.04.2022	201a		1	32	Body	un	splash interior glaze	1075-1225	Orange buff margins grey core	Grog temper and grit
192	20.04.2022	201a		1	7	Body	un		Med	Wheaty colour, possible outer colour coat of brown slip	fine grit

IA-Iron Age
un-unknown
Med-Medieval

Appendix 3: Context List

Context	Type	Description	Underlies	Overlies	Depth, cm		Thickness, cm		Comments
					min	max	min	max	
Overall									
101	Topsoil	Very dark grey brown, organic	None	102	0	0	5	10	Modern
102	Subsoil	Dark grey brown, paler & more compact than 101. Victorian coins.	101	102a, 102b, 102c, 104	5	20	5	10	Post medieval and residual medieval
East									
102a	Ashy tipping	At edge of ditch	102	102b	Slopes	10	Diffuse	20	Not after 1900
102b	Gravelly ashy tipping	At edge of ditch	102a	102c	Slopes	15	Diffuse	20	
102c	Small stone ashy tipping	At edge of ditch	102b	102d	Slopes	10	Diffuse	20	
102d	Subsoil	At edge of ditch. Probably = 102.	102a, 102b, 102c	104	Slopes	20	10	10	Post medieval and residual medieval
102e	Tree throw (s)	Mixed fill with plastic	101	103	35	35	10	15	Modern
Central Building									
103	Broken stone roof slates	Broken sandstone slabs, 2cm thick with nail holes & nails	102	104	22	25	2	5	Building collapse. Not before 1200
103a	Redeposited fawn clay	Refer to tree throw (s)	102	104	25	35	Lumpy	5	Refer to 102e
103b	Compacted clay floor	Fawn clay with hard upper surface, more compact & slightly greener than 107	103, 104	107	40	60	5	10	Middle Saxon and after
103c	Partial levelling	NW part of site cut to level	103b.	107, 108	50	50	Sloping cut	0	Before 103b
104	Collapsed stone layer	Stone rubble with soil overlay	102, 103.	103b, 104a, 105	30	30	10	15	Building collapse. Not before 1200
104a	Thin organic soil layer	Thin, dark grey brown, organic.	104	106 (north)	52	52	2	3	Disuse horizon. See 106e
105	"Outside" - much small pottery	Friable soil outside wall on north and east sides of drain	102, 103, 104.	107	45	55	10	15	Middle Saxon and after
105a	Clayey and charcoal bitty compact soil	Taken to mark outside of east wall (not found)	104	107	65	65	10	10	Possible medieval field surface

105b	Soil overlaying wall foundations	Thin, dark grey brown	104 and 104a	106	65	65	3	5	Disuse
106	Wall and wall foundation structure, small inside water supply culvert	North and west walls of building: double faced, mixed stone in clay, no mortar. South wall appears robbed	102, 109b	107	Variable	55	10	10	
109 - equals 104	Dem layer of stone tumble interior	assorted medium stone and soil	102	103b	20	40	10	20	Building collapse
Channel Drain									
106a	Retaining wall of channel	Sides of channel: single faced mixed stone, no mortar	102, 109b	107	30	30	Max 3 courses	60	
106b	Backfill / silt of channel retaining wall west	Clay soil backfill of 106a	102, 109b	107	30	30	varies	30	Note cleaning comment in 106d
106c	Cut of channel retaining wall	Runs north south along outside of west wall	106a, 106b	107	80	90	0	0	
106d	Fill of channel	Dark grey fine silt with cherty gravel & occasional stone	102, 104, 109b	107	30	50	varies	25	Channel would have been periodically cleaned, (accounting for later pottery)
106e	Soil on top of channel retaining wall	Grey friable soil, beyond south wall	102	106a	Diffuse with 102	10	10	Diffuse with 102	Not before 1200
106f	Soil layer behind channel retaining wall	Relates to 106b	102, 104, 109b	107	30	30	10	10	
106g	Sandy layer on south side of south end of channel	May be natural as N1 can be very light and sandy	102	N1	20	25	30 diffuse with N1	LOE	
106h	Clean sandy clay at south end of channel	May be natural as N1 can be very light and sandy	102	N1	20	25	30 diffuse with N1	LOE	
N1 (107)	Orange / fawn Clay. 107 is the top 5cm of N1	Natural: finds within top 5cm	103b, 104a, 105a, 106f	108	70cm varies in slope	70	30	50	Roman / Iron Age
N2 (108)	Shale bedrock, bottom of cut of	Natural: no finds	107	LOE	90	100	10	LOE	

	channel (north)								
Later Land Drain									
111a	Cut of land drain	Cuts across building west to east	111b	Cuts 103b, 104, 106 series	15	45	0	0	
111b	Fill of land drain	Friable with sandy clay top is wash down	102	107 (103b)	15	15	varies	30	Not before 1250
Water Supply Duct									
110	Cut of water supply duct	Within building structure, cut 15cm deep into 107 & 15cm wide	110a, 110c	103b.	65	70	0	0	
110a	Side packing of water supply duct	Small irregular limestone, slope inwards	110b	110, 103b	60	65	5	10	
110b	Capstones of water supply duct	Flat irregular medium-large limestone	102, 103, 104, 104a	110a, 110c	55	60	10	10	
110c	Fill of water supply duct	Soily silty fine fill	110b	103b, 107	60	70	10	10	Not before 1050
West Yard									
201	Imbrication	Limestone 10-15cm long and 10cm broad laid in dogtooth pattern	102	207	20	30	10	15	Appears to be late addition, after 1200
201a	Imbrication south west edge	Flat irregular medium-large limestones	102	207	20	30	10	15	Not before 1075 but see 205
201b	Imbrication east edge	Irregular long shaped limestone	102	207	20	30	10	15	
202	Hard clay on north-west side of dig	Possibly an element of the medieval field surface. Butts to imbrication	102	204, 205	25	30	Lumpy	15	Not before 1075
203	Friable subsoil	Butts up to 202 from channel side, may be a result of the channel cut, between 102 and 204 or related to 109	102	205	20	30	5	10	
204	Stone tumble	Overlays yard and 205. Similar to 104, medium sized assorted stone 10-15cm. Not as coherent	102, 202	205	30	30	10	15	

205	Thin dark organic gritty	Overlays yard. May represent disuse	102, 202, 203, 204	201, 201a, 201b	20	23	1	3	Not before 1250
206	Soil in between imbrication	In yard stones, gritty perhaps as in use	205	201	See imbrication	N/A	1	1	
207	Orange /fawn clay with charcoal	Under yard stones diffuse with underlying clean natural	201, 201a, 201b	N1	20	30	10	Diffuse with N1	
N1 (107)	Natural orange fawn clay	Natural, becomes diffuse with N2 / N3	207	N2, N3	Diffuse with 207 at 30-40	70	30	50	
N3 (108b)	Heavy Sticky black clay	No finds. Organic: possibly related to ditch and watercourse	N1	LOE	Diffuse with N1 at 80-90	LOE	20+	LOE	Black colour would indicate human intervention (e.g. upstream)

LOE Limit of By excavation or
Excavation sondage:
Ground slopes
down to east

Appendix 4: Late thirteenth century royal activity in Wirksworth.

Wirksworth returned to being a royal manor in 1266 having been “recovered” (in rather dubious circumstances) from the deFerrers, who had held it since just after the Norman conquest. This coincides with a burst of royal activity in the Peak District and it might just be the case that work identified during the archaeological examination, such as the cutting of the west side of the Causeway Ditch, can be seen in the light of this burst of royal activity in the 1260s and 1270s.

1266. In 1266 Wirksworth returned to being a royal manor after having been with the deFerrers for an extended period and was given to Edmund the 1st Earl of Lancaster, the younger brother of Edward (the First), the following year. Wirksworth had originally been a royal manor and the date at which it came to the deFerrers is not clear, but after 1086, when William the Conqueror is stated as the Lord of Wirksworth, with part of the manor (Lea and Tansley in Wirksworth) being owned by Ralph son of Hubert.

1269. After being briefly recovered by the deFerrers Wirksworth irrevocably became royal again.

1272. The church had a new vicar appointed by the Dean of Lincoln who had (apparently) been given the church in “about 1100” (Refer also Ashbourne church).

1272. King Edward becomes king on death of Henry III.

1273. An attempt was made by Robert deFerrers to grant Wirksworth to Gilbert deClare and recover the manor, this did not succeed.

1274. Letters Patent were issued releasing Edmund from debts in the Wirksworth Wapentake.

1275. The King’s mines at Wirksworth were granted to Robert del Don (presumably as the contractor or smelter).

1275-1300. St Mary’s church in Wirksworth appears to have been completely rebuilt.

1279. Grant made to Edmund swapping the towns of Wirksworth and Ashbourne and also Wirksworth Wapentake for the castles and counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen. It is not clear what this grant was formalising but it appears to legally give Edmund the very profitable town of Wirksworth instead of a (possibly) unprofitable castle in Wales. As with many documents about Wirksworth’s history this needs more consideration, Wirksworth at the time was making a profit of the (current) equivalent of £160,000 a year for Edmund, on the market, two mills, in rents and *not including* the lead mines or tolls from the manorial boundaries.

1280. Two “unknown men found killed in Lord Edmund’s sheepfold in Wirksworth Parke”.

1288. Inquisition Quo Warranto into “the operation of the Barmote Court”. This is not correct but is often quoted and repeated: it was an inquiry into the rights of the kings miners, not the Court.

Other court records begin for Wirksworth in 1291 in reign of Edward 1st including the Wapentake (Hundred) Court.

1297. A routine inquisition into the death of Edmund stated that in Wirksworth he had held a main house (most likely for his steward); 100 acres of arable land; 23 acres of meadow; rents from the Free Tenants (the burgesses); rents from other tenants; a fulling mill; a water mill; a market; an enclosed pasture (maybe the park noted in 1280); as well as Tallage (land tax) from tenants. This inquisition is interesting in many ways, for example, it tells us the market was in existence before a formal charter was given in 1306. The list of income doesn't include that from the lead mines and smelting nor from the sale of wool (note the sheepfold, above) or other items which can be found being sold in the royal manorial accounts for Wirksworth of 1314-15, which have survived.