

LA11

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT ON

7 FISHER LANE

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7 FISHER LANE, NORTON COTTAGE

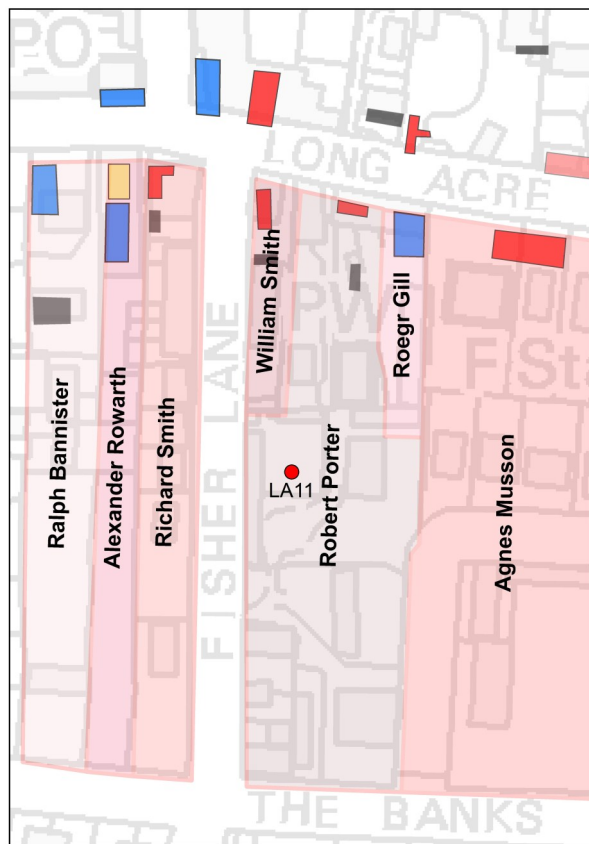
SITE HISTORY

Norton Cottage is located on high ground on the east side of Fisher Lane. The house faces south and is at the north end of what was a large plot, presumably so that the whole garden plot would be south facing. It is a three cell cottage with a large central chimney (indicative of the mid-18th century) with hearths on each side. The walls of the cottage are of mid Victorian three inch thick brick suggestive of a rebuild around the original central chimney; the brick vaulted cellar reveals a mixture of brick sizes from 2½” to 3”. A surveyor’s report of 1986 suggested Norton Cottage was built at different stages ‘probably dating back to the mid eighteenth century and constructed in its present style during the mid-nineteenth century’. However a cottage is shown on the tithe map of 1841.

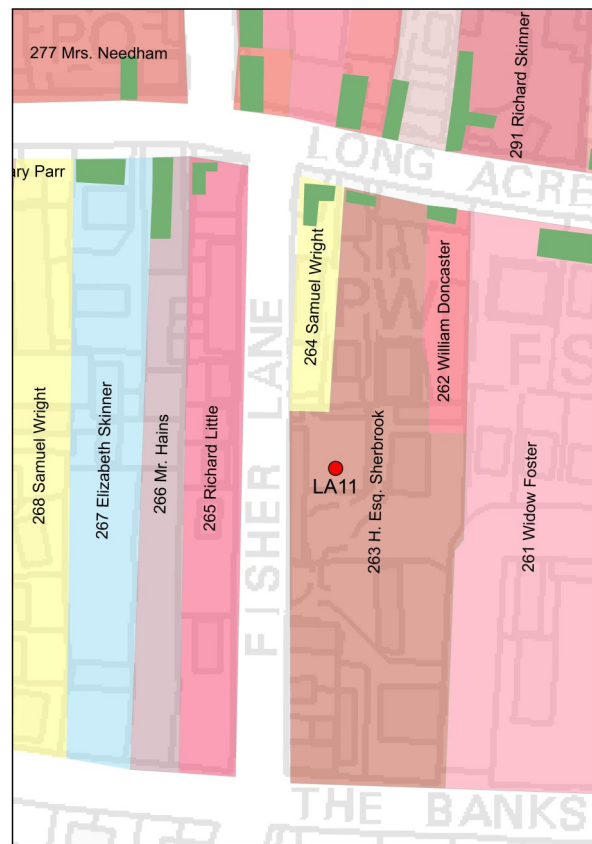
1586

The estate survey of 1586 did not have an accompanying map. Our conjectural map was built up from text descriptions of the boundaries of each property. There were no descriptions of property

that



Conjectural map for 1586
OS Licence No 0100031673



Map for 1776
OS Licence No 0100031673

were not owned by the Stapleton Estate, merely a note (“freehold property of ...”) in the descriptions of the adjoining properties. Thus we are confident that the plot on which Norton Cottage now stands was part of a larger freehold plot owned by Robert Porter, but we have no record as to whether there was a cottage here.

1677

The Porter family lasted for some 300 years as well-off ‘yeomen’ farmers, but never aspired to the status of gentlemen. Dr Thoroton in 1677 mentioned Richard Porter as ‘the only considerable free-

holder in the lordship' of Bingham. The family died out in the 18th century when Mary Porter of Bingham married Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton near Southwell (died 1779), the last male heir of a small landowning family. Their eldest daughter Margaret married her cousin Henry Porter of Bingham. On his father-in-law's death in 1754 Henry Porter changed his name to Sherbrooke in order to inherit the Oxton property and moved his seat to Oxton.

1776

In 1776 the whole plot was owned by H Sherbrooke, esq, of the successor family to the Porters. The estate survey did not provide a plan of freeholds so again we do not know if there was a house on the property.

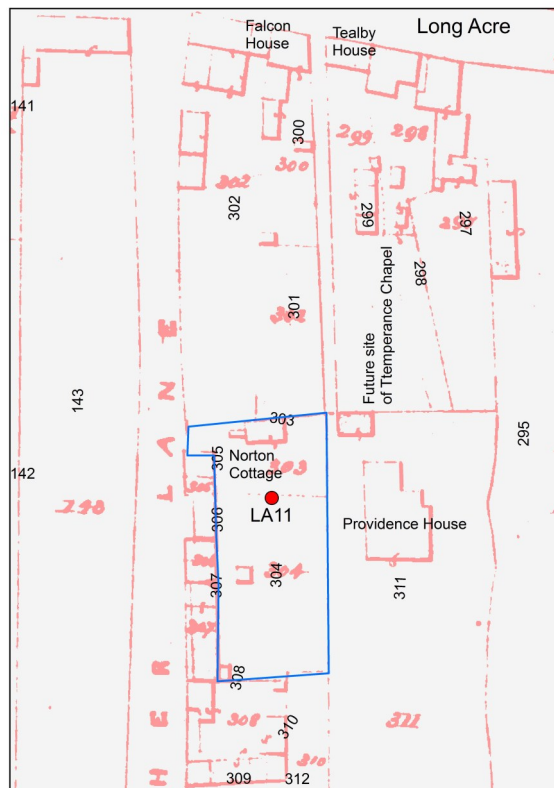
1813

On 5/6 April 1813, the whole plot was sold by Harriett Ann Bonell to Richard Doncaster. Harriett was a daughter of Thomas Porter Bonell, who was descended from the Porters through a complex line of descent via the Sherbrookes and the Bonells of Duffield House in Amber Valley, Derbyshire. The deeds note that the plot was known as "The Shearing Close", presumably reflecting an ancient pastoral use.

An indenture of July 1829 recorded that Doncaster "sold off divers lots" and also "had lately sold and conveyed to John Doncaster a considerable lot of ground". The same document records that Richard had built "two tenements situate in Bingham and fronting the town road or turnpike road leading from Nottingham to Grantham and also that other messuage or tenement in Bingham standing behind or near the two above. [Falcon House, Tealby House and number 32a behind Falcon House]. From this we conclude that Norton Cottage had not yet been built.

1841

The remainder of the plot was broken up into individual freehold plots along the length of Fisher Lane, one of which was Norton Cottage. It is shown on the 1841 map, so we have a probable first build date for Norton Cottage of between 1839 and 1840.



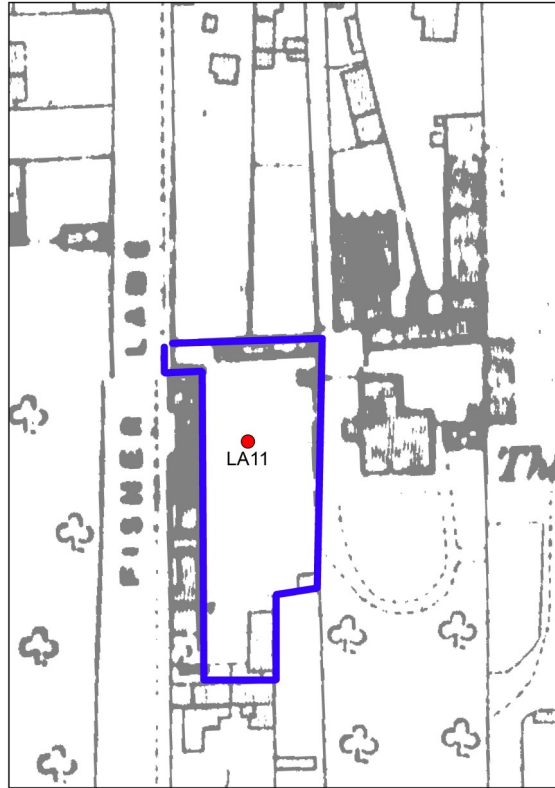
Tithe map for 1841

The tithe apportionment document lists the cottage as owned and occupied by James Mann (Plots 303 and 304). The census for 1841 has James Mann, aged 60, a tailor living in Long Acre with his wife, two female servants and a 5 year old boy named Thomas Bailey. Their house and tailor's shop was on the corner of Market Street and Long Acre.

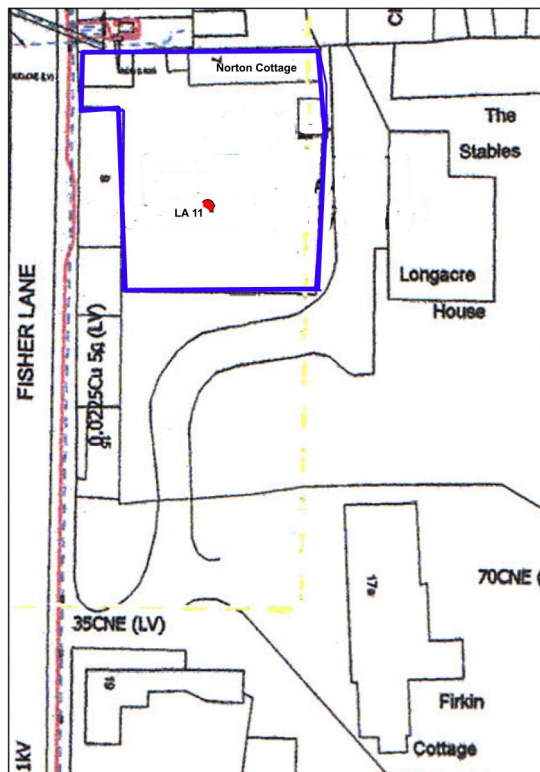
Since they were clearly living 'over the shop, the-Manns presumably rented out the cottage. Comparison of the tithe allotment and the census suggests that Norton Cottage was occupied by John Wilson, a 55 year old stonemason, with his wife and three children (the oldest was a dressmaker and might even have worked for James Mann. Most other residents of Fisher lane were agricultural labourers and the like; a qualified stonemason might be the kind of person one would expect to live in a slightly more salubrious house than the rest of Fisher Lane at that time!

Plots 300 and 301 belonged to John Innocent, who

had loaned money to Richard Doncaster and acquired these (and may be Norton Cottage) when Doncaster defaulted on the loan. They were in the occupation of Richard Hewitt and Thomas Hallam respectively.



O.S. map for 1910



*Modern map as Map A (see text)
By permission of Western Power*

Plots 310 and 311 (Providence House) were owned by John Doncaster.

1910

The 1910 shows the tithe plot basically unaltered since 1841. In 1911 The Chestnuts to the east was owned by William Moore, retired carriage builder. We have not been able to determine who lived in Norton Cottage.

LATER

At some point Norton Cottage was purchased by whoever owned Providence House at the time as the deeds clearly show that along with other cottages at this end of Fisher Lane, Norton Cottage was part of the estate of Providence House, later The Chestnuts (owned by Charles Hayner Curtis), then Orchard Close (from 1923, after its purchase by James Urban Rogers) [the name is carved in the gate post coping stone at the original entrance in Temperance Yard] and now Long Acre House. Norton Cottage retains a right of way to Long Acre from its garden gate along the driveway of Long Acre House to this access. Indeed, the electoral roll for 1918 gives Norton Cottage's address as Long Acre, emphasising its connection with The Chestnuts. The occupant at that time was Annie Moore. These cottages may have been tied houses for staff and/or investment properties for rent.

1986

In 1957 Steven Armitage purchased Orchard Close, Norton Cottage and Rose Cottage. In 1986 he sold Orchard Close to Robert Hand and Norton Cottage to Tony Player. It may have been at this time that the garden plot of Norton Cottage was truncated to provide an access driveway from Fisher Lane to Orchard Close (by now Long Acre House). This is illustrated by map A.

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LOCATION AND PROTOCOL

NGR	470488.339738
Height OD (mid point rim of N face)	27.704 m [error 0.025 m]
Dig dates	13-14 th June 2012
Pit site	Lawn in garden. The garden is elevated by at least 3m above Fisher Lane.
Pit protocol	1-metre pit, 10 cm spits, all spits sieved. Pit orientated N-S. North face sections only described and measured unless otherwise stated. Photographs taken facing north unless otherwise stated. Sloping bottom reached at 70 –75 cm. A 30 cm downward extension was dug to 5-10 cm at 74 cm along north side of pit. A 10 cm-wide slot dug at east end of this to a depth of 91 cm.

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ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Description of pit

This is complex pit. None of the boundaries are horizontal and there is the possibility of an old ground level 30-40 cm down.

Topsoil to 12cm depth

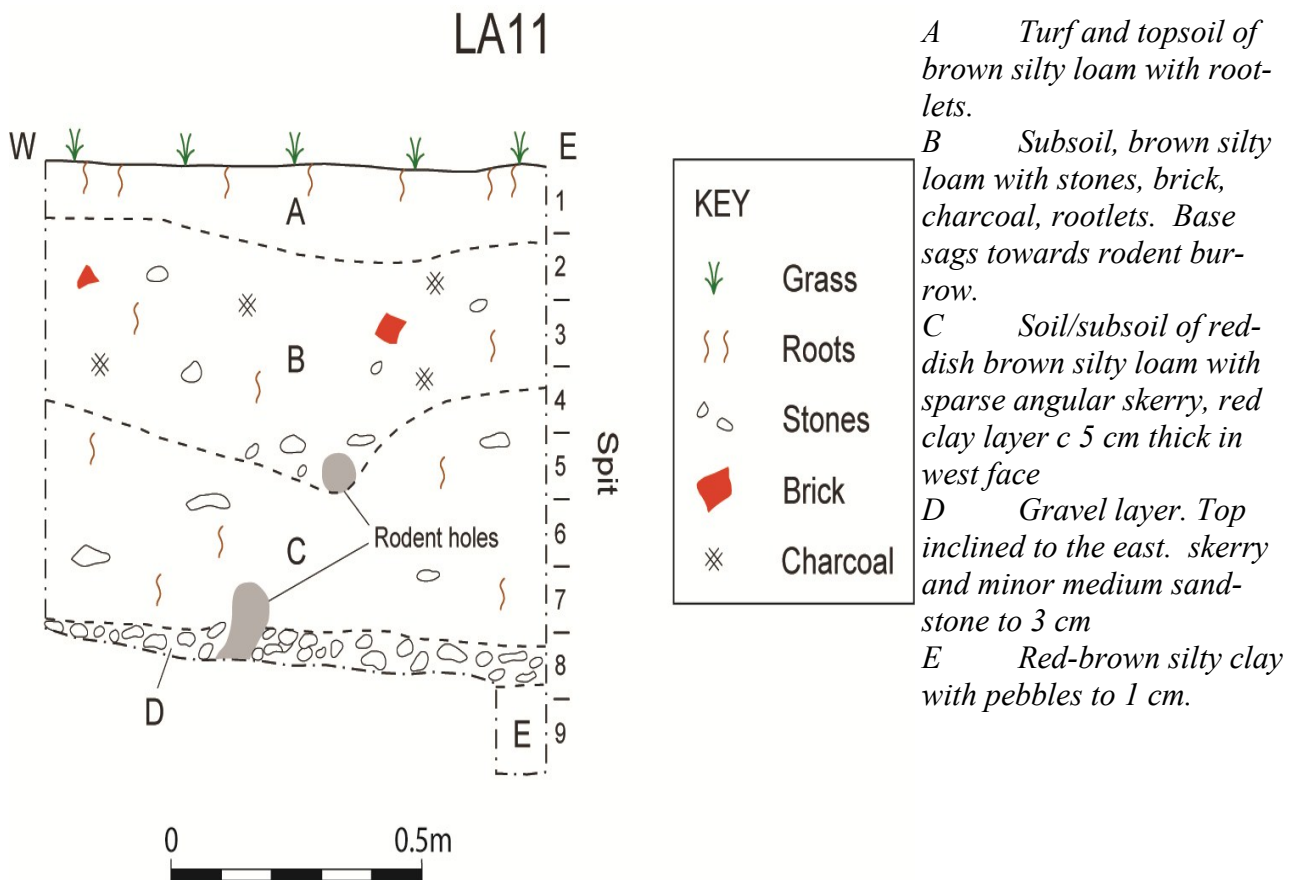
Subsoil to c50 cm

Old ground surface at c 50 cm

Soil to c70 cm.

Gravel on basal red-brown silty clay.

The topsoil is a brown silty loam with rootlets beneath the turf. It varies in thickness from 9 to 14 cm.



The subsoil is also a brown silty loam with pottery sherds, mortar, brick, charcoal, stones and roots. The roots are rotted. The stones are mostly skerry, some well-bedded flat stones. The depth varies from 33 to 50 cm. The deepest part is round an animal burrow where there is a small concentration of skerry pebbles around it.

The irregular base of the subsoil is marked by a large, flat lump of red clay, 3-5 cm thick in the N W corner of the pit. Some smaller, 1-2 cm thick lumps rest just above it. There are also some stones at this level. Among them are medium-grained sandstone 7 x 2 cm with a black, possibly burnt surface. It seems that there has been some sort of disturbance at this level.

The soil beneath this level is reddish brown silty loam with sparse, angular skerry pebbles. There



IMG_1463 20 cm facing North



IMG_1464 50 cm depth facing N showing red-brown clay in NW corner, root and burrow.



IMG_1468 facing N. Both burrow holes seen plus gravel layer at 75 cm.



IMG_1470 N face showing burrow, gravel layer and red clay underneath it.



IMG_1469 North face showing dark, organic topsoil and the brown silty loam beneath it. Both entrances to the burrow can be seen with the gravel layer below and red clay underneath it.

is an animal burrow in this context possibly the same one as at the higher level, but originating outside the pit.

The basal clay is red-brown and silty with small pebbles <1%. It is covered by a 5 cm-thick layer of closely packed mostly skerry stones up to 3 cm.

Finds

Building materials were limited to the topsoil and subsoil. Only brick was found.

Three pieces of glass were found high in the subsoil. One was flat window glass, 1/16th inch thick, one from a green fine bottle and the other from an octagonal bottle. They are likely to be early 20th or 19th C.

Among the miscellaneous items are bone discs in the topsoil that may have been the core to fabric buttons.

Metal items include a screw, a buckle and nails made of wrought iron. All were found in the topsoil and upper subsoil.

Bones and teeth were found down to 60 cm depth.

Six pieces of coal were recovered. Four from the topsoil and two from the bottom of the subsoil.

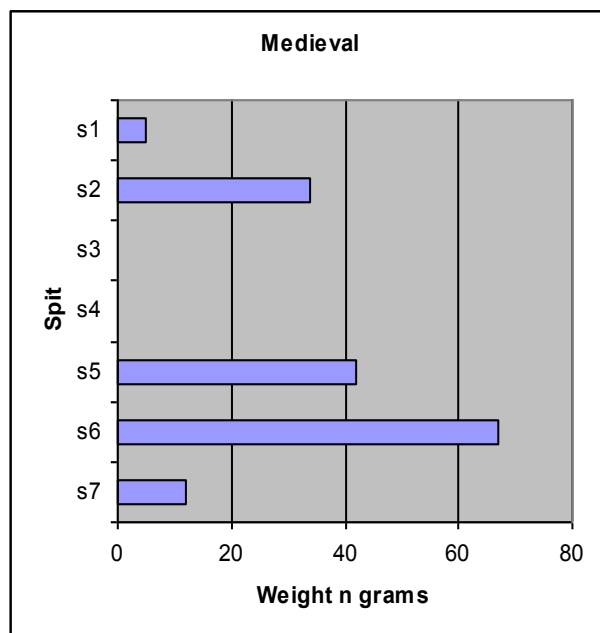
All eight fragments of clay pipe were from the late 18th and 19th C. All were stems except one fragment of a bowl. This was quite distinctive and part of an Indian's Head design made between 1810 and 1850. This possibly dates all the stems. They were found in spits 1 to 5; that is in the topsoil and the subsoil.

The pottery finds show an interesting distribution. All 19 sherds of modern pottery was found in the top 30 cm. The commonest type is Transfer Print, making 42% of the total. They are pale blue and white or darker blue and white, one or two seeming to be Willow Pattern. They are all 19th C. The original vessel for only a few of the sherds could be identified, but included at least one cup and some plates.

The White Ware (5) was undistinguished. The sherds were wither white or creamy, but it is unlikely that any of them was Cream Ware. This type of pottery came in at around 1830.

There were two sherds of Cane-coloured Ware. They were small pieces and one was split with glaze on only one side. As with many of the cane-coloured sherds it is uncertain if they were part of Mocha Ware jugs or mugs. One sherd with a diffuse banding of buff and cane coloured might well be Mocha Ware. The three remaining sherds were Flow Blue, Late Black Ware and a modern 20th C piece. The flow Blue is a rim piece for a plate or bowl. It has a blue rim with a spiky pattern that merges into the white glaze of the main body. This type of pottery is widespread in Bingham. It was made in the mid 19th C. The Late Black Ware piece is of uncertain identification. It has a dark brown-black glaze on a fine grey-purple body and is a rather ornate piece of a handle to a jug or tea pot. ornament. This piece does not quite fit the description for Midland Black Ware or Cistercian and has been categorised as Late Black Ware, which was commonly used for tea pots in the 19th/20th C

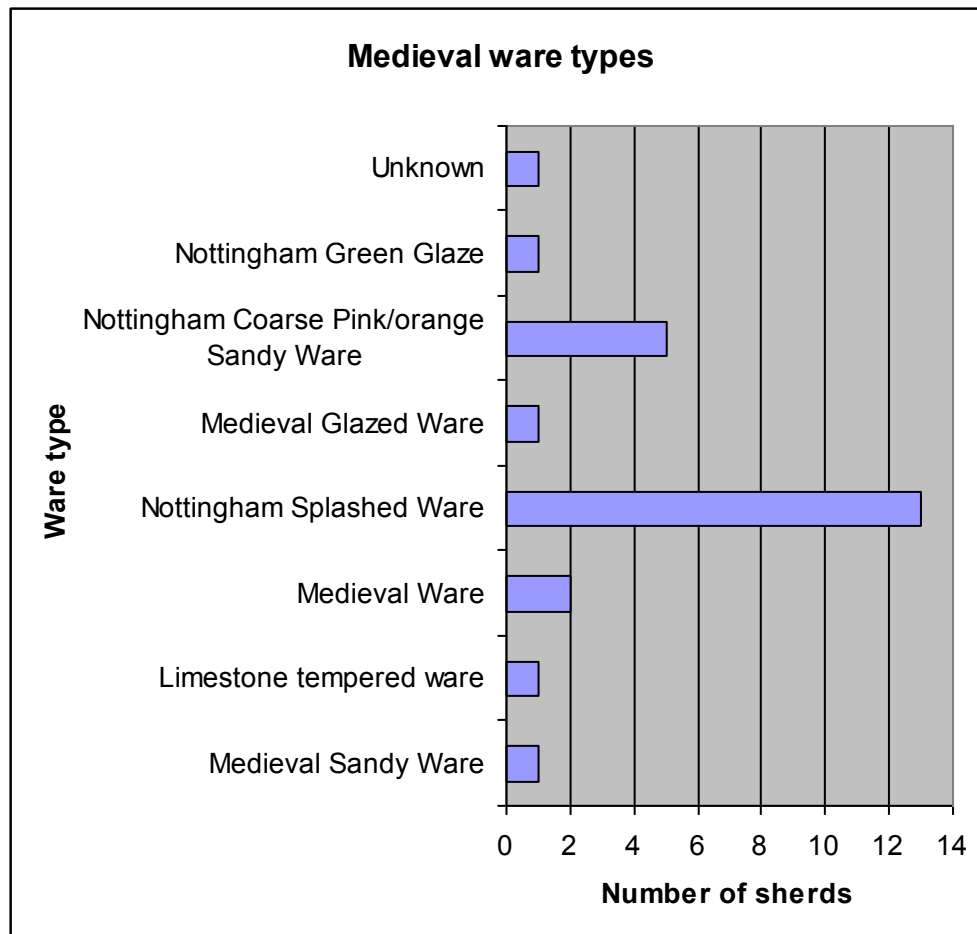
One sherd with a strange decoration of black hyphens on a white base is thought to be 20th C.



A single sherd of red-bodied coarse earthenware was recovered at the top of the subsoil. It was a body sherd probably from a pancheon. The fabric was fine sandy tempered red clay and there was a red slip on the outer side.

Only two post medieval sherds were found. These include a severely eroded sherd of yellow ware with hardly any glaze left from between 20 and 30 cm depth. It dated late 16th C to 17th C. The other piece from 50-60 cm depth is a small sherd of Light-bodied Black Ware also possibly late 16th to 17th C.

Medieval sherds are the most numerous. A few were found in the top 20 cm but most were recovered from 40 to 70 cm depth.



The most common find is Nottingham Splashed Ware. Sherds from jugs, jars and a bowl were recovered. There are various fabrics each giving a slightly different age range. All of them fell between 1100 and 1250. Medieval Sandy Ware and Medieval Ware all fell in the date range 1100 to 1300, while Medieval Glazed Ware is somewhat later, 1200 to 1400. These are not likely to be made in Nottingham. The fine Medieval Sandy Ware is definitely not from Nottingham.

A limestone-tempered ware is highly unusual and not previously seen in Bingham. This is a 12th C ware type. Nottingham Coarse Pink/orange Sandy Ware is next in abundance; one sherd was from a cooking pot. It starts in 1220 or 1250 and may extend until the end of the 13th C. Nottingham Green Glaze and Nottingham Light-bodied Green Glaze both range from 1250 or 1275 to 1350. One unrecognisable sherd is 13th C.

Two sherds of Saxo-Norman ware were found. One was Stamford Ware C, 12-early 13th C; the other a Stamford Ware B/C, mid to late 12th C. This was a rather low number of Saxo-Norman ware finds for this garden, which yielded rather a lot of Stamford Ware in the garden survey.

Four sherds of Roman wares were found. These were all low in the pit, 40-70 cm depth. The earliest is a shell tempered ware sherd, dated 70-150. Two sherds were Grey Ware, one of which was not dateable; the other from a dish dated 130 – 300. A rouletted Nene Valley Colour-coated ware sherd from a closed form is dated 170-400. Three of these sherds were small and eroded, while the shell-tempered sherd was large.

Interpretation

A number of modern finds were found only in the upper 30 cm, that is the topsoil and the upper part of the subsoil. These include all the Modern pottery, coarse earthenware, building materials, glass, metallic objects, all except one of the clay pipe fragments and miscellaneous items. These are present with one post-medieval, three medieval, one Saxo-Norman and a Roman sherd. This is a fairly typical assemblage from a topsoil turned over during agriculture or horticulture.

Except for the one stem fragment found between 50 and 60 cm the clay pipes were all late 18th to 19th C, with one dated bowl fragment 1810-1850. This could be the oldest date for the whole of the collection in the topsoil and subsoil. Coal was found only in the topsoil and the subsoil.

Bones and teeth are mostly in the topsoil and subsoil with one at 50-60 cm depth.

This seems to validate the presence of the postulated ancient ground level at around 50 cm depth and shows that the soil above it was put in place at sometime after 1810-1850, the age of the one dated clay pipe.

Most of the pottery was found below this surface. It was not arranged stratigraphically. The medieval and Roman pottery ranged from 40 to 70 cm depth, while the one post-medieval pottery sherd was found between 50 and 60 cm depth. This also suggests a soil profile that has been turned during ploughing. The date of the single post-medieval sherd is not clear, but it must be late 16th or 17th C, which suggests that this may be the date of the surface.

All the medieval pottery has an age range starting in the 12th or 13th C. One or two sherds have a range that extends into the late 14th C, but there are none that are characteristically after the mid 14th C. This could be taken to suggest that this is a pre-Black Death assemblage; that is before 1348/49. There are no later fabrics until the late 16th C Midland Yellow Ware.

The Roman fabric types show a range from mid 1st to end 4th C. No Anglo-Saxon, nor Late Saxon finds were recorded. The Saxo-Norman finds were 12th C roughly coincidental with the Nottingham Splashed Ware.

The conclusion is that there was Roman activity here, but then after they had left nothing else happened until 12th C. There was some sort of continuity after that date until the Black Death. Then again, nothing happened until the late 16th C. It is possible that the most important period was the 12th to mid 14th C when the land here was well used for agriculture. There may have been a fallow period after the Black Death with the ground coming into use again in the late 16th C. Whether it was pasture or arable or both in alternation cannot be determined. However, in the early 19th C extensive earthworks led to the deposit of around 50 cm of soil and clay dug from the basal clay layer onto the contemporary ground surface.