

**SHC01, 02 and 03**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT ON**

**ROBERT MILES INFANTS SCHOOL**

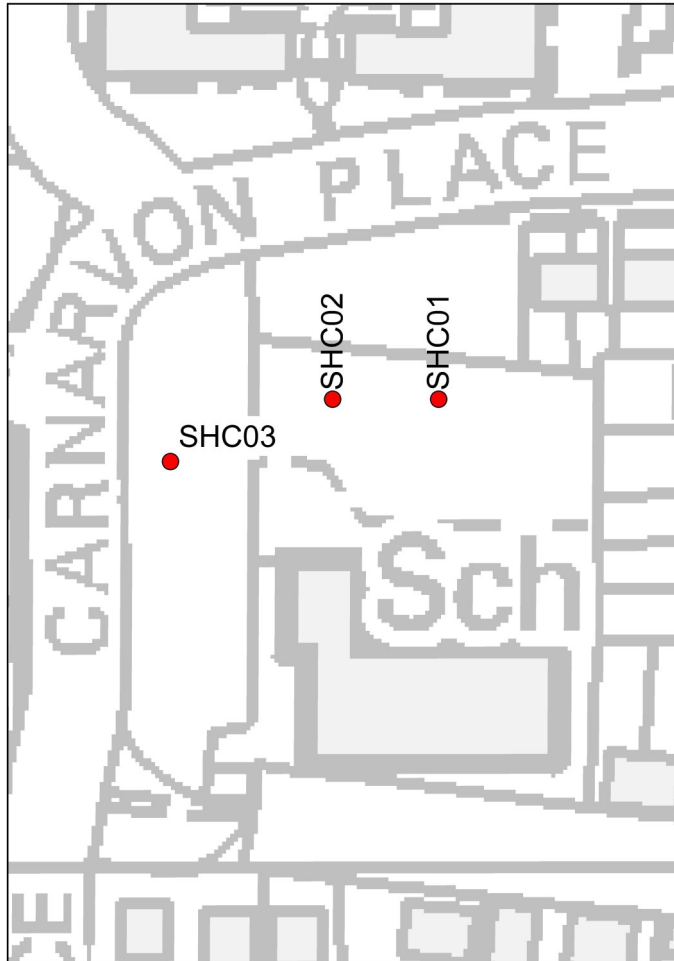
**CONTENTS**

SITE HISTORY  
INTRODUCTION  
LOCATION AND PROTOCOL  
ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

**SHC01,02 and 03**  
**ROBERT MILES INFANTS SCHOOL, SCHOOL LANE**  
**SITE HISTORY**

**1586**

As far as we can tell, and as we show on our conjectural map of Bingham in 1586, the plot now occupied by the infant's school was a small enclosure (termed a close in the estate survey) rented from the Stapleton Estate by Elizabeth Allayne. This was on the very edge of "residential" Bingham and adjoined the boundary of the North Field. She had a cottage elsewhere in the town and would almost certainly have used this as pasture, perhaps for grazing a cow or two.



*The division of the land in 1586 overprinted on the modern map. The area now occupied by the school was let to Elizabeth Allayne. OS Licence No 0100031673*

Plot 62.3 to the north and east was described as "an enclosed parcel called Chappell Close in which the ancient walls of the late St Helen's Chapel remain" – the 14th C private chapel of the de Bingham family. This is now occupied by Edwardian houses built in 1910 and Kirkland House.

**1776**

By 1776 virtually the whole of the west side of what is now Fairfield Street had been sold from the estate as small freehold parcels. The 1776 survey recorded names and maps only for tenants. The school plot, 417, was owned by "Sundry Freeholds"! We have no other information.

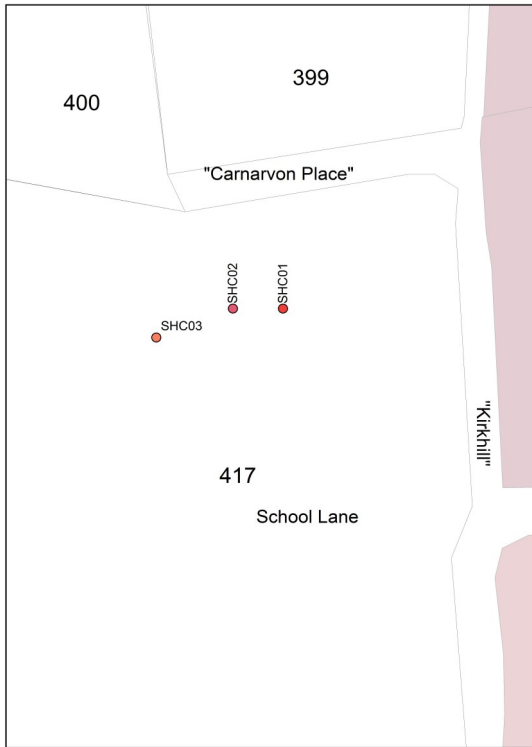
**1841**

By 1841 two windmills had been built nearby but not on what became the school site. Plot 333, the westernmost mill was owned and occupied in 1841 by the executors of James Walker. William Walker

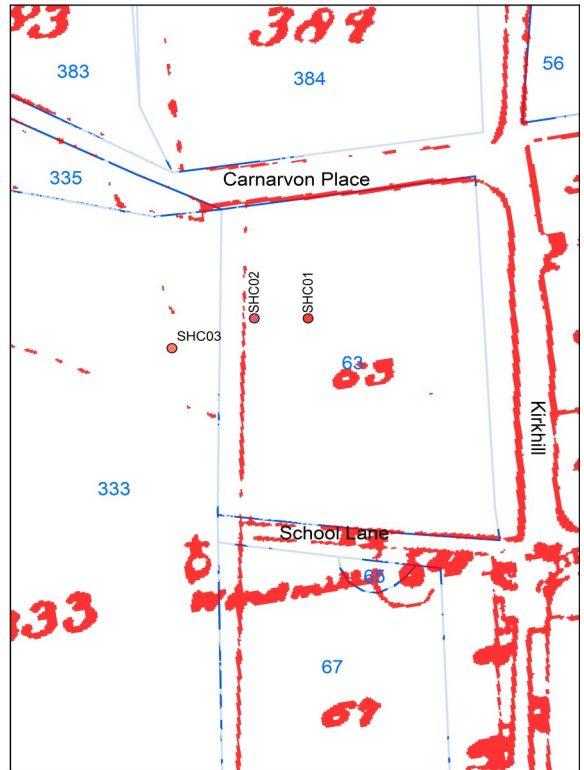
owned and occupied the meadow which was plot 63, now occupied by the school. Robert Wilson owned and occupied the other mill on the south side of what is now School Lane.

**1900-1910**

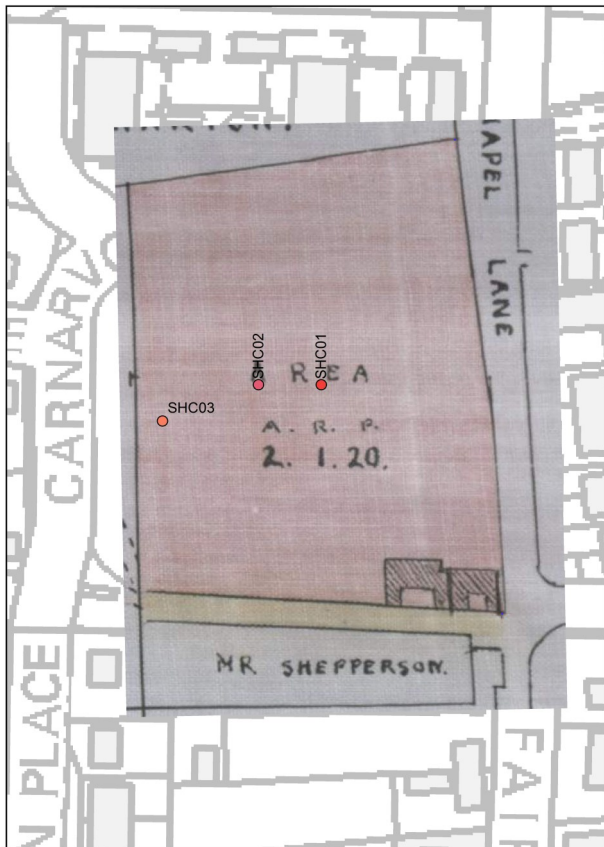
In 1906 Samuel Swanwick, a farmer, purchased the plot shown in red on the 1901 plan and sold the land to a local builder, James Walker, who then sold Kirkland House on the corner of School Lane and Kirkhill in 1907 to the Board of Guardians who used it for a children's home. They were already renting the house from Walker. Walker built a pair of villas on what is now School Lane and other houses on the lot alongside Kirkhill. We suspect he built the school after presumably selling to the local authority. The 1910 plan shows the completed development.



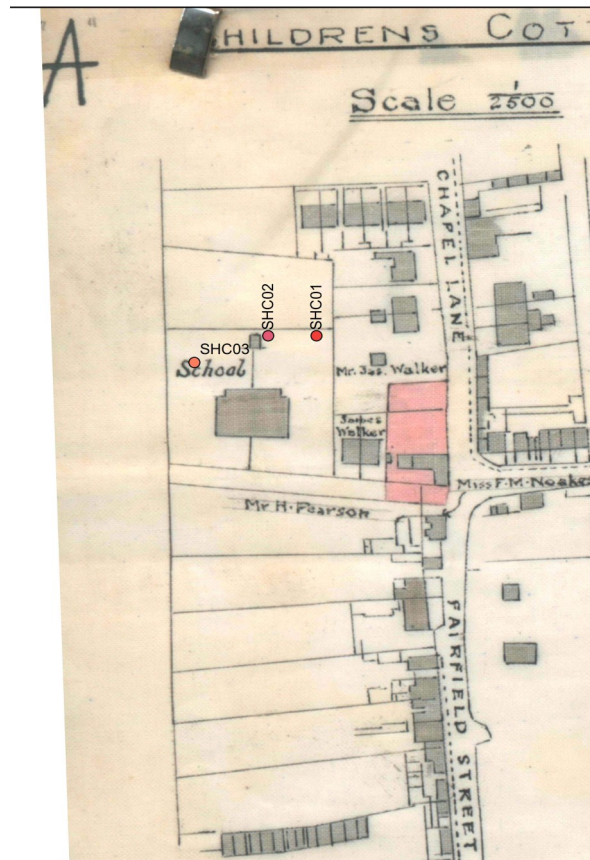
Map of the area in 1776. Taken from the manorial survey of that year



The tythe map of 1841



Map for 1901.



Map for 1910

## SHC01, 02 and 03

### ROBERT MILES INFANTS SCHOOL

#### INTRODUCTION



*The site of SHC01 with children doing the sieving*

*SHC02 with children in the pit doing the digging.*

Between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012 three test pits were dug at Robert Miles Infants School as a school project. The children in the top class, supervised by their teachers and teaching assistants, took part in the dig doing the digging, sieving and washing.

The school is built near the edge of the outcrop of the Hollygate Sandstone in the Edwalton Formation. There is an escarpment to the north of the school building where the geology changes. The escarpment is sandstone and the flat area at the foot is shale. The slope would have been unstable and there would always have been soil movement down it creating small landslip deposits on the side and foot of the slope. The soil is now fixed with trees and landscaping features.

Two of the three pits were dug on the flat ground at the foot of the slope close to the boundary with the allotments. The third was dug in the playing field somewhat higher up the slope and to the side of the school.

The accounts given here of the three pits have been amalgamated into one.

## SHC01, 02 AND 03

### LOCATION AND PROTOCOL

#### Site details

Site code	SHC01
NGR	470147.340075
Height OD (mid point rim of N face)	23.601 m [error 0.025 m]

Site code	SHC02
NGR	470130.340075
Height OD (mid point rim of N face)	23.626 m [error 0.059 m]

Site code	SHC03
NGR	470104.340065
Height OD (mid point rim of N face)	23.96 m [error 0.044 m]

Dates when dug	25th-27th June 2012
----------------	---------------------

Pits SHC01 and SHC02 were sited in grassy areas at the foot of the steep slope below the school. SHC03 was in the playing field to the west of the school, sited on a moderate slope.

#### Pit protocol

Each pit was one metre square, orientated N-S. Unless otherwise stated only the north face sections were described and measured. Photographs were taken facing north unless otherwise stated. Each pit was dug to c40 cm, but in half of SHC01, 02 and 03 a 100 x 50 cm part of the pit was dug further down to test the extent of the basal clay. Digging was stopped, still within the clay, at 75 cm in SHC01 and 50 cm in the other two pits.

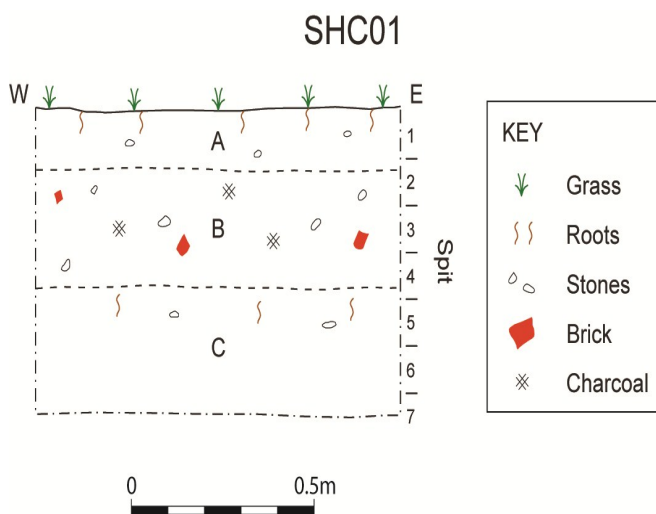


## SHC01, 02 and 03

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

#### The soil profile

The soil profile is a classic gradation upwards from the underlying natural geological deposit. Here it is thought to be the Thrussington Till, deposit of clay with stones that was laid down under the glaciers about 450,000 years ago. It passes upwards through subsoil into the organic topsoil. The ground shows evidence of disturbance in the nature of the enclosed artefacts – brick, tile etc. Its situation at the foot of the slope suggests that the soil, while it conforms to the classic profile may have been derived by slippage down the slope over a long time. The soil is heavy and clay rich, similar to the underlying till.



Section on the north face of SHC01 showing the typical sequence that is characteristic of all three of the pits



Orange-brown clay at the bottom of the pit with an irregular upper boundary with the subsoil. This picture is of SHC01, but the boundary is the same in all three pits.

#### Description of the pits

The three pits showed an essentially similar section through turf into topsoil and subsoil and below that the basal clay. All boundaries are gradational. There were three contexts:

*Context A* 10-12cm thick topsoil. Brown silty loam with rootlets beneath the turf. It contains sparse stones (<1%), brick, charcoal and pot sherds. In SHC 03 the soil is well drained compared with SHC 01 and 02.

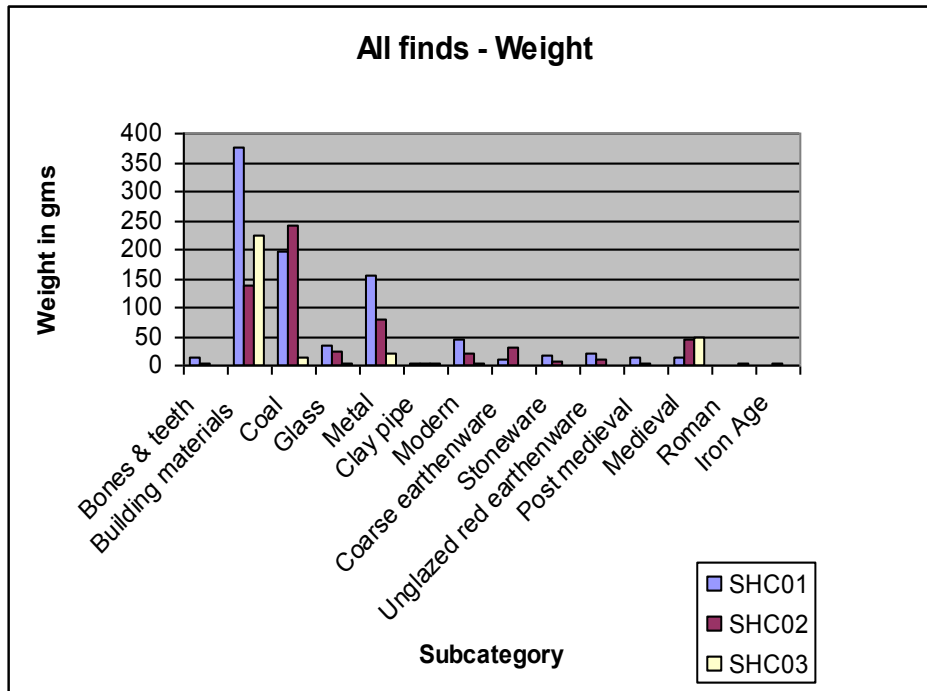
*Context B* 20-30 cm thick subsoil. Reddish brown to brownish grey clayey loam with some pebbles to 4 cm, brick, charcoal and pot sherds. Pebbles about 1.5% include rounded quartz. Boundary with topsoil is gradual. The subsoil is wet and heavy to work.

*Context C* Basal clay. Reddish brown to orange, stiff, with grey mottles making up about 50%. Pebbles of skerry and medium-grained sandstone are sparse. Some carbonised roots. The upper surface is disturbed and convoluted and grades into the subsoil above it. This is thought to be the Thrussington Till.

#### Finds

Finds were recovered from within the weathered top of the basal till and above. There is no stratification in the finds. Most categories of find were found at all levels in the pits.

Bones, glass, brick, plaster, floor tile, slate, oyster shell, buttons, beads, collar studs, nails, coal, clinker, multicoloured glass marbles and clay pipe stems were all recorded. Some of these items are modern. A brass button



(64068) bears the inscription “Fabron”, which is a company based in Halifax that made buttons for overalls between 1930 and 1960. The beads (64077), marbles (64145), the four-hole bone button (64079) and the metal base to a light bulb (64146) are also likely to be mid 20<sup>th</sup> C.

The clay pipe stems are all dated 1750 to about 1920, but look like they are earlier within this period rather than later. One small piece of a bowl (64155) is 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> C.

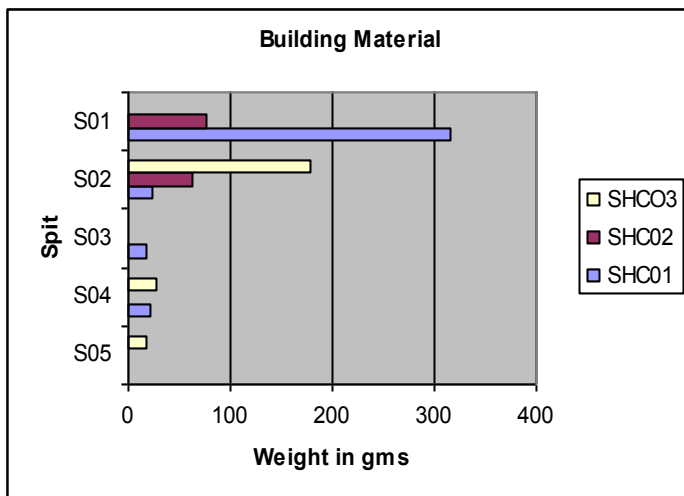
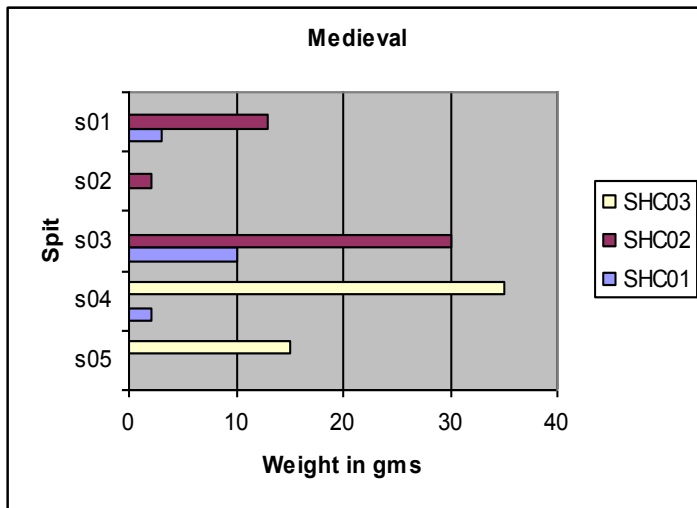
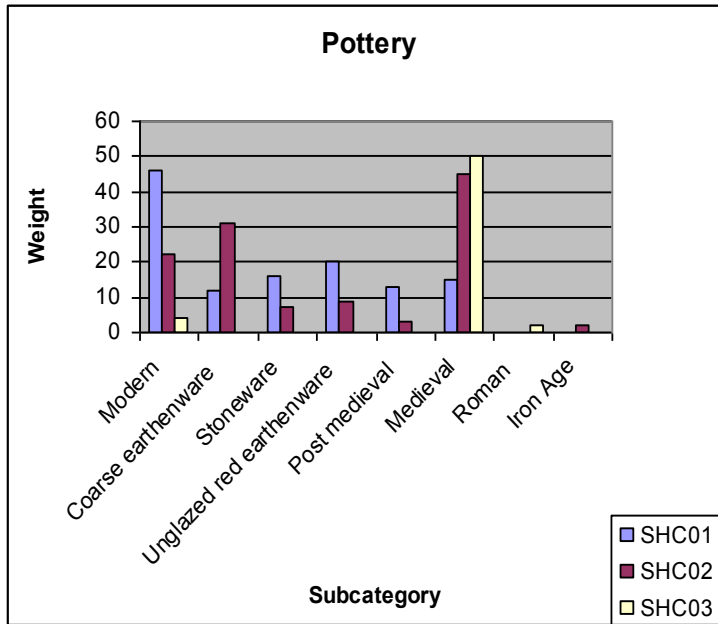
There was little glass. Most of it was from clear bottles or jars with a small number of pieces of green or very dark green and amber bottle glass. One piece of a jar had the ribbing typical of meat paste jars. Flat, window glass, either clear or pale green was 1/16th thick. All of the glass is likely to be late 19th or 20th century

Perhaps the most significant find is the coal. This occurred mostly in SHC01 and SHC02 and at depths down to 40 cm. In terms of quantity coal was one of the most abundant of all finds.

None of the Modern

	SHC01		SHC02		SHC03	
	Weight in grams	No	Weight in grams	No	Weight in grams	No
<b>Bones &amp; teeth</b>	<b>13</b>	3	<b>5</b>	2	<b>0</b>	0
<b>Building material</b>	<b>377</b>	31	<b>138</b>	35	<b>225</b>	6
<b>Coal</b>	<b>196</b>	57	<b>240</b>	75	<b>15</b>	9
<b>Glass</b>	<b>33</b>	13	<b>23</b>	5	<b>2</b>	1
<b>Metal</b>	<b>156</b>	3	<b>78</b>	9	<b>21</b>	4
<b>Clay pipe</b>	<b>5</b>	1	<b>3</b>	1	<b>3</b>	2
<b>Modern</b>	<b>46</b>	31	<b>22</b>	15	<b>4</b>	2
<b>Coarse earthenware</b>	<b>12</b>	4	<b>31</b>	4	<b>0</b>	0
<b>Stoneware</b>	<b>16</b>	4	<b>7</b>	2	<b>0</b>	0
<b>Unglazed Red Earthenware</b>	<b>20</b>	3	<b>9</b>	1	<b>0</b>	0
<b>Post-medieval pottery</b>	<b>13</b>	4	<b>3</b>	1	<b>0</b>	0
<b>Medieval</b>	<b>15</b>	3	<b>45</b>	10	<b>50</b>	11
<b>Roman</b>	<b>0</b>	0	<b>0</b>	0	<b>2</b>	1
<b>Iron Age</b>	<b>0</b>	0	<b>2</b>	0	<b>0</b>	0

pottery is particularly distinctive. One sherd of White Ware, possibly the rim of a tea cup (64170), was found in SHC03, with the rest from the other two pits, mostly from SHC01. Most of the piec-



es were White Ware, which was being made in the early 19<sup>th</sup> C and continues to this day. Cream Ware, which dates from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> C to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> C is sometimes difficult to distinguish from the White Ware. It is impossible to tell the date of small pieces. Some of the blue and white transfer printed pieces may be Willow Pattern (64116 and 64118), which has a long date range from the early 19<sup>th</sup> C. Another blue-green transfer-printed sherd (64134) would have been made after 1830. A cane-coloured sherd (64120) is from a mixing bowl similar to ones found in present-day kitchens, but which has been in use since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. Many of these were made by Sharpe's Pottery in Swadlincote. Another sherd which is cane-coloured on one side and has a blue and white pattern on the other (64123) is typical Mocha Ware, which has a range through the 19<sup>th</sup> C. The typical design on it is of a tree-like form made by a chemical reaction rather like when adding ink to blotting paper.

The post-medieval pottery, coarse earthenware and stoneware were not at all abundant and all of it was found in the two pits SHC01 and SHC03.

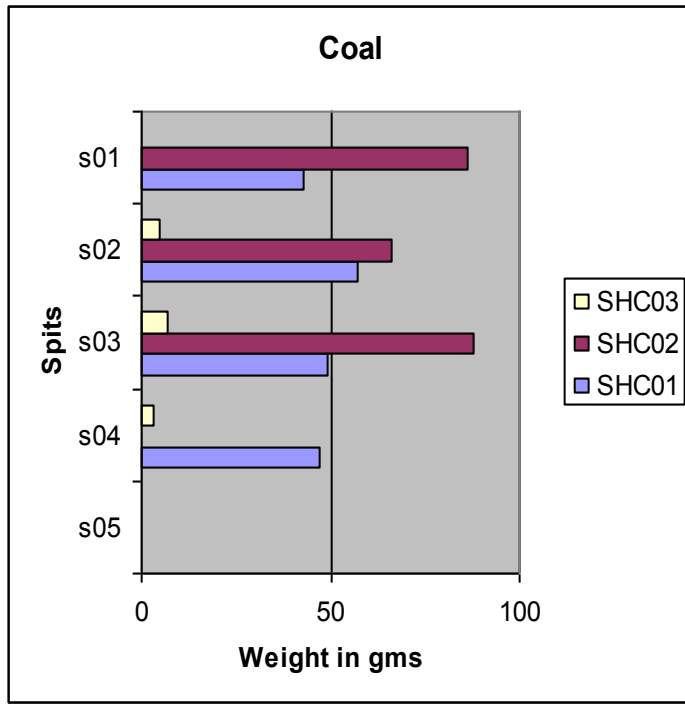
The coarse earthenware was mostly Red-bodied Black Glazed and Brown Glazed with one sherd of Pink-bodied Coarse Earthenware. These types were used from the late 17<sup>th</sup> C until the 20<sup>th</sup> C. Despite coming from large dishes, all of these sherds were very small and eroded.

The brown, salt-glaze stoneware sherds were mostly 18<sup>th</sup> C in age and of a kind made in Nottingham and Derbyshire.

Only one of the pieces found (64113) was later, with a date range of 1760 to 1840. Two finds (64117) were ribbed white stoneware from a kitchen jar.

Only five post-medieval sherds were found. They were slipware and Coarse Black Ware. The slipware ranges in date from about 1675 to 1750. The Coarse Black Ware date range is not precisely known, but probably extends through the 18<sup>th</sup> C.





Medieval pottery was found in all three pits, but was most abundant in SHC03. It occurred at all levels, though in SHC03 it was confined to depths below 30 cm. One sherd of Midland Purple Ware (64054) in SHC01 is late 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> C. There was one sherd of Nottingham Light-bodied Green Glazed Ware (64101) and another of Light-bodied Gritty Ware (64296) in SHC02, both of which are characteristically dated 1350 to 1450, but all the other sherds were from early fabric types, which tended not to be found after about 1350. These included Medieval Sandy Ware, Nottingham Reduced Green Glaze, Medieval Glazed Ware, Nottingham Green Glaze Ware and Nottingham Coarse Pink Sandy Ware, all of which are usually dated mid to late 13<sup>th</sup> C to mid 14<sup>th</sup>. Shelly Ware (64167) with a

range of 1100 to 1300 and Nottingham Splashed Ware (64160) also possibly 12<sup>th</sup> C were two very early medieval fabrics.

A single sherd of Roman pottery was found in SHC03 (64157). This was found near the bottom of the subsoil (30-40 cm depth). It is a piece of a Grey Ware pot with an everted rim weighing 2 grams and cannot be dated precisely.

A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was found in SHC02 (64096). It is a tiny scrap of a piece, weighing 2 grams and was found in the topsoil.

The oldest item recovered is a small flint. It is probably waste from a larger flint that was being worked to make a tool. Signs that it has been hit and small flakes taken from it are what identifies it as humanly worked.

### Interpretation

The overall quality of the finds in these pits is low. Much of the pottery is split and abraded and the pieces are small compared with the equivalents in other pits. This suggests that it has all been subject to erosive forces during movement within the soil.

All the clearly 20<sup>th</sup> C finds came from the topsoil, but so also did the Iron Age sherd. All the other pottery was well distributed through the topsoil and subsoil, being present at all depths. This also suggests that there has been some soil disturbance. In this topography it is most likely to be from soil creep; that is the slow movement over time of the soil down the hillside. The boundary between the basal clay and the overlying subsoil looks like there is continuity, but the soil profile above this could have been enhanced by the addition of soil particles from up the hill gradually moving downwards under the influence of water and gravity. Sherds of pottery etc could have moved the same way. Perhaps the best example that illustrates this is the distribution of coal. Most of the coal is in pits SHC01 and 02, downhill from the school and may have originated in the school boiler room. This means that it has to be later than 1911 when the school was built, but the fact that it is present at all depths shows that the soil has been mixed. There is comparatively little coal in the pit (SHC03) dug at the side of the school.

It is likely that none of the finds originated *in situ*, but have been redistributed mostly by down-slope movement. Most, if not all the pottery may have been spread in the fields hereabouts in manure. The overall quality of the finds supports this idea and that they have been moved and damaged within the soil.

The most significant event in this area was the building of the school in 1911. Little of the pottery dates from after this time, though much of the rest of the observed debris collected in the pits did. For example, most of the building material was found within the topsoil and just below it. In detail the pieces were too small to be measured, but the presence of slate suggests that it is mainly rubble associated with the building of the school.

The amount of Modern pottery is low, but it still could have originated in manure while the land was under arable cultivation. Nearly all the Modern pottery was from the 19th C and is a mixture of table ware and kitchen ware, including a sherd of mixing bowl. The most unusual type of pottery found here is Mocha Ware a beautifully coloured and decorated ware type used for mugs, jugs, cups and bowls in the 19th C.

Most of the medieval finds are pre-1350, which is the time of the Black Death. The few sherds that extend beyond that date may not be too much younger than it. After that there is nothing that can definitely be attributed to the period late 14<sup>th</sup> C to late 17<sup>th</sup> C. This is a gap of 300 years. A similar time distribution has been observed in other pits. We know from the field-walking project that the period late 13<sup>th</sup> to early 14<sup>th</sup> C was one of intense agricultural development in Bingham. Almost all the land that could be worked was in production. The impact of the Black Death, however, was profound and we see in other pits a gap until the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries where there are no medieval finds after the mid 14<sup>th</sup> C. This seems to indicate that the recovery from the Black Death was slow. Land that was under arable cultivation in the early 14<sup>th</sup> C either became wasteland or pasture and manure was not spread on it. Arable cultivation did not return to this area until the late 17<sup>th</sup> C.

There is no evidence of Anglo-Saxon and Late Saxon pottery, which suggests that the Roman sherd might have got there mixed with farmyard manure and that this form of agriculture did not continue after the Romans left England in 410 AD.

The distribution of Iron Age sherds elsewhere in Bingham occurs in clusters around what may have been inhabited sites. Even a single sherd here may indicate that there are more nearby and that this was a place where the Iron Age British lived.

Finally, the flint is quite unusual in the test pits dug in Bingham. It is not easy to date it, but it has the appearance of flints made in the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age, that is between 3000 and 1200 BC.