

Update October 2016

We have returned this month to the Old Manor House on Coldwell Street to insert another test pit. The pit is on the south side of the garden below the terrace, in an area of former flower beds three metres west of Test Pit 1, which was in the former Tennis Court.

This one, test pit 3, has proved rather better than our first two in so far as it yielded, amongst other more modern items, a shard of late mediaeval sandy ware from within the top context, the soil immediately below the turf. Although this might not seem wonderfully encouraging, in fact it has been the easiest mediaeval shard we have ever found, suggesting, perhaps, that parts of the Manor House garden may be relatively undisturbed. It made a wonderful change from having to dig down a vast depth (as we have in most other parts of Wirksworth) to find anything that wasn't modern. The caveat from one shard is that it might be later, splashed ware was produced later, for example in the north east of England (Chris Cumberpatch, pers com).



Test Pit 3 with top context (101) worked out.



Shard of late mediaeval sandy ware
Splashed glaze 1300-1500

The garden of the Old Manor House (Mr Spurrier-Smith feels that it is the Dean of Lincoln's Manor House and would like us to look at his documents) is very large, perhaps 3 acres and we are still at a distance from the house, with the view that we will work towards it.

Separately, I received an email from a Mr Frank Bunting, historian of the Bunting Family, who had been looking at Bunting Wood in Wigwell Grange by aerial photography and found the following enclosure outlined in a field to the east of it, with a number of circular features. The field is at SK 3200 5457 immediately on the south side of Blunderstone Lane, a lane which leads off Longway Bank. Consequently I visited the location on the 29th October.

Blunderstone Lane has a surprising number of houses along it from its eastern end, although it is unmade, Derbyshire County Council is particularly parsimonious with the application of tarmac: Blunderstone Lane needs to be made, not quietly neglected.

North



Setting the matter of access to one side, the visit wasn't especially enlightening. The land slopes quite steeply from the top of the picture towards the Mere Brook in the valley, off the picture at the bottom, and the site is particularly overgrown in a way which made it impossible to assess from a casual standpoint, and we do not have the resources to investigate it. However, we often record matters which may deserve attention by colleagues and Mr Bunting felt the large circular feature in the centre right of the image might represent an Iron Age roundhouse. I can draw no conclusions one way or the other, the field gives the impression of having been a horse enclosure, but this would not preclude archaeological features being present.

end.