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Medieval enclosures and a fishpond at Rectory Meadows, King’s Stanley, Gloucestershire: excavations in 2011

By Alan Hardy and Jamie Wright

With contributions by Sara Cobain, Angus Crawford, and Jonny Geber

Abstract

Excavation revealed a sequence of small enclosures dating to the 11th to 13th century, possibly part of a forerunner to the borough established in the south of the parish in the mid 13th century. The subsequent construction of a large fishpond in the late 13th or 14th century was possibly associated with the newly established Rectory, although it was infilled well before the earliest related documentary references.

A quantity of residual Roman finds also suggests that there was a nearby settlement dating to the 2nd to 4th century, distinct from the Roman settlement near the manor and Church.

INTRODUCTION

Project background

Between June and July 2011, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an excavation in the grounds of the Rectory, Church Street, King’s Stanley, Gloucestershire. The work was undertaken on behalf of Colburn Homes Ltd as a condition of Planning Consent for 15 dwellings. The excavation was undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council (Archaeological Advisor to the local planning authority Stroud District Council), who also monitored both the fieldwork and the post-excavation analysis.

Site location, geology and topography

King’s Stanley lies 4km to the south-west of Stroud. The site was centred on NGR SO 8105 0362, c. 50m to the west of Church Street, on ground sloping gently down to the west from 46m above Ordnance Datum. The site lies c.100m north of the area known as ‘The Borough’, which contains the medieval market place of the town (Tilley et al. 2007, 20). Immediately to the east of the proposed development area lie a medieval rectory and its associated buildings, including a late 16th-century dovecote (Herbert 1972, 254).
The church and earliest focus of occupation lie to the north of the centre of the present village on an outcrop of river gravels, while the southern, core area of settlement sits on a bed of Dyrham Silts. The area along Church Street which links the two areas lies on a band of Lower Lias clay. Small streams on either side of the village flow north to the River Frome, the western stream forming the parish boundary with Leonard Stanley (Tilley et al. 2007, 19).

**Historical and archaeological background**

The early focus of settlement at King’s Stanley overlooked the River Frome to the north. Although the Norman church was established here, the later medieval settlement developed some distance to the south of this. A settlement ‘Stantone’ was mentioned in Domesday, was ‘Stanley’ from 1160, and added the prefix ‘King’s’ by 1278. As by this time the manor was held by the King, this distinguished it from the settlement of Leonard Stanley, its western neighbour, whose manor was held by Gloucester Abbey (Tilley et al., 20).

In 1253 the lord of the manor Adam le Despenser was granted a market and fair, which led to the establishment of a borough, sited some 400m south of the church and manor, and concentrated around the junction of the road leading northwards to the church with the west-east road skirting the heights of Selsey Common to the south. The new borough was not commercially successful, and by the 16th century was largely moribund. The post-medieval clothing industry prompted a revival in the settlement’s fortunes, at least until the 19th century (Tilley et al., 20).

The eastern part of the site lies within the property acquired by the rectory during the late 13th or 14th centuries. The western part, comprising an acre of pasture bordering the parish boundary stream, is first recorded in 1588 as being granted by Elizabeth I to one Edward Wymark. By 1717 it had become incorporated with another parcel of land to the east as charity land (known as Deacon’s Close), whose rental proceeds were administered by the church for the support of three local schools. Only in the 19th century did it become fully part of the rectory grounds (Charity Commission 1826-7).

The earliest known detailed map of the area, the King’s Stanley Parish Map of 1817, shows the rectory and associated buildings occupying two plots fronting the road (see Figure 2). Deacon’s Close (no. 22 on the map) is still, at this time, depicted as a separate plot, with independent access to the road.

Extensive excavations in the immediate vicinity of the church, manor, and associated earthworks from the 1960s to the 1980s, revealed a sequence of prehistoric, Roman, and
medieval occupation, much of it high status in character (Heighway 1989). No archaeological excavations have taken place in the area of the later borough, or along the linking road (Church Street). Nevertheless, isolated finds of 13th-century pottery have been made in the area of The Beeches, on the western side of Church Street approximately mid-way between the present site and the church (Heighway 2007), and sherds of ‘early medieval’ pottery have also been found at a number of locations on both sides of Church Road (P. Griffin pers.comm.).

**Methodology**

An area of 2000 m² was mechanically stripped, and all revealed features were sample excavated by hand, 10% of linear features, 50-100% of discrete features). The exception was the large pond; two full sections were machined through it. All features were cut into the natural light greyish brown clay natural, and sealed by a subsoil and turf/topsoil layer typically 0.20m deep. Suitable deposits within features were sample for macrofossil and/or charcoal remains. Two monolith samples were taken from the stratigraphic sequence through the pond. All recording followed standard CA procedures.

**EXCAVATION RESULTS**

A network of features was revealed in the centre of the site, clearly representing a sequence of intercutting enclosures (Fig. 3) defined by shallow gullies. Their stratigraphic relationships were frequently inconclusive; the artefactual dating lacked precision, and the dating material, by virtue of the repeated disturbance of earlier features, had been subject to redeposition. Thus a confident sequence of enclosures is not possible, nor is an accurate chronology of the elements of that sequence. However, with recourse to consideration of spatial relationships, and the general distribution of finds, a plausible sequence of four phases of enclosure (B, C, D, E) can be postulated, dated to the 12th/13th centuries by the predominant pottery recovered from them. A quantity of residual Roman pottery was also recovered from features within these phases. This material is discussed below.

Slightly later pottery (Minety ware) and a different alignment indicates a change of land division in the later 13th century (Phase F), and this is followed by late medieval Phases G and H. The final phase (Phase J) is dated by pottery to the 18th or 19th century.
Period 1 (12th century?)

A shallow gully (1167) oriented north-east – south-west was identified on the eastern edge of the main part of the site. Its orientation was distinctly different to other alignments, although its profile and fill characteristics were similar. Stratigraphically it appeared to be the earliest feature revealed in this area, although there is no artefactual evidence that it represents pre-medieval activity.

Period 2 (12th to early 13th century)

This period is represented by four successive rectangular or sub-rectangular paddocks, defining small areas. Although enclosure C is on a slightly different alignment from the others, it is noticeable that all the enclosures tended to occupy the same confined area, and the western part of the site extending downslope towards the parish boundary stream, remained clear. Most of the enclosure gullies were less than 0.20m deep and a shallow ‘U’ shape in profile. By contrast, the ditches of the last enclosure in the sequence (E), displayed a steep ‘V’ shaped profile averaging 0.6m deep. The gully fills were generally silty clay with occasional inclusions of fired clay fragments. Finds from these features included 11th to 13th century limestone-tempered pottery in generally small quantities, Animal bone was recovered in small quantities, principally elements of mature cattle, but also pig. The distribution pattern of this material was similar to that of the limestone-tempered pottery. Exceptionally, enclosure B yielded a substantial quantity of Roman pottery from a single section.

Two discrete features, large pit 1036 and small pit 1280, were located within the complex of gullies and both were presumably associated with one of the enclosures. The former was a substantial feature, measuring 2.95m by 3.07m and less than 0.40m deep. It contained a mixed silty clay fill, with fragments of fired clay, and limestone rubble. A quantity of limestone-tempered 11th to 13th century pottery was also recovered, along with some animal bone. Although two possible postholes and an undated shallow pit were identified close by, there was no evidence of a structural function for pit 1036, nor was there evidence that it was dug to hold water. The likelihood is therefore that this pit was excavated to obtain material for wall daub, or clay for an oven. It did not appear to have been used as a rubbish pit, which suggests that any domestic focus was some distance away.

In the narrow south-east extension of the site, a number of linear features were identified (1048, 1055, 1057), which, by their profile and from the finds recovered, are likely to be parts of the same succession of enclosures. Their location and approximate orientation broadly
coincide with a modern hedge line (Fig. 1) apparent as a boundary between plots 21 and 22 on the 1817 map (Fig. 2).

Period 3 (13th century)

A re-orientation of the site is indicated by two linear features, in the north gullies 1005 and 1252/1265, and in the south ditches 1137 and 1061/1119. In contrast to earlier activity, these features extended across the western part of the site, turning to a more east-west orientation. The fills of the southern ditch (1119) yielded a quantity of Minety Ware sherds, consistent with a date slightly later in the 13th-century.

Period 4 (14th-15th century)

A further re-organisation of the site is indicated; the northern arm of an enclosure (1059) was identified at the southern edge of the site, turning to the south as ditch 1213. A north south ditch (1190) was also revealed, terminating immediately south of a pond (1375 – see below). These two features were possibly linked by small gullies 1140 and 1153, which may have defined a gateway.

To the north was a large shallow pond (1375), averaging 7.3m wide x 1.3m deep, with sloping sides and a flat base. The rounded southern terminus of the pond was exposed, truncating the northern terminus of ditch 1190. The pond extended beyond the northern limit of the site; a curve in its eastern side suggested that it may have turned or widened at this point. The fills of the pond were most recorded in a machine-cut slot near its southern terminus (not illustrated), showing two layers of primary silting of grey clay (1379, 1380), followed by an infilling deposit of mottled greyish brown clay. Monolith samples of these deposits were taken and analysed (see below).

Period 5 (18th-19th Century)
The final phase of activity recorded on the site was represented by an episode of consolidation in the southern part of the site – by the dumping of limestone rubble and gravel, principally along the length of ditch 1059, but also as other patches in the vicinity. At a point where the line of ditch 1059 crossed that of earlier medieval enclosure ditches of enclosures D and E, the consolidation took a more substantial form. A stone-built channel (1138) was constructed within the upper fill of ditch 1059, measuring 2.84m long, its east end terminating in a faced stone edge (Fig. 4). The west end did not display any evidence of a similar finish, although it may have been disturbed by modern activity. The structure appears to have been originally capped with slabs, and a substantial quantity of stone rubble bordered each side of the channel, suggesting that the whole structure may have been a north-south crossing over an otherwise boggy drainage ditch - the stone structure providing a firm surface while still allowing water to pass underfoot through the channel.

THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Pottery by Angus Crawford

The assemblage of 461 sherds of pottery weighing 9.3kg dates predominantly to the medieval period, though a small number of Roman, post-medieval and modern sherds were also recovered (Table 1). The level of preservation varies, with the majority of the Roman sherds in poor condition, and a large number of the medieval of sherds having abraded edges and vesicular surfaces due to the leaching of calcareous inclusions. The assemblage was fully recorded, sorted by fabric and quantified utilizing sherd count, weight and rim Estimated Vessel Equivalents. For pottery identified as of a likely Worcestershire type, the fabric code used for Deansway, Worcestershire (Bryant 2004) has been adopted. Otherwise fabric codes have been created for the purpose of this report and, where possible, Roman fabrics have been correlated to the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998).

Roman pottery

A small Roman pottery assemblage totalling 46 sherds and weighing 299g was recovered from six stratified deposits and from the topsoil. All sherds are abraded with only four deposits containing solely Roman material, all of which were gully fills (deposits 1177, 1179, 1181 and 1354, from gullies 1176 (enclosure A), 1178 (enclosure J), 1180 (enclosure B), and 1355 (enclosure) respectively.
The Roman pottery assemblage is dominated by Severn Valley wares (Tomber and Dore 1998; type SVW OX2) with 17 sherds, weighing 101g. Of these, seven are of oxidised type with a further eight organically-tempered variants and two with a reduced, organically-tempered fabric. While the Seven Valley wares can only be broadly dated to the Roman period, a 1st to 2nd-century AD date for the organically-tempered variants is likely.

Greywares are the next most common fabric type, with ten sherds (43g) in a fine sandy fabric with a coarse sandy sherd with organic inclusions also present. All of the greywares are probably of local production and, as the sherds are unfeatured, are attributed a broad Roman period date.

A small quantity (5 sherds weighing 41g) of Dorset Black-burnished ware sherds (Tomber and Dore 1998; type DOR BB1) are present, again attributed to a broad date of 2nd to 4th century AD. A sherd from ditch fill 1181, featuring a wide flaring everted rim, is consistent with jars produced during the 3rd and 4th century AD.

The remaining Roman assemblage includes a two sherds of central Gaulish samian (Tomber and Dore 1998; type LEZ SA 2), in poor condition, from fill 1068 of pond 1375). Unfeatured sherds in fine and sandy oxidised fabrics, some with organic inclusions and a reduced grogged fabric are also present. Although residual, a 2nd-century AD date can be applied to the samian, with the remainder assignable only to the broader Roman period.

**Medieval pottery**

The medieval pottery assemblage amounts to 393 sherds (8.6kg) and is characterised by an abundance of limestone-tempered wares (86% of the total medieval pottery count). The majority of the medieval pottery consists of cooking pot-type coarse wares.

Vesicular fabric Oolitic_LT amounts to 279 sherds and almost certainly represents a leached limestone-tempered type very common from the Cotswold region (Ireland 1998). A further two sherds retaining oolitic limestone inclusions, though in a sander fabric, are considered to be in the same Cotswold oolitic limestone-fabric tradition. Identifiable vessel forms are restricted to jar/cooking pots with everted rims. Rim morphology varies, with examples from simple everted rims of uniform thickness to those with thickened/expanded outer proportions. Two sherds with everted inturned rims were also recorded from fill 1212 (ditch 1213 enclosure G) and fill 1276 (gully 1275 enclosure D)(Fig. 6, no. 1). A jar with a clubbed rim of 11th to 12th-century date was recorded from fill 1286 of pit 1284 (enclosure B), the small size of the group makes determining whether there is any chronological significance to rim variation problematic.
Sherds in a well-fired oolitic limestone-tempered fabric (MIN_LT) with a sparse lead glaze are identifiable as Minety-type ware. Dating for the unfeatured sherds is broad with production of Minety wares extending between the 12th and 15th centuries. Identifiable vessel forms include jars with everted rims, of uniform or thickened types, of 14th to 15th-century date. A double-handled spouted pitcher, of handmade type, features applied strips and combing to the body as well as stab decoration to the handles (Fig. 6, no. 2). Recovered as joining sherds from ditch fill deposits 1189 and 1191 (both from ditch 1190, enclosure G), a late 12th or early 13th-century date can be attributed to the vessel. A rim from a globular jar, recovered from the upper fill 1342 of ditch 1341 (enclosure F), probably of 14th or 15th-century date, confirms a broad period of use for Minety wares on site.

Other regional wares include 21 sherds of unglazed Malvernian ware (MALV), with a possible further four sherds also recorded. All are typified by inclusions of moderate to abundant Malvernian rock (acid igneous) inclusions. Where present, rim forms are of short everted and folded type (Fig. 6, no. 3) typical of cooking pots produced during the 13th and 14th centuries (Bryant 2004, 298-99).

Three sherds with abundant medium rounded sub-angular quartz inclusions are identifiable as likely Worcestershire types (fabrics WORSC and WORCSG; Bryant 2004). Two sherds are unglazed and include a jar with an everted and thickened rim, which probably dates from the 13th to mid 14th century (Fig. 6, no. 4). The remaining sherd is oxidised with an internal glaze, possibly from a bowl or skillet of 14th-century type (ibid., 290-7). Further oxidised sherds include 15 in a sandy fabric (OXS), with one also featuring organic inclusions (OXSorg) and another with grog and organic inclusions (OXSgorg). None of the sherds could be identified to source though a local production is possible.

The remaining medieval pottery consists of small individual sherds that cannot be identified further beyond attributing a broad medieval date of production.

Post-medieval and modern

The small post-medieval and modern pottery assemblage (49 sherds) comprises a range of domestics wares utilized during the 18th to 20th century. A range of plain glazed earthenwares, including North Devon gravel-tempered ware, are datable across the 17th to 18th centuries. Refined whitewares fabrics, which includes pearlwares, blue-on-white transfer printed wares and a piece from a transfer-printed porcelain sanitary ware bowl are considered to date after 1780.
**Discussion**

The Roman pottery assemblage is of limited interpretative value. The small quantities and poor condition suggest some degree of residuality within the assemblage. Material from ditch fills 1177 (ditch 1176), 1179 (ditch 1180), 1181 (ditch 1182) and 1354 (ditch 1355) may have derived from deposition on the ground surface prior to being incorporated into the ditch fills.

The medieval pottery consists of a limited range of pottery types. The forms are predominantly utilitarian jars and there is a high reliance on wares produced in the Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered tradition. Whether this is through a deliberate preference or restricted access to a wider variety of products is difficult to interpret. That other material was available is evidenced by the Minety, Malvernian and Worcester-type products within the assemblage. With the exception of the Minety ware spouted pitcher, these wares again appear to be predominantly utilitarian in nature and the assemblage is consistent with a site of lower socio-economic status in the medieval period.

**Other finds by Angus Crawford**

**Fired clay/daub**

A total of 322 pieces of fired clay and daub was recorded, weighing 6.21kg, of which 180 pieces were identified as daub with another 59 pieces recorded as daub-like material, recovered from medieval dated deposits spanning the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. The majority of this material featured stake or lath impressions, suggesting an association with structures, and possibly ovens. In addition two small fragments of fired clay, both from medieval contexts, appeared to have originated from objects and may have been mould or loomweight fragments.

**Ceramic building material**

Thirty-five fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 1.59kg, were recorded from the site. Most were undiagnostic and of medieval to modern in date. However, a fragment of Roman tile (340g), with a complete stamp of ‘ARVERI’, was recorded from deposit 1357 (pit 1036, enclosure D) (see Fig. 5 no.1). Another small fragment of Roman tile (6g) appeared to also have a small portion of an ‘ARVERI’ stamp, and was recovered from deposit 1332 (ditch 1331, enclosure E) (see Fig. 5, no.2). The ‘ARVERI’ stamp is believed to be from a private tile-maker working near Cirencester, though other places of manufacture are possible (see Collingwood and Wright, 1993). A further likely fragment of Roman tile was recovered as an unstratified find.
**Flint**

Seven pieces of flint were recovered from the assemblage. Of these, a large core (1.26kg) in a honey coloured flint was recovered as an unstratified find. The core is of interest as flint is not part of the local geology and the core would have had to be transported to the site. Further finds included a primary flake from deposit 1015 (fill of tree throw 1014), further flaked material from deposit 1204 (part of natural hollow 1024), and others recovered as unstratified finds.

**Glass**

A small fragment of Roman blue coloured glass (2g) was recorded from 1166, a spread of silty clay over part of ditch 1164 (enclosure F).

**Slag**

Three pieces of tap slag were recorded, including two from features 1034 (enclosure D) and ditch 1182 (enclosure B) on the east side of the site. The presence of this material suggests that some ironworking, possibly including smelting, was taking place nearby, although not to any intensive degree. A small assemblage of metal objects and clay-pipe fragments was also recovered. A full catalogue of all recovered finds is retained in the archive.

**Animal bone** by Jonny Geber

Within the bone assemblage species were identified, but no quantitative analysis was viable for such a small assemblage. Only animal bones from medieval deposits were analysed in detail, and these are discussed as a collection broadly dating from the 11th to 13th century AD. Only a relatively small amount of animal bone was recovered (3kg), which nevertheless gives insights into the husbandry regime and economy of the site, and the diet of the people who occupied it. The bones were generally well preserved, but had in several cases suffered considerable fragmentation. The bones were identified to species and skeletal element with the aid of an osteological reference collection (Cotswold Archaeology) and reference literature (Iregren 2002; Radu 2005; Schmid 1972). Measurements were taken in accordance with von den Driesch (1976), and shoulder heights of cattle and horse were calculated using the equations by Fock (1966) and May (1985).
The main domesticates: cattle, caprovine and pig

Bones from mammals dominated the assemblage (Table 2). Of these, cattle amounted to 65% of all identified species by fragment count. These derived from a minimum of two mature and one juvenile animals. One metatarsal (GL=210.00mm), sexed as cow (Chaplin 1971, 103–4), generated an estimated shoulder height of 112cm. One middle foot phalanx displayed considerable marginal osteophytosis at the proximal articulation, which indicates degenerative joint disease (Rogers and Waldron 1995).

The identified elements included both meat-rich and meat-poor elements, which would suggest that the animals slaughtered locally were also consumed in the vicinity. One noteworthy deposit (1369, middle fill of pond 1375) included fragments of two bull skulls, a juvenile mandible, a third foot phalanx, a patella, and a fragment of a thoracic vertebra – all, with the exception of the patella and vertebra, representing meat-poor regions of the carcass. This may suggest slaughter waste rather than generic domestic waste.

Eleven fragments derived from caprovines, which was the second most abundant species in this assemblage, although it was not possible to distinguish between sheep and goat from the remains. The material included two skull fragments and two loose teeth, a thoracic vertebra, two metapodials and four fragments of a minimum of three tibiae. One of the tibiae, which comprised part of the leg meat-cut, displayed knife-cut marks from butchery on its posterior surface.

Five deposits each yielded a single pig bone fragment, which were identified as parts of a mandible, a loose tooth, a scapula, a humerus and a metapodial. The mandible derived from an immature animal, aged approximately 6–9 months (Habermehl 1975; Silver 1970). The generic zooarchaeological evidence from across medieval England has indicated a higher proportion of pig bones and a lesser proportion of caprovine on high status sites compared with urban sites or villages (Grant 1988). The evidence from this assemblage suggests a low status for the medieval site.

Horse and dog

Three horse bones were present in the assemblage: two fragments of a skull from ditch 1119 and a metacarpal pit 1036. The skull included several molar teeth, which all displayed considerable wear which suggests an old age for this animal. A shoulder height of 135cm (13.1hh) could be estimated from the metacarpals, which is of normal size for horses in Britain during the medieval period (Clark 2004, 22).
Dog was represented by one thoracic vertebra from ditch 1032, and the left and right side of 
the same mandible in from ditch 1094. The latter bones were fragmented, but suggest that 
they derived from an adult dog of medium size.

Bird
The only bird bone in the assemblage was a fowl tibio-tarsus found in ditch 1275. Evidently, 
fowl and egg would have contributed to the diet, although to what extent is not possible to 
determine. Bones from domestic birds are generally less common on lower status sites than 
higher status sites in the medieval period (Grant 1988). They are also, however, amongst 
the most fragile animal bones in archaeological assemblages, and this bias may be reflected 
in the relative quantities of recovered bone material.

Fish
Fish was represented by two scales and eight vertebrae found in three fills of pond 1375. Six 
of these could be identified as bream. The archaeological evidence of a fishpond on the site 
suggests that there would have been regular consumption of fish, and that the fish bones are 
from bream bred this pond. Bream is particularly well suited to ponds, as its preferred habitat 
is the bottom of stagnant and muddy water (Weiss Adamson 2004, 42). The consumption 
pattern of fish in the medieval period in Britain varied significantly depending on social 
status, resource availability, and religious standing (Serjeantson and Woolgar 2006). Based 
on the historical accounts and current archaeological evidence from elsewhere in Britain, the 
evidential access of pond fish at King’s Stanley during the late medieval period does imply a 
high social status consumption pattern (Dyer 1988; Woolgar 1999).

The plant macrofossils and charcoal by Sarah Cobain

Introduction

Five bulk soil samples were taken for plant macrofossil and charcoal remains from medieval 
features pit 1036 and pond 1375. Following assessment, four of these samples were 
selected for plant detailed macrofossil and charcoal analysis to provide information on the 
function of features sampled and socio-economic activities, and to infer the composition of 
the local woodlands and flora.
Methodology

Plant macrofossil and charcoal remains were retrieved by standard wet sieving and flotation procedures using a 250micron sieve to collect the sieved/floated material. The seeds were identified using a low power stereo-microscope (Brunel MX1) (x10-x40). Identifications were carried out with reference to images and descriptions by Cappers et al. (2006), Berggren (1981) and Anderberg (1994). Up to 100 charcoal fragments of the >2mm sieve fraction were identified using an epi-illuminating microscope (Brunel SP400) (x40-x400). Identifications were carried out with reference to images and descriptions by Cutler and Gale (2000), Heller et al. (2004) and Wheeler et al. (1989). Nomenclature follows Stace (1997). The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Discussion

Fishpond 1375

The two sections excavated through the medieval fishpond revealed a large number of well-preserved waterlogged and a small number of poorly-preserved carbonised seeds from fill 1105 (northern section) and fill 1379 (southern section). The carbonised cereals consisted of abraded and most likely residual free-threshing wheat, barley and oat, typical of cereals cultivated during this period (Stone 2006, 13). The waterlogged plant macrofossils consisted of species indicative of wetland/marshland (rigid hornwort, pondweed, fool’s-water-cress), grassland (thistle spp and buttercup) and hedgerow/scrub/woodland (hazel, elder and brambles) environments (Stace, 1997). The plant macrofossils were largely the same in both sections with the exception of fill 1105 (northern section) which contained a large number of waterlogged hazelnut shell fragments and nine whole hazelnuts. In contrast, fill 1380 (southern section) contained large numbers of bramble thorns, blackberry and bramble spp. seeds. While as a whole this indicates the presence of a scrub landscape surrounding the pond, it also gives a very localised impression of vegetation with hazel tree(s) at the north end of the pond and brambles towards the south. Of the nine whole hazelnuts recovered, four of these had a small hole <2mm diameter at the top end of the nut, indicative of a nut weevil larvae (Curculio nucum) burrowing out of the nut. The female nut weevil lays its eggs which hatch inside the hazelnut and the lavae remain until they have eaten the entire nut, at which point they bore a hole out of the hazelnut.
Monoliths from fishpond 1375

Four monoliths of 500mm length were taken from one sequence of the fills of pond 1375, to examine the micromorphology of the pond fills. The surface of each monolith was cleaned using a scalpel to ensure the exposed layer of sediment was clean and remove smearing.

The layers identified within the monolith concur with those recorded on site (see Excavation Results) with the exception of a dark grey organic-rich layer 0.02m deep at the interface of pond fills 1379 and 1380, which represent the formation of ‘gyttja’ - an anaerobic fine-grained, organic silt which develops in ponds/lakes or slow-moving water, building up in the base of the pond. The dark grey layer recorded between fills 1379 and 1380 may represent the growth of water plants at the base of the pond during an interval when the pond base was dry. Eventually the pond was backfilled with a grey-brown silty clay material (deposits 1378, 1377 and 1376). The water table in the area varied over time as some of this infilling material appears gleyed. This showed most clearly as bands within deposit 1378, and most likely represents a fluctuating winter/summer water table in the years after infilling.

Pit 1356

The basal and secondary fills within pit 1356 contained a small assemblage of carbonised cereal grains. Approximately half were identified as free-threshing wheat although they were highly abraded. There was no cereal chaff present. Free-threshing wheat was a typical crop during this period (Stone 2006, 13) and may have been exposed to heat, possibly while being dried in preparation for milling before being discarded in this pit.

A large amount of beech charcoal was also recovered from the pit. Approximately 40% of the charcoal identified exhibited curved growth rings indicating that a proportion of the wood comprised small roundwood twigs. The remaining fragments may have originated from larger branches or trunk wood, although many were too small to be diagnostic. As there was no evidence of in-situ burning, the material is likely to represent discarded firing debris from cereal processing activities. The high proportion of roundwood may indicate coppicing of beech, although a larger number of charcoal samples would be required to confirm this.
Conclusion

The material recovered from this site provides an interesting reconstruction of the local vegetation together with an indication of crops being processed in this area. Fishpond 1375 contained a large, well preserved assemblage of waterlogged plant remains consisting of species indicative of wetland, grassland and hedgerow/scrub/woodland environments. Of particular interest was the dominance of hazelnut in the northern section of the pond and brambles in the southern section giving a localised impression of vegetation. The pit and fishpond contained small assemblages of carbonised cereals dominated by free-threshing wheat, which were poorly preserved and highly abraded, and indicate discarded burnt waste from cereal-processing activities.

DISCUSSION

The Roman evidence (2nd to 3rd century)

While the occasional sherd of Roman pottery on the site might be accounted for by manuring, the presence of 19 sherds from at least three vessels in one ditch section (1182, enclosure B) on the eastern side of the site is significant. The stratigraphy of the ditch gave no indication that it did not belong with the rest of the 11th to 13th-century enclosure complex, and it is probable that this Roman pottery was redeposited when the ditch was infilled during one of the episodes of re-excavation of the enclosures. However, the presence of this quantity of Roman pottery suggests a 2nd to 3rd century domestic focus nearby, distinct from the Roman site in the vicinity of the church, 400m to the north (Heighway 1989, 42). This contention is given support by the presence of fragments of two ‘Arveri’- stamped roof tiles (Fig.5), suggesting at least one building of some status nearby (Fig. 5). The manorial and church focus to the north had its predecessor in a villa on the site (ibid.); the evidence from the Rectory invites the suggestion that the southern focus of King’s Stanley’s settlement may also have had a Roman antecedent.

The medieval enclosures (12th to 13th centuries)

Some slight evidence of post-Roman occupation was recovered from the church and manor excavations (Heighway 1989, 37-8), but no similar indications were found on the Rectory site (or have been found in the vicinity). The earliest identifiable activity on the site was the sequence of shallow gullies defining small paddocks, probably relating to plots fronting the southern part of Church Street, and bordering the meadow alongside the parish boundary stream. The gullies appeared to have acted as drainage channels, defining and draining
small paddocks for livestock. They may well have been augmented with hurdles or light fences, which would not have left an archaeological footprint.

The pottery and the animal bone evidence are consistent with low-status occupation in the 12th to 13th centuries, during the period of the small enclosures. The dating suggests this activity took place before the formal establishment of the borough in the mid 13th century. Large sherds of a 12th to 13th century spouted Minety Ware pitcher were recovered from the boundary ditch that was later expanded to become the pond, although the rest of the Minety ware, generally confined to the southern part of the site, is slightly later in date, indicating continued activity well into the 14th and even the 15th centuries.

 Artefact distribution

Although redistribution of material was inevitable during the succession of enclosures, the process would not have moved the material far; thus a distribution plot of the earlier pottery and the fired clay suggests a concentration of earlier activity in and around the four enclosures B, C, D, and E. Although no footprint of a structure was identified, the fired clay, much of it displaying wattle impressions, suggests the presence of a building, or possibly an oven in the vicinity.

The environmental evidence from the large pit (1056) suggests the proximity of domestic activity, including crop-processing activity and the use of beech twigs, possibly as fuel.

The fishpond (14th - 15th centuries)

The character of the site changed significantly in the later medieval period with the excavation of the large linear pond extending across much of the site. The apparent return of the feature to the east, at the northern edge of the site, invites the suggestion that it could have acted as a moat, as well as a pond. In parts of lowland England, particularly the east Midlands, East Anglia and the South-East, partially or fully encompassing moats were highly desirable as both defensive features and as status symbols in the 12th and 13th centuries (Steane 1985, 59), although there is much less evidence for their attraction in the South-West. Later in the medieval period the incidence of partial moats increased, a reflection of the desire for the status symbol without necessarily the physical constriction that a full moat would imply (ibid.). In contrast to the environmental evidence from the earlier paddocks and gullies, that from the pond/moat fill supports the hypothesis of a garden feature, with no evidence for domestic activity nearby. Hazel trees bordered it to the north, and brambles to
the south, – although this may be more indicative of the pond’s dereliction, rather than the surrounding environment when it was in use.

As Bowden reminds us, not every medieval linear water-filled feature is a moat, and not every pond was intended to accommodate fish (2006, 173). However, such water features did serve that purpose (Clarke 1984, 56-7), and the presence of scales and vertebrae from the pond clearly indicates that it contained bream – destined, one assumes, for the rectory dining table - even if it was also a decorative garden feature. This role was probably a reflection of the ecclesiastical associations of the property. The disparity of archaeological remains revealed on either side of the pond suggests that its creators made use of an existing boundary ditch, enlarging it to create the pond. This is supported by the evidence of the truncated earlier ditch (1190) at the southern terminus of the pond.

The pond only produced late medieval dating evidence, so seems to have been a rather transient landscape feature. It is not shown on the earliest map of the area, dating to 1817 (see Fig. 2), nor is it mentioned in the earliest terriers relating to the property, dating from 1618 (GDR Gloucester Diocesan Records: Glebe Terrier). Its infilling may relate to the alterations to the property undertaken by the rector Thomas Morgan in 1720; the terriers suggest that the preoccupation at the time was over the symmetry in garden planning (P. Griffin, pers. comm.). The pond’s alignment would have been at odds with that of the rectory building, and this may have led to its removal as a landscape feature. The 1817 map shows no evidence of any remnant earthwork where the modern excavation found the pond, although it does show an oval pond immediately west of the long rectangular building to the south of the rectory. This building is presumably the barn and stable of ‘9 bays’ recorded in the 1807 survey (GDR Gloucester Diocesan Records: King’s Stanley Terrier). This pond was infilled before the end of the 19th century, and the long barn was shortened and converted to a Coach House.

Landscape morphology

The phenomenon of polyfocal settlements was first examined in the standard work by Taylor (1977), and more recently by Aston (1985, 73-6). The incidence of polyfocal settlements in medieval England is more common than used to be thought, as often progressive infilling has tended to blend original multiple foci into one sprawling settlement. As for King’s Stanley, its medieval polyfocalism is more marked than most, with an apparent gap of some 400m between the medieval manor and church, and the established borough. The evidence from the rectory site allows some informed if tentative conclusions to be drawn.
The alignment of features, both in the existing landscape and as revealed in the archaeological excavation, show an interesting divergence over time. The early sequence of enclosures (B-E) appear to broadly respect the alignments of the properties to the south of the site, suggesting that this area may have originally been part of the mid-13th century market establishment, or even part of a putative predecessor. It is possibly significant that the present Coach House (of probable medieval origin) is also aligned in respect of this earlier arrangement. The later enclosure F across the site appear to respect the property alignments to the north along the west side of Church Street, as does the Rectory building itself. The fishpond follows the earlier alignment, although this seems to be so because it was created from an early phase boundary ditch.

The dating evidence would suggest, therefore, that the establishment of a market in the middle of the 13th century was not a brand new settlement, but possibly involved the consolidation and expansion of an existing hamlet or node of settlement at the junction of a track running south from the manor and church, and a west-east route linking Frocester, Leonard Stanley and Woodchester, running under the scarp of Selsey Common to the south.

The site later occupied by the rectory appears to have originally been laid out in respect of the prevailing boundaries of plots to the south, and may have represented the most northerly of the properties of the southern focus. The dating evidence suggests that this could well have dated to the 12th century, or even earlier.

In contrast, the orientation of the boundaries of the rectory building echo those of the properties to the north, and those on the eastern side of Church Street. It is possible therefore, that the rectory property represents a subsequent infilling of the space between the burgeoning market and the original focal point of the manor and the church.

It is also significant that the medieval plot boundaries F extended right across the site towards the stream, suggesting that for a time they denoted divisions of the pasture later known as Deacon’s Close.

**The regional context**

Gloucestershire saw significant prosperity in the 12th and 13th centuries, based largely on the burgeoning wool trade, but also on manufactured cloth (Tilley et al. 2007, 21). The location of the rectory, a considerable distance from the church, and on the northern edge of the newly founded borough, may reflect the desire of the Church to maintain some sort of ecclesiastical presence close to the new settlement.
The evidence of post-Conquest development of the settlement of King’s Stanley corresponds to the regional pattern. Its neighboring settlement Leonard Stanley also prospered into the 13th century, in this case with the benefaction of a priory set up by Gloucester Abbey. It too benefited from a weekly market set up in the 13th century. The boom in the cloth industry of the 13th and 14th centuries in the region appears not have directly benefited the market of King’s Stanley; its neighbour’s commercial fortunes seem to have been managed with much greater success, such that by 1650, Leonard Stanley was described as a ‘market town’ in a survey of church livings, while King’s Stanley was not (Herbert 1972, 253).

**Conclusion**

The northern part of King’s Stanley has benefited from extensive archaeological investigation in recent decades. The southern focus has yet to receive such attention, yet the excavations in the Rectory Meadows suggest that there could well be an equally complex narrative to be understood there.

**Acknowledgements**

The entire project was funded by Colburn Homes, to whom – in the person of Martin Evans - must go appreciation for their support and cooperation. The excavation was supervised by Jamie Wright, and the post-excavation programme was managed by Joern Schuster and Alan Hardy. Illustrations are by Lorna Gray. Alan Hardy would like to express his thanks to Peter Griffin and Carolyn Heighway for freely giving of their time and knowledge of the history and archaeology of King’s Stanley.

**Archive**

The project archive is currently held by Cotswold Archaeology. It will be duly deposited with The Museum in the Park, Stroud, Gloucestershire, under the accession number STGCM 2011.33.
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**Unpublished sources**

GDR Gloucester Diocesan Records: Glebe Terrier 1618
GDR Gloucester Diocesan Records: King’s Stanley Terrier 1807
Gloucestershire Archives. D1159, Parish Map of King’s Stanley in 1817
Table 1: Roman and medieval pottery by fabric (quantification, sherd count, weight in grams and rim EVEs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Fabric</th>
<th>Description/Reference</th>
<th>Ct.</th>
<th>Wt. (g)</th>
<th>Rim EVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVWOX2</td>
<td>Oxidised Severn Valley ware (Tomber and Dore 1998, 149)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oxidised organically-tempered Severn Valley Ware</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced organically-tempered Severn Valley ware</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DORBB1</td>
<td>Dorset Black-burnished ware 1 (Tomber and Dore 1998, 127)</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEZSA2</td>
<td>Central Gaulish samian ware (Tomber and Dore 1998, 30)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GWs</td>
<td>Sandy Greywares</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<td>GWco</td>
<td>Coarse Greyware with organic inclusions</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>REDg</td>
<td>Reduced fabric with grog inclusions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxf</td>
<td>Fine oxidised fabric</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>Sandy oxidised fabric</td>
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<td>Oxorg</td>
<td>Sandy oxidised fabric with organic inclusions</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>Oolitic_LT</td>
<td>Oolitic limestone–tempered ware (Ireland 1998)</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>6181</td>
<td>1.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIN_LT</td>
<td>Minety ware (Musty 1973)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1816</td>
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<tr>
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<td>292</td>
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<td>OXS</td>
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<td>94</td>
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<td>OXSgorg</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>OXSorg</td>
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<tr>
<td>REDS</td>
<td>Reduced (brown) sandy ware</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>WORCS</td>
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<td>Bsgo</td>
<td>Black sandy ware with grog and organic inclusions</td>
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<td>LTS</td>
<td>Limestone-tempered ware</td>
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Table 2. Identified animal species from medieval deposits by fragment count (NISP), minimum number of individuals (MNI) and weight.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Species</th>
<th>NISP</th>
<th>MNI</th>
<th>Weight (g)</th>
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<td><strong>MAMMALS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cattle (<em>Bos taurus</em>)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caprovine (<em>Ovis aries/Capra hircus</em>)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>106.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pig (<em>Sus scrofa domesticus</em>)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>56.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse (<em>Equus caballus</em>)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>383.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog (<em>Canis familiaris</em>)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large sized</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Medium sized</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>5.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indeterminable (<em>Mammalia sp.</em>)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>17.96</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3,146.38</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BIRDS</strong></td>
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<td>Fowl (<em>Gallus gallus</em>)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal:</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FISH</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream (<em>Abramis brama</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indeterminable (<em>Pisces sp.</em>)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Subtotal:</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
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<td>**TOTALS:</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,147.26</td>
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Table 3: Plant macrofossil identifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>13 60 13 57 11 05 1379 13 80</th>
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<td>Feature number</td>
<td>13 13 13 75 1375 13 75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample number</td>
<td>53 54 55 60 1379 13 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flot volume (ml)</td>
<td>2. 5 11 .5 29 0 410 19 .5</td>
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<td>Sample volume (l)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil remaining (l)</td>
<td>30 30 30 30 30 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase</td>
<td>M ed M ed M ed M ed Me d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant macrofossil preservation</td>
<td>Po or Po or Go od Go od</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat Code</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>HSW</td>
<td>Adoxaceae</td>
<td>Sambucus nigra L.</td>
<td>Elder *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Apiaceae</td>
<td>Apium nodiflorum (L.) Lag.</td>
<td>Fool's-water-cress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/D</td>
<td>Apium repens (Jacq.) Lag./Apium graveolens L.</td>
<td>Creeping marshwort/wild celery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/P</td>
<td>Asteraceae</td>
<td>Cirsium Mill./Carduus L.</td>
<td>Thistles *</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSW</td>
<td>Betulaceae</td>
<td>Corylus avellana L.</td>
<td>Hazelnut *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW</td>
<td>Ceratophyllaceae</td>
<td>Ceratophyllum demersum L.</td>
<td>Rigid hornwort *</td>
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<tr>
<td>M/D</td>
<td>Cyperaceae</td>
<td>Carex L.</td>
<td>Sedges *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/A/P</td>
<td>Fabaceae</td>
<td>Vicia L./Lathyrus L.</td>
<td>Vetches/vetchlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Malvaceae</td>
<td>Malva L.</td>
<td>Mallows *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
<td>Avena L.</td>
<td>Oats grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Hordeum vulgare</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hulled barley grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
<td>Triticum aestivum L./Triticum Turgidum L./Triticum durum Dest.</td>
<td>Free-threshing wheat grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Poaceae</td>
<td>Indeterminate cereal grain</td>
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<tr>
<td>D/A/P/M</td>
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<td>Rumex L.</td>
<td>Docks</td>
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<tr>
<td>D/A/P/M</td>
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<td>Rumex L.</td>
<td>Docks *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Potamogetonaceae</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Ranunculaceae</td>
<td>Ranunculus L.</td>
<td>Buttercups *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW</td>
<td>Rosaceae</td>
<td>Crataegus monogyna Jacq.</td>
<td>Hawthorn *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW/D</td>
<td>Rubus L.</td>
<td>Bramble spp *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW/D</td>
<td>Rubus L.</td>
<td>Bramble thorns *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW/D</td>
<td>Rubus L.</td>
<td>Bramble twigs with thorns *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW/D</td>
<td>Rubus sect. 2 Glandulosus Winn. &amp; Grab. (Rubus fruticosus L. agg.)</td>
<td>Bramble (blackberry) *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/D</td>
<td>Solanum L.</td>
<td>Nightshades *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key
* = waterlogged
+ = 1-4 items
++ = 6-20 items
+++ = 21-40 items
++++ = >40 items
A = arable weed; D = weed indicative of disturbed areas; P = grassland/pasture weed; M = marsh/wetland species; HSW = hedgerow/scrub/woodland species; E = economic species

Total 1 6 8 4 29 5 720 plus >500 bramble thorns
Table 4: Charcoal and waterlogged wood identifications

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context number</th>
<th>1360</th>
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<th>1105</th>
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<td>1375</td>
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<td>Sample number</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight volume (ml)</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample volume (l)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil remaining (l)</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charcoal quantity</td>
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<td>++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>++ (s)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Number of Fragments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betulaceae</td>
<td>Alnus glutinosa (L.) / Corylus avellana L.</td>
<td>Alder/hazel</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Betula L.</td>
<td>Birch</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fagacea</td>
<td>Fagus L.</td>
<td>Beech</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quercus robur L./ Quercus petraea (Matt.) Liebl.</td>
<td>Pedunculate/sessile oak</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosacea</td>
<td>Rubus L.</td>
<td>Bramble twigs with thorns *</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Fragments: 66 100 0 12 0

Key
* = waterlogged
+ = 1-4 items
++ = 6-20 items
+++ = 21-40 items
++++ = >40 items
(s) = charcoal fragments typically too small to identify
Figure list

Figure 1 – Site location (scale 1:1250)

Figure 2 – Detail of Rectory and Deacon's Close from 1817 Parish Map (Gloucestershire Archives D1159) Scale 1:1250 approx)

Figure 3 – Phase plan of site including distribution of medieval pottery and fired clay

Figure 4 – Stone lined drain (1138)

Figure 5 – Stamped ARVERI tile

Figure 6 - Pottery
Fig. 1 Site location (scale 1:1250)
Fig. 2  Detail of Rectory and Deacon’s Close from 1817 Parish Map (Gloucestershire Archives D1159) (scale 1:1250 approx.)
site
- limestone-tempered ware (11th – 13th century)
- Minety ware (13th century)
- fired clay/daub
- Malvernian ware (13th – 14th century)

Fig. 3 Phase plan (scale 1:500)
Fig. 4  Stone-lined channel 1138, looking south-west (scales 1m and 0.3m)
Fig. 5  Roman tiles showing maker’s stamp ARVERI (scale 1:2)
Fig. 6 Medieval pottery (scale 1:4)