

Roads to the Past
The Archaeology of Thornton le Street

Fieldwalking Report



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Fieldwalking Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Project Overview	2
2. Description of the Project Area	3
2.1 Geology	3
2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background	3
3. Fieldwalking Results	7
3.1 Method	7
3.2 Field 1	7
3.3 Field 2	9
3.4 Field 3	11
3.5 Field 4	13
3.6 Field 5	15
3.7 Field 6	16
3.8 Field 7	18
4. Fieldwalking Results in Context	20
4.1 The Pottery Assemblage	20
4.2 Lithics	20
4.3 Animal Bone	21
4.4 Overall Patterns and Density	21
5. Sources	23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Project volunteers undertaking fieldwalking in Field 3 to the north-west of Thornton-le-Street.....	2
Figure 2 Location of fields walked during the project.....	6
Figure 3 1843 tithe map showing Field 1.....	8
Figure 4 1845 tithe map showing Field 2.....	10
Figure 5 1910 Ordnance Survey map showing Field 2.....	10
Figure 6 1845 tithe map showing Fields 3–5.....	12
Figure 7 1843 tithe map showing Fields 6 and 7.....	17

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Breakdown of finds from Field 1.....	9
Table 2 Breakdown of finds from Field 2.....	11
Table 3 Breakdown of finds from Field 3.....	13
Table 4 Breakdown of finds from Field 4.....	15
Table 5 Breakdown of finds from Field 5.....	16
Table 6 Breakdown of finds from Field 6.....	18
Table 7 Breakdown of finds from Field 7.....	19
Table 8 Density of medieval pottery by field.....	20
Table 9 Lithic densities by field.....	21
Table 10 Total finds and overall finds by field.....	22



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The *Roads to the Past* (RTTP) project was a National Lottery Heritage Fund volunteer community archaeology and history project, run as a partnership between the Thornton-le-Street History Group and Solstice Heritage. Two seasons of archaeological fieldwalking were undertaken from 2017–2018. The first season during 2017 covered an area of five fields around Thornton-le-Street and to the north-west of Thirsk. The second season in 2018 was necessary to complete the survey of Field 1 and also included project volunteers undertaking fieldwalking on a sixth field, close to the moated site at Moat Farm. A seventh field was also sampled by project volunteers, though it was not possible to gather spatial data. This field has been included in the overall discussion but does not have distribution or density plots.

This report presents a rapid overview of the locations walked and a basic quantification of the finds recovered. It is intended that this will serve as a basis for future analysis of the dataset—and indeed further fieldwalking in the local area—by the project volunteers. To this end, the full dataset has been supplied along with this report to provide a foundation for more detailed work.



Figure 1 Project volunteers undertaking fieldwalking in Field 3 to the north-west of Thornton-le-Street

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA

2.1 GEOLOGY

The village of Thornton-le-Street sits within the 'Vale of Mowbray' National Character Area (NCA). This area is characterised by low-lying, gently undulating flood plains associated with the River Swale and its tributaries, the River Whiske and Cod Beck. It occupies the area of lowland between the North York Moors to the east and the Yorkshire Dales to the west, making it a main route running north to south throughout the past and into the present day, with the existing A1 following roughly the same line as that of the Roman Dere Street (NE 2015, 3, 5). It extends from Ripon and the Vale of York in the south to the Tees basin in the north.

The specific underlying geology of Thornton-le-Street comprises mudstone of the Redcar Mudstone Formation. The superficial deposits within the site are mapped as clay, sandy, and gravelly deposits of the Vale of York Formation as well as free-draining sand and gravel river terrace deposits (BGS 2017), which provide a naturally fertile landscape. The topographic character of the local area has played a key role in the settlement and activity that took place within the Vale of Mowbray since c. 12500 BP (before present), with the retreat of the last glaciers. This complex sequence of sand and gravel terraces, glacial till (boulder clay) and Holocene alluvium, cut through by the dominant rivers and tributaries, forms part of the deglaciated landscape seen today, which includes landforms such as moraines, eskers and drumlins, typical of this type of landform. The accessible nature of the broad valleys, combined with fertile land, would have attracted settlers and human activity throughout prehistory and history.

The most prominent local topographic features are the Yorkshire Dales to the west, the North York Moors to the east and the washlands of the Rivers Swale and Ure in the centre of the Vale. The Cod Beck, one of the tributaries of the River Swale, is situated immediately to the east of the village, contributing to the combination of loamey and clayey soil with impeded drainage and floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater found in the immediate area. The generally flat landscape of Thornton-le-Street and the surrounding area is in part due to its proximity to Cod Beck, which, having been a larger river during deglaciation, carried much of the meltwater from the Vale of York ice lobe into a lake (Bridgland *et al.* 2011, 51). It should be noted, however, that many of the projected lines for the Roman road within this landscape, and the village of Thornton-le-Street itself, sits slightly higher, on the flanks of the low ridge to the west of the Cod Beck.

2.2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 PREHISTORY

The earliest people in the Vale of Mowbray moved through the landscape in the Mesolithic period or Middle Stone Age, re-colonising the post-glacial tundra. This would have generally consisted of settlers living a mobile hunter-gatherer subsistence lifestyle, although sedentism increased over the course of the next millennia. This recognition of Mesolithic 'persistent places' is providing a more nuanced picture of how the landscape was settled and used. A significant amount of flint assemblages has been discovered in this area, including those at Little Holtby, comprising an assemblage of Early Mesolithic flint microliths, and at Topcliffe near Thirsk, where a flint assemblage including large blades and shouldered points was recovered (Bridgland *et al.* 2011, 211–212). Such finds provide some evidence for greater mobility along the Swale throughout the Mesolithic and Early to Middle Neolithic than previously thought (Harding 2013, 188).

The Neolithic, or New Stone Age, began around 3900 BC with a fundamental cultural shift towards sedentary and agricultural subsistence introduced by seafaring immigrants from the Low Countries and Brittany, accompanied by a distinctive cultural package which included the earliest ceramics and new lithic technology. This new worldview resulted in the modification and delineation of the environment in new ways and in the creation of the first great monuments of prehistory. Although the majority of Early Neolithic activity in the lowlands of the Vale of Mowbray is characterised by scattered artefact assemblages, the great henges of Thornborough and the Devil's Arrows, a series of standing stones in Boroughbridge, represent considerable Later Neolithic settlement and activity (Harding 2013). These large communal monuments and their counterparts throughout the region suggest the development of a centralised 'society' with its own complex systems of ritual and social interaction.

Through the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age which followed, human activity in the lowlands is poorly represented in the archaeological record when compared to more upland areas, such as the North York Moors and the Pennines. By the time of the introduction of metal-working to Britain from the continent in the mid- to late 3rd millennium BC, burial traditions had changed to encompass the raising of small broadly circular cairns over places where inhumations, and later cremations, were placed. Although scattered, evidence has been uncovered for the tradition of barrow burial and cremation practices in the lowlands despite the majority of such sites having been flattened by later agricultural practices.

From the later Bronze Age and Iron Age—a period covering the 1st millennium BC—the Vale of Mowbray was likely a heavily settled and farmed landscape, as there is aerial photographic evidence of field systems and associated settlements just to the south in the Vale of York (Roberts 2010). Large infrastructure projects, such as the widening of the A1 from Dishforth to Leeming, yielded substantial Iron Age remains along the route of what would later become Roman Dere Street (Ambrey *et al.* 2011). Near the Vale of Mowbray, a greater proportion of features are still at least partially extant in the present day, particularly in the uncultivated areas of the uplands which flank the Vale. Although still enigmatic, the stone-founded enclosures and roundhouses of late prehistoric settlement are perhaps the first type of archaeological site familiar to the modern observer, precursors to the farmsteads and smallholdings of historical periods. Examples of larger Iron Age monuments are scattered along the west and north ridges of the Hambleton Hills, most notably Roulston Scar (NHLE 1015502), one of the largest hillforts in Britain, which dates to approximately 400 BC (Historic England 2018). Along with the nearby Bolton Scar, these forts are associated with the Cleave Dyke, an Iron Age system of boundaries dividing the landscape, making them significant sites in terms of understanding the Iron Age Vale and its development over time (*ibid.*).

2.2.2 FIRST MILLENNIUM AD

The Romans first came to the North East with Petilius Cerialis' military campaign in the early AD 70s which overpowered Brigantian leadership. Throughout Britain, evidence for the native and rural populations of Roman Britain is scarce. The Vale of Mowbray itself, however, formed part of the major north-south route along Dere Street, following roughly the course of the modern A1. More pertinent to the investigations at Thornton le Street is the proposed route of Cade's Road, named after 18th-century antiquarian John Cade. The proposed route of the road began at Brough-on-Humber, running northwards and westwards through York before heading north through Thornton le Street, east of Northallerton and ultimately crossing the Tees into County Durham. There has been a long-standing history of investigation into this possible Roman Road, and a substantial exploration of the possible routes in and around Thornton-le-Street is presented in the project excavation report (Brightman *et al.* 2019).

By the AD 500s, this region formed part of the medieval Anglian kingdom of Deira. Through the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods of the mid-to late first millennium AD, Deira and the neighbouring kingdom of Bernicia became part of the kingdom of Northumbria, united and ruled under King Aethelfrith. The kingdom was eventually divided with the establishment of the Danelaw following the Viking invasions of the 9th century.

2.2.3 MEDIEVAL

The village itself, first mentioned in Domesday Book as Torentun, was clearly established before the Norman Conquest and developed throughout the medieval period, with much of the remains of the medieval settlement around the modern village now designated as a scheduled monument (NHLE 1018853). Included within the boundary of the monument are earthworks, buried remains of the medieval village, and some remains of the mill.

Through the course of the *Roads to the Past* project excavations and earthwork survey have demonstrated that the surviving earthworks are at the northern end of the medieval village and include a row of toft-and-croft properties facing on to the axial road. These properties were an extension to the core of the earlier settlement, which probably clustered around the Church of St Leonard, as the village prospered, seemingly in the 13th and 14th centuries. Extensive evidence of arable agriculture was found in the survival of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing, the documentary records of at least one medieval mill and the recovery of bread wheat, rivet wheat, barley and oats from one of the excavation trenches. A full discussion of medieval Thornton-le-Street in its landscape context has been given in the project excavation report (Brightman *et al.* 2019).

2.2.4 POST-MEDIEVAL TO MODERN

Following a period of decline in the later medieval period, the village of Thornton-le-Street did not completely disappear like many other depopulated rural settlements. The continued presence of a manor and church, and the construction or rebuilding of both the Old Hall show that the settlement not only continued but supported many of the 'trappings' of such places. The road running through the village itself was moved, although its medieval, and possibly earlier, roots were retained with the linear nature of development. First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping shows that in 1853, there was some residential development along the eastern side of the road to the west and north of St Leonard's Church and the associated vicarage. To the north-west of the settlement, beyond the causeway and remains of the medieval settlement, a corn mill dating to the 17th century in its earliest form on that site still stands. By 1892, the Ordnance Survey map shows the vicarage had moved further north and a village school had been built, suggesting that there was demand for education given population of the time.

The post-medieval and industrial periods saw a significant transformation of the countryside. The changing nature of society after the medieval period, with feudalism became rapidly less important and the aggregation of people to urban centres, also saw the concentration of formerly common land into the hands of fewer landowners. Coupled with a drive for agricultural improvement, particularly through the 18th and 19th centuries, much of the land started to become enclosed. This resulted in the creation of large, regular fields, often straight roads and a landscape of dispersed farmsteads which had moved away from their historical village setting. Within the vicinity of the Thornton-le-Street this movement towards aggregation of larger, regular fields can be seen in the historical mapping. The development of the different fields walked through the course of this project is explored in more detail below.



3. FIELDWALKING RESULTS

3.1 METHOD

All the fields were walked by a team of volunteers, with Fields 1–5 also accompanied by Jim Brightman of Solstice Heritage. The fieldwalking was undertaken in transects 5 m apart, with baselines set out with ranging rods to ensure regularity. This methodology is based on the premise that 2 m transects result in a 100% recovery rate, and it therefore follows that 5 m transects result in a representative sample of 40% of surface finds. For the calculation of finds densities presented below, the number of recovered finds has been multiplied by 2.5 to achieve a 'notional number of finds' for the total field area, and this has then been used to calculate number of finds per hectare. This allows for comparison with other fieldwalking to assess the prevalence and density of finds recovered during this project.

All small finds were marked with survey flags by the team walking and their position was then recorded with GPS to sub-1 m accuracy. Each small find was given a unique identifying number (UID) which was recorded on the finds bag and onto the GPS to ensure data concordance. The recovery strategy included all small finds except for modern CBM and recent pottery smaller than a ten pence piece. Following fieldwork, all small finds were cleaned and a rapid cataloguing was undertaken. GPS data was downloaded, cleaned and the basic catalogue data was attached using QGIS. This dataset has been supplied along with this report to form the basis for future detailed assessment where possible.

3.2 FIELD 1

3.2.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 1 lies on the north-west outskirts of Thirsk, facing onto Newsham Road and between the racecourse and the cemetery (SE 42225 82419). It covers a total area of 5.52 ha. The field sits at the southern end of the ridge of higher ground that is to the west of the Cod Beck. The underlying geology is defined by glaciofluvial sand and gravel, and the west, south and east of the higher 'peninsula' of land is dominated by sands and glaciolacustrine (former wetland) deposits. Although the chronology is poorly defined, this would have been a tip of well-drained higher ground with marsh or carr-land around for a considerable period of time.

3.2.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

The area of Field 1 is visible on the 1843 tithe map, though at this point the area of Field 1 and the more recent cemetery is divided into four separate narrow plots. The overall shape of the fields in this area preserve the characteristic reverse 's' of medieval ploughing, illustrating the long-term agricultural nature of the land. The ends of the medieval fields align on Newsham Road, also demonstrating that this was at least a medieval routeway, if not earlier. According to the schedule accompanying the tithe map, the plots comprising Field 1 was owned by John Bell Esquire, presumably a forebear of the current owner. All the plots which would later comprise Field 1 were. Plot 583, the southernmost strip adjacent to what is now Cemetery Road, was tenanted by John Pick and was named as 'Foot Road Close' comprising grass pasture. Plot 582 was a small enclosure at the western end of this field described as 'Rickyard'. Moving north across the strip fields from Plot 583, Plot 584 was tenanted by Thomas Holliday, owner of the Black Bull Inn. This was also described as grass pasture and was called 'Gravel Hole Close', suggesting a nearby gravel extraction pit. Plot 585 supports this, being named 'Gravel Hole Field'. It was tenanted by Jane Andrew, who also tenanted 19 other plots of land around Thirsk and was recorded as the owner of the Three Tuns Hotel. Finally, Plot 586 was the only arable plot at this point, also named as 'Wheat Field'. It was tenanted by George Stainthorpe.

The boundary layout within what would become Field 1 is the same on the 1st Edition OS mapping, surveyed in 1853. Some additional detail is visible from the tithe map, including a small barn to the south-east corner of the area, now inside the grounds of the cemetery. In addition, a series of gravel pits are shown to the east of Wellands Lane, possibly the origin of the earlier field names. By the time of the 1891–1892 mapping, the cemetery has been begun, putting in place what is now the eastern boundary of the field. Between 1956 and 1968, the cemetery was expanded to the north and most of the internal boundaries were removed, creating the outline of Field 1 which exists today.

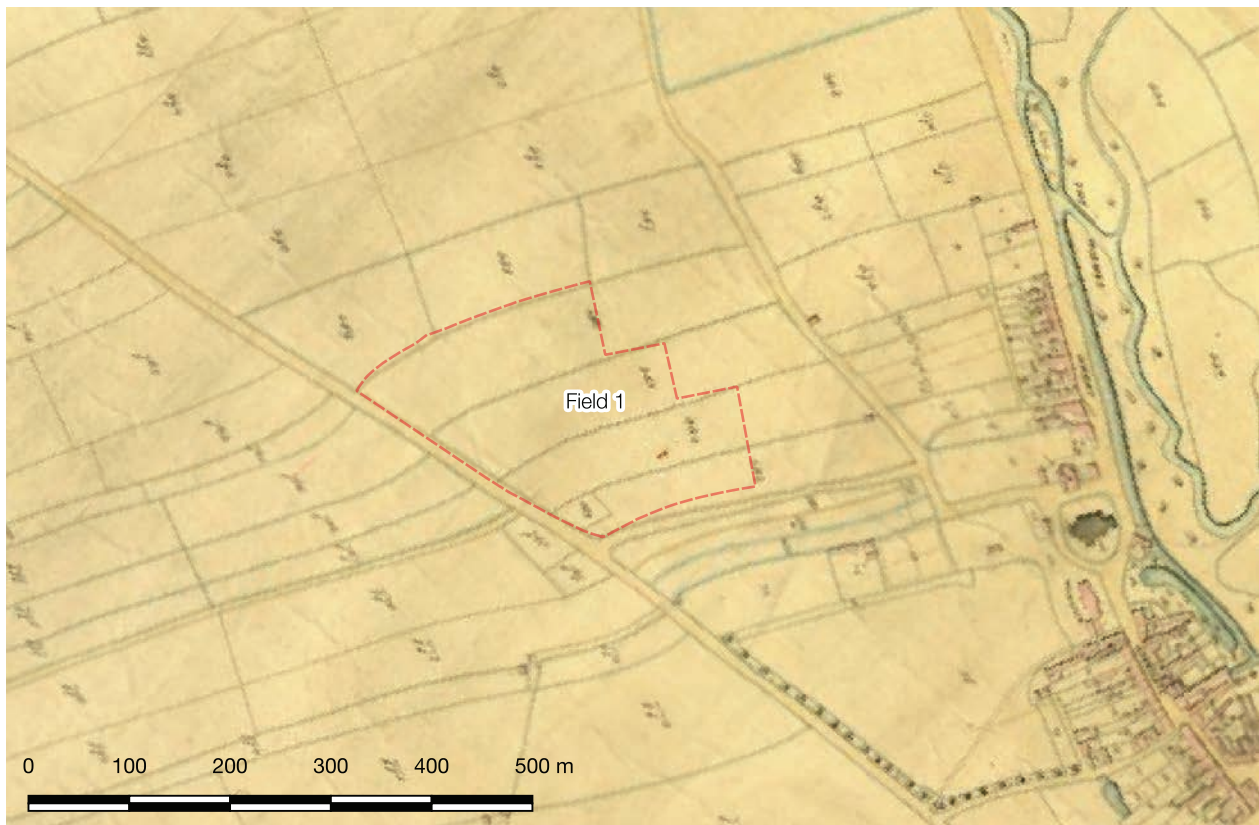


Figure 3 1843 tithe map showing Field 1

3.2.3 FINDS

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). In terms of Field 1, a large and diverse assemblage of 609 sherds was recovered, split between early modern and recent in date and with a notable medieval component. Medieval wares examined include Buff Sandy ware, Tees Valley B and B/C wares and some Reduced Greenware. In addition, a small component of late medieval Green Glazed Sandy ware was noted. A small amount of Tin Glazed Earthenware, Cistercian Ware and Yellow ware represented the late medieval to early post-medieval period, and from the 18th century onwards there was a substantial assemblage of White Salt Glazed Earthenware, Creamware, Pearlware as well as other more utilitarian wares. In terms of distribution, the medieval pottery is relatively well spread across the field. The post-medieval and early modern to modern pottery is also well spread, though there is a slight concentration towards the central band. This is discussed in more detail below in relation to other find types.

Glass

A total of 211 sherds of glass was recovered from Field 1. Rapid analysis suggested this was a largely post-medieval to modern assemblage, with some definitively modern pieces. A large concentration was notable towards the centre-east of the field, though the finds were relatively well-spread across the whole area walked.

Clay Pipe

A total of 422 fragments of clay pipe was recovered from Field 1, representing a considerably higher density than any of the other areas walked during the project. The vast majority of pieces recovered were broken stem fragments with only one intact mouthpiece (Find 970). Local manufacture was evident with some stamps noted, including Find 1327 marked with 'Hall Ripon'. As with the glass finds, Field 1 has a notable concentration of clay pipe along the central east-west band of the field equating to the centre two plots of land visible on the early mapping. This suggests that despite all the plots being pasture in 1843, for much of the preceding two centuries at least the two central plots were under arable cultivation.

Metal

Six pieces of metalworking slag, potentially relating to localised cottage industries, were recovered from Field 1, alongside 19 other metal objects. The metal finds recovered indicate agricultural activity, for example large horseshoes. Slightly less usual objects were also found, including an engine part with lettering reading 'Crabtree Patented' and dateable to approximately 1930. Although a small sample, the distribution of metal finds followed that of the other small finds, concentrating in the former two central plots of the field.

3.2.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

Field 1 has, by a comfortable margin, the greatest number of small finds from any of the fields walked through the course of the project. In terms of general breakdown of finds, the high proportion of medieval pottery and clay pipe is significant in indicating a continued arable agriculture from the time of the creation of the strip fields through into the 17th and 18th centuries. The significant assemblage and concentration of clay pipe in particular suggests the spreading of waste material from potentially a collective source.

Field 1			Area (ha):	5.52
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	417	1042.5	26.85	188.86
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	192	480	12.36	86.96
Lithics	241	602.5	15.52	109.15
Glass	212	530	13.65	96.01
Clay pipe	423	1057.5	27.24	191.58
Metal	25	62.5	1.61	11.32
Animal bone	33	82.5	2.12	14.95
Miscellaneous	10	25	0.64	4.53
TOTAL	1553	3882.5	100.00	703.35

Table 1 Breakdown of finds from Field 1

3.3 FIELD 2

3.3.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 2 lies to the south-east of Thornton-le-Street, behind a garage and abutting the A168 (SE 41524 86077). It covers a total area of 5.52 ha. The field sits on the flatter terraces to the west of the Cod Beck and sheltered to the west by the ridge of high ground which runs north to south down this side of the Vale. The underlying geology is defined by well-drained glaciofluvial sands and gravels on the first terrace immediately above the Cod Beck floodplain. Given the spread of alluvium encountered during the excavations (see Brightman *et al.* 2019) it is likely that this field has also been periodically flooded. This is reinforced by the UKSO soil mapping which notes both 'loamy and clayey floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater' and 'slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils' (UKSO 2019).

3.3.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

On the 1845 tithe map for the area, Field 2 is shown close to its modern form. The north-east boundary, defined by the Cod Beck, has meandered slightly in the 150 years since, and a section has been claimed along the north-west end to accommodate the extension of the village and the construction of the garage. Otherwise, it is as shown. According to the tithe apportionment, Field 2 was part of the extensive estate around the village owned by Baronet Sir Samuel Crompton and was tenanted by Thomas Wilkinson. This was identified as plot 107 and was recorded as a grass field with no specific name. By the time of the 1853 1st Edition OS mapping, the route of the Cod Beck follows its modern meanders, and it is likely that the tithe map is just a simplification of this route. The only other information included on historical mapping is a large gravel extraction pit shown in the east corner of the field on the 1892 and 1910 OS mapping.



Figure 4 1845 tithe map showing Field 2

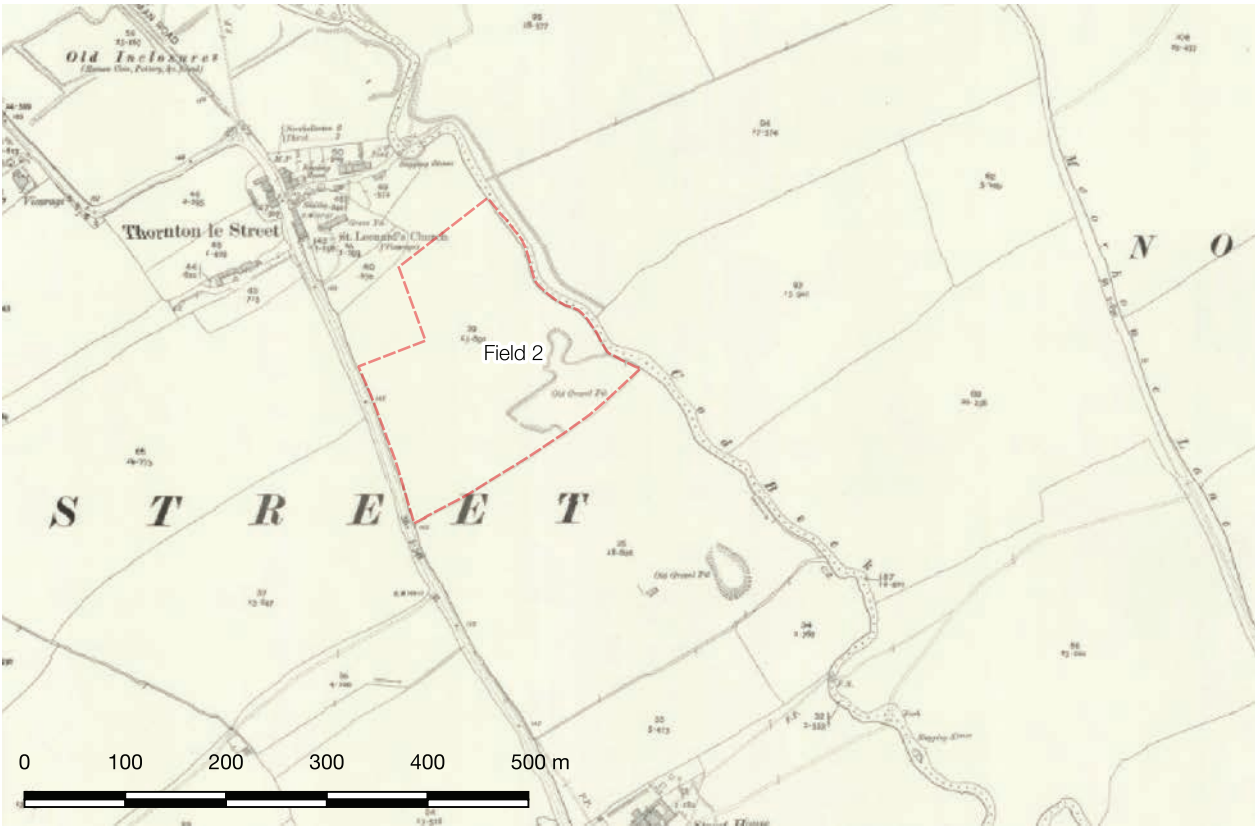


Figure 5 1910 Ordnance Survey map showing Field 2

3.3.3 FINDS

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). In terms of Field 2, a small, mixed assemblage of 20 sherds was recovered, comprising some medieval wares (Reduced Greenware, an early piece of 12th- to 13th-century Gritty ware and a possible sherd of Tees Valley B ware) and a selection of typical Early Modern table and utilitarian wares. There was no discernible patterning to the pottery recovered.

Glass

Nine sherds of glass were recovered from Field 2, representing up to five vessels. This figure was calculated due to similarities within the metric measurements, colour variations and the form of the sherds. In general, the glass finds were concentrated towards the centre and south-west closer to the road, though the assemblage is small enough to not be statistically meaningful.

3.3.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

Field 2 has a relatively small overall assemblage, notably so in comparison to some of the other fields (see below). The greater proportion of the assemblage was split between medieval pottery and lithics, comprising roughly a third of the recovered finds each.

Field 2			Area (ha):	4.49
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	16	40	35.56	8.91
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	4	10	8.89	2.23
Lithics	15	37.5	33.33	8.35
Glass	9	22.5	20.00	5.01
Clay pipe	0	0	0.00	0.00
Metal	0	0	0.00	0.00
Animal bone	1	2.5	2.22	0.56
Miscellaneous	0	0	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	45	112.5	100.00	25.06

Table 2 Breakdown of finds from Field 2

3.4 FIELD 3

3.4.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 3 is one of a group of three adjacent fields in a block to the north-west of Thornton-le-Street and west of the A168 (SE 40604 86792). Field 3 covers a total area of 11.01 ha. The field covers a band of the east-facing ridge to the west of the Cod Beck, stretching from the 60 m contour close to the apex down to the 50 m contour by the road. The underlying superficial geology comprises Vale of York formation, which forms much of the higher ridge. It is predominantly diamicton (glacial till, also sometimes still called boulder clay) with interbedded sands and gravels (BGS 2019).

3.4.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

On the 1845 tithe map for the area Field 3 is divided across three plots, all owned by Baronet Sir Samuel Crompton. Plot 80, closest to the road to the east, was tenanted by Thomas Peacock and was described as a 'pasture adjoining Road'. Plot 79 is a large, irregular field which was tenanted by James Saddler. The modern track separating Fields 3 and 4 is shown as a path across the centre of Plot 79, which is noted as being grass pasture

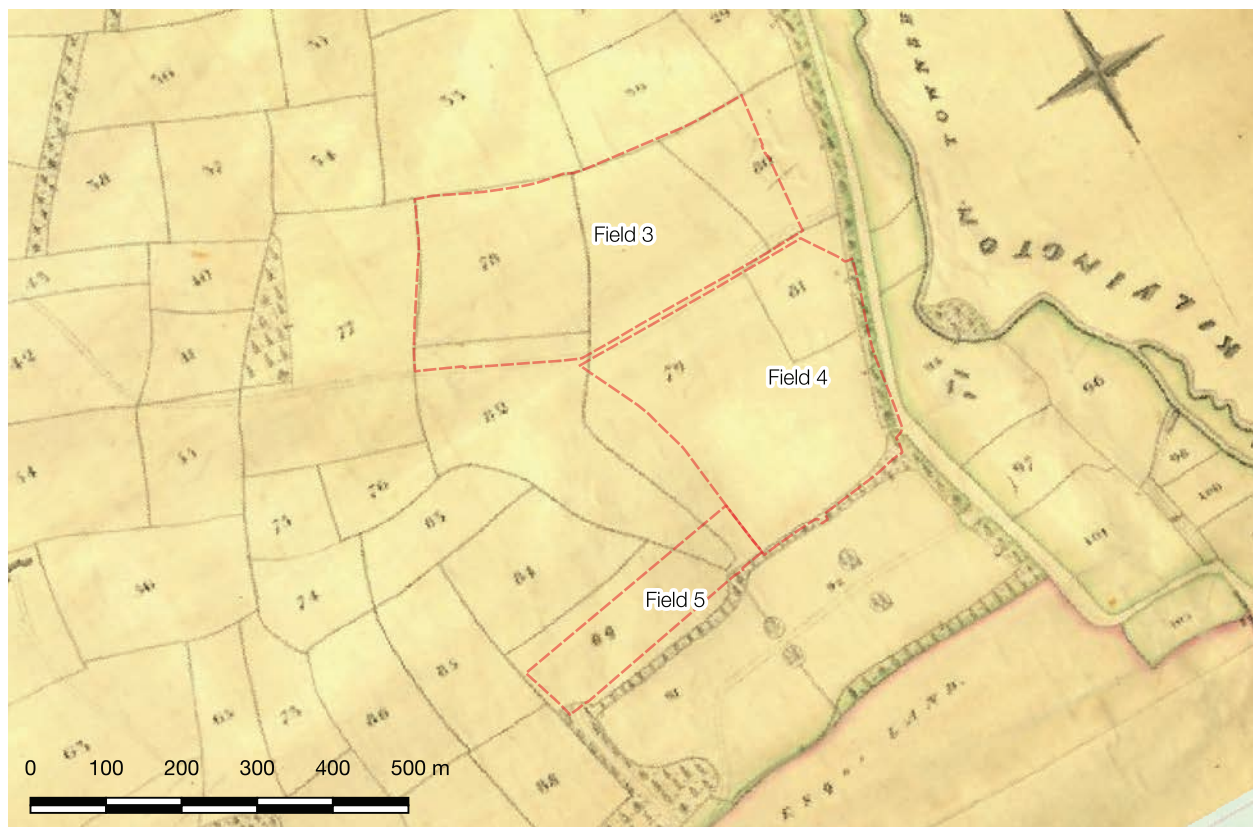


Figure 6 1845 tithe map showing Fields 3–5

and named 'Newland'. Plot 78, at the western end of Field 3 near the top of the ridge, is also tenanted by James Saddler but is under arable crop at this time. It is given the name 'Little Otterington Gates'.

By the time of the 1853 1st Edition OS mapping, the southern and east boundaries of Field 3 have been set with fencelines, and the separated plot at the east end has been divided into three smaller paddocks. A small stable or hemmel is shown on the eastern boundary which still survives today, albeit semi-ruinous. A path crosses the centre of the field, linking the track shown on the tithe map with, ultimately, Hill Top Farm to the north. The eastern boundary of Field 3 was moved to its current location before 1930, though the western end remained a separate field until later in the 20th century.

3.4.3 FINDS

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). In terms of Field 3, the assemblage of 365 sherds comprised predominantly post-medieval, early modern and modern wares with a smaller number (80) of medieval sherds. The medieval portion of the assemblage comprised 12th- to 13th-century Gritty ware, Buff Sandy ware, Gritty ware and Tees Valley ware (all of a similar date), 13th- to 14th-century Tees Valley B and B/C ware, 14th- to 15th-century Reduced Greenware and some predominantly 16th-century Late Medieval Sandy ware. There is a general trend in all the pottery recovered to be concentrated towards the eastern end of the modern field. This could be related to the earlier arrangement of smaller plots but is perhaps more likely to be due to the local topography and the slow movement of material downhill with the dominant direction of ploughing.

Glass

An assemblage of 50 sherds of glass were recovered from Field 3. The majority of the glass appears to be early modern in origin, with evidence including mould lines and tooling marks noted. A smaller percentage of the assemblage may have been mouth-blown, though the relatively fragmentary nature of many of the sherds makes definitive identification difficult. There is a greater density of glass noted from the eastern side of the field, again

potentially representing the downward movement of material over time. In addition, there is a general trend towards centre-south of the field, closer to the trackway.

Clay Pipe

Field 3 had twelve fragments of clay pipe recovered, eight of those being stem and four being bowl fragments. Although only a small assemblage, the pattern of recovery shows a preference for the centre-east of the field, following the line of an earlier footpath shown on the 1st Edition OS mapping. This suggests that, unlike the dense assemblage of clay pipe in Field 1, the Field 3 assemblage represents chance loss or discard.

Metal

Only four pieces of metalwork were recovered from the field, all relating to chance discard or loss from agricultural machinery or fixtures. In addition, three small pieces of metal slag were recovered, though the size of the assemblage is too small to make any definite conclusions.

3.4.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

Field 2 has a relatively small overall assemblage, notably so in comparison to some of the other fields (see below). The greater proportion of the assemblage was split between medieval pottery and lithics, comprising roughly a third of the recovered finds each.

Field 3			Area (ha):	11.01
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	80	200	17.35	18.17
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	285	712.5	61.82	64.71
Lithics	17	42.5	3.69	3.86
Glass	50	125	10.85	11.35
Clay pipe	12	30	2.60	2.72
Metal	7	17.5	1.52	1.59
Animal bone	9	22.5	1.95	2.04
Miscellaneous	1	2.5	0.22	0.23
TOTAL	461	1152.5	100.00	104.68

Table 3 Breakdown of finds from Field 3

3.5 FIELD 4

3.5.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 4 is one of a group of three adjacent fields in a block to the north-west of Thornton-le-Street and west of the A168 (SE 40749 86557). Field 4 covers a total area of 9.57 ha. The field has a parallelogram form and covers a platform or area of higher ground on the east-facing slope of the ridge to the west of the Cod Beck. The underlying superficial geology is predominantly Vale of York formation—diamicton (glacial till, also sometimes still called boulder clay) with interbedded sands and gravels (BGS 2019). To the south-west edge of the field, the land dips down into a localised depression filled with glaciolacustrine clays, showing the location of a post-glacial pond.

3.5.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

On the 1845 tithe map for the area Field 4 is divided across two plots, both owned by Baronet Sir Samuel Crompton. Plot 79 is a large, irregular field which was tenanted by James Saddler. The modern track separating Fields 3 and 4 is shown as a path across the centre of Plot 79, which is noted as being grass pasture and named 'Newland'. Plot 81 is a small subdivision of Plot 79, recorded as arable at the time of the survey and described

as 'stubble adjoining road'. The separation between the two plots is also shown on the 1st Edition OS mapping, surveyed in 1853, as are a pair of footpaths running from the road access in the east corner of the main field north-west and west-north-west respectively to join the central track. By the time of the 1892 mapping, the fields have been combined to form the shape which modern Field 4 has, though a scattering of trees are still shown preserving the former internal boundaries.

3.5.3 FINDS

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). The assemblage of 362 sherds from Field 4 comprised a large medieval group including 12th- to 13th century Gritty wares and 13th- to 14th-century Tees Valley A, B and B/C wares though no Reduced Greenware. It included a small group of recent wares. Post-medieval and early modern wares were notably rare although Cistercian ware and Tin Glazed Earthenware were noted. Recent wares in the assemblage included Yellow Glazed Coarseware and a small amount of Transfer-printed Whiteware. The distribution of the medieval pottery has a few interesting characteristics. The finds are relatively well distributed across the entirety of Field 4 with the exception of a triangular section along the north-west boundary. This suggests the possibility that the medieval field shape was slightly different, with its northern boundary on a different alignment. Similarly, the comparison between the distribution and densities of Fields 3 and 4 shows a clear concentration in Field 4, indicating the intensity of arable agriculture in the fields closer to the north and west of Thornton-le-Street. The later pottery is concentrated in a rough line from the north to the south corners of the field. This does not equate to any known footpath shown on historical mapping, but it does suggest a greater level of arable agriculture in the smaller paddock to the north shown on the tithe and early OS maps.

Glass

Nine sherds of predominantly early modern and modern glass were recovered from Field 4, with at least two possibly part of the same machine-tooled and moulded vessel. There is a slight bias in distribution towards the footpaths shown crossing the field on historical mapping, though the assemblage is too small to draw any definite conclusions.

Clay Pipe

Field 4 had only three fragments of clay pipe recovered: two bowl fragments and one stem. Although very little can be gleaned from such a small assemblage, the pattern of recovery broadly mirrors that from Trench 3 in following the line of an earlier footpath shown on the 1st Edition OS mapping.

Metal

Three pieces of metalwork and one piece of metal slag were recovered from Field 5, representing chance loss of discard most likely from agricultural machinery.

3.5.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

More so than any other field walked, Field 4 represented a focus of medieval activity. Even though a larger total assemblage was recovered from Field 1, this is in an area on the edge of a large town. The density of medieval pottery from Field 4 is close to that of Field 1, and it has to be assumed that the proximity of the medieval settlement at Thornton-le-Street is the cause.

Field 4			Area (ha):	9.57
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	246	865	84.39	90.39
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	16	40	3.90	4.18
Lithics	32	80	7.80	8.36
Glass	9	22.5	2.20	2.35
Clay pipe	3	7.5	0.73	0.78
Metal	3	7.5	0.73	0.78
Animal bone	1	2.5	0.24	0.26
Miscellaneous	0	0	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	410	1025	100.00	107.11

Table 4 Breakdown of finds from Field 4

3.6 FIELD 5

3.6.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 5 is one of a group of three roughly adjacent fields in a block to the north-west of Thornton-le-Street and west of the A168 (SE 40627 86365). Field 5 covers a total area of 5.18 ha, though given time constraints only 2.70 ha was walked in a strip along the south-east boundary. The field is on the east-facing slope of the ridge to the west of the Cod Beck. The western upslope portion of the field lies on Vale of York formation—diamicton (glacial till, also sometimes still called boulder clay) with interbedded sands and gravels (BGS 2019). The north-east end of the field dips down into a localised depression filled with glaciolacustrine clays, showing the location of a post-glacial pond.

3.6.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

The area of Field 5 which was walked is shown on the 1845 tithe map as being most a narrow field (Plot 89) to the north of the approach to Wood End. It also incorporates a small piece of Plot 79 (see description of Field 4 above) and part of an irregular field which covers the area of former wetland (Plot 82). All the land is owned by Baronet Sir Samuel Crompton and tenanted by James Saddler. The main area of Field 5 is given the name 'North High Grass Lands' and is described as grass pasture, while the narrow section of Plot 82 is given the name 'Great and Little Carr', confirming the continued presence of wetland. This division of plots is also shown on the 1st Edition OS mapping in 1853, though by this point a long drainage channel is shown running through the centre of the carr, across the Wood Hall grounds and ultimately canalised into the Cod Beck to the north-east of Street House Farm. The boundaries are not changed to their modern configuration until sometime between 1956 and 1968.

3.6.3 FINDS

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). The assemblage from Field 5 comprised a very small group of 25 sherds of mainly medieval pottery in Buff and Orange Sandy fabrics—most probably 12th- to 14th-century Tees Valley

A and B wares with very little Reduced Greenware. The pottery was relatively well distributed across the area walked, though there was a notable lack of finds from the portion of Field 4 which was historically part of the partitioned wetland.

Glass

Three sherds of glass were recovered from Field 5, all likely representing early modern or modern vessels.

Metal

A single piece of metal was recovered from 5: a large square metal washer presumably representing loss from agricultural machinery.

3.6.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

As with Field 4 to the north-east, the dominant part of the assemblage from Field 5 was medieval pottery, suggesting this was part of the same agricultural landscape associated with medieval Thornton-le-Street.

Field 5			Area (ha):	2.70
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	21	52.5	72.41	19.44
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	4	10	13.79	3.70
Lithics	0	0	0.00	0.00
Glass	3	7.5	10.34	2.78
Clay pipe	0	0	0.00	0.00
Metal	1	2.5	3.45	0.93
Animal bone	0	0	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	0	0	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	29	72.5	100.00	26.85

Table 5 Breakdown of finds from Field 5

3.7 FIELD 6

3.7.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 6 is one of a group of two adjacent fields on the south and west of the moated site at Moat Farm investigated archaeologically through the course of the Roads to the Past project (see Brightman et al. 2019) (SE 41351 83703). Field 6 covers a total area of 11.06 ha though only 2.77 ha at the western end, immediately south of the moated site, was walked. The field lies towards the southern end of the ridge of higher ground to the west of the Cod Beck and is entirely on Vale of York formation superficial geology—diamicton (glacial till, also sometimes still called boulder clay) with interbedded sands and gravels (BGS 2019).

3.7.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

Field 6 comprises the western half of a larger field shown on the 1843 tithe map. It was owned by John Bell Esquire and tenanted by George Reynolds. The field was given the name 'Thirteen Acre Close', potentially referring to its size pre-division, and was recorded as a grass field. The field has the same shape on subsequent OS mapping though a path is shown running east to west along its centre on the 1st Edition. The central boundary was not removed until the late 20th century.

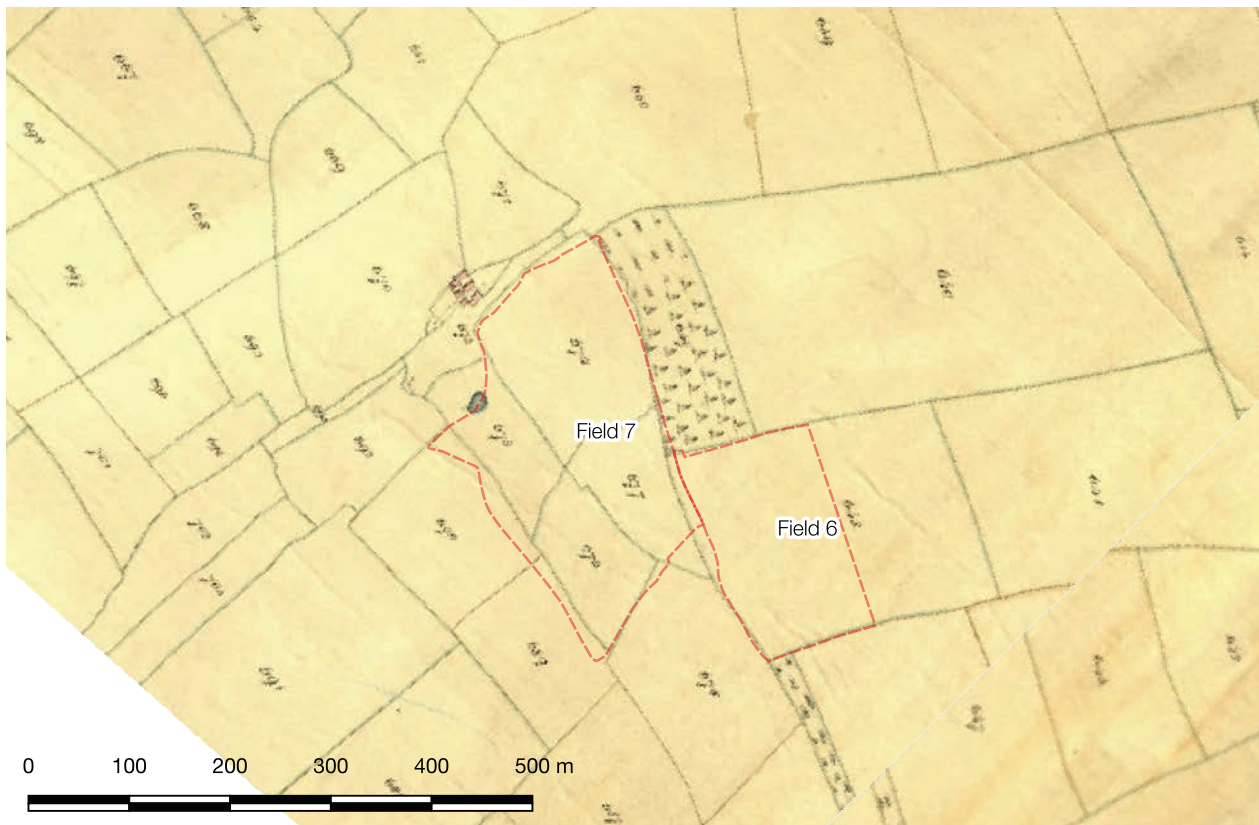


Figure 7 1843 tithe map showing Fields 6 and 7

3.7.3 FINDS

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). The assemblage from Field 6 comprised a very small group of 13 sherds of early modern and modern pottery, including Yellow Glazed Coarseware, Stoneware and Creamware. There is no clear pattern to the distribution of pottery other than a notable lack of finds in the south-west corner of the field.

Glass

Three sherds of glass were recovered from Field 6, with the only notable find being a bottle top with an applied and tooled rim, suggesting an 18th- or 19th-century date.

Clay Pipe

Three pieces of clay pipe were recovered from Field 6, including one bowl fragment and two stem pieces, none of which included stamps or marks.

Metal

Three ferrous metal objects and five pieces of metal slag were recovered from Field 6. The metalwork generally appeared to be chance discard or loss from agricultural machinery or other fixings. There is no overall pattern to the distribution of this small assemblage.

3.7.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

The relatively small assemblage from Field 6 is dominated by the post-medieval and later pottery and scattered pieces of metalwork. The absence of medieval pottery is interesting giving the proximity of a known medieval site. In addition, Field 6 was targeted specifically as it also hosts the remains of a presumed Iron Age or Romano-British settlement visible as cropmarks and confirmed through geophysical survey undertaken during the project (Swinbank and Harris 2018). Despite the apparent excellent preservation of the remains, no finds from this period were recovered during the fieldwalking, suggesting the settlement is more likely to be Iron Age in date, a period from which surviving small finds are generally scarce, than Romano-British when pottery in particular is more robust and plentiful.

Field 6			Area (ha):	2.77
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	13	32.5	46.43	11.73
Lithics	5	12.5	17.86	4.51
Glass	3	7.5	10.71	2.71
Clay pipe	3	7.5	10.71	2.71
Metal	8	20	24.24	7.22
Animal bone	1	2.5	3.03	0.90
Miscellaneous	0	0	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	33	82.5	100.00	29.78

Table 6 Breakdown of finds from Field 6

3.8 FIELD 7

3.8.1 GEOLOGY AND LOCATION

Field 7 is one of a group of two adjacent fields on the south and west of the moated site at Moat Farm investigated archaeologically through the course of the Roads to the Past project (see Brightman et al. 2019) (SE 41126 83813). Field 7 covers a total area of 5.84 ha. The field lies towards the southern end of the ridge of higher ground to the west of the Cod Beck. The underlying superficial geology of the eastern half of the field is Vale of York formation—diamicton (glacial till, also sometimes still called boulder clay) with interbedded sands and gravels (BCS 2019). The western half of the field, however, is on fine-grained lacustrine deposits, representing an area of former wetland.

3.8.2 HISTORICAL MAPPING

Although the boundaries have changed slightly, Field 7 is roughly congruent with four separate smaller field depicted on the 1843 tithe map. All four are shown on the apportionment as owned by John Bell Esquire and tenanted by John and James Hutton. All are described as grass pasture, and, in an anti-clockwise direction from the north-east, the fields are named ‘Pond Garth’, ‘Tailforth Pasture’, ‘Tailforth Pasture’ and ‘Picked Pasture’. The 1st Edition OS mapping in 1853 shows the same arrangement as well as a field barn at the confluence of the four fields. By 1892, the two southern fields had been combined in one, with the former boundary preserved as a dispersed treeline. The combining of the two northern fields and the realignment of the western boundary did not take place until late in the 20th century.

3.8.3 FINDS

No detailed spatial data was collected for Field 7, and so the overview of finds is undertaken without considering distribution patterns.

Pottery

A specialist overview of the pottery assemblage was undertaken as a first step to more detailed cataloguing and assessment at a later date (see below). The assemblage from Field 7 comprised a reasonably sized group of 108 sherds of largely medieval pottery, including 13th- to 14th-century Tees Valley A, B, B/C and similar wares, Late Medieval Sandy ware and also a fragment of medieval tile. This is particularly interesting given the find of glazed medieval floor tile from the test pitting in the adjacent moated site (see Brightman 2019). In addition, a small assemblage of 19th- to 20th-century pottery was also recovered.

Glass

A total of 21 pieces of glass was recovered from Field 7, including 14 sherds of predominantly modern glassware and 7 pieces of apparent glass slag. The assemblage is small, but the presence of a small concentration of glassworking residue could be suggestive of nearby small-scale industry, particularly given the presence of iron smelting slag from the excavations in the adjacent moated site (see Brightman *et al.* 2019).

Clay Pipe

One piece of clay pipe was recovered from Field 7, presumably representing chance discard.

Metal

Ten ferrous metal objects and two pieces of metal slag were recovered from Field 7. The metalwork generally appeared to be early modern or recent in date and has been attributed to chance discard or loss from agricultural machinery or other fixings (e.g. a horseshoe and a piece of chain link).

3.8.4 ASSEMBLAGE BREAKDOWN

Extensive geophysical survey in the fields around the moated site was undertaken during the project (Swinbank and Harris 2018) to assess whether there were any medieval features associated with the moat. No clear features of this date were discovered, but the concentration of medieval pottery recovered through fieldwalking suggests that this area was at least active agricultural land peripheral to the manor.

Field 7			Area (ha):	5.84
Find Type	Total Finds Recovered	Notional 100% Count	Percentage of Field Assemblage	Density per ha
Pottery (medieval)	80	200	54.79	34.25
Pottery (post-med and early mod)	28	70	19.18	11.99
Lithics	0	0	0.00	0.00
Glass	21	52.5	14.38	8.99
Clay pipe	1	2.5	0.68	0.43
Metal	12	30	8.22	5.14
Animal bone	4	10	2.74	1.71
Miscellaneous	0	0	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	146	365	100.00	62.50

Table 7 Breakdown of finds from Field 7

4. FIELDWALKING RESULTS IN CONTEXT

4.1 THE POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE

Dr Chris Cumberpatch

The pottery from the fieldwalking assemblages that formed part of the Roads to the Past project was examined by the author on 2nd July 2019. Given the quantity and diversity of the material, it was decided that the material would be scanned with a view to providing brief notes on the material and an indication of its significance. It is estimated that a full assessment and catalogue at a later date would take at least ten days. Field-specific information has been summarised in the relevant sections above.

The assemblages were, generally speaking, in good condition although inevitably abrasion was more severe than on the assemblages from the excavations.

In general terms the assemblage consisted of a significant quantity of earlier medieval pottery (mid/late 12th- to late 13th-century) with much smaller quantities of later medieval (14th- and 15th-century) material. Tees Valley wares were well represented, and it is highly likely that much of what has been noted as Buff Sandy/Gritty ware belongs to the Tees Valley A ware group while the Orange or Iron-rich wares belong to the Tees Valley B ware group. Details of these wares can be found in the excavation report (see Cumberpatch in Brightman *et al.* 2019).

Post-medieval, early modern and recent wares were also well represented although the quantities varied considerably between fields. Early modern pottery, not always a significant component of fieldwalking assemblages, was also well represented with several fields producing groups of White Salt Glazed Stoneware.

There was considerable variation in the representation of different time periods in the individual fields although whether this relates to the former presence of buildings, middens etc. or changing patterns of land-use and the incidence of manuring or other 'improvement' practices, is unclear.

Table 8 below shows the comparative density of medieval pottery finds across the seven fields. The concentrations in Field 1 and Field 3 stand out and confirm their past as intensely worked arable land on the periphery of active medieval settlements.

Field	Area (ha)	Med Pot Finds	Nominal Count	Density
1	5.52	417	1042.50	188.86
2	4.49	16	40.00	8.91
3	11.01	80	200.00	18.17
4	9.57	346	865.00	90.39
5	2.7	21	52.50	19.44
6	2.77	0	0.00	0.00
7	5.84	80	200.00	34.25
TOTAL	41.9	960		
Average			342.86	51.43

Table 8 Density of medieval pottery by field

4.2 LITHICS

A substantial volume of lithics was recovered through the course of the fieldwalking and has been included within the tables of finds for each field described above. A full assessment is being undertaken for this assemblage, but the concentration and density of lithic material discovered in Field 1 is worth consideration at this point.

Subject to the assessment of the assemblage—and the potential for a proportion of that assemblage to be classified as natural—the concentration of lithic tools and debitage in Field 1 is among the highest seen by the author for any such project. The Field 1 collection comprises over 75% of all lithic material collected through the course of the project, and as can be seen in Table 9 below the density of finds per hectare for the field is currently 109.15. This can be compared with other published fieldwalking lithic sites in North Yorkshire and in the North more widely:

- In the southern Vale of Mowbray near Dishforth and in an area of known Mesolithic activity, a lithic density of 45.32 per ha was recorded (Chatterton 2005, 133–6).
- In the northern Vale of Mowbray, a programme of fieldwalking was undertaken to the south of Catterick as part of a landscape investigation prior to gravel quarrying. The two most prolific fields, focused on landforms attractive to Mesolithic and Neolithic activity, returned lithic densities of 78.4 and 95 finds per ha (Waddington *et al.* 2009).
- An extensive fieldwalking project characterising the prehistoric landscape in Northumberland, including landscape and landforms very similar to the Vale of Mowbray, also provides a good corollary to the Roads to the Past fieldwalking. Of the 97 fields walked, the greatest density of lithic artefacts was encountered on a terrace above the River Tweed near St Cuthbert's Farm: 68.7 lithics per ha (Passmore and Waddington 2009, 104).

As can be seen, even if the assessment and detailed cataloguing results in a decrease of the density within Field 1, it is still comfortably among the densest assemblages of its type. The topographic situation of the field—at the southern tip of a peninsula of clay-heavy high ground—would have made this an ideal spot for exploiting the natural resources of this part of the Vale for considerable periods of its history.

Field	Area (ha)	Lithic Finds	Nominal Count	Percentage	Density
1	5.52	241	602.50	77.74	109.15
2	4.49	15	37.50	4.84	8.35
3	11.01	17	42.50	5.48	3.86
4	9.57	32	80.00	10.32	8.36
5	2.7	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	2.77	5	12.50	1.61	4.51
7	5.84	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	41.9	310		100.00	
Average			110.71		19.18

Table 9 Lithic densities by field

4.3 ANIMAL BONE

A small assemblage of animal bones was also recovered during the fieldwalking, though these were scattered and general few. The exceptions are Field 1, where 33 pieces were recovered and Field 3, where 9 pieces were recorded. Although these are both small in comparison to the remainder of the assemblage from each field, they are a useful confirmation of the process of nightsoiling—the spreading of waste material to 'sweeten' and fertilise the soil of arable fields through the medieval and post-medieval periods.

4.4 OVERALL PATTERNS AND DENSITY

Field 1 was overwhelmingly the most productive field walked during the course of the project. In all categories of finds Field 1 had the greatest density, and the overall density of total finds is so large so as to considerably skew the average from the other fields. Positioned on prime agricultural land on the edge of Thirsk, it is perhaps unsurprising that the field has seen so much activity from the medieval period onwards. However, as described above, the volume of lithic finds makes this field of particular interest and deeply worth further investigation.

Of the four fields in the immediate environs of Thornton-le-Street, there is a clear differentiation visible in the pattern of finds. Field 4, and to a lesser degree Fields 3 and 5, represents a clear focus of medieval arable agriculture visible through the pottery finds. The signature of the medieval assemblage is very similar to that recovered from the excavations in the shrunken medieval village to the south-east—dominated by Tees Valley wares and similar, probably locally produced forms. In contrast, Field 2 immediately to the south of the village, had a sparse coverage of medieval finds, suggesting the principal agricultural land associated with medieval Thornton-le-Street did not extend in this direction. In terms of the post-medieval and later pottery, the largest concentration was demonstrably in Field 3 further away from the village. When considered alongside the tithe apportionment, this suggests the development of pasture from formerly arable land from the 16th century onwards.

Fields 6 and 7 represent a curious contrast, being adjacent to each other and yet having markedly different signatures. Field 6 was over a known Iron Age or Romano-British site yet contained very few finds overall and nothing obviously related to the underlying settlement or the adjacent medieval moated site. Field 7, however, appears to have been part of the active hinterland of the moated site, including a substantial assemblage of medieval pottery.

Field	Area (ha)	Total Finds	Nominal Count	Density
1	5.52	1368	3420.00	619.57
2	4.49	45	112.50	25.06
3	11.01	461	1152.50	104.68
4	9.57	410	1025.00	107.11
5	2.7	29	72.50	26.85
6	2.77	28	70.00	25.27
7	5.84	146	365.00	62.50
TOTAL	41.9	2487		
Average			888.21	138.72

Table 10 Total finds and overall finds by field

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