

Mowbray Manor Revealed!



A Community Archaeology Project at Vinegarth, Epworth

17 - 28 July 2018



Why did we excavate here?

Vinegarth was granted to the Mowbray family in 1108 with the Isle of Axholme being the largest single holding of the Honour of Mowbray alongside other extensive lands in Yorkshire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire.

Vinegarth is also the possible location of a chantry dedicated to St. Mary and St. Katherine, founded by John de Mowbray, the 3rd Baron of Mowbray in 1344.

Excavations in the 1960's revealed walls and floor tiles to the east of the church during a graveyard extension. Excavations in 1975-6 c.100m to the southeast of the church prior to the site's domestic development revealed more substantial foundations and a tiled floor depicting the Mowbray Shield. These excavations also revealed a hall and kitchen area and an apparent cloistral walk adjacent to a courtyard or garden, but only the south wall of the hall remained.

Excavations on land near Church Street revealed medieval domestic pits and a ditch below deposits containing demolition material.

Recent detailed geophysical surveys within the fields to the south of the church have revealed anomalies that could relate to comparable to the walls excavated in the 1970's.

Our Research Objective

'Map the location and extent of the manor's buildings and settlement, and any other remains and, where possible, to characterise the archaeological features thus located'

What did we find?

We excavated two trenches and nine 1x1m and 2x2m test pits in areas identified as significant by a geophysical survey completed prior to the start of the project. It was hoped our excavations would reveal walls and floor surfaces from the manor or the chantry.

Our trenches were devoid of any walls but were full of demolition material and finds. In the trench closest to the churchyard we uncovered a compacted area of demolition rubble, consisting mainly stone rubble that may have once formed the rubble core of a larger wall.



The Finds

We found a large amount of butchered bone spread across the entire site. We even found the remains of a horse's jaw! Other animal remains include pig, bird (possible chicken), sheep, cow, boar and possible deer antler

We also uncovered a high quantity of Medieval pottery, ranging from base sherds to green glazed handles.

The most interesting finds include: Medieval tiles showing the crest of the Mowbray family, a metal needle, two medieval coins, one a halfpenny and a dice possibly made from jet.

The finds in pictures



CONCLUSIONS

We did not necessarily find what we were looking for in terms of structural evidence for the Manor or chantry, however we did find evidence of the destruction of quite a substantial building, the remains of which were spread across the site. Largestoneroof tiles, angular pieces of stone and bricks were found in large quantities.

We also found a large amount of evidence for the site being used as a dumping ground for domestic waste, possibly from the medieval period through to the 19th Century, evidence such as large amounts of butchered bone, oyster shells, broken medieval and post medieval pottery.

The lack of structural remains has left us with more questions than answers in terms of the manor's true location, but the excavations have gave us a good look into how waste was man- aged in the past!



The York Archaeological Trust, the Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Partnership and The North Lincolnshire County Council would like to thank St. Andrews church for accommodating the excavations and the army of volunteers and local children who help and enthusiasm held no bounds!

