

Wirksworth Archaeological Society

Progress Report August 2025

Work continues at our dig site at Ian Avenue and quiet progress is being made. In some respects the location of Trial Trench 2 is very difficult, that is to say finding the archaeology below tons of builder's rubble from the 1963 estate continues to be our biggest challenge, particularly in comparison to the Meadows, where the archaeology of the late Saxon croft cottage found there was conveniently almost directly below the subsoil in some parts of that site.

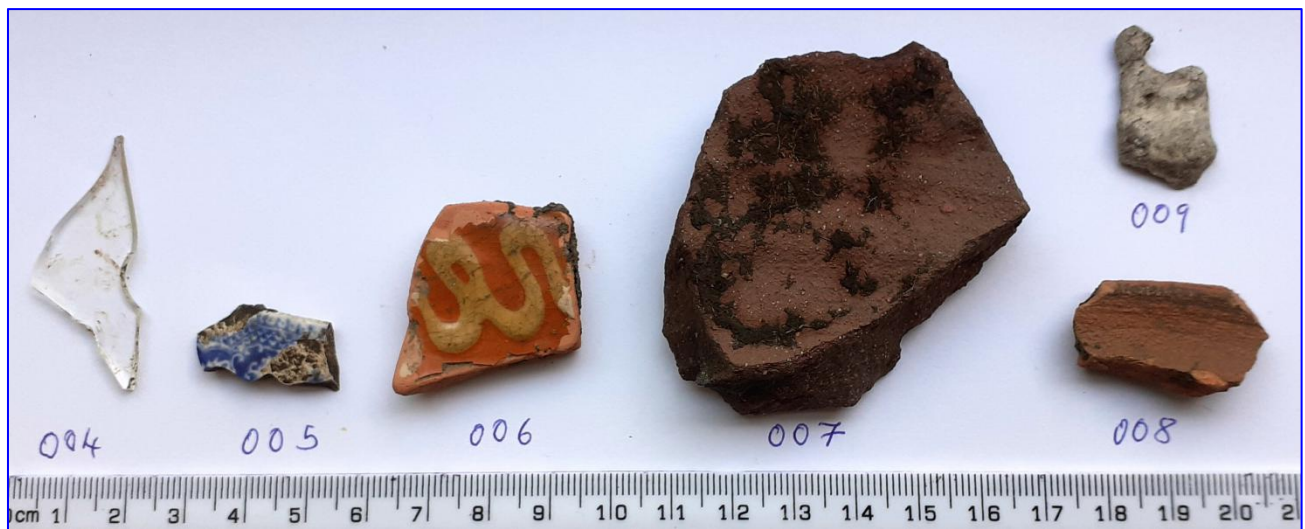


Trial trench 2 with additional shuttering being constructed

To give an idea of the extent of the collection of rubble, clay and generally bulldozed materials in the trench, here is a provisional context list. For those of you unfamiliar with this, the simple way of thinking about it is as a list of layers, like a cake. We can date the layers of the cake by the finds in them, such as pottery. This is how we have provisionally dated the contexts here: more work will result in more finds and thus more accurate dating.

			WIA25 Trial Trench 2 30th August 2025 Provisional Context List			
Feature	Context	Type	Description	Extent Length x width x depth	Depth from ground level at mid point of trench to context	Remarks
	C1	Modern topsoil	Very thin dark grey garden soil with a little grass and leaf mould	2m x 1m x 5cm	0cm	1963-2025 House garden
	C2	Modern subsoil	Slightly lighter very stony soil with bits of brick and other modern materials	2m x 1m x 15cm	5cm	1963-2025 House garden
	C3	Mixed gravelly soil	Modern context of mixed soil (40%), large quantities of gravel (20%), patches of clay (15%) and rubble of broken breeze block (15%)	2m x 1m x 25cm	20cm	1963 Builder's activity
	C4	Mid brown clay	Mid brown clay (95%) with some soil, rubble of broken brick and stone	2m x 1m x 40cm	45cm	1963 Builder's activity
	C5	Soil and harder clay	Slightly darker harder clay than above (50%) and much soil (40%) with rubble of large and small stone, large lenses of breeze block ash	2m x 1m x 45cm	85cm	1963 Builder's activity
	C6	Soil and stone rubble	Dark grey - black soft soil (80%), some clay patches (15%) with some large stone rubble and a little brick	2m x 1m x 25cm	130cm	Early 1963 Builder's activity
	C7	Black friable soil	Soft black clean friable soil (95%) with a very few clay lumps and charcoal bits with post medieval pottery	2m x 50cm x 30cm	155cm	Post medieval to 1963
	C8	Mid grey hard soil	Mid to dark grey hard dryer soil (92%) with a few small lumps of clay, some little sand and organic patches, small pebble and a very visible amounts of charcoal flecks and small pieces	1.5m x 50cm x 35cm	185cm	Provisionally Medieval to Roman
Toe of Seating Bank F1	C9	Redeposited clay with soil lenses	Mid brown and grey silty streaky redeposited clay with intervening soil lenses, some charcoal flecks	1.5m x 50cm x 30cm	220cm	Provisionally Roman
	C10	Black sticky soil	Very black, sticky, but not heavy, clean soil	Auger 15cm	250cm	Provisionally pre Roman
	C11 (N1)	Natural fawn orange clay	Substrate of clean fawn (beige) orange clay, common to the substrate of other nearby digs (e.g. Meadow Croft)	Auger 10cm LOE at 275cm	265cm	Likely natural substrate

The image below shows some finds from the dig at this stage:



Sample finds are:

- 004 Modern post medieval glass C7
- 005 Sherd of post 1760 transfer printed Blue and White ware C7
- 006 Sherd of post civil war slip trailed ware C7
- 007 Sherd of Wirksworth medieval brown slipped oxidised ware C8
- 008 Rim Sherd of Roman colour coated ware C8
- 009 Facet of lead moulding or splash C9

As the dig continues more finds will be added from the respective contexts, this helps determine what the contexts are and whether the finds belong there or are intrusive in some way. For example, the contexts of the builders activity in 1963 contain not only materials associated with 1963 such as Marley Tile and food wrappers, but also medieval and Roman items which cannot be from 1963 but are a result of things from the building site being bulldozed together into piles then flattened over the garden.

Work, as they say, continues.

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