

## June 2023 - Meeting

Hi All,

We had an excellent attendance at our June meeting with a total of 50 made up of 38 members and 12 visitors. Our paid up membership now stands at 49, with another 9 yet to renew.

We had four apologies from members who were unable to attend.

We had excellent support from attendees for our new book sale, organised by Pat Bushaway.

We have made efforts to promote our meetings and we have had good support from the Redditch Standard for our various press releases, our Facebook page has 1,800 followers, our website receives around 600 visitors a month and we send out over 100 alerts each month when we release a new monthly Newsletter. This does seem to be having some impact on visitor numbers and, fortunately, with our move back to the main hall, we are not limited on numbers.

### **On page two 'Coming Events' section.**

We have details of our next Meeting on Monday 10th July 2023 which is a presentation 'The changing face of Redditch through the lives of one family'. This is by Elizabeth Simpson, the Redditch History Society Chairman, who has stepped in at short notice as our programmed speaker was unable to attend due to a personal loss.

In this section we also have (again - sorry) a reminder that we do not have an August meeting and there are also details of a family event at Forge Mill Needle Museum.

**On Pages three and four** we have a report on our June presentation Exploring the past – the Excavations in Beoley in 2021. This was an excellent presentation by Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

**On Pages five and six** For interest, I have produced a walk, using data I produced in the past, connecting together the presentation on Beoley and the article on Moons Moat. The two sites are a fair distance by road, but are only about 1.5 miles by foot and far more interesting than the road journey..

**On Page seven and eight** we have an article by Derek Coombes on the Conservation Group and their need for committed volunteers. The group hold volunteer days at the moat on the fourth Sunday of the month.

### **Next Meeting...**

Our next Meeting is on Monday 10th July 2023 and is 'The changing face of Redditch through the lives of one family' a presentation by Elizabeth Simpson, Redditch History Society Chairman. There is more on this presentation on Page 2.

The meeting will be, as always, at the Oasis Christian Centre starting at 2.00 pm.

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

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# Coming up

**Next Meeting Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**'The changing face of Redditch through the lives of one family'**

**Presentation by Elizabeth Simpson, Redditch History Society Chairman**

In this presentation, Elizabeth, starts in the 18th century, taking us through the 250-year history of her family and how the development of the area influenced their lives.

During this period the town increased from about 1000 in 1800, 5000 in 1855, 13500 in 1900 and continued climbing steadily to the present time.

The family over this time participated in so many trades in Redditch.

These included shoe making, the needle industry, the fish-hook industry, cabinet making, Royal Enfield, retailing, publicans, the gas and electric industry, railways and more.

Elizabeth will use numerous original photographs of family members and 'then and now' pictures of where they lived and worked.

This should be a fascinating and professionally researched presentation.



## August Meeting moved to December (reminder)

SORRY TO KEEP REPEATING THIS BUT.....

Due to a major electrical upgrade at the Oasis Christian Centre we have decided that we will move our August meeting to December and Oasis have made some changes to allow us to have our second Monday of the month slot in December. Our speaker, Bill Macham, has kindly agreed to move to the December slot and will be giving his talk 'From Brum to Bringsty Common - tales of a Wartime Childhood' on Monday 11th December.

The leaflets have been modified and the website details have been changed to reflect this.

<https://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/meetings.htm>

## STEP BACK IN TIME WEEKEND Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 10.00am to 4.00pm

Forge Mill Needle Museum's first multi-period event including displays and re-enactors from WWII, Medieval times, the Tudors and the Victorians.

Bring the whole family!

ADULTS £2.00, CHILDREN FREE

Includes entry into the museum

<https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/events/>

**Step Back In Time**  
**WEEKEND**  
**24 & 25 JUNE**  
**10am - 4pm**

A multi-period event including displays from WW2, Medieval Times, Tudors & Victorians.  
**Adults £2, Children FREE**

[www.forgemill.org.uk](http://www.forgemill.org.uk)

# June Meeting Report.

## Exploring the past – the Excavations in Beoley in 2021

Presentation by Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager at the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service gave a fascinating overview of the community test pitting that took place in Beoley in the autumn of 2021.

Small Pits, Big Ideas is intended to help communities reveal the origins of their villages and the story over time.

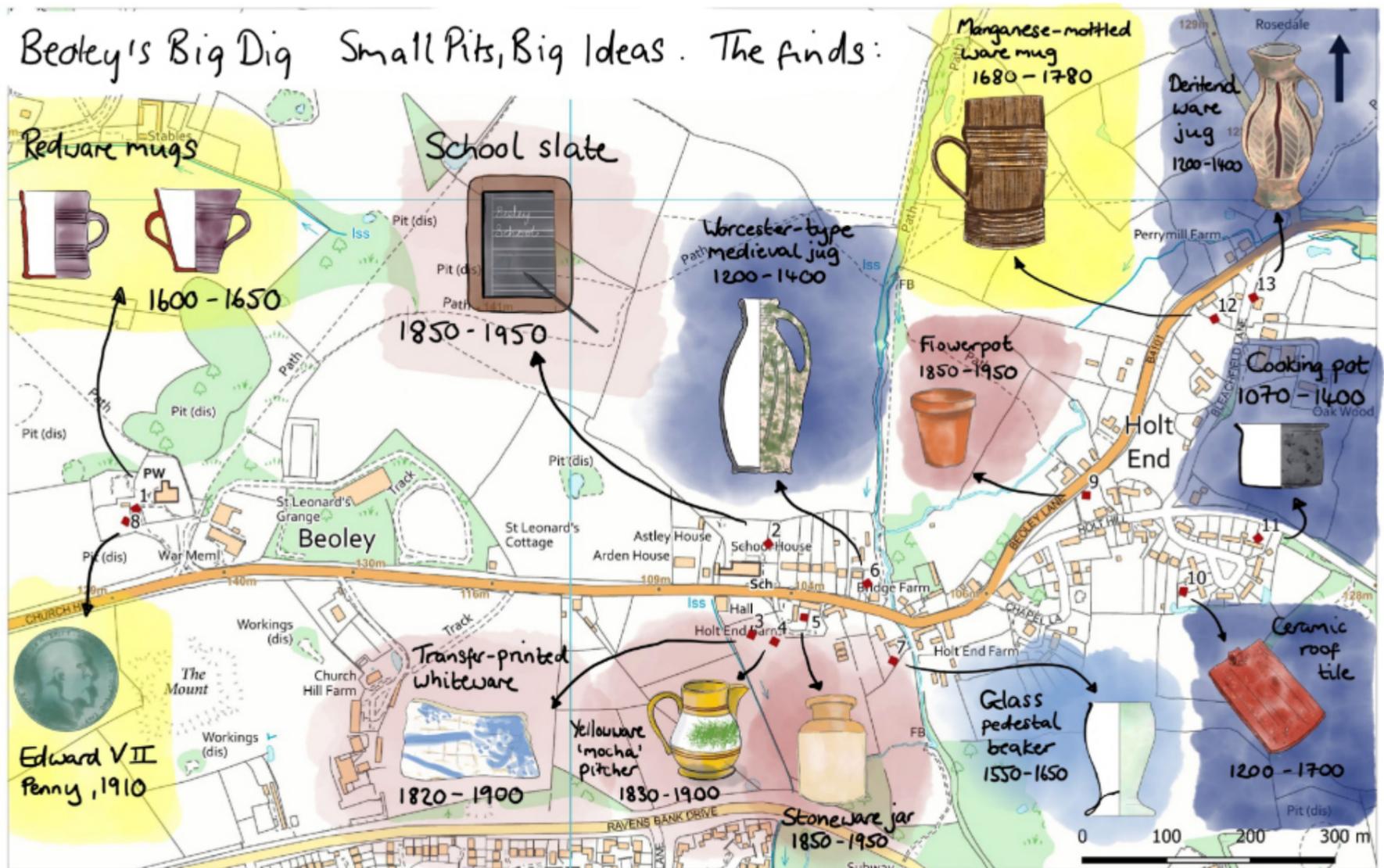
Surprisingly, relatively little is known about the development of Worcestershire's rural medieval settlements and, as many are lived in, large archaeological excavations are almost impossible.

By uncovering the archaeology hidden in back gardens, the project brings people directly in touch with their past and shines new light on the story of rural Worcestershire.

The project is run by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service on behalf of Worcestershire Archaeological Society, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Between autumn 2021 and summer 2022, six locations were investigated. Beoley was chosen because it is a medieval village dating from the 10th-12th Century.

There are deserted villages in Worcestershire due to the black death, but the interest in this project was to excavate existing villages to see how they had developed.



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Illustration: Rob Hedge 2022

Earliest activity:

- Blue circle = 11<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> century
- Yellow circle = 17<sup>th</sup> / 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Light blue circle = 16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> century
- Pink circle = late-18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> century

Over the weekend of the 2nd – 3rd October 2021, 13 'test pits' were excavated across Beoley village (also known as Holt End). A total of 56 people took part in digging the test pits and processing the finds.

For most, this was their first hands on go at archaeology. Support was provided by staff from Worcestershire Archaeology, volunteer archaeologists and students from the University of Worcester.

## June Meeting Report cont....

Test pits are mini excavation areas, just 1m by 1m. They are dug in 10cm layers (called 'spits') with the finds from each spit kept separately, so that it's known how deep down they were found.

Test pits were excavated down to the undisturbed geology. This was generally 50-80cm below ground level.

Together, the 13 test pits across Beoley tell a broader story of the village over time.

Most test pits reached the natural geology, meaning that all archaeology was excavated, and the oldest clues weren't missed.

Finds were mostly typical of household waste and general building rubble, with the notable exceptions of an early (1550 – 1650) glass goblet fragment from Test Pit 7, a possible piece of burnt daub from a timber framed building and smithing waste (both Test Pit 10).

Whilst the glass is an unexpectedly high status and rare find, potentially from Beoley manor, the smithing waste is a reminder that rural settlements involved many more trades than farming.

Little medieval pottery was found.

If Beoley village (also called Holt End) had been a medieval village centred around a green or spread along a road, then more test pits would have been expected to produce medieval pottery.

Instead, medieval activity was found in three spread out locations – alongside the brook and an old holloway (Test Pit 6), within the moated platform (Test Pits 10 and 11) and at the end of Bleachfield Lane (Test Pit 13).

From this evidence, it appears that medieval Beoley was small clusters of houses and farms spread out over a wide area rather than a concentrated village.

Dispersed medieval settlements are often, but not always, found in wooded areas – the early medieval Domesday survey records a large area of woodland within the parish, and so this may have also been the case in Beoley.

This is only a short overview of a fascinating and clearly presented talk by Nina and there is much more to be found on the Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service website at the link <https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/project/small-pits-big-ideas/> where, if you click on Beoley, you can find a detailed pdf report of the dig (from where I took all the images I have used, plus some text), and there is also a video presentation by Nina of the project (which is really useful for those who were unable to attend the in-person presentation).



Photo 6: Base of a pedestal glass vessel (Test Pit 7 spit 1)



Photo 9: Loop of glass created when forming the vessel base

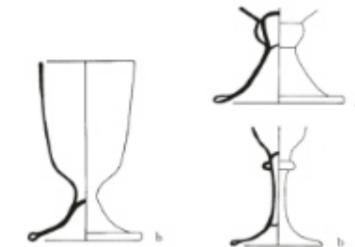


Figure 4: Types of pedestal goblets that match fragment from Test Pit 7 - taken from Wilentz 2002 (pgs 75-76)



Photo 7: Medieval pot sherd from a Brill Boarstall jug - front (left) and profile (right) of rim (Test Pit 6 spit 5)

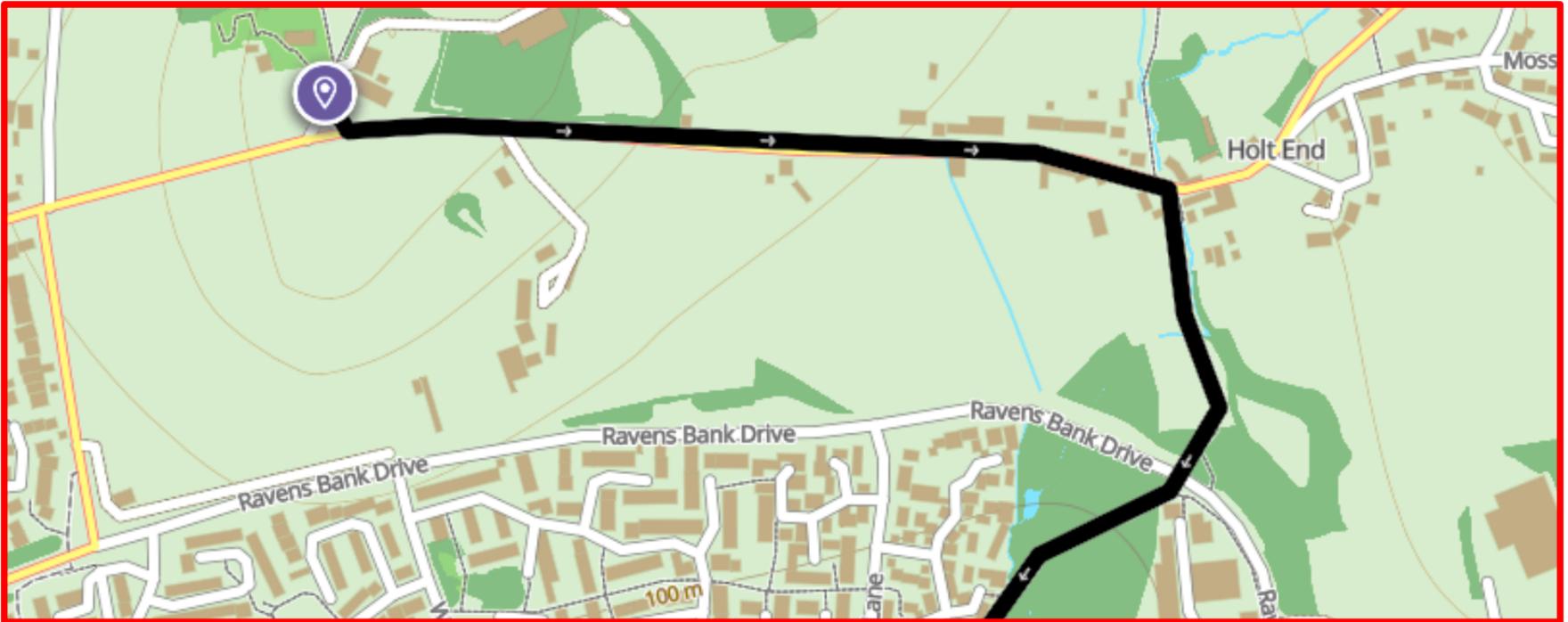


Photo 13: Medieval pot sherds from Test Pit 11 spit 5

Photo 4: School writing slate (Test Pit 2 spit 3)

# A Walk from Beoley to Moons Moat

## By Anthony Green



The original location of Beoley was at the top of the hill. Beoley is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'Bee clearing' i.e where bees often swarm.

At the top of the hill, at your left, is the 12th century St Leonard's Church. In the churchyard you will find the grave of PC Davies, a local policeman who was murdered along Ikniel Street in 1885.

Continue on down the hill into the village of Holt End, which has many attractive dwellings, some dating back to the 17th century.

If you wish to have a break at this point, continue on along the road to the 'Village Inn' a 19th century inn, which has been serving teas for 160 years.

At the point where the stream goes under the road, cross the road, looking out for traffic, and follow the 'Public Footpath' sign leading to a path by the side of the stream.

The stream follows the path of an ancient hollow way which runs down to Mappleborough Green.

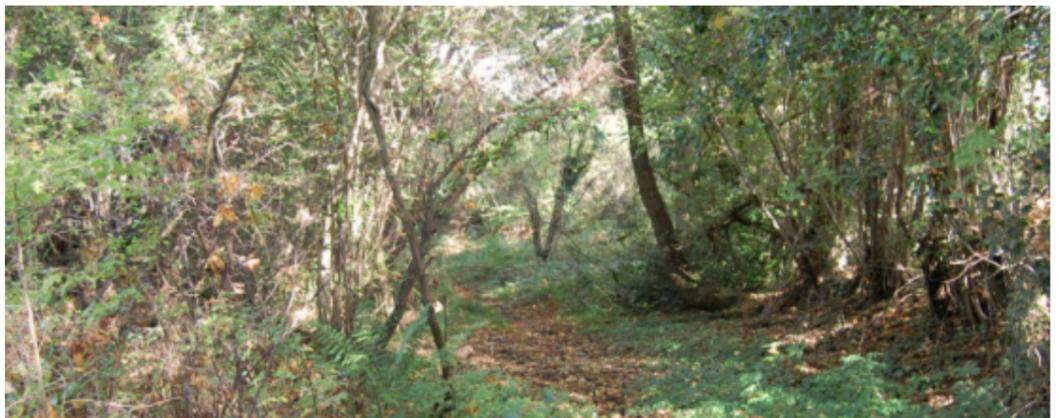
In places this is 8-9 metres wide and probably dates from Anglo-Saxon times.

Hollow ways, also known as sunken lanes or holloways, are roads or tracks that are significantly lower than the land on either side.

The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon hola weg, meaning a sunken lane. They are centuries-old thoroughfares worn down by the traffic of time, and are one of the few examples of human-made infrastructure still serving its original purpose.



**Above Left: Beoley (Holt End) Village**



**Above Right: Sunken path**

## A Walk from Beoley to Moons Moat cont.....

Our path only follows the hollow way for about 300 metres before our path bears right to an underpass passing under Ravens Bank Drive.

Passing through the underpass you arrive in an area of modern woodland.

This separates the Moons Moat Industrial area from the residential areas.

Continue along this pleasant path avoiding left turns into the industrial area and right turns into the residential areas.

Cross the Bus Route and continue on the path and you will arrive at Moons Moat.

Moon's Moat is a designated historic landmark and the site of a former medieval moated house.

This was originally a hunting lodge with a moat, dating back to the sixteenth century.

This was a typical of the moated homesteads which were popular at this time.

Located in an isolated position two fields away from Ryknield Street, it is roughly square in shape, the moat is still well-preserved and still holding water on three sides.

The entrance appears to have been by a causeway in the middle of the north side of the moat.

Moated homesteads in the Medieval Period were not designed for defensive purposes but they show the importance of the family.

### Note:

*The two maps of the walk were produced using the OS Maps Application*

*The total distance of the route is 2.45 km, it is level terrain (apart from the walk down from the church) and at normal walking pace should take 30 minutes.*



**Above Left: Junction in path through 'new' woodland.**

**Above Right: Moons Moat (around 2005)**

# The Moons Moat Conservation Group

## By Derek Coombes



For over twenty years, volunteers of the Moons Moat Conservation Group, have worked to restore, maintain, develop and promote the site so that today it provides a calm and attractive community asset.

The Conservation Group hold volunteer days at the moat on the fourth Sunday of the month.

These sessions are being funded by grants from local RBC and WCC Councillors to enable all who are interested to be involved with ongoing maintenance and improvement tasks at the Moat.



# The Moons Moat Conservation Group

## By Derek Coombes cont....



- Typical maintenance and improvement activities the group has undertaken over the last couple of years have included: :
- Clearing and restoring footpaths to the north and south of the Moat
- Planting whips inside the ranch fencing to close the boundary gaps
- Maintaining the ranch fencing with repairs as required
- Clearing scrub and non-native shrub growth (eg Dogwood) on the north and south perimeter of the Moat
- Planting spring bulbs (daffodils & Snowdrops) during designated sessions involving children from local First Schools
- Clearing the outlet channel from the Moat to enable egress during high water-levels
- Clearing any litter and/or debris which has been left on site
- Cutting reeds to water-level in the eastern section of the Moat (retaining those to the west adjacent to the island)
- Construction and location of bird boxes
- Removal of tree and shrub growth to create a walkway through the area to the east of the moat
- Removal of scrub and shrub growth to enable the growth of natural flora (eg bluebells)
- Creation of brush and wood-piles using some of the cut material
- Installation of seating (log-benches) in the walkway and overlooking the Brook
- Sowing a wild-flower meadow
- When seasonal, raking out the cut meadow grass

We have an experienced leader for this programme in Peter Burton and we work in close liaison with RBC officers.

The dates for the volunteer days for the remainder of 2023 are:

25th June, 23rd July, 27th August, 24th September, 22nd October, 26th November

There will be no session in December.

We are a small, friendly group who are always on the look out for new volunteers to join us, and help preserve and promote the Moat.

If you would like to be involved in the Programme please contact us by emailing [volunteer@moons-moat.online](mailto:volunteer@moons-moat.online) or calling 07887 692348 or 07860 326582