



Test Pit 5: The Malt Shovel, 25 Main Street, SK 39544 04997

Test Pit 5 (Figure 1) was excavated in the front garden of The Malt Shovel, on the north side of Main Street. The current brick-built house was formerly The Malt Shovel Inn, built in the early 19th century. Photographs of the inn in the early 20th century show that the current attached garage and the adjacent property (27 Main Street) have replaced a thatched, brick-built barn; the inn's front garden is also visible as flower beds and lawn, with a brick path connecting the front door with the street. The garden was raised slightly above street level and retained behind a brick wall topped with a picket fence. The test pit was located to the south-west of the modern porch, immediately west of the original front door of the inn.



Figure 1: Test Pit 5 during excavation. Looking west



Figure 2: Test Pit 5 fully excavated, looking north

During the excavation, 0.2m of turf and brownish grey silty clay topsoil (Layers 1-2) was removed (Figure 2). Beneath was 0.2m of greyish brown silty clay subsoil (Layers 3-4) mixed with small quantities of building rubble, charcoal and stones. The natural substratum, greyish orange clay, was reached 0.4m below the ground; no archaeological features were recorded.

In all, 423 individual finds (2.313kg) were recovered from the test pit (Table 1). A single sherd of Roman pottery (2nd-4th century) and very small assemblages of High Medieval (12th-14th century) and Late Medieval (15th-mid-16th century) pottery were found, along with a large assemblage of post-medieval and modern pottery (17th-19th century). Other finds included modern building material, typically fragments of handmade brick and tile made locally from the late 18th century onwards. Iron slag, hand- and machine-made iron nails, pieces of clay tobacco pipes, modern garden waste, window and bottle glass and a glass marble were also found. Unique items included a tyre valve, a copper-alloy brooch and six buttons. A small group of animal bone was also present.



Figure 3: A brooch, buttons, clay tobacco pipe and a glass marble from Test Pit 5

The test pit was sited to assess the potential extent of medieval and post-medieval activity east of Carlton Green and west of St Andrews Church. The assemblage of clay tobacco pipe, together with items like the buttons, the brooch and the bottle glass, which included a marble from a Codd-neck bottle (Figure 3), could all relate to the site's historic use as a public house. Post-medieval and modern pottery suggested that habitation started at the site in the late 17th or 18th century. Earlier finds from the test pit were consistent with the area being under cultivation from at least the 12th century through to the 14th century. Medieval pottery sherds were typically small and abraded. This suggested that they were circulating in plough soil for a prolonged period of time. Rather than representing nearby habitation in the medieval period this pottery was likely imported from elsewhere, perhaps included in domestic refuse used to manure the fields surrounding the village. The scarcity of late medieval pottery and the absence of early post-medieval pottery (15th-16th centuries) suggested that this agricultural land was taken out of cultivation and turned over to pasture, perhaps in the 15th century. This is consistent with the faint traces of ridge and furrow still visible in the paddock to the north of the test pit.

The Roman pottery was small and abraded and represents a low-level 'background noise' of Roman activity in the wider landscape, perhaps associated with a small farmstead located 200m to the east, behind 42-44 Main Street.

Many thanks to Geoff and Joanne Stratford for the test pit location. Excavation was carried out over two days on September 10-11, 2022 by Elizabeth Babbington, Deanne Baughn and Caroline Turner.

Table 1: The finds from Test Pit 5

Layer	Category	No	Description	Phase*	Comments
1	Bone & shell	2	Misc. animal bone	Undated	Bird bones
1	Building material	41	Red ceramic building material	Modern	Typically small fragments of handmade brick and tile, probably made locally from late 18th century onwards
1	Building material	2	Iron nails	Modern	Machine-made, one 20mm galvanized, one 1"
1	Clay pipe	3	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	Modern	2.4mm bore
1	Glass	11	Clear window glass	Modern	
1	Personal adornment	1	Button	Modern	Bottom and shank of composite button 11mm diameter
1	Pottery	1	Iron-Glazed Earthenware	Post-medieval	Chilvers Coton / Ticknall 17th-19th century AD
1	Pottery	6	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
2	Bone & shell	3	Misc. animal bone	Undated	Includes cow tooth
2	Building material	86	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
2	Building material	1	Iron nail	Undated	Handmade, square shafted
2	Clay pipe	4	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	Modern	Including mouthpiece, 2.4mm bore
2	Clay pipe	2	Clay tobacco bowl fragments	Modern	Vertical ribbing
2	Garden waste	2	Modern plastic	Modern	Fragments of laundry peg and plastic ruler
2	Garden waste	1	Foil bottle top	Modern	
2	Glass	28	Clear bottle glass	Modern	
2	Glass	8	Clear window glass	Modern	
2	Glass	3	Green bottle glass	Modern	
2	Industrial	1	Iron slag	Undated	
2	Personal adornment	1	Button	Modern	stud button with raised vertical line decoration, 16mm diameter
2	Pottery	30	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
3	Building material	49	Red ceramic building material	Modern	

Layer	Category	No	Description	Phase*	Comments
3	Building material	1	Iron nail	Undated	Handmade, square shafted
3	Building material	1	Iron nail	Modern	Machine-made, 1"
3	Clay pipe	9	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	Modern	x2 with 1.6mm bore, x7 with 2.4mm bore
3	Garden waste	1	Plastic peg	Modern	
3	Glass	2	Brown bottle glass	Modern	
3	Glass	10	Clear window glass	Modern	
3	Glass	15	Clear bottle glass	Modern	x1 base fragment stamped 'LONDO_'
3	Household	1	Tyre valve	Modern	
3	Personal adornment	2	Buttons	Modern	2-hole button 16mm diameter & stud button 15mm diameter
3	Pottery	1	Chilvers Coton 'A' Ware	High Medieval	Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire AD 1250-1395
3	Pottery	1	Staffordshire Manganese Mottled Ware	Post-medieval	AD 1680-1780
3	Pottery	2	English Brown Salt-Glazed Stoneware	Post-medieval	Staffordshire AD 1670-1900
3	Pottery	26	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
4	Bone & shell	1	Calcined bone	Undated	
4	Building material	19	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
4	Building material	1	Iron nail	Undated	Handmade, square shafted
4	Clay pipe	4	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	Modern	2.4mm bore
4	Glass	1	Clear glass marble	Modern	Hand blown, probably from a Codd-neck bottle
4	Glass	1	Green bottle glass	Modern	
4	Glass	9	Clear window glass	Modern	
4	Glass	5	Clear bottle glass	Modern	1 shard partially melted
4	Personal adornment	1	Button	Modern	Shank button, plain, 12mm diameter
4	Personal adornment	1	Brooch	Modern	Missing pin
4	Pottery	1	Roman pottery	Roman	Greyware
4	Pottery	1	Potters Marston ware	High Medieval	AD 1100-1300/50+

Layer	Category	No	Description	Phase*	Comments
4	Pottery	1	Chilvers Coton 'A' Ware	High Medieval	Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire AD 1250-1395
4	Pottery	1	Cistercian Ware	Late Medieval	AD 1450/75-1550
4	Pottery	1	Staffordshire Slipware	Post-medieval	AD 1680-1750
4	Pottery	17	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+

* Phasing: Bronze Age (2600-700 BC), Roman (AD 43-410), High Medieval (1100-1400), Later Medieval (1400-1550), Post-medieval (1550-1800), Modern (1800-present)