

POST-MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT WYFOLD GRANGE, OXFORDSHIRE



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Abstract

As part of a wider programme of field archaeology and landscape archaeology, a broad range of activities at Wyfold Grange, Oxfordshire, was undertaken by volunteers from South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG) in 2022. These included, inter alia, a brief historical summary, geophysical surveys, an assessment of the house and other buildings, excavations on the lawn, an examination of water supply and excavation of a cistern and finds from an excavation on the northern perimeter of the enclosure, all relating to late medieval or later periods. We have demonstrated the veracity of a drawing of the house in 1762, held by the Bodleian Library and shown that doubts cast upon the reliability of another drawing, of 1868, may be misplaced.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report focuses specifically on deskwork, surveys and excavations of Wyfold Grange relating to late-medieval and post-medieval periods undertaken by South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG) in 2022. Two sister reports, *Landscape Archaeology at Wyfold* and *Excavations of the Earthwork at Wyfold Grange* which shows the construction to be of medieval date, cover related material and are occasionally referred to below.

1.1 Background

Wyfold Grange (centred on SU 68840 81640) lies near the summit of a low hill in the Chilterns approximately 4km east of Woodcote and 1km north of Gallowstree Common. The site dominated by the remains of a probably late Saxon earthwork enclosure which is roughly elliptical with a maximum diameter of about 210m. The earthworks remain prominent around the northern half but are eroded to a lower profile to the south. The general layout of the site in the context of its immediate environs is clearly shown on the 1898 Ordnance Survey 25" map, Figure 1.

The aims of the present work were to add to the known history of the site in the later medieval and post-medieval periods by geophysical surveys, excavations and deskwork.

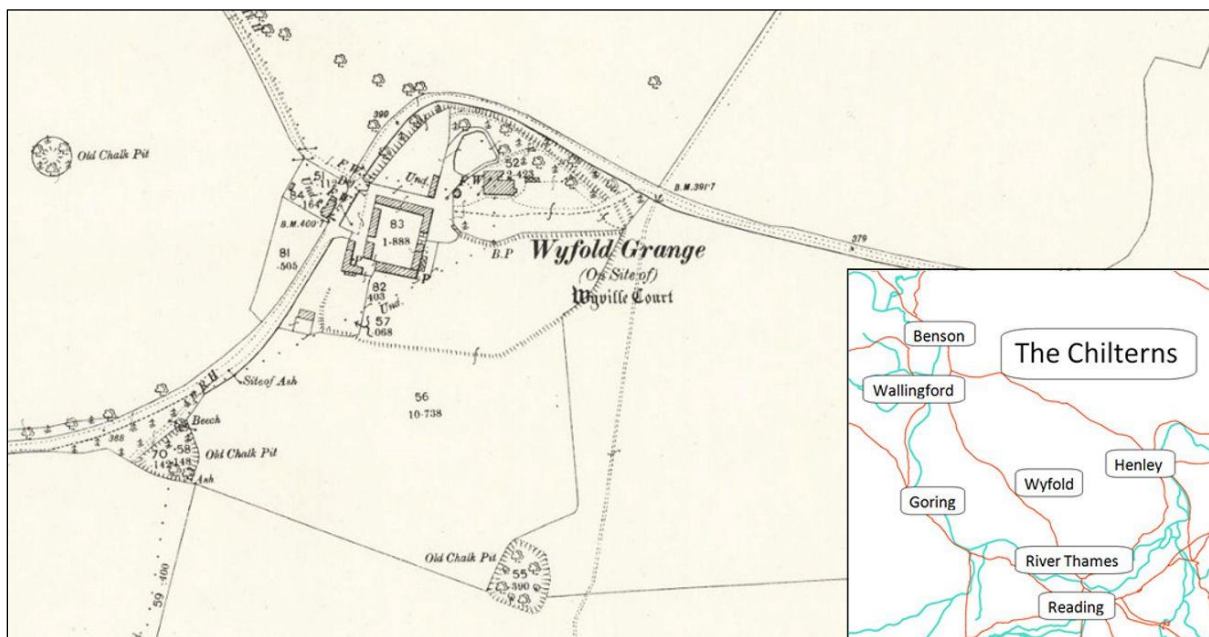


Figure 1. Wyfold Grange as shown on 25" Ordnance Survey map 1898. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

1.2 Geology

The geology of the enclosure has been investigated by taking core samples and is reported in more detail in our report *Landscape Archaeology at Wyfold*

In summary, over most of the enclosure a chalk bedrock is overlain by a superficial deposit of Thames gravel (of undetermined depth but greater than 2m measured near the southern boundary) which in turn is overlain by a further superficial layer of "clay with flints" to a depth of around 0.8m.

In the area of the former pond there is a thick deposit (greater than 3m) of impervious clays.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF WYFOLD GRANGE

with contribution from Nigel Peters

Though not mentioned specifically in Domesday Book, it is likely that Wyfold Grange and surrounding land was part of the Royal estate of Benson (Bensington) at that time (Milesen and Brookes, 2021). Thame Abbey, belonging to the Cistercian order, was founded in 1138. By 1179 they had four granges in Oxfordshire, at Wyfold (given c 1153 by Henry II), Otteley, Stoke Talmage and Chesterton, and two others in Buckinghamshire. As a farming order, they were exempt from paying tithes and were not subject to episcopal visitation, so historical records are few, though research in 2005 by SOAG stalwart Pat Preece found some details of tenants and the working (assarting) of the woodlands (which covered most of the manor) in the 12th.

14th centuries (Preece, 2005). The extent of the estate is estimated in our report *Landscape Archaeology at Wyfold*.

Wyfold had become a manor by 1452 when it was owned by Thame Abbey (VCH XX, p 87) and farmed by tenants. The Abbey seems to have had frequent periods of debt and mismanagement. When the Abbot of Waverley visited in 1525, he found the buildings in ruins, with immense debts. He said *“Though the abbot is ignorant I cannot allow this monastery..... should totter to ruin under an evil shepherd, and with an irreligious flock.”* (VCH II, pp83-86). Following the Dissolution, the monastery was surrendered in 1539 and in 1546 the manor was split into two parts centred on Wyfold/Wyvil Court and Hook End farm (VCH XX, p87). The Wyfold Grange estate was sold off, partly to the Lord of the Manor of Checkendon.

It is probably around this date that the original manor house was built on a site now largely beneath the present Wyfold Grange house as evidenced by the 1841 Tithe Apportionment maps for Checkendon and Rotherfield-Peppard shown in Figures 6 and 7 and Ordnance Survey 25” map 1898 (Figure 1).

In 1870 Edward Hermon, MP for Preston, and cotton magnate, purchased the Wyfold/Wyvil manorial estate (House and Heritage, 2019). The old house was demolished and the present house, known as “Wyfold Grange” was built c.1871, as discussed further below. Hermon also built a much grander house, taking the name “Wyfold Court” about 1km to the northwest, completed in 1877. A grand dinner party and ball was given in February 1877 at the new Court, *“the residence of E. Hermon...the owner of the estate, who has now taken up permanent residence here... the festivities...were the first of the kind to be held there”* (Henley Advertiser, 1877).

3. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

by John Scarborough

Magnetometry and resistivity surveys were undertaken over all sufficiently clear areas within the earthwork enclosure, Figure 2. The aim was to identify any underground features which might relate to former occupation or other use of the grounds of Wyfold Grange with the potential for further investigation by excavation.



Figure 2. Location of the five geophysical survey areas

3.1 Equipment

Positioning was undertaken using a Trimble 5700 GPS Base Station and Rover receivers. A permanent marker reference point was established at SU 6884481667, elevation 120m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and used to plot a 20m x 20m grid across the five areas (conservatory lawn, driveway, lawn, meadow and pond) to be surveyed.

Magnetometry surveys were performed with a Bartington 601-2 Gradiometer (thanks to Richard Miller).

Resistivity surveys were performed with a TR Systems Mk2 resistivity meter.

Analysis and image production was undertaken using QGIS 3.16.11, Snuffler 1.32 and TerraSurveyor Lite 3.0.37.3

Aerial photography was by DJI Air 2S drone (courtesy of Richard Miller).

3.2 Results

The survey results have been georeferenced to a drone photograph of the Grange property. These are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.



Figure 3. The magnetometer survey georeferenced to aerial photograph

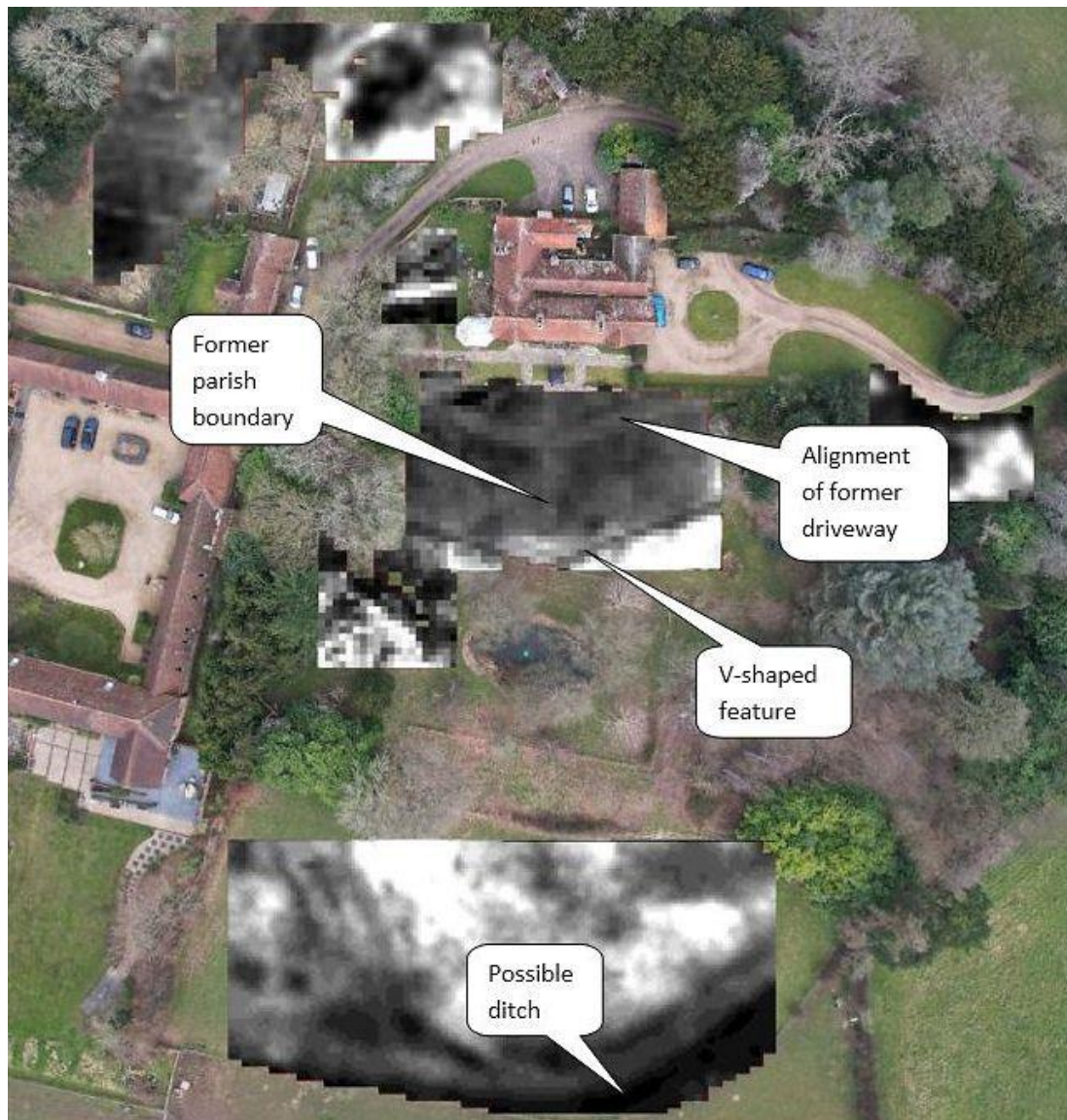


Figure 4. The resistivity survey georeferenced to aerial photograph

3.3 Discussion

Although there were broad anomalous areas in both surveys which may indicate the presence of demolition material, no clear evidence of foundations of former buildings was found. This suggests that any former foundations were either made of biodegradable materials or, if masonry, have been robbed out. The absence of any sign of the former house is consistent with the hypothesis that the new house (built in 1871 – see Section 4) was constructed on broadly the same footprint as the former.

The magnetometer survey showed two parallel lines, possibly a double track, heading south off the east driveway. As this was not clear on the resistivity survey it was not investigated further, but it is thought that this is possibly caused by sub surface vehicle ruts.

The resistivity survey showed a distinct shallow V-shaped feature to the south side of the lawn which coincided with a dip in level and possible remnant of a ditch. The line of this feature is shown on the 1898 OS map, Figure 1. This feature was subsequently excavated as Trench 3 – see Section 4.

The alignment of the former driveway south of the house as shown on the 1898 map can also be seen on the lawn. In addition, the N-S portion of the former Checkendon/Rotherfield Peppard parish boundary, which passes through the boundary post (“B.P.” on the map in Figure 1), is clearly visible on the resistivity image indicating that at some time this boundary must have had a substantial physical presence.

The meadow resistivity image indicates what appears to be a ditch running around the south side as a continuation of the bank and ditch enclosure earthwork to the north. This feature was subsequently excavated and is recorded in our report *Excavations of the Earthwork at Wyfold Grange*.

Both magnetometry and resistivity show the path of what could be services to the NW of the property.

4. THE LAWN EXCAVATIONS

with contribution from Derek Greenwood

4.1 Trench 3

The resistivity survey showed a distinct dark (low resistivity) shallow V-shaped feature to the south of the lawn which corresponded with a dip in level and possible remnant of a ditch. High resolution Lidar DTM data has kindly been supplied by the Chilterns Conservation Board "Beacons of the Past" project and is shown in Figure 5. This shows that most of the features shown on the 1898 map are still apparent. The resistivity image, the Lidar image and the 1898 map together with the panoramic view across the valley (now partially blocked by planting in the 1980s) suggested that this feature might have been a Ha-Ha (a ditch with a masonry wall on one side, which would keep animals out but allow uninterrupted views across the countryside) or perhaps the footings of a former wall.

The purpose of Trench 3 was to investigate this feature. On the ground, it was visible as a steep dip running in front of the Grange, dividing the slightly higher lawn around the building to the north from the lower ground to the south.

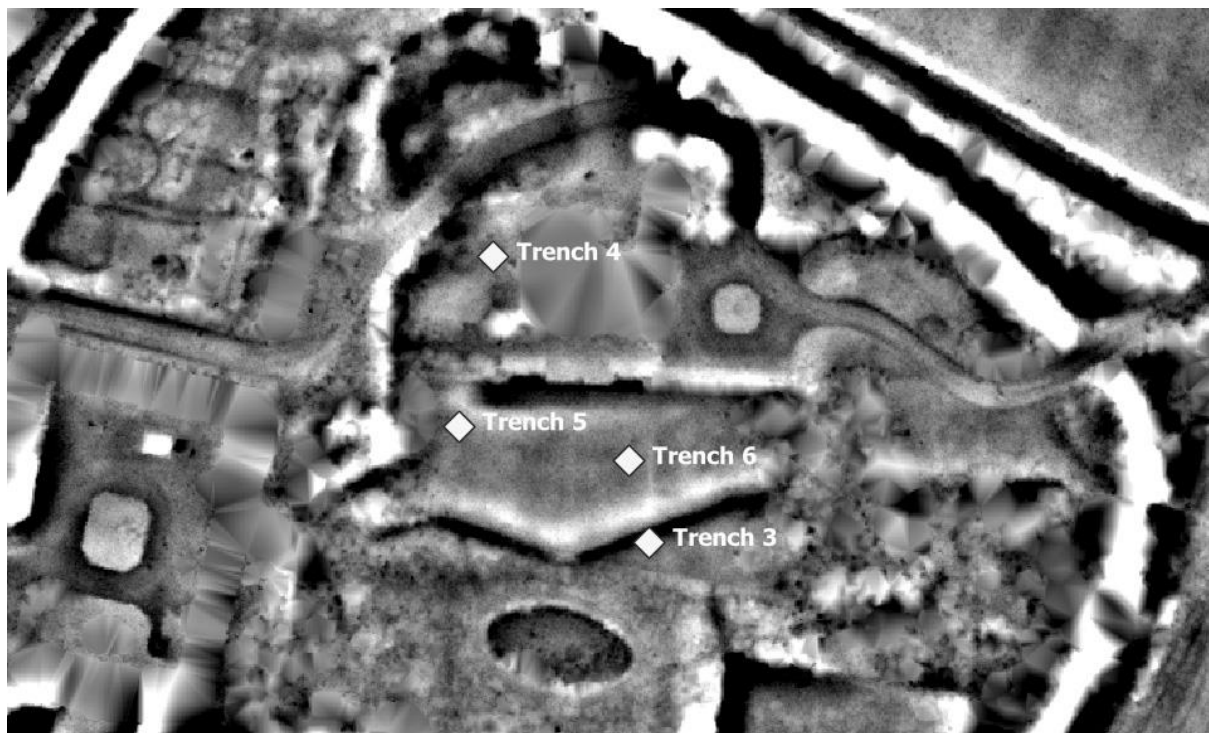


Figure 5. Lidar image of Wyfold Grange showing location of excavation trenches (LRM visualisation by the author). Lidar data courtesy of Chilterns Conservation Board "Beacons of the Past" project.

4.1.1 Methodology

Trench 3 was positioned transversely across the linear feature and dug to a depth sufficient to get down to the natural. It ran 3.4 m from the upper lawn, across the dip and out onto the lower part of the lawn to the south. The soil was mostly quite soft allowing the use of trowels for much of the excavation. Spoil heaps and the trench surface were swept frequently by metal detectorists.

4.1.2 Results

A section of the west facing side of the excavation is shown in Figure 6.

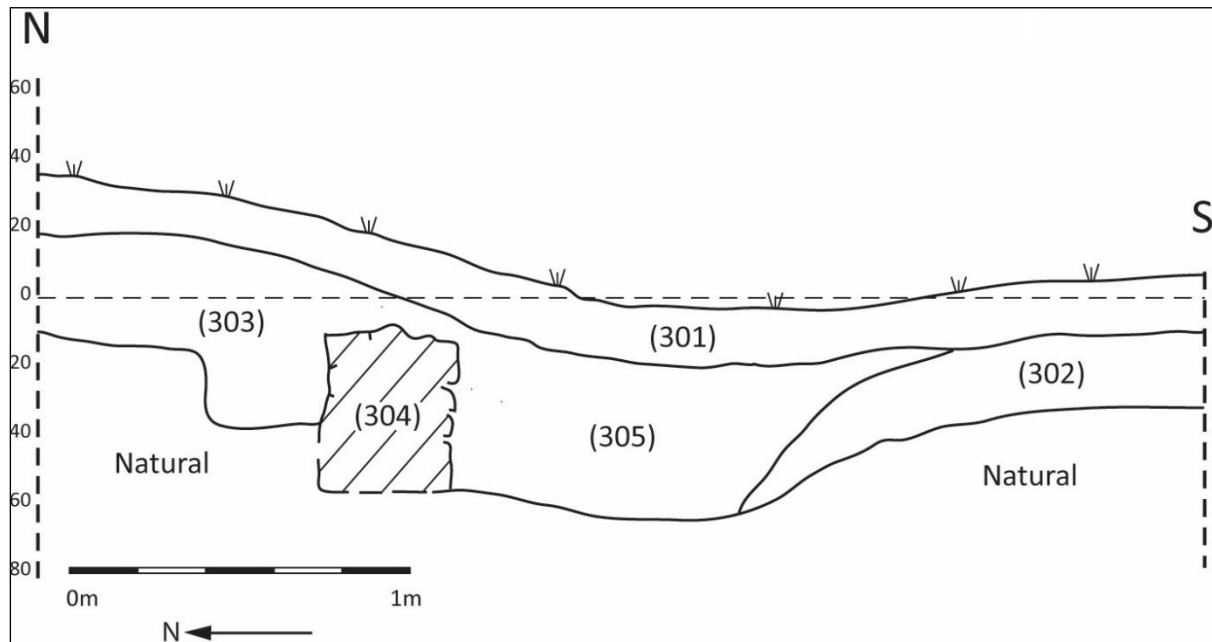


Figure 6. Section of the west facing side of Trench 3

Following removal of turf and topsoil, the base of a stone wall (Context 304) was discovered, about 40 cm wide and running roughly E - W across the trench, Figure 7.



Figure 7. Trench 3 showing the base of a flint wall

The mortared surface, emerging at a depth of about 45cm, comprised worked flints, with faces showing to the south. A couple of courses down two securely mortared, dressed blocks of limestone, 20-25cms long were exposed. To the north of the wall, there was a substantial quantity of infill (Context 303), which had been used to raise and level the lawn, comprising sandy brown soil and rubble - including roof tile fragments, mortar and some faced flints. This material also extended slightly over the line of the wall into the context below. To the south of the wall a shallow ditch was evident, filled with soil, CBM and numerous 19th and 20th century household items (Context 305). Further south, beyond the ditch the ground was flat and undisturbed.

It seems unlikely that the wall could be the remains of a Ha-Ha, given the maximum elevation of no more than 1m from the bottom of the ditch to the, apparently raised, upper lawn. The Ha-Ha at Grey's Court for example, is at least 1.4 metres high. Interpretation of this wall is discussed in Section 5, below.

4.1.3 Finds

From the topsoil down, the trench produced substantial quantities of CBM, mainly broken roof tile with some brick, mortar and some faced flints. As well as this material, also uncovered were number of fragments of 19th and 20th century household goods/nails/hinges but little or nothing from earlier periods. This suggested that both demolition material and household rubbish might have been used as infill for the ditch to the south of the wall and to raise the level of the lawn.

4.2 Trenches 5 and 6

These two small (0.5m x 0.5m) test pits were dug to check if CBM was present across the lawn. CBM (predominantly roof tile) was recovered from both trenches. Their location is shown in Figure 5. There were other modern small finds including pottery sherds, clay pipe fragments, animal bone, glass and ferrous metal.

Table 1 shows the roof tile material found in Trenches 3, 5 and 6.

Trench No.	Trench Area (m ²)	Mass of roof tile (kg)	Density (kg/m ²)
Trench 3	3.40	20.45	6.01
Trench 5	0.25	0.63	2.52
Trench 6	0.25	2.35	9.40
Totals/Average	3.90	23.43	6.01

Table 1 Roof tile material from Trenches 3, 5 and 6

From Table 1 it can be seen that the average density of roof tiles is 6.01kg/m² of lawn sampled. A typical plain roof tile (dimensions approximately 266mm x 54mm x 14mm) weighs approximately 1.1kg so average number of roof tiles in the trenches is 5.4tiles/m². Assuming that this average was uniform across the whole lawn and taking the lawn to be 45m x 23m i.e. lawn area to be 1035m², there would be approximately 5639 roof tiles in the lawn.

When laid there are approximately 60 tiles per m² of roof and so the lawn would contain sufficient tiles to cover 94m². But a pitched roof covers a smaller area of building. Assuming a pitch of 45 degrees, this would cover approximately 67m² – say a building approximately 8m x 8m. This seems insufficient to cover the roof of the old house (estimated around 300m²) but might have been sufficient to cover a small outbuilding. Whilst we acknowledge that this calculation is of somewhat speculative it may serve to explain the quantity of CBM found in the context of attempting to identify the exact placement of the former house and any outbuildings associated with it which is discussed further in Section 5, below.

5. THE HOUSE AND OTHER BUILDINGS

In Section 4 physical evidence of a stone wall comprising worked flint and dressed limestone blocks, and of roofing material from former buildings was presented. Below we consider this and documentary evidence to examine the likely built environment prior to the 1871 house rebuilding and to consider if any of the evidence may relate to the former medieval grange of Thame Abbey.

5.1 A drawing from 1762

Early documentary evidence of the buildings is scant: the house was described as a “*very respectable and commodious Residence*” in a sale notice of 1842 (Oxford Journal) and in the hearth tax records of 1665, and now called Wyfold Court, the house was of some size, having six hearths.

The earliest known drawing was from 1762, Figure 8, which shows a walled area including a house and barn, and the end of a further building outside the wall to the left of the picture (Bodleian Library a). The condition of the stone wall suggests considerable age at the time of drawing and so it could potentially derive from medieval monastic times.



Figure 8. Water colour entitled “South View of Wyfold Priory Oxfordshire April the 13. 1762”. Artist unknown. Bodleian Library a.

Given that the watercolour is identified as a “South View” it seems likely that the remains of the wall found in Trench 3 are the footings of the wall depicted in Figure 8. Close inspection of Figure 9, a 20th century postcard of Wyfold Grange, confirms the remains of a stone wall running across the lawn in an east-west direction which is very likely a continuation of the wall found in Trench 3. The line of this wall can also be seen in the 1898 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 1) just north and west of the word “Wyfold”.



Figure 9. Postcard: photograph of Wyfold Grange postmarked October 26th 1921

In Section 4 a crude estimate was made of the potential size of building that could be roofed by the ceramic tiles found in the lawn excavations. It was suggested that this could be a building of around 8m x 8m. Perhaps this represents the remains of the barn shown in Figure 8 which is located at the west end of the present lawn.

The building to the extreme left Figure 8 appears to be in the position of the northern range of the present stables building. The Tithe Apportionment map for Checkendon (Figure 10) shows the stables buildings and courtyard configured similarly to their present arrangement (now in use as a domestic residence) but with no eastern range. The Tithe map of Rotherfield Peppard (Figure 11) also includes representations of Wyfold Grange as the boundary between the parishes passes right through the house (see also Figure 1). The location of the house on both Tithe maps is similar to that of the present house in relation to the other buildings and the pond.

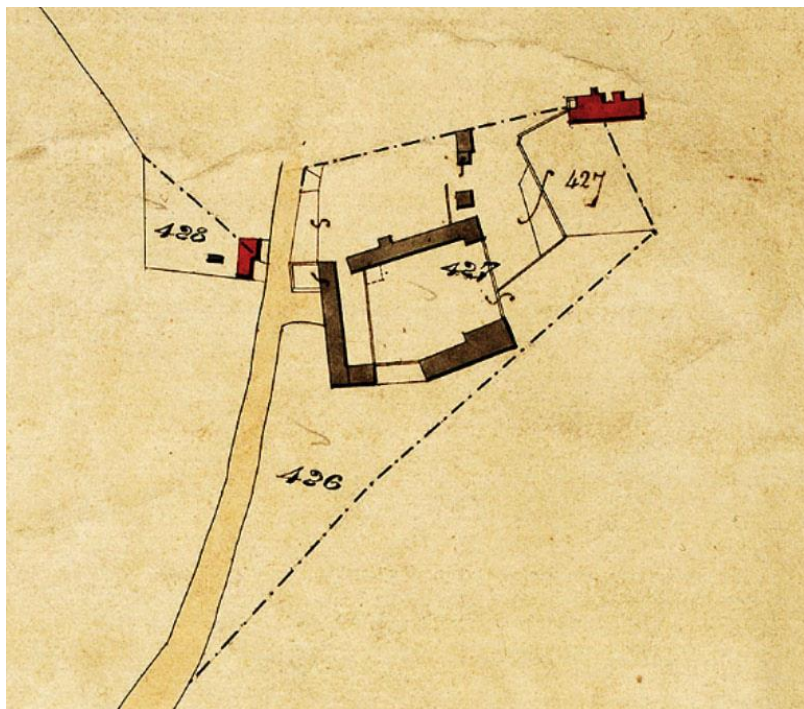


Figure 10. Part of 1841 Tithe Apportionment map of Checkendon

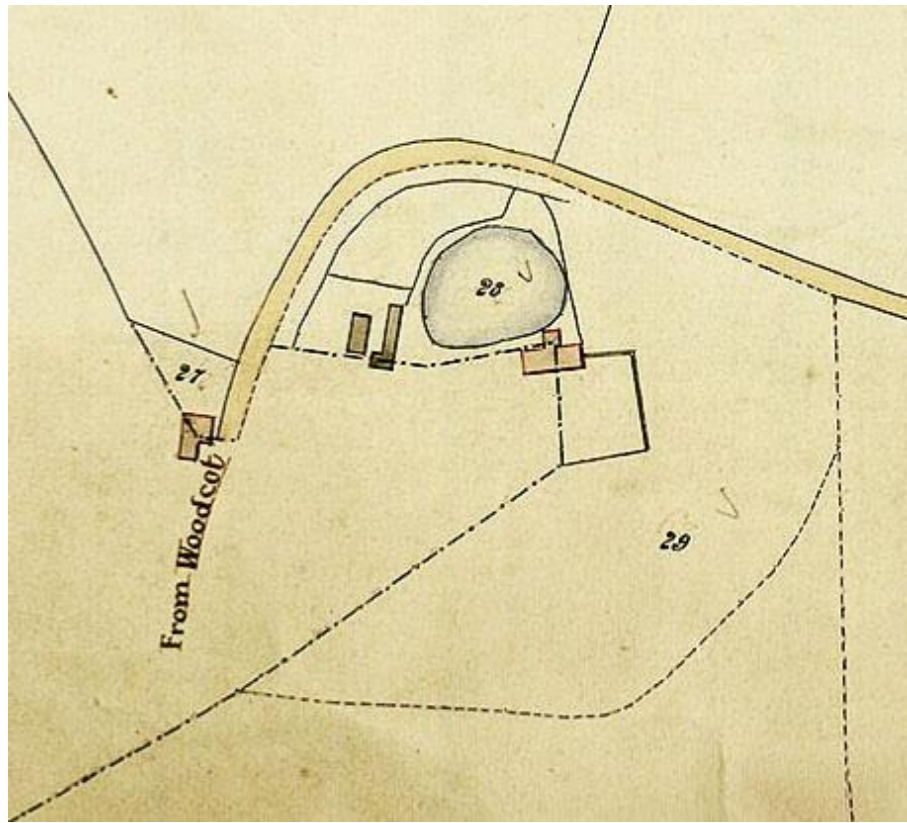


Figure 11. Part of 1841 Tithe map of Rotherfield Peppard

In summary, the physical evidence from Trench 3 confirms the wall shown on the 1762 drawing, which is still evident above ground on the 1898 Ordnance Survey map and the 1921 photographic postcard. The house and stables buildings on the drawing appear in a correct relationship to the wall as indicated on the Tithe Apportionment maps of 1841. The barn on the drawing, now missing, may have left traces in the large quantity of roof tile fragments found in the present lawn, where it used to be situated. This convergence of documentary and archaeological evidence serves to confirm the veracity of the 1762 drawing.

5.2 A drawing from 1868

A drawing of 1868, just a few years before its demolition, (Figure 12) shows Wyfold Court as a very grand house with twin castellated towers with a large gothic window between, and a large barn to the right (Bodleian Library, b). The Bodleian cataloguing says “possibly fanciful or mislabelled, or showing a mock-medieval addition”. To what extent this drawing is a realistic representation of the house in 1868 is assessed below.



Figure 12. Pen and Ink drawing of Wyfold Grange, 1868, possibly from the northeast. Bodleian Library (b).

In their detailing, the castellated towers are somewhat reminiscent of remaining parts of Thame Abbey, now called Thame Park (Figure 13). Oxford Archaeology undertook a Heritage Assessment and Survey of Thame Park (SMJ, 2002, p60). They concluded that parts of the present building “*incorporate substantial surviving elements from the medieval monastic buildings of the Cistercian Abbey*”. The western part of the south range (the left-hand section on Figure 13) “*belongs to the earliest phase of construction*”.



Figure 13. The south range of Thame Park. Courtesy of Thame Museum

The perspective of the 1868 drawing suggests that it must be a view from the northeast and the barn must be the predecessor of the present stables building, which, as has been discussed above, is confirmed on the Checkendon Tithe Apportionment map (Figure 10). It is also possible to reconcile the Figure 8 view (from the south), the Figure 12 view (from the northeast) and the T-shaped building on the Rotherfield Peppard Tithe Apportionment map (Figure 11). It should also be noted that our excavation of a short section of wall (Trench 3, see Section 4 above) revealed the presence of recycled dressed stone on the site suggesting that there had been at least one stone building at some time.

By 1870, when the house was sold by George Donkin’s trustees, the house is described as being in “*good order, sufficiently commodious for a gentleman’s shooting box (there are four sitting rooms, six bedrooms, and five attics, besides kitchens and offices), capable at slight expense of being converted into a family house*” (Oxford Journal, 1870). This description fits well with the 1762 and 1868 drawings. It is not clear if the façade was a remnant of the medieval grange or a more modern Gothic revival but, given the architectural links to Thame Abbey, compatibility with both Tithe maps and the sale description, and the confirmation of limestone on site, the former possibility certainly cannot be ruled out.

So, in summary, it seems as if the 1868 drawing is compatible with the 1762 drawing and other documentary and physical evidence. It may be reasonably realistic and neither “*fanciful*” nor the picture “*misplaced*” as suggested by the Bodleian.

5.3 The present buildings

The 1870 sale description continues “*This house would, at all events, afford a comfortable residence during the erection of a Mansion, for which the estate is admirably adapted, and was partially prepared by a late owner*” (Oxford Journal, 1870). It seems, therefore, that in a Victorian age where heritage was not viewed in the way it is seen today, that the medieval manor was already seen as old fashioned, with its estate ripe for the development of a new Mansion. This is exactly what the new owner, Edward Hermon did, building the new Wyfold Court on a site about a mile away from the historic Grange. Hermon, a very rich industrialist who made his fortune from the Lancashire cotton industry, was clearly no lover of farming, and in May 1871 all the farming equipment and animals were sold off by auction. (Berkshire Chronicle, 1871).

The old house was demolished and the current house, from 1877 known as Wyfold Grange, was built in only a year. A number of early 20th century postcards depicting Wyfold Grange exist of which two are shown in Figures 9 and 14 and another (postmarked February 15th 1908) is on the title page.



Figure 14. Postcard: photograph of Wyfold Grange postmarked July 27th 1933

There are echoes of the former house design seen in the 1762 drawing in the roofline, the gables and the chimney. Perhaps the 1871 house was in some measure a Victorian copy of the former house on the same footprint. The design has elements of Arts and Crafts style and is decorated with Flemish diagonal bond diapering.

A photograph of the house taken in 2022 (Figure 15) shows that at some point in the last 100 years, believed to be in the first half of the 20th century, the house has lost its central gable but otherwise remains unchanged from the southern perspective. There have been 20th century additions to the north and east.



Figure 15. View of the house in 2022 taken from similar position as Figure 9

Members of Oxfordshire Buildings Record undertook a brief inspection of the loft space as part of this project. It was found that all roof timbers and brickwork, including chimneys, were modern, presumably dating from construction in 1871. There was no evidence of any part of the former house having been retained.

The cottage to the west of the house, portrayed inconsistently on the two Tithe maps (Figures 10 and 11), still remains though, as it is now a brick built structure, it is probably a later replacement. There has been some extension since the 1898 OS map (Figure 1).

The present stables buildings are of brick and knapped flint construction (Figure 16) as is the wall of the drive, to its north. It seems likely that the stables and the cottage may have been constructed contemporaneously with the house, on the footprints of former structures.



Figure 16. The stables (foreground) and cottage (centre left) c1970

6. WATER SUPPLY AND THE CISTERN EXCAVATION

Until the introduction of piped water in the early 20th century, water supply in the Chilterns had always been problematic. The use of ponds and wells was common. In our landscape archaeology report we have explored the hydrogeology of the pond at Wyfold Grange and shown it to be a natural perched aquifer. However, the Wyfold pond was shallow. Based on present levels it was only 64cm deep when full. For comparison the two ponds at Greenmoor (Woodcote) are segregated: one for human use was several metres deep, the other, for animals, was relatively shallow. Similarly at Crays Pond the pond was fairly deep and still retains a hand pump for human use. It seems unlikely that the Wyfold pond would be sufficiently clean to be used for human water supply except as an absolute last resort in extreme dry times.

6.1 Wells

There has long been speculation that there was a well at Wyfold Grange. Indeed, the following report appeared in the Berkshire Chronical (1873):

“Distressing Suicide at Wyfold – A distressing case of suicide occurred at Wyfold Court on Wednesday morning. Mrs Tobitt, wife of the steward to Mr E. Hermon, M.P., of Wyfold Court rose before 6 o’clock on that day, removed the covering from a well 360ft deep which had only recently been constructed, and threw herself down it. Of course, she was killed instantaneously, her head being literally smashed and her body dreadfully mangled. An inquest was held on Christmas Day and a verdict of “temporary insanity” was returned. Insanity had been found in deceased’s family before.”

What truth there is behind this story cannot be determined but it is certain that if there were a well at Wyfold it could not have been 360ft (110m) deep. That would put the bottom of the well almost at sea level. As we have shown in our hydrogeology study in our report *Landscape Archaeology at Wyfold*, the water table (main Chilterns aquifer) at Wyfold is likely to vary between extremes of approximately 97m and 127m AOD. Ground level at the house at Wyfold Grange is approximately 120m so the aquifer would be in the range 23m below ground level to 7m above: the latter accounting for occasional flooding. So it would have been impossible, and

indeed there would have been no need, to dig a well significantly deeper than 23m. Perhaps there was some confusion with another well e.g. the Maharaja's Well at nearby Stoke Row constructed in 1864 with a depth of 368ft.

No known maps indicate the presence of a well at Wyfold Grange. There is a small circular building directly to the west of the house shown on the 1898 OS map (Figure 1) but this is not labelled and, in any case, looks too big to be a well. Unfortunately, this location was not readily accessible to our investigations due to a later wall built, and trees growing, over it and so could not be further investigated.

6.2 Water cisterns

The 1898 (Figure 1) map indicates a water pump ("P") at the southeast corner of the stables. Removal of a large stone cover in this location revealed a beehive construction water cistern shown from the inside in Figure 17. Its base diameter was approximately 1.8m and potential water height approximately 1.2m giving a capacity of about 3m³ (800 gallons). The inlet pipe can be traced to show that the supply for this cistern was rainwater collected on the roof of the adjacent stables.



Figure 17 Internal photograph of the garden water cistern showing old (ceramic) and new (plastic) inlet pipes.

In the curtilage of the cottage within the enclosure, to the west of the house, there is a circular feature of just over 1m diameter, covered by large wooden blocks. An excavation was started here and quickly revealed the top of another cistern presumably fed from the roof of the cottage. Unfortunately, the brickwork forming this cistern had started to collapse and it was felt unsafe to continue with the excavation.

The present landowner of Wyfold Grange recalled, as a child, seeing another large hole in the ground immediately to the west of the house, and it being covered by a metal plate. By metal detecting and probing with an auger, the location was determined and an excavation, Trench 4, commenced.

6.3 Trench 4: The house water cistern

6.3.1 Methodology

The turf was removed revealing disturbed soils and a steel ring. Further excavation using trowels and hand mattocks, exposed two large capstones, sitting more or less horizontally and side by side about 6 m from the wall of the house and 10-20 cm below the surface of the lawn. One was a rectangular stone slab just over a metre long and the other was a concrete quarter-circle cover with a large embedded ring. These covers were lifted away using the ring, to reveal an opening into a substantial cistern located directly beneath (Figure 18).



Figure 18. The house water cistern with one of the capstones removed

After this initial excavation, digging continued all around the cistern to a total depth of about 40 cm and later the trench was extended slightly towards the house.

6.3.2 Results

With the cover removed, it was possible to get a clear view into and around the cistern. This revealed a beehive shaped construction about 3 m in diameter and 4.1m depth with a cylindrical wall of brick and mortar, an exterior coating of concrete and a lined interior. At the top, the wall curved in towards the centre to provide a circular opening into the cistern about 60 cm in diameter. It would have held about 28m³ (7400 gallons) of water. From the construction it seems likely that the cistern was probably 19th century. Figure 19 shows a plan of the excavation.

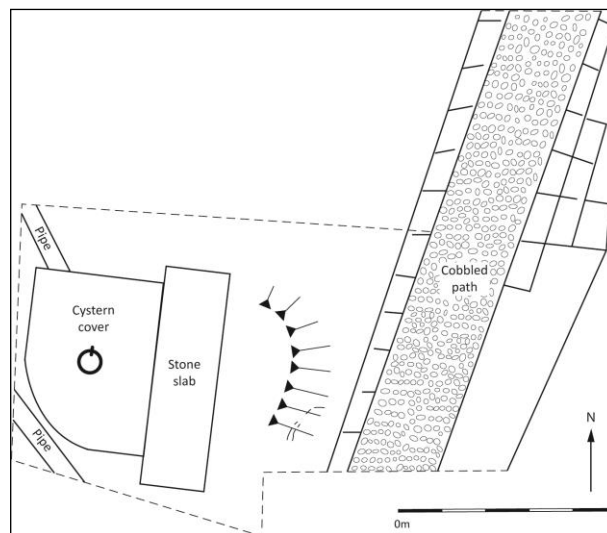


Figure 19. Plan of house cistern excavation.

In the south east corner of the trench, the outer concrete covering of the wall was not present and a patch of altered brickwork was visible. This may have been where a pump was originally located as there was a vertical steel pipe within the cistern leading up to this area.

Following the excavation around the cistern, the trench was extended slightly towards the house, revealing a well laid cobble path, probably of Victorian construction, running alongside the cistern, about 60 cm from the stone slab. This might have been used to gain access to the cistern and to the pump in particular.

At the landowners request a portion of this cobbled path was left exposed as a reminder of the excavation.

6.3.3 Finds

As might be expected in this situation, the soil above and surrounding the cistern was heavily disturbed and showed no signs of stratigraphy. It did contain some typical household finds, such as nails and other bits of metal, CBM, animal bones and glass fragments (all modern) together with a single piece of medieval or earlier pottery. There was nothing of particular significance as the pottery sherd was not in context, and probably came in from elsewhere.

7. OTHER SMALL FINDS FROM WYFOLD GRANGE

7.1 Metal detecting

A metal detecting survey throughout the enclosure and adjacent fields is described in our report *Landscape Archaeology at Wyfold*. The whole assemblage of finds largely consisted of a typical array expected from a rural domestic setting with some interesting items in addition. A timeline of the more interesting finds suggests continuous activity at the site since the medieval period. No finds earlier than AD 1180 were found.

7.2 Post-medieval finds from the northern perimeter

Trench 1 across the northern bank and ditch is described in our report *Excavations of the Earthwork at Wyfold Grange* and the contexts referred to below are illustrated there, in section 2.2.2. However it is more appropriate to report on the post-medieval finds from that trench here and they are listed by context in Table 2.

The topsoil (Context 101) and the upper fill of the ditch (Context 104) contained a general mixture of material, mostly of more recent or indeterminate date. Small finds within context 102, the upper part of the bank, were recorded by depth, measured from the crown. Small amounts of finds were found in the upper part of the context – where there were areas of disturbance caused by tree roots, raising the likelihood of intrusion – but otherwise Context 102 was bare of finds. The lower bank Context 103 was also bare of finds, as was the lower ditch fill, Context 105.

Context	101	102		104
Sub-Context Depth		0-36 cm	36-51 cm	
Pot	180g flower pot, 240g various			15g, 1 sherd, stoneware
Clay Pipe	8g, 4 pieces, AOB			1g, 1 stem
Bone				
Flint/ Stone				200g 1 core?
Glass	300g, 30 pieces, mainly bottle		2g, 1 piece	460g, 3 pieces, bottles
Metal	330g ferrous, various	79g, 4 pieces		
CBM	2.2kg mainly tile, some brick	35g, 6 pieces		350g, tile
Wood/ Charcoal		169g, 3 pieces Charcoal		
Other	Part of leather shoe 70g, 5p piece, slag/coal 500g			

Table 2. Small post-medieval finds from Trench 1

One find of particular interest was three sherds of a clay pipe shown in Figure 20. This is decorated with the letters AOB and bulls' horns. This is the emblem of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes and the pipe is thought to be a 19th century initiation token.



Figure 20. "AOB" clay pipe

8. CONCLUSIONS

In this report we have concentrated on archaeological evidence to support the historic narrative presented in VCH XX and other sources, and in particular the evolution from a Cistercian Grange to a domestic residence. We have focused particularly on finding evidence for the former house which was replaced by the present one in 1871, a little before the estate centre moved a short distance northwest to a new grandiose residence: “Wyfold Court”.

We have also considered, including by partial excavation, the water supply for the domestic residences and in particular evaluated three water cisterns and their supply by rooftop collection of rainwater. These cisterns are likely to have been of 19th century construction.

The geophysics programme identified a ditch feature which, upon excavation, revealed the remains of a stone wall. This wall has been identified with that shown on a sketch of 1762, and its remains were still visible on a 1921 photographic postcard. Ceramic roof tiles from this excavation, supplemented by two more small excavations on the lawn, may have come from the barn shown in the 1762 sketch. The archaeological and photographic evidence validates the sketch.

Doubts have been cast over the veracity of a later sketch (1868) by the Bodleian Library but we have shown that it is not incompatible with the former sketch nor the Tithe Apportionment maps of 1841 nor a property sale description of 1870. In addition to this documentary evidence, the presence of dressed limestone in the excavated wall supports the idea of a more imposing building than had previously been allowed.

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