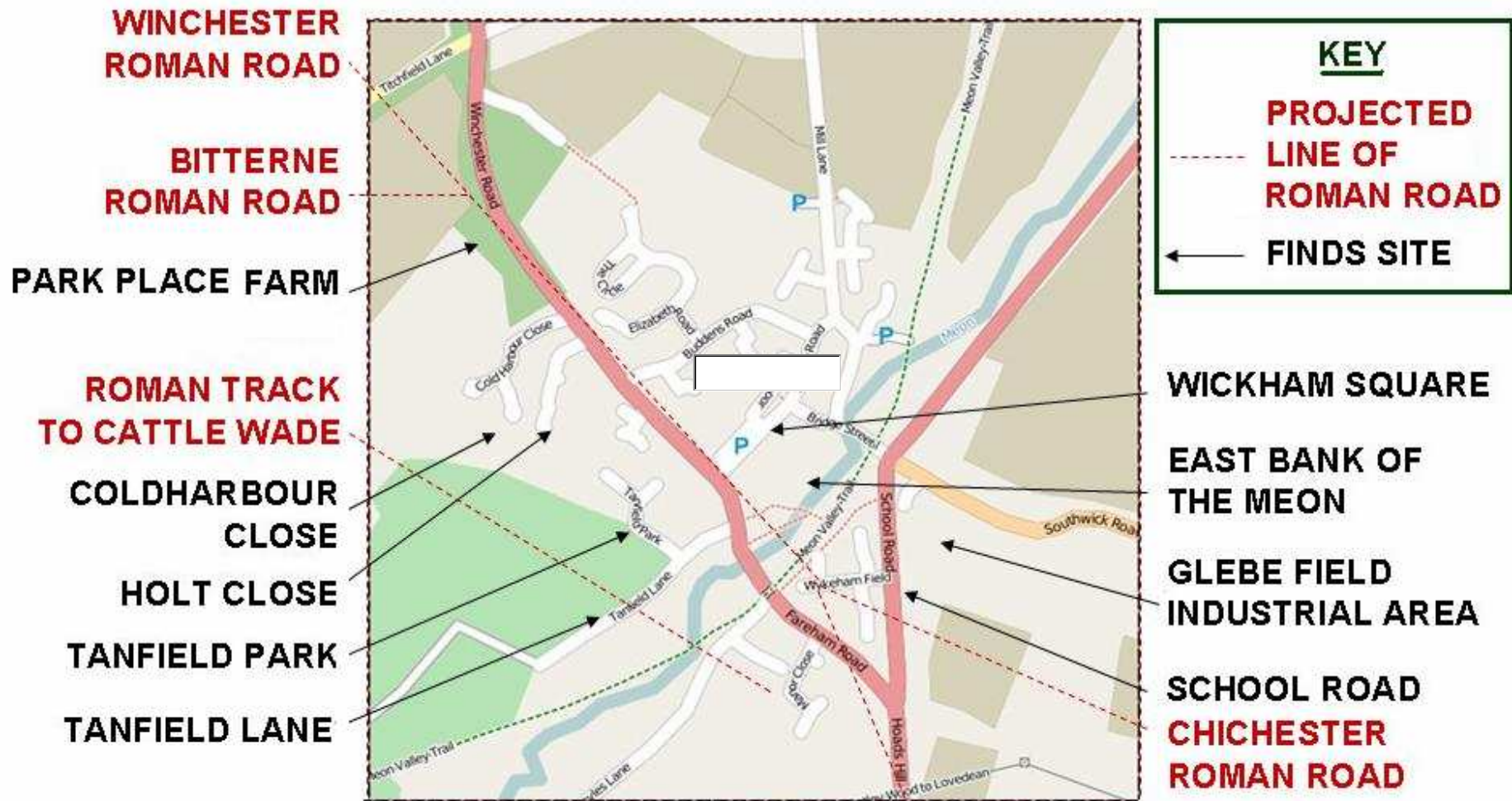


# SOME IRON AGE AND ROMANO-BRITISH FIND SITES IN WICKHAM



## THE GLEBE FIELD AND THE AREA TO THE SOUTH

During the years 1975 to 1978, the 11<sup>th</sup> century moated manor house was excavated. Finds of Roman pottery came to light during this excavation. As a result, the land to the south and east of the excavation was designated an Area of High Archaeological Importance awaiting further investigation.

In June and July of 1999 it became necessary to lay a new water pipeline, generally in a north/south direction, through the Glebe Field and the area to the south of it, affording archaeologists the opportunity to further examine the ground. As a result, the following Iron Age and Romano-British finds came to light:

1. Flint and mortar wall foundations and evidence of brick walls.
2. A line of post holes, probably representing the wall of a timber building.
3. A pit filled with charcoal.

4. Linear gullies, possibly clay extraction sites for pottery making.
5. A circular, post built structure, thought to have been a combined round house and workshop.
6. Three single chamber, open flue pottery kilns.
7. "An abundance of pottery shards" in the area of the kilns, mostly of late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and 3<sup>rd</sup> century date but spanning the period from before 50AD to 300AD, (actually, 4322 shards were found over a trench length of 160 meters).
8. A piece of Samian Ware pottery of the Martes de Veyre type from central Gaul, at the time only the second piece of its kind to have been found in the whole of the country.
9. A rotary quern and a saddle quern.
10. Iron objects and slag indicating smithying.
11. A continental glass vessel handle.
12. An enamelled copper alloy brooch.
13. A number of coins.
14. Spelt, wheat and barley seeds.

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From this excavated evidence one can deduce a few things.

1. The site was occupied by the Iron Age and Romano-British people for a long period, (at least 300 years).
2. They produced far more pottery than they needed for their own use and therefore traded it, and that their trading activities were not confined to this country.
3. They largely continued their old Iron Age life style but with Roman aspirations, at least with regard to luxury goods.

The picture that emerges is one of an industrial/occupation site, a picture which is repeated elsewhere in the village.

### **TANFIELD LANE, “SPURS PADDOCK” AND “AMANI”**

Excavations took place in the gardens of Spurs Paddock and Amani, Tanfield Lane, in November 1998 in way of the building of a new house. The following Romano-British finds

came to light:

1. Ceramic building materials and tiles plus evidence of pottery production.
2. Eight copper alloy coins.
3. Two post holes or pits filled with charcoal.
4. The Roman road sub-surface.
5. Some daub and evidence of a floor surface which may represent the remains of an Iron Age round house.

This site is another instance of a Romano-British industrial/occupation centre.

### **SCHOOL ROAD**

During August 2000, archaeological investigation in the vicinity of School Road brought to light a large amount of Iron Age and Roman material, indicating occupation before and during the Roman conquest. A pottery kiln base and the remains of an associated building were found.

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This was not the only indication of industrial activity. Finds suggested the presence of:

1. Pottery making.
2. Glass working.
3. Iron working.
4. Bronze smithying.
5. Lead smelting.

This is very interesting, for although clay for pottery, sand for glass making, and iron ore can all be found fairly locally, lead, tin and copper cannot and must have been brought from far away, or else we have an early example of recycling.

There must have been a pressing need for bronze and one can conjecture that the requirement was for horse harness fittings by the advancing Roman army. Whether or not this is true will probably never be known.

Other features and finds from the site included stake holes, post holes, gullies and

quarries, brick, tile and stone, iron slag, hearth lining, part of a crucible furnace and building material.

This site is another instance of a Romano-British industrial centre.

### **TANFIELD PARK, MEON POOL**

Meon Pool, Tanfield Park, was also investigated in 1998 in way of the building of new houses, revealing the following Romano-British finds and features:

1. Wickham greyware pottery, including shards of a rimmed storage jar.
2. Tiles and burnt clay.
3. Iron slag from smithying.
4. The Roman road sub-surface and roadside ditches.
5. A Roman trackway.

Interestingly, the road appears to have been repaired with flint material several times in antiquity. *continued...*

## **COLD HARBOUR CLOSE**

Limited excavations were carried out at Cold Harbour Close in May 1995 in way of building work.

When the work started, Romano-British coins and a bone pin were found which caused archaeologists to look at the site. They discovered Roman tile fragments in the builder's spoil heap. Some rather rushed exploratory work was then undertaken with the following resultant finds:

1. Iron Age and early Romano-British pottery shards.
2. A large quantity of Roman tile
3. One large and three small sub-circular pits.

Cold Harbour Close represents a cautionary tale. What was not found in the builders spoil? What more information could have been garnered had the archaeological investigation not, per force, have been rushed?

## **PARK PLACE**

In September 1991, limited archaeological investigations were carried out in way of the construction of the golf course on part of Park Place Farm.

Excavations quickly revealed ditch elements associated with the Roman road running through the site, along with a small quantity of Romano-British grey ware pottery, including folded beaker shards and a mortarium.

## **OTHER SITES**

Several other sites in and around the village have, over the years, yielded Romano-British finds. These include:

1. Tiles and brick from Mansfield Lane.
2. Pottery from the west end of Wickham Square.

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3. Evidence of metal working, pottery (including high status Samian ware) and a possible villa at Black Cottage Lane.
4. Neolithic flints, Romano-British ditches, pottery, iron slag and hearth lining, plus under floor heating tiles and box flue tile as used in hypocaust construction from Holt Close.
5. Pottery shards from the east bank of the River Meon.

And a little further away:

1. Mesolithic flint working, Neolithic axes and scrapers and 23 Romano-British pottery kilns at Shedfield.

2. Evidence of charcoal burning and iron working in the Bere Forest car park area.

The geographical extent of the industrial occupation finds in Wickham indicates a site of importance during the Roman Period. Further evidence from the Romano-British period may come to light in the future, but probably only through keyhole archaeology because much of the village centre is a designated conservation area, containing important and extant later buildings that cannot and should not be disturbed.

