

TEST PIT EXCAVATION WITHIN CURRENTLY OCCUPIED RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, NETHERLANDS, POLAND AND UK – RESULTS OF THE CARE PROJECT 2019

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Introduction and Methodology (C.L.)

The CARE project ‘Community Archaeological in Rural Environments Meeting Societal Challenges’ (CARE-MSoC) is a new three-year, four-nation research project focused on currently inhabited rural settlements of known or suspected medieval date. The archaeological aims of the project are to advance knowledge and understanding of the development of these settlements through test pit excavation, extending Carenza Lewis’s work in currently occupied rural settlements (CORS) in the UK reported in this journal since 2005 (Lewis 2005; 2006; 2007a; 2008; 2009; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016a; 2017; 2018; 2019a)⁶. Led by the UK, the CARE project introduces participative community test pit excavation as a method for investigating CORS in the Czech Republic, Netherlands and Poland, where this is an unfamiliar technique. In all three countries, CORS have not previously been extensively investigated by archaeological excavation and public participation in archaeological excavation is almost unknown. Running over three years, the CARE project involves archaeologists from the Universities of Amsterdam (Netherlands), Lincoln (UK), Poznań (Poland) and West Bohemia (Czech Republic) in training, supervising and supporting rural residents carrying out test pit excavations in the greens and gardens of medieval villages in the Czech Republic, Netherlands and Poland, and in analysing and reporting on the results. The project is a European Commission Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) funded jointly by the national research councils in each of the four countries.

The overarching archaeological objectives in relation to medieval settlement studies are (1) to test the feasibility and research value of participative test pit excavation in CORS in different countries; (2) to advance knowledge of the extent and character of the

archaeological resource underlying currently occupied rural settlements; and (3) to advance understanding of *longue durée* change in participating settlements. This is innovative research as most countries, especially beyond the UK, have seen little or no research-driven excavation in inhabited rural settlements, with excavations in such places rare and mostly driven, when they do occur, by the development process. Accordingly, previous research into CORS has been dominated by historical and/or cartographic analyses.

Methodology

The CARE project involves the excavation of 1m square archaeological test pits in different locations across selected rural settlements of known or suspected medieval date. The excavations follow the same methodology used extensively across eastern England (Lewis 2007; Lewis 2019b) developed from earlier projects at Shapwick (Gerrard and Aston 2007) and Whittlewood (Jones and Page 2006) and brought to wider attention through Channel 4’s ‘Time Team’s Big Dig’ at Great Easton, Leicestershire in 2003 (Cooper and Priest 2003), at Kibworth in Leicestershire in BBC’s ‘Story of England’ in 2010 (Collins 2018) and at Long Melford, Suffolk in the BBC’s 2012, ‘Great British Story’ (Collins 2019). In brief, the test pits are hand-excavated in 10cm spits by local residents supported by written handbooks and working under the supervision of professional archaeologists. The positions of the test pits are recorded by survey and/or handheld GPS. Test pits are excavated by stratigraphic layer, unless a layer is more than 10cm thick, in which case it is excavated in 10cm spits. Each layer/spit is assigned an individual context number and recorded using *pro forma* booklets which include a plan of the surface of each layer/spit before excavation, with a photograph also taken of this surface. Spoil is sieved through a 10mm mesh sieve or sorted manually to the same level of resolution, and all items which volunteers consider even remotely likely to have been created or used by humans are retained, with finds from each context kept separate. Test pits are usually excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m, or until they reach natural, or encounter a feature that renders further excavation inadvisable or impossible. Once excavation ceases, the test pit sections are recorded on

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⁶ The CARE project has a range of other aims (<https://archaeologyeurope.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/>) relating to the social value of public participative archaeology that are beyond the scope of reports in this journal whose primary interest is in medieval settlement.

pro forma booklets, the pits are backfilled and any turf replaced. Following excavation, the finds are formally identified, dated (if possible), analysed and mapped.

Results

The outcomes of the test pit excavations from this first year of fieldwork are summarised below, listed alphabetically by country and then by settlement name.

Czech Republic (P.V.)

In the Czech Republic, research to date into nucleated rural settlements has produced some evidence for the high medieval formation of nucleated villages and thrown light on the late-medieval and post-medieval disruptions such as the fifteenth century religious wars and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648); processes of modern villages' development; and the impact of the post WWII ethnic cleansing and communist collectivisation. However, investigation within surviving medieval villages has been limited to rescue archaeology (Nováček and Vařeka 1996; Krajč, Měřínský and Vařeka 2017, 368–369; 372). This has shown that inhabited settlements can provide valuable evidence for medieval and post-medieval settlement development (*e.g.* Vařeka *et al.* 2010).

Test pit excavations were carried out in two villages in the Czech Republic in 2019, Myslinka (District of Plzeň-North) and Vanovice (District of Blansko) (Fig. 1). Only two pits were excavated in Vanovice and these will be included in the report for 2020, but preliminary results from Myslinka are presented here.

Myslinka (District of Pilsen-North), Czech Republic (49°44'53" N, 13°13'09" E)

Myslinka is a small village situated 5 km west of Pilsen on a gentle north-facing slope above the Myslinka stream at an altitude of 360–380m. The gently undulating landscape is formed of mudstones, sandstones and arkoses of Palaeozoic, Cenozoic sands and gravels covered with brown soils. The village was first documented in 1239, when it became part

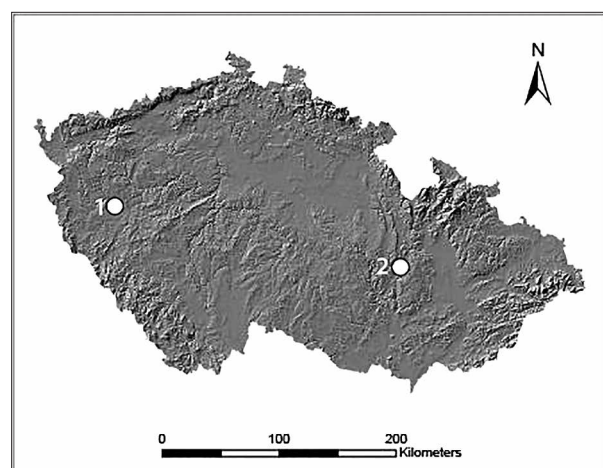


Figure 1 Map of Czech Republic showing location of 1: Myslinka (District of Pilsen-North); 2: Vanovice (District of Blansko) where CARE project test pit excavation focused in 2019.

of the large estate of the local Benedictine monastery in Kladrby (*villam nomine Myzlinka*, CDB III/2, No. 219, p. 293). The monastery was burnt down in 1421 during the Hussite Wars (1419–1434), when the estate was devastated and taken over by local nobility. A number of villages were therefore deserted, including Myslinka. The monastery reclaimed the estate during the seventeenth century re-catholicisation of the country and restored it to prosperity after the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). The settlement of Myslinka was re-established sometime after 1671 (Gersdorfová 2020, 1–2). The settlement pattern then included the large monastic manor farm cultivating most of the cadastral territory and 17 small farms with strip fields in marginal areas, settled by invited peasants whom parish registers indicate were German. The number of houses increased steadily from 19 in 1789 to 38 in 1930, when about 80% of inhabitants were German farmers and the remainder landless Czech agricultural workers. After WWII, residents of German ethnicity were expelled, and their property given to Czech settlers. The manor farm and its fields were nationalized in 1948 and managed as a state enterprise with the collectivization of private farms starting in 1950. The village, which had 36 houses in the 1980s, began to grow again after the Velvet Revolution (1989) and currently has 59 houses accommodating 225 inhabitants (Gersdorfová 2020).

The earliest ordnance survey map of Myslinka from the late eighteenth century (<http://oldmaps.geolab.cz/map>) depicts an oval plan. More detail is provided by the cadastral map from 1838 (<https://archivnimapy.cuzk.cz>) (which probably reflects the late seventeenth century layout), showing the settlement measuring 220x290m, with 20 small farms situated around the central village green where a small chapel can be seen (Fig. 2). In 1838 the settlement was dominated by a large four-wing baroque stone and brick monastic manor-farm on the south-east, with all other farm buildings (except one farm house and a few outhouses) built of wood (marked yellow on the map), probably using the corner-timbered vernacular construction style typical of this part of West Bohemia (Vařeka and Frolec 2007; 2010). These were replaced during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century by stone and brick buildings, and new houses were also added on the northern side of the village. During the communist era, several buildings were demolished including most of the baroque eighteenth century manor farm and chapel (Fig. 3). Development since the 1990s has continued, as before, on the northern side of the settlement.

Seventeen test pits were excavated in Myslinka by c. 20 local people in autumn 2019 - early 2020 (Fig. 2 and 3) to an average depth of 1m. Three pits were sited within house plots and 14 on the village green. A total of 1,071 finds were recovered, with all dateable artefacts derived from the late seventeenth-twentieth century.

Of the test pits within the house plots, two (numbers 2 and 3) revealed former agricultural soils, with a handful of late seventeenth-nineteenth century sherds in test pit 2 linked to manuring. Test pit 1, sited in the back of house plot 2, revealed the original surface of the farmyard, covered with a thick layer of waste (mostly building debris and ash from stoves) mixed with artefacts of early twentieth century date (Fig. 4).



Figure 2 Plan of Myslinka showing features recorded on cadastral map of 1838. A: manor farm; B: Chapel; 1–17: test-pits; red: masonry buildings; yellow: timber buildings; green lines: house-plots; black lines: fields and roads; grey lines: contour lines (map by M. Preusz and P. Vařeka; <https://archivnimapy.cuzk.cz>).



Figure 3 Orthophoto Map of Myslinka in 2019. A: former state farm (currently private enterprise); B: former chapel; orange: preserved historic buildings (before 1945); grey: demolished historic buildings; 1–17: test-pits (orthophoto map by ArcGIS on ags.cuzk.cz, M. Preusz and P. Vařeka).



Figure 4 Myslinka – Test-pit 1 showing section. 1: top soil; 2: layer of waste from the post-WWII period; 3: original surface of the farm yard; 4: soil; 5: subsoil (2019; photo by S. Mattová).

Three test pits were situated around the perimeter of the village green, on its northern (No. 4), western (No. 5) and southern (No. 6) sides. The first two pits revealed the ground surface of the green which contained a small number of late seventeenth-nineteenth century sherds, and showed the green to be overlain by thick layers of late twentieth century land-fill dominated by construction debris. Test pit No. 6 exposed the foundation of a clay-bonded stone wall, which formerly defined the front of farm complex (No. 9) but was removed in the late twentieth century when this part of the village green was used for waste disposal. Contexts associated with the former garden in front of the farm building produced pottery dating from the late seventeenth – early twentieth century.

The remainder of the test pits were sited in the centre of the village green in response to a request by the municipal office to locate the remains of the baroque chapel, demolished on the orders of the local communist authorities in 1976. Historical maps were used to identify the presumed location of the chapel which was investigated by test pits. 7–17 (Fig. 5). The complete ground plan of the chapel measuring 4x4m was uncovered just a few centimetres beneath the current ground surface. Well-preserved remains were represented by a 1m thick lime mortar-bonded stone wall and a red brick floor. Test pits around the chapel documented late twentieth century activity in this area (confirmed by local people), which included waste disposal, children's play and parties involving considerable alcohol consumption represented by broken bottles and traces of bonfires (the latter associated with the traditional "burning of witches" commemoration on the night of 30th April/1st May).

The test pit data suggest that the present village of Myslinka was established in the late seventeenth century, after the end of the Thirty Years War. With the exception of a few architectural features including components

of the manor farm complex, the pre-twentieth century development of the village has left minimal material trace, represented mostly by thin layers containing pottery fragments, found both within house plots and on the village green. The excavations recorded significant discontinuity in the development of the village after WWII: changed attitudes to the locality are reflected not only in the demolition of historic architecture but also in waste disposal which was deposited in private as well as in public areas. Thick deposits containing building debris from ruined and demolished farms as well as domestic garbage was simply spread around. One important social outcome of the test pit excavations is that local initiatives to re-establish the chapel and renovating the village green can now be guided by the tangible excavated evidence.

The absence of any pre-late seventeenth-century archaeological material suggests that when Myslinka was re-established after 1761, it was sited in a new, previously unoccupied, area. Surface survey has identified a potential location for the documented medieval village (deserted in the fifteenth century) c. 400m to the north on a platform above the confluence of two streams. Test pit excavation in autumn 2020 is planned to test this hypothesis.

Netherlands (H.v.L. and J.V.)

In the Netherlands, a recent study of Dutch village formation (Verspay *et al.* 2017) highlighted the importance of systematically studying the built environment of villages to understand the processes leading to village formation, but recognised that good archaeological data from CORS are generally lacking. There is interest in a 'landscape biography' approach to the long-term history of places, drawing on disciplines including history, archaeology, geology, historical geography, toponymy and folklore (Kolen *et al.* 2015; Bloemers *et al.* 2010; van Londen 2016) and it is hoped that the CARE project will help advance this.

In the Netherlands, the CARE project focusses on Het Groene Woud, a region in the southern part of the country situated between the towns of 's-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven and Tilburg (Fig. 6). This coversand-dominated area is characterised by a varied landscape with small villages and the occasional market town amidst old open fields interspersed with woodland, marshes and heathland with impressive driftsands. Because of the strong connection between natural and cultural history, the area has been declared a National Landscape.

Eight villages are committed to participating in the CARE project in the Netherlands between 2019 and 2022: Best, Boxtel, Esch, Gemonde, Liempde, Oirschot, Schijndel and Woensel (Fig. 7). These represent a variety of settlements in the region ranging in size from small to large, and in their state of historical preservation from good to almost unrecognisably subsumed within the suburb of a modern industrial town. Equally, their populations range from those with large proportions resident for several generations to those dominated by recent incomers with no historic ties to the village. This presents an excellent opportunity to learn about the capacity of participative archaeological explorations of

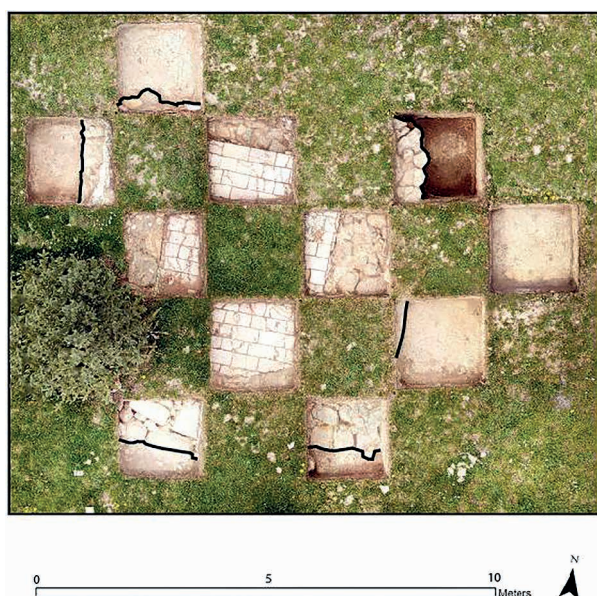


Figure 5 Myslinka - photoplan of test pits 7–17 showing the baroque chapel remains, external wall face highlighted by a blue line (photogrammetry by M. Preusz).



Figure 6 Map of Netherlands showing Het Groene Woud (orange) region between the towns of 's-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven and Tilburg where the Dutch part of the CARE project focuses.

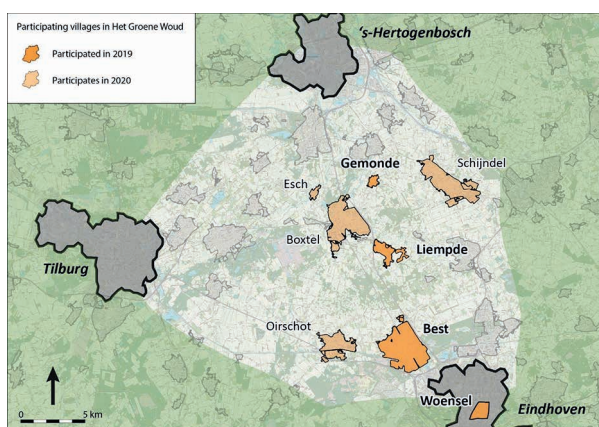


Figure 7 Map showing the villages in Het Groene Woud currently participating in the CARE-project.

the village's past to strengthen people's ties to their place (binding), to improve social cohesion (bonding) and connect people from various social groups (bridging). In each of the villages the archaeological events are run by the local history or archaeology club.

Aarle (Best), Netherlands (51°30'41"N, 5°21'48"E)

Aarle now lies within Best, a mostly modern village of approximately 29800 inhabitants which developed as an agglomeration of formerly separate hamlets sited along a main road connecting a marshland area in the north to extensive heathlands in the south. Administratively, these settlements used to be part of Oirschot, but in 1821, Aarle, Naastenbest, Verrenbest and De Vleut (the hamlets furthest east of the village) became the separate municipality of Best. Aarle is the westernmost of these hamlets.

The name Aarle refers to a small stream (Aa-) in or near woodland (-Lo). The stream can still be observed

in the present landscape, as can the agricultural character of the historic community, reflected in the various traditional compartmented longhouses (*langgevelboerderij*) surviving along the streets. When administratively part of Oirschot, the villagers of Aarle formed a neighbourhood (*herdgang*) which meant that tasks such as the use of the common land for grazing sheep and were organized by the Aarle community.

Aarle lies on the main road from Oirschot to Son. It does not have a true nucleus, but is made up of a cluster of farms around a green and a row of houses along the Broekstraat. On a small mound next to the green is a chapel dedicated to St. Anne dating to 1837, when it replaced a chapel built in 1628 as an upgrade of a late medieval timber shrine building (Coenen 2000, 112–113). Analysis of the historical topography shows that the present hamlet sits amidst five large arable fields, with the farm buildings located on the outer edges of these fields at the intersections of the roads separating them. Previous archaeological research in one of the fields showed the earliest settlement there to have been a farm of late ninth century date located fairly centrally in the plot (Verspay 2017, 499–506). From the twelfth century successive farms and their divisions moved gradually outward in tandem with the expansion of the field system, with the earliest occupation of the current farm sites appearing to date to the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Whether this also applies to the other fields remains to be seen. The final expansion of the arable land appears to coincide with a nucleation of the farms in the late thirteenth/fourteenth century when use of the commons was formalised and the communities start to appear in the historical record as administrative entities.

Four test pits were excavated in Aarle in April 2019 with the local history club 'Dye van Best' in a event run as a pilot before the formal launch of the CARE project in the Netherlands (Fig. 8). Only test pit 2 produced medieval pottery, and that was of fifteenth century

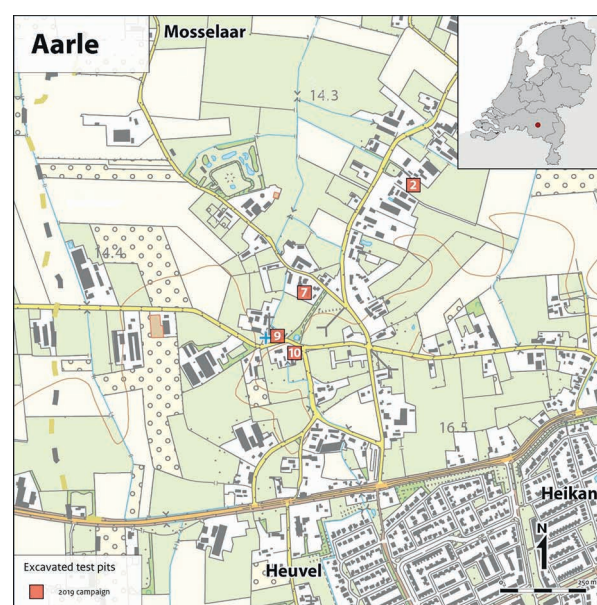


Figure 8 Aarle, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2019. (Topographic Map; © Kadaster).

date. Although the archaeological finds were of limited significance for understanding the medieval settlement development, the exercise proved invaluable in fine-tuning the organisational and operational process, and moreover allowed a first observation of the stratigraphy of the soil within the current settlement itself. In test pits 2 and 9 natural was not reached because the sites were perceived to have been subject to modern disturbance, but a final check revealed that intact layers were in fact present below these. These sites will be dug again next year.

Gemonde, Netherlands (51°37'13" N, 5°21'28" E)

Gemonde is a small settlement of 2200 inhabitants located between Boxtel and Sint-Michielsgestel at the foot of a coversand ridge which flanks the river Dommel. The historic layout and buildings of Gemonde are fairly well preserved and so too is the surrounding rural landscape. The village centre lies directly behind a large, elongated open field system on the edge of a more varied and finely divided area with fields, meadows and woodlands. This area is quite wet and is intersected by the Beekse Waterloop and numerous other water-carrying ditches. The southern part of the village area includes part of the marsh and carr forest area of De Geelders.

Gemonde consists of extensive ribbon development along two roads at the base of the coversand ridge and a small nucleus around the church, surrounded by a number of separate farms and small hamlets: Besselaar, Beek and De Wielse Hoeven. In recent years, the intermediate area has been infilled in with ribbon developments. On the Hogert, the highest part of the coversand ridge and the site of the medieval church and possibly of the settlement that preceded the present village, only a few modern farmhouses can be found. The name Gemonde dates back to at least the seventh century (Coenen 2004, 14). In a twelfth-century copy of a deed from AD 698/699 it is spelled Datmunda, most likely a transcription of Gaimunda, a name that goes back to the Germanic *gemuntha* which means 'river mouth' or 'confluence of two waters' (Sprenger de Rover 1951). This translation corresponds with the topographical situation of the area where the Beekse Loop empties in the Dommel stream.

Archaeological evidence suggests the stream valley and coversand ridge formed attractive hunting and fishing area for people as early as the Mesolithic. Like elsewhere along this stream valley, the first reclamations were undertaken on the higher parts of the coversand ridges. Finds indicate an agricultural settlement in the Iron Age followed in the Roman period by the construction of a villa comprising a tuff stone house with a tiled roof on the highest part of the ridge. Whether the site was abandoned in the later third century, as happened to other parts of the region, is unclear, but in the seventh century it formed the centre of the manorial estate of Gaimunda where the missionary Lambert established a chapel (Glazema 1954).⁷ This estate was donated to Willibrord who gave it to Echternach abbey after his death in 739, after which the chapel was made a church and Gemonde became a parish. Administratively

the area was split between the lords of Boxtel and the lords of Oud-Herlaer (later Sint-Michielsgestel), and this became even more complicated in the fourteenth century when the Duke of Brabant granted the rights to use the Bodem van Elde (a large area of marsh and heathland east of Gemonde) to the inhabitants of Boxtel, Sint-Michielsgestel, Schijndel and Sint-Oedenrode. This brought the parish of Gemonde under the jurisdiction of four aldermen courts, divided between two bailiwick quarters: Peelland and Oisterwijk.

Some farms in the later village area are known by name from the fourteenth/fifteenth century. Noteworthy is the estate of Berselaar (later Besselaar), east of the present settlement, which lay in the most western part of the jurisdiction of Sint-Oedenrode. It is not known whether Berselaar/Besselaar was part of the pre-thirteenth century holdings of the counts of Rode or whether it was a new foundation, established perhaps in relation to a claim on this part of the wilderness. At this time, the settlement of Gemonde took the form of an agglomeration of dispersed farms and hamlets rather than a clustered settlement. This changed in the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries. In 1648 the parish church of St. Lambert was transferred to the Protestants following the transfer of the bailiwick of 's-Hertogenbosch to the Dutch Republic, but after the 1672 French invasion the Catholic inhabitants of Gemonde obtained the right to celebrate mass in a clandestine church in exchange for a fee. A barn church was built near the Twijnmeer estate at the base of coversand ridge and this Kerkeind (Church End) became a focal point for the subsequent development of the settlement, although it never became an administratively independent village. The division lasted until 1996, when Gemonde, in its entirety, became part of the municipality Sint-Michielsgestel.⁸

Fourteen test pits were excavated in Gemonde in 2019 (Fig. 9) by more than 120 volunteers, organised by the local history club 'Heemkundekring Den Hogert'. Finds processing was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but initial findings from test pit 3 and 4 appear to confirm settlement on the coversand ridge in late prehistory. Pottery from test pit 4 indicates that the Roman villa site may have been occupied continuously up to the seventh century. Finds on the far side of the coversand ridge suggest this area was occupied earlier than expected. Amongst the debris of the nineteenth century farm that stood here until the 1960s, several pieces of twelfth-century Andenne pottery from the Belgian Meuse region were found in test pit 21. Combined with the characteristic rounded plot shape, this suggests that this was the site of an eleventh/twelfth-century farm.

On the other side of Gemonde, on a farm on the edge of the former wilderness, finds from test pit 11 confirmed the relatively recent date of occupation here, with the earliest pottery dating to the eighteenth century, correlating neatly with the 1697 date found on a beam that discovered in the fireplace by the owners of the house during renovation work. This farm seems therefore to have been established during the reclamation of the wetland forest (carr) during this period.

On the south side of the Sint-Lambertusweg test pit 25 was dug on the site of a former farm of Our Lady's

⁷ Glazema 1954.

⁸ Coenen 2004, 372.

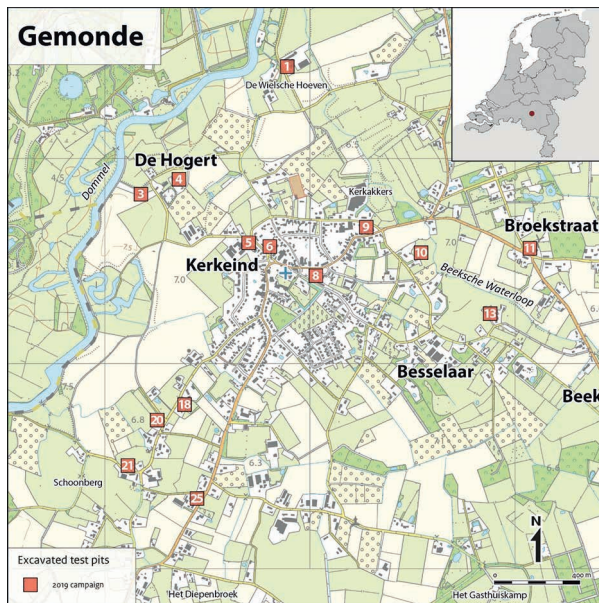


Figure 9 Woensel, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2019 (Topographic Map; © Kadaster).

Hospital of Boxtel. Although the farm was leased out by the nuns, we did find a token of devotion from the tenant farmer: a beautiful tobacco pipe (1890–1920) brought back from Kevelaer (a seventeenth century pilgrimage site on the present Dutch-German border) as a souvenir.

Liempde, Netherlands. (51°34'13" N, 5°22'22" E)

Liempde is a moderately sized village of approximately 4800 inhabitants situated on a coversand ridge at the stream valley of the Dommel. It is characterized by its well-preserved historic centre amidst an intact agricultural landscape and the village has many national and municipal monuments, distinctive buildings and protected townscapes, along with a close-knit community and numerous active social organisations and clubs.

The village name Liempde is recorded in 1309 as 'Leymde' (Coenen 2004, 37). The prefix Liem- or Lim- is generally explained as loam. This interpretation is supported by the pedological situation of the area which is indeed very loamy. Previous finds show that the stream valley and the coversand ridge offered an attractive environment for hunting and fishing as early as the Mesolithic. With the transition to agriculture, arable fields were created on the higher parts of the ridge. Initially, these fields would be periodically relocated, but later they were cultivated more permanently. During the Roman period the area appears to have been abandoned again and in the following centuries the woodland gradually regenerated. Reclamation was not undertaken before the Early Middle Ages, when the relatively fertile soils on the higher parts of the ridge were again the first to be cultivated. These clearings formed the basis for the later arable fields and their associated farms. Liempde is an agglomeration of smaller settlement clusters which around the beginning of the Late Middle Ages (late thirteenth or fourteenth century) consisted of six separate hamlets (Den Berg, Kasteren, Hezelaar,

Koestraat, Looeind and Vrilkhoven) which together formed the *communitas* Liempde (Heesters 1987, 39).

The historic village centre is a relatively recent development. The community had its own chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist from the late fourteenth century (Coenen 2004, 38), located not on the site of the present church but closer to the Dommel stream at the edge of the Kerkakker (churchyard) field. This peripheral location could indicate an origin as a private chapel on a manorial estate. This chapel had developed into an independent parish by 1603 and the chapel elevated to a church. When in 1648 the territory was given to the Dutch Republic after the Peace of Münster, the church came into the hands of the Protestants, but as the village had few protestant residents, it soon fell in ruin. However, after the French invasion of 1672, the Catholic inhabitants of Liempde were given permission to celebrate mass in a clandestine 'barn church', leading to the development of the small Kerkeind (Church End) settlement cluster around the church. In 1787, a town hall constructed further south between the existing hamlets formed a second focal point around which settlement developed. Subsequently, the area between the barn church and the town hall was infilled and developed into what is now known as the historic centre of Liempde.

Seven test pits were excavated by more than 40 volunteers in Liempde in 2019 (Fig. 10) organised by the local history club 'Erfgoedvereniging Kèk Liemt'. The excavation aimed to establish when the medieval settlement clusters at the town hall and the Kerkeind barn church were first occupied and to see whether they were new foundations or developed from existing settlement.

Again, test pit excavation showed that contrary to general expectations the historical layers were mostly well-persevered. The plot of the former barn church turned out to be built up prior to the construction of a new rectory in 1867 following a fire in 1864 that destroyed much of Kerkeind including the barn church and old

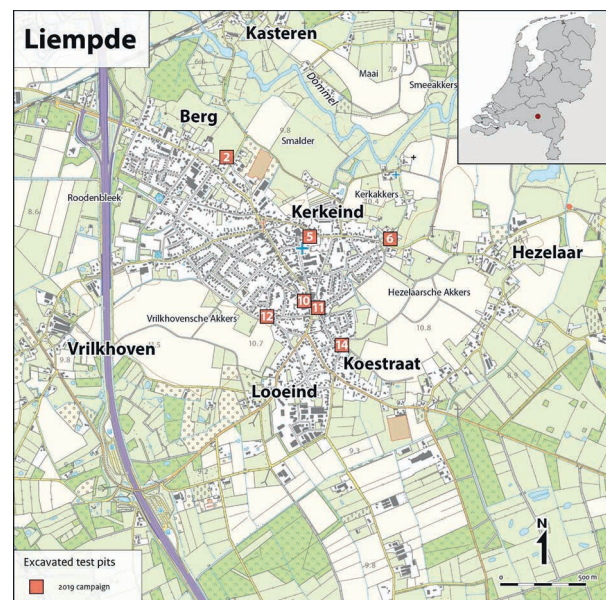


Figure 10 Liempde, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2019 (Topographic Map; © Kadaster).

rectory. In test pit 5 fourteenth/fifteenth century pottery was discovered underneath an intact late medieval ploughsoil, indicating that the site was on the edge of the arable fields with settlement probably nearby. On the east side of Kerkeind test pit 6 was dug in the backyard of a farm that was demolished in the nineteenth century. This showed the site lay in the former vegetable garden, with the neck of a wine bottle dating to the late seventeenth or first half of the eighteenth century found at the bottom of the ploughsoil.

The pit in the town hall area yielded a variety of finds (pottery, glass, clay pipe, coins, etc.) dating from the sixteenth century up to the present day. One of the most remarkable pieces was a 30mm diameter piece of a seventeenth-/eighteenth-century cast iron grape shot. This might be a relic of the Eighty Years' War, but could also be associated with the War of the First Coalition when British, Dutch and Austrian troops were pushed back by French republican forces, which led to a confrontation in the neighbouring market town of Boxtel in September 1794.

Woensel, Netherlands (51°28'57" N, 5°26'48" E)

The former village of Woensel lies hidden beneath a modern suburb. Although very little remains of it above ground today, in the Middle Ages Woensel was a prominent settlement, the centre of a deanery and a parish centre. The earliest documented reference dates to 1107 when the pope confirmed the rights and properties of the Abbey of Sint-Truiden (BE), including a church. In the Late Middle Ages, the parish of Woensel included several villages, a seignory and the town of Eindhoven, with the latter only becoming an independent parish at the end of the fourteenth century (Arts & Hardy 2008, 16–17). The name Woensel refers to a person (Wodo) and a wood (-lo) and dates back to the Early Middle Ages (Laak 2005, 107–110; Arts, 2010, 13–14). Woensel was an autonomous municipality until 1920 when it was absorbed by Eindhoven.

Woensel is situated on an elongated coversand ridge which flanks the valley of the river Dommel (Korthorst & Nollen 2008, 11–12). At the beginning of the twentieth century most of this was used as arable land, with extensive heathland to the west. The transitional area between the two was characterised by a varied landscape with alternating arable, meadow and woodland in which individual parcels of land were demarcated by wooded banks and hedges.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, habitation was mainly located on the main roads from Eindhoven to Son and Sint-Oedenrode and on the causeway over the Dommel to Nuenen, the hamlet Het Broek. These roads determined the linear layout of the settlement. In addition, there were clusters of houses around the nineteenth century church of St. Peter and its predecessor, the Old Tower (*Oude Toren*).

Settlement at Woensel appears to have originated in the fifth to ninth century near the Oude Toren (Old Tower) (Arts & Hardy 2008, 15–16), with archaeological evidence dating back to the Carolingian period (late eighth to late ninth century AD) and may even have its roots in the Merovingian period (mid-fifth to mid-eighth century AD). The hamlet of Het Broek probably developed after the farms were moved out of the arable

land to its edges. This is a well-known process in the region that took place in the twelfth and thirteenth century in which only the church and cemetery, being on consecrated ground, were usually left in place amidst the fields. The settlement along the Woenselsestraat is believed to have been established in the mid-thirteenth to sixteenth century, when Eindhoven developed into a regional centre. The settlement cluster around the current church of St. Peter only formed from the nineteenth century when the church was built here. In the urban expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, Woensel was incorporated in the suburb Woensel-Zuid and most of the old houses were replaced by modern high-rise buildings. The current research focuses on the area around the Oude Toren, in the district of the same name.

With the development of the suburb, the village community has also changed and it is unclear how many of the current resident still have ties to the historic village or even know about it. Woensel thus offers an interesting opportunity to study the relationship of a rapidly urbanized community with their heritage and see to what extent the older history still plays a role in their sense of place or whether it can add a new dimension to it.

Six test pits were excavated in Woensel in 2019 (Fig. 11), in the Oude Toren area and the northern part of Het Broek, carried out by 32 volunteers organised by the local archaeology club 'Archeologische Vereniging Kempen en Peelland'. Despite the extensive recent development, pre-modern archaeological layers proved to be surprisingly well-preserved. The earliest finds date to the Iron Age, with pottery from this period found in several pits confirming the presence of settlement on the coversand ridge in late prehistory. No definite evidence of Roman pottery was found; however, finds from the test pit 1 (near the Old Tower) confirm the presence of habitation at this location in the late eighth to late ninth century AD, with a sherd of Merovingian pottery hinting at a pre-eighth-century origin for settlement here.

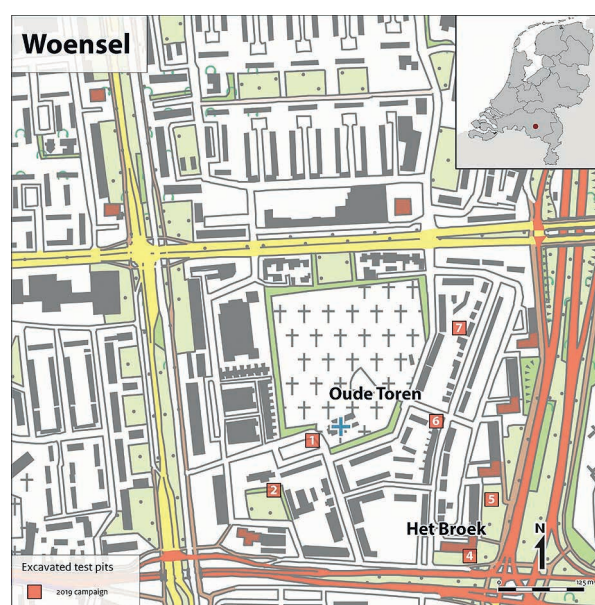


Figure 11 Gemonde, North-Brabant, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2019 (Topographic Map; © Kadaster).

Interestingly this sherd was not found next to the church but closer to the river in test pit No. 6. This suggests that early medieval settlement was present beyond the currently known settlement cluster around the church, although it is too early to establish whether this site predates it or formed part of it. In the same pit, however, part of a feature believed to be a well was discovered underneath the man-made plaggen soil (a soil layer artificially fertilized with a mixture of manure, turf, litter and sand), cut into the natural substrate. The absence of the anthropogenic plaggen soil in the fill of the well indicates that it dates back to at least the mid-eleventh to mid-thirteenth century. The location of this well, along the causeway north of Broek, could indicate that this hamlet initially extended further towards the river.

Test pit 4 in the Broek area appeared to have been sited on or close to one of the historic farmhouses itself. This pit revealed a clear sequence of occupation and demolition of a succession of houses up until the present-day flat was constructed. Finds include a porcelain figurine and the bowl of a clay pipe moulded in the shape of the Roman god Saturn. Analysis of the finds showed habitation on this site to date back to at least the sixteenth century, but natural was not reached and the pit will be completed next year.

Poland (A.M., K.K., D.K.)

Poland has one the highest rates of rurality in Europe and a long tradition of rural settlement studies (*e.g.* Maik 1993; Wójcik 2012), but while this has encompassed villages with different forms and included multi-period reconstructions of the same village in different periods, research has mostly involved historical data analysis and mapping of settlement spatial arrangements rather than archaeological excavation and this is especially true of currently inhabited sites.

Chycina, Poland (52°28'56"N, 15°25'36"E)

Chycina is a small village in western Poland (Fig. 12), today inhabited by approximately 100–120 people. The village is first recorded in written sources dated to the early fourteenth century, but previous archaeological finds indicate that the local area has been inhabited since prehistory. However, historic maps show that the area where the 2019 test pits were sited was without building coverage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As one of the consequences of the Second World War, Chycina and Lubuskie province, previously in Germany, became part of Poland.

Test pit excavation in Chycina in 2019 focused on a central square within the village (Fig. 13) which is currently used as a playing ground and volleyball pitch for local children. This was because the square was the only location whose owner was prepared to give permission for archaeological test pit excavations. A total of 12 test pits were excavated in Chycina in 2019 (Fig. 14) over two weekends in September. Altogether, 552 artefacts were unearthed (Krzepkowski 2020). The ceramic assemblage was dominated by late medieval grey ware (Fig. 15), with smaller numbers of sherds dating to the late Bronze Age and the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Glass and tile fragments were also found.



Figure 12 Map of Poland showing the location of Chycina where CARE project test pit excavation focused in 2019.

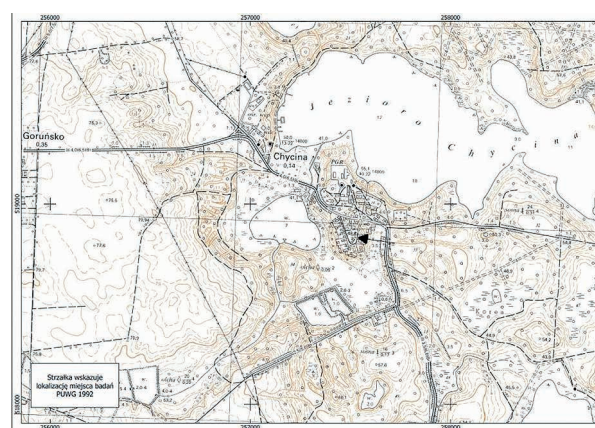


Figure 13 Plan of village of Chycina showing the location of the main square (arrowed) where the CARE project test pit excavations took place in 2019.

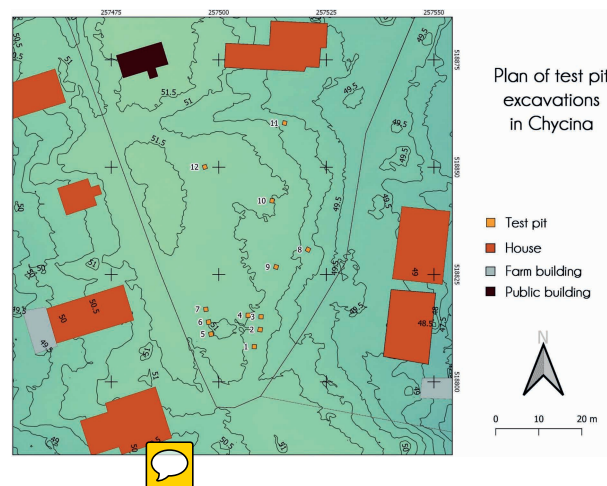


Figure 14 Chycina main square showing the location of test pits excavated in 2019.



Figure 15 Chycina. A selection of late medieval grey ware (after Krzepkowski 2020, Fig. 2).

Test pits 1–4 lay on the south-east of the excavated area. In test pit 1, seven contexts were excavated before reaching natural, yielding finds included pottery, glass and animal bone. A single sherd of late Bronze Age pottery was found in pit 1. The rest of excavated material dates to the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, plus some modern pottery. Nearby, test pit 2 produced a similar post-thirteenth-century assemblage, and also a cobbled floor surface of suspected medieval or post-medieval date. Test pits 3 and 4 both encountered tree roots which prevented excavation below 20cm, but the excavated contexts produced similar thirteenth-to-eighteenth century ceramic assemblages, with approximately a quarter of these dating to the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Test pits 5–7, a little to the west of test pits 1–4, reached contexts 7, 8 and 6 respectively and revealed large assemblages of pottery dating between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. These three pits produced a total of 62 thirteenth-to-sixteenth century sherds and 166 dating to the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, as well as stove tile fragments and just a couple of fragments of animal bone. Test pit 6 produced another sherd of Bronze Age pottery, while for the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries the presence of 24 and 32 sherds in test pit 5 and 7 respectively strongly suggested habitation in this location at this time. Test pit 6 yielded no late medieval pottery but contained 99 sherds dating to 1600–1800 AD, indicative of a refuse pit. A single Late Bronze Age

sherd was also found. Safety concerns prevented further excavation of this pit.

Test pits 8 and 11 were the most easterly of the test pits excavated in Chycina in 2019 and lay on slightly lower ground. Although excavated to 60 and 40cm respectively, they only produced three sherds of pottery pre-dating the eighteenth century, suggesting quite different use of this area in the pre-modern and medieval periods.

Test pit 10 was excavated to a depth of 120cm but produced no finds below 90cm. Its pre-nineteenth century ceramic assemblage was similar to test pits 1–7, dominated by early modern (sixteenth to eighteenth century) material but with a considerable number of late medieval material (thirteenth to sixteenth century) to indicate habitation nearby. A single Late Bronze Age sherd was also found.

Test pits 9 and 12 were notable as the only ones in which the pottery assemblage was dominated by late medieval ceramics (Fig. 14) at the expense of post-medieval materials. Test pit 12 was particularly notable in producing 50 post-Medieval sherds from the top two of four excavated contexts, strongly indicating a deliberate deposition, most likely in the form of refuse. Although its presence in two uppermost levels may be due to post-depositional processes, the sheer number sherds is indicative of late medieval settlement in the area.

The test pit excavations in Chycina in 2019 were all sited close together in the central square, with test pits 1–7 located within an area c. 20m²; it is not impossible that they were all sited in a single farm plot. Given that eighteenth/nineteenth century maps show that this excavated area (Fig. 3) had no buildings, the discovery of substantial amounts of pre-1800 AD pottery and domestic structures (including refuse deposits and a cobblestone floor) indicates that the square was more intensively used during the past centuries than has previously been suspected. In addition, three late Bronze Age and one early Medieval sherd provide new evidence for earlier activity in today's village.

United Kingdom (C.L.)

In the UK rural settlement has long been an important area of research for medieval archaeologists (Gerrard 2003; Christie and Stamper 2012; this journal issues 1–34), but until recently settlements which did not become permanently depopulated had been somewhat overlooked. Recently, test pit excavation in scores of CORS across the UK has shown the technique to be very effective in reconstructing individual settlement development (Gerrard and Aston 2008; Jones and Page 2008), showing how variable their trajectories are (Lewis 2019b) and in aggregate revealing the impact of global phenomena such as the Black Death (Lewis 2016b). Extensive test pit excavation is not planned in the UK as the CARE project prioritises fieldwork in countries where the approach is new, but in 2019 test pit excavations were carried out at Old Dalby in Leicestershire as part of a psychological survey exploring the impact of participation, and the archaeological results of these excavations are reported below.



Figure 16 Map of England showing the location of Old Dalby where CARE project test pit excavation focused in 2019.

Old Dalby and Queensway (Leicestershire), UK (52°48'25" N, 1°00'07" E)

Old Dalby (Fig 16) is located 15km northeast of Loughborough and 9.5km northwest of Melton Mowbray in the county of Leicestershire, with Queensway a small twentieth century estate which developed on the site of a former military base. Old Dalby lies west of Dalby Brook on land that slopes from approximately 80m OD in the east to 105m OD at the western edge of the village. Soils in the village are of the Denchworth Association, typically pelo-stagnogley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 155), overlying a solid geology of Charmouth Mudstone (BGS 2002).

The place name combines the Old English element 'Wold' reflecting the location of the village in the undulating lowland landscape of the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds, and the Old Scandinavian element *Dalby* ('village in the valley') (Mills 1998). The earliest known archaeological remains at Old Dalby date to the Roman period and include coins, pottery and a brooch found by metal detecting northwest of the village (LHER 9388). The majority of the history and archaeology of Old Dalby relates to the medieval period, with the most notable features being earthworks of former settlement (LHER3446 and 3451) and Hospitaller preceptory (List entry: 1009174) immediately south-east side of the present village. Excavations in advance of development in 2005 in the centre of the village (16–30 Main Road) revealed ditches, post holes and gullies containing stratified pottery dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries (Parker 2005).

Old Dalby today (Fig 17) is a nucleated settlement arranged along Main Road in the centre and Church Lane and Paradise Lane which run towards the church on the extreme southern margin of the present settlement. North of Main Road, Chapel Lane runs along the northern edge of a small green, and to its north further settlement is arranged along Longcliffe Road and two closes. The first edition Ordnance Survey map (*c.* 1880) shows a more thinly dispersed settlement, mostly comprising a cluster around the church, intermittent cottages and

farms around the Chapel Lane green which looks as if it was formerly larger, and a intermittent succession of houses on Longcliffe Road along the edges another former green near North Lodge Farm.

Nine test pits were excavated in Old Dalby in October 2019 (Fig. 17) (Parker 2020) by around 50 local residents supported by the Old Dalby History Group (and the local pub). One test pit (number 9) was sited in Queensway and produced only modern material, the other eight were located in Old Dalby itself. No material preceding the ninth century was recovered from any of the 2019 test pits, but test pits 1, 7 and 8 all produced sherds of Stamford ware (*c.* AD 850–1100). These pits were located some considerable distance apart (350m or more) in very different parts of the present settlement, suggesting a dispersed pattern of settlement at this time. The presence of Stamford ware in test pit 7, immediately north of the field containing the deserted settlement earthworks, was notable as it suggests that this part of the settlement certainly predates the preceptory and possibly the Norman period.

For the twelfth to fourteenth century, only test pits 7 and 8 produced sufficient pottery to indicate habitation

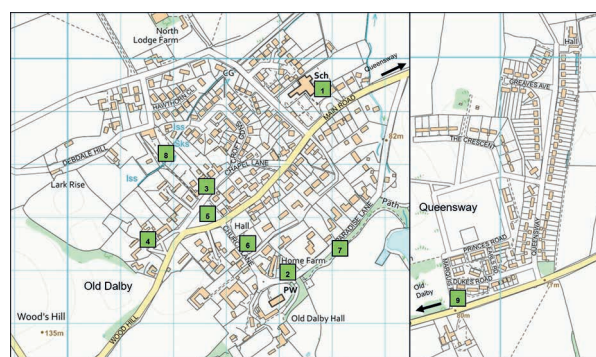


Fig 17 Old Dalby and Queensway, showing the approximate locations of the test pits excavated in 2019 (base map © Edina Digimap, figure prepared by Carenza Lewis).

in the vicinity: again, these are more than 350m apart, hinting that Old Dalby was then either very large or dispersed. The absence of pottery of this date from test pits 2–6 might support the latter explanation in the south-western part of the village, although with a relatively small number of pits excavated it is difficult to be confident of this, while twelfth to fourteenth century finds noted above from excavation along Main Street hint that settlement may have been larger or more continuous north-west of test pit 7. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, the test pits do usefully indicate that the main part of the present settlement was in existence in some form *before* the now-deserted area southeast of the village was abandoned.

Three test pits (3, 4 and 7) produced pottery of fourteenth to sixteenth century date, giving little indication of post-fourteenth century contraction seen widely elsewhere, although they do hint at some settlement shift at this time. Five pits produced pottery of sixteenth to eighteenth century date, three of which were around the green by Chapel Lane, suggesting that this became the main focus of settlement at this time. Notably, test pit 7, near the deserted settlement earthworks, produced no pottery of this date, suggesting this part of the village was abandoned sometime around the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. This may have coincided with the closure of the Hospitaller preceptory in AD 1540, whose earthwork remains lie immediately south of the settlement earthworks.

Excavation at Old Dalby is planned to continue in 2020.

Overall conclusion

In 2019, 61 test pits were excavated in eight rural communities in the Czech Republic, Netherlands, Poland and UK as part of the CARE participative community archaeology project intended to advance knowledge of the archaeological potential and historic development of the settlements and the social impact of the activity. Overall, the results for the first year have been immensely promising. The test pit excavations have shown archaeological layers to be more extensive and better preserved than expected in many places, and a substantial number of artefacts are being recovered including a good complement of pre-modern material. At this stage it is too early to offer firm conclusions about the development of any individual settlements, and it is certainly too early to begin to re-evaluate current models for settlement development, but we are hopeful that we will be able to do both these by the end of the CARE project.

Importantly, it has been shown that participative community test pit excavation is feasible in the Czech Republic, Netherlands and Poland and that it stimulates interest in and positive benefits for local people. In the Czech Republic, nine test pits in two villages in Moravia involved 20–30 participants whose interest was keen and cumulative, with enthusiasm for the idea of archaeology writing new stories stimulated by involvement in the excavation process. In the Netherlands, 31 test pits were excavated by more than 100 volunteers in four villages in the Het Groenewoud area of Brabant, close to the border with Belgium. Again, the project aroused considerable

and cumulative interest, with soaring volunteer numbers and shortlisting for national and regional heritage awards. In Poland, the excavation of 12 test pits in Chycina remarkably involved 25% of all the village's inhabitants. In the UK, nine test pits were excavated in Old Dalby, Leicestershire by c. 50 volunteers who are keen to carry out further archaeological excavations. Volunteers in the Netherlands and UK participated in a psychological survey that have produced important new evidence for the positive impact of participation in local archaeological excavations (in prep).

In all countries, the projects have gained considerable publicity, both regionally and beyond. Additional villages are asking to join the project and members of several participating village communities are now keen to get involved in other archaeological activities.

In 2020, test pit excavation is planned to continue in each of the villages investigated in 2019 as well as in new communities in each of the participating countries. The outcomes will be reported in the next issue of *Medieval Settlement Research*.

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