

Conclusions

People and places remembered

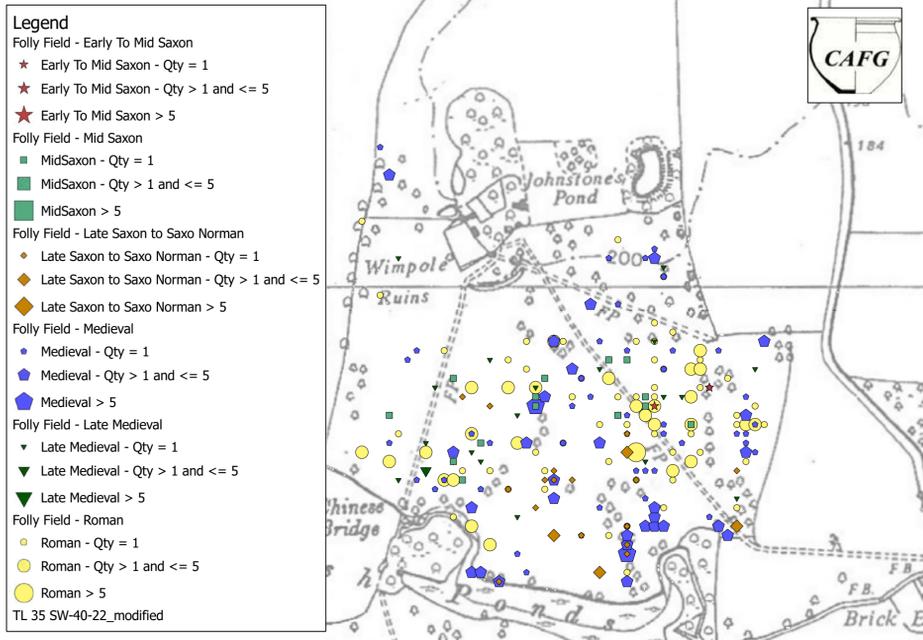
This Wimpole Tithe Map of 1851 (and the earlier OS Map 51 of 1836) shows an almost empty landscape that has changed little until the present day (apart from New Wimpole, built between 1840 - 1850). The Hall and its buildings dominate the area.



Wimpole Hall viewed from the south

However, our studies have shown the existence of a much more populated past. We have shown how the prehistoric, Roman and medieval network of tracks and roads shaped the parish and influenced the settlement locations. We have produced new evidence for dispersed Iron Age and Roman settlement in the parish and a significant Anglo Saxon presence as well. Field walking and test pit digging provide some clues to the timing and location of those settlements.

Distribution Maps showing the periods of recovered pottery

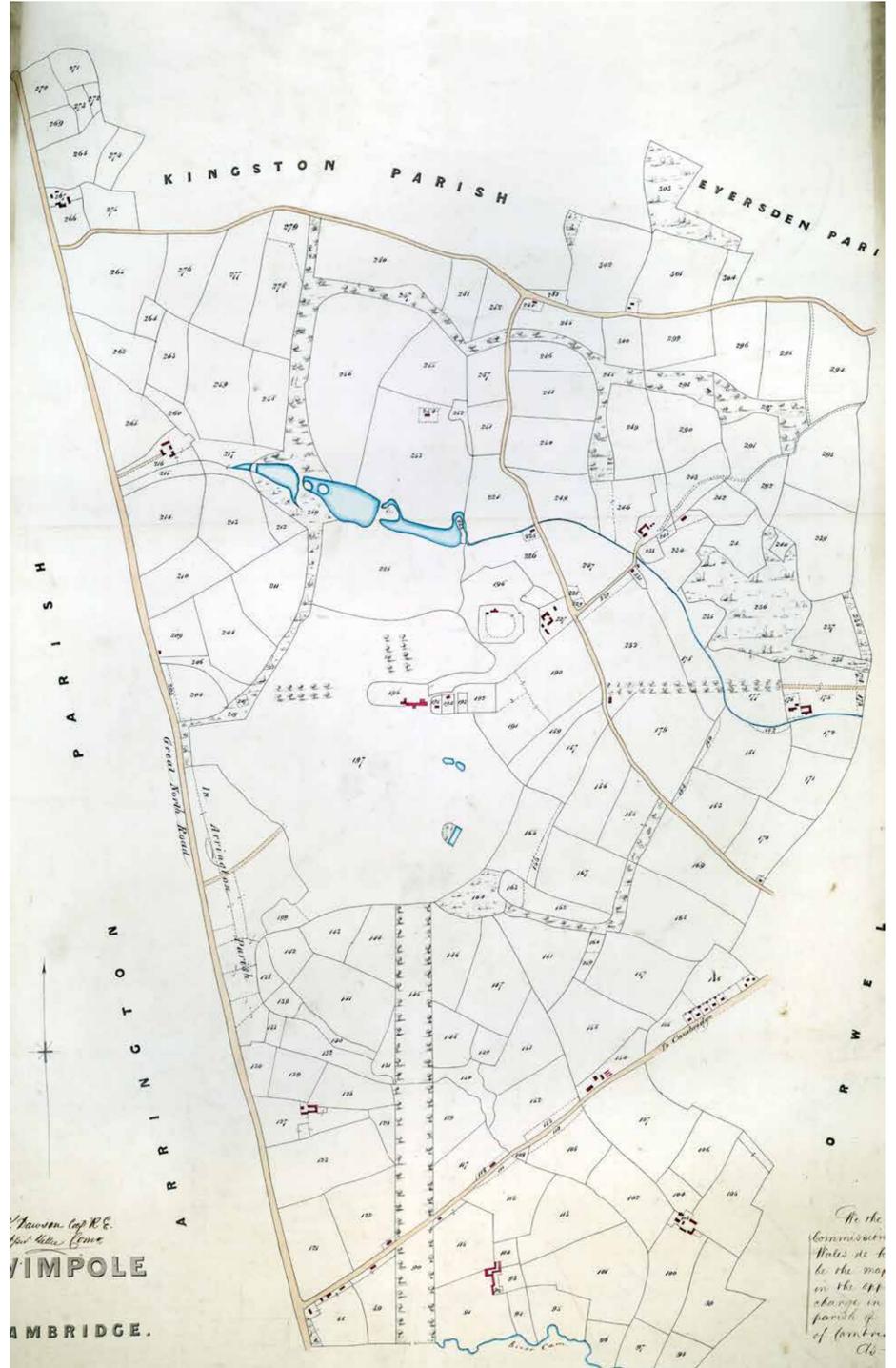


Our excavation of "Mr Ratford's house" gives a glimpse of domestic life in the 17th and 18th centuries. Finally, our archive research has given us the names of the people who lived here, their continuity and some information about their lives.

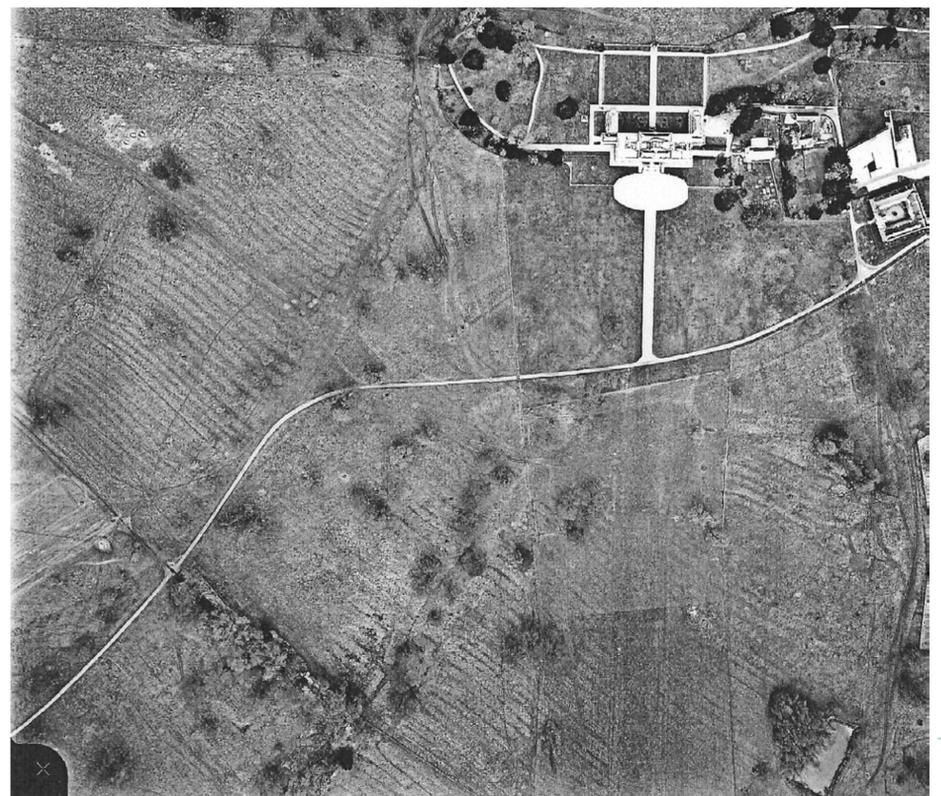
Using a wide variety of archaeological techniques, including landscape studies, fieldwalking, the digging of test pits, excavation and metal detecting, together with the archive work has produced additional information which no single approach could provide: their sum is definitely greater than the parts.

By opening some of these activities to encourage the involvement of local people and members of the public, their response has demonstrated the value of such exercises in putting people in touch with tangible signs of their past.

Our work suggests more research is required to complete the story of Wimpole as a parish with an ancient past. The normal processes of settlement development and nucleation were slowed and then halted by the gradual expansion of the park. This has helped preserve information about the past which might otherwise have been lost through the intensive farming or house building seen elsewhere. It leaves us with a landscape in which the old roads, lanes and cottages have largely disappeared and all that remains are the hollow tracks and house platforms still visible in the grass of Wimpole Park: but with a story that can still be told.



Wimpole Tithe map 1851



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