

19-20

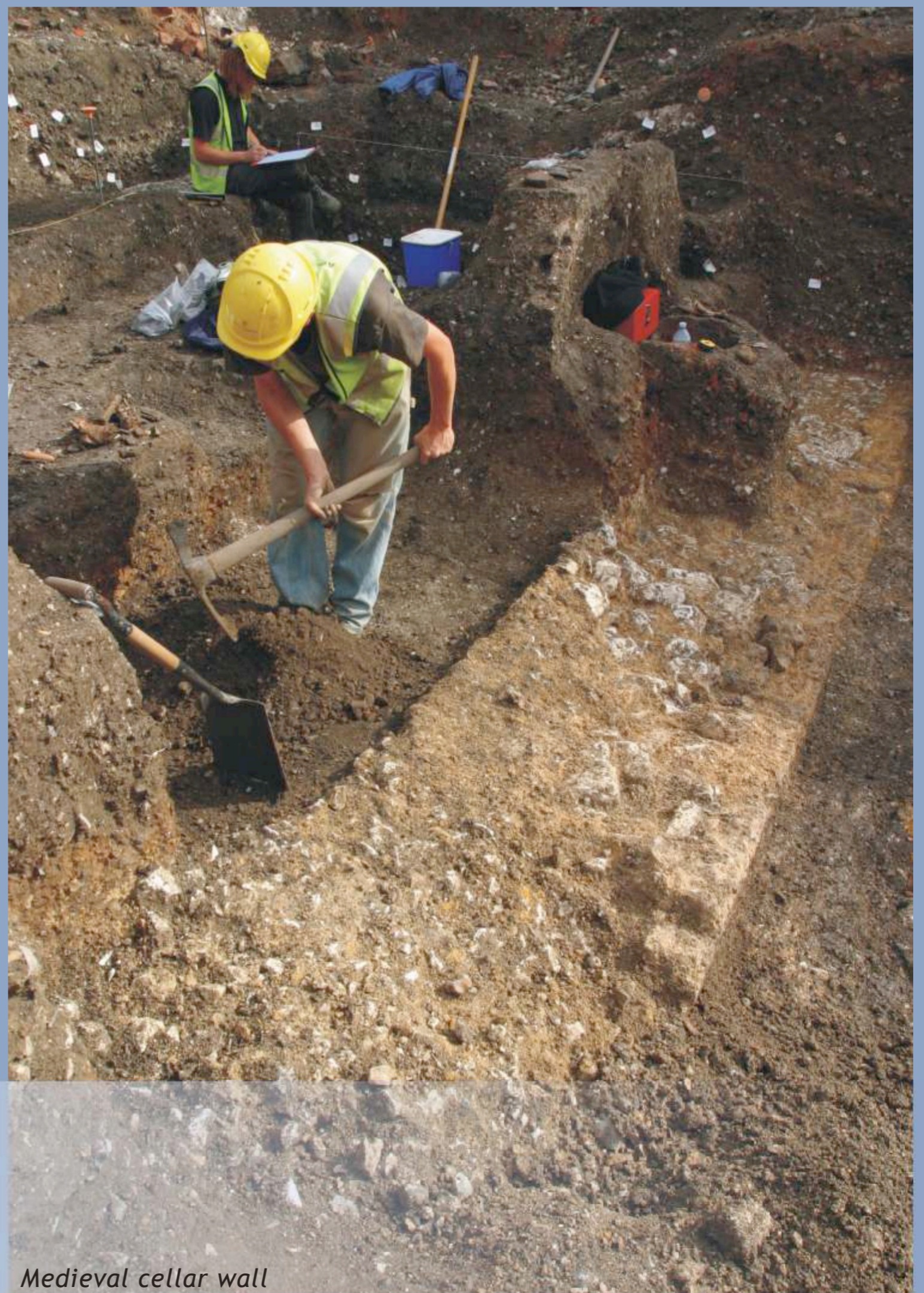
Jewry Street, Winchester

An excavation is being carried out in Jewry Street, Winchester, ahead of development on the site by Mr M Bakhaty. The site is in the north-west corner of the historic core of Winchester. This area of the town is known to contain archaeological evidence of Winchester's medieval, Saxon, Roman and Iron Age past.

A large cellar was built in the middle of the site in the medieval period. It was finely built and some evidence of its thick mortared chalk footings remains. The cellar presumably belonged to a substantial property fronting what is now Jewry Street. This was a prosperous area of the town between the late 11th and 14th centuries, known as 'Scowrtenestret' (Shoemakers' Street), and later 'Gywerystrete'. Documents from the fifteenth century list the occupants of the three medieval properties on the site. Amongst them were weavers, labourers, poor men, carpenters, a book binder, a tinker and a widow.



View of the site from the Hampshire Chronicle offices



Medieval cellar wall

19-20

Jewry Street, Winchester

2

In the northern part of the site we are uncovering very slight traces of late Saxon floors, but these have for the most part been destroyed by deep pits of later date.



Roman pits being uncovered

Several pits which date from the Roman period (AD43-410) are being investigated and contain pottery and animal bone. The soil from these pits will be analysed for information about the contemporary environment. On the western side of the site we may find traces of a Roman street, linking the south and north gates of the Roman town (Venta Belgarum).

No remains of Iron Age date have yet been found.



Remains of a late Saxon floor visible in a later pit



Excavating and recording the evidence

19-20

Jewry Street, Winchester

As the excavation has moved closer to the rear of the site, a flint-lined well has been uncovered. It was dug sometime between the 16th and 18th centuries, before piped supplies were available and it drew water held in the underlying chalk.

It is now possible to see that the medieval cellar in the centre of the site originally extended to the full width of the property. One of its walls has survived.

At one time or another numerous pits and wells have been dug across the site. Circular, square or rectangular in shape, the pits have straight sides and are deep enough to reach the underlying chalk. Whether or not they were originally opened as wells, the pits were later filled with a mixture of deposits containing food and domestic waste.



Post-medieval well lined with flint cobbles



Cellar wall built from blocks of chalk



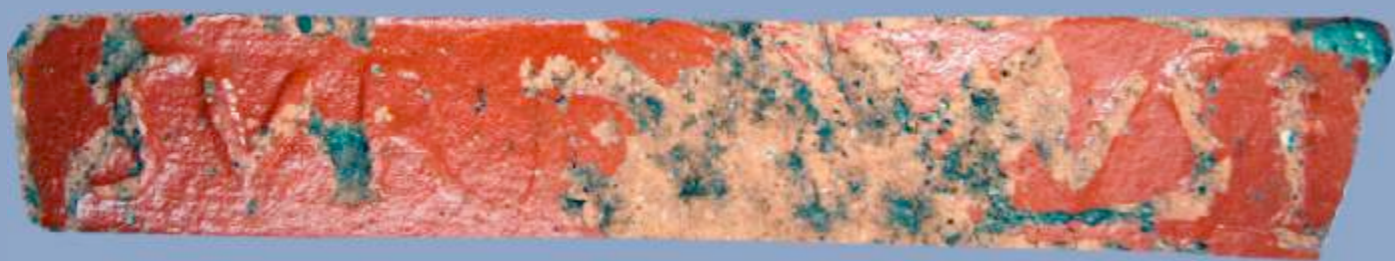
Pits and wells have been dug across the site

19-20

Jewry Street, Winchester

Pits and wells have destroyed nearly all traces of remains earlier than the medieval period. One that has survived is a small 'island' of so-called 'dark-earth'. This deposit appears to cover the remains of Roman Winchester and may be soil that formed over the town when it fell out of use at the end of Roman rule in the early fifth century.

However, one find of particular interest is a piece of fine pottery, of a type known as samian ware, which was imported into Britain in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. What makes this piece so special is that it has a near complete maker's stamp, SVRD--LVS.F. Research suggests that it is the mark of SVRDILLVS, a potter who worked in Lezoux in central France between 90-150AD. The F at the end of the name stands for fecit, Latin for 'made (it)'.



Detail of maker's stamp



Remains of the dark-earth deposit showing in the upper layer of a pit



A locally made, nearly complete Roman pot found in one of the pits



Samian ware with
maker's stamp



**Wessex
Archaeology**

www.wessexarch.co.uk

19-20 Jewry Street, Winchester

Up to 8 cess pits have been found, running in a line north to south through the middle of the site. They lie half way between two Roman streets and either served a public building or, more likely, lay to the rear of the houses which fronted the two streets. The pits are cut 5-6 metres deep into the underlying chalk. Only one other like them has been found in Winchester.

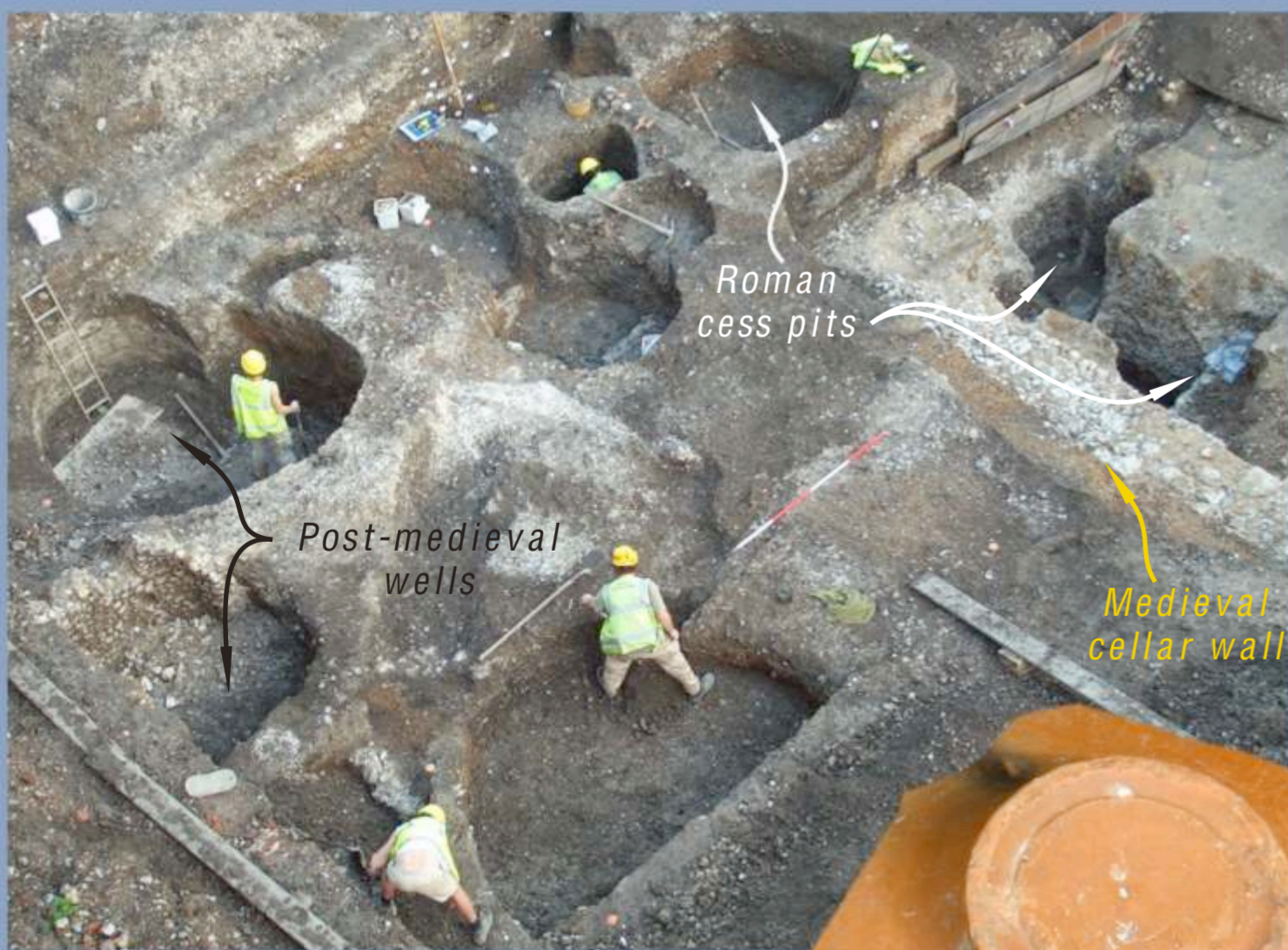
The pits are an exciting source of evidence: as well as degraded human waste, they contain fragments of pottery, building materials and many animal bones.



Row of Roman cess pits beneath 3 Medieval tenements



Excavating a Roman cess pit beneath the medieval cellar



Pottery recovered from the cess pits

19-20

Jewry Street, Winchester

6

Small items have been found in the cess pits: bronze finger rings, a fine bone pin, tweezers and coins accidentally dropped into the pits nearly 2,000 years ago.

The most valuable information may well come from the smallest finds of all the remains of mineralised seeds, fruit stones and insects, which will give us more evidence about the diet and way of life in Roman Winchester.



Bone pin with decorated head



Coins

Tweezers



Also from the site a knife blade, bone comb and decorated pottery

Mineralised beans, hazel nuts and grain



Wessex
Archaeology

www.wessexarch.co.uk