



Dig School

Enquiry-based learning



Council
for British
Archaeology



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN



Historic England

DigSchool.org.uk | Engaging cross-curricular learning-enrichment workshops themed around archaeology





Session 9: Tracing places

Exploring change over time beneath our feet



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Key questions

- How can we reconstruct how a place developed over time when there is no written evidence?
- Where can we do this?
- Why does it matter?



Today's settlements (cities, towns, villages, farms) are mostly places which have been used by humans for centuries.

Even if the place you live in is not a famous historic or archaeological site, there is likely to be evidence buried beneath your feet from tens, hundreds or even thousands of years ago which when people were there before you, and what they might have been doing...



Quick Quiz

History of settlement



Questions

1. What were the first tools made by humans in the British Isles made of? (Stone, metal or plastic)
2. When did people anywhere in the British Isles first start to live in permanent settlements? (Paleolithic 500,000 years ago, Neolithic 5,000 years ago or Roman 2,000 years ago)
3. When did people in the British Isles first start making pottery (Neolithic 5,000 years ago, Roman 2,000 years ago or Medieval 1,000 years ago)
4. When did towns first appear in the British Isles (after the Roman Conquest AD 43, after the Norman Conquest AD 1066, or after the first factories were built in the 1760s)
5. What happened to most towns in Britain after the end of the Roman period in AD 410 (they grew, they shrank, they were abandoned)
6. When were most of today's towns and villages founded? (in the Anglo-Saxon period between AD 850-1050; in the Tudor period AD 1485-1603, after World War Two 1945-75)
7. Which historic pandemic had the worst impact on settlements in the British Isles? (The Black Death 1348-9; the Great Plague 1665; Spanish Influenza 1918-19)
8. Which historic period saw the biggest growth in the size of Britain's cities and towns (the high medieval period 1066-1300, the Industrial Revolution 1760-1850, the post World War Two period 1945-75)



Answers

1. What were the first tools made by humans in the British Isles made of? (Stone)
2. When did people anywhere in the British Isles first start to live in permanent settlements? (Neolithic 5,000 years ago)
3. When did people in the British isles first start making pottery (Neolithic 5,000 years ago)
4. When did towns first appear in the British Isles (after the Roman Conquest AD 43)
5. What happened to most towns in Britain after the end of the Roman period in AD 410 (they were abandoned)
6. When were most of today's towns and villages founded? (in the Anglo-Saxon period between AD 850-1050)
7. Which historic pandemic had the worst impact on settlements in the British Isles? (The Black Death 1348-9)
8. Which historic period saw the biggest growth in the size of Britain's cities and towns (the post World War Two period 1945-75)



What did you score?!



There's very little written down which can tell us the answers to these questions. So how do we find out?





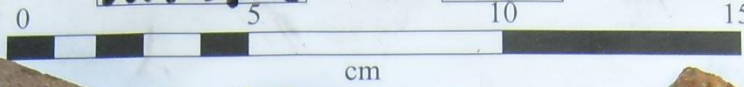




**Write a sentence saying what you think the finds from each layer
in this school playing field are revealing about what was
happening in the past**



Site name **HOUGHTON & WYTON** Date **Sept 05**
Site code **HAW/05** TP no. **A** Context no. **1**



Site name **HOUGHTON & WYTON** Date **Sept 05**
Site code **HAW/05** TP no. **A** Context no. **2**

0 5 10 15
cm



Site name **HOUGHTON & WYTON** Date **Sept 05**
Site code **HAW/05** TP no. **A** Context no. **2**

0 5 10 15
cm







What did you think?

Did you think the archaeology showed how the use of this place
changed over time





A small 'test pit' like this is quite easy to dig if you've been taught and you follow instructions.

Usually, deeper layers produce older finds, like the school pit.



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End of part one



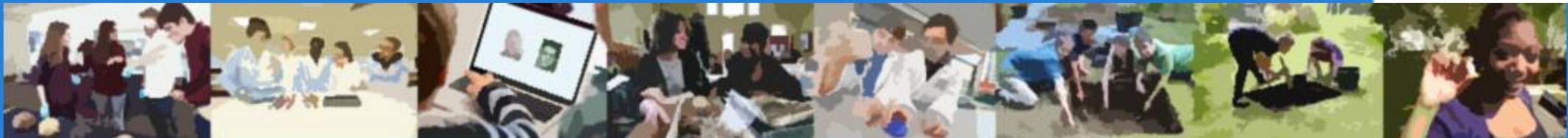
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Part two

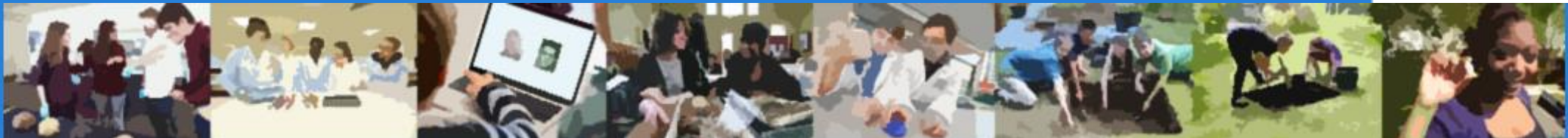
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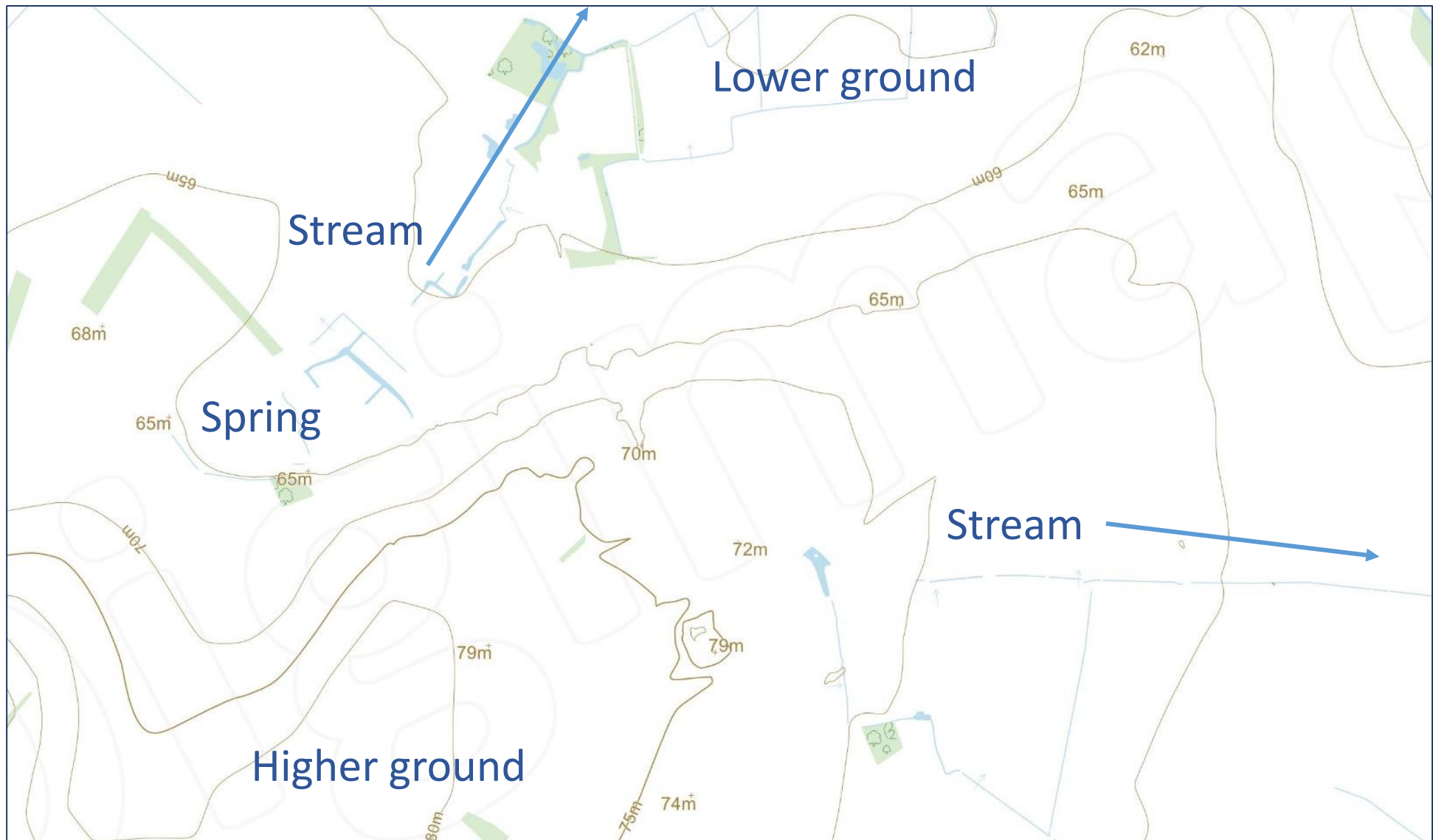
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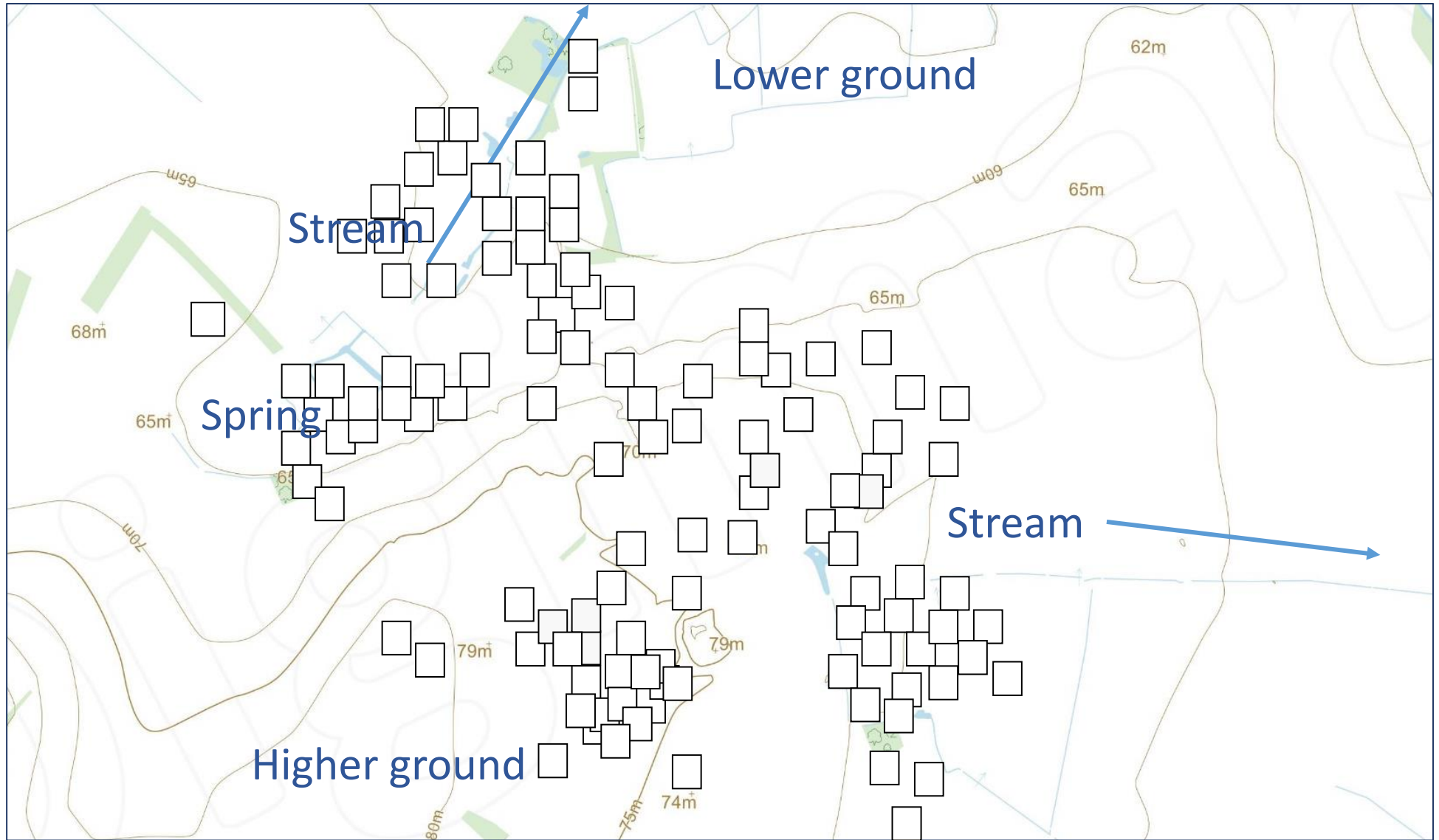
As well as telling the story of one location through time, doing lots of small digs in different places (rather than one big one in one place) can show how whole settlements developed!

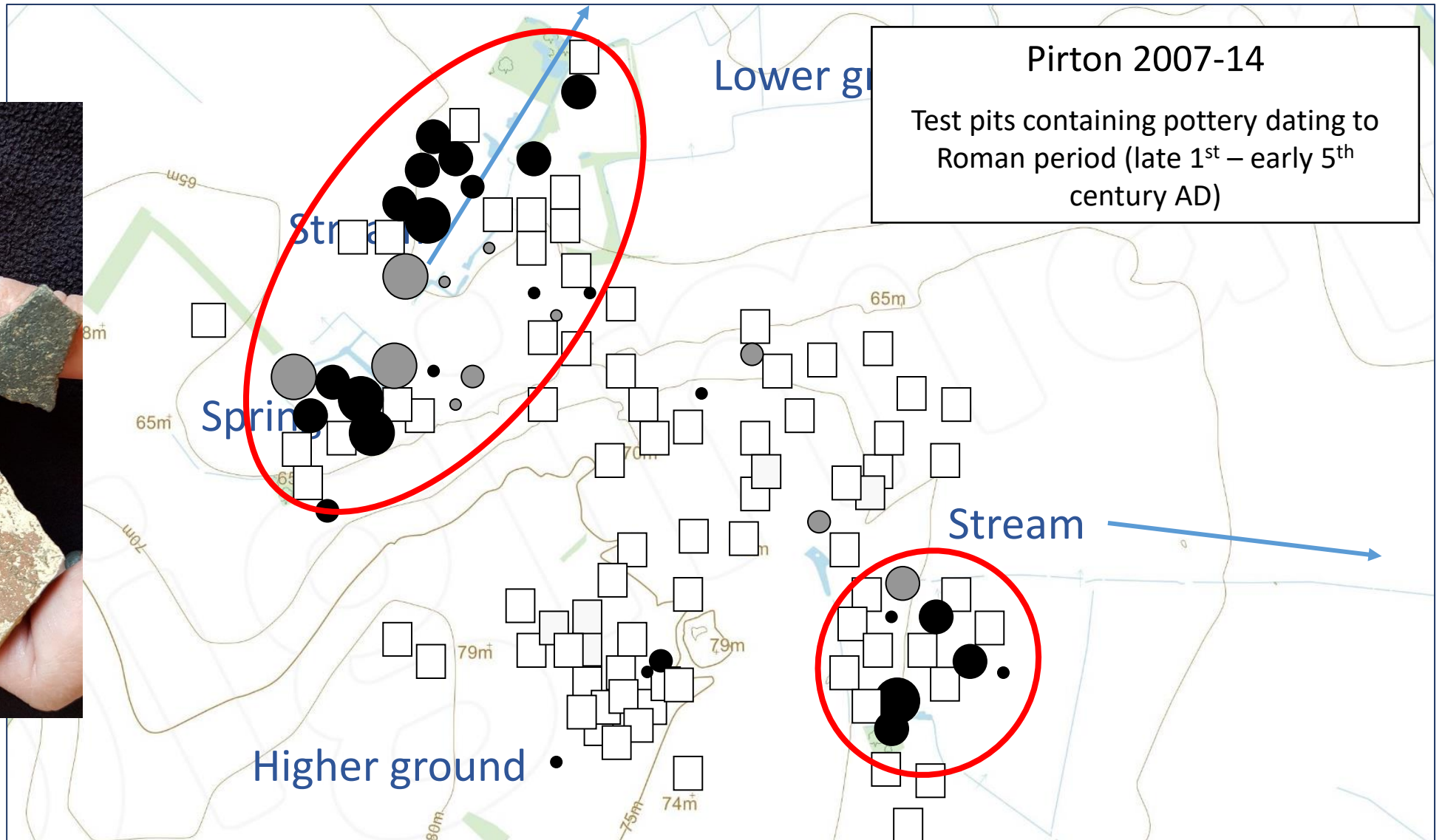


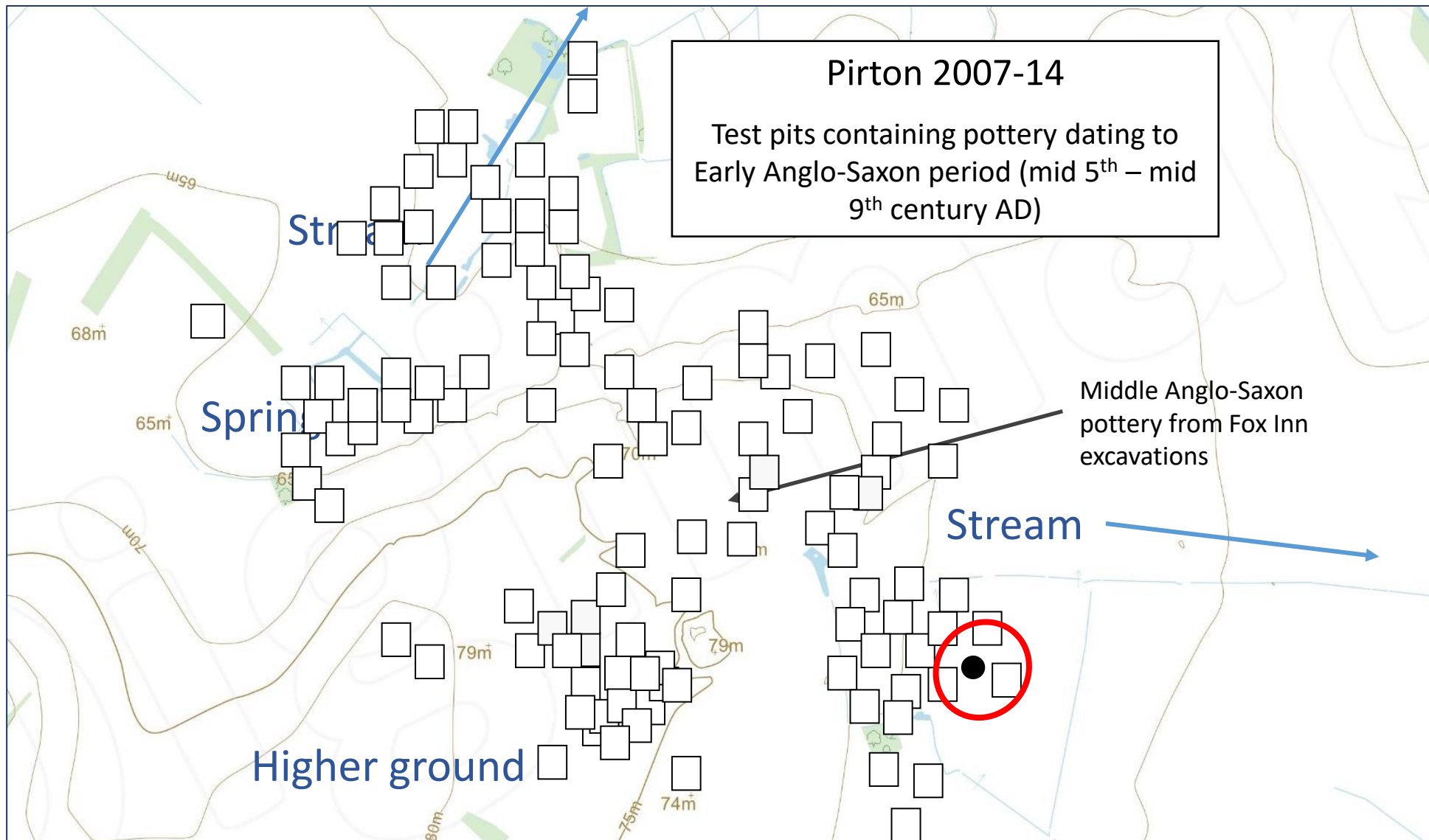


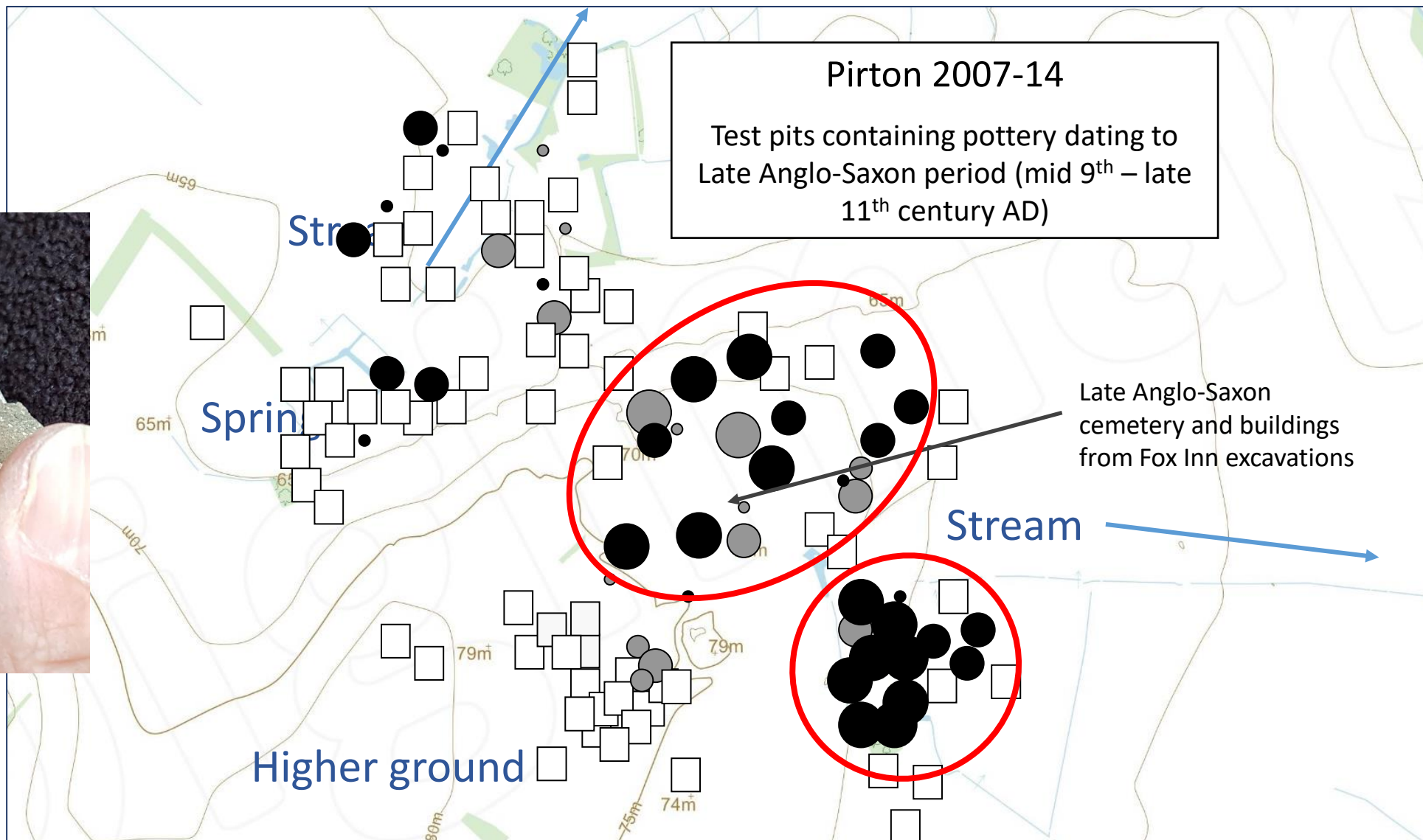
For each of the following maps, colour in the squares which you think produced pottery for each different date:

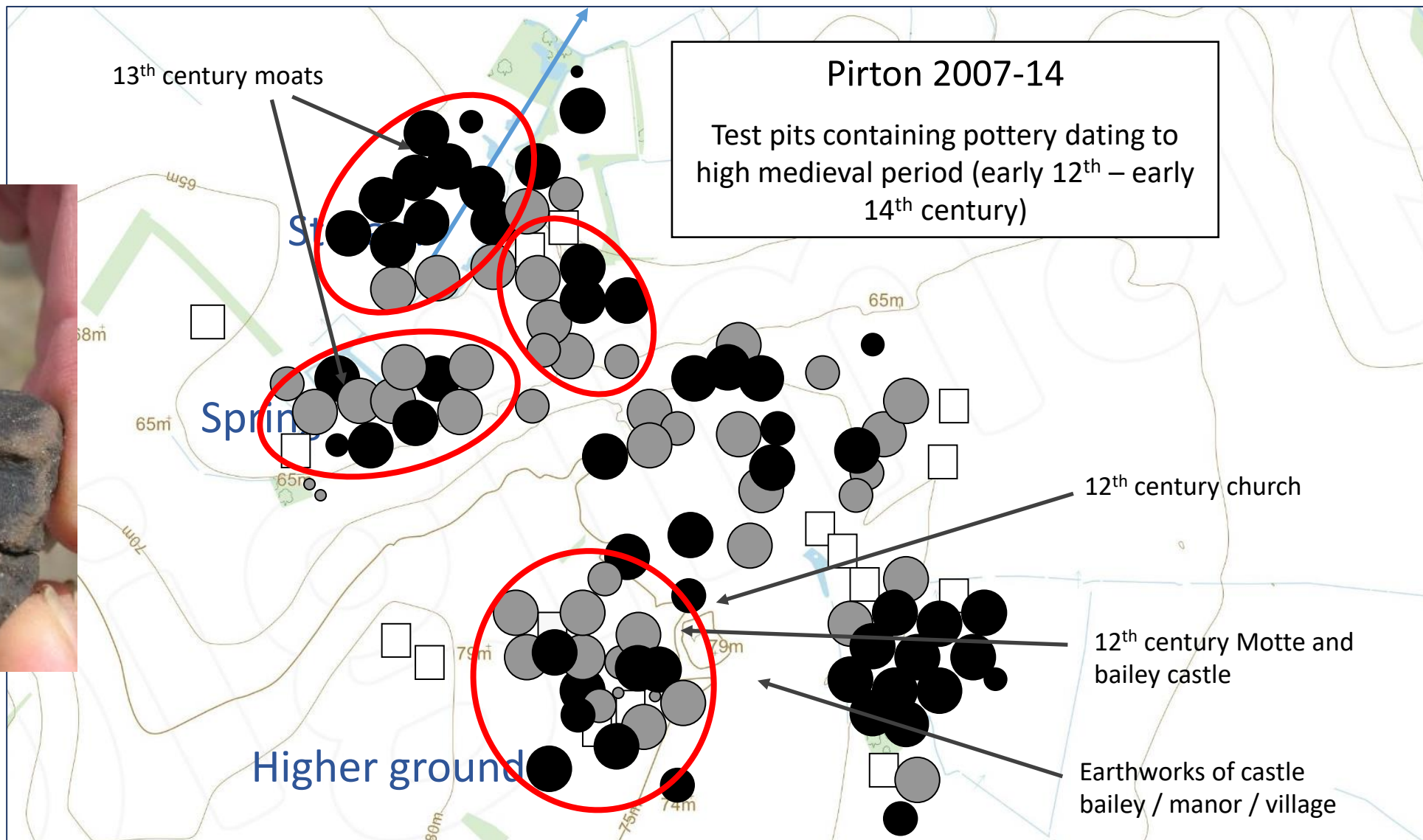
- Roman
- Early Anglo-Saxon
- Late Anglo-Saxon
- High medieval
- Late medieval
- Tudor/Stuart/Georgian
- Victorian / modern

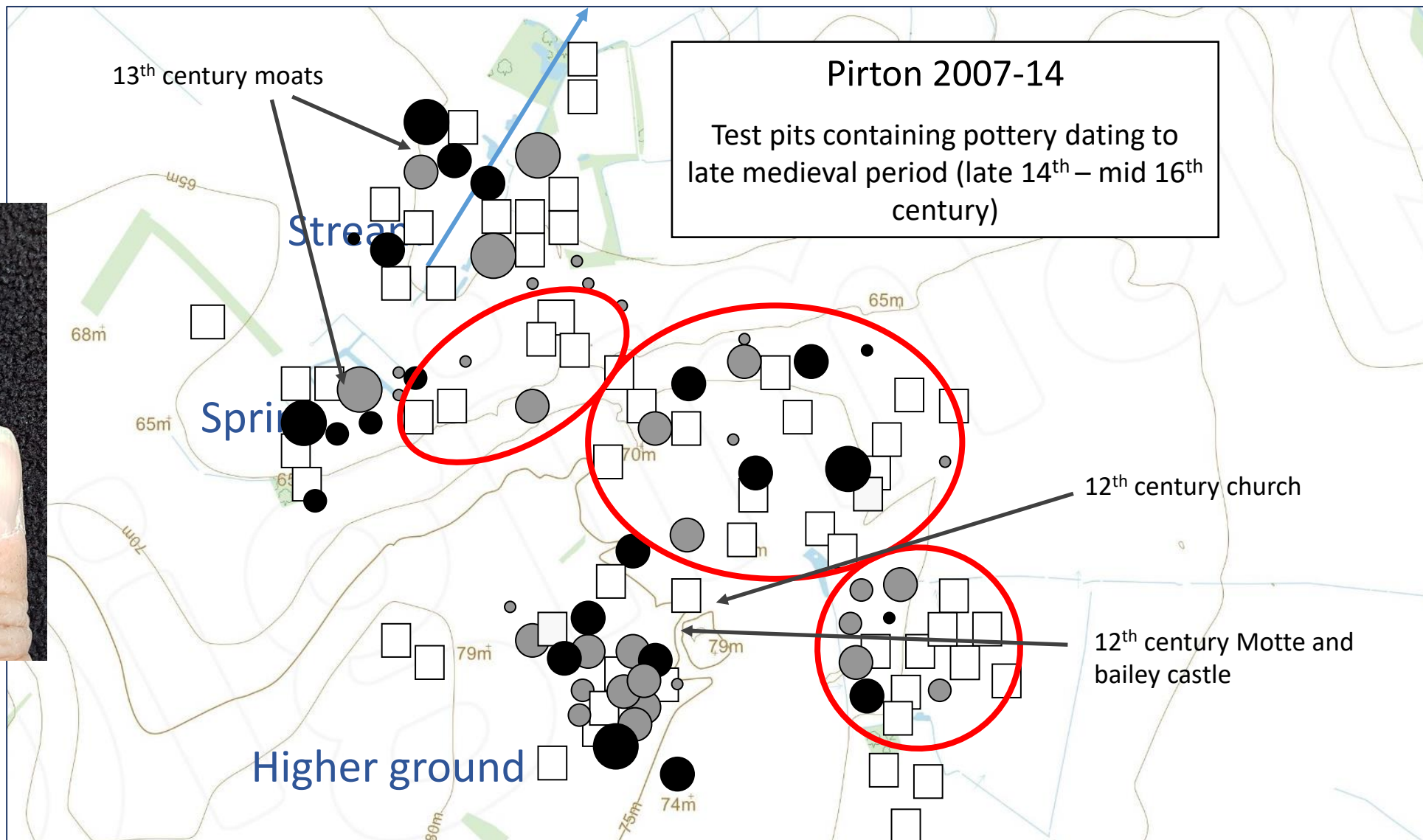


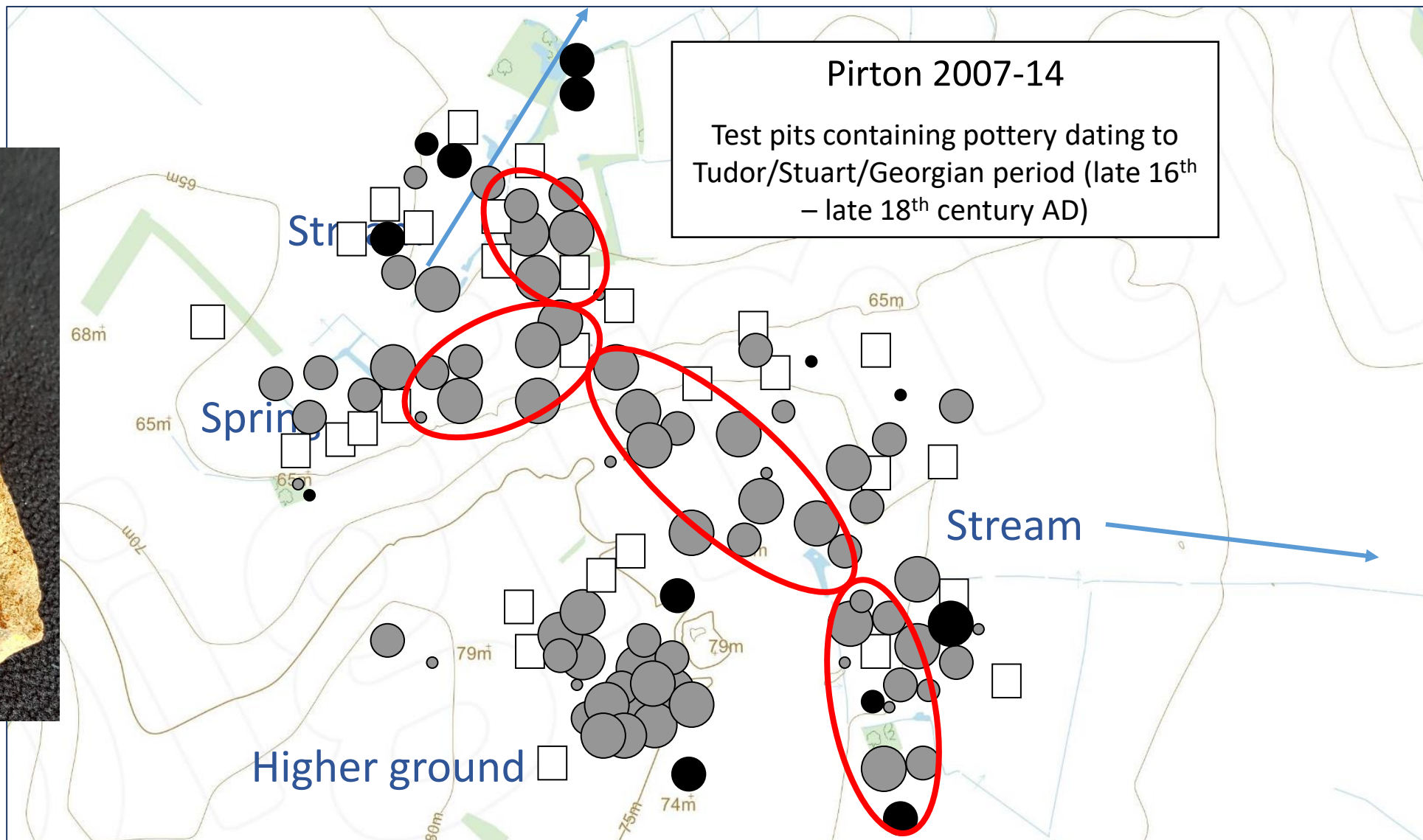


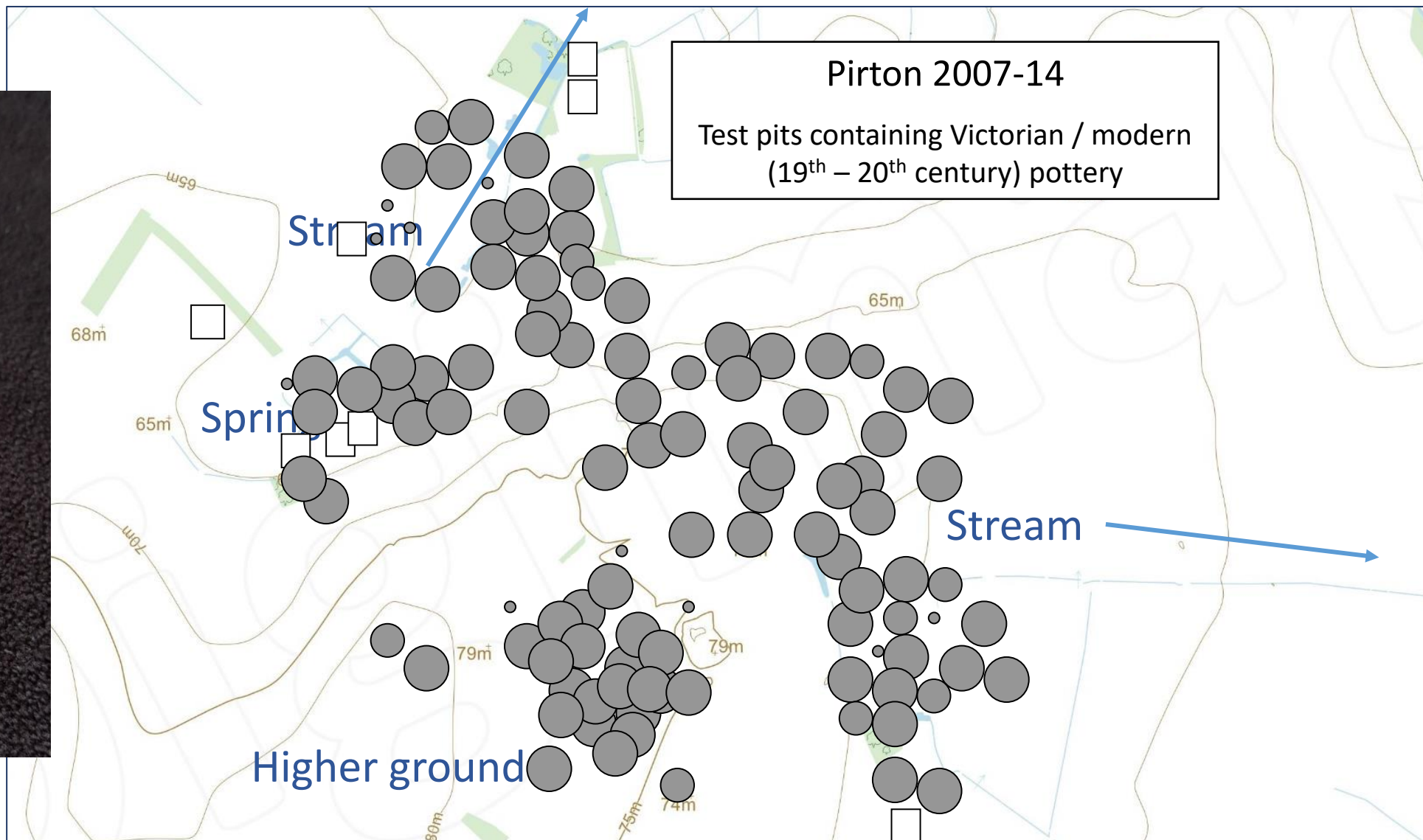


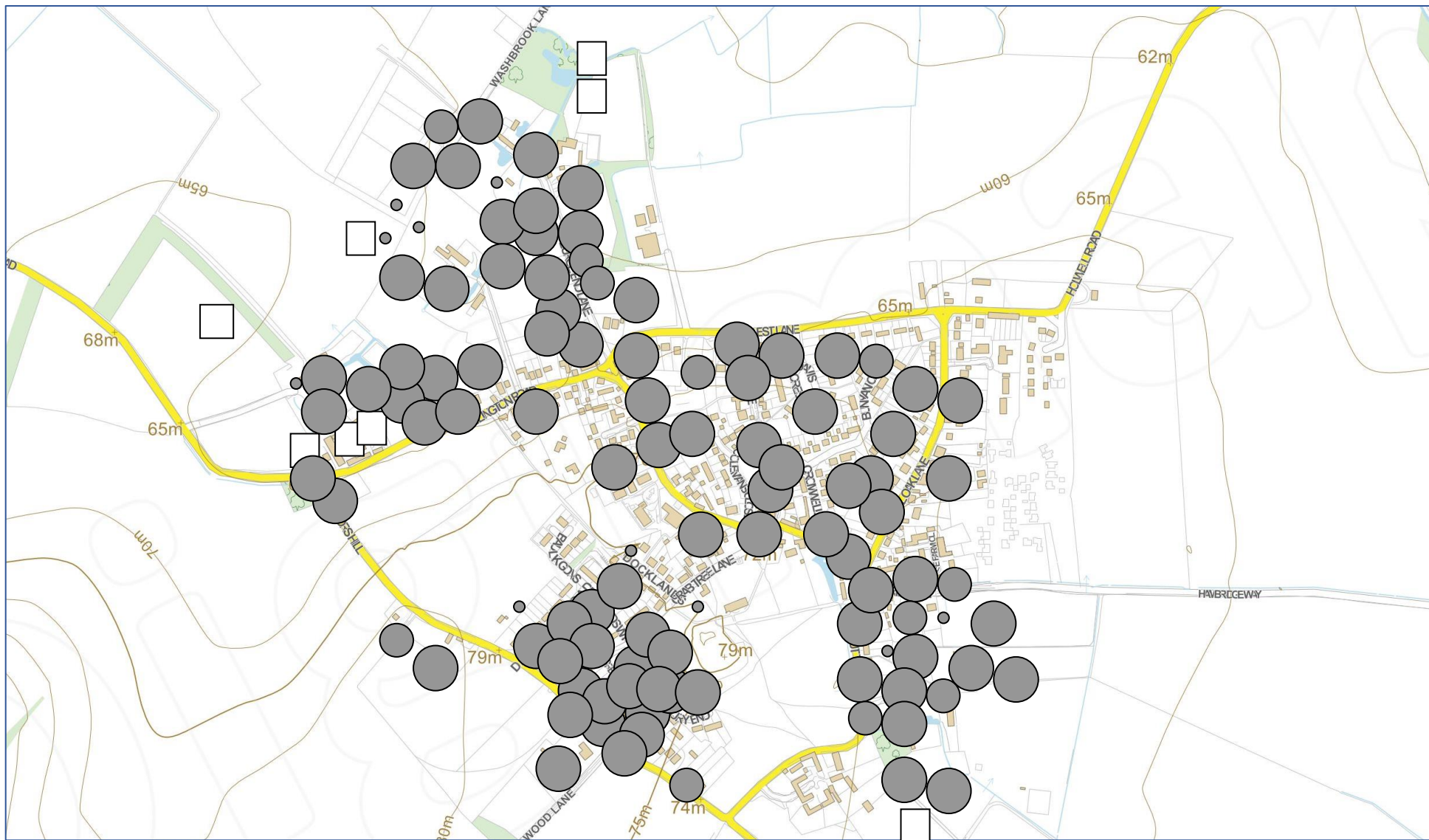










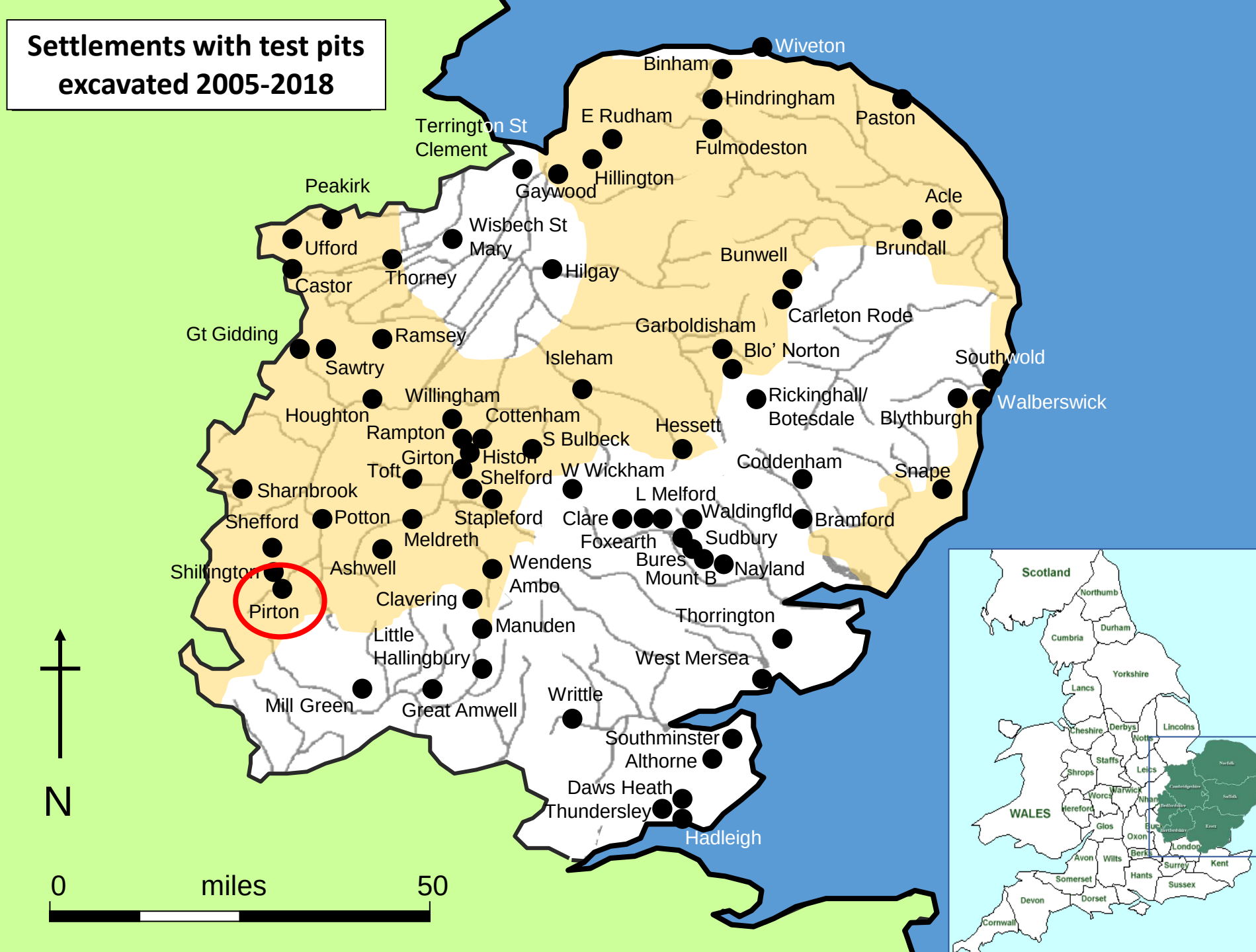


How typical is
Pirton? (circled in
red)

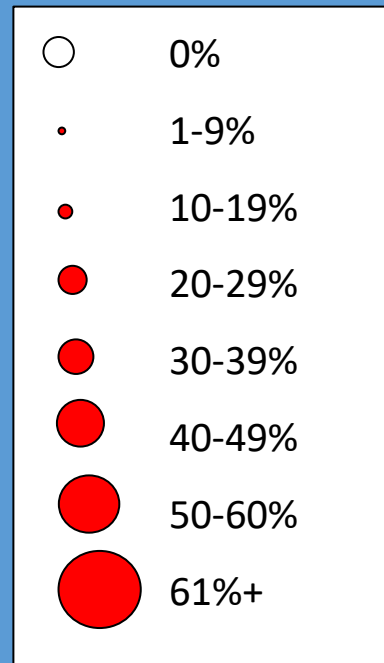
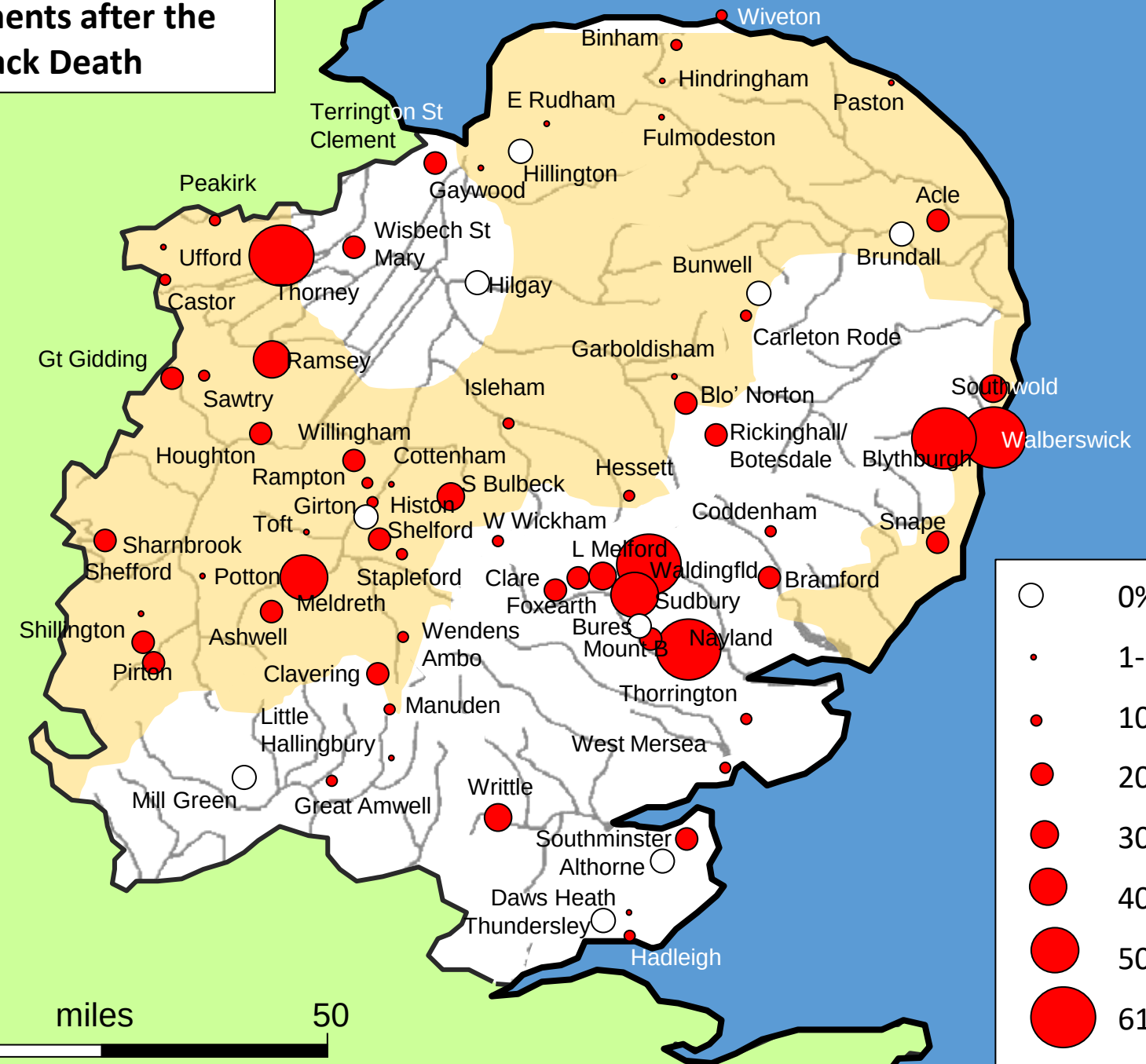
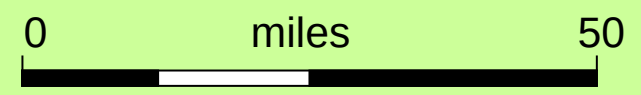
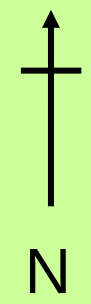
Which settlements
grew largest in the
centuries before
the Black Death?

At this time access
to good arable land
and a major river
helped support
large populations
earning a living
through agriculture
and/or trade.

Choose ten....



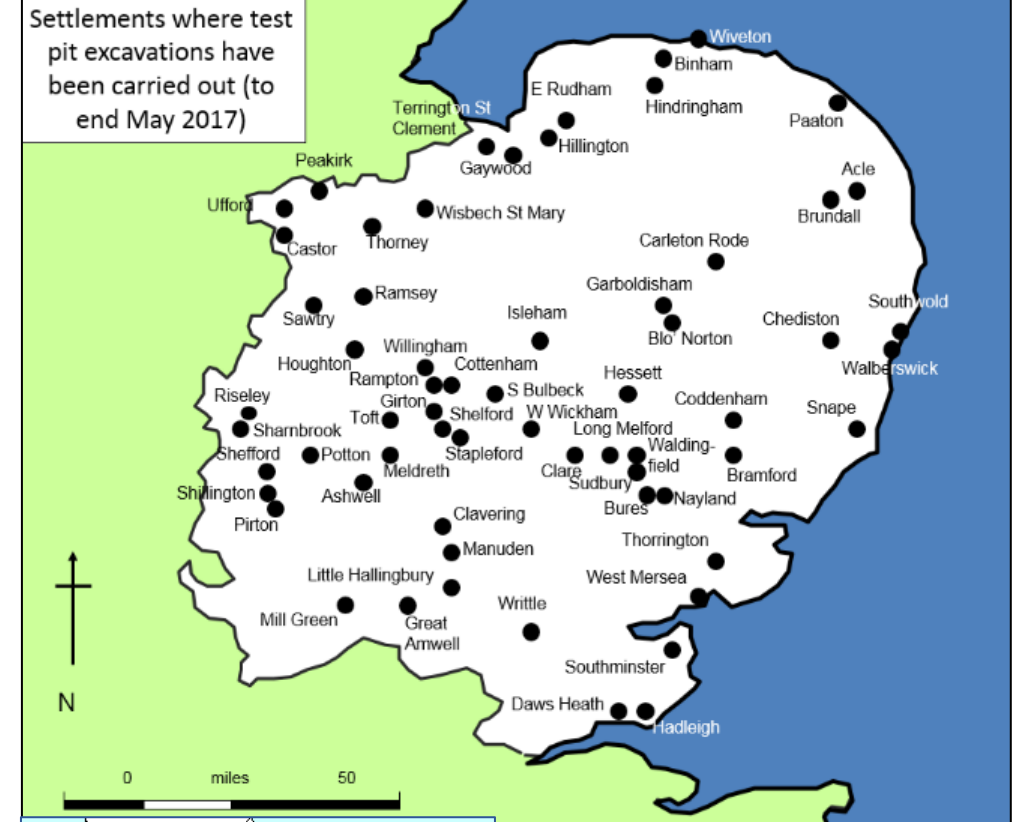
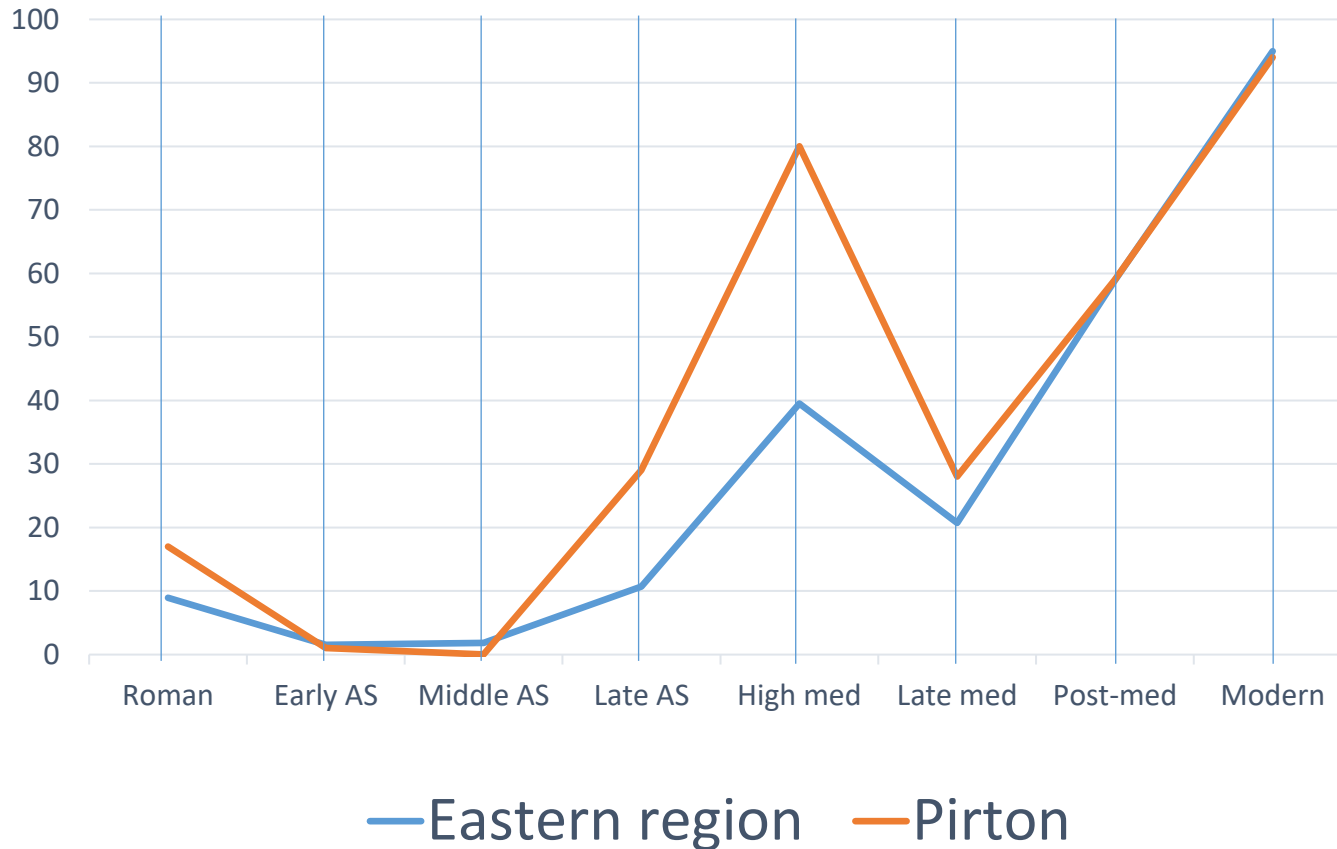
Settlements after the Black Death



How to measure the significance of any single sherd of pottery!



Percentage of pits producing pottery in different periods



Key questions

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END

