

A Mediaeval Farm on the Millennium Green

You are now standing in the centre of a Mediaeval Farm which once might have occupied the land in this small valley 600-800 years ago

The moat, fishponds and ridge and furrow field system all indicate the presence of a farmstead which, because of their well preserved condition, are designated by English Heritage (the governing agency for historic buildings and monuments), as a Scheduled Ancient Monument of National importance.

Worcestershire is the main area for medieval moats and fishponds with over 150 recorded although few are accessible to the public as these at Inkberrow Millennium Green

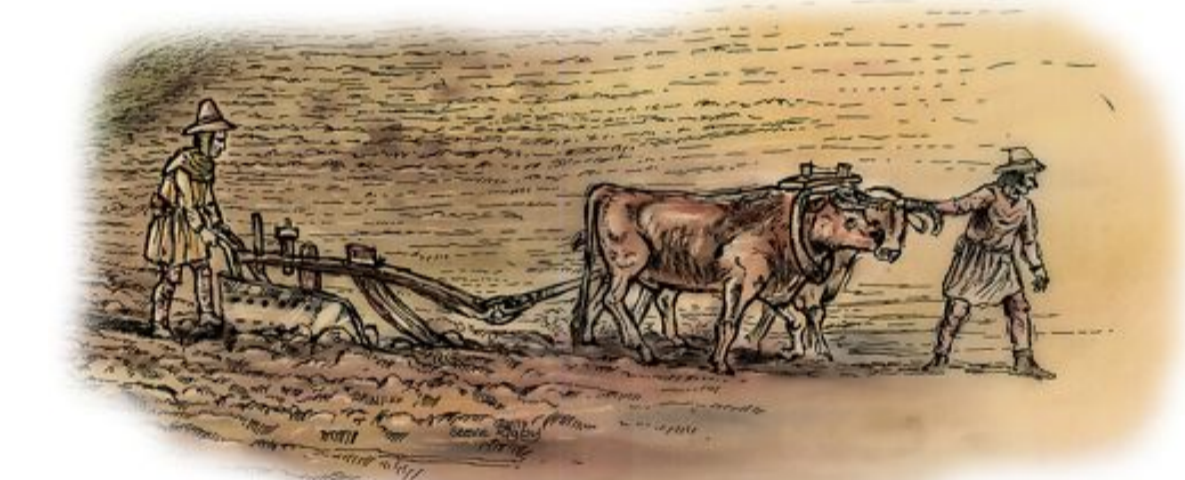
Moats were usually dug as a status symbol and not for protection. Within the moat, a timbered building like the one shown here might have existed although only a further survey will establish this.



Artist's impression of the sluice gate between the pond and moat

The fish ponds and moat were connected by a complicated series of sluices to the nearby brook which was probably diverted from a previous course to provide a source of water. Each of the ponds were lined with Hazel fences or 'wattle' to prevent farm animals from trampling in the banks. The ponds were regularly maintained to provide fish such as Bream, Roach and Tench for the farm table.

Livestock such as sheep, goats, chickens and oxen would have been kept within the wattle area closest to the farm whilst the characteristic 'bumps' or ridges to your right represent the 'ridge and furrow' or strip farming field system created by a plough pulled by oxen.



A mediaeval plough pulled by a team of oxen. The ridges were created by ploughing in one direction within the half acre strip, Each strip was the equivalent of a modern day field, sometimes with as few as one strip per farmer. Ridge and furrow also aided drainage on very heavy clay soils.



A home for wildlife

Today, the Mediaeval Farm is an important home for wildlife as well as being an archaeological site.



The Ridge and Furrow field system is an indication that the land has not been ploughed for over 600 years and, with little use of agricultural chemicals, the grassland is rich in wildflowers like Knapweed.

This type of wildflower meadow supports many different types of creatures such as butterflies like the Marbled White, and birds like the Green Woodpecker



The Marbled White butterfly can be seen in mid summer. Worcestershire is its most northern territory



Green Woodpeckers are often heard in the trees at the top of the hill. They feed on the large anthills on the upper slopes of the field.

The ponds, stream and other wet areas are good for amphibians like the Common Frog, Grass Snake and Dragonflies, whilst mature Oak and Ash trees provide nesting holes for Woodpeckers and daytime roosts for bats.

Managing the Millennium Green

Inkberrow Millennium Green is being managed to enhance both the archaeologically important medieval farm and its wildlife.

Management is guided by the Millennium Green Trust with most of the work undertaken by volunteers.

This work includes;

- Light summer grazing of the wildflower meadows with sheep to encourage wildflowers.
- Restoration programmes for the ponds and moat to preserve archaeology through de-silting and raised water levels.
- Traditional management of the hedgerows by coppicing and hedge laying to maintain them as wildlife features.