

Queen's Well, Carshalton

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(with additional material by the late A.S. Gilbert, C.B.E., LL.M.)

SUMMARY

Excavations following the demolition of Queen's Well disclosed two small medieval pits and a possible hut site, tentatively dated by pottery evidence to *c.* 1300. Evidence for the sequence of construction of the post-medieval house was recovered which supplemented that deduced from the predemolition survey carried out by the late Mr S. Smith. A gabled house of *c.* 1700 had been drastically remodelled *c.* 1810-1820.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the decision of the Carshalton U.D.C. to clear an area in the centre of Carshalton preparatory to rebuilding, two sites of archaeological potential became available for excavation in 1963 and 1964. The initiative for excavation of these was taken by the Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeological Society which was supported by the Surrey Archaeological Society and the London Natural History Society (Archaeological Section). The writer was invited to direct. The gratitude of the director and of the Societies involved is due to the Carshalton U.D.C. and its officers who co-operated willingly throughout.

Both sites lie on rising ground to the south of Carshalton Ponds and close to the parish church. Before excavation commenced hopes were held that some evidence would be forthcoming for medieval occupation on the sites. Two small, shallow medieval pits and a possible hut site were found in the garden of Queen's Well and a scatter of medieval pottery was found over both sites. The second site, Orchard Hill, produced an extensive mesolithic flint industry and this site will form the subject of a separate report.

Queen's Well stood at the junction of Church Hill and Pound Street, facing the western, or upper, Town Pond (N.G.R. TQ 278644). Its garden was bounded on the west by the Greyhound Inn and on the south by Pier's Cottages. Excavations showed that the underlying subsoil is the Bullhead Beds, immediately above the Upper Chalk (Fig. 1).

The notes, field books etc., made during the excavations and while preparing the report, have been deposited at Castle Arch.

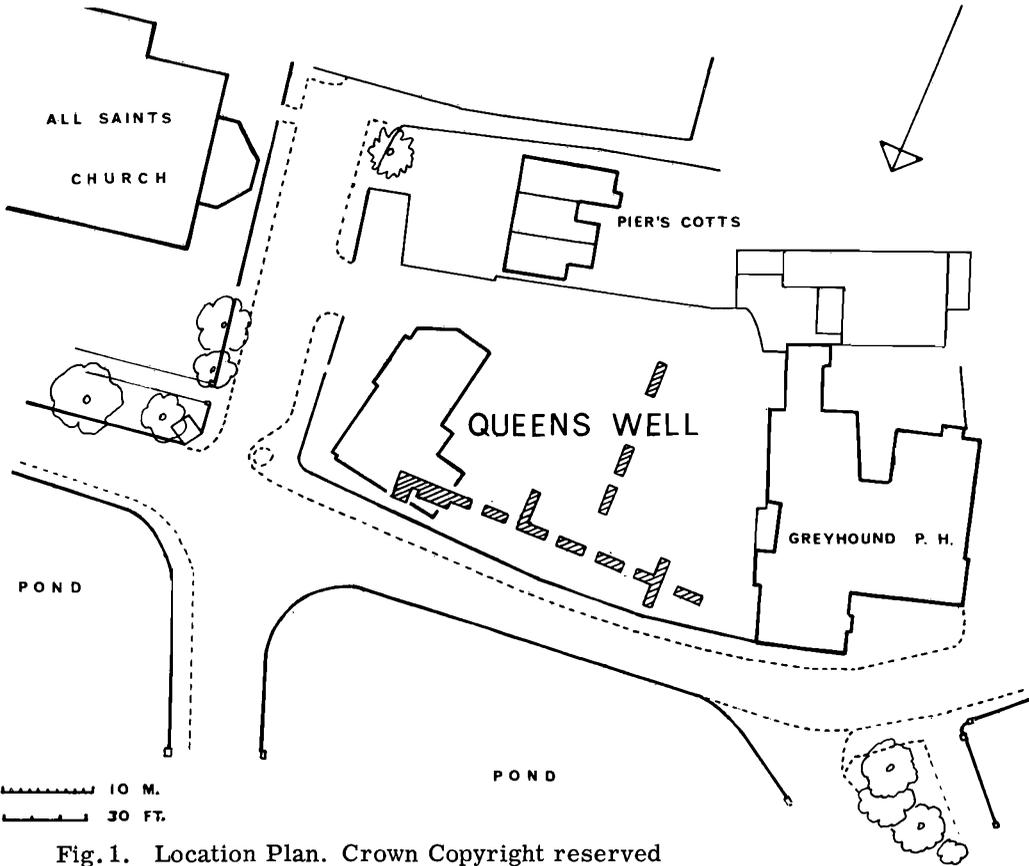


Fig. 1. Location Plan. Crown Copyright reserved

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

(Compiled from notes made by Mr. A. S. Gilbert from documents then in the possession of the Carshalton U.D.C.)

The earliest surviving document relating to the property is an indenture of 1781, which recites a lease granted to Thomas Clegg for 21 years from Michaelmas, 1762, at £20 p.a. The boundaries of the property are set out as:

All that message or tenement with the outhouses stables buildings yard and garden to the same belonging situate lying and being in Carshalton aforesaid and now in the tenure and occupation of Susan Clegg, widow, her assignors or undertenants abutting the upper or westernmost town pond towards the north on the Broadway adjoining the Church Yard towards the east on an orchard belonging to the Greyhound Inn towards the south and on the yard and buildings belonging to the Greyhound Inn aforesaid towards the west. . .

The same indenture deals with a parcel of land known as Grantham's Orchard 'abutting the highway leading through the town of Carshalton towards Sutton' and situated to the west of the Greyhound Inn.

At this date the highway from Sutton ran along what is now Pound Street and turned north along what is now West Street, passing through what was then the centre of Carshalton where several late eighteenth-century weather-boarded houses still stand. A side road continued for a short distance along the line of the present main road, into a lengthy water splash through the edge of the Town Pond before picking up another road to Beddington. This splash ran alongside the north side of the Queen's Well garden and the Queen's Well property was said in the deeds to abut on the pond, unlike Grantham's Orchard which abutted on the Highway.

A lane or trackway known as Crooked Lane passed to the south of Grantham's Orchard and the Greyhound Inn and linked with the south end of 'the Broadway adjoining the Church Yard': this Broadway is now called Church Hill.

There was clearly a building on the Queen's Well site by 1762. The property was part of the Scawen Estate—presumably that of Sir William Scawen, Governor of the Bank of England, who died in 1722 and whose monument is in Carshalton Church. The surviving trustees of the estate are listed as the Right Hon. Richard Rigby, M.P., of Mistle Hall, Essex; Henry, Earl Bathurst, Lord President of the Council; Robert Drummond, of Charing Cross, Middlesex; Charles Bragge of Lincoln's Inn; and James Scawen of Carshalton. Robert Scawen, 'late of Reigate', had also been a trustee but had died by 1781. According to *V.C.H.*, in 1781 James, only son of Thomas Scawen (nephew of William Scawen) conveyed all his estates in Surrey to Earl Bathurst, Robert Drummond and Charles Bragge, as trustees to sell the same. Also in 1781 the Manor and Park of Carshalton were sold to George Taylor who died in 1834 (*V.C.H.*, IV, 183).

The remainder of the lease of Queen's Well was conveyed in 1781 to John Field. Further documents record later leases but the series is far from complete. The property is not named in the earlier documents and the name Queen's Well as applied to the house can only be traced back to the latter half of the nineteenth century. The name derives from a well—the local name for a spring—situated at the corner of Church Hill opposite the Upper Pond. This well has traditional connections with Anne Boleyn as related by Lewis (1840) but the tradition has become nonsensically connected in later versions with an anachronistic journey by Anne from Nonsuch to Beddington.

THE HOUSE

Prior to the demolition of the house it was surveyed by the late Mr S. Smith who prepared a set of measured drawings, copies of which were lodged with the National Buildings Record, the Surrey County Council and the Carshalton U.D.C. Mr Smith made no attempt to analyse the history of the structure

but an attempt has been made to do this using the evidence recorded by Mr Smith, photographic and earlier graphic evidence, and the results of the excavation of a small part of the foundations. (The writer is indebted to Mr K. W. E. Gravett, F.S.A., for advice but errors in the analysis are the writer's responsibility.)

The house had clearly been enlarged in the early nineteenth century and the date of this extensive alteration can be placed within two decades by print evidence. A picture drawn by Whittock and published in 1830 shows the house after alteration, as does an undated Hassell. A print by Ellis, published in 1806, shows the house before alteration. A date of *c.* 1820 for the alteration is supported by the stratification in the area of the foundations excavated.

The enlargement resulted in the house being given new facades to the north and east. The extension had low pitched slate roofs with deeply overhanging eaves.

Of more interest is the question of the pre-1820 house. This had two storeys plus gable-ended attics under tiled roofs. Excavation showed that a cellar, discovered during the demolition of the house, lay under a wing which also pre-dated the 1820 remodelling. The Ellis drawing indicated that this wing also had a gabled roof (Plate I). The wing may have been an addition to the original building as its wall showed a butt joint at the north-east corner of the cellar (Fig. 2.). The room above the cellar had been provided



Plate I. Queen's Well in 1806 from an engraving by William Ellis. The artist has apparently omitted the smaller, southern, west-facing gable. (By courtesy of Mrs P. H. Witkowska.)

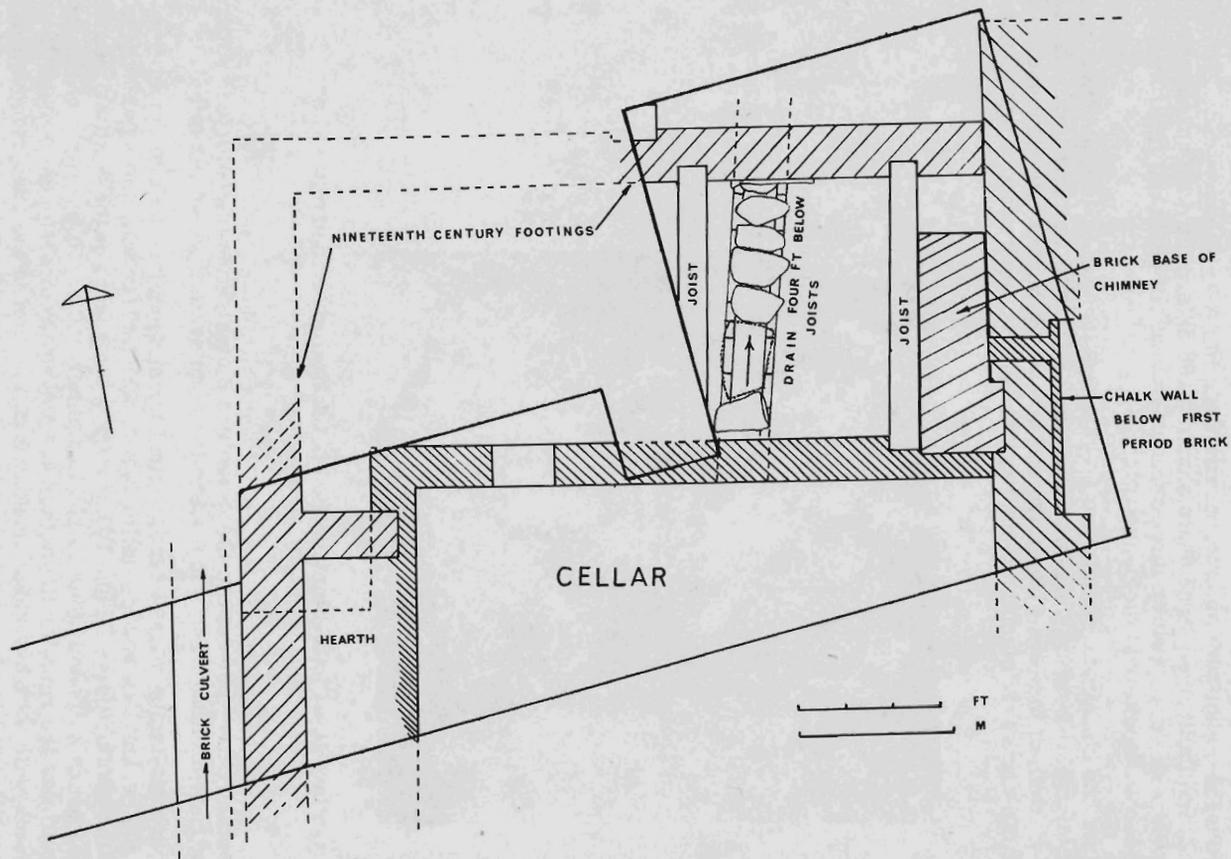


Fig. 2. Excavation of part of the house and cellar.

from the outset with an external fireplace in its west, gable wall. The cellar wall was built of squared chalk blocks faced externally with unknapped flint. A brick drain, capped by large irregular blocks of chalk led from the cellar to the north towards the ponds (Plate II).

When the house was demolished a stone was found built into the south wall of the cellar bearing the name of Richard Harris in well-cut lettering. Mr C.F. Stell, of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England), favours an early eighteenth century date for the inscription which should

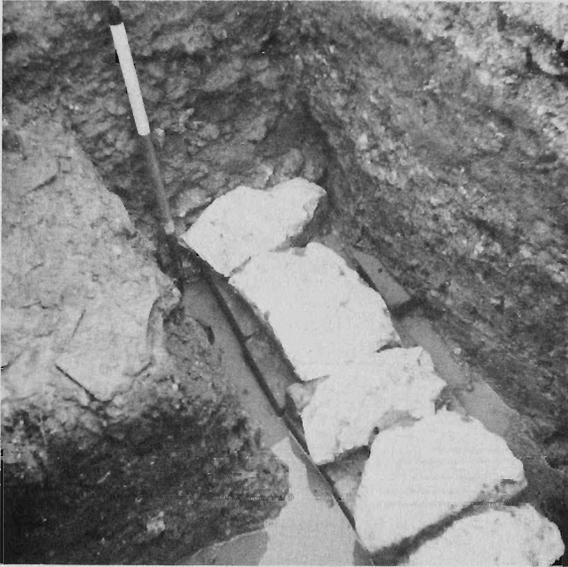


Plate II. Chalk-block capped brick drain leading from cellar.
(Photo: Mrs P. H. Witkowska.)

certainly have been cut in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Attempts to trace Richard Harris in Carshalton documents have so far failed.

Two west-facing attics of the original house remained before demolition, a large central one and a smaller one, to which there was no longer access, to the south (Plates III and IV). Between the gables of these attics was a roof which extended south to end in another gable. To the north of the large gable was the remains of another north-south roof, also containing attic rooms, with a higher ridge, truncated by the roof of the 1820 remodelling. The Ellis print indicates that another large west-facing gable originally existed, thus giving an assymetrical elevation. The outlines of this elevation can be tentatively reconstructed (Fig. 3).



Plate III. Queen's Well from the west before demolition.



Plate IV. Queen's Well from the north west before demolition.

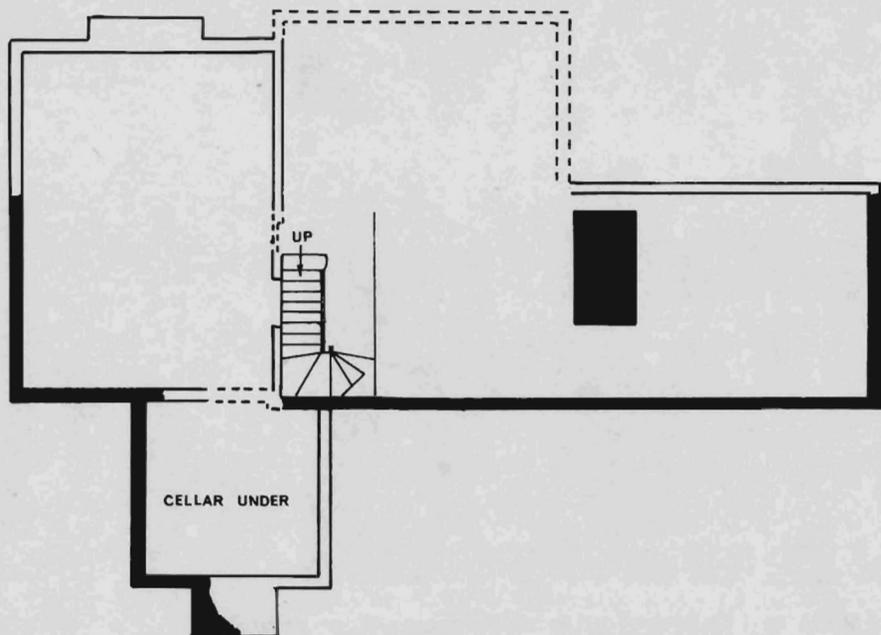


Fig. 3. Reconstructed plan and west elevation of the house in 1806. Certain elements in the plan are blocked in while least certain elements are shown in broken line.



Plate V. Queen's Well: staircase balustrade.

Within the house was a fine staircase with bulbous balusters and spherical newel post finials (Plate V), apparently made by the same craftsman as that at the Old Rectory, which Mr H. V. Molesworth Roberts considers probably dates from *c.* 1700. This may well be the date of the original house.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Following the demolition of the house, the whole site was made available for excavation. As excavation of the house site would have entailed the clearing of much rubble, work was concentrated on the garden. A small area of the foundations of the house, including part of the cellar, was also examined (Figs. 2 and 4).

Two lines of trenches were set out perpendicularly to one another and the following features were uncovered.

Possible medieval hut

At the west end of the site a shallow, flat-bottomed depression was found in the natural clay of the Bullhead Beds. At the bottom of this was a black

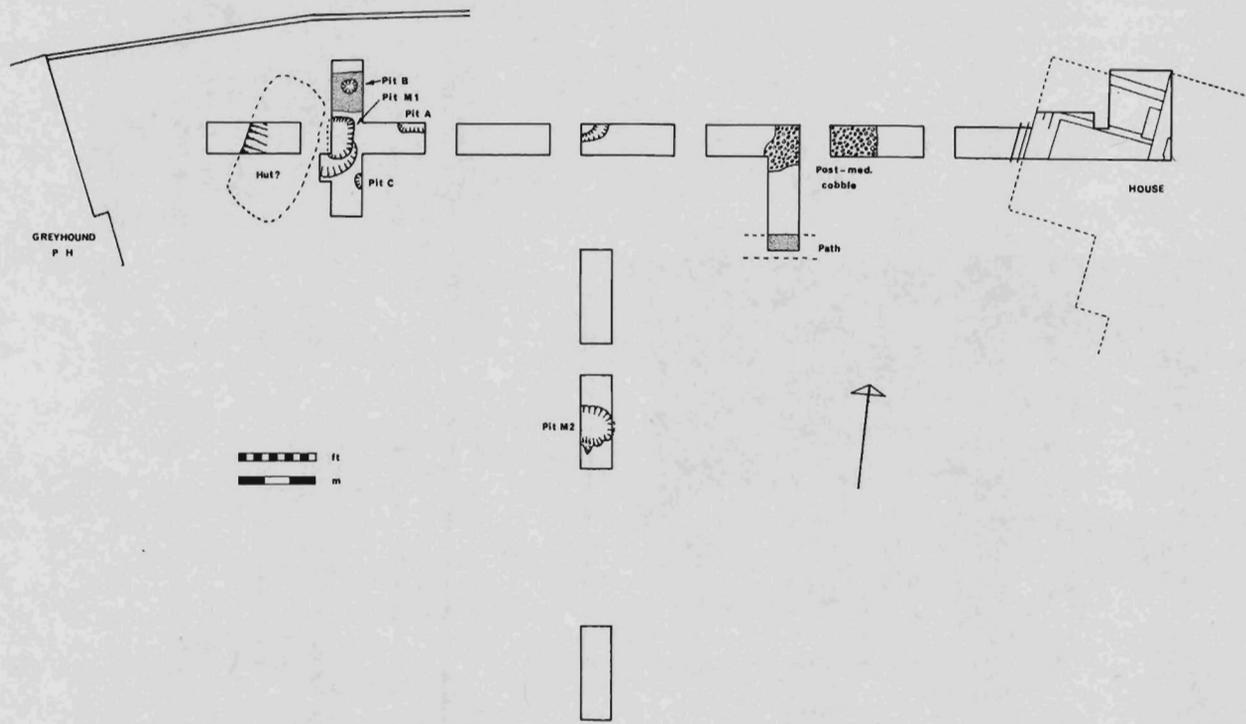


Fig. 4. Plan of excavations.

layer, possibly occupation soil. This contained only four sherds of shell-tempered and hard grey sandy pottery so can only be tentatively dated to the late thirteenth century. The depression was partially filled with the brown loam which covered the natural clay over most of the site. No post hole was found associated with the depression but immediately to the east was the medieval pit, M 1. The depression could have represented the site of a small hut but as it was only partially excavated, conclusions must remain tentative.

The depression was eventually filled up in two stages in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by dumping rubbish, including pottery and broken bottles. The fact that the depression was still only partially filled by the middle of the eighteenth century indicates that the site had not been ploughed since medieval times and that the brown loam had accumulated as a result of soil creep etc. The site could have been used for grazing or as an orchard. The eighteenth-century documents mention a number of orchards in the vicinity and the name Orchard Hill is current nearby.

Medieval pit, M 1

A shallow pit, approximately 5 feet square and little more than 1 foot deep, filled with dark loam and overlain by brown loam. The pit fill contained nearly one hundred sherds of medieval pottery, all but one of which were of hard grey or grey-brown sandy ware.

The concentration of sherds implies that it was backfilled from a nearby midden. If the pit itself had been a rubbish pit more joining sherds of pottery should have been found. The narrow range of pottery types suggests that the midden was short lived. The near absence of shell-tempered sherds suggests a date for the midden later than *c.* 1250: the absence of off-white sandy wares suggests that the midden should be earlier than *c.* 1325. The pit could be a few years later than the midden from which it was filled.

Medieval pit, M 2

An irregular pit, deeper than M 1. The dark grey loam fill contained a greater range of medieval pottery types than were found in pit M 1. It was also overlaid by the brown loam.

This pit was clearly backfilled from a more diffuse source than was pit M 1 but no great difference in date is indicated.

Georgian pits, A, B and C

Cess pits containing late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century sherds. Pit B had been cut through a deep layer of sterile gravel which had been laid in a V-sectioned trench and may have been a path which had fallen out of use by the end of the eighteenth century.

SUBSIDIARY EXCAVATION

Note by the late A. S. Gilbert.

In June 1966, workmen on the Queen's Well site, clearing the way for a new entrance to the Old Peoples' Home then being built, dug down to a depth varying between 4 feet and 5 feet, across a 10 foot front, in the corner of the site at the north end, next to the Greyhound boundary and in the angle of the wall facing the road and the ponds. In doing so they exposed the upper part of a chalk mud wall, topped with bricks, which ran at right angles to the north wall of the site and parallel with the east wall of the Greyhound. Digging about 2 feet further down at the side of this wall revealed a tiled pavement associated with it. It was, therefore, decided to excavate.

The first point to establish was the extent of the tiled pavement. This appeared to run underneath the chalk and flint wall in one direction towards the Greyhound, but trial holes along the inside of the wall facing the pond showed that it extended only east from the chalk mud wall first found. It was bounded by the foundations of a very much slighter wall running parallel with the heavier wall to the west. The chalk mud wall, which contained some flint, was based on two courses of brick, standing on the tiles. Above the tiles was a bank of heavily disturbed earth, in places at least 8 feet high. Within this there was no stratification. To the east of the tiles and the wall foundations on that side there was, at the lower level, an area of lightly packed natural soil showing no intrusions. It may be relevant that the deeds of the premises show that the level of the Greyhound site was 6 feet below the level of the Queen's Well site.

As clearance proceeded a nineteenth-century garden wall was found standing at right angles across the tiles but at a higher level. Its foundations were comparatively slight and after being drawn and photographed this was demolished. At a lower level and also lying across the tiles was a fall of part of a chalk mud wall or foundation which had fallen in from the southern or inward end of the tiles. Associated with this were a number of nails and other iron objects.

When the whole was cleared there was an area of tiles 2ft 9in. wide at the pond wall end and 2ft 8in. wide at the other end running from the wall facing the pond, inwards for a distance of 8ft 10in. at one corner and 8ft 7in. at the other, and bounded on the west by the substantial chalk mud wall and on the east by the foundations of a much slighter wall. At the southern end of the tiles there was a band of cross tiles and just beyond that the foundations of another chalk mud wall, presumably that which had fallen in. Beyond the tiles, to the south on the Greyhound side could be seen the remains of another foundation wall, running parallel with the Greyhound.

The chalk mud wall to the north could be dated fairly definitely to about 1720. [Mr Gilbert's reason for this date do not seem to be recorded—D.J.T.]

It was established that the chalk mud wall was earlier in date than the brick wall facing the pond and that it had been cut into and shortened when that wall was built. Originally, and before the road or even the wall was built, it ran down further towards the pond. The tiles still run underneath the wall facing the pond. This suggested that the tiles were a passageway leading up from the pond. The chalk wall had been repaired with brick at its inward end and a new return wall of brick had been built running back towards the Greyhound, but it could be assumed that the chalk mud wall, the tiles and the associated foundations were all of the same date, approximately 1720.

A print of the site in 1806 by William Ellis shows a small extension to the Greyhound at apparently the exact spot to which such a passageway would have led. This print is admittedly of much later date than 1720 but it was still before the road was built. The annexe, of which the upper part shows above the wall, was weatherboarded similarly to the adjoining part of the Greyhound, presumably on solid foundations. It has now completely disappeared, but it is a reasonable assumption that the tiled passageway once led to it.

At some date after the wall facing the pond was built the tiles became waterlogged and a soakaway was constructed next to the pond wall by lifting two tiles, one of which was used as a cover for the soak hole, and which was set and later reset in mortar more than once.

Also at some stage after the tiles were laid two post-holes were cut through them on the eastern side and two others at the extremities of the southern end. In the southernmost of the two post-holes on the eastern side remains of wood were found, which suggested that at some stage some kind of wooden structure had been erected over the tiles. [Mr Gravett, to whom the description 'chalk mud wall' is due, is of the opinion that this form of wall construction was more widespread in Surrey in post-medieval times than has been recognised and an early eighteenth-century date would not be surprising. Further evidence of this form of construction was found by Mr Gilbert at Milner Place, Carshalton, during his excavations of 1969.]

FINDS

The finds have been deposited in the museum collection of the London Borough of Sutton, owner of the site.

Worked flints

A scatter of worked flints was found over the site. The material possessed a mesolithic character and is no doubt derived from the nearby mesolithic site at Orchard Hill which was excavated in 1964-5 and is to be the subject of a separate report.

Retouched pieces:

possible unfinished microliths.	2
possible transverse arrowhead.	1
angle burins.	2
awl.	1
serrated flake.	1
truncated blades and flakes.	3
scrapers.	2
notched blades and flakes.	7
flake trimmed along one edge.	1
spurred flake.	1
unclassifiable.	1
	—
	22

Waste material:

core rejuvenating flake.	1
waste flakes and blades.	79
hammerstone.	1
	—
	81

Medieval Pottery (Fig. 5.)*Group 1—From Pit M 1*

- Four sherds with discontinuous applied horizontal strip decoration. Three sherds have pale khaki internal surfaces with greyer external surfaces, while the body is pale grey. The sherds are sand-tempered and match closely rim No. 17 from the same trench. The fourth sherd is greyer toned on both surfaces but otherwise similar. These sherds closely resemble sherds from various Limpsfield kiln waster sites where the same decorative technique is found. (Not illustrated).
- Rim of thin-walled jar or cooking pot of grey sandy ware. Possibly Limpsfield.
- Rim of cooking pot of black-surfaced pale grey ware with some coarse sand temper. This is a distinctive ware of as yet unknown origin.
- Rim of jar or cooking pot of dark brown-surfaced pale grey ware with some sand temper similar to 3.
- Rim of jug of light brown-surfaced pale grey sandy ware. Possibly Limpsfield ware.

The fill of this pit produced one sherd of shell-tempered ware and eighty-five sherds of grey or grey-brown sandy wares. While these may have come from at least two different sources, the pottery in the pit is surprisingly homogenous.

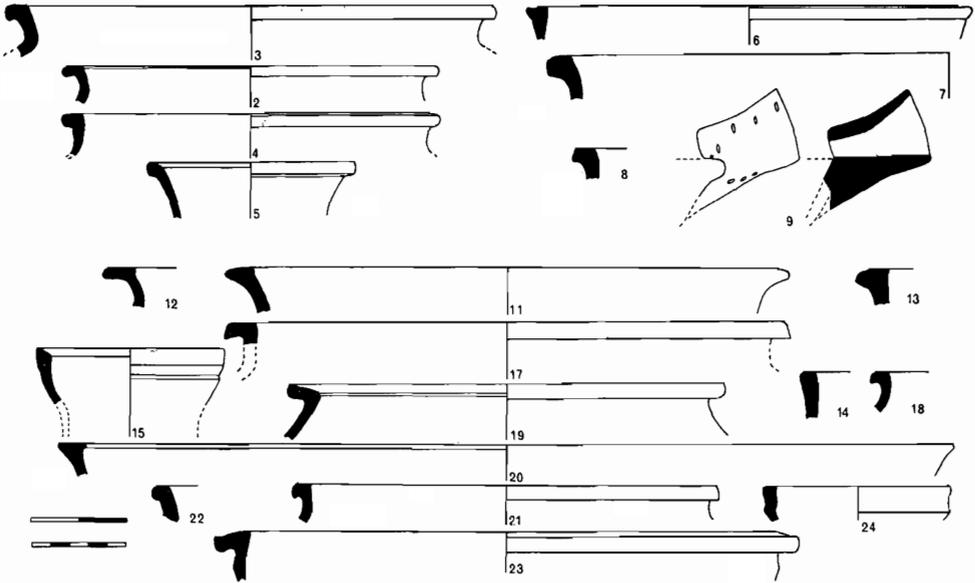


Fig. 5. Medieval pottery.

Group 2—From Pit M 2

6. Rim of jar of pale grey sandy ware with well-smoothed surfaces, pink-brown externally and dun coloured internally.
7. Rim of large vessel of pale grey sandy ware with darker surfaces. The clumsy club-shaped flange cannot be paralleled at Limpsfield and the tempering is finer. (But *cf.* Turner, 1967, No. 92).
8. Rim of similar ware to 7.
9. Tubular socket for a wooden handle from a skillet of similar ware to 7 and 8. A similar handle, but with a steeper angle, has been published from Ashstead and dated to *c.* 1300 (Frere, 1941) and another, but unstabbed, has been found at Reigate. Somewhat similar handle sockets have been recorded from Winchester (Cunliffe, 1964, Fig. 37. 10), and Northolt (Hurst, 1962, Fig. 69. 83 and 69. 84) amongst other places, in twelfth-century contexts and have been taken as indicators of the survival of Anglo-Saxon traits. The revival of such archaic features in late thirteenth-century Surrey is not without interest.

The fill of this pit, apparently as homogenous as that of Pit M 1, was not so exclusive in its pottery content. There was one sherd of grass-tempered (Anglo-Saxon) pottery, four sherds of shell-tempered, five of brown-surfaced grey ware, ten of sandy grey or grey-brown wares and one each of pinky-brown sandy ware and off-white sandy ware.

Group 3—Medieval cultivation soil

Over much of the site the 'natural' was covered by a distinct layer of brown loam which contained virtually no pottery later than the medieval period. This can be regarded as a cultivation soil (but not a plough soil) and the pottery range within it gives some indication of occupancy in the vicinity.

10. Two small sherds of grass-tempered pottery. The three sherds of this ware found on the site were the only indication of Anglo-Saxon occupation. These are probably strays washed down the hill. Anglo-Saxon pottery was commoner, although still rare, on the Orchard Hill site. The friable, grass-tempered ware has, of course, a low survival potential on any heavily disturbed site. (Not illustrated).
- 11 and 12. Rims of grey-brown, shell-tempered ware. The flanged forms suggest a thirteenth-century date.
13. Rim of brown-surfaced, grey-bodied, shell-tempered ware with the shell leached or fired out giving a corky texture.
14. Rim of brown-surfaced, grey sandy ware.
15. Rim of jug with flaring neck, of pink-surfaced, grey ware with cream slip and mottled green glaze externally. Late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. (Cf. Frere, 1941, Figs. 4. 11 and 4. 14).
16. Large sherd of jug of orange-red ware with trellis pattern of bands of white slip. Mottled clear to pale green glaze over. Late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. (Cf. London Museum, 1954, Plate LXII. 3). (Not illustrated.)
17. Rim of vessel of grey-brown surfaced grey ware with some coarse sand temper. (See 1). Limpsfield type.
18. Rim of cooking pot of grey sandy ware. Possibly Limpsfield ware.
19. Rim of cooking pot of pale grey, khaki-surfaced ware, with fine sand temper, smoke-blackened on the outside. Possibly Limpsfield ware but the temper is rather fine.
20. Rim of large dish of bright pink surface, pale grey, sandy ware.
21. Rim of cooking pot of black-surfaced, pale grey sandy ware, similar to 3.
22. Rim of large vessel of dark brown surfaced, grey sandy ware, similar to 4.
23. Rim of bowl of pink ware with slight fine sand temper. Down-turned flange, sharply undercut. Bowl slightly carinated externally just below the rim. A form found in considerable numbers at Moat Farm, Hookwood, near Horley, (excavated by the writer 1963-5) but in a more coarsely tempered ware.
24. Rim of jug (cf. 15) of dark surfaced grey ware.

Pipeclay*Clay tobacco pipes*

Fragments of clay tobacco pipes were found in the upper layers in the garden. No fragments were found associated with the house foundations. The diagnostic pieces have been examined by Mr B. J. Bloice who has classified them according to Oswald and Atkinson's (1969) most recently published typology.

<i>Oswald and Atkinson type number</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Stem Bore (m.m.)</i>	<i>Notes</i>
15	1660-1680	3.0	
20	1680-1710	2.75	
21	1680-1710	2.75	
21 ?	1680-1710		
25	1700-1770	2.5.	One crowned rosette on either side of the heel.
27	1780-1820		
27 ?	1780-1820		
32	c1840	1.5.	Miniature pipe.

Wig Curler

One 18th century wig curler bearing the initials WB on one end.

Bronze

Ten spherical-headed pins (four 7/8ins long; four 1ins long; one not less than 1-5/16ins long; one 1-11/16ins long).

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