

Medieval Site at Addington

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CHURCH MEADOW (TQ 372 638) lies to the south-east of Addington Church and its size was originally estimated at twelve acres. Parcels of land at the edges had been fenced off for houses and kennels, leaving ten acres in 1970. When plans were made to cut new carriageways through part of it to take the east-west traffic out of the village, involving the loss of four more acres, the Archaeology Section of Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society decided to investigate the area more fully.

The meadow was already recorded by the Ordnance Survey as containing earthworks, and was claimed by local historians as the possible site of one of the Manor Houses of Addington. The O.S. Field Investigator however thought it to be an ancient field system and did not favour the idea of a manor house site.

Church Meadow was surveyed and gave an interesting picture of small fields approximately square, with three main lynchets following the contours east to west (Fig. 1).

In view of the theories of the historians, some of whom claimed a castle, and others a Manor house, as having stood in the field in the past, a Resistivity test was carried out using a Martin Clark apparatus kindly loaned to us by Surrey Archaeological Society. Unfortunately all that it recorded was a layer of flints, the result of worm sorting on 'clay with flints.'

Phase 1

The new road was planned to run along the length of the lowest lynchet and to cut off the west end of the middle one, so a section was excavated at right angles across the middle lynchet, the most impressive, as near to Lodge Lane as the road contractors would allow, and a trench of 48ft. by 4ft. was opened up. It was hoped to establish (a) whether the original lynchet had been utilised to form an enclosure boundary for the supposed manor house and give a lead to its existence and (b) to date if possible the original land use. For better recording the trench was divided into four sections: A the positive lynchet, B the crest, C the negative lynchet, D the level portion at its base.

Layer 2 contained tile, slate, brick and clay tobacco pipe fragments, a bronze thimble, a portion of Roman hypocaust tile, Frechen stoneware sherds, sherds of Red Ware and West Kent glazed ware, so it is very mixed, probably not earlier than the 18th century in date.

Layer 3 was a sandy loam with very few finds

and possibly represents with layers 1 and 2, a long period of pastoral use.

Layer 4 extended only over A and B and contained a conspicuous amount of chalk crumbs. It would seem this layer must relate to the last period of ploughing and that the lynchet was still acting as a field boundary at that time. No finds were made in this layer.

Layer 5 was of sandy clay and contained quernstone fragments, sherds of shell-tempering, calcined flint tempering, sand tempering, hard grey ware and one sherd of red ware with olive green treacly glaze suggesting late medieval to Tudor period.

Sherds containing shell, calcined flint and sand tempering were found in layers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. A portion of rotary quern, polished from use, and a sherd of mortarium with grits worn smooth were also recovered from layer 6.

Layer 7 was of sandy clay with slight evidence of marling. The rim forms from these two layers indicate a date of about 13th-14th century.

Layer 8 was of chalk free clay and contained slag, fragments of quern stone, and struck flints.

Layer 9 again showed slight marling and was of clay, carrying many fragments of decayed sherds, bone and charcoal. Rim types were of the 12th century; quernstone fragments and a stone rubber were also recovered.

Layer 10 yielded decayed sherd, bone, charcoal and 12th century sherds as in layer 9 but scored into the yellow clay of the natural, were roughly parallel lines of darker soil which were crossed by others not quite at right angles. These were accepted as plough marks caused by cross ploughing. They were parallel to the banks of the field which at this corner are similarly not at right angles.

Rubbish Pit

Cutting into these plough marks was a rubbish pit lying partly under the crest and partly under the top end of the negative lynchet. It contained dark humic soil, bones, much charcoal, and sherds basically of 12th century date. Ploughmarks were not found anywhere in the negative lynchet. They would appear to have preceded the digging of the pit since it cut into them, and they must represent more than one ploughing since the numbers increase and the distance between decreases at about 8 feet into the field from the pit.

Rather more than half way down the slope of the negative lynchet, a small ditch and bank was uncovered—the original marking out boundary of

the fields. The spoil from the rubbish pit had been thrown partly against the bank, accentuating its effect. The ditch would originally have been left open but had silted up with soil creep down the slope.

It is assumed that the sherds had been thrown onto the fields when midden waste was being spread. Unfortunately most of them were so small and abraded from the ploughing, that it is difficult to tell the form of the vessels from which they came. Ploughing also tends to mix the contents of the layers. The upper levels were extremely mixed for the lynchet was honeycombed with mole runs which extended down into the ditch and pit.

Field System

Cross-ploughing, when the soil was scratched, not turned, was thought to have been superseded during the Roman occupation, but it would appear to have continued in use in this district of Addington well into medieval times, creating small approximately square fields which could be mistaken for "Celtic." The medieval field system of strip farming, common to most of England, was not generally adopted in Kent where small enclosures were favoured.

Church Meadow is about a mile from the Kent border and its drainage system runs eastward linking the settlement with Kent rather than with Surrey.

The first agricultural use of this land would appear to date from the 12th century on the evidence of the pottery. It seems probable that it was not cultivated before being given c. 1187 to the Priory Church of St. Mary Overie. Possibly ploughing was abandoned after the Dissolution of the monasteries for by this time it had been found more profitable to keep sheep, and it would appear to have been used as grazing land ever since. Records show it has remained unploughed for the last two hundred years at least. The bone analysis shows mainly sheep and a sheep bell has been recovered but the field has been used for grazing horses in latter years.

A small trench (II) was dug into the positive slope of the lynchet at the lower end of the field, which is now completely destroyed, in an endeavour to relate it to the one excavated. It had been much disturbed in the past when electricity cables were laid, but its lowest layer was identical to layer 9 of trench I and contained a sherd of calcined flint tempered ware and another of dark grey grit tempered

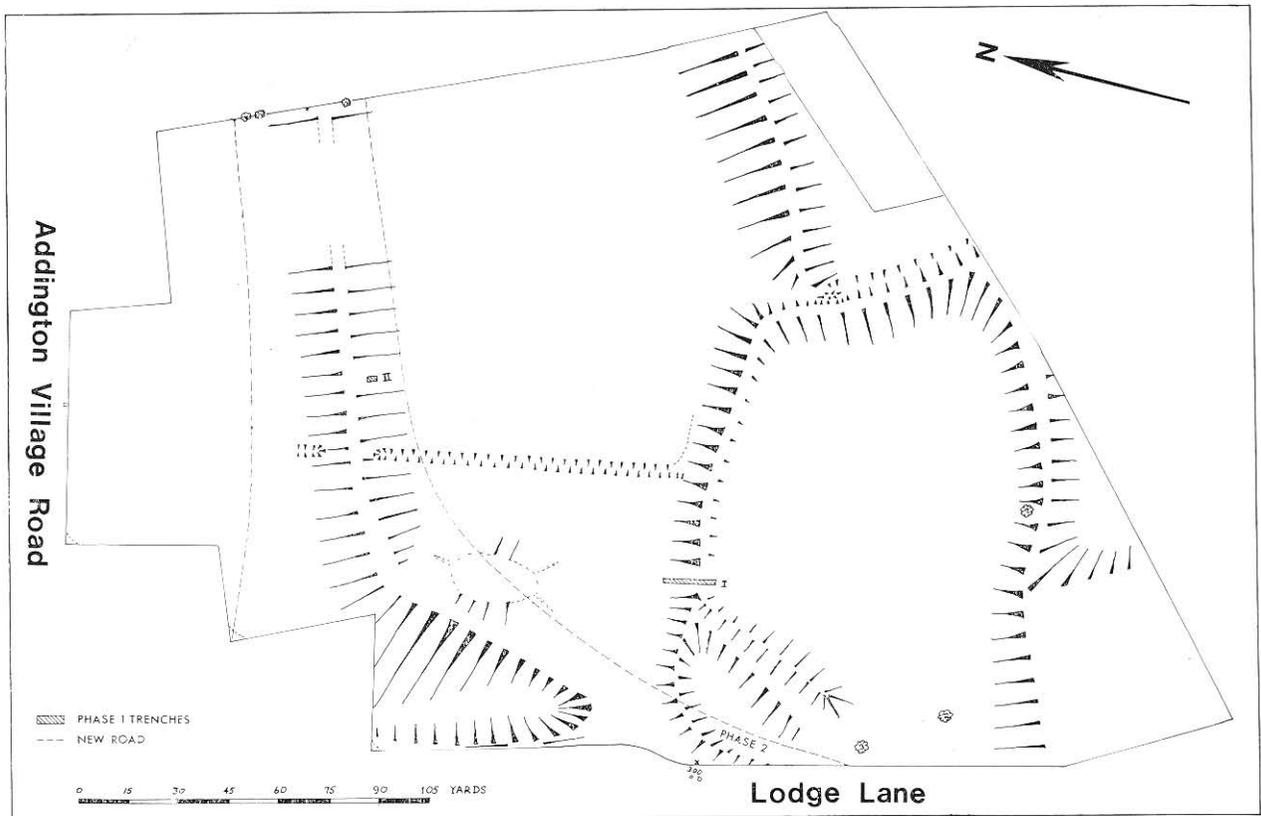


Fig. 1. Plan showing lynchets at Church Meadow, Addington, and line of the new relief road.

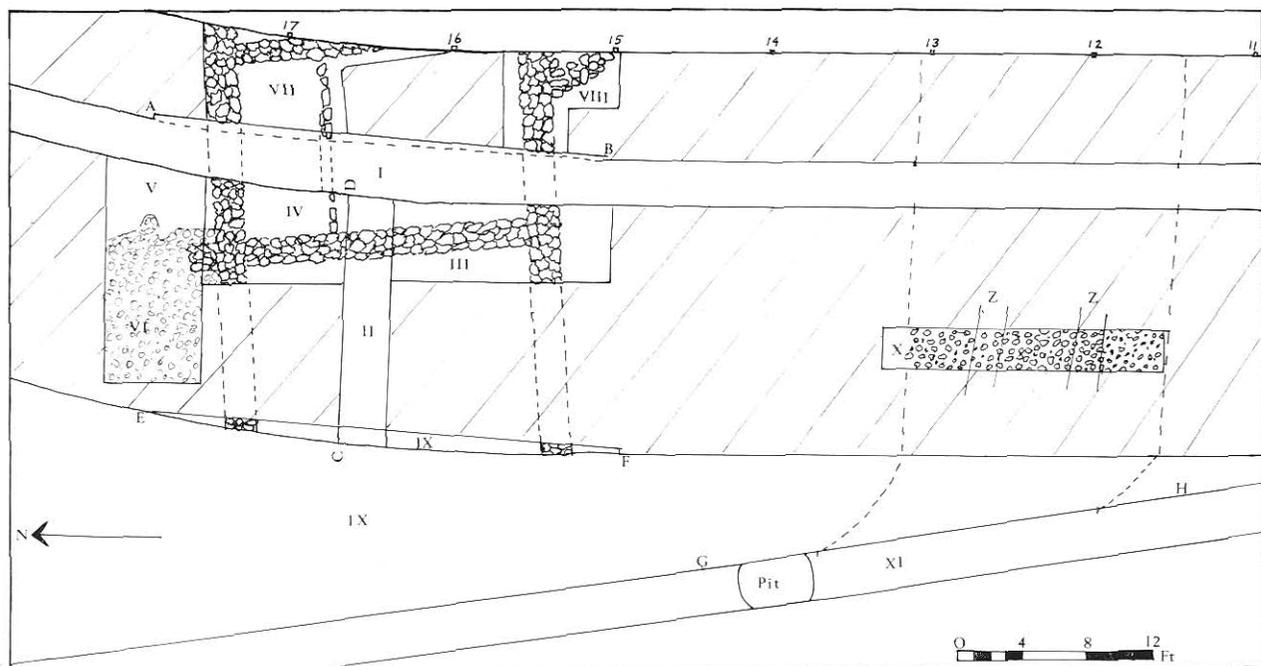


Fig. 2. Flint walled medieval building at western edge of Church Meadow.

ware. There was nothing to indicate that this lynchet was different in date to the one investigated more fully.

The Ordnance Survey card index states that the field system was visible in fields to the south and the west earlier in the century. That to the south has been levelled to form a playing field, but slight traces of lynchets can still be made out in the ploughed field to the east as well as in the pasture to the west.

Phase 2

Although nothing was found during these investigations to suggest a nearby building of any kind, later in the year a tumble of tiles exposed during the cutting of a drainage trench and sherds in the spoil, led to another excavation being undertaken on what had been the western edge of Church Meadow, an area now occupied by the road and its verges (Fig. 2).

A section was cut along the east face of this trench (I) and the footings of two flint walls 21ft. apart were exposed.

Trench II was cut at right angles to I, mid-way between the flint walls to establish the extent of the building to the west. A flint wall running north-south was found, but the new road cutting had removed the terminal western wall.

Trench III was cut to the south and IV to the north of the east end of II to examine the junctures

of the walls. Trench V, a northern extension of IV, was cut because the wall appeared to continue, but this proved to be a buttress. Trench VI to the west of V was excavated to examine a cobbled pavement, below which was found a rubbish pit with 17th-18th century material.

Trenches VII and VIII were opened up on the east side of the drainage trench I, to establish the plan of the building on this side, and a second north-south wall was disclosed. The full extent of the building was not recovered because three walls ran under the fence into Church Meadow. A roughly curved flint structure abutted the southern exterior wall against the fence which could have been another buttress or perhaps the west footings for a porch.

Trench X was excavated 20ft. to the south of this complex to examine a possible flint floor seen in the workmen's trenches I and IX, and a 16ft. wide road was discovered constructed of flints and cobbles set in gravel, rammed down on a chalk bedding. Ruts occurred about 5ft. apart.

During our work another drainage trench was cut in the base of the new road which revealed a pit containing animal bones and a few medieval sherds, viz. hard grey ware, hard buff ware with internal yellow and mottled green glaze, and W. Kent ware.

In all a great deal of pottery was found, dated

approximately from the 13th to the 18th centuries but there was only small evidence of earlier structures. A 14th-15th century rubbish pit was found in the confines of the latest building so it is unlikely that the medieval structure coincided with this. Earlier features included remnants of a rammed chalk floor, a flint cobbled floor, a possible wall and two post-holes of 6in. and 7in. respectively.

The building preceding that shown by the flint walls must have been destroyed by fire because a layer of burnt material containing an Elizabeth I silver penny and Tudor pottery, underlay the flint footings. It was probably half timbered and the tiles tumbled in the original trench appear to belong to this structure.

Rocque's map of Surrey shows two buildings on this site but only one was traced. Time was short and uncertain and the weather too wet to allow trowelling of the natural which was clay with flints. Only II, III and IV were taken down to bedrock so later pottery outweighs the medieval material.

The Pottery

One grass-tempered rim sherd of mid-Saxon period was found but accepted as a stray. Medieval sherds included flat square rim types of 13th century, some containing a little shell tempering, and grit and sand tempered sherds of 14th century cooking pots, culinary jugs and dishes, mainly hard fired with sagging bases. Decoration takes the form of (a) applied thumbed strips either vertical or horizontal, (b) groups of lines made with a comb while the pot was turning. One sherd had stab marks on the top of the rim as at Joyden's Wood and the other decorations can also be paralleled there. Late medieval pottery included a hard red ware with curvilinear patterns in cream slip and similarly decorated sherds of brown or black slip on a cream fabric. Most of the Surrey off-white wares had at least a faint trace of glaze. The rims were well developed, and one, a bifid rim may be part of a cistern, the bunghole of which was found.

Imported Rhenish stoneware included bases and rims of Sieberg, Raeren and Frechen drinking mugs and one fine rim and body sherd of Wester-

wald in blue and grey. English stoneware was also present.

Early red wares with olive glaze, and those of later types with yellow, brown and red glazes were abundant and included two-thirds of a large colander. Staffordshire slipped and combed wares, and tin glaze wares in two shades of blue were also found. One interesting sherd was the base of a dish in English earthenware decorated blue on white, showing part of two figures, a man and woman dressed in the style of William and Mary period and dated to the 17th century.

The pottery and clay tobacco pipe material indicate the abandonment of the building and its surroundings in the late 18th century, since sherds of that period occurred in large numbers whereas hardly anything of the 19th century was found. Clay tobacco pipe bowls and stems date from c.a. 1640 to 1800 and some are initialled 'R.G.'

Other Finds

Small metal finds include blades of knives, keys, buckles both from shoes and breeches, parts of a copper bowls, bowls of 17th century spoons—puritan and trefid, furniture mounts, horse shoe fragments, pins, a thimble and a 19th century pendant seal from a gentleman's fob.

Glass included 17th-18th century bottle glass, a drinking glass stem with an air twist of mid-18th century, and a medallion from a Pyrmont mineral water bottle.

Other finds included the base of a medieval mortar, fragments of a Niedermendig rotary quern, fragments of Mayen quernstone, burnt daub and other building materials.

General Conclusion

The animal bones recovered indicate farming over the whole period. As mentioned above, this was considered a likely site for one of the Addington Manor houses. The archaeological evidence so far recovered neither confirms nor refutes this, for the pottery does not include sufficient quantities of fine wares to lend support to the theory, but on the other hand, the site has only been partially excavated. It was certainly in use as a farmhouse.

Current Excavations

Fulham, by Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society. Excavation of Fulham Pottery under the direction of V. R. Christophers. Experienced diggers required to excavate and record key areas; also to survey, record architectural detail and work on processing (see *the London Archaeologist* No. 11). Inquiries to V. R. Christophers, c/o 1 Church Gate, Fulham, S.W.6.

Battersea, by Wandsworth Historical Society. Excavation of a site in Battersea square under the direction of Stan Warren. The site is in the centre of old Battersea and it is hoped to learn something of its early history. Weekends—

inquiries to 10 Dunganven Avenue, S.W.15. (876 3596).

Mucking, by the Department of the Environment. Ranges from a ditch of the Bronze Age to Saxon huts. Excavation takes place seven days a week. Inquiries to Excavation Supervisor, Mucking Excavations, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex.

Southwark, by Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee. Several sites from the Roman period onwards. Inquiries to Harvey Sheldon, S.A.E.C., Montague Chambers, Montague Close, S.E.1. (407 1989).