

Fig. 1: site location.

# Harts Hospital, from farm to country house: Phase II and III excavations

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## Introduction

HARTS HOSPITAL, Woodford Green (TQ 4039 9220) lies at the edge of metropolitan Essex in north-east London (Fig. 1). This report is of excavations designated Phases II and III conducted by the Archaeology Section of Newham Museum Service between December 1994 and December 1995. These phases followed evaluation of the site by the I. F. Meddens 'Harts Hospital; from farm to country house: a preliminary report' *London Archaeol* 6, no. 15 (1992) 399-406.

Museum in 1991. The excavations were conducted to fulfil archaeological clauses in the planning applications, in advance of the development of the site by Persimmon Homes and Goldsbrough Developments as residential housing. This report should be considered as an accompaniment to the preliminary report of the evaluation<sup>1</sup>.

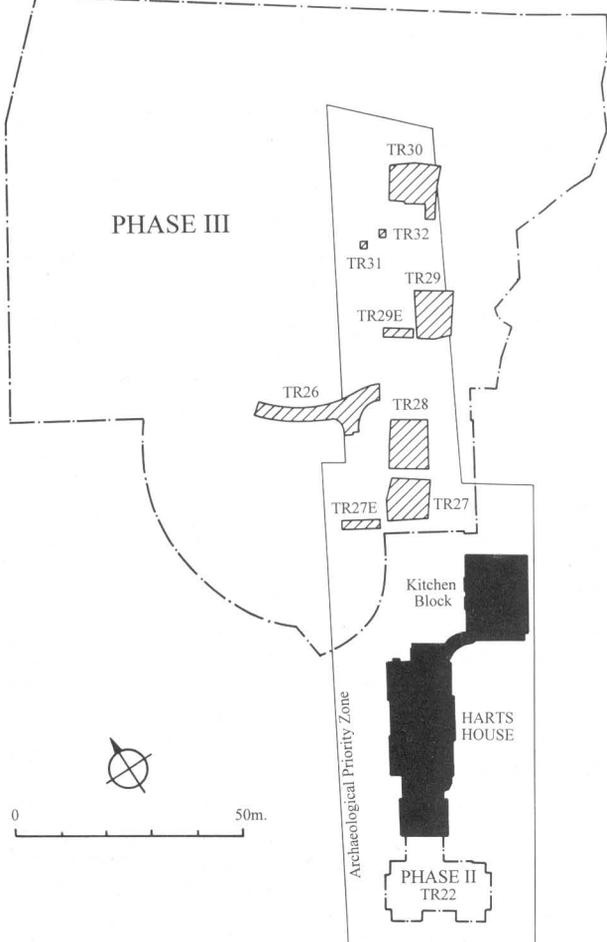


Fig. 2: site plan, showing the Phase II and Phase III areas, with trench locations and the Archaeological Priority Zone.

The site is bounded to the south by Snakes Lane, to the north and east by Monkham's Avenue, and to the west by Woodford Green. It had been used from the turn of the century as first a tuberculosis hospice and later as a general hospital. The hospital was closed in 1986 and the land sold for development.

### The excavations

The Phase I excavations in 1991 comprised twenty-one evaluation trenches over the entire site, in conjunction with Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), resistivity, magnetometry, and photographic surveys. Evidence of major structural elements was recorded, particularly in the west of the site. They included substantial wall and cellar foundations, an extensive drainage network, and a pitched tile hearth, as well as considerable amounts of ceramic and other artefacts ranging in date from the 15th to 19th centuries, as well as some residual Mill Green pottery dating from *c.* 1270-1350. From the

results of the assessment, a site-specific Archaeological Priority Zone was formulated in consultation with the developers and English Heritage, London Region.

The Phase II and III excavations (Fig. 2) were concentrated in two areas within the priority zone. Phase II covered demolition of the 20th-century south wing of the existing Harts House and construction of a new, enlarged wing. Phase III excavations covered development in the north-west of the site, including a new access road and water main. Excavation revealed extensive occupation evidence dating from the late medieval to the 19th century.

### The medieval evidence

It is known that the land accommodated a succession of tenant farmers until the 16th century, and that the estate was divided into three tenements: Marshall's, Dandyville's and Hart's. The first reference to the Marshall's tenement dates to a manorial survey from 1235. The excavations produced evidence of ploughsoils, dating to the medieval period. Although there was no direct evidence of settlement, the presence of pottery in these agricultural deposits suggests occupation, at least in the north-western area of the excavations. A number of post holes, a pit and a shallow butt-ended ditch were cut into the ploughsoil. One of the post holes contained medieval sandy ware, which has a date range of between 1100 and 1300. These features did not appear to form the outline of any kind of structural pattern, although the size of the area of excavation limited a wider interpretation.

### The Brewhouse in the late medieval/early post-medieval period

The first mention of the Brewhouse plot, a tenement with adjoining land and a successor to the Dandyville's plot, comes in 1539, when the copyhold passed to John Holmes. Although there is no specific evidence for brewing on the site, other than the Brewhouse name, there is a history of licensed and unlicensed brewing in the Woodford area. In 1270 Richard Hert, who held the copyhold of the Hart's property to the south, was mentioned in the Court Rolls when his wife Ann was charged with breaking the assize on ale. It would also have been common for large houses of the period to have had their own brewing facilities.

Trench 30, in the Brewhouse plot, contained three periods of major construction (Fig. 3). The earliest took the form of a brick building, with evidence of a timber structure directly to the north, containing a substantial pitched tile hearth. A similar hearth was recorded in 1991<sup>2</sup>. A large late medieval slipped

jar (Fig. 6, 1), dating to the 15th century, had been set upright in the south-west of the hearth. Its base was missing, suggesting its re-use as a drainage sump. Both the building and the hearth dated to the late 15th or early 16th century, and were contemporary with foundation post pads recorded in Trench 30 and further south, in Trench 29.

The various construction styles and types of building materials recorded in this phase suggest a change in the status of the building over a relatively short time, perhaps coinciding with an increase in the affluence of the estate, which may relate to the occupancy of John Holmes.

There is evidence of a transitional period in the Brewhouse plot in the late 16th or early 17th century. This again may relate to a change in tenancy on the estate, which was held by a second John Holmes.

Rubbish pits and dumps in Trench 29 contained a variety of early post-medieval pottery, animal bone and a fragment of bronze cooking pot (Fig. 7, 2). Another of the rubbish dumps produced a decorated conical lead weight (Fig. 7, 1), which may be of 16th-century date<sup>3</sup>. It had raised ribs from top to bottom, with small bosses of lead in between, and a small iron loop attached to the top. It may have been used either as a flat or suspended weight, and is of special interest because of the rarity of such weights from excavations in London.

This phase also contained a series of ploughsoils and horticultural layers dating to the late 16th century. Identified in Trenches 27 and 28, they suggest that the rest of the area remained agricultural land.

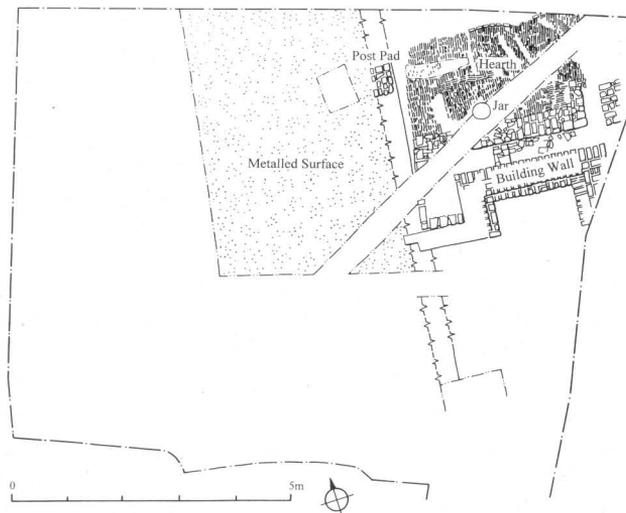


Fig. 3: plan of Trench 30, showing part of the Brewhouse plot, late 15th-early 16th century.

## Harts during the 17th century

In the Hart's tenement, evidence for a yard adjoining a substantial house was recorded in Trench 22, to the south of the current Harts House. It comprised a brick-built wall bonded into a section of substantial masonry and brick. The structure was linear, partly founded on stone, running south from the existing Harts House. It was further augmented by a small structure which comprised a small, heavily truncated building, apparently built against the main wall. The foundations were too small to support a major wall of a yard adjoining the main house. Features to the east of this wall were probably garden features.

An indenture dating to 1617 between William Elrington and Humphrey Handford mentions a "kitchen yard" and a "pumpe yard" attached to the house. They contained a "Buttry" (buttery), "Back-house" (bakehouse), "Milkehouses", a "Cheese-lofte", and an "Applehouse"<sup>4</sup>. It is thought that the structure in Trench 22 may relate to either of these yards with their associated outbuildings. The presence of a mouse-trap in the corner of the building would certainly suggest that this building had a domestic or storage function rather than being for stabling or horticulture. Further evidence of small outhouses in the area comes from a resistivity survey during the 1991 excavations that shows a small square structure with internal divisions immediately to the east of the yard wall.

A substantial wall was recorded in Trench 27E (Fig. 2), running east-west, with a possible floor surface set against it to the south. Cartographic evidence, along with dating from the building materials and evidence from the stratigraphic sequence suggests that these structures may also have been part of the Handford house, which had been completed by 1619.

To the north of the Hart's property, structures apparently contemporary to the walls in Trench 22 demonstrate a pattern of agrarian development. Near the Brewhouse plot, Trench 26 produced evidence of two timber buildings. The first of them was a four-posted structure thought to be a granary or raised store. This was superseded by a more elaborate barn structure, represented by twin post holes and beam slots either side of a double door. Further internal supports were evident, as was an interior gravelled floor surface. Unfortunately, only one side of the building was repre-

2. *Ibid.*

3. Geoff Egan, *pers. comm.*

4. Guildford Muniments Room 97/13/849.

5. Essex Records Office: D/Dcy P2B, John Doyley, 1815.

sented in the trench. These structures were related to numerous other post holes, beam slots and gullies, none of which formed recognisable patterns, and are thought to represent further temporary or ephemeral buildings of a similar nature. Also present was a large rubbish pit containing significant quantities of ceramics, glass and bone, dating to about 1700.

### Early-18th-century development

A well-founded English bond wall, with central rubble packing, was recorded to the west of Trench 26 and is likely to represent the 18th-century boundary of the estate. From documentary evidence, it is known that the boundary of the Harts estate was moved about twenty metres west some time in the 18th century, probably as the result of the illegal enclosure of the common<sup>6</sup>. This is evinced by the watching on the water main that showed only 19th-century deposits to the west of this wall. Aligned with this wall was a possible cellared building with a single buttress, which continued into Trench 29 to the north. These structures could be related to work undertaken by Sir George Caswall, who acquired possession of and enlarged the Brewhouse plot in 1719.

At this time, the Brewhouse plot consisted of a croft with four acres. A second major construction phase used the late 15th/early 16th century building in Trench 30 as a foundation on which to build walls on a similar alignment and lay a floor surface over the hearth (Fig. 4). The remains of a contemporary building were recorded to the south of the trench, with an associated drains network located between these two structures. A bone knife handle (Fig. 7, 3) was retrieved from a pit in Trench 29 and may have been associated with this phase of occupation. It had a separate bone plug in the end, and is comparable to a bone handle uncovered in excavations at Winchester<sup>7</sup>. The Winchester handle dated to the 16th or 17th century.

Several sherds of Chinese porcelain were recovered from a pit in Trench 27E. They dated to the early 18th century and, due to the pit's location, were likely to have been associated with the Hart's property in this period. A sherd of comparatively rare Chinese porcelain, pre-dating 1650, was recovered from Trench 28. This may indicate the access of the merchant owners to the oriental market<sup>8</sup>.

### Mid-18th-century development

Further development on the Harts Estate is represented by the construction of a complex drainage

<sup>6</sup>. *Op cit fn 1*.

<sup>7</sup>. M. Biddle *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester ii Artifacts from Medieval Winchester*. Winchester Studies 7.ii

system, covering most of the Harts plot. It is consistent with drains of similar complexity recorded during the 1991 excavations, particularly in Trench 16. The drainage system may reflect an increase in the number and size of the outhouses, stables and gardens associated with the estate.

Two retaining walls to the north of the drains contained what appeared to be an undisturbed medieval ploughsoil, and were likely to have been built in order to terrace the grounds, either for construction or horticulture. This episode of terracing would have involved the truncation of earlier deposits, and accounts for the lack of stratigraphy to the south of these walls.

To the south of the Harts plot, in Trench 22, the deposits of this date are predominantly horticultural, with ornamental garden beds being recorded.

These deposits suggest a major remodelling of the Harts plot. The layout of the 17th-century wooden barn structures in Trench 26 suggest agricultural buildings; the later brick-built structures are small and could have been domestic. The presence of a down-pipe leading from the middle of the area around these buildings suggests that the area to the north of the Harts property had by this time become a courtyard.

These developments probably date from the occupancy of Mary Sly and her son Richard Warner, who became copyholders in 1723. This, along with the presence of garden beds in Trench 22, suggest that kitchen yards and associated buildings had moved further north to the other side of the house, with the former kitchen yards being extensively landscaped as gardens. Richard Warner, a director of the East India Company, was a noted botanist, and is credited with introducing the gardenia to Britain. It was during his occupancy that Harts gained its reputation as a botanical garden.

### Late-18th-century amalgamation

A period of demolition and reconstruction followed, which may have related to the change in tenancy in 1783 from Charles Foulis to Sir Robert Preston, who amalgamated the previously separate tenements into the Harts estate.

Large substantial walls (Fig. 5), dating to the early 19th century, truncated the earlier structures. It is thought that this latest building was part of the Brewhouse<sup>9</sup>, which related to the occupancy of Sir Robert Preston. The redevelopment could account

(1990). Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 866, Fig. 261, no. 2916.

<sup>8</sup>. R. Kerr, *pers. comm.*

<sup>9</sup>. *Op cit fn 1*.

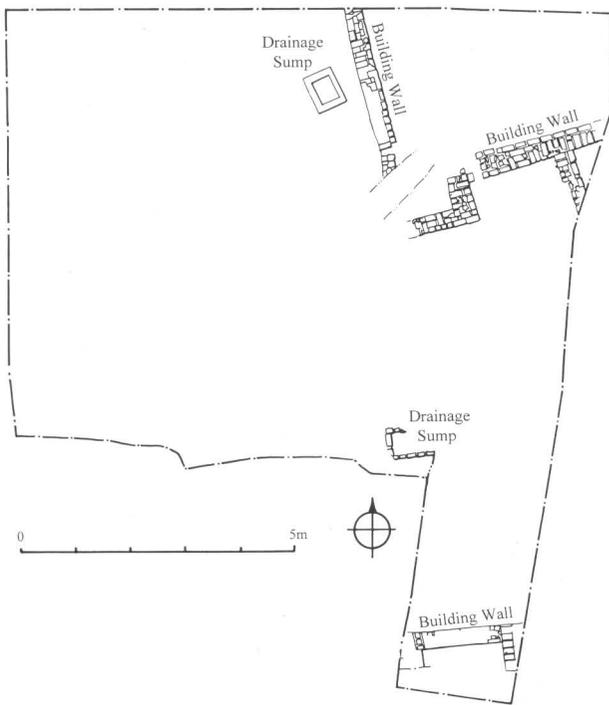


Fig. 4: plan of Trench 30, showing part of the Brewhouse plot, early-18th-century development.

for the relatively rapid demise of the 18th-century buildings.

### Discussion

The Phase II and III excavations illustrate a pattern of continual development from the 15th to the 19th century, showing increasing complexity of structure as the estate gained in importance and affluence. Of the three original medieval tenements, only the Harts plot appeared to have remained. It is possible that the Marshalls plot was also superseded by the Brewhouse plot, which developed independently from Harts until amalgamation in the late 18th century, although both plots exhibit comparable development from rural to metropolitan estate.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Harts site was divided into rural tenements, with an economy dependent on subsistence agriculture. It is known that between the late 15th and the early 17th centuries, the population of London increased from approximately 50,000 to 200,000<sup>10</sup>. The city was experiencing a boom time, as trade developed and the merchant classes established themselves. From the 17th century onwards, they often settled in areas such as Woodford, Wanstead, and West

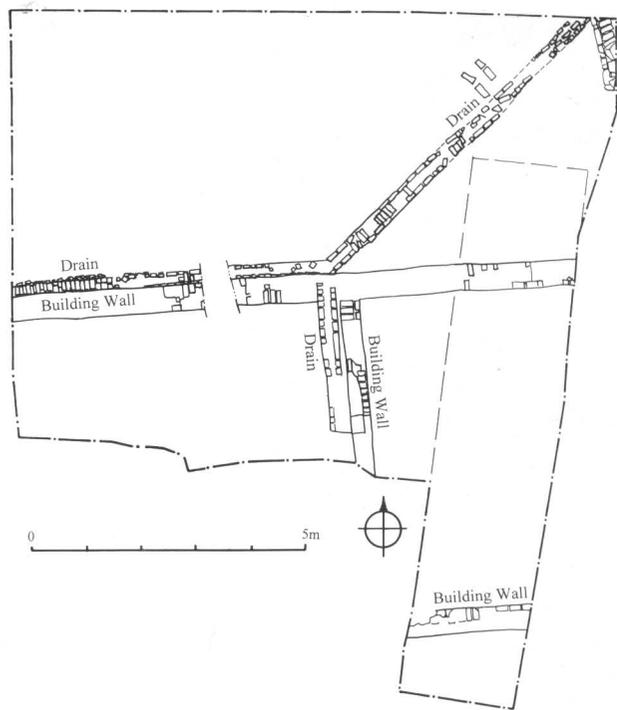


Fig. 5: plan of Trench 30, showing part of the Brewhouse plot, early 19th century.

Ham<sup>n</sup>, to enjoy the benefits the countryside had to offer, whilst remaining close to the centre of the capital.

Although there was no apparent boundary between the Harts and the Brewhouse plots, there seemed to be a distinct change in the deposits about 50 metres south of the Brewhouse structures. This is highlighted by the extent of the drainage system associated with the development of the Harts plot during the 18th century. Results from the 1991 and 1995 excavations showed that the area from the existing Harts House northwards contained a complex and constantly renovated system of vaulted brick culverts. This system appeared to stop just to the north of Trench 28.

This impressive drainage network over the area comprised a variety of dates in the range of bricks used; one drain in particular was made up of an assortment of frogged and unfrogged bricks, although the actual date of construction is related to the 18th century. The frogging feature first appears on bricks c. 1690, although the manufacture of unfrogged stock bricks continued into the early 19th century<sup>12</sup>. The drainage system appeared to be disproportionate to the number of associated build-

10. R. Weinstein Tudor London (1994) Museum of London.  
11. W. R. Powell (ed.) *Victoria History of the County of Essex* (1973).

12. K. Sabel *Building materials at Harts Hospital (phases II and III)* Newham Museum Service, unpublished archive report (1996).

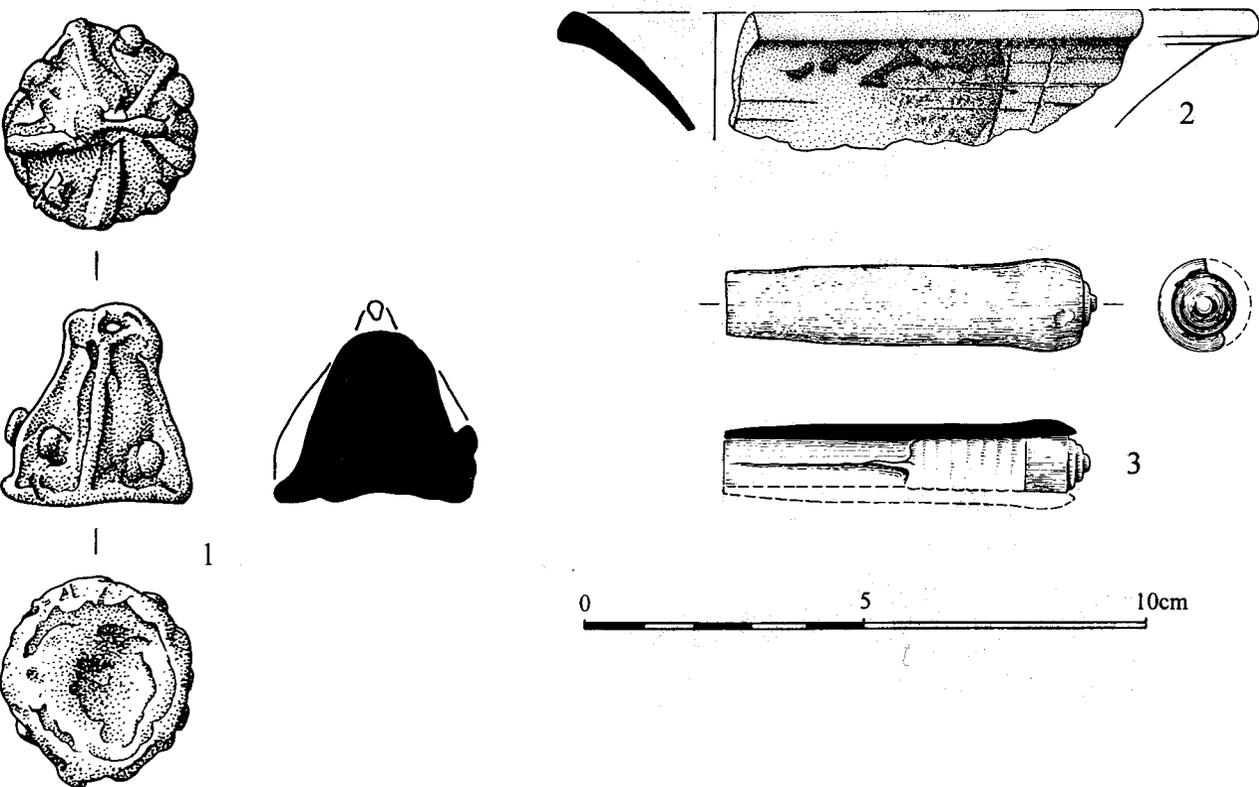


Fig. 6: finds. 1. Lead weight with iron loop. 2. Copper alloy skillet rim. 3. Bone handle with plugged end.

ings in the area. This may suggest the presence of large-scale landscaping. The lack of comparable drainage in the Brewhouse plot may illustrate the growing pre-eminence of the Harts plot at this time.

It appears that the main houses remained in roughly the same locations, while the garden activity moved to the east. Evidence of barns and sheds to the north of the main Harts house during the 17th century suggest there was still some agricultural on the site at this period. From the early 18th century onwards, agricultural activity appears to have been entirely supplanted by horticulture. During the 19th-century occupation, the walled garden and its associated potting and seeding sheds had been moved to the east, into the centre of the site, while the previous kitchen yards to the south had given way to ornamental gardens.

One particularly notable trait to emerge from all the excavations at Harts from 1991 to 1995 is the extent of re-use of bricks for later buildings and re-capping of drains. Foundations were found to contain a mixture of vitrified and under-fired bricks indicating re-use, and most of the tiles from the hearth in Trench 30, for example, are roof tiles

from an earlier period than that of its construction. Successive buildings have been built in the same locations over time; while this is significant in terms of the continuity of the occupation of the site, it also means that some of the evidence from previous phases has been systematically destroyed. The Harts estate demonstrates changes in both the manufacturing techniques of its building materials and the design of construction. Several of the tiles from the hearth contained a higher proportion of calcium carbonate than was usual for the specific fabric, suggesting a local variation either in techniques of manufacture or the composition of the brickearth<sup>13</sup>.

Study of the pottery indicates that local wares dominated the ceramic assemblage<sup>14</sup>. The medieval pottery was almost exclusively from local industries, except for several sherds of Scarborough ware. From the 16th century, imported pottery was present, usually as a small percentage of the wares. Initially Raeren and Frechen stonewares and Dutch slipware occur, with Saintonge Mottled Green ware, Normandy and Westerwald stonewares, Weser ware and Chinese porcelain present from the 17th century. From the mid 17th century, non-local wares appear in the assemblage, such as Staff

13. *Ibid.*

14. C. Jarrett *Pottery from Harts Hospital (phases II and III)* Newham Museum Service, unpublished archive report (1996).

# The distribution of villas in some south-eastern counties: some preliminary findings from a survey

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## Introduction

THIS ARTICLE extends to five counties north of London (Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex and the area within the boundaries of the old county of Middlesex, encompassing a total area of approximately 9,150 sq. km. (3,533 sq. miles)), some preliminary findings from a survey of the distribution of Romano-British villas in Kent, Surrey and Sussex<sup>1</sup>.

Difficulties remain over the definition of the term 'villa'. Generally the majority of buildings identified as villas in Britain have been regarded,

1. H. Sheldon *et al.* 'The distribution of villas in Kent, Surrey and Sussex: some preliminary findings from a survey' *London Archaeol* 7 no 2 (1993) 40-46.

or discussed, by others, as farms either central to, or parcels of, larger estates (see for example River<sup>2</sup>). In only a few of the sites considered in this survey have field systems been reported at or near the villa building, suggesting that the villa may have been the centre of agricultural activity. However, as Hingley<sup>3</sup> has pointed out, this is largely because excavators have too often studied stone-walled villa houses without exploring beyond the bounds of a single building, thus ignoring any additional dwelling houses, outbuildings and field systems, which might give some indication of the status of the villa within a broader settlement context. In

2. A. L. F. Rivet *Town and country in Roman Britain* (1964) 103-5.

3. R. Hingley *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain* (1989).

(continued from p. 186)

ordshire Slipware. The range of forms increased over time, with a general tendency towards food preparation and tablewares, with the number of vessels associated with cooking declining. These trends in vessel shapes are as expected for the period. None of the vessel forms from the pottery analysed could be linked to the agricultural or horticultural activity known on the site. From the mid 17th century, tea, coffee and chocolate-drinking became fashionable social activities that the middle classes readily adopted. The presence of a tea drinking vessel in the form of a mid 17th century Chinese porcelain bowl/cup may indicate affluent social activity for the period.

The Harts estate mirrors the climate of change in London over several centuries, and the archaeological work undertaken since 1991, together with the documentary evidence, provides insights into the development and gentrification of rural Essex.

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