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# Beyond the Manor of *Hintona*

## Further thoughts on the development of Church End, Cherry Hinton: The Neath Farm Site

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*Excavations at Neath Farm Business Park have considerably advanced our understanding of the occupational sequence at Church End, Cherry Hinton. Whilst previous investigations had demonstrated the existence of a significant late 9th/mid 10th–late 11th/early 12th century settlement, the Neath Farm excavations indicated the existence of a previously unrecognised Romano-British agricultural landscape of droveways and paddocks. Significant settlement continuing until the early 15th century, this Late Medieval activity – in conjunction with the earlier investigations – points to a long-lived settlement, the focus of which shifted over time and demonstrates the important potential of cumulatively investigating such sites over substantial areas.*

### Introduction

Following on from a test-pit survey (Patten 2006) and evaluation (Slater 2011a) between February and June 2012 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook excavations at Neath Farm Business Park, Cherry Hinton, covering 0.57 hectares (Figs. 1–2; Slater 2012). This is the latest, but almost certainly not the last, of several phases of developer-funded fieldwork in the vicinity undertaken by a range of organisations for a number of clients. This work has shed light on a series of sites, none of which have been or are indeed likely to ever be investigated in their entirety. In such a context developer-funded archaeology must be viewed as an iterative, cumulative process and any statement remains provisional and interim.

The first substantial piece of fieldwork in 1999 at 69–115 Church End, unfortunately still unpublished, revealed an extensive cemetery that may span the 8th–12th centuries with over 670 burials associated with a small church and fragments of at least eight stone monuments dating to c. 950–1100, plus ditches and pits of the same date (McDonald and Doel 2000). Further work in 2002–03 at 63 Church End and Rosemary Lane uncovered evidence for a settlement that originated in the late 9th/mid 10th century and that developed into a large manorial centre, with an extensive sparsely occupied 'D'-shaped enclosure covering over six hectares with evidence of droveways, timber buildings, quarry pits and wells (Cessford with Dickens 2005). This manorial centre, which was identified with the

manor of *Hintona* recorded in Domesday Book, was abandoned in the late 11th/early 12th century, although some occupation continued on the periphery of the village for a time. Subsequent to this, in 2007 an evaluation at Hatherdene Lane revealed possible Bronze Age and Iron Age burials, a Romano-British ditched funerary enclosure plus fieldsystem and an Early Saxon cemetery (Mortimer 2007). This represented the state of understanding when excavation began at Neath Farm.

This paper has two principal aims. Firstly, as the Prehistoric and Romano-British periods were, perhaps understandably, omitted from the previous publication (Cessford with Dickens 2005), more attention will be paid to them. Secondly, as the Medieval period formed the focus of the previous publication, the principal focus will be upon how the more recent investigations modify the interpretation of this period presented in the earlier article. In particular, the Neath Farm investigations allow us to place the earlier investigations into a much longer term 8th–15th century settlement sequence, thereby taking us far beyond the Domesday Book manor of *Hintona* in both time and space and shedding light upon the process of village nucleation. As will be considered further in the discussion (see below) the archaeological investigations at Church End Cherry Hinton and other sites in southern Cambridgeshire provides significant insights into the long-term evolutionary process whereby nucleated settlements and their associated open fields developed from a variety of earlier nuclei. As southern Cambridgeshire lies on the fringe of the area where this process occurred it is a particularly useful place to study the phenomenon, additionally the attention paid to Post-Medieval and later activity allows the Medieval developments to be placed in a longer time frame albeit one where the mid 11th–late 12th century can be identified as crucial.

### *A Prehistoric Presence*

No prehistoric features were identified at Neath Farm, although, in common with other investigations, some worked flint was inadvertently 'trapped' in later features. Whilst none of this material is of intrinsic interest and much of it can only be poorly dated, the

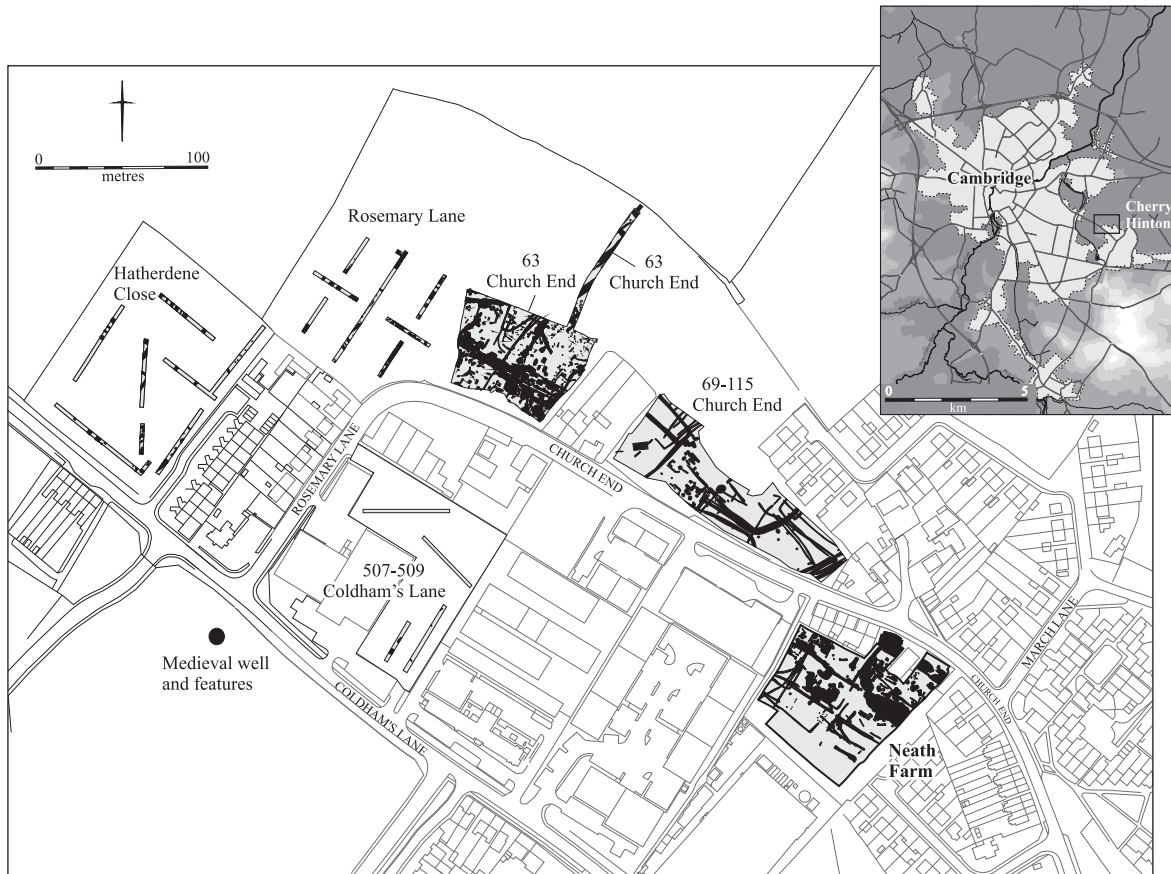


Figure 1. Church End, Cherry Hinton, investigations base-plan.

densities of such material are potentially of interest if a comparative agenda is employed (Evans 2012; see Table 1). Whilst archaeological investigations of prehistory largely focus on 'sites', however these are defined, investigations on later sites have the potential to serendipitously shed light on prehistoric 'non-sites' or blank areas.

The distribution of the material in later features suggests that it was present as a slight surface scatter at the start of the Medieval occupation, rather than having been brought in subsequently with soil or manure dumps. Under such conditions it is unsurprising that prehistoric pottery is rare; the sole discovery from the CAU excavations being a single sherd of probably Late Bronze Age pottery from 63 Church End, although seven sherds of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age pottery were recovered at 69–115 Church End. The evidence, therefore, consists almost entirely of the more robust worked flint, although a fragment of a polished stone axe was also found at 69–115 Church End. As reported upon by Emma Beadsmoore and Lawrence Billington below, 111 worked flints have been recovered from the CAU investigations. Of these, all of which occurred residually within the fills of later features, 25 come from Neath Farm.

The most distinctive pieces within the assemblage consist of six blade-based products; three blades and three bladelets. These are systematically produced pieces characteristic of Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic technologies. The remainder of the assemblage consists of flake-based material that is likely to postdate such blade-based technologies. None of this material is strictly diagnostic, but technological traits including large plain striking platforms, squat flake morphologies and direct hard hammer percussion suggest a later Neolithic or Bronze Age date is likely. A single retouched tool was recovered, an irregular, expediently produced scraper made on the proximal end of a large cortical flake.

The work at 63 Church End produced 71 worked flints. Tools included three arrowheads; an earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead, a Beaker barbed and tanged arrowhead and an Early Bronze Age arrowhead with just a tang. Three scrapers were also retrieved; an end scraper that is technologically consistent with earlier Neolithic flint working, a thumbnail scraper that provides further support for Beaker activity and a sub-circular scraper that is likely to be Early Bronze Age. The remaining tools, three retouched flakes, are not clearly chronologically diagnostic. Yet the morphology of one tentatively links it to the later Neolithic, whereas another is the product of a more expedient and unstructured technology and therefore likely to be Bronze Age or later prehistoric. The 62 pieces of flint working waste include six cores; one single platform core is probably Neolithic, a two-platform core is more likely to be later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, two other single platform cores are probably Bronze Age



Figure 2. Overall view of Neath Farm excavations, facing northeast, and feature base-plan.



Site	Investigated area (hectares)	Prehistoric worked flint (count)	Romano-British pottery (count)	5th-9th century pottery (count)	10th-12th century pottery (count)	13th-15th century pottery (count)	Medieval animal bone (kg)	Medieval fired clay (kg)	Medieval lava quern stone (kg)	Medieval wells	Medieval buildings
Neath Farm, Cherry Hinton	0.57	25 (43.9)	14 (24.6)	10 (17.5)	240 (421.1)	746 (1308.8)	23.2 (40.7)	29.6 (51.9)	0.9 (1.6)	7 (12.3)	9 (15.8)
63 Church End, Cherry Hinton	0.44	71 (161.4)	69 (156.8)	23 (52.3)	1861 (4229.5)	484 (1100.0)	64.0 (145.5)	34.4 (78.2)	10.9 (24.8)	16 (36.4)	5 (11.4)
Lordship Lane, Cottenham	2.7	1238 (458.5)	17 (6.3)	297 (110.0)	520 (192.6)	99 (36.7)	16.9 (6.3)	1.7 (0.6)	10.3 (3.8)	– (0.0)	12 (4.4)
West Fen Road (Ashwell site), Ely	3.16	213 (67.4)	1915 (606.0)	234 (74.1)	7059 (2233.9)	9228 (2920.3)	231.9 (73.4)	12.4 (3.9)	63.8 (20.2)	8 (2.5)	23 (7.3)
West Fen Road (Consortium site), Ely	2.00	51 (25.5)	291 (145.5)	418 (209.0)	2 (1.0)	64 (32.0)	c. 66 (1.75)	Unknown	3.5 (1.75)	1 (0.5)	12 (6.0)
Walsingham Way, Ely	0.42	51 <sup>(1)</sup> (121.4)	13 (31.0)	155 (369.0)	463 (1102.4)	928 (2209.5)	19.5 <sup>(2)</sup> (46.4)	2.9 (6.9)	9.1 (21.7)	2 (4.8)	11 (26.2)
Grand Arcade, Cambridge	0.70	25 (35.7)	121 (172.9)	– (0.0)	3558 (5082.9)	12755 (18221.4)	479.4 <sup>(2)</sup> (684.9)	0.5 (0.7)	13.3 (19.0)	37 (52.9)	16 (22.9)
Eastern Gate, Barnwell	0.19	21 (110.5)	12 (63.2)	19 (100.0)	43 (226.3)	3195 (16815.8)	94 (494.7)	55.9 (294.2)	6.4 (33.7)	19 (100.0)	7 (36.8)

**Table 1.** Quantities and densities per hectare of selected materials and features from archaeological investigations of broadly comparable character. <sup>(1)</sup> Not studied by specialist, may not all be genuine. <sup>(2)</sup> Estimated based upon percentage by count assigned to this phase.

while two irregular cores are likely to be later prehistoric. No tools were present in the 15 pieces of worked flint from Rosemary Lane, with the exception of a possibly notched flake and a very rough scraper. While not clearly datable, most of the material is likely to be Bronze Age, with a small later Neolithic component.

The material from the other investigations at 69–115 Church End (83 pieces) and Hatherdene Close (seven pieces) is of similarly mixed date to the assemblages from the CAU sites.

### *Re-focussing on the Romano-British*

At Neath Farm, the earliest phase of activity at the site in which features were present consisted of a series of shallow ditches and gullies. These appear to represent a peripheral zone, consisting of a network of enclosures and routeways (Fig. 3). The ditches were orientated on a markedly different alignment to the later phases of occupation and contained a small quantity of Romano-British pottery. In general the investigations at Church End have produced only a limited quantity of Romano-British material.

This evidence was somewhat ambiguous, as residual Romano-British material is frequently the only dating evidence associated with the very earli-

est activity on Medieval rural sites. At Neath Farm, however, one of the ditches contained part of a poorly preserved human skeleton laid in an extended supine position with their head to the south (Fig. 4). These remains are probably of a female aged 35–45, whilst radiocarbon dating indicates that they were interred between the late 3rd and early 5th centuries (260–420AD at 95% confidence level; 1690±30 BP, Beta-330878). Natasha Dodwell reports of the burial:

The partial skeleton is represented by two groups of articulating bone; a right femur, tibia, fibula plus foot and a right distal humerus, ulna, radius and hand (Fig. 4). These limbs are in the correct anatomical position in relation to each other; the body would have lain in a supine south-north aligned extended position. Two disarticulated ribs, the atlas and a partial skull including the mandible were recovered adjacent to the two limbs. Sexually dimorphic traits on the skull and mandible and metrical data suggest that this individual is female. The pattern of wear on their molars suggests that the individual was around 35–45 years old when they died.

Additionally, a single disarticulated adult-sized middle phalanx was recovered from a 14th–15th century quarry pit. This pit was located c. 40m northeast of the skeleton and the phalanx probably either derives from this burial or another otherwise unidentified Roman interment.

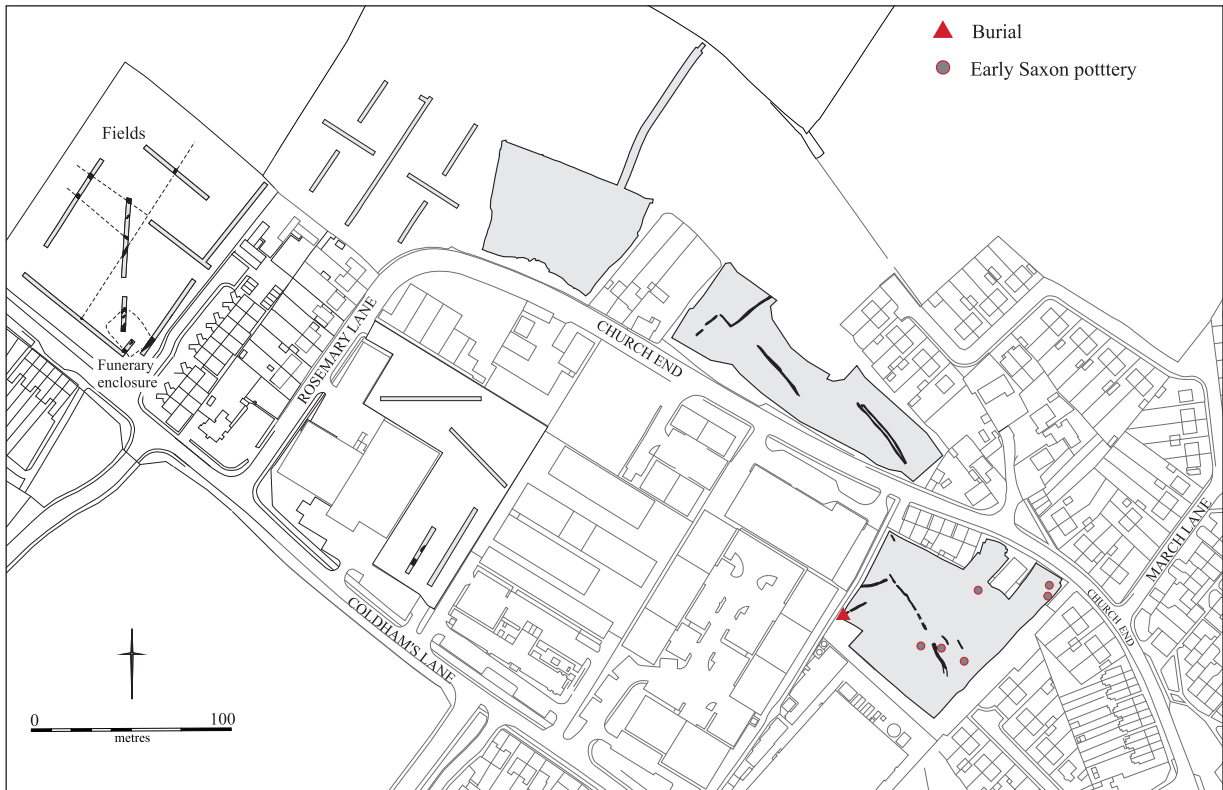


Figure 3. Romano-British features at Church End, with location of burial and Early-Saxon pottery at Neath Farm.

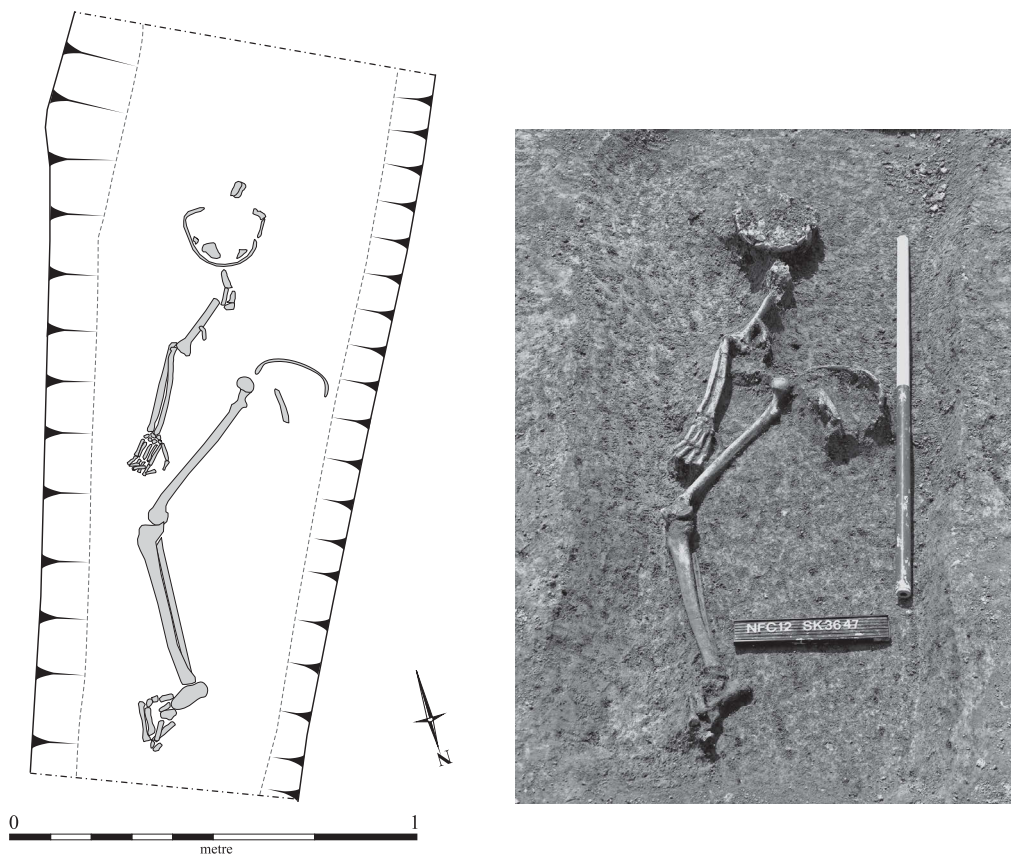


Figure 4. Late Romano-British burial in ditch, facing southeast.

The burial provides some of the least ambiguous evidence for actual Romano-British activity and suggests that the shallow ditches and gullies date to the Early or Middle Romano-British periods and had partly silted up prior to the burial.

Given the paucity of finds, the Neath Farm evidence is best interpreted as an outlying part of a Romano-British agricultural landscape of droveways and paddocks. This probably had its main focus further to the west; the alignment of some of the earliest ditches at 69–115 Church End suggests that they may be part of the same network rather than being of later date. Indeed, as several of the earliest ditches at the sites investigated are dated solely by the presence of small quantities of Medieval material, this raises the possibility that – if this material derives from the uppermost fills – the ditches might be Romano-British in origin.

Whilst it is possible that this network of enclosures and routeways may be linked to some of the other Romano-British activity identified in the area, such as the ditched funerary enclosure at Hatherdene Lane or the scattered fields systems and pits known from elsewhere, the fragmented nature of the archaeological investigations and the distances involved mean that specific linkages, rather than the identification of a generic overall period landscape, are impossible. The best evidence for Romano-British settlement in the vicinity comes from the Norman Cement Works at Coldham's Lane, which were established by British Portland Cement by 1895 and continued in operation until the 1950s. The associated marl pits resulted in a number of discoveries, although the works never appear to have attracted sustained antiquarian or archaeological interest. One such discovery was of a well shaft, in which there were seven Romano-British coarseware pots dating to the 1st–2nd centuries found at a depth of around 30ft (c. 9m; Liversidge 1959).

Overall, the admittedly still rather scant evidence indicates that the main focus of Romano-British occupation in the Church End area dates to the 1st–2nd centuries but that the area was still utilised in the Late Romano-British period when an individual was buried in a relict ditch.

There was extremely sparse Romano-British material. Aside from pottery, the only material that is independently dateable as Romano-British consists of two fragments of tile from Rosemary Lane, as well as a copper-alloy Colchester-type brooch from 63 Church End that is dated typologically to c. 50 BC–75AD. Very little animal bone was recovered from Romano-British contexts; of seven specimens three were identified as sheep/goat, horse and cat. There was also a very low density of charred plant remains; three samples totalling 34 litres were processed and analysed but only four cereal grains were recovered (Table 2). Two Romano-British ditches were sampled for pollen. One was essentially barren with only a few resistant palynomorphs detected. The other had slightly better preservation with sparse remains which comprised resistant palynomorphs including herbs and spores.

#### Pottery

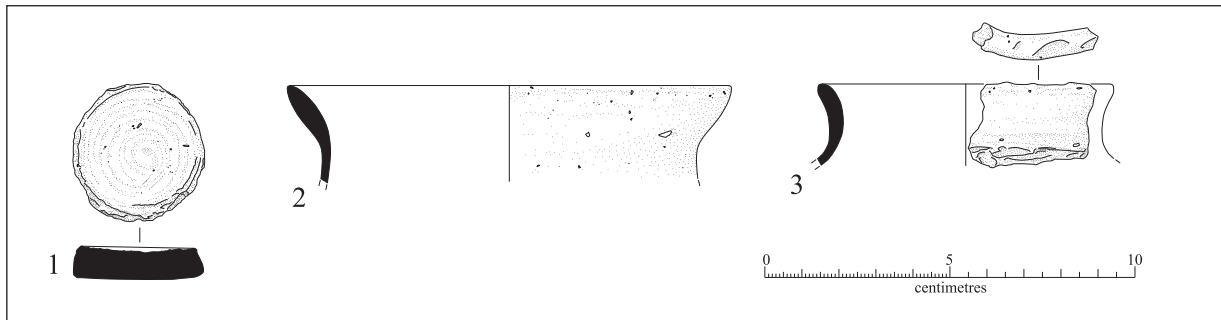
Katie Anderson

The total assemblage from Neath Farm, including definitely residual material from later features, was only 14 sherds of often small and abraded pottery weighing 183g with a low mean sherd weight of 13g. Little of this pottery could be closely dated; no diagnostic sherds were present and the only material that could be sourced were sherds of South Gaulish Samian (50–100AD) and Horningsea greyware (3rd–4th century). One sherd had been reworked into a disc (Fig. 5.1).

It is notable that the various investigations in the area have typically produced negligible quantities of Romano-British pottery. In addition to the 14 sherds from Neath Farm, the CAU excavations have produced another 105

**Table 2.** Cereal grains by phase from Neath Farm, with individually rich samples also listed.

		Romano-British	12th	Late 12th–13th	Well 6 (14th–15th)	Well 3 (14th–15th)	Other 14th–15th	All 14th–15th
Volume of samples (litres)		32	76	63	3	12	64	79
<i>Hordeum vulgare sensu lato</i>	barley grain	1	2	22	47	32	4	83
<i>Triticum spelta/dicoccum</i>	spelt or emmer wheat grain	–	2	13	5	3	1	9
<i>T. aestivum</i> sl.	free-threshing wheat	3	19	218	51	95	5	151
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	unspecific wheat	–	2	150	16	21	3	40
<i>Hordeum/Triticum</i> sp.	barley or wheat grain	–	14	53	30	15	4	49
<i>Avena</i> sp.	wild or cultivated oat	–	–	–	–	29	2	31
<i>Hordeum/Avena</i> sp.	barley or oat grain	–	–	1	–	13	–	13
<b>Total grains (excluding fragments)</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>376</b>
Density of grains (per litre)		0.1	0.5	7.3	49.7	17.3	0.3	4.8



**Figure 5.** Romano-British and Early Saxon pottery. 1) Romano-British coarseware sherd re-shaped into disc, from a later pit; 2–3) Early Saxon, handmade mineral-tempered pottery rims, from later roadside ditches.

sherds. At 63 Church End there were 69 sherds, the majority of the fabrics were sandy grey and oxidised wares, which were probably locally made and are difficult to date because these types of fabrics were common throughout the Romano-British period. There were a few sherds of Central Gaulish Samian, some dated to the mid or mid-late 2nd century. Thirty six sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered at Rosemary Lane; these were mainly a range of local grey and buff, fine and coarse sandy wares, with small amounts of Central Gaulish Samian fragment and Nene Valley colour coats. The overall date of the Rosemary Lane assemblage is 2nd–3rd century. Additionally 27 sherds of residual Romano-British pottery described as early (1st–2nd century) were found during the 69–115 Church End excavations. 45% of the Romano-British pottery (117 sherds) from the Church End investigations came from Hatherdene Lane; this all dated to the mid 1st–2nd century and the closely datable material is of mid/late 1st century date.

#### Early–Late Saxon Abandonment

A small quantity of Early Saxon handmade mineral-tempered pottery, dating to the 5th–7th centuries, was recovered from residual contexts (10 sherds; Fig 5.2–3); there was a total absence of the distinctive Middle Saxon Ipswich ware that is diagnostic of sites in the region occupied between the early 8th and mid 9th centuries. Although found in residual contexts, the distribution of the Early Saxon pottery suggests that one of the Romano-British routeways continued in use (Fig. 3). The overall paucity of material provides strong support for the idea that the principal focus of Early and Middle Saxon activity lay to the northwest, with the Early Saxon cemetery at Hatherdene Close and some skeletons found at the Norman Cement Works before 1939 ‘with daggers at the waist’ (Cambridgeshire HER no. 04628). Additionally, the principal concentration of Ipswich ware and other Middle Saxon pottery occurred at Rosemary Lane. Between the late 9th/mid 10th centuries and the late 11th/early 12th century there was what has been interpreted as a manorial or *thegnly* centre to the northwest (Cessford with Dickens 2005), but no evidence of occupation at Neath Farm.

Although the evidence is too fragmentary to be conclusive, and the poor survival of pollen at Church End obviates the recovery of palaeo-environmental

sequences, there are hints that – at the broadest level – there is probably continuity of rural occupation between the Roman and Medieval periods (Rippon *et al.* 2013).

#### High and Late Medieval Activity

At some point during the 10th–12th centuries occupation began at Neath Farm (Figs. 6–7). Only a small quantity of pottery of this period was recovered (240 sherds); this, combined with the predominance of St. Neots-type ware over Thetford type-ware, suggests that occupation is probably entirely Post-Conquest and need not pre-date the 12th century. This is also supported by the relative paucity of quern stone at the site. The earliest activity was located on the western edge of the excavated area and consisted of an enclosure (Enclosure A; Table 3), with evidence for an entranceway with some form of posthole structure and a well located within the enclosure (Well 1). Enclosure A was subsequently re-defined, making it 25 x 10m (+) in extent. In the northwestern corner of the enclosure there was a rectangular posthole and beamslot timber building (Structure 7; Fig. 8). There were also a number of gullies, postholes, pits and a well indicating general activity in the area.

In the late 12th–early 13th century the existing Enclosure A was swept away and Church End Road was established – or at least formalised – as a major routeway with a sequence of roadside ditches running parallel to it along the northern side of the area (Figs. 9–10). Ultimately, this sequence of roadside ditches was re-cut, perhaps a dozen times apparently over several centuries; unfortunately, the degree of residuality of the material from the fills makes more precise attribution of the sequence impossible. There is, however, a clear trend that over time that the line of the ditches shifts southwards, effectively widening the road and encroaching upon the area of enclosures by around five metres (Fig. 9).

South of this the area was subdivided into six rectangular enclosures (Enclosures B–G; Table 3), with narrow routeways between them which contained a series of timber structures, wells and other features (Figs. 9 and 11). This marks the point at which the entire area was intensively sub-divided for use, rep-



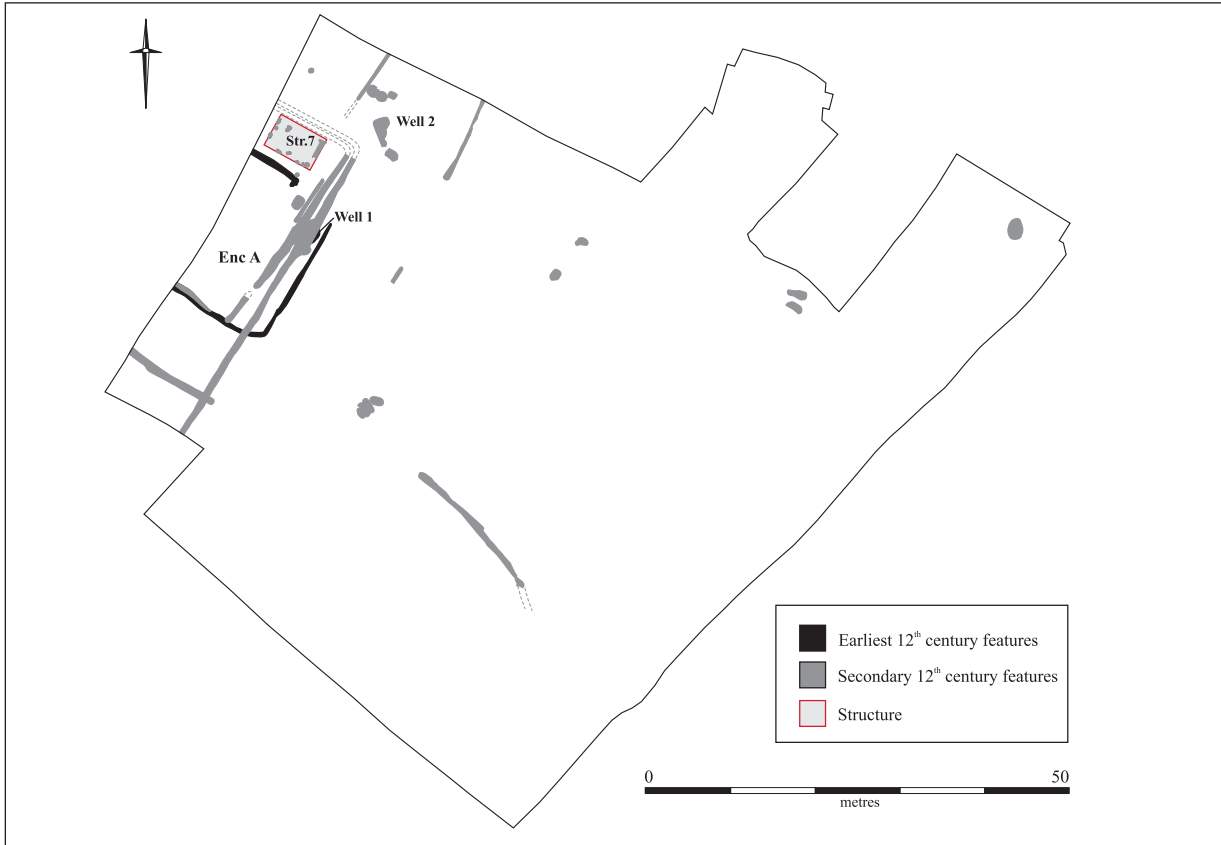


Figure 6. 12th century features at Neath Farm.



Figure 7. 10th-12th century features at Church End.



Enclosure	Date	NE/SW (m)	NW/SE (m)	Extent (m <sup>2</sup> )	Buildings	Wells
A	12th	19	>14	>265	–	Well 1
	12th	25	>10	>250	Str. 7 (6.5m×3.6m)	Well 2
	13th	>42	>10	>420	Str. 7 (6.5m×3.6m)	Well 2
B	13th	27	>44	>1190	Str. 8 (6m×4m)	Well 3
	14th–15th	32	>44	>1410	–	Well 3
C	13th	23	>43	>990	–	–
D	13th	16	>37	>590	Str. 9 (10m×6m), Str. 14 (7m×3m)	Well 4
E	13th	23	>43	>990	Str. 10 (8m×3.5m), Str. 11 (7.4m×2.4m), Str. 12 (6m×6m)	Well 5
F	13th	31	>37	>1150	–	–
G	13th	>35	>70	>2000	Str. 13 (9m×6m)	–
H	14th–15th	>85	>70	>5720	–	Wells 4–9

Table 3. 12th–15th century enclosures at Neath Farm.

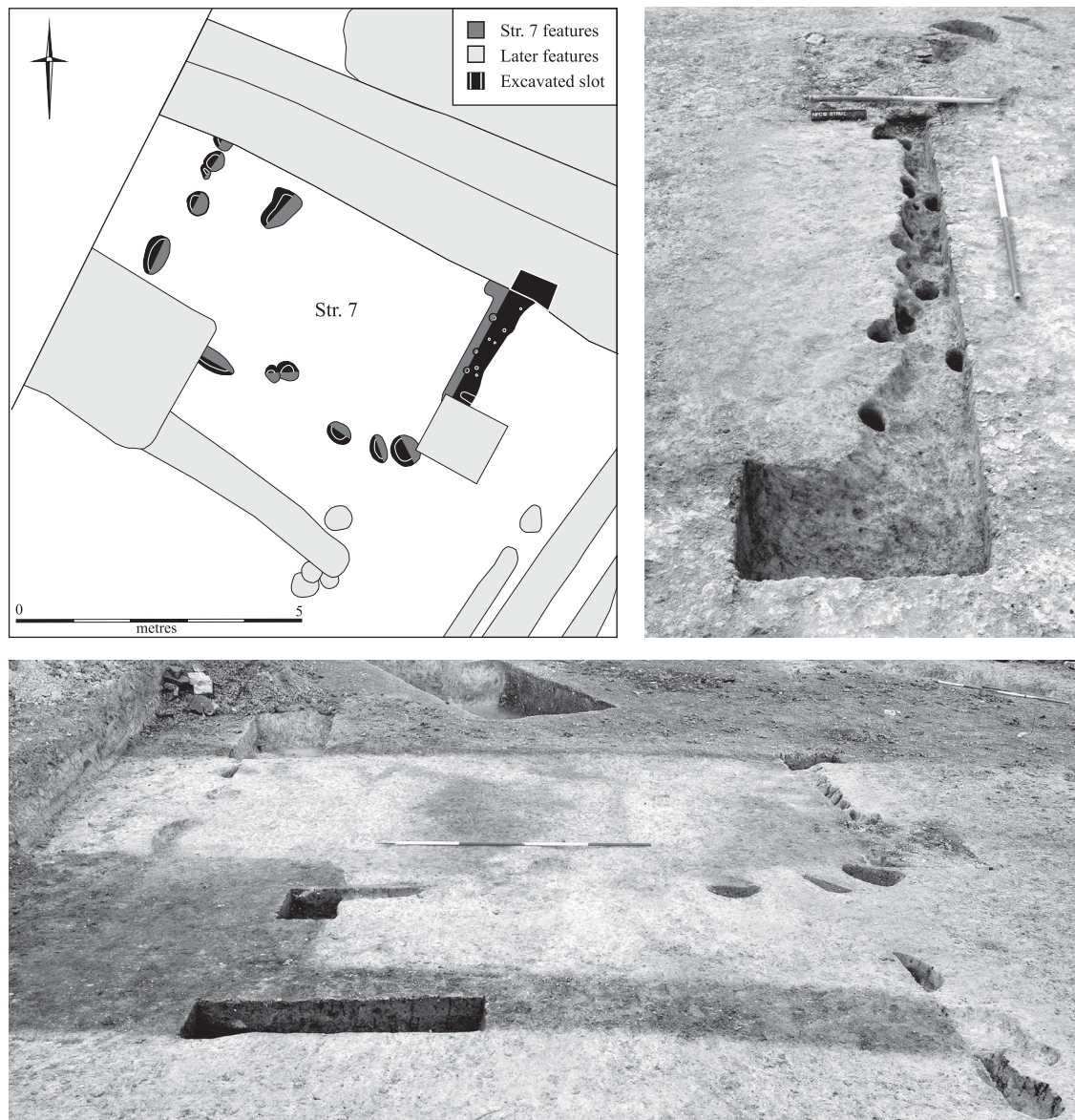


Figure 8. Structure 7 plan and view, facing northeast, plus detail of eastern wall line, facing southwest.

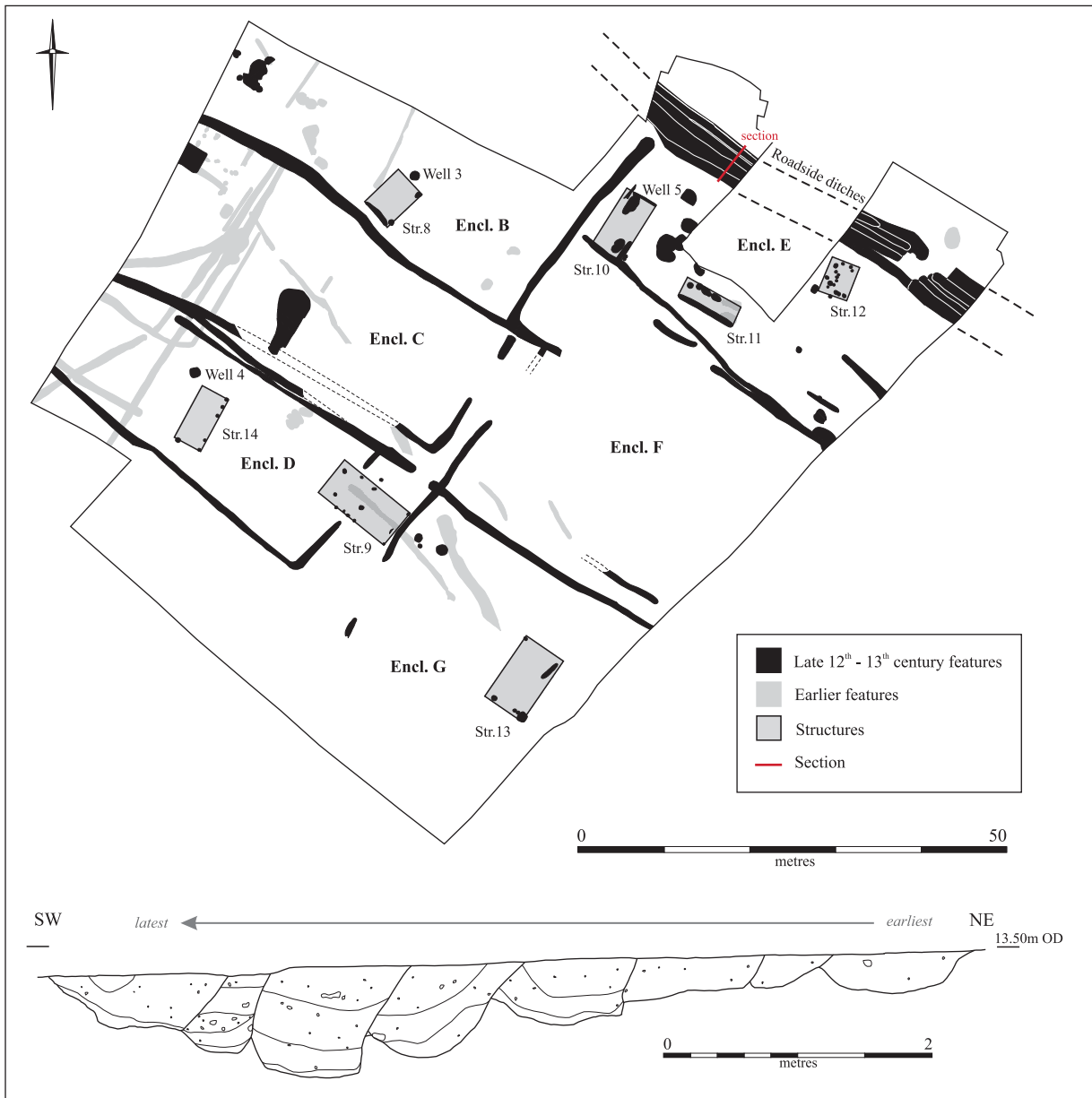


Figure 9. Late 12th–13th century features at Neath Farm and section of roadside ditch sequence.

representing either a shift in settlement or an expansion of occupation in the vicinity. The overall regularity of the enclosures indicates that this represents some form of planned development at a single point in time rather than a more piecemeal organic development. Unfortunately none of the enclosures were revealed in their entirety; the exposure of individual enclosures varied between 420 and 2000m<sup>2</sup>. The contemporary 13th century enclosures at West Fen Road Ely with evidence of occupation varied between 1575 and 4600m<sup>2</sup> (Mortimer *et al.* 2005, table 6.1), which provides an indication of what proportion of the overall individual enclosures at Neath Farm were investigated. The scale of the investigations at Neath Farm means that it is not possible to determine if the six enclosures are all truly separate entities or if they are

components of possibly as few as two plots fronting onto Church End, with internal divisions behind.

By some measures, levels of activity declined during the 14th–15th centuries, although these may be misleading (Figs. 12–13). The roadside ditch continued to be re-cut and the network of ditched enclosures was amalgamated into a smaller number of larger units. From the 13th century onwards ditches were less frequently employed in densely occupied contexts and property boundaries were often delineated by stake and wattle fences (Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002, 807–10) and hedges (Bowsher *et al.* 2007, 23), which usually leave few or no archaeological traces. To further complicate matters, how a particular boundary was defined may have varied along its length and boundaries may also have been discontin-

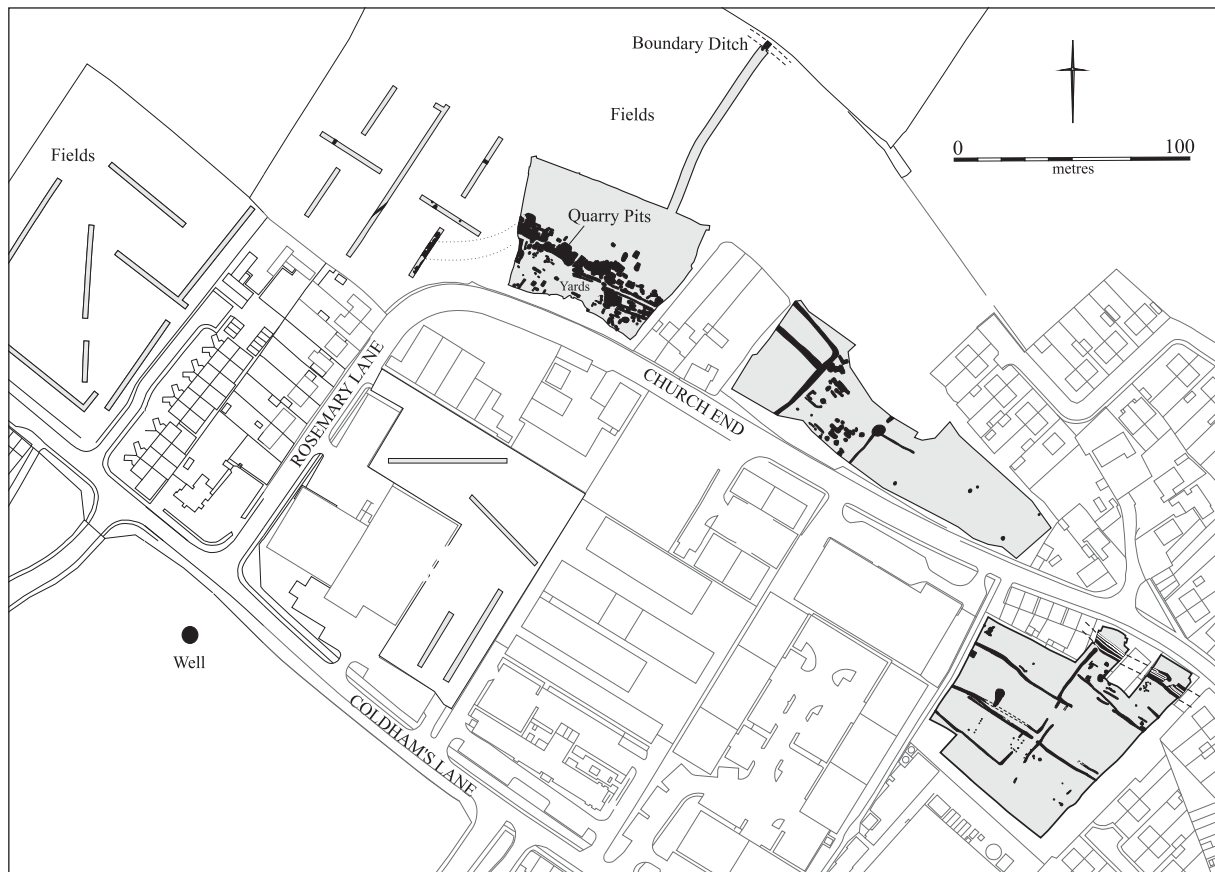


Figure 10. Late 12th–13th century features at Church End.

uous with no physical demarcation for some stretches (Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002, 807–10). Paradoxically, the declining use of ditches can be interpreted as evincing increasing pressure on space, as ditches occupy more land than hedges or fences.

Evidence for timber buildings also decreases; this reflects the late 12th century adoption of building techniques utilizing timber frames supported on earth-fast sill beams (Walker 1999). Stimulated by the re-adoption of sawing as a technique after c. 1180, this improved the squaring of timber and allowed better built timber frames (Schofield and Vince 2003, 109). This type of construction came to dominate locally over the course of the 13th century, and, as such timber framed buildings do not possess substantial postholes they are less visible archaeologically, especially on sites that have subsequently been ploughed. Although no hearths or ovens were identified, either in structures or outside them, the presence of fragments of fired clay that had been exposed to relatively high temperatures indicates that these were present at this time. In terms of size and construction techniques, the structures that were identified would largely appear to be secondary, ancillary structures.

In contrast to the rather ambiguous evidence from ditches and structures, there are several strands of evidence that indicate increased levels of activity. Firstly, the number of quarry pits rises. These features prin-

cipally occur in several tightly clustered inter-cutting groups. This 'clustered' pattern contrasts markedly with the general swathe of contemporary quarry pits at 63 Church End, which represented communal usage of an area that was no longer used except for agricultural purposes. In contrast, the clusters at Neath Farm are indicative of a different pattern, whereby each cluster is likely to relate to an individual plot/household. Most significantly, there are at least six 14th–15th century wells indicating increased levels of occupation compared to the 12th–13th centuries (Fig. 12). One of these wells was over 6m deep and lined with roughly squared and sawn clunch blocks, which do not appear to have been reused (Fig. 14). Clunch, referred to locally as 'white stone', was used in most stone buildings at Cambridge prior to the 15th century (Purcell 1967, 24–28). The use of clunch to line wells is rare at this date locally; in this instance it is presumably at least partially due to the proximity of clunch quarries at the southern edge of Cherry Hinton that were probably in operation from the 12th century onwards. Nonetheless, this well stands out as the only one with a stone-lining indicating that it still marks a significant level of expenditure.

There appears to have been a tailing off of activity in the mid/late 15th century. The only 16th–18th century features comprised a few pits, gullies and fence lines suggesting that occupation in the vicinity had

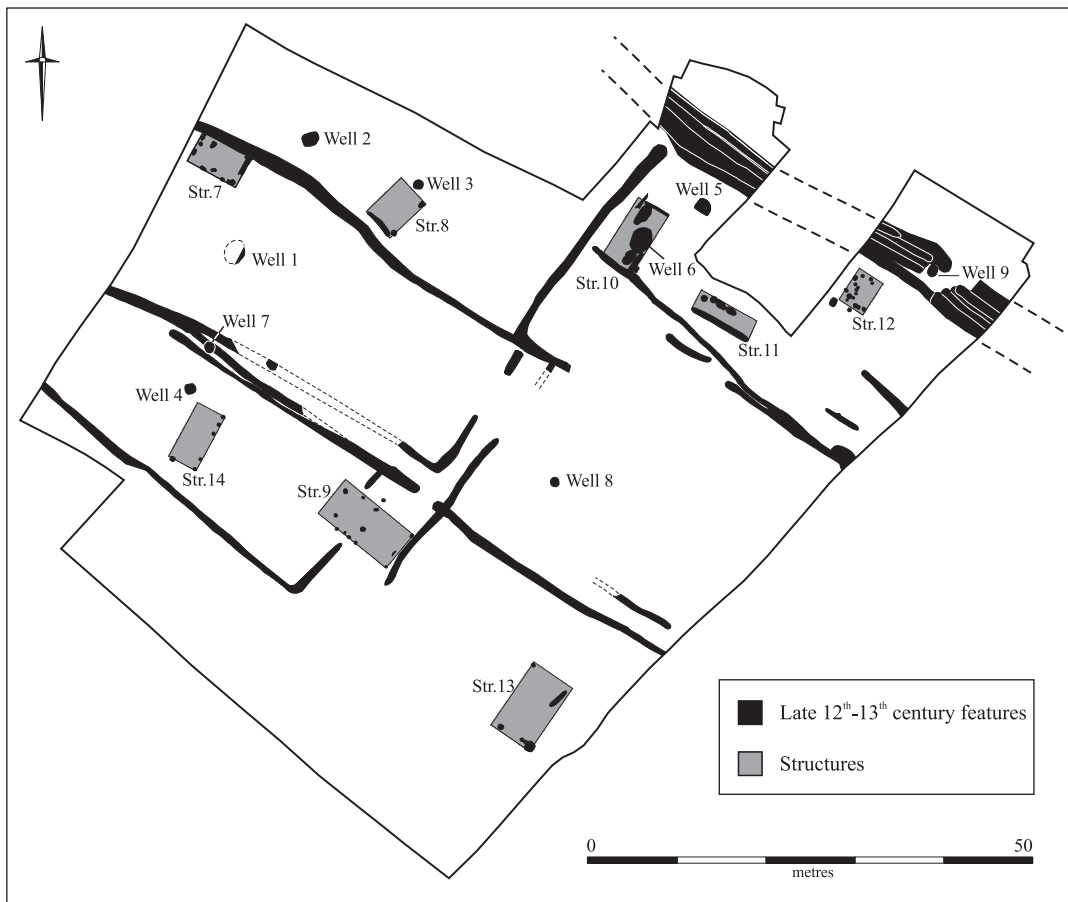
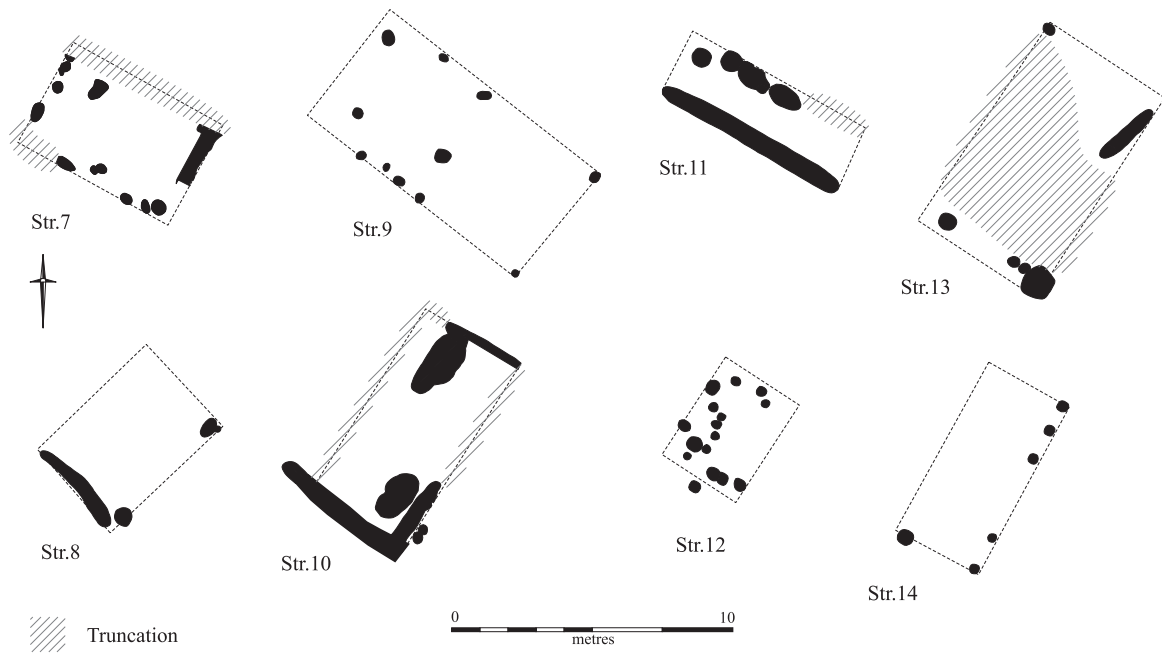


Figure 11. 12th–15th century structures at Neath Farm, with plan showing location of all structures and wells set against background of main late 12th–13th century boundaries.



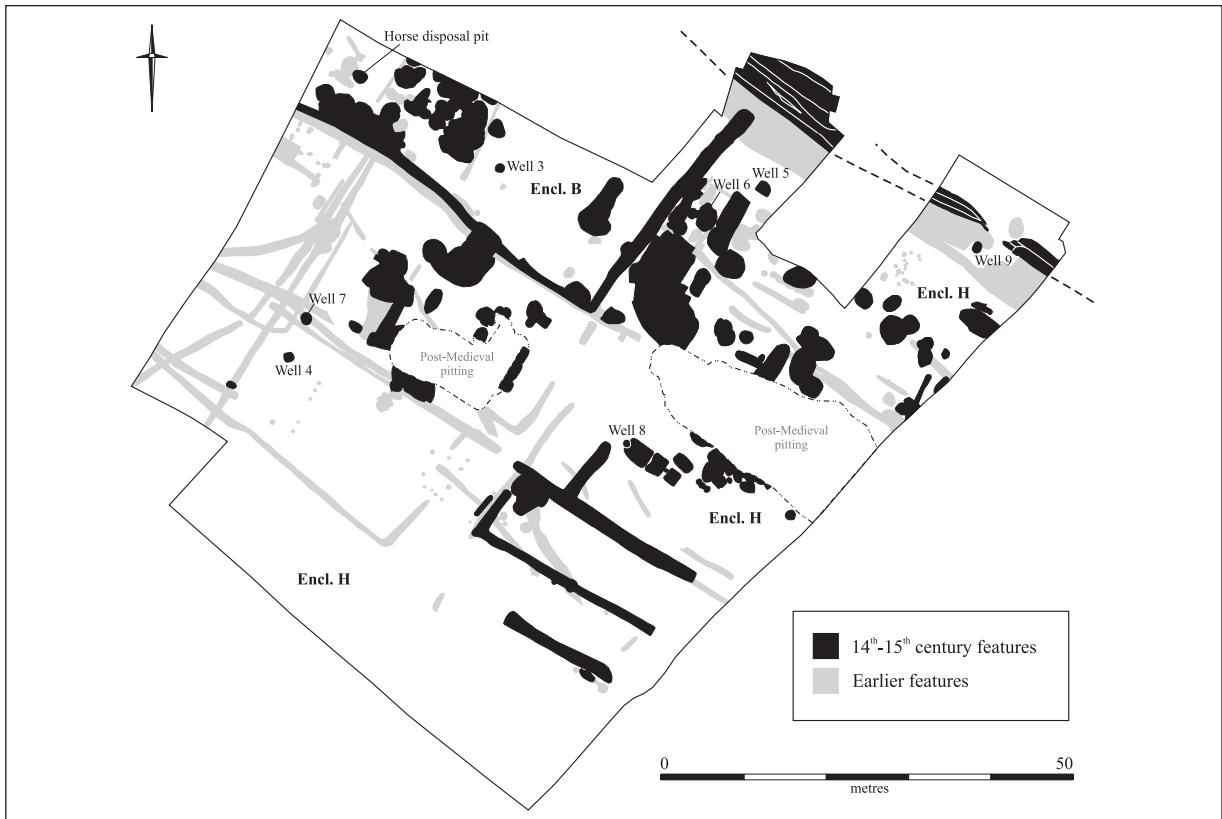


Figure 12. 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century features at Neath Farm.

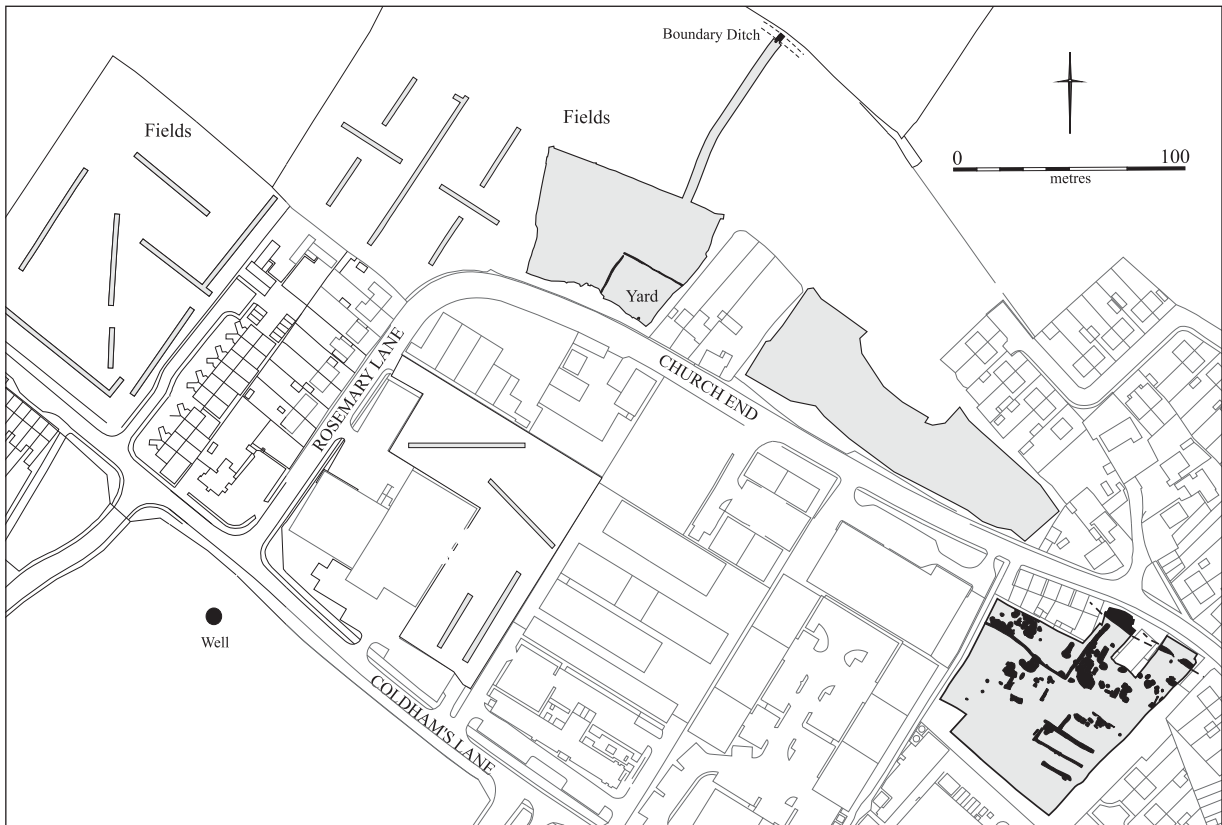


Figure 13. 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century features at Church End.



*Figure 14. Clunch-lined Well 4, facing southwest.*

ended and that the area was employed solely for agricultural purposes. Occupation did not re-commence until the 19th century.

In addition to specialist contributions that follow, two Medieval contexts, a ditch and a well, were sampled for pollen. Reported upon by Steve Boreham, the ditch was essentially barren with only a few resistant palynomorphs detected. The pollen from the well was better preserved but with sparse remains; these were some resistant palynomorphs, mostly herbs and spores.

#### *Pottery*

*David Hall and Craig Cessford*

The pottery assemblage recovered was not particularly large and is typical of the fabrics and forms found at sites in Cambridge and its environs. As a result it is presented in a tabular form (Tables 4–5) with the more interesting pieces illustrated (Fig. 15.1–6). Given the pattern of shifting 9th–15th century occupation identified at Church End it is worth attempting to compare the relative proportions of pottery at these sites over time. The pottery can be relatively simply grouped into Middle Saxon (8th–9th century), Late Saxon (10th–12th century) and Late Medieval (13th–15th century). Whilst the Middle and Late Saxon pottery cannot be meaningfully sub-divided it is possible to attempt to sub-divide the Late Medieval ceramics.

Although much of the 13th–15th century pottery of this period cannot be more closely dated there are certain wares that have dateable local periods of principal use in Cambridge and its immediate environs. These be used as crude proxies for temporal patterning and include Boarstall/

Brill, Lyveden/Stanion and Pink Shelly wares (early–mid 13th century), Ely, Grimston, Surrey Borders and Toynton (late 13th–14th century), Essex redware (14th–15th century, but predominantly later than the others). Based upon this the ratio of more closely dateable pottery observed at Neath Farm compared to other local sites demonstrates a preponderance of 14th–15th century wares (Table 6).

#### *Metalwork*

*Grahame Appleby*

Of the 87 pieces of metalwork recovered, up to 70 may be of Medieval date. The only piece of copper alloy was a riveted sheet with a central groove and two lobate ends, this may be a decorative strap end or clasp. The identifiable ironwork includes 42 nails and staples, two buckles, a tanged knife, a hinge or corner bracket and a vessel fragment. The most noteworthy piece of ironwork was a well-preserved complete large iron key with a 'D'-shaped open bow, a circumferential groove at the end of the shank and four wards cut into the bit (Fig. 15.7). Typologically Late Medieval or Post-Medieval, this key was found in a 15th century context.

#### *Worked Stone*

*Simon Timberlake*

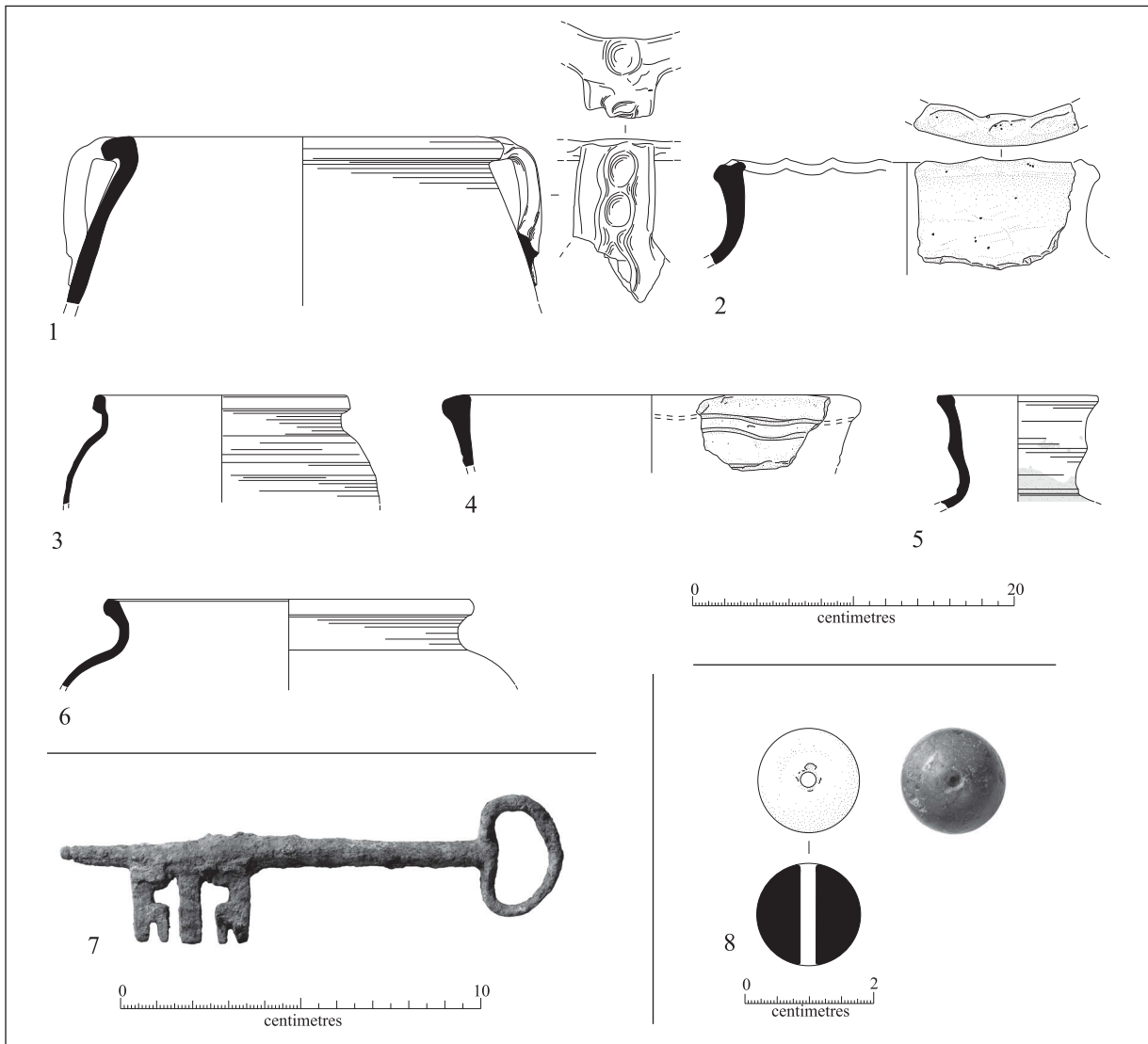
The worked stone consisted of small quantities of quern stone and whetstones plus a single bead. The spherical bead was made of polished jasper and is 16.67mm in diameter, with a central threading perforation of 2.15mm diameter, weighing 8g (Fig. 15.8). The bead came from a 14th–15th century context and was probably part of a necklace or paternoster.

Pottery type	Neath Farm count	Neath Farm weight (g)	63 Church End (count)	Rosemary Lane (count)	69–115 Church End count	Total (count)
Handmade Saxon	10	60	5	–	1	16
Maxey-type	–	–	2	–	–	2
Ipswich ware	–	–	16	13	2	31
Total 5th–9th century	10	60	23	13	3	49
Thetford-type	69	1477	694	100	714	1577
St. Neots-type	147	1243	1113	162	381	1803
Stamford	24	119	54	1	18	97
<b>Total 10th–12th century</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>2839</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>3477</b>

*Table 4. 5th–12th century pottery from Church End sites.*

Pottery type	Date range	Origin	Neath Farm count	Neath Farm weight (g)	63 Church End (count)	Rosemary Lane (count)	Total (count)
Blackborough End-type	Late 12th–13th	Various	3	35	–	–	3
Brill/Boarstall	13th–15th, 13th locally	Buckinghamshire	1	1	–	–	1
Cambridge type Sgraffito	14th–early 16th, 15th locally	North Essex or South Cambridgeshire	1	3	–	–	1
Developed St. Neots type	13 <sup>th</sup>	Various	5	37	15	9	29
Developed Stamford	13th–14th	Lincolnshire	2	9	–	–	2
Ely	Late 12th–15th, 14th locally	Cambridgeshire	39	528	76	91	206
Essex greyware*	15th	Essex	10	43	Unknown	Unknown	10
Essex Redware	Late 13th–15th, 15th locally	Essex	71	533	28	14	113
Grimston	12th–15th, 14th locally	Norfolk	5	149	1	–	6
Heddingham ware (greyware)*	Mid 12th–mid 14th, 14th locally	Essex	2	11	Unknown	Unknown	2
Heddingham ware (redware)*	Mid 12th–mid 14th, 14th locally	Essex	50	682	Unknown	Unknown	50
Hertfordshire green glaze	13th–14th	Hertfordshire	–	–	8	–	8
Lyveden/Stanion	13th–14th, 13th locally	Northamptonshire	3	36	4	1	8
Miscellaneous coarsewares	Late 12th–15th	Various	540	5892	350	86	976
Pink shelly ware	13th	Predominantly Northamptonshire	12	150	–	–	12
Scarborough ware	13th–14th	Yorkshire	2	10	–	–	2
Possible Suffolk green glaze	13th–14th	Suffolk	–	–	2	–	2
<b>Total</b>			<b>746</b>	<b>8119</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>1431</b>

*Table 5. 13th–15th century pottery from Church End sites. \* wares only systematically recognised at Neath Farm: their absence from 63 Church End and Rosemary Lane is due to changes in how pottery was analysed rather than representing a genuine absence.*



**Figure 15.** Medieval finds: 1) Thetford-type ware jar with thumb impressed handle, from pit; 2) Blackborough End-type jar, from Well 5; 3) Developed Thetford-type bowl, from roadside ditch; 4) Grey coarseware jar rim, from pit; 5) Medieval Ely ware jug, from gully; 6) Grey coarseware cooking pot, from pit; 7) Iron key found in association with 15th century pottery, from pit; 8) Jasper bead found in association with 14th–15th century pottery, from enclosure ditch.

Site	Early 13 <sup>th</sup> proxies (sherd count)	Mid 13 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> proxies (sherd count)	15 <sup>th</sup> proxies (sherd count)	Ratios
Neath Farm	24	44	134	0.55:1:3.05
63 Church End	19	77	28	0.25:1:0.36
Grand Arcade	324	2186	2647	0.15:1:1.21
Divinity School	293	1458	487	0.20:1:0.33
Corfield Court	126	542	390	0.23:1:0.72
Eastern Gate	147	671	431	0.22:1:0.64

**Table 6.** Comparison of 13th–15th century levels of activity at local sites based upon selected pottery wares.



One probable whetstone 195mm long by 70mm wide and 37mm thick and weighing 1248g had been crudely shaped from a piece of sandstone and was probably used for sharpening large blades. The second, smaller, example was a squarish tablet 55mm by 45mm and 10mm thick weighing 50g. This was also made of sandstone and would have been used for smaller knives. Whilst the petrology of two fragments of rotary lava quern stone (total weight 872g) is more typical of some of the beds from the Mayen quarries quarried and imported during the Romano-British period it is perhaps more likely that they are of Medieval date. One fragment probably comes from a lower stone whilst the other is a rim fragment from the upper stone, the original diameter of which was c. 400mm. A hole revealed in section on the break (25mm diameter) is probably for a handle. The small quantity of quern stone contrasts with the other sites such as 63 Church End, where 160 fragments weighing 4944g were recovered. The ratio, by weight, between Neath Farm and 63 Church End is 1:5.7 whereas the ratio for Post-Roman pottery at the sites is just 1:2.3. The relative paucity of quern stone at Neath Farm is probably related to date, as locally the quantities of quern stone recovered declines markedly after the 12th century as feudal control over milling was increasingly asserted (Watts 2002).

#### *Animal Bone* *Vida Rajkovača*

In total, 2,066 fragments of animal bone were recovered, of which 514 were assessable. Of these, 295 came from Medieval contexts and could be identified to species or general animal

size. This relatively small animal bone assemblage is dominated by cattle, followed by horse, dog and then sheep/goat with a small amount of pig, plus some cat, red deer, chicken and crow. The relatively high proportion of horse and dog is unusual. An articulated, near complete dog skeleton from Well 2 measured 47cm in shoulder height and there were several more partial dog carcasses, of which one was probably a neonate. Another partial dog skeleton from a 14th–15th century pit had a severe infection on the mandible.

One 14th–15th century pit contained a horse aged only 8–12 months (Fig. 16). This discovery suggests horse breeding and rearing in the vicinity and a broadly contemporary quarry pit at 63 Church End contained a nearly complete female adult horse that was missing one leg. The overall impression is of an area with a relatively high disposal of complete and partial horse and dog skeletons compared to the disposal of butchery and kitchen waste.

#### *Plant Remains* *Anne de Vareilles*

Twenty-two samples attributable to the Medieval period, totalling 195 litres, were analysed (Table 2). Most contained charred grains and wild seeds indicative of an agricultural settlement. Almost all the samples from 12th century features contained some grain and wild seeds indicative of an agricultural settlement.

Although many of the samples from late 12th–13th century contexts were practically devoid of plant remains two had rich assemblages of cereals and arable weed seeds. One



*Figure 16. Horse disposal pit, facing northwest.*

of these contained a preponderance of free-threshing wheat grains and a significant amount of hexaploid free-threshing wheat chaff. The wild plant seeds are, however, a mix of sizes and were probably removed from the crop before the last clean. Various processing stages, including initial threshing, are represented. The other rich sample had almost no chaff and therefore no threshing waste. Whilst both assemblages retained seeds indicative of drier areas, they also had seeds from plants that favour very damp to wet soils, such as lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), gipsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*) and sedge (*Carex* sp.). Whether the latter plants were arable weeds remains uncertain; indeed, two fragments of pulses suggest that the assemblage has more than one origin.

Three samples from 14th–15th century wells had significant plant assemblages, with two producing the largest assemblages of charred grains from the site. The sample from one, Well 6, produced 149 whole cereal grains and many more fragments. This was composed of a mixture of hulled barley, free-threshing wheat and a little spelt and/or emmer (*Hordeum vulgare sensu lato*, *Triticum aestivum* sl. and *T. spelta/dicoccum*), were counted. Free-threshing wheat and barley chaff, a little straw and 68 likely arable weed seeds were recovered. Assuming the remains in the posthole represent activities taking place in the vicinity, it would seem that both the early and final stages of cereal processing took place. Free-threshing wheat chaff is easily removed at the first stage of threshing after the cereal has been harvested. The presence of numerous rachis nodes, as well as a little straw, suggests threshing. Grains survive charring better than chaff and delicate seeds (Boardman and Jones 1990), which could explain the large presence of grains in apparent waste. The arable weed seeds are mostly large, falling into the category of seeds that are removed by hand during the last stages of processing (Hillman 1981; Jones 1984). Interestingly, debris representative of intervening processing stages is absent. At least two peas (*Pisum sativum*) and a fruit stone (*Prunus* sp.) were also found. The presence of five hulled wheat grains is not altogether surprising. Although the selection of free-threshing wheat over the popular Romano-British crop spelt is a phenomenon seen across Early Saxon Britain, it continues to occur sporadically well into the Medieval period (Greig 1991; Murphy 1994). The role of spelt in Saxon agriculture remains enigmatic. Whilst the grains could conceivably have been re-worked from Romano-British occupation debris, this seems unlikely given the paucity of Romano-British plant remains and other material at Neath Farm. The arable weed seed assemblage is mostly composed of large grass seeds. Other species are congruent with the local chalky marl soil. Whilst certain plants would have favoured damp clay, others, such as field gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), show that some areas were drier and perhaps chalkier.

One sample (Well 8) appears to contain more wild plant seeds than cereals. The small overall size of the seeds and the near absence of chaff, suggest that the remains are waste from fine sieving – a stage that takes place after threshing and winnowing, but before the final sort (Hillman 1981). The other (Well 3) had at least 73% more grains than seeds. The same cereals as from earlier features were found, with the addition of oats (*Avena* sp.). Although these cannot be definitely described as cultivated due to the absence of chaff, their size and the date of the feature make it highly likely they were a managed crop. Very little chaff was present, but wild plant seeds were numerous and of various sizes. The same indicators of damp, heavy clay found in previous samples were also found, however, field gromwell, indicator

of drier, calcareous soils, is missing.

A predominance of hexaploid free-threshing wheat was found throughout the phases of Neath Farm. Hulled barley and a few spelt/emmer caryopses were also present in most samples. Large, cultivated oats were only found in the 14th–15th century. Evidence from the 12th century onwards suggests the inhabitants grew their own crops locally and carried out all of the processing within the settlement. Weed ecology demonstrative of cultivated soil types remains arguably constant throughout the phases. The local chalky marl was farmed, with some areas drier and others wetter than the overall damp, sticky clay.

## Discussion

The work at Neath Farm has considerably enhanced our understanding of the settlement pattern of the Church End area of Cherry Hinton. The certainty provided by the radiocarbon dating of the Late Romano-British skeleton focuses attention upon this previously neglected period. For the Medieval period, the absence of Middle Saxon (c. 650–850) material, the commencement of activity in the 12th century and full occupation from the late 12th/early 13th century until the mid/late 15th century, provides a clear contrast to the pattern identified at 63 Church End and Rosemary Lane. This allows a site-specific consideration of the long-term processes affecting settlement locally between the 8th and 15th centuries.

In at least parts of England the 7th and, more particularly, 8th centuries saw the emergence of settlements the defining archaeological characteristic of which is the dominance of ditched enclosures, which in some respects makes them more similar to rural Romano-British settlements than those of the intervening 5th–6th centuries. Although often relatively insubstantial, these ditches display evidence that they were repeatedly re-cut over substantial time periods, often spanning centuries. Whilst individual ditches were frequently re-cut in the same location, indicating maintenance of enclosures, there is also evidence for substantial reconfiguration of layouts. This settlement form is particularly well attested through archaeological investigation in Cambridgeshire at Lordship Lane, Cottenham (Mortimer 2000) and West Fen Road, Ely (Mortimer *et al.* 2005; Mudd and Webster 2011; Slater 2011b), which have been pivotal to more general discussions (Hamerow 2010; Hamerow 2012; Wright 2012). These Middle Saxon settlement forms continue into the Late Saxon period but develop over time; at Lordship Lane, for example, the 10th–11th centuries witnessed some changes that may relate to the establishment of the nucleated village, and by the 12th/13th century the site had been abandoned and the nucleated village fully established. At West Fen Road there was also broad continuity until the 11th century, although some enclosures were sub-divided. In the 12th century the intensity of occupation declined, as some enclosures were amalgamated and others were given over to agricultural uses. This process continued through the 13th–14th centuries with most of the site given over to agriculture by the 15th



century.

Although all the settlements possess idiosyncrasies, Church End broadly fits into the same long-term Middle Saxon to Late Medieval pattern witnessed at Lordship Lane and West Fen Road, and in some senses we are undeniably producing generic, repetitive narratives (Evans 2013). The main difference from the standard 'narrative' at Church End is that the late 9th/mid 10th–late 11th/12th century occupation relates to a manorial or thegnly centre, with a rather different form of occupation than the others. From the 12th century onwards, the period most relevant to Neath Farm, its network of rectilinear enclosures is closely paralleled elsewhere, particularly at West Fen Road. Although Church End, Lordship Lane and West Fen Road stand out as exemplars of this process, this is largely due to the scale of their archaeological investigation; as such long-term patterns of shifting occupational focus are only visible on a large-scale. More limited investigations will reveal only part of the picture. There are, however, hints from several other villages where that the broad pattern may be replicated. For instance, at the nearby village of Fulbourn, only 4km southeast of Church End, excavation has revealed a mid 11th–late 12th century rural settlement with enclosures, timber structure and wells, plus indications preceding 10th–mid 11th century occupation in the vicinity (Bradley-Lovekin 2008). At Chesterton, some 4km northwest of Church End, there is evidence for some form of Middle and Late Saxon occupation – the centres of which appear to have lain outside the areas investigated to date – followed by a planned nucleated settlement established in the late 11th/early 12th centuries (Cessford with Dickens 2004; MacKay 2009). Equally, a series of investigations at Madingley Hall (Gdaniec 1991; Gdaniec 1992; Hunter 1991; Regan 1998), just over 5km west of Cambridge, suggests an extensive but shifting 8th–12th century settlement that moved towards the current village around the 13th century. In isolation such sites make relatively little sense, yet when compared to the more intensively investigated settlements it suggests that these are recognisable elements in a broader and more long-term process. In contrast to these, work at the Medieval settlement associated with Barnwell Priory that was apparently established in the early 12th century as a completely new entity presents a very different picture (Newman 2013).

This long-term extensive shifting pattern of occupation is a particular issue for the Medieval period, as the location of such sites on the fringes of still occupied settlements means that they have often been re-absorbed into the settlements by 19th–20th century development. This is partly counteracted in Cambridgeshire, in particular, by the phenomenon of intensive and repeated developer-funded archaeological investigations in certain locales that are developmental 'hot-spots'. Here, archaeology has effectively become an iterative process, where each phase of investigation can be viewed as an iteration the results of which are not an end in themselves but the starting point for the next iteration. Although

such work is not truly large-scale in comparison to rural development-funded open-area excavations that now regularly cover tens of hectares, it can be viewed as bridging the gap between individual sites and larger landscapes (Thomas 2013). The settlement dynamics of the Church End area of Cherry Hinton in the late 20th–early 21st century – in particular its previous agricultural and light industrial usage, and the scale of housing demand linked to its proximity to Cambridge – mean that it has been, and will continue to be, a focus for developer-funded archaeological investigations.

These investigations are of added significance because southern Cambridgeshire is located on the frontier between what are known as the Central and South-Eastern Provinces of Medieval settlement, with a landscape where nucleated villages predominate to the north contrasting with a landscape of mainly dispersed settlements to the south and east (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000; Taylor 2002). This Medieval settlement and landscape revolution in the Central province, with a shift from a largely dispersed settlement pattern towards nucleation and the concomitant adoption of large unenclosed fields farmed in common, has been termed the 'village moment' or 'great re-planning' (Lewis *et al.* 1997). This 'village moment' is generally seen as an evolutionary process, rather than a revolutionary development, which was the product of a particular period and took 400 years to reach maturity and that passed after the 12th century (Lewis *et al.* 1997). Nuclear settlements appear to develop from a variety of 'pre-village nuclei', rather than from the abandonment of an earlier pattern of dispersed settlement (Jones and Page 2006). Whilst this appears to be substantially vindicated by the continuing archaeological investigation of sites in Cambridgeshire the obsession of some of those studying the Medieval rural landscape with village nucleation has meant that they have largely ignored the succeeding 13th–15th century phase, when village nucleation has taken place but outlying settlement has not fully receded to the core. If a long-term view is to be pursued, it is worth noting that the only 16th–18th century features at any of the Church End sites appear to be agricultural in nature, and it is only from the 19th century onwards that occupation spreads out from the nucleated village core. This pattern is replicated at other sites such as West Fen Road, and it could be argued that the 8th–15th century long-term picture should be expanded to an 8th–18th century one.

Although prolonged processes, rather than specific events, are undoubtedly crucial to this narrative (Jones and Page 2006), this should not be allowed to entirely overshadow shorter-term events. It is clear that the mid 11th–late 12th century was a particularly crucial phase of nucleation in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere. This is apparent both from the archaeologically investigated examples at Church End, Lordship Lane and West Fen Road, but also from other villages which have been studied from a morphological perspective. Here it has been argued that some south

Cambridgeshire villages that were once believed to represent Late Saxon nucleation were, in fact, secondary relocations to new sites soon after the Norman Conquest (Oosthuizen 1997). Understanding of these is hindered by a lack of understanding of the predecessors of these villages, something which archaeology can counteract. It appears that in Cambridgeshire the transition from sokemen (i.e. tenants holding land with a degree of freedom but rendering some agricultural services) in 1066 to villiens (i.e. peasant occupiers or cultivators entirely subject to a lord) in 1086 that is recorded in the Domesday Book may have led to a shift from dispersed holdings to nucleated house plots (Taylor 2002). This transition from sokemen to villiens is recorded at Cherry Hinton (Otway-Ruthven 1938, 373) and may have had an impact archaeologically. In the context of mid 11th–late 12th century changes it is particularly unfortunate that the church and cemetery at 69–115 Church End remains unpublished, as the abandonment of these is almost certainly a crucial element in the narrative. An abandonment around or soon after the Norman Conquest is inherently probable, especially as the fragments of stone monuments from the site date to c. 950–1100. This is supported by evidence from the current church of St. Andrew – which is likely to be the direct lineal successor to the church at 69–115 Church End – and this contains some later 12th century elements (Wareham 2002, 114) and a late 12th century cross slab grave-cover (Sargeant 2008).

If we allow for a brief excursus, in contrast the development opportunities of what has been the core of the village from at least the Late Medieval period onwards have been more restricted leading to only a few small-scale investigations (Fletcher 2005; Mortimer and Philips 2004; Punchard 2008). Whilst these are sufficient to identify the presence of Late Medieval occupation, their scale means we are likely to fail to recognise less intensive periods of activity, such as Romano-British fieldsystems or the earlier stages of Medieval activity. This creates a paradox, whereby it is the nucleated core of the village that is the least well-understood portion archaeologically. Admittedly, the constraints of developer-funded archaeology may well be powerless to resolve this directly, whilst other avenues of investigation – such as test-pitting (Lewis 2007) – can be successful and could profitably work in conjunction with developer-funded archaeology. Although Cherry Hinton still awaits such work on a substantive scale, the results of excavations at Fulbourn Old Drift are suggestive of a roadside ditch along the High Street that originated in the 10th–11th century followed by two phases of the back plots of enclosed areas dating to the 12th–14th century that fronted onto this (Fletcher 2005; Mortimer and Philips 2004).

The picture that is emerging through repeated archaeological investigation is that Cherry Hinton had polyfocal origins and that over time the village coalesced around a single core. At a broad level, there was a process of staggered retrenchment along a broad axis from northwest to southeast over several

centuries. Given the time-scale involved; there was evidently no overall plan to this; although the individual stages in the process would have been managed. Whilst the precise reasons behind this long-term process of nucleation are uncertain, and may have varied according to particular circumstances, a combination of increasing levels of feudal control, changing agrarian practices and organisation, and declining population levels from the early–mid 14th century onwards are all probably implicated at a broad level.

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