

whittlewood_{project}

Report on Test Pits in and around Leckhampstead village: June- August 2002

The following is a gazetteer of test pits dug in and around Leckhampstead in the summer of 2002. Each entry carries the following information:

- Location
- Research questions
- Table of pottery by spit/feature (italized entries represent undisturbed medieval or earlier deposits; shaded entries identify early medieval pottery)
- Individual conclusions and issues raised by the results

The location of all test pits is indicated on the accompanying map.

The pottery was recorded in Dbase IV format using the coding system and chronology of the Northamptonshire County type-series. For the material from Buckinghamshire, the equivalent codes of the Milton Keynes late Saxon and medieval type-series (where they exist) are in parentheses (prefixed 'MK'). The early and middle Saxon wares have no equivalent codes.

F2: Early-middle Saxon Handmade wares, AD450-850.

F95: Ipswich Ware, c.AD725-850.

F100 (MK SNC1): T1(1) type St. Neots Ware, AD850-1100. F200:

F200 (MK SNC1): T1 (2) type St. Neots Ware, AD1000-1200.

F207 (MK MSC1): Cotswolds-type Oolitic ware, AD975-1150

F330 (MK MC1): Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400

F345 (-) Early Medieval Oxford ware, late 11th – 14th century

F360 (MK MS3 etc): Miscellaneous Sandy Coarsewares, AD1100-1400

F324 (MK MC9): Brill/Boarstall Ware, AD1200-1600

F320 (MK MSC4) Lyveden/Stanion 'B' Ware c. AD1225-?1400.

F329 (MK MC6): Potterspury ware, AD1250-1600

F364 (MK MS29): East Wiltshire ware, Early 12th – early 15th century

F365 (MK TLMS3): Late Medieval Reduced ware, AD1400-?1500

F371 (-) Unprovenanced medieval glazed ware

F401 (MK TLMS18): Late Medieval Oxidized ware, ?AD1450-?1500

F403 (MK PM14) Midland Purple ware, AD1450-1600

F404 (MK PM15): Cistercian ware, AD1470-1550

F406 (MK PM38): Midland Yellow wares, AD1550-1700

F407 (MK TLMS12): Red Earthenwares, AD1500+

F408 (MK PM29): Rhenish Stonewares, AD1450+

F410 (MK) Tin-glazed earthenware, 17thC

F411 (MK PM16): Midland Blackware, c AD1550-1700.

F413 (MK) Staffs Manganese Glazed ware, 1680 – 1760

F420 (MK) Westerwald/Cologne stoneware, 17thC +

F425 (MK PM2): Staffs trailed slipware, L17th – 18thC.

F426 (MK) Iron-glazed earthenware, L17th – 19thC

F429 (MK PM22): Staffordshire Salt-Glazed Stoneware, 18thC

F451 (MK PM18): Border Ware, late 15th/early 16th century

F1000: Miscellaneous 18th -19th century wares: Late English Stoneware, Iron-glazed Earthenware, Staffs Manganese wares, etc.

F1001: All Romano-British wares

Most of the medieval sandy wares have been grouped together as one code (F360), as they are all broadly dateable AD1100-1400, and have very similar petrological compositions. They were also made at numerous unknown sources in the region, and so it is considered that individual identification of such wares, which would be extremely time-consuming, would impart little information which would be of use at this stage of the project.

Gazetteer of Test Pits

LE TP 1

Hilly Field (South)

Fieldwalking prior to test pitting produced an important concentration of medieval pottery on the south side of the road linking Middle End with Church End. This suggested occupation along this axis. A series of five TPs were located along the northern side of the road, on prominent earthworks, to assess whether this side of the road had been occupied during the medieval period and provide a better understanding of the morphology of Middle End.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
2	407	3
2	1000	2
3	407	2
3	408	1
3	426	1
4	329	1
4	360	1
5	329	2
6	330	4

In three of the five TPs excavated here (LE TPs 1, 3 and 4) undisturbed medieval deposits were encountered. The presence of medieval pottery, but not in great quantity suggests that this area was cultivated as part of the open fields (witnessed also by the survival of ridge and furrow in the field). The earthworks, reminiscent of house platforms fronting onto the road at this point must now be interpreted as relic headlands and not occupation zones. Thus, it is possible to conclude that development at Middle End consisted of a single row of houses and not a double row as found in Church End.

LE TP 2

Hilly Field (South)

See LE TP 1

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	407	2
4	403	1
4	407	2
4	413	1
4	426	1
F1	407	1
F1	411	1
F1	1000	2

For results see LE TP 1

LE TP 3

Hilly Field (South)

See LE TP 1

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
4	324	2
4	360	1

5	1001	1
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For results see LE TP 1

LE TP 4

Hilly Field (South)

See LE TP 1

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
2	1000	2
3	324	1
3	329	1

For results see LE TP 1

LE TP 5

Hilly Field (South)

See LE TP 1

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	404	1
3	329	4
3	407	1

For results see LE TP 1

LE TP 6

Hilly Field (Middle)

In the centre of the field, a prominent terrace exists in the hillside as it descends to the valley bottom. Three TPs were located on this terrace to establish whether the feature was man-made and to provide a date and function for its construction.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1

LE TPs 7 and 8 failed to produce any datable material. The presence of a single sherd of Potterbury ware from LE TP 6 also means that conclusions must be drawn tentatively. However, the stratigraphy and the lack of finds both point to natural causes forming this terrace rather than human intervention. It is quite possible that this feature is a geological slump, perhaps encouraged by the presence of a spring head close by. Other slumps are known in the parish, for example at Weatherhead Farm. The boulder clay appears to have been prone to slippage located along the steeper sides of the River Leck valley.

LE TP 10

Hilly Field (North)

Two further TPs were located opposite The Old Forge to assess whether medieval occupation continued beyond the bridge of the River Leck.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	407	1

1	1000	3
2	1000	4
9	330	1
10	360	1
12	360	2
13	360	1

The considerable depth of deposits in this TP meant that only a quarter sample could be obtained from the lower stratigraphic horizons. The quantity of finds from layers 9 and below must therefore be considered with this in mind. However, the presence of medieval pottery at the lower levels is significant, although they are almost certainly the product of manuring of arable fields rather than occupation at this spot. They were discovered below a considerable depth of sterile deposit (layers 3-8) which may have built up by the dual action of alluviation (from the flooding of the River Leck) and colluviation (the creepage of soil downslope). Any medieval deposits in the river valley are thus likely to occur under deep overburden.

LE TP 11

Glebe Field (South)

Glebe Field occupies a central location within Church End, immediately north-east of the church. This open space provided the opportunity to excavate a series of TPs, all set close to the northern side of the main street. These were designed to establish whether this area had formerly been occupied and to provide a date for any such occupation.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
2	1000	2
3	329	7
3	1000	7
4	1000	2
5	330	2
9	324	1
9	1000	2
F1	2	1

Four of the five TPs revealed undisturbed medieval deposits above the natural geology. All produced medieval pottery and three produced early medieval pottery. LE TP 15 was particularly rich in ceramic evidence and points to occupation. This is further corroborated by the discovery in all TPs of made-up deposits which appear to be a part of a rough cobbled surface, possibly a yard. Below this cobbling which appears to date from the late thirteenth century, and not cut through this surface, LE TP 15 contained the complete and articulated skeleton of a dog which showed the cut marks of pre-deposition skinning. This skeleton will be the subject of a future report.

The recovery of two sherds of early-middle Saxon handmade wares, also found in LE TPs 37, 38 and 51 point to an early pre-village nucleus centred in this area north-east of the church, from which Church End may have expanded throughout the medieval period.

LE TP 12

Glebe Field (South)

See LE TP 11

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
2	1000	1
4	330	1
4	407	2

5	329	2
5	403	1
5	407	2
6	360	1

For results see LE TP 11

LE TP 13

Glebe Field (South)

See LE TP 11

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	4
2	329	3
2	330	1
2	407	3
2	408	2
2	1000	1
3	360	1

For results see LE TP 11

LE TP 14

Glebe Field (South)

See LE TP 11

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	200	1
1	1000	2

For results see LE TP 11

LE TP 15

Glebe Field (South)

See LE TP 11

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	2	2
1	360	1
1	413	1
2	329	12
2	360	5
3	329	10
3	330	2
3	360	4
F1	324	2
F1	329	83
F1	330	1
F1	360	11

For results see LE TP 11

LE TP 16

Lower Farm

Lower Farm lies at the southern edge of the modern village. Fieldwalking prior to the excavation of TPs had revealed a concentration of medieval pottery on the northern side of the road, west of Barretts End Cottages. Earthworks still survive in the field immediately to the west of Lower Farm. Three TPs were located in Lower Farm, all located as close to the road frontage as was feasible. These were designed to establish whether the southern side of the road had been occupied during the medieval period, and to ascertain a likely date for the establishment of the road.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1
1	330	1
1	360	2
2	329	1
2	1000	1
3	324	1
3	329	1
4	324	1
4	329	4
4	330	1
4	407	1
4	1000	1

Significant quantities of medieval pottery were recovered from the three TPs located to the south of the road leading to Weatherhead Farm. LE TP 18 was particularly rich in ceramic finds and almost certainly indicates proximity to medieval settlement. Whilst LE TP 16 and 17 were less productive, the levels of pottery indicate more than manure scatters and almost certainly point to occupation close by. Together, the TPs suggest that the southern side of the road was occupied along this stretch, and thus it must be concluded that a double row of buildings must formerly have occupied this spot. The absence of early material, however, points to later expansion of the occupied zone during the thirteenth century when documentary records point to population increase.

LE TP 17

Lower Farm

See LE TP 16

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	2
1	330	1
1	1000	3
2	324	1
2	329	3
2	1000	5
3	329	1

For results see LE TP 16

LE TP 18

Lower Farm

See LE TP 16

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1
1	360	2
1	1000	2
2	329	1
2	330	1
2	360	4
2	407	9
2	413	2
2	425	2
2	1000	7
3	329	2
3	330	7
3	360	6
3	407	5
3	425	1
3	426	1
3	429	1
3	1001	2
4	330	8
4	360	17
5	329	1
5	330	2
5	360	6
5	1001	2
F1	1000	5
F2	329	1
F2	404	1
F2	1000	10

For results see LE TP 11

LE TP 19

The Old Post Office, Church End

The Old Post Office now stands at the easternmost edge of the village in Church End. TPs were located along the whole length of the modern occupied zone (Le TPs 30, 31, 36, 11-15, 40, 19, and 48-50) in order to assess the extent, nature and date of occupation along this axis.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	6

Excavation at The Old Post Office revealed a compacted gravel and stone surface just below the turf line. The decision was made to terminate the excavation before this surface was removed. The TP therefore produced no information relevant to the medieval morphology of the village.

LE TP 20

Woodland Cottage

Woodland Cottage lies close to the parish boundary with Wicken and the county boundary with Northamptonshire. Two TPs were located here. The first, close to the front of the plot sought to add understanding to the location and establishment date of this critical boundary. The second was located away from the occupied zone and was designed to act as one of the controls against which other more centrally located TPs could be set.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
3	1000	4
4	407	1
5	324	1

LE TP 20 produced a single sherd of medieval pottery from its lowest deposits. The nature of this layer and the presence of medieval material points to this TP being located over former arable land, further corroborated by the survival of ridge and furrow in the neighbouring field.

LE TP 21

Woodland Cottage

See LE TP 20

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	7
2	1000	12
3	1000	6
4	407	1
4	425	1
4	1000	2
5	1000	1

No early material was recovered from this TP. The stratigraphic information and ceramic evidence points to significant disturbance in the modern period, probably associated with the construction and occupation of the present house. No evidence was forthcoming to establish any date for the development of the parish and county boundary.

LE TP 22

The Keepers Cottage

Keepers Cottage actually lies in the parish of Wicken and thus in Northamptonshire. Once again however, the opportunity to investigate an area close to this boundary was of potential value and it is in this context (as for LE TP 21) that the results might be viewed.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	5
2	1000	25
2	1001	1

Whilst the majority of the assemblage here proved to be modern, the recovery of a single sherd of Romano-British pottery is of interest. A small settlement of this period is known to lie 300m south-west of the TP, the field producing in addition a thin scatter of pottery indicative of Roman maturing of arable fields. It may well be that the location of the TP lies within this cultivated area. It has also be suggested that the county boundary here follows a Roman road, running north-west from a bridging point over the River Ouse at Thornton. Whilst the evidence from the TPs along this stretch cannot prove the existence of this road, neither can they dismiss the possibility.

LE TP 23

Waterside, Church End

Whilst it was possible to locate a number of TPs on the northern side of the main street through Church End, there were fewer opportunities to investigate the southern side. LE TP

23 provided one such opportunity and was designed to establish whether this side of the road had been occupied during the medieval period.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	324	2
1	329	2
1	330	1
1	404	1
1	413	1
1	1000	12
2	1000	4
3	360	1
3	404	1
6	330	2
6	360	2

Located at the back of the plot close to the course of the River Leck, the deep deposits in this TP, some of which were archaeologically sterile, demonstrate the problems of alluviation, the result of flooding of the river. The lowest layers did, however, produce medieval pottery, suggesting that such evidence is buried deep below the flood deposits. As such the stratigraphy is similar to that encountered in LE TP 10. Both may point, however, to a change in the course of the River Leck, since it is unlikely that the banks of the river would have been exploited. Thus the presence of any medieval material is of interest and may suggest that the location of the TP lies not of the banks of the medieval stream course, but a later canalised course.

LE TP 24

Wicken Road Farm

One intriguing feature of the modern morphology of Leckhampstead village is the intermittent settlement along the Wicken Road extending to the parish boundary. A number of TPs were located along this axis (LE TPs 32, 27, 26, 25, and 24). This were all designed to address the question of the origins and development of settlement along this road.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	22
2	407	2
2	1000	17
3	1000	12
4	1000	11
F1	1000	2
F2	407	13
F2	413	1
F2	1000	53

LE TP 24 proved to be located over an early modern pit associated with the farmhouse. This will have destroyed all medieval evidence if present. However, the total absence of earlier material, which may have been disturbed but redeposited, suggests that the current building is the first to have occupied this spot.

LE TP 25

Hunters View Cottage

See LE TP 24

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	25
2	1000	12
3	407	1
3	1000	6
F2	1000	10
F3	1000	1

Just as for LE TP 24, the absence of medieval material indicates that this part of the Wicken Road developed after the medieval period. However, there remains the possibility, once again, that modern activity on site, notably the construction of barns and outhouses, may have removed or obscured earlier evidence. On balance, however, it is probably best to conclude that this development lies outside the medieval zone of occupation.

LE TP 26

Limes End Cottage

See LE TP 24

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
2	200	1
2	1000	2
3	360	1
3	1000	1
3	1001	1

This TP produced single exemplar of Romano-British, early medieval and medieval pottery, although the small quantity recovered suggest agricultural activity rather than occupation. As for LE TP 22, this TP is located within 300m of a known Roman settlement site and may fall within its orbit. The medieval pottery is probably part of a larger manure scatter associated with the open fields. The presence of the St Neots type 2 sherd, however, cannot be explained. It is the only example to result from excavation that is not located within Church End.

LE TP 27

Rosemount Cottage

See LE TP 24

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1
1	1000	10
2	1000	20
5	1001	1

This TP is reminiscent of its neighbour LE TP 26 and the same conclusions may be drawn. A single sherd of Samian ware, the fine Roman tableware, suggests a first/second century date for the Roman activity. Samian rarely travels far from the settlement.

LE TP 28

Manor Farm, Church End

Manor Farm almost certainly occupies a position on or close by the one of the demesne manors of medieval Leckhampstead. Two TPs were located on the lawn north-west of the modern house. Both were located close to the course of the River Leck.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	6
1	330	1
1	360	6
2	329	3
5	329	4
8	1001	1

Both TPs at Manor Farm revealed deep deposits of undisturbed medieval date. Certainly the quantity of material recovered from LE TP 28 is indicative of occupation rather than any other activity. Whilst LE TP 29 produced less material, it produced high quality wares, including sherds of a glazed and decorated medieval jug. Together the TPs are consistent with the supposed high status of the location, the site of the medieval manor house. Once again, however, the proximity of this material to the banks of the River Leck may point to a change in its course. Significantly, however, neither of these TPs showed signs of alluviation and it may well be that their build up was intentional and pointing perhaps to canalisation of the river during the later middle ages.

LE TP 29

Manor Farm, Church End

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	1
2	1002	2
3	329	1
3	330	1
4	324	1
4	360	1
5	324	1
5	360	1
6	330	1
7	324	1
F1	329	2

For results see LE TP 28. Of additional interest is the recovery of two sherds of Iron Age pottery. These are the only sherds of this date to have been recovered during test pitting. Do they indicate late prehistoric activity?

LE TP 30

Swallows, Church End

Swallows is located at the western edge of modern Church End. The TP here allowed the frontage of the main street once again to be investigated. The TP was designed to establish the western extent of occupation during the medieval period.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	407	1
1	1000	42
2	1000	13
3	407	6
3	411	2
3	413	1
3	1000	15
4	407	22

4	413	2
4	425	4
4	429	6
4	1001	1
5	407	5
5	413	1
F2	329	8
F2	330	6
F2	360	4

The greater parts of the upper deposits in this TP had been disturbed by modern activity, the site clearly used as a dumping ground. However, a surface of rough cobbles, similar to deposits encountered in Glebe Field (Le TPs 11-15) was discovered below the disturbance. This contained a significant quantity of medieval pottery and might again be interpreted as a rough outside surface closely associated with settlement. It is clear then that by the late thirteenth century, the village had spread to its current western bounds.

LE TP 31

Church End Cottage

Proximity to the church and the opportunity to investigate the front of the plot and thus establish whether this part of the main street had been occupied during the medieval period meant that this TP offered great potential for the purposes of this research.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	404	1
1	1000	3
2	1000	1
3	1000	2
4	407	1
5	1000	1

In the event, however, the TP failed to produce any material of early date. This might be explained by later activity, including the laying of a cobbled surface as well as the deposition of quantities of hard core in the upper surfaces. Any medieval layers must therefore have been destroyed by this activity. The results were thus negative.

LE TP 32

The Limes

See LE TP 24. In addition, proximity to the bridging point over the River Leck and the known existence of cottages close to the location of the TP added further interest and potential to this TP.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	10
2	1000	9

Nothing of medieval date was recovered, the material all being modern and probably associated with the cottages that formerly stood on this site. The location on the valley floor, however, might explain why the site was not occupied or cultivated prior to the construction of these cottages.

LE TP 33

1, South End

South End lies between known nuclei for medieval settlement. To understand fully the morphology of the medieval village, it is essential to establish whether the area of South End too was occupied at an earlier period. Several TPs were located around this part of the village (LE TPs 33, 34, 35 and 42).

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1

Shallow deposits and the recovery of a single sherd of medieval pottery both indicate that this plot lies over the fields of the medieval village.

LE TP 34

10, South End

See LE TP 33

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1
1	360	1
1	1000	11
2	1000	2
3	329	1
3	1000	5
4	403	1
4	1000	2
5	1000	2

The recovery of three sherds of medieval pottery again indicates that this area was formerly ploughed but not occupied. However, the mix of material of all periods points to significant disturbance.

LE TP 35

21, South End

See LE TP 33

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	411	1
6	404	1
6	407	1

No medieval material was recovered. It is thus impossible to conclude how this plot might have been exploited during the medieval period. However, the total absence of material of this date, together with results from LE TPs 33 and 34 all point to South End being a modern creation and lying away from earlier occupation zones.

LE TP 36

Steadwell House, Church End

A series of three TPs was located in this property. LE TP 36 was located at the front of the plot, opposite the church. LE TP 37 and 38 were located respectively to the side and to the back of the garden. It was intended that the assemblages from these three TPs might be looked at together, to assess the distribution of medieval material with respect to distance from the main street frontage.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	330	3
1	360	3
1	1000	1
3	329	1
3	330	2
3	360	2
3	1000	1
5	1000	5
6	1000	1
F1	207	1
F1	330	1
F1	407	2
F1	1000	2
F2	2	1
F2	200	1
F2	329	2
F2	330	1
F2	360	5
F2	1000	1
F3	360	1
F3	407	1
F4	360	1
F4	1000	1

LE TP 36 shown to be located over a filled well. Excavation had to be terminated on the grounds of health and safety before the well could be bottomed. The mix of medieval and modern material, however, points to a relatively recent construction date for the well, although its existence was unknown before excavation. Nevertheless, the presence of significant quantities of medieval material appear to show that the well had been sunk through medieval occupation deposits. This conclusion is further reinforced by the quantities of material of this date recovered from LE TP 37 in particular and less so LE TP 38 which points to a marked drop off of material away from the road.

Contained within the matrix of LE TP 36 were three sherds of early medieval pottery ranging from the early to late Saxon period. From LE TP 37 a further 12 sherds were recovered and from LE TP 38 a further six. This is the highest concentration of pre-conquest pottery found within Leckhampstead and indeed from Akeley and Whittlebury, two other villages explored using the same methodology. The presence of late pre-conquest pottery points to this area being the main focus for settlement by Domesday Book, although similar material has been found both east and west of this focus. However, the cluster of early-middle Saxon handmade wares, of which two were recovered from this property, is more discrete and indicates a small pre-village nucleus focused on this spot north of the church.

LE TP 37

Steadwell House, Church End

See LE TP 36

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	200	2
1	330	2
1	1000	2
2	324	3
2	330	5
2	360	4

2	1000	7
3	200	4
3	330	1
3	360	13
3	371	1
3	1001	2
4	200	4
4	330	2
4	360	6
5	207	1
5	330	1
5	360	1
6	2	1

For results see LE TP 36. In addition to the ceramic evidence, the TP produced a human femur shaft fragment which exhibited signs of having been cut post mortem. Its worn state and the absence of other human bone both suggest that it has been disturbed and redeposited (although it should be noted that it came from a late thirteenth century context). It should not, perhaps be dated to the medieval period, but rather earlier.

LE TP 38

Steadwell House, Church End

See LE TP 36

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	2
2	407	1
2	1000	9
3	200	3
3	330	3
3	360	1
3	1000	11
5	200	2
6	200	1

For results see LE TP 36

LE TP 39

White Cottage, Middle End

This property lies at the northern edge of Middle End, close to the footpath that connects this End with Church end. The TP located here was designed to assess whether this most direct route acted as an axis for occupation during the medieval period or whether the Ends remains discrete entities.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1
1	330	1
1	407	8
1	1000	68
2	407	4
2	411	2
2	413	1
2	1000	27

4	407	6
4	411	3
4	1000	11
5	329	1
5	407	6
5	1000	18
6	407	7
6	425	1
6	429	6
6	1000	12
7	324	1
7	329	20
7	407	1
7	410	1
7	411	1
7	451	1
8	329	1
F1	407	4
F1	1000	4

Despite the disturbed nature of the deposits here, the TP produced large amount of medieval pottery. This must indicate that this plot was occupied during this period. As such it contrast with the results from LE TP 1-5 which appear to suggest that occupation was limited to the southern side of the road. White Cottage must therefore represent the most eastern extension of the medieval End north of the road.

LE TP 40

Cottage Farm, Church End

Cottage farm garden provided similar opportunities to those offered by Steadwell House, namely the ability to test the results of two TPs set close to and away from the main street. Standing close to the bridge over the River Leck, this property occupies a critical location within Church End.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	8
2	329	1
2	1000	10
3	1000	14
4	329	1
4	360	1
4	1000	15
5	329	15
5	330	3
5	360	2
6	329	28
6	330	11
6	360	16
7	330	1
4	360	4
8	1000	1
8	1001	1

Significant quantities of material, albeit from disturbed deposits, were recovered from the front of the property, indicative of medieval occupation. The quantity of material can be see to drop off with distance from the main street frontage, however, even LE TP 41 produced more

medieval pottery than many other TPs in the village. In fact a small ditch was found in LE TP 41 which may have had its origins as a medieval boundary marker (a prominent earthwork continuing its line can be seen in the adjacent field), but modern material contained within its fills suggest that it has been subject to modern clearance. LE TP 40 also produce a single sherd of Romano-British pottery, rarely found within the modern village area.

LE TP 41

Cottage Farm, Church End

See LE TP 40

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	1
2	329	1
2	360	2
2	1000	14
3	360	1
3	1000	18
4	1000	21
5	1000	9
6	403	1
6	1000	10
7	330	3
7	360	5
7	404	1
7	1000	2
8	200	2
8	330	3
8	360	7
8	407	1
8	408	1
8	425	1
8	1000	1

For results see LE TP 40

LE TP 42

Neffod, South End

This TP, located at the heart of South End, was designed to assess the nature of land use during the medieval period in this part of the village.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	21
2	1000	12
3	1000	5

The total absence of early material points to this area being set away from the main areas of occupation. The proximity of this TP with LE TP 33 may point to its use as arable land despite the artefactual lacuna.

LE TP 43

The Old Forge, Church End

The Old Forge lies just to the south of the bridge over the River Leck. Together with LE TPs 9 and 10, this TP sought to assess whether Church End had extended south beyond the river at any point during the medieval period and before the establishment of the post-medieval forge.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	32
2	360	1
2	1000	15
3	360	1
3	1000	2
4	360	2
5	360	1
5	407	1
5	408	1
8	330	1
8	408	1

The paucity of medieval finds suggests that this TP was located outside the zone occupied during the medieval period. This might be contrasted with the evidence from the three TPs located in the field immediately north of the brook. There is no evidence forthcoming, therefore, that Church End ever extended beyond the bridge.

LE TP 44

Hilly Field (West)

Lying just outside the property within which LE TP 39 had been located, this TP was designed to address similar questions concerning the connecting footpath from Middle End to Church End, and to establish whether the current boundary of White Cottage represented the extent of any medieval occupation on this spot.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	2

The negative results from this TP contrast starkly with those from LE TP 39. Whilst the latter suggests occupation of some sort in this location, LE TP 44 does not and had credence to the hypothesis that the northern boundary of the modern garden might mirror an earlier property boundary.

LE TP 45

Chequers House, Middle End

Two TPs were located at the front and at the back of this property. That at the front sought to establish whether this part of Middle End had been occupied during the medieval period as fieldwalking evidence had suggested just to the east. That to the back sought to establish the extent of any medieval toft, again as suggested by fieldwalking in the neighbouring field.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	12
2	1000	5
3	329	1
3	407	5
3	426	2
3	1000	25
4	329	3
4	360	1

4	407	2
4	1000	8
5	324	1
5	407	2
5	1000	20
6	324	1
6	330	1
6	1000	2
F1	407	3
F1	1000	30

Whilst the evidence from these two TPs is far from compelling, taken together it is probable that the presence of medieval pottery is the result of occupation rather than any other activity. Notably, LE TP 46 produced 13 sherds, far more than might be expected to accumulate through manuring. It is possible to postulate that the occupied zone found during fieldwalking to the east extends below the modern house and possibly beyond.

LE TP 46

Chequers House, Middle End

See LE TP 45

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	20
2	329	1
2	1000	4
3	329	1
3	330	1
3	360	3
3	407	2
3	1000	14
4	329	2
4	360	3
4	407	1
4	1000	5
5	329	2
5	1000	2

For results see LE TP 45

LE TP 47

2, Barretts End Cottages

Fieldwalking had shown medieval occupation along the northern side of the road leading to Weatherhead Farm. This TP, located close to the road frontage was designed to discover whether this row of occupation continued beneath the modern cottages.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	10
2	329	1
2	1000	8
3	407	5
3	408	1
3	411	5
3	413	1

3	1000	19
4	407	12
4	413	2
4	1000	7
5	1000	2
6	360	1
6	407	1
F1	329	3
F1	330	1
F1	407	1
F1	411	1

Despite its proximity to known medieval occupation, this TP failed to produce the quantities of material that might have been predicted had this continued to the east. It must be supposed, therefore, that the open fields of Leckhampstead extended to the road at this point, that occupation was not continuous along the northern side of the road. The zone identified to the west through fieldwalking is quite possibly the original South End, the name migrating to the north with the construction of the modern End. Certainly this is suggested on the first edition OS maps. If this is the case, then South End appears to have remained distinct from the original Barretts End at Weatherhead Farm.

LE TP 48

Church End

A series of three TPs were located in this field to the east of Church End and to the north of the River Leck. This is followed by a footpath which links Church End with Limes End and is almost certainly an early routeway connecting these two elements of the dispersed settlement pattern. As such, it may well have been attractive as a location for occupation. These TPs were excavated with the intention of discovering whether this had been the case, and if so, how far occupation spread along this line.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	15
1	360	2
1	1000	2
2	329	1
3	1001	2
F1	207	1
<i>F1</i>	329	6

All three TPs produced undisturbed medieval deposits. In all three cases, the quantity of medieval ceramics was indicative of proximity to occupation. The assemblages are all dominated by later medieval wares, however, the presence in all TPs of pre-conquest pottery points to the fact that occupation had extended this far east by the end of the eleventh century. The absence of early-middle Saxon pottery, however, suggests that this is an initial extension from a more discrete earlier centre.

LE TP 49

Church End

See LE TP 48

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	207	1
1	329	7
1	330	1

1	360	8
1	407	2
2	200	2
2	329	11
2	330	2
2	360	7
2	1000	4
3	324	1
3	329	10
3	330	6
3	360	10
4	200	5
4	329	6
4	330	4
4	360	5

For results see LE TP 48

LE TP 50

Church End

See LE TP 48

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	329	5
1	360	2
1	1000	1
2	329	6
2	330	2
2	360	3
3	329	21
3	330	2
3	360	5
4	360	1
F1	200	2
<i>F1</i>	324	1
<i>F1</i>	329	67
<i>F1</i>	330	3
<i>F1</i>	360	14

For results see LE TP 48

LE TP 51

Church Cottage, Church End

Church Cottage is one of the oldest properties in the village. Located south of the main street in Church End, adjacent to the church, this property occupies a central location within the village. The TP was designed to establish whether this part of the village had been occupied from the medieval period, the results from which could be compared with those from test pits north of the main street.

<i>Spit/Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>
1	1000	14
2	330	1
2	360	2

2	407	2
2	411	3
2	413	2
2	425	1
2	1000	27
3	329	3
3	360	1
3	404	1
3	407	2
3	1000	15
4	330	1
5	330	12
5	329	29
7	330	7
7	360	20
7	1001	1
8	329	1
8	330	2
8	360	6
F1	360	1
F1	404	1
F1	407	2
F1	1000	10
F3	2	1
F3	330	4
F3	360	17
F4	207	1
F4	330	3
F4	360	10
F4	1001	1
F5	360	2

Despite modern disturbance in the upper layers, two medieval floors were excavated in the lower deposits which remained undisturbed. On top of, and contained within, were large quantities of medieval pottery. Both thus suggest that the TP cut through occupation layers. The presence of both early-middle Saxon pottery and later pre-conquest pottery might suggest continuous occupation of this spot over a number of centuries. Given the location of the TP close to the church, on the main street, and adjacent to the connecting route between Church End and Middle End, this is perhaps not surprising.

Conclusions

2352 sherds of pottery of all periods were recovered from the 51 TPs excavated during the summer. These are detailed in the table below. Nearly 40% of the total assemblage is made up of medieval pottery. Despite the low percentage of early medieval finds (2%), the recovery of 41 sherds of pottery of pre-conquest date represents a major result since this material is rare. Assemblages from Whittlebury and Akeley, where similar numbers of TPs have been excavated contain far less of this material than the Leckhampstead assemblage. Most of this material was found in Church End, with a single outlier along the Wicken Road. The medieval pottery is dominated by Potterspury wares (1250-1600) as might be predicted since this was the major pottery producing centre located only a few miles to the east. Seventeen sherds of Romano-British wares and two sherds of Iron Age pottery suggests that centre of population during these periods were located away from the area that was to become the medieval and subsequently the modern village.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>	<i>% Total</i>
2	6	0.3
200	30	1.3
207	5	0.2
324	24	1.0
329	423	18.0
330	142	6.0
347	1	0.04
360	317	13.5
371	1	0.04
403	4	0.2
404	9	0.4
407	172	7.3
408	7	0.3
410	1	0.04
411	19	0.8
413	16	0.7
425	11	0.5
426	6	0.3
429	13	0.6
451	1	0.04
1000	1126	47.9
1001	17	0.7
1002	2	0.08
	2353	

Taking the evidence together with results obtained from fieldwalking the following observations may be made about the origins, changes and development of Leckhampstead's settlement pattern over time:

- There is strong evidence to suggest that the parish was densely populated during the Romano-British period. Whilst these settlement may not be contemporary, it would appear that several large Romanized farmsteads and smaller settlements were established across the territory and the land was cultivated. The lack of Romano-British finds from the modern settled area suggests, however, a fundamental breakdown of settlement after the Roman occupation had ended.
- There is significant evidence to suggest that in the early medieval period, a number of settlements existed in and around the village. Notably, a cluster of early-middle Saxon handmade wares immediately to the north of the church is suggestive of occupation at this period (400-800) which may be the pre-village nucleus which expanded in subsequent centuries. Others, such as a dense cluster 700m north of the village appear to have been abandoned since this was later incorporated into the open fields of the medieval village.

- By the time of Domesday Book (1086), the village had grown substantially. The recovery of type 2 St Neots ware from the north side of the main street in Church End, from Ladylees in the west to the field beyond The Old Post Office in the east suggest early ribbon development along this axis. Other concentrations of this late pre-conquest pottery from Weatherhead Farm and from Barretts End suggest that these nodes were growing too.
- The lack of early finds from Middle End may suggest that this was a later development as the name might suggest. The name implies its relationship to at least two previously established population centres. In this instance this must relate to Church End and to Barretts End/Weatherhead
- There is substantial expansion of the village in the post-conquest period reaching its floreat in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Three main axes of development can be discerned: in Church End the east-west route running past the church and towards Limes End; in Middle End along the south side of the road running north-eastwards; and in the south from north-east of Weatherhead Farm past Barretts End Cottages, both north and south of the road.
- Despite obvious growth, however, the separate Ends appear to have remained separate entities throughout the period, the intervening spaces being brought under cultivation. However, rather than the clustered/nucleated appearance of the modern Ends, it is clear from this research that these represent contractions from more elongated row development.
- In fact the modern village bears similarities between the nucleated polyfocal pre-village plan suggested by the finds of early-middle Saxon handmade wares, albeit with the later additions of South End and Limes End which complicate the picture.