

# A medieval trackway and buried soil at Goswell End, Harlington

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## SUMMARY

*Between 2001 and 2003, Albion Archaeology undertook a series of archaeological investigations at Goswell End, Harlington. Based on the evidence of earthworks and the results of trial trenching, the site was thought to have comprised part of a shrunken or deserted medieval village, inhabited in the Middle Ages. However, the results of open-area excavation did not bear this out: apart from a few small pits and post-holes, there was little to suggest the former existence of substantial structures. Remains of a buried soil and possible enclosure ditches indicated that cultivation took place on the site.*

*The most significant feature proved to be a hollow-way that crossed the site from north to south, with a subsidiary network of branching paths. This was an essentially medieval feature that remained in use as a major route up to the time of Enclosure, and can be identified as 'Long Lane', a thoroughfare shown on early maps.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the Local Education Authority of Bedfordshire County Council obtained planning permission for a new arts block on land to the south-east of Harlington Upper School. Evaluation of the development area (Albion Archaeology 2001) identified significant archaeological remains in its southern part, as a result of which Albion Archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation in November and December 2001.

In March 2003, planning permission was obtained for another, more extensive development of the school buildings. In addition, the area of the proposed arts block that was excavated in 2001 was to be turned into a car park, with a slightly bigger footprint than the area originally investigated. Following advice from the County Archaeological Officer, Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the contractor, Galliford Try Construction Limited, to carry out an evaluation and watching brief in the school grounds and the extended area of the proposed car park (Albion Archaeology 2004).

This report draws together the results from all stages of the archaeological investigations: the evaluations, excavation and watching brief.

## SITE LOCATION AND CONDITIONS

The development area was situated within a field of rough pasture which had served as a paddock until the investigations. It was bounded to the south and west by Goswell End Road and to the east by Harlington Upper School, with rough pasture continuing to the north (Fig. 1). The three trenches excavated during the re-development of Harlington Upper School were situated within the school grounds and cut through manmade footpaths and car parks.

The land lies at c. 100m OD, with a gentle slope upward to the north and east. The underlying geology is Gault

Clay, overlain by Boulder Clay. The weather conditions during both evaluations were dry and sunny, whereas the excavation in the winter of 2001 was subject to very wet weather and ground conditions.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origin of Harlington may lie in the Norman period, with the old version of its name 'Herlingedon' meaning the 'Hill of Herela's people' (Rayner 1960). The suffix 'don' (hill) or 'ton' (place) may even suggest Saxon origins, but so far this is not supported by any historical or archaeological evidence.

A manor was first recorded there at the time of the Domesday Survey (Page 1912), but its exact location is unclear. As Harlington is a dispersed settlement made up of several smaller hamlets or 'ends', more than one manor could have existed at any one time. The present manor house off Station Road in the centre of Harlington — the site of John Bunyan's examination before he was removed to Bedford Jail (Page 1912) — dates from the 17th century, but it could have been built on the site of an earlier manor house.

The Thomas Jefferys Map of Bedfordshire, surveyed in 1765, depicts the township of Harlington as a group of five hamlets. The main settlement was situated around the church in Harlington, with Higher East End (now Upper East End) and Lower East End to the east, Grange Mill to the north-east, and Goswell End to the north.

The hamlet of Goswell End is referred to as 'Goslins End' on some early maps and 'Gostle End' on maps of the early 19th century. A reference to Goswell End in the will of John Wingate (d.1643) details 'a brick and half timber cottage, and messuage with Dove House, and other lands, known as Gosling End Green and Spriggs' (de Hoog 1979). This cottage stood until the early 20th century. The mention of the dovecote in John Wingate's will is curious, as it raises the possibility that the 'cottage'

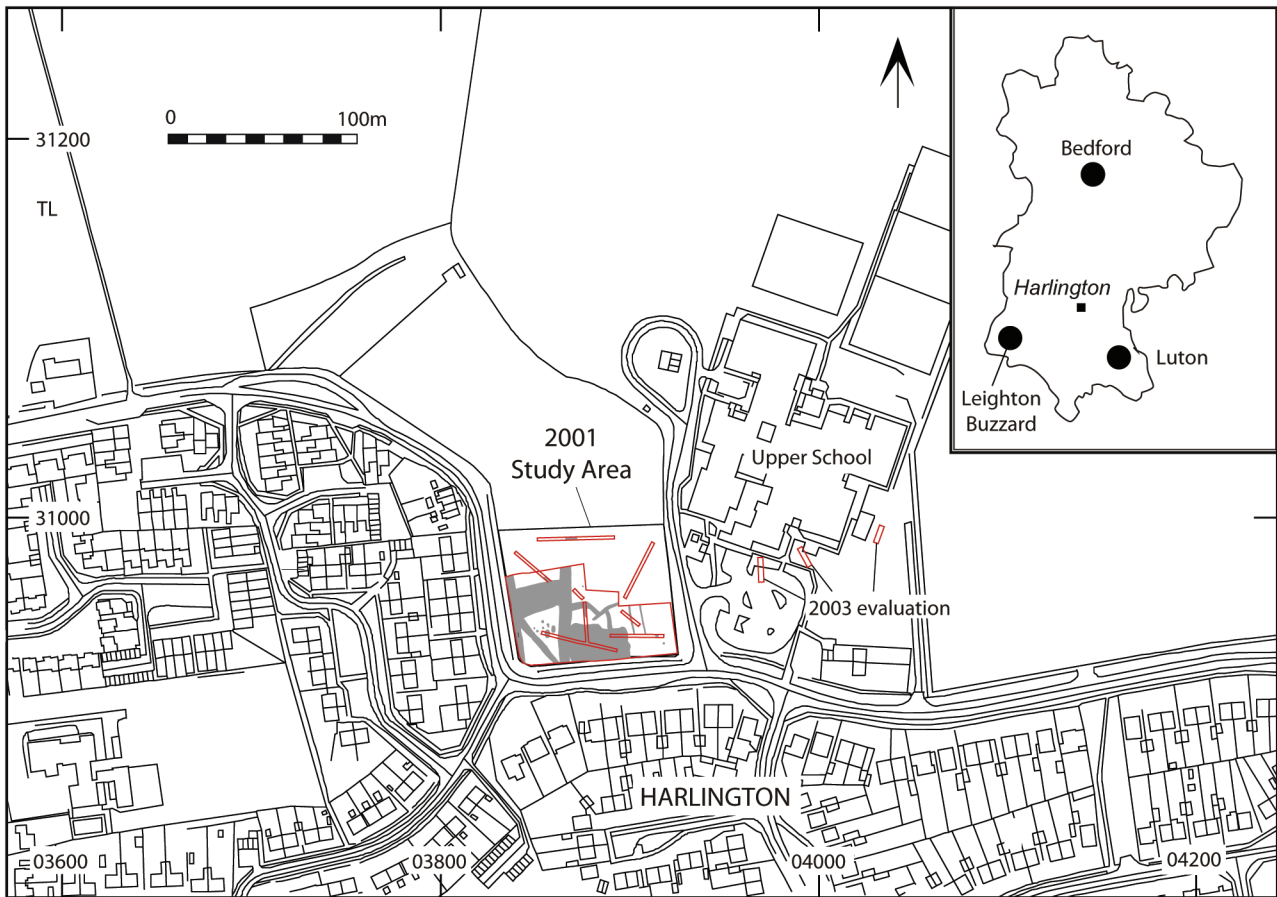


Figure 1: Site location

was in fact part of a larger manorial complex, as in medieval times only lords were allowed to raise pigeons.

To the east of Goswell End, substantial earthworks survived until the middle of the 20th century. These were the remains of a medieval moated site and were excavated in 1958 (see below). No historic references to a manor there exist, but pottery retrieved during the excavation indicates settlement of the complex from the 13th to the 15th centuries. This could mean that it was the location of either a predecessor to the Harlington or Goswell End manors, or another neighbouring manor.

In the post-manorial landscape, the Jefferys map shows buildings in closes at Goswell End in the 18th century, but little more in terms of settlement is likely to have existed on the site. Enclosure Award maps from 1810 indicate that the site was bisected by the north–south route known as ‘Long Lane’. This route was blocked at the time of Enclosure, but its nature as a deeply eroded hollow-way ensured its survival in the form of earthworks. Although marked on historical maps and surviving at least for parts of its extent in physical form, the formerly important route of Long Lane has been almost completely forgotten and is not generally mentioned in historical accounts of Harlington.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Several intrusive and non-intrusive investigations have been carried out at Harlington over the last sixty years, with its earthworks being characterised as the site of a possible ‘shrunk medieval village’. The study of

shrunk or deserted medieval villages (DMV) has become increasingly popular since the 1950s (Beresford and Hurst 1990), yet evidence for DMVs in Bedfordshire has always been difficult to identify: none of the settlements fits the classic model with rectangular patterned plots, roads and a church — the most famous example being Wharram Percy in Yorkshire — and very few have been excavated (Edgeworth 2007). The label DMV may itself now be slightly misleading, as disbanded settlements could equally have constituted smaller, more irregular settlements and individual farmsteads. There may have been several processes of settlement formation and abandonment at work in Bedfordshire, providing a general picture of gradual change and shifting settlements, with ancient trackways providing fixed points of reference (Edgeworth 2007, 100).

#### *1958 excavation of nearby moated site*

The remains of a medieval moated settlement, possibly the medieval manor of Harlington, were investigated in 1958 (Savage 1960). The site was situated between Upper East End and Goswell End, immediately to the east of the present Harlington Upper School (Fig. 2). Substantial earthworks indicated three moated and embanked enclosures, with two larger earthworks and one smaller enclosure to the north. One of the field boundaries or trackways associated with the moated site extended westwards into the present area of investigation. These earthworks have now been ploughed flat, but are still visible as crop-marks.

The larger, western enclosure contained a substantial hall-type building, consisting of chalk foundations

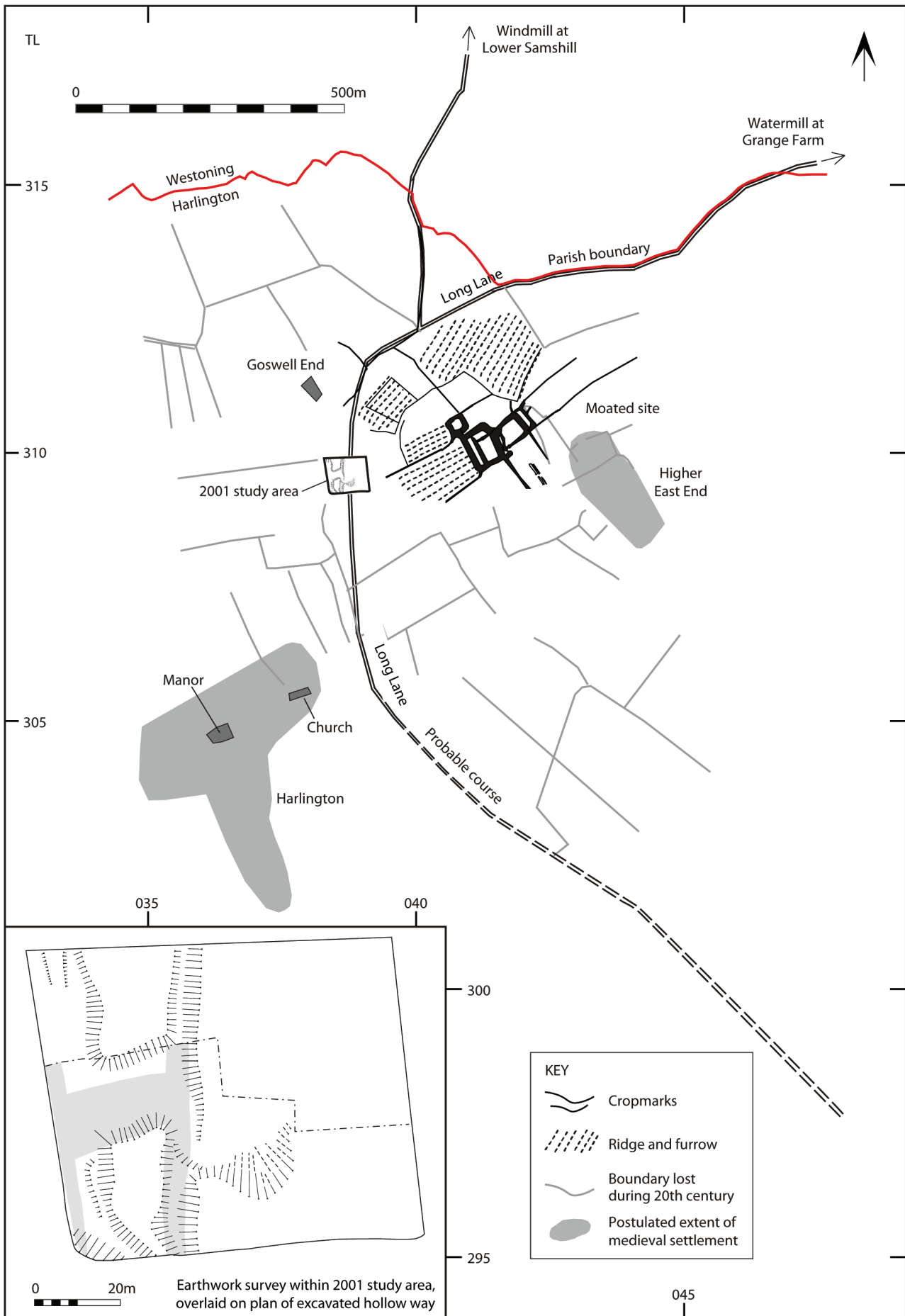


Figure 2: Reconstructed medieval landscape

interspersed with sandstone blocks for the horizontal and vertical beams of the timber structure. The building had a timber partition and a central hearth set within the puddled chalk floor in the centre of the main hall. A smaller building of similar construction to the west had extensive areas of burning and midden deposits, suggesting that this was a detached kitchen block for the main building (Odell 1958). The other enclosures contained possible farm buildings and sheep pens, as well as a small pond. The excavations produced pottery indicating settlement from the 13th to 15th centuries, along with other medieval objects including fragments of a bronze cauldron, iron arrowheads, a number of knives, several ox-shoes and a silver penny of Edward I or II (Savage 1960). Unfortunately, no trace can be found of the archive from this excavation; it appears to have been handed over to the Inspector of the Ministry of Works in 1959, but is now lost.

#### *1987 earthwork survey (Fig. 2)*

Earthworks representing the hollow-way of Long Lane and associated trackways in the eastern half of the development area have been surveyed (Coleman 1987). Aerial photographs show the continuation of the earthwork of Long Lane into the field to the north, which was still under rough pasture at the time of fieldwork, but no earthworks were visible further to the north due to levelling.

#### *Desk-based assessment*

Prior to the evaluation in 2001, Albion Archaeology (then Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service) carried out a desk-based assessment (Steadman 2000), drawing together cartographic and documentary resources from the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS). Table 1 contains references to the aerial photographic images consulted.

The assessment identified oblique aerial photographs from the 1960s and 1970s which appear to show a double-ditched trackway extending westwards into the development area from the moated complex. A further enclosure with internal features could also be seen as a crop-mark to the north-west of the school. Neither the trackway nor the enclosure is visible on vertical aerial photographs taken in the 1990s; the former lies under tennis courts and the latter under terraced playing fields to the north and north-west of the school respectively.

The moated complex is still visible as a very faint crop-mark on aerial photographs that post-date their levelling in the late 1950s, but it is almost completely ploughed out.

#### *The intrusive archaeological investigations*

##### *Evaluation (2001)*

The evaluation comprised nine trial trenches, which identified a concentration of archaeological features and deposits in the southern part of the development area. These features included two hollow-ways, a buried soil horizon containing pottery of the 12th–13th centuries, cobbled surfaces, and a small number of ditches and post-holes.

##### *Open-area excavation (2001)*

A 0.6ha area of rough pasture was excavated to the west of Harlington Upper School. All isolated features were half-sectioned and ditches were excavated in segments; the buried soil identified in the evaluation was investigated by test-pitting.

The excavations were undertaken under extremely difficult and wet ground conditions, largely due to winter weather, but exacerbated by the low permeability of the Gault clay subsoil and by the fact that a lot of springs exist in the fields near Goswell End. Such conditions also characterised the 1958 excavations, a visitor to which observed that ‘they should have dug out trenches in the moat — but the place is so wet it would have been well nigh hopeless’ (Odell 1958).

##### *Watching brief and trial trenching (2003)*

Three trial trenches were excavated on land adjacent to the existing school buildings, next to the medieval moated site (HER 234) excavated in 1958. Extensive modern landscaping meant that no archaeological features were exposed. The stripping of topsoil was monitored in the area of the extended car park to the north of the 2001 open-area excavation, revealing a cobbled surface and a ditch.

##### *Post-excavation methodology*

Following assessment of the site archive’s potential for further analysis (Albion Archaeology 2003), the contextual data were analysed in order to provide a coherent spatial and chronological framework. This framework comprises a structural hierarchy of increasingly more interpretative and less detailed context groupings, composed of:

- Groups (*e.g.* a building, concentration of pits, or a boundary ditch). Group numbers are prefixed with a letter ‘G’;
- Land-use groups (a collection of broadly contemporary and spatially coherent Groups, *e.g.* a boundary and associated activity, or a field system). Land-use group numbers are prefixed with a letter ‘L’.

Sortie No.	Run	Frame	Date	Angle	Repository	Copyright
AJJ		88–9	1.7.64	Oblique	BCC	Cambridge University
BMF		60–64	17.4.73	Oblique	BCC	Cambridge University
HSL UK 76 24	12	1017–8	24.6.76	Vertical	BCC	Cambridge University
HSL UK	14	9489	22.6.81	Vertical	BCC	Cambridge University
AF/91/COL/125	10	5228–9	7.9.91	Vertical	BCC	Cambridge University
AF/96C/564	19	2265–6	18.7.96	Vertical	BCC	Cambridge University

Table 1: Aerial photographic references

## RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATIONS

The results of all the investigations, which identified two significant landscape elements — a hollow-way and its subsidiary branches, and a buried soil — are presented below (Fig. 3). The account is structured by feature type rather than by chronology, as the majority of the features were broadly contemporary: nearly all the main features apart from the hollow-ways produced uniform pottery assemblages, which are mostly 13th–14th-century with a few residual late Saxon sherds. The hollow-ways were also part of the same medieval landscape, but the deposits within them (L14) formed only as the hollow-ways fell out of use, and the post-medieval artefacts recovered from them give little indication of the features' date of origin. There was also very little intercutting of features, with most seeming to respect one another.

### MEDIEVAL THOROUGHFARES

A network of hollow-ways, cobbled paths and trackways was identified across the excavated area, though primarily in the western half. This network might be taken as the streets of a settlement if there were more evidence of actual occupation on site or in the vicinity. In the absence of such evidence, however, it is more likely that Long Lane had a variety of alternative routes across this very wet and intractable area of ground, with traffic shifting from one to the other according to weather conditions and with subsidiary tracks coming into being in order to link the main routes.

#### *Hollow-way L15 (Long Lane) and ditch L16*

The main course of Long Lane was identified in the form of hollow-way L15, 5–6m wide, which ran north–south across the middle of the site. A post-medieval finds assemblage was recovered from it, but this is thought to provide a *terminus ante quem*, relating to the period when the hollow-way was no longer in use. Excavation showed the hollow-way to be up to 1.1m deep and to consist of two parallel trackways, G14 to the east and G15 to the west (Fig. 3: a). It is possible that G14 and G15 were both in use at the same time, with traffic alternating between them according to where ground conditions were best, or that one served as a drainage ditch while the other was in use as a thoroughfare. The infill of G15 comprised clay with a high stone content, overlain by silty sand, which may represent a deliberate attempt to strengthen the track. The precise relationship between G14 and G15 could not be determined due to re-cutting by ditch L16.

#### *Hollow-way L11 and clay layer L12*

A much shallower hollow-way L11 ran roughly parallel with L15, at a distance of *c.* 20m, along the western edge of the site. The hollow-way was only 0.11m deep and contained a cobbled surface in its base; the presence of drain G20 cut through these cobbles suggests that flooding was a problem (Fig. 3:b). The cobbles and drain became sealed by a layer of clay L12, which presumably formed once the hollow-way was no longer in use, with traffic perhaps shifting to the line of the modern road.

#### *Hollow-ways L10 and L13*

Hollow-ways L11 and L15 may have been linked by two further ones: L13, a very broad, roughly east–west hollow-way which was 14m wide and up to 0.56m deep; and L10, a much narrower hollow-way running NW–SE. This possibility is supported by the fact that L13 did not continue on the eastern side of Long Lane (L15), suggesting that its function was to run into this well-worn thoroughfare.

In common with L11, hollow-ways L10 and L13 each had a layer of cobbles spread across its base, although the survival of these cobbles was only patchy. They also each had a drainage channel; drain G18 was cut through the cobbles in L10, but the relationship between drain G24 and the cobbles in the base of hollow-way L13 was unclear.

#### *Cobbled path L6*

A linear, roughly east–west spread of cobbles L6 was excavated to the east of Long Lane, sealed by the buried soil L5. They were not contained within a hollow-way, but their linear nature could suggest a path leading off from Long Lane towards the east. Two irregular depressions (G30) towards the eastern end of the spread may represent potholes. The cobbles were irregularly distributed — patchy in some areas but up to three layers thick in others — suggesting that the track was resurfaced in an *ad hoc* manner as and when required.

#### *Trackway L2*

A short length of trackway L2 was identified in the eastern part of the excavated area, delimited by two small gullies that were spaced *c.* 5m apart. These gullies either terminated or were completely truncated before they reached the southern limit of excavation, and, although they continued beyond the northern limit, they were not identified in the trial trench to the north.

### COBBLED SURFACE

The watching brief within the grounds of Harlington Upper School in 2003 revealed a spread of limestone cobbles which measured *c.* 4m by 2.5m in plan. It may represent the remains of a trackway, similar to cobbled surface L6. The position of the cobbles fits in with the alignment of a trackway extending westwards from the moated site and visible on aerial photographs of the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, however, the area within the school's grounds had been too extensively landscaped in more recent years to reveal any further traces of the trackway in the 2003 evaluation trenches.

### BURIED SOIL

Layer L5 consisted of a thick, dark brown buried topsoil that was encountered beneath the modern topsoil, covering a sub-rectangular area of roughly 35m x 20m. It contained a large quantity of small, mostly unabrased and evenly distributed pottery fragments dated to the 12th–14th centuries, as well as a small quantity of animal bone and timber nails.

The area of buried soil was investigated by means of a series of test-pits and a soil-sampling strategy. The samples were analysed by Richard MacPhail, whose report

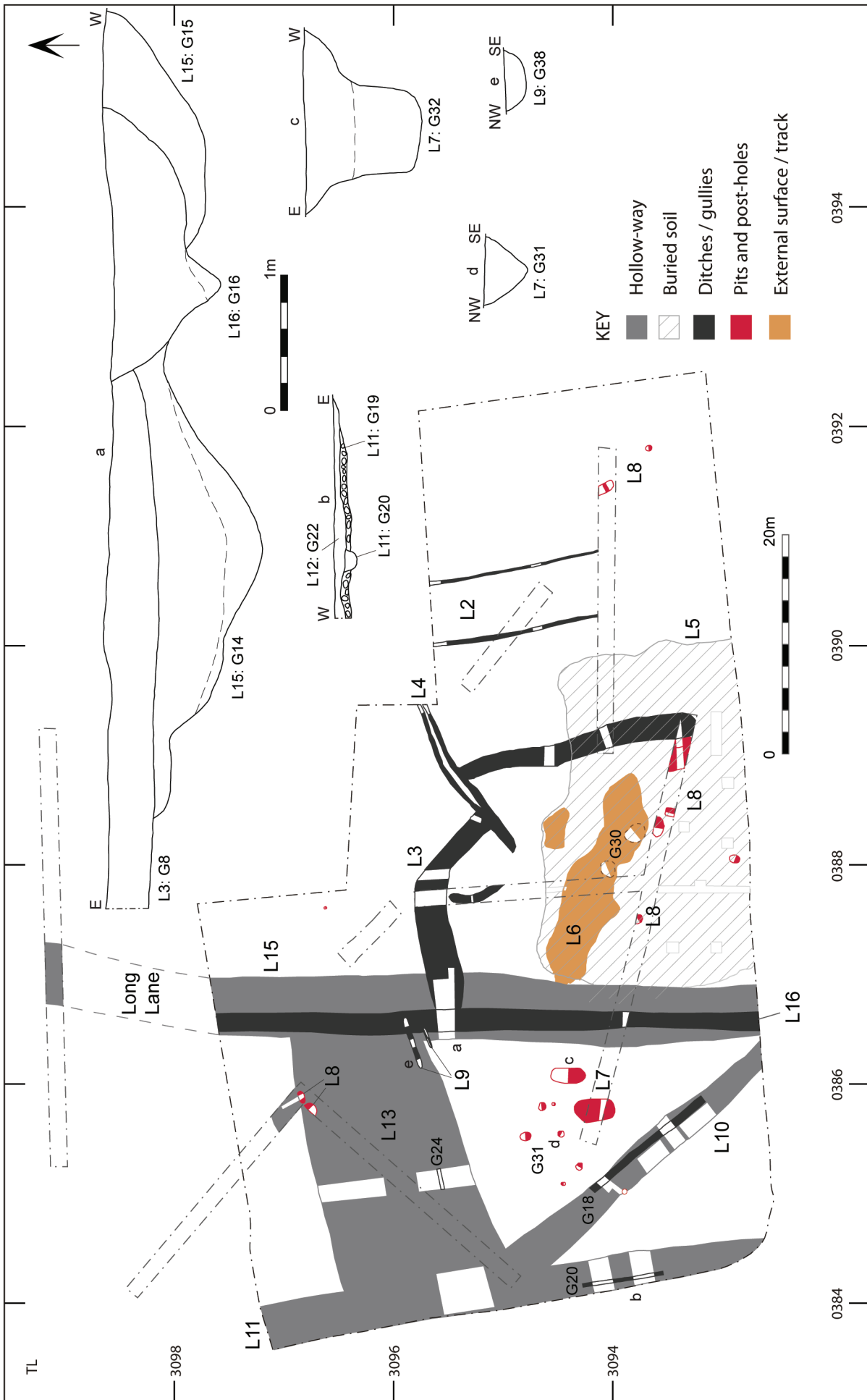


Figure 3: All-features plan and selected sections

forms part of the site archive (Albion Archaeology 2003). Micromorphological analysis of the soil monoliths suggests that the buried soil was a medieval ploughsoil that was only sparsely manured. It was also sometimes cultivated under waterlogged conditions, although the soil's high water-holding capacity would at least have aided cultivation in dry years. The unstructured, homogenous character of the soil and the even distribution of pottery sherds within it also suggest that it did not develop *in situ* but was carted in from middens located elsewhere, most likely in an area of nearby settlement. It could also have been added to by the clearing-out of the hollow-way to its immediate west.

#### ENCLOSURES

The two ditches on the eastern side of Long Lane (L15), together with ditch L16 on the western side, formed a possible small enclosure L3. On the northern side, G8 was up to 2.9m wide and 0.3–0.45m deep (Fig. 3: a), becoming distinctly narrower and deeper towards its eastern limit, whereas G10 on the eastern side was only 1.75–1.9m wide and 0.1–0.3m deep. The enclosure defined a similar area of land to that covered by buried soil L5, and may have redefined a plot of land that had previously corresponded with the extent of the soil. An entrance to the enclosure probably existed at its north-east corner, although detail of this was obscured by ditches L4. It is unclear how these two ditches leading away from the enclosure — one presumably a re-cut of the other — related to this entrance. A ditch identified during trial-trenching may represent a continuation of L4 within the enclosure, but the course of the ditch beyond the trial trench could not be detected during open-area excavation.

#### PITS, POST-HOLES AND STRUCTURAL GULLIES

A concentration of possible pits and post-holes L7 was found, the distribution of which is indicative of nearby settlement — both to the north (the nearby hamlet of Goswell End) and possibly also to the south — even though the area was not itself intensively occupied. A cluster of post-holes G31 was located to the west of Long Lane; no regular shape could be discerned from them in plan, although it is possible that they formed a rough building measuring 6.3m long, which was 1.7m wide to the south-west and 2.35m wide to the north-east. Two pits located near this structure were substantially larger than any others on the site; the western pit G33 — 3.75m long, 1.95m wide and over 1m deep — contained a partially articulated dog skeleton and a possible cow skeleton, whereas G32 (Fig. 3: c) produced very few finds to indicate its function.

A few other pits and post-holes were also identified across the site (L8), mostly at the evaluation stage. No significant concentrations could be identified, however, nor is their date certain. The pits and post-holes in L7 are likely to represent the focus of settlement-related activity within the development area during the medieval period. Two short lengths of gully L9 may also have been contemporary with L7; measuring 2.0–4.8m long, their flat-bottomed profile (Fig. 3: e) suggests they held ground beams, perhaps forming a small structure.

## FINDS

Jackie Wells

### NON-CERAMIC ARTEFACTS

#### *Introduction and methodology*

Each object was assigned an identification and functional category, and was quantified by number and/or weight. Method of manufacture, material and source, and presence of diagnostic features were noted. Where applicable, a date range was assigned by reference to standard typological works. Parallels from comparable sites were sought, and a full catalogue description entered into the project database. All ironwork, which survives in poor condition, was x-rayed by Lincolnshire County Council Heritage Service's Conservation Department. Objects are discussed below by functional category; none are illustrated. The majority of the assemblage derived from buried soil L5 (Table 2).

#### *Fasteners and fittings*

The remains of ten iron nails were recovered from buried soil L5, cobbled surface L6 and a small pit in L8. Four have flat, rectangular heads, while the remainder are tapering, square-sectioned shank fragments, likely to represent general-purpose carpentry nails. Buried soil L5 also yielded an undatable, U-shaped staple fragment (RA 64).

#### **RA 64.** *L5. Iron U-shaped staple.*

Incomplete, in four joining pieces, with the tips of arms missing. Surviving length c. 40mm; breadth 20mm.

#### *Household items*

Ditch L4 yielded the fragmentary remains of a poorly preserved iron sheet vessel (RAs 50, 51) of indeterminate form and unknown date.

#### **RA 50.** *L4, G13. Iron vessel.*

Fragmentary remains of a sheet vessel, with sheet components mainly surviving as stains in the clay matrix, and a few extant strips forming part of the vessel 'frame'. One of the larger pieces appears to comprise part of a circular base and start of the vessel walls. Original form of vessel indeterminate. Estimated base diameter c. 200mm.

#### **RA 51.** *L4, G13. Iron vessel.*

Fragmentary remains, similar to RA 50 and possibly part of same vessel.

#### *Personal items*

A gaming piece or marble (RA 1) of late 16th-century to post-medieval date derived from buried soil L5. Similar

Land-use area	Group	Artefact Summary*
L1 Subsoil	2	Knife (RA 61)
L4 Boundary ditch	13	Sheet vessel (RAs 50, 51)
L5 Buried soil	28	Stone marble (RA 1); chain link (RA 58); strip fragments (RAs 55, 62, 63); knife (RA 60); staple (RA 64); timber nail x 7; shoeing nail x 4
L6 Cobbled surface	29	Quernstone (RA 59)
	30	Timber nail x 2
L8 Isolated features	35	Timber nail
L10 Trackway	17	Horseshoe (RA 52)
L12 Layer and drain fill	21	Horseshoe (RA 56)
L14 Layer in hollow-ways	26	Copper alloy rumbler bell (RA 57)
L16 North-south ditch	16	Whetstone (RA 65)

\* all iron unless otherwise stated

Table 2: Non-ceramic artefacts

objects, made from a variety of materials including chert and red and green sandstone, were recovered from late 16th-century deposits at The Free Grammar School, Whitefriars, Coventry (Woodfield 1981, 105–6). The objects from Whitefriars are thought to have been used in the game of ‘Nine Holes’, wherein a player endeavoured to roll small balls into nine holes in the ground, each of which had its own scoring value.

**RA 1.** L5. ?Lathe-turned quartz or marble gaming piece, possibly a marble, with smoothed and polished surfaces. Four complete and partially overlapping circles and parts of two others have been inscribed on one face of the stone. Diameter 16.2mm. Late 16th-century to post-medieval.

#### *Multi-purpose implements*

Ditch L16 yielded an undatable whetstone fragment (RA 65), made from Coal Measures sandstone. The object is a primary hone, quarried and traded specifically as a whetstone, often over considerable distances (Moore 1978, 65). Cutting implements are represented by portions of two iron knives. Subsoil L1 yielded a whittle-tang knife (RA 61) which could be identified as a Type F form (after Goodall 1980), datable to the 13th–15th centuries. The second example (RA 60) from buried soil L5 survives in poor condition and is unclassifiable.

**RA 65.** L16, G16. *Whetstone.*

Coal Measures sandstone(?). Incomplete, worn primary hone of rectangular cross-section, broken both ends. Length 43.3mm; width 32.6mm; thickness 31.8mm.

**RA 60.** L5. *Iron knife.*

Incomplete, tapering rectangular sectioned tang, with a bent tip, and start of triangular sectioned blade. Length 75mm; surviving width blade 13mm; maximum width tang 7mm; thickness tang 6mm.

**RA 61.** L1, G2. *Iron whittle tang knife.*

Incomplete. Tang set at mid point of blade width. Blade back slopes down and edge rises gently to meet at tip which is damaged. Goodall type F. Length 104mm; width blade 15mm; thickness blade 6.2mm. 13th–15th century.

#### *Agricultural items and animal trappings*

Portions of four eared shoeing nails of 13th–14th-century date derived from buried soil L5. Nails of this type are generally found in association with Type 3 horseshoes (Clark 1995, 87). Trackway L10 yielded an incomplete iron horseshoe (RA 52), comprising the toe and the upper parts of each branch. The poor condition of the artefact makes positive identification problematic, although diagnostic elements suggest the object is a Type 4 standard ‘late medieval’ form (after Clark 1995), frequently recovered from 14th- and 15th-century deposits (Clark 1995, 96). An incomplete horseshoe (RA 56) of 18th–19th-century date derived from the infill (G21) of drainage gully G20 (L12), and a post-medieval rumbler bell (RA 57) from the upper layers L14 of the hollow-way.

A sizeable portion of a Hertfordshire Puddingstone bun-shaped rotary quern (RA 59), datable to the late Iron Age or early Roman period, occurred as a residual find in cobbled surface L6.

**RA 52.** L10, G17. *Iron horseshoe.*

Incomplete: heels and lower branches missing. Rectangular nail holes, 3/3 survive, one with remains of nail *in situ*. Inner profile slightly arched. Thin branch, width of web *c.* 29mm; breadth 117mm. Clark type 4(?). Late medieval.

**RA 56.** L12, G21. *Iron horseshoe.*

Incomplete: heels and lower branches missing. Rectangular nail holes, currently 4/5, one with remains of nail *in situ*. Tongue-shaped inner

profile. Encased in soil and corrosion by-products. Web width 35mm; breadth 130mm. 18th–19th century.

**RA 57.** L14, G26. *Copper alloy rumbler or crotal bell.*

Complete cast bell with petal/palmate and shield(?) motif on base; plain upper with integral rectangular suspension loop. Diameter 41.4mm; height 53.4mm. Post-medieval.

**RA 59.** L6, G29. *Hertfordshire Puddingstone bun-shaped rotary quern.*

Approximately quarter of the upper stone, with a worn grinding surface; outer edge and start of central feeder survive. Thickness 80mm; estimated diameter 270mm. Iron Age–1st/2nd century.

#### *Wide-ranging uses*

Miscellaneous iron objects recovered from buried soil L5 comprise an incomplete figure-of-eight chain link (RA 58) and three rectangular strip fragments (RAs 55, 62 and 63). The latter has a perforated terminal and may derive from part of a small furniture hinge or other structural fitting. All are undatable.

#### *Summary*

The small size of the non-ceramic assemblage allows only limited conclusions to be drawn regarding the character and date of activity. Typologically datable artefacts are few, and derive mainly from the buried soil and hollow-way; they comprise horseshoes, shoeing nails, a whittle-tang knife, rumbler bell, and gaming piece or marble, all dating from the 13th century onwards. Most are indicative of early medieval agricultural activity, or represent casual personal losses. The fragment of late Iron Age or early Roman rotary quern is residual within the assemblage; however, the weight of this item makes it unlikely to have travelled far, suggesting activity of that date within the vicinity.

## POTTERY

#### *Introduction and methodology*

The investigations produced 1,403 sherds of pottery (12.1kg), representing 960 individual vessels. The pottery was examined by context and fabric types (see appendix) in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently held by Albion Archaeology. Form codes were assigned and catalogued within each fabric group. Quantification was by minimum vessel and sherd count, and weight. The condition of the pottery from each context was noted, and attributes such as decoration, manufacture, levels of abrasion and evidence of function (residues, sooting and wear marks *etc.*) were recorded.

Selected pottery is illustrated in Figure 4. Standard drawing conventions have been used, with vessels shown at one quarter size, external view on the right and internal view on the left. Handmade vessels are illustrated with hatched sections, and wheel-thrown vessels with solid sections. The pie diagram accompanying each illustration indicates the proportion of the vessel recovered.

#### *Discussion*

The assemblage is mainly of 12th- to late 13th-century date and is dominated by locally manufactured, sand-tempered wares C59A, C59B, C53, C05, C03, C71 and C60 (ordered by decreasing prevalence), which constitute over 96% of the material. The dominance of sandy wares, in particular types C59A and C59B, and the homogeneity of the assemblage reflect the influence of local geology upon pottery manufacture. The pottery can



be directly compared in terms of vessel form and fabric type with assemblages recovered from nearby excavations such as Chalgrave (Pinder and Davison 1988), Stanbridge (Abrams 2010) and Grove Priory (Baker 2013). Non-local wares are represented by just four glazed sherds, thought to be London ware (type C57), and two sherds of high medieval Brill-Boarstall ware (type C09), a regional import from Buckinghamshire.

The pottery comprises a range of thin-walled vessels which are handmade and either wheel-thrown or wheel-finished. Jars predominate, totalling 70% of the diagnostic assemblage and varying in diameter from 80mm to 280mm; rims are square, rectangular, everted or sometimes internally bevelled, and bases are flat. Bowls constitute 18% of the diagnostic assemblage and jugs 12%. Bowls have square or rectangular rims, with diameters of 300–340mm (Fig 4: P4); jug diameters range from 90mm to 140mm. A single bung from a cistern was also identified. Decoration is rare, and comprises incised wavy lines and applied vertical or horizontal thumbed strips on body sherds (Fig. 4: P2), while jug handles are thumbed, slashed and pinched (Fig. 4: P1).

Contemporary wheel-thrown shelly wares (type B07: twenty-five vessels) occur in jar and jug forms, the handles of the latter exhibiting stabbing (Fig. 4: P3). There are also twenty-one shelly vessels in a late ‘chocolate-brown’ variant of St Neots-type fabric B01, datable to the 11th–12th centuries. Diagnostic forms are restricted to large, oval-rimmed bowls with diameters of 340–360mm.

Sooting and the presence of internal white limescale(?) residues on a proportion of the vessels indicate that most of the basic utilitarian vessels which make up the assemblage represent kitchen wares. This is supported by the paucity of glazed wares.

*Distribution*

Over 70% of the assemblage was recovered from buried soil L5, with the remainder deriving from the disuse fills of cut features, predominantly boundary and enclosure ditches, pits, and features associated with the hollow-ways (Table 3). Overall, the degree of fragmentation is high, evidenced by a low average sherd weight of 9g and a low vessel to sherd ratio of 1:1. This is probably due to the breakage of thin-walled vessels, which comprise the majority of the assemblage. The incidence of abrasion, however, is rare, and the condition of the pottery is generally good, with a few vessels having reconstructable profiles.

L No.	Group	Sherd no:wt (g)
L1 Subsoil	2	9:72
L2 Trackway	5	2:5
	7	2:17
L3 Enclosure ditch	9	11:99
	11	42:385
L4 Boundary ditch	13	1:1
L5 Buried soil	27	49:359
	28	946:8,060
L6 Cobbled surface	29	25:192
	30	60:420
L7 Post-holes and pits	32	3:18
	33	1:4
L8 Isolated features	35	3:10
	45	1:2
	46	192:2,051
	47	8:32
L10 Trackway	17	4:38
L14 Layer in hollow-ways	25	6:21
L15 Hollow-way	14	33:221
L16 Boundary ditch	16	5:103
		<b>1,403:12,110</b>

Table 3: Pottery quantification

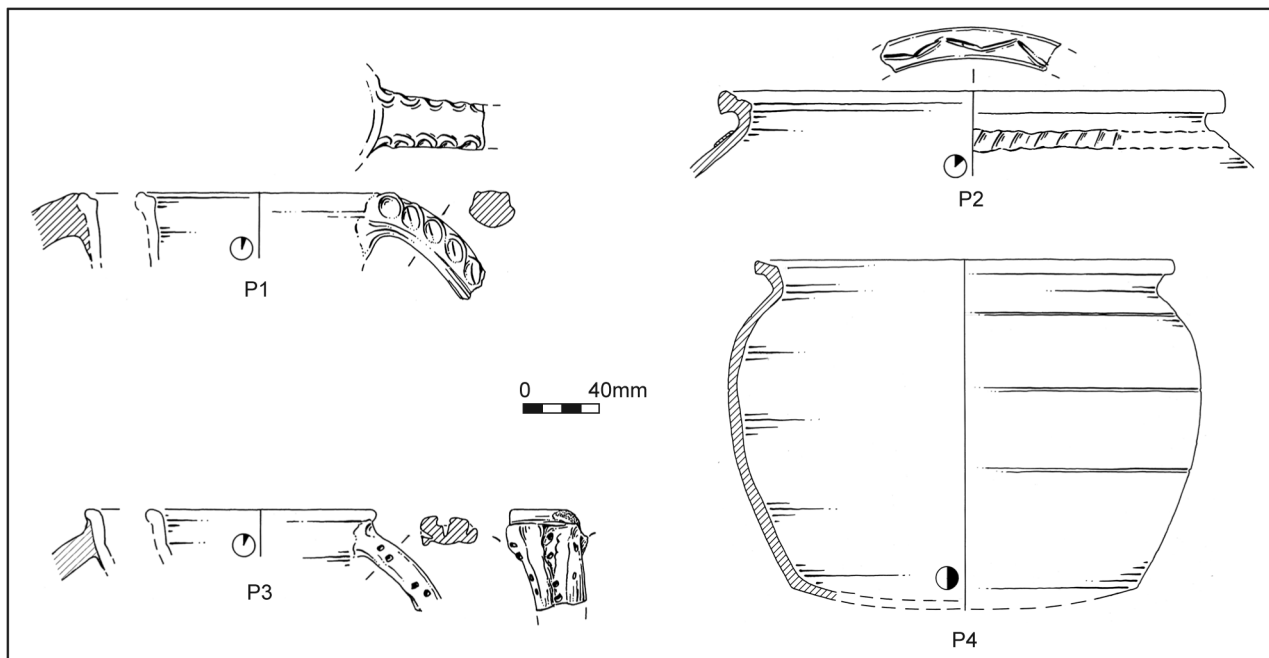


Illustration No.	Description	L no.	G no.
P1	Jug: rod handle with pinched and thumbed decoration (fabric C59A)	3	11
P2	Vessel, with decorated rim and applied thumbed horizontal strip (fabric C59A)	5	28
P3	Jug: strap handle with stabbed decoration (fabric B07)	6	29
P4	Bowl (fabric C59B)	8	46

Figure 4: Selected pottery illustrations

## CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

Fifty-five sand-tempered pieces (3.7kg) of ceramic building material were recovered, the majority deriving from buried soil L5. Fragments are largely unabraded, though fairly small, with an average weight of 68g. Diagnostic material comprises unglazed plain ridge tiles; square-holed peg tiles; narrow 'bricks' with worn surfaces, c. 29–35mm thick, which may have been paviments; and brick fragments. Roof tiles range in thickness from 12mm to 15mm, and bricks from 30mm to 37mm. Most are likely to be of late medieval to early post-medieval date, although fragments recovered from enclosure ditch L3 and pits L8 may be of 13th-century origin, contemporary with the pottery deriving from these deposits.

## ANIMAL BONE

A small assemblage of animal bones was recovered, which are generally quite poorly preserved and probably include some redeposited material. Assessment of the assemblage determined that it was too small to enable meaningful detailed analysis. The full assessment report by Ellen Hambleton is contained within the site archive (Albion Archaeology 2003).

The assemblage is composed mainly of domestic species, which undoubtedly formed the basis of the animal economy and meat diet, although there is also some evidence for the exploitation of fallow deer. The dog skeleton from one of the ditch fills showed signs of having been processed, perhaps for its skin, although there is no evidence from this assemblage to suggest that either dog or horse were eaten here. It is likely that cattle, sheep/goat and pig all contributed to the meat diet, but the lack of suitable ageing data means it was not possible to address the question of management of domestic animals for primary and secondary products.

## DISCUSSION

### LONG LANE

The investigations revealed significant evidence relating to the layout and nature of the medieval settlement at Goswell End. However, rather than comprising buildings or other structures relating to settlement on the site itself, as was originally expected, the evidence took the form of a principal hollow-way (Long Lane, L15) and associated trackways.

The combined north–south thoroughfare of Long Lane had a width of more than 30m within the excavated area. This was probably due primarily to the wet clay subsoil, with the trackway migrating laterally as certain parts of the route became impassable. Hindle notes that medieval tracks were not restricted by hedges or boundaries, and were seen as rights of way across fields, allowing them to 'fan out' and find the best possible route over an area of land (Hindle 1982). The wide track joining the two north–south thoroughfares (L13) may have been a crossover point between the two alternate routes. It is noticeable that the track did not continue east beyond Long Lane, and that the buried soil L5 and possible enclosure L3 to the east (see below) also seem to have respected its alignment, not continuing to its west. This suggests that Long

Lane followed a boundary that was respected by features either side of it.

Aerial photographs and historical maps show that Long Lane extended as far as Grange Mill c. 1.18km to the east, taking a linear, slightly sinuous but straightforward path through the landscape. It came from the south-west, probably on a course past the parish church in Harlington, and led straight north, past the Goswell End hamlet and probable manor. The Enclosure Award of 1810 describes how it continued from Goswell End to the 'East Corner of a close called Hignalls'. Here the road forked, with Long Lane continuing towards the watermill at Grange Farm and 'another Lane' leading north towards Westoning past the windmill at Lower Samshill. The western course of the lane, which followed the parish boundary between Harlington and Westoning, is shown clearly on an earlier pre-Enclosure map dating from around 1752 (BLARS ref X1/24).

The probability that Long Lane served not only as a major thoroughfare but also as a boundary is therefore very high. Due to its length, it is likely that Long Lane was not merely an agricultural boundary, but the border between the two manorial estates postulated to have existed at Goswell End to the west and the moated site to the east.

The age of Long Lane is difficult to establish, as the erosional deposits within the hollow-way were only formed when it fell out of use after Enclosure in the early 19th century. They therefore only provide a *terminus ante quem* for the formation of the feature. No datable material was retrieved from the primary cobbled surfaces within the hollow-ways.

That Long Lane at least dated to the pre-Enclosure period is testified by its mention in the Enclosure Awards of 1810 (BLARS ref X392/22/1), and its inclusion on the Enclosure maps of the same date and their revision in 1825 (BLARS refs X21/588 and X21/572). The Enclosure Award states:

One other Plot of Land or Ground consisting of part of Gostle End Green such part of Long Lane as extends from the said Green to the East Corner of a close called Hignalls and another Lane leading out of Long Lane into the parish of Westoning and containing Two acres and thirty six perches Bounded on part of the South and on part of the West by the Gostle End Road and on all other parts by ancient Inclosures in Harlington and by the parish of Westoning. The mounds and fences whereof next the Gostle End Road and next the parish of Westoning shall be made and for ever hereafter maintained and kept in repair by and at the Expence of the said Elisabeth Jennings and the owner or owners of the same allotment for the time being.

Further evidence for the date of Long Lane comes from considering its relationship with the surrounding landscape. Looking at some of the surviving open fields in the area surrounding Long Lane, the trackway can be seen to have run along what are most likely field boundaries associated with the moated site (Fig. 2). Medieval tracks — many of which were hollow-ways — often followed a sinuous course between villages, running through ploughed fields or along headlands (Hindle 1982); lost medieval tracks can sometimes therefore be traced by looking at the lines of field boundaries, or at the divisions between different alignments of ridge and furrow earthworks. The surviving plough pattern in the field to the north of the development area is almost parallel with the track, while towards the north-east, where Long Lane forks off to head towards the mill at Grange Farm, the track could conceivably have run

along an old headland. The gently curving, sinuous line of the trackway across the fields north of Goswell End Road could, therefore, imply that Long Lane was once part of the medieval field system, and hence of a medieval date itself.

#### BURIED SOIL AND OTHER FEATURES

The buried soil adjacent to Long Lane probably served as a cultivation soil. Micromorphological analysis confirmed that it was ploughed, at least for a short while, and that it was sparsely manured. The origin of the soil is unclear: it may represent material that was cleared out of the adjacent hollow-way, or it could have been imported as a midden from a nearby settlement, to improve the heavy clay soil for cultivation.

The position of an artificially created cultivation soil next to the trackway seems curious. The trackway may have served as a western boundary to the cultivated area, although the presence of the trackway and its shifting position, together with the hostile and wet soil conditions, could also have meant that cultivation was only short-lived before being abandoned. It is possible that the creation of enclosure L3, which appears to have redefined the plot of land associated with the buried soil, corresponded with a change of use.

The possible small building G31 and its associated pits to the west of Long Lane, along with the isolated post-holes and pit scattered throughout the excavated area, point towards the presence of activities other than just cultivation in the vicinity of the hollow-way. The precise nature of these is unclear, but they may have been related to outlying activity associated with the nearby settlement at Goswell End.

#### LONG LANE AFTER ENCLOSURE

Enclosure of the open fields in Harlington near the beginning of the 19th century closed off part of Long Lane and largely put the trackway out of use. However, the part of the lane north of Goswell End Road was enclosed in its entirety and became the property of Elisabeth Jennings, as seen in the text of the award above and on the Enclosure map of the same date.

It is unclear whether parts of the lane remained in use and for how long. It would certainly have lost its use as an access way through the open field system, and may have been superseded by the main road leading from Goswell End *via* Upper East End to the mill at The Grange. Long Lane never led all the way to the mill, but always joined the Mill Road coming from Lower East End to the south.

The first edition 25-inch OS map of 1882 still shows remnants of Long Lane in the form of isolated stretches along the parish boundary, or as a line of trees where the lane had once been, as is the case in the development area. This line of trees had gone by the second edition of the map in 1901. However, the lane did survive as earthworks visible in aerial photographs and on the ground until the site was developed.

#### CONCLUSION

The investigations of the land at Goswell End, Harlington, have revealed the remains of a substantial landscape feature

in the form of the hollow-way of Long Lane. Evidence suggests that it dates back to the medieval period, when it would have given access to and from the lands of the open field system within the area; its name also implies a longer thoroughfare that may have led additionally to neighbouring villages. At the same time, Long Lane may have represented a boundary between neighbouring manorial estates, one manorial complex now barely surviving as crop-marks in the field east of Goswell End, the other represented by the brick house that stood at Goswell End until the beginning of the 20th century. As such, it is likely that Long Lane played an important part in the agricultural, administrative and folk history of Harlington.

This article has demonstrated that an excavated feature often cannot be interpreted in isolation, but needs to be set in the context of its wider landscape in order to assign a date and function to it. Careful study of the surviving landscape, aerial photographs and historical maps is necessary in order to identify surviving historical features within the present-day landscape of Harlington, and to place Long Lane in its true context.

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The project was managed by Jeremy Oetgen, with the assistance throughout of Matt Edgeworth, and of Christiane Meckseper for the post-excavation analysis. Jackie Wells analysed all the artefacts and Ellen Hambleton assessed the animal bone, while Richard MacPhail commented on the micromorphology of the buried soil. Pottery illustrations are by Cecily Marshall and the remainder by David Ingham.

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## APPENDIX: CERAMIC TYPE SERIES

### POTTERY

Pottery fabrics are summarised below (Table 4), based on surface appearance and major inclusion types, using type codes and common names in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology, from whom detailed fabric descriptions are available. Published references are noted below. Bracketed numbers after each fabric code denote sherd numbers. No new fabric types were identified.

### BRICK AND TILE

**Sand:** hard-fired, orange throughout, turning to brick-red where over-fired. Generally finely tempered, although some fragments are harsh and coarsely made, and contain angular quartz of up to 6.0mm in size. Contains frequent, well-sorted, sub-angular multi-coloured quartz c. 0.2–0.5mm and dark red and black iron ore c. 0.1–0.3mm. Also occasional angular flint inclusions of up to 5mm in size.

Fabric code	Common name	Reference
B01 (32)	St Neots-type ware	Wells and Slowikowski 1996, 84
B01A (3)	St Neots-type ware (orange)	Wells 2009, 169
B07 (36)	Shell	Baker and Hassall 1979, 167
C03 (50)	Fine sand	Wells 2009, 169
C05 (69)	Sand (red margins)	Wells 2009, 169
C09 (2)	Brill-Boarstall ware	Ivens 1982, 144–5
C53 (190)	Sand (pasty)	Wells 2009, 170
C57 (4)	London ware	Pearce, Vince, and Jenner 1985, 149–51
C59A (562)	Coarse sand	Wells 1996, 113
C59B (401)	Sand	Brine 1988, 43
C60 (12)	Hertfordshire-type grey ware	Brine 1988, 43
C71 (36)	Sand (buff–grey–cored)	Wells 2009, 170
C (1)	Non-specific medieval	Described in the site archive
E01 (3)	Late medieval reduced	Wells 2009, 170

Table 4: Pottery fabric type series