

**LAND AT GOSWELL END, HARLINGTON,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Project GEH744

14th August 2001

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Bedfordshire County Council



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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this report to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the brief. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology (Albion) cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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Key terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CAO	County Archaeological Officer (of BCC)
Albion	Albion Archaeology
BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
Client	Education Planning and Admissions, Bedfordshire County Council
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record BCC



Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted in advance of the proposed extension of Harlington Upper School, in Harlington, Bedfordshire. The proposed area of development is situated within a field of rough pasture, of approximately 0.6ha, which until evaluation served as a paddock, centred at TL 03883096. The study area is situated within the bounds of the medieval hamlet of Goswell End.

A probable 'hollow way' (Long Lane) ran north-south across the field, with a possible second, leading off to the west, approximately halfway along the course of the north-south one, within the field. Evidence of possible ditches 'within' the bounds of both probable 'hollow ways' was observed.

To the south of the study area, the field topsoil sealed an earlier topsoil containing a frequent, even distribution of c.12th-13th century pottery sherds. This assemblage may have accumulated as a result of direct dumping onto the buried topsoil. The deposit was seen for c.18.5m east-west and c.3m north-south. It was bounded to the east by a ditch and to the west by the probable north-south 'hollow way'. The northern limit appeared to be defined by rough cobble surfaces and an east-west ditch. The southern extent was not determined by the evaluation. This clearly defined 'allotment', with an apparent maintained soil, may have functioned as an enclosed orchard or cottage garden.

Two linear features and a probable post-hole were observed to the north and east of the 'allotment'. These may represent a different phase of site use.

The north-east quadrant of the study area was void of archaeological deposits.

Evaluation results indicate that archaeological features and deposits relating to the 11th - 13th century are present to the south of the study area. This has significance with regard to the origin and form of the Hamlet of Goswell End.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

In advance of the proposed extension of Harlington Upper School, in Harlington, Bedfordshire, a *Brief* for an archaeological evaluation was issued by BCC, County Archaeology Office (CAO) (Oake, 2001). A *Project Design* for the evaluation was formulated 26th June 2001, which included a preliminary search of archive data held in the HER (Wilson, 2001). The evaluation was implemented between the 9th - 18th July 2001, by Albion Archaeology.

1.2 *Site Description*

The proposed area of development is situated within a field of rough pasture, of approximately 0.6ha, which until evaluation served as a paddock, centred at TL 03883096. It is bounded to the south and west by Goswell End Road, to the east by Harlington Upper School, and to the north by a field under rough pasture (Fig.1). The land is situated at c.100m OD with a gentle slope upward to the north and east. The geology of the site is Gault Clay, overlain by Boulder Clay.

1.3 *Archaeological Background*

Earthworks, within the eastern half of the study area (HER 3882), were surveyed in 1987 (Coleman, S.) and considered to be the possible remains of medieval settlement (Oake, 2001, 4.1) (Fig.2).

In advance of construction of a new Arts Centre at Harlington Upper School. Albion Archaeology undertook a preliminary *Desk-based Assessment* of the area (Steadman, 2000). Available cartographic and documented sources, held within The Luton and Bedfordshire Archives Service and the Bedfordshire Historic Environmental Record (HER) were investigated.

The remains of a medieval moated settlement, situated the east of the school (HER 234), were investigated, prior to levelling, in 1958 (Fig.2). The unpublished excavations revealed the chalk foundations of a substantial timber-framed building. Finds indicated settlement from the 13th to 15th centuries. The site was suggested to be the medieval manor of Harlington (Savage, 1960, pp.314-5).

1.4 *Historical Background*

Five hamlets constituted the township of Harlington, as shown on the *Jeffreys Map* surveyed in 1765 (Plate 1). The main settlement was situated around the church, with Higher 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 the 1765 *Jeffreys Map* and *Gofle End* on Maps of the early 19th century (Plate 2).



A reference to Goswell End in the will of John Wingate who died in 1643, details '*a brick and half timber cottage, and messuage with Dove House, and other lands, known as Gosling End Green and Spriggs*' (Page, W., (ed.), 1912).

A number of references to the area occur as a result of enclosure in 1808, with the awards printed in 1810 (Plate 2). The *Harlington Inclosure Award*, 1821, details allotments in and around the study area (Plate 3).

Enclosure awards maps indicate that the study area was bisected by the north-south route, known as *Long Lane* (2.1, 2.3.2), which originally led along the parish boundary, winding its way to Grange Mill. This route was blocked at the time of enclosure. A description of *The 3rd allotment of Elizabeth Jennings* (Plate 4), in the *Harlington Inclosure Award*, 1821, details the bounds of allotment 202, with the inclusion of part of *Long Lane*.

1.5 Methodology

The *Brief* specified a maximum area of 300m² to be investigated by trial trench, with provision for a further 100m² allowed for contingency. Opening of evaluation trenches proceeded on 9th July 2001 with a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket. Initially trenches 1-7 were sited with regard to site topography (Fig. 3). Contingency trenches 8 and 9, opened on 16th July, were sited in order to determine the extent of archaeological features and deposits revealed by the initial trenches. Features and deposits were investigated to a level which provided the information required to meet the objectives of the evaluation. All archaeological deposits and features were recorded by section, plan, written record and digital photography.



2. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION (FIG.4)

Details of trench locations, dimensions and recorded archaeological features and deposits are presented in Appendix 1.

The natural geology of the study area was seen consistently to comprise of a brownish-yellow Boulder Clay layer of c.0.10-0.40m thickness, over the highly irregular upper boundary of the grey Gault Clay.

2.1 North-South Linear Depression

Approximately 15m east of the western limit of Trench 1 a c.6m wide, 1.2m deep, north-south linear concaved depression was sectioned [105]. Disarticulated cow bones were retrieved from the earliest observed fill of this depression (108), but no datable artefacts. The feature is concurrent with the north-south, 7m wide, linear depression recorded by the topographic survey conducted in 1987 (S. Coleman) (Fig.2). The same depression was sectioned to the south of the study area in Trench 4 [418] (2.3.2).

2.2 East-West Depression

Some 25m south of the northern study-area limit, the linear depression concurrent with feature [105], meets a c.20m wide, c.1m deep, east-west depression [503, 607]. This depression appears from field topography to extend from the eastern side of the linear depression concurrent with feature [105], more than 35m west, beyond the western limit of the study area.

Trenches 5 and 6 demonstrated possible ditches along each side of the base of this depression [605] [505]. To the north, the c.1.5m wide cut [605] was sectioned and found to be only 0.18m deeper than the main depression. No dating evidence was present within the excavated portion of its naturally accumulated fill (606). The southern side of cut [605] truncated two possible pits [509][507]. A peg-tile fragment was retrieved from the naturally accumulated fill of cut [507] (508). To the south of the base of the c.20m wide depression [607], the east-west linear cut of [505] had a width of c.1.4m. Water inundation prevented further investigation of this feature.

2.3 Occupation Evidence to the South of the Study Area

Archaeology was present throughout the full length of Trench 4. The friable sandy-clay-silt topsoil (400) sealed what may be an earlier c.0.25m thick clay-silt topsoil (401). This deposit contained a frequent, evenly distributed, concentration of pottery sherds.

2.3.1 Eastern Extent (Plate 5)

To the east of Trench 4, deposit (401) extended to the western side of the north-south, linear, cut of a probable ditch [407]. Cut [407] had a width of c.1.75m and depth of c.0.75m. The fill of cut [407], (402) contained frequent pottery sherds. Cut [407] may terminate to the north of Trench 4, since no feature matching its alignment was observed in Trench 9. The eastern side of cut [407] truncated a possible 0.18m deep feature of uncertain form [405].



The eastern side of cut [405] was truncated c.0.8m west of cut [407] by the western side of a possible ditch terminus [426]. A north-south linear, probable ditch [903], of 1.9m width and 0.3m depth, was seen towards the western end of Trench 9. Cut [903] may be the ditch for which [426] represents the possible southern terminus.

2.3.2 Western Extent

Deposit (401) extended c.18.5m west of cut [407] as far as the eastern side of the c.6.5m wide, c.0.75m deep, north-south depression [418]. This depression is concurrent with that recorded on the topographic survey of 1987 (S, Coleman), and sectioned to the north of the study area in Trench 1[105].

A possible north -south ditch [408], of 1.4m width and 0.5m depth below the base of [418], with a steeply concaved profile, was present in the centre of the bottom of feature [418].

Some 5m to the west of the linear depression [418] a possible north-south ditch was seen to have a width of 1.9m and a depth below the bottom of topsoil of more than 1.1m [415]. Surface topography concurrent with this feature appeared as an oval north-south depression; more like a pit than a ditch. Partial excavation revealed sides with a slope of around 80°. A 'disuse' fill of cut [415], (419), contained the articulated skeleton of a dog. A 'use/disuse' deposit (420), below deposit (419), contained preserved wood (Plate 6).

A mound, composed of re-deposited natural deposits (423) was evident between features [418] and [415].

2.3.3 Northern Extent (Plates 7, 8)

Deposit (401/ 801) extended 1.6m north of Trench 4 within Trench 8. The northern limit of deposit (801) corresponded to the southern limit of a layer of moderately concentrated medium sized stones (806).

Layer (806) extended 1.7m north, up to the southern side of a probable east-west ditch [803]. Cut [803] had a concaved profile with a width of 1.2m, and depth of 0.3m.

On the northern side of cut [803] a layer of more concentrated, larger stones, extended 1.1m north (805).

Both layers (806) and (805) had pottery and bone lying flat on the surface, implying that they are contemporary with settlement activity. It is unknown whether these layers sealed any further archaeology since they were not removed during the evaluation.

2.3.4 Features Beneath Deposit (401 / 801)

An oval, north-west - south-east aligned, possible pit [413] measured 0.35m long, 0.3m wide and extended 0.15m below deposit (401).



An irregular, probable oval feature [411], filled with a light grey silty-clay (412) was investigated. It extended 1.8m east-west, at least 0.85m north-south, with a depth below deposit (401) of 0.32m. This feature may be of natural origin.

A sub-rectangular feature extended 0.8m north of the southern trench side [409]. It had a width of 0.75m, and a depth below deposit (401) of 0.18m. This may be the terminus of a north-south linear trench.

2.4 Further Archaeological Features

A curvy-linear feature [817] extended north from the western trench side before becoming indistinct. It had a width of c.0.6m and depth of 0.4m, with indistinct vertical sides and a flat base. Fills consisted of a brownish yellow clay-sand-silt (818), either side of a c.0.2m wide, 0.4m deep 'column' of dark brownish-grey clay-silt (807) (Plate 9).

A roughly circular pit [808] had a diameter of c.0.55m with a depth below sub-soil of 0.38m. Within the lower 0.14m of this probable post-hole, the possible remnant of a c.0.14m diameter post was evident as a dark greyish-brown humic clay-silt (Plate 10).

A linear feature [906] extended 1.5m south-east of northern trench side. This feature terminated with a subcircular, c.0.45m diameter, 0.08m thick stone, aligned perpendicular to the cut. The 0.78m wide soilmark of feature [906] appeared similar to that of cut [817] but the profile proved to be concaved with a depth of 0.24m below subsoil. The dark brownish-grey silt-clay central soilmark had a concaved lower boundary to a depth of 0.12m (Plate 11).

An oval, north-south, 1.15m long, 0.80m wide, pit [417] contained the fully articulated skeleton of a cow. This feature was not excavated.

2.5 Negative Results

No archaeological features or deposits were present within Trenches 2, 3 and 7. Results were also negative north-west of the chalk filled land drain [603] within Trench 6. No archaeological features or deposits were present to the east or west of feature [105] within Trench 1. No archaeological features or deposits were seen between features [904] and [906] within Trench 9.

2.6 Finds Assemblage

2.6.1 Introduction

The complete finds assemblage by Trench and feature is presented below. The spot dates are based upon the latest item in the whole assemblage.



Trench	Feature	Context	Feature Type	Spotdate	Pottery	CBM	Animal Bone	Other Finds
1	105	108	D				12:1039	Oyster shell
4	401	401	NS	LM-PM	178:1494	7:1233	8:50	marble (RA1)
4	405	406	P	12 th -13 th	8:31		1:1	
4	407	402	D	12 th -13 th	196:2076	9:130	9:74	eggshell
4	408	403	D	LM-PM	3:67	1:157		
4	408	404	D	12 th -13 th	1:16			
4	408	425	D	13 th		1:85		
4	409	410	D	12 th -13 th	1:2			
4	415	419	D	12 th -13 th	1:4			
4	415	430	D				242:176	
4	426	427	D	12 th -13 th	8:74		2:60	
5	507	508	P	LM-PM		1:78	5:18	
5	509	510	P				1:62	
6	603	604	I	LM-PM		5:1250		
8	801	801	EC	12 th -13 th	3:20		1:2	
8	803	811	D	12 th -13 th	7:41		1:1	
8	804	804	D	LM-PM	15:104	6:31		
8	805	805	ES	12 th -13 th	26:201		2:8	
9	902	902	NS	LM-PM	42:496	2:56		
9	903	904	D	12 th -13 th	30:292	3:58	6:311	
		Totals:			519:4918	35:3078	290:1802	

Table 1:Artefact assemblage by trench and context
(sherd/frag count: weight in grammes)

CBM = ceramic building material

LM/PM = late medieval/post medieval

RA = registered artefact

2.6.2 Pottery

The ceramic assemblage is in the main of 12th-13th century date with little beyond the late 13th century. Both sandy and shelly wares are present, with sandy wares predominating.

Shelly wares occur in jugs and jars of fabric type B07. There are also occasional examples of a late version of fabric type B01 (St Neots) in a chocolate-brown fabric, occurring in oval-rimmed bowls with wide diameters. This fabric type was also found at Grove Priory, Beds. possibly dating to the 11th-12th century.

The sandy wares present (fabric types C03, C53, C59a and C59b) occur in fine, thin-walled vessels, predominately in jar forms with rectangular rims. There are only five sherds (11 grammes) of green glazed pottery thought to be of fabric type C57 (London Ware).

Fabric types	Common name	Context/sherd no.
Saxo-Norman (11th-12th C.) Type B01	St Neots (late)	(401)/2;(402)/10;(406)/1; (427)/2;(904)/1
Early Medieval (1150-1250) Type B07 Type C57 Types C03;C53;C59a,C59b	Medieval shelly London type	(401)/1;(402)/5;(406)/1;(805)/1;(904)/4 (804)/5



	Sandy wares	(401)/175;(402)/181;(403)/3;(404)/1;(406)/6;(410)/1;(419)/1;(427)/6;(801)/3;(804)/10;(805)/25;(811)/7;(902)/42;(904)/25
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Table 2: Pottery fabric types and contexts

The majority of vessels are plain, decoration being limited to incised wavy lines and vertical thumbled strips on the sandy jars, with a single handle with pinched edges. Handles on the shelly jugs exhibit stabbing. Many of the jar sherds are sooted externally, suggesting use as cooking vessels.

Although many of the sherds are small, this is likely to be the result of breakage of thin-walled vessels. Abrasion is rare and the condition of the assemblage, with a few exceptions, is generally good.

The paucity of glazed wares might suggest a low-status assemblage. However, the limited forms and fabric present may be limited by function, that is kitchen wares, rather than status. This is supported by the presence of sooted sherds within the assemblage.

2.6.3 Ceramic Building Material

A small quantity of building material was recovered, in the form of narrow 'bricks', about 35-40 mm in thickness, which may have been used as paviments (context 401); unglazed plain ridge tiles (context 604) and a square-holed peg tile (context 508). These suggest some late medieval to early post-medieval activity. Contexts 401, 402 and 904 yielded remains of a flat roof tile with distinctive dark red, harsh sandy fabric. As contexts 402 and 904 yielded only 12th-13th century pottery, with no intrusive material present, it is possible that this tile fabric type could date to the same period, possibly 13th rather than 12th century.

2.6.4 Non-ceramic Artefacts

A single registered artefact was recovered from context 401. This is a smoothed and polished, possibly lathe-turned, stone sphere 16.2mm in diameter. Four complete and partially overlapping circles and parts of two others have been inscribed on one face of the stone. It is suggested that this sphere may have been a 'marble' or gaming piece. Ten marbles with diameters ranging from 11mm to 30mm were found at The Free Grammar School, Whitefriars, Coventry in deposits dating to between c.1545-1557/58 (Woodfield 1981, 105-6). These examples were made of a variety of materials including chert, and red and green sandstone. The marbles were 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 (Woodfield 1981, 105).

2.6.5 Animal Bone

Animal bone was recovered from 12 contexts, three-quarters of which were small and fragmentary assemblages. Slightly larger collections were found in three contexts. Context 108 produced the remains of at least two cow jaws, whilst context 402 yielded a sheep jaw. Context 430 consisted of a complete articulated skeleton of a small-boned dog.



3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Summary of Results

The evaluation successfully determined the character, extent and depth of archaeological features and deposits within the study area (Fig.5). Settlement activity was revealed to the south of the investigated field.

A probable 'hollow way' (*Long Lane*) ran north-south across the site [105, 418], with a possible second, leading off to the west, approximately halfway along the course of the north-south one [503, 607], within the study area.

Approximately 600m of the course of *Long Lane* appears to arch around the north-western side of the medieval moated settlement suggested to be the medieval manor of Harlington (1.3), at a distance of c.200m. *Long Lane* then continues eastward along the parish boundary to Grange Mill. *Long Lane* may represent a fossilised boundary, possibly with some relation to the moated site.

The buried soil horizon seen to the south of the study area (401, 801) was demonstrated to be within an 'enclosed area' bounded by ditches to the east, west and north. The frequent, even, distribution of fairly unabraded pottery within this deposit may have resulted from direct dumping of household waste onto the soil. The buried topsoil may be that of a cottage garden or orchard as detailed in the *Harlington Inclosure Award*, written in 1821, for allotment 171, opposite the study area (Plates 2, 3).

The 'allotment' area is situated to the south of the field referred to as *Spriggs* on enclosure maps c.1810 (Plate 2). *Long Lane* appears to be the western boundary of the 'enclosed area'. Other than the highly speculative connection between *Long Lane* and the moated site, the evidence from the study area gave no indication of manorial status or connections. Finds from the moated site indicated settlement from the 13th to 15th centuries whilst the pottery assemblage associated with the 'enclosed area' appears to indicate low status occupation during the 12th to 13th centuries.

Post medieval ceramic building material from the vicinity of the 'enclosed area' probably originated from land drains, seen within Trenches 4 and 8, in which such material served as packing. Peg tiles retrieved from the fill of possible pits seen in Trench 5 may indicate a later phase of activity in this portion of the study area.

Features observed outside the 'enclosed area', to the north and east, may possibly relate to an earlier phase of site occupation.

The Gaulty Clay natural and presence of field drains imply that rain during any excavation is likely to result in flooding of depressions and negative features.



3.2 **Significance of Results**

This site has local and regional significance with regard to the organisation, development and possibly the origins of the hamlet of *Gostle End*.

Medieval rural settlements in Bedfordshire are relatively under researched. This site may offer a useful comparison between settlement on Gault Clay and valley sites such as Stratton and Marston Mortaine.

In contrast to deserted sites, still-inhabited settlements, like Harlington, have been highlighted by the Medieval Settlement Research Group as a hitherto under-investigated archaeological resource:

They represent a high proportion of medieval settlements, and must be regarded as archaeological sites, as worthy of recording, survey, management, preservation or excavation as any deserted or shrunken site (MSRG, 1996, p.5).

The archaeological resource of villages such as Harlington is particularly vulnerable to in-fill development. Such development land has the potential to preserve evidence for the earlier layout, and indeed the origins, of this type of settlement.

There is a possibility that it too preserves evidence for the early medieval (i.e. Saxon) settlement of the area. The recovery of settlement evidence for this period has been identified as a research priority for the region (Wade, 1997, p.48).



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5. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES