

Archaeological investigation of land at Clock Close, off Cinques Road, Gamlingay by Gamlingay Archaeology Group (GamArch) on 19th. October 2013.

*Archaeological Evaluation
By GamArch
Report Date: January 2014*

Report Number: ?
Site Name: Clock Close, off Cinques Road, Gamlingay
HER Event No: ECB4165
Date of Works: 19th October 2013
Grid Ref: Easting 523040, Northing 252600. (Centre of grid)
Site Code: Clock2013

Prepared by: Mike Collins
Position:
Date: March 2014

Checked by: Kirstin
Position: Gamarch Secretary
Date: March 2014

Signed:

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Summary

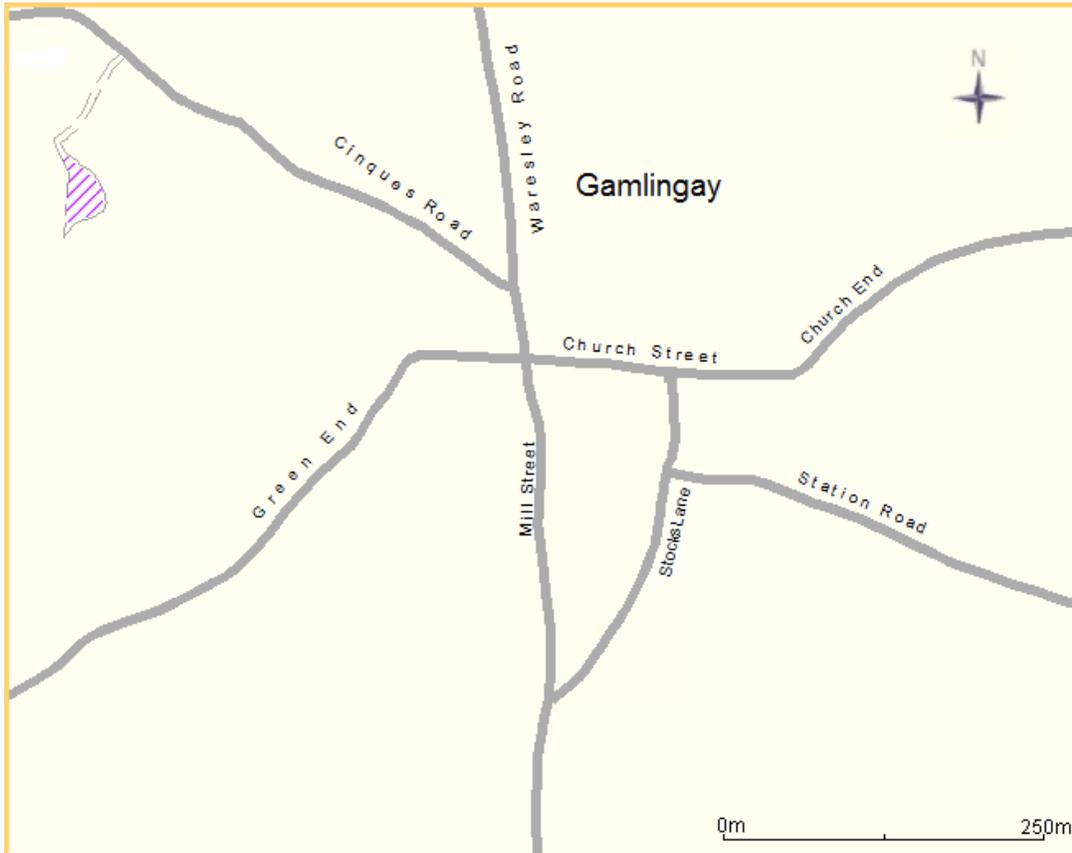
A fieldwalking exercise was conducted by GamArch on Saturday, October 19th 2013 at Clock Close, Gamlingay Cinques. The exercise produced a very small number of worked flints, a small amount of pre-modern ceramics and a quantity of modern artefacts suggesting limited activity on the site until relatively recent times.

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work

The fieldwalk was carried out on a field situated approximately mid-way between the north-westerly outskirts of Gamlingay and the village centre. The field, known as Clock Close, is approached by a track running south-west off Cinques Road, Gamlingay.

Figure 1: Location map showing the area walked (stippled purple) at Clock Close, Gamlingay.



GamArch (Gamlingay Archaeology Group) is an amateur group investigating the archaeology in and around the parishes of Gamlingay and the Hatleys. The group is supported by Jigsaw Cambridgeshire, who have been providing professional support, advice and training for local projects involving archaeology. The purpose of the fieldwalk was to recover, identify and preserve any artefacts and to evaluate the site in terms of its historical and archaeological interest.

Geology and topography

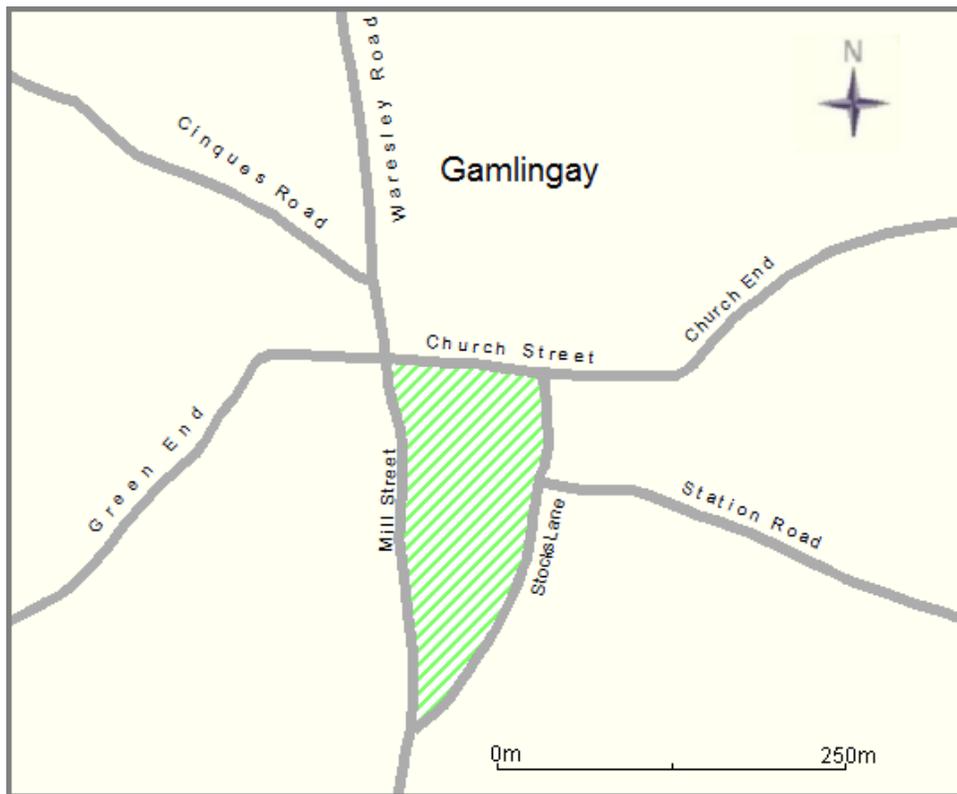
The field is approximately 0.5 hectares in size, c52m O.D. and located some 250 metres south of a position where Cinques Road approaches Gamlingay Cinques. The centre of the field is OS National Grid 523036, 252597. The general trend of the land from the road to the field is a gentle south-easterly downward slope with the trend continuing south beyond the field for another 100 metres where it meets an easterly flowing tributary stream. The field is broadly D-shaped bounded on its western sides by a post and wire fence and by a part-canalised ditch cum free flowing stream around the curve of the 'D'.

The soil type is 541A Bearsted which is a well-drained course loamy soil over sandstone, in places ferruginous. The bedrock geology underlying the site is Woburn sands formation of sandstone (code WBS-SDST) belonging to the lower greensand group of the early cretaceous age. This typically consists of cross-bedded sandstone or loose sand composed of fine to course grained quartz sand, glauconitic in part which is commonly silty with a few clay wisps or seams. It is locally cemented to iron pan or gritty carstone. There may be some pebbles and phosphatic nodules towards the base. It is typically grey or greenish-grey, weathering to ochreous yellow brown (NSRI: 2013)

Archaeological and historical background

Prior to modern boundary changes Gamlingay was the largest village in Cambridgeshire and it remains one of the largest to this day. The medieval village of Gamlingay is thought to have originated around a triangular green now built over and bounded by Church Street on the north, Stocks Lane on the south-east and Mill Street on the west. Before the conquest the village is thought to have been centred further east on the Station Road area as Saxon remains were discovered there in the 1990s (Murray and McDonald: 2006).

Figure 2: Map showing the probable central green (stippled green) around which the Medieval village developed.



Pre-Saxon Gamlingay is less well understood. On the basis of the curation and recycling of Roman materials at the Station Road Saxon site, it has been suggested there was a Roman villa somewhere within the vicinity of the Saxon site itself. For prehistoric times, aerial survey photography and interpretation indicates potential Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age sites to exist within the parish and its immediate locale. Worked flint finds dating from the Mesolithic onwards are not uncommon within the parish and a very few lithics from deeper prehistory have been found.

For the medieval period there exists much documentary evidence, particularly from 1279 onwards. In 1260 Walter de Merton founded Merton College, Oxford and gave much of his land in Gamlingay to the College, an amount of which it retains to this day. Prior to a devastating fire in 1600 – the ‘Great Fire’ - the village was divided into three manors. These were the manors of Merton and Avenels, both

centrally located, and the manor of Woodbury to the west of the village. Avenels, the main medieval manor, passed to Merton College in 1599. Shortly afterwards in 1602 Merton commissioned Thomas Langdon to survey and map its Gamlingay estate. The highly detailed maps Langdon produced in 1602 provide important evidence of the topography of the village in this period (Clarke 2004: 3).

The distinctive 'D' shape of Clock Close, its area and location is matched in all respects by a field shown on Langdon's maps of the Merton estate. The size of the field may have been marginally enlarged in recent times since on old OS maps the northern tip of the straight section of its western fence line is shown a few metres due east of its current position.

According to local knowledge the field was customarily given over to any parishioner taking on responsibility for the winding of the church clock. Formal sources suggest an entirely economic use of the site:

"By 1952 the church lands consisted of 3 a. of arable in Long Lane, let for £6, and 1 a. of arable known as Clock close, let for £2 10s., given at an unknown date for the maintenance of the church clock" (Elrington 1973: 68-97).

The current landowners of Clock Close remember the field being used as a market garden from around the 1950's up until fairly recent times.

Recorded archaeology near to the site consists of three buildings, taken to be barns, dating to 1601 or earlier. All of these buildings are between 150 and 250 metres west and west south-west of the site. A probable post-medieval ditch identified via aerial photography lies some 325 metres north-west, a little way south of Cinques Road. A Bronze Age arrowhead and blade were found nearly 500 metres away to the south-east.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the land owners, Joy and Graham Hill, for allowing us access to the land and for sharing with us their in-depth knowledge of the nature and past use of Clock Close and the land around it. We would also like to thank Peter Swannell of the Gamlingay History Society – it was Peter who set this project in motion by instigating a first meeting between GamArch and the landowners.

Aims and Methodology

Aims

The Clock Close site provided the group a valuable opportunity to look at a space outside the core area of the village. The purpose of the fieldwalk was to recover, identify and preserve any artefacts and to evaluate the site in terms of its historical and archaeological interest.

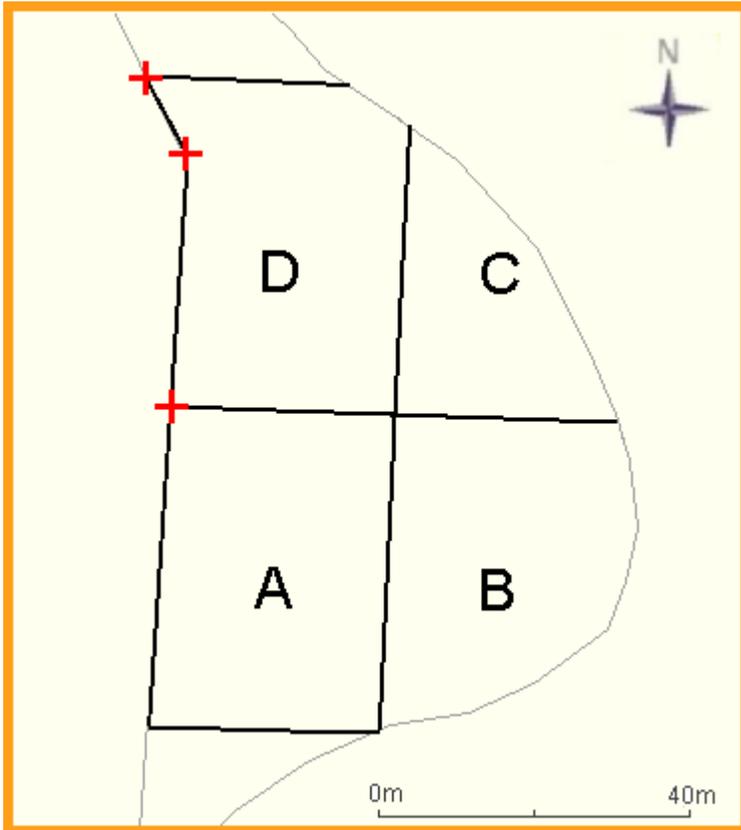
Methodology

In October 2013 GamArch was contacted by a member of the local History Society suggesting that a landowner in Gamlingay Cinques might be interested in allowing GamArch access to land. It was unclear then as to what the land was or what the group might be expected or allowed to do. Toward the end of the month two GamArch members met with the landowners, Joy and Graham Hill, and were shown the field and given permission to access and walk it. It being a small field it was decided to undertake a rapid evaluation of the site via visual inspection, random walking and by undertaking a single transect along an east-west line across the field's mid-point. Recovering and seeing nothing other than small amounts of modern ceramics and other finds of a modern date and it being unclear at the time as to how long the group might have access to the land it was decided to undertake as thorough and systematic a fieldwalk as was possible with the basic equipment to hand – field notebook and pencil, collecting bags, Garmin 60CSx GPS unit.

The field had been lightly ploughed to remove weeds a few weeks week before the exercise and left in an unrolled state. The ground was moist but the light was low due to significant cloud cover. Conditions were good enough for the exercise but were not ideal light conditions.

A grid was laid out using the straight running western fence line as a baseline. GPS readings were taken at three points along the fence. Lines running approximately perpendicular to the baseline were marked out with straight sticks and lines adjudged straight by line of sight. GPS readings were taken at four points and the layout of the grid found to be satisfactory and a sketch plan of the site made. Grid square C is approximately $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ less in area than are the other 3 grid squares which are all approximately 0.1 hectares each.

Figure 3: Sketch plan of Clock Close and lettered field grid. GPS recorded positions are marked with red crosses.



Each grid square was then walked systematically up and down in a zig-zag manner. Each traverse (each 'zig' or 'zag') was separated by two paces i.e. they were approximately 2 metres apart. Finds were bagged and recorded with grid numbers and collected at the end of the exercise and stored at the home of a GamArch member where a preliminary assessment of them was made the same day.

Finds from within each square were kept together and spread out on trays to allow to air dry then lightly brushed and were inspected. None appeared to be of significant archaeological interest and none appeared fragile or otherwise in need of special care. They were then left in store in a darkened room having steady low temperature and humidity conditions.

Processing was completed over the course of several weeks and involved the washing and identification of finds. Finds were then assessed and assigned to general categories and the results stored in a Windows Access software database. The weight of categories of finds from each grid square was recorded but the weight of individual finds was not.

Results

Finds

A total of 168 individual finds having a combined weight of a little over 2kg were recovered from the site. A surface soil anomaly was also noted.

Figure 4: Number of finds per grid square

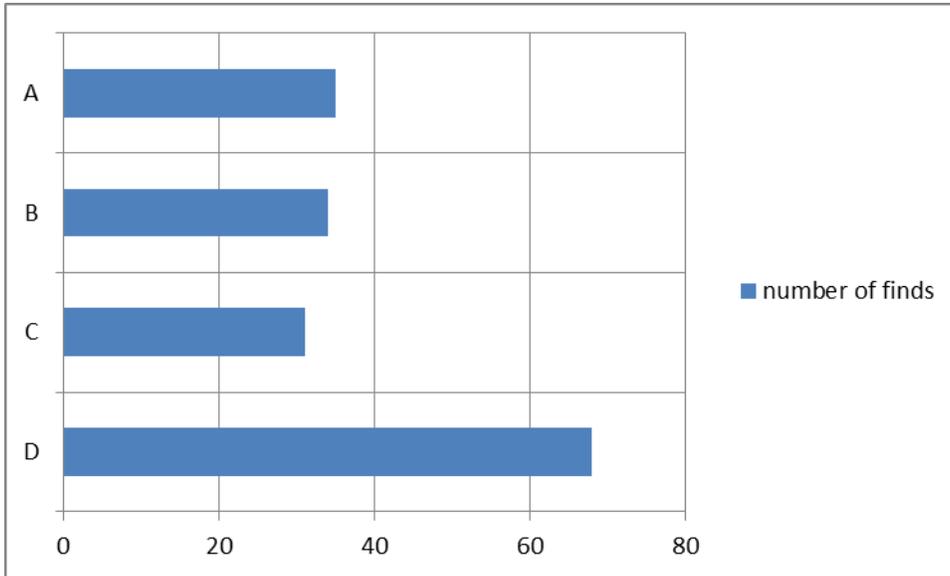


Figure 5: Number of finds per finds category

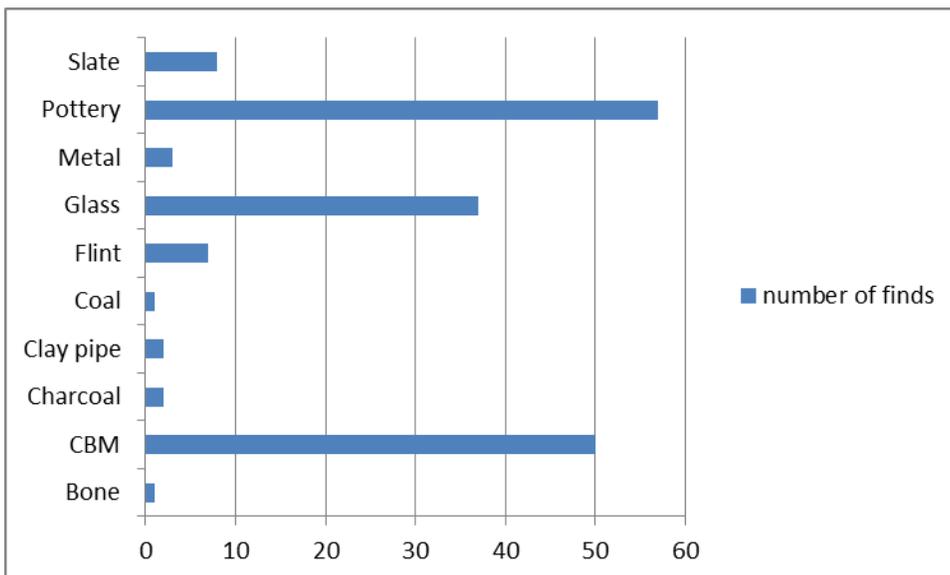


Figure 6: Number of finds per category and grid square

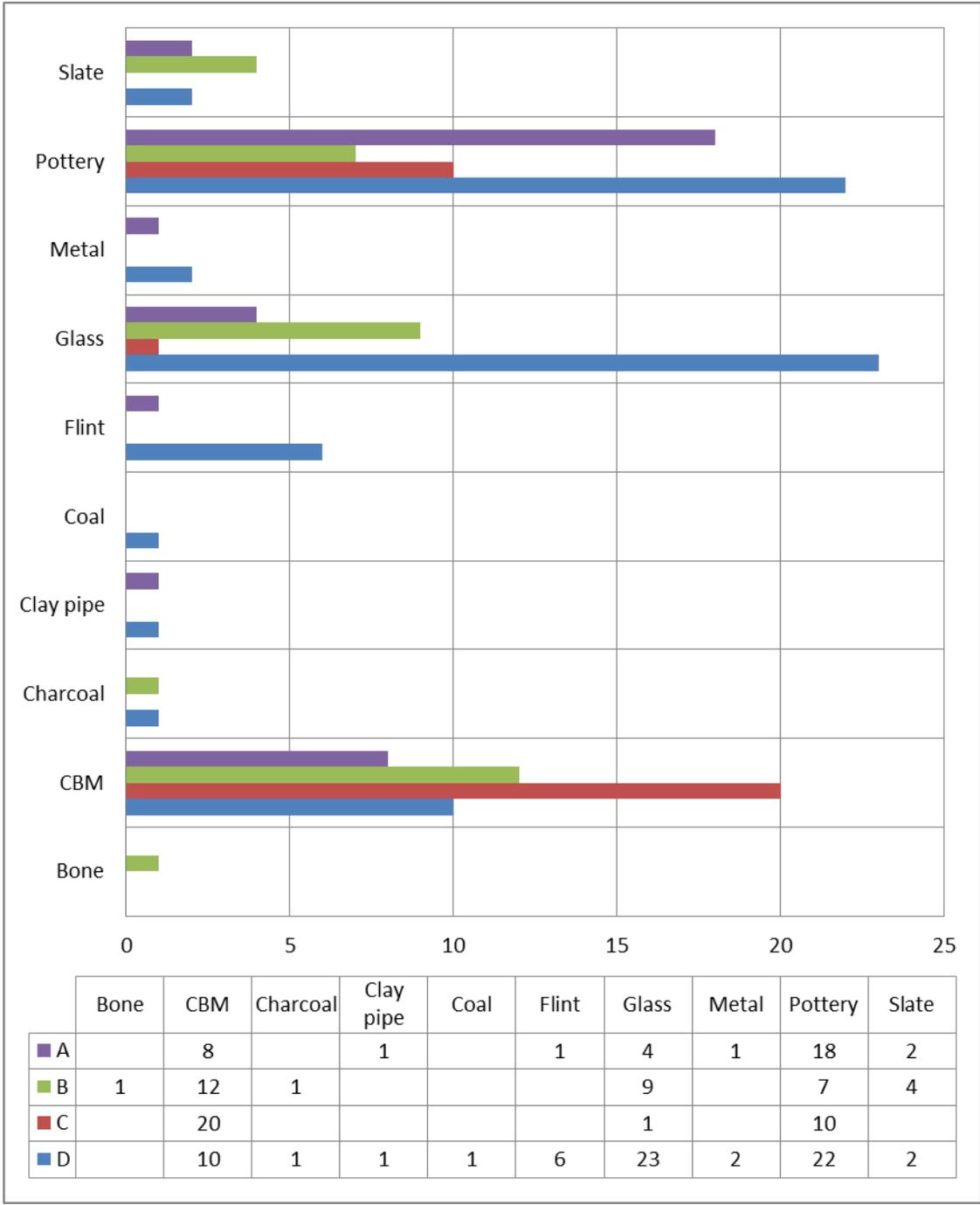
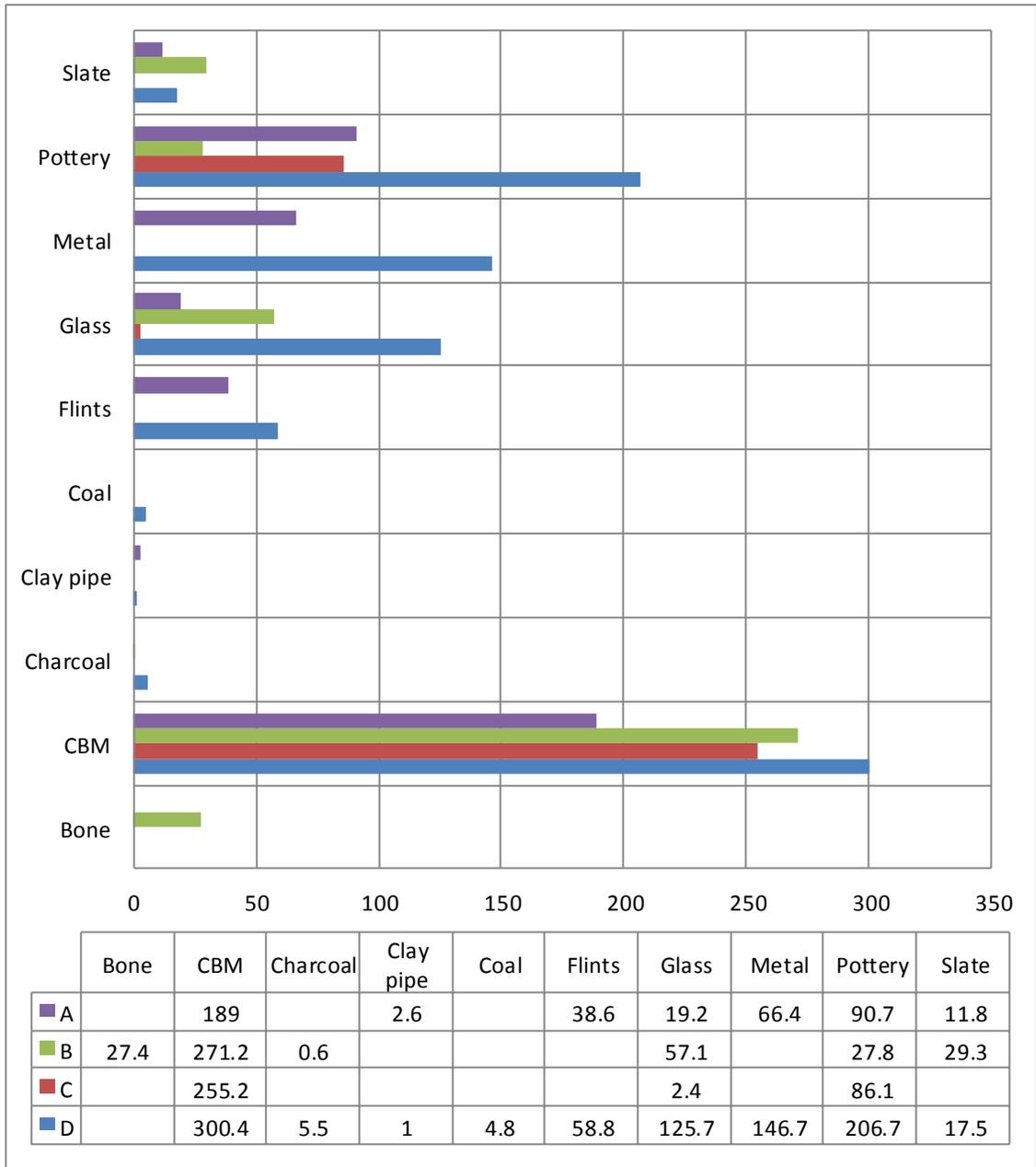


Figure 7: Weight of finds per category and per grid square



Finds Summary

Abbreviations used:

PMR=Post-Medieval redware

CBM= ceramic building material (brick or tile unless otherwise stated).

When listing finds below the following attributes are given in sequence: number of finds, find type (with a description if helpful), archaeological period, date range of find. A ? indicates a degree of uncertainty as to the attribution. Where (GAMREF) is appended to the archaeological period attribute it indicates identification or dating was arrived at via comparison with GamArch's own set of reference materials. This set consists of artefacts formally identified by professional archaeologists and similarly suitably qualified individuals. Even so, a GAMREF is no substitute for formal assessment. All other identification/dating is GamArch's own assessment unless otherwise stated.

Pottery

57 finds:

1 greyware, incised lines on outer surface, ?Roman - Medieval, 43 – 1500 A.D.

1 ?sandyware, ?Medieval, 1066 – 1500 A.D.

1 greyware, coarse fabric, ? Roman - Medieval, 1066 – 1500 A.D.

6 PMR, post-Medieval, (GAMREF), 1500 – 1800 A.D.

46 modern, 1800 – present day

2 unknown (sherds too abraded or small to attempt their identification)

The decorated greyware and the coarser fabric greyware came from grid square D. Bands of incised lines in three zones are visible on the decorated greyware (see inset photos). The sandyware came from grid square C. PMR was found in all squares – 3 from grid square D and 1 from each of the other grid squares.

Modern finds were of 17 refined white earthenware, 11 stoneware, 8 plantpot, 4 willow pattern, 2 ?porcelain (else refined white earthenware), 1 yellow ware, 2 plain white earthenware, 1 unknown (too small and/or abraded to allow identification). One of the plain white earthenware might be a little earlier than mid-19th century as it has a colourless crazed glaze.

15 pieces of modern pottery came from grid square A, 6 from grid square B, 7 from C and 18 from grid square D. The 2 unidentifiable sherds came from grid square A.



CBM

50 finds:

- 6 pieces of tile mid-Medieval – early post-Medieval (GAMREF), 1350 A.D. - 1650 A.D.
- 2 pieces post-Medieval tile, 1500 A.D. – 1800 A.D.
- 2 pieces pinkish brick, late post-Medieval (GAMREF) 1700 A.D. – 1800 A.D.
- 6 pieces of modern tile, 1800 A.D. – present day
- 34 unknown (these have no readily discernable diagnostic features)

4 of the 6 pieces of late Medieval/early post-Medieval came from grid square A, two from grid square C. One of the pieces of post-Medieval tile came from grid square C, the other from D. The 18th century pinkish brick came from grid squares C and D. One piece of modern tile came from grid square A, another came from square C and 4 pieces came from grid square D. Three of the unidentifiable CBM pieces came from grid square A, 12 from square B, 15 from square C and 4 from square D.

Flint

7 finds:

- 2 flint cores, prehistoric,(GAMREF), 10000 B.C. – 1000 B.C.
- 2 blades, prehistoric,(GAMREF), 10000 B.C. – 1000 B.C.
- 1 flake or ?microlith, prehistoric,(GAMREF), 10000 B.C. – 1000 B.C.
- 1 scraper, prehistoric,10000 B.C. – 1000 B.C.
- 1 ?struck flint, ?prehistoric, 10000 B.C. – 1000 B.C.

Six of the flint finds appear to be worked and came from grid square D. Of these, both of the flint cores have some cortex remaining and both show evidence of having been struck several times and from several directions. The single questionable struck/worked flint find came from grid square A.

Slate

8 finds:

- 8 slate slivers, modern, ?roof tile, 1800 A.D. – present day

2 of the slate finds came from grid square A, 4 from grid square B, 2 from grid square D. These finds all appear to be modern.

Metal

3 finds:

- 3 slag date unknown.

2 lumps of slag came from grid square D, 1 from grid square A. Dating of the slag would require a specialist. The slag is non-magnetic and appears to be modern.

Glass

37 finds:

37 various kinds, modern, 1800 A.D. – present day

None of the glass is patinated or otherwise appears to date earlier than mid-19th century. Mostly bottle remains of dark blue-green and green colour, one was brown. Also some plain flat sheet presumed window glass, 1 thin-walled light green curved vessel piece. 23 of the 37 pieces came from grid square D, 9 from grid square B, 4 from grid square A and 1 from grid square C.

Clay pipe

2 finds:

2 remnants of clay tobacco pipe stems, ?modern, 1800 A.D. – present day

1 pipe stem remnant came from grid square A, 1 from grid square D. Both pieces appear fairly fresh, the stems are quite thick with a small bore and so probably date from the mid-19th century at earliest.

Charcoal

2 finds: date unknown.

1 small lump of charcoal came from grid square B, 1 from grid square D. Not dateable. Remains of a recent bonfire could be seen on the site.

Bone

1 find:

1 bone, ?radius, from grid square B. Not dateable.

Identification would require a specialist. The bone is well preserved, presumably modern remains of a small mammal.

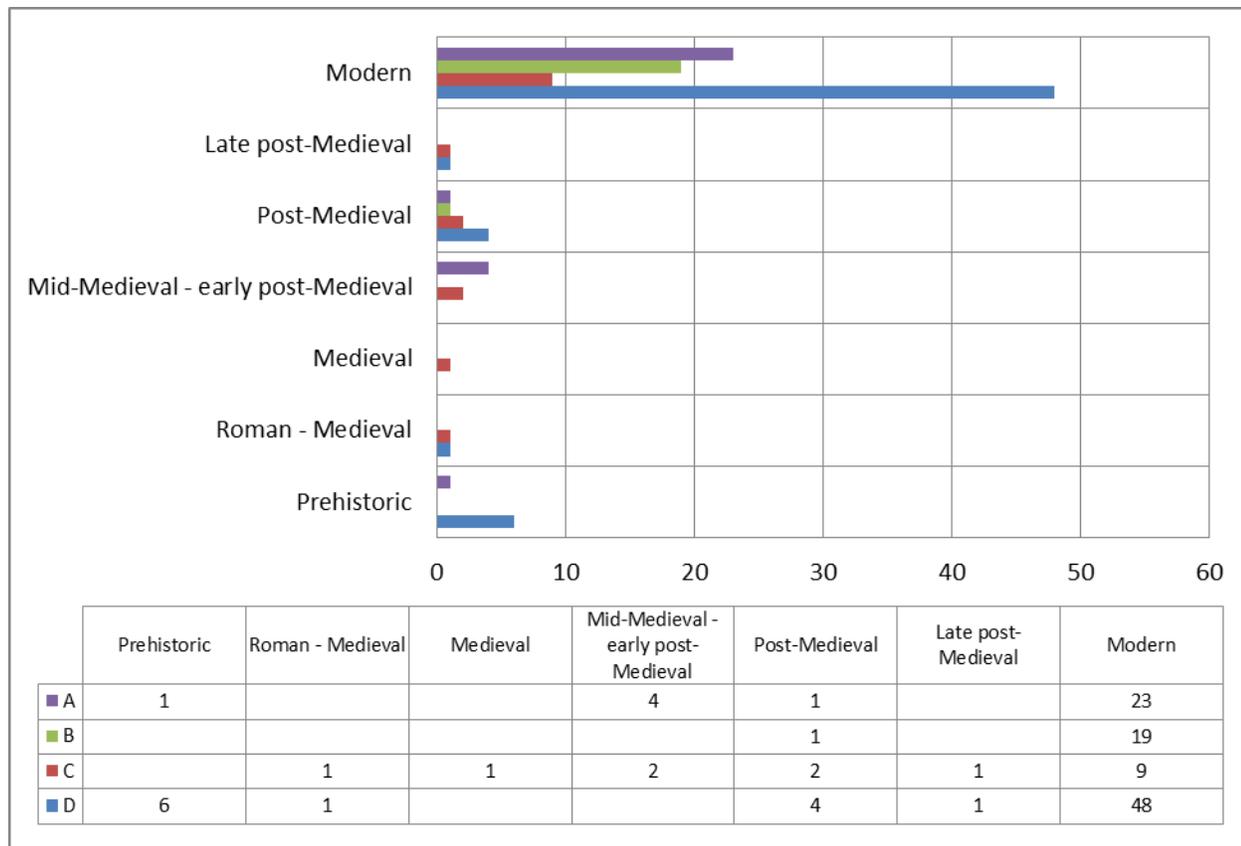
Coal

1 find:

1 small lump of coal came from grid square D. Not dateable.

Finds chronology

Figure 8: Number of finds per time period and number of finds per time period per grid square



Soil anomaly

During the fieldwalk a subtle change in the topsoil within grid square D and extending a little way into grid square C was noted. The colour of the soil there was orange hued and sandier than elsewhere. There was insufficient time on the day to survey the anomaly other than to note that that it was broadly rectangular, some 30 meters long west to east and at least 10 meters wide north to south. Its western edge was a few metres into the field (2 to 3 paces) and ran more or less parallel to the western fence.

Discussion and Conclusions

Medieval farming was much influenced by Roman texts and manuals and, as in Roman times, the Medieval method of maintaining soil fertility of arable land was to use manure. Broken pots along with other domestic waste would be added to the midden and spread on the arable lands along with the manure. This is evidenced today in the 'dark earths' of Roman sites and by the surface scatters of artefacts around Roman and Medieval sites. In modern times too domestic and human waste (aka 'night earth') would find its way to the land via manuring and refuse disposal. Finds from a fieldwalk, unless conducted over or near to an archaeological site or activity area of one kind or another, will mostly have arrived on the site as a result of manuring.

In theory it should be possible to cross-compare densities of artefacts on fieldwalked sites such that past use and intensity or longevity of use of the land might be determined or at least indicated. To date, including Clock Close, Gamarch has conducted three fieldwalking exercises, an insufficient number to enable meaningful cross-comparisons between sites and so for now discussion and interpretation of our results is on a site by site basis.

At Clock Close, a deal of variation in the numbers, distribution and of the dates of finds across the grid can be discerned. However, square C has an area approximately 1/3rd less than the other squares which are all of around 0.1 hectare in size and so the numbers of finds from square C is under-represented. To bring it into line with the tallies for other squares (or normalising it) the raw data for square C can be adjusted upwards by a third. Adjusted finds tally figures for grid square C are shown in Table 1. Adjusted weight figures for square C are shown in Table 2. The figures do not take into account the field's possible enlargement in recent times.

Table 1 Normalised tally of finds per finds category

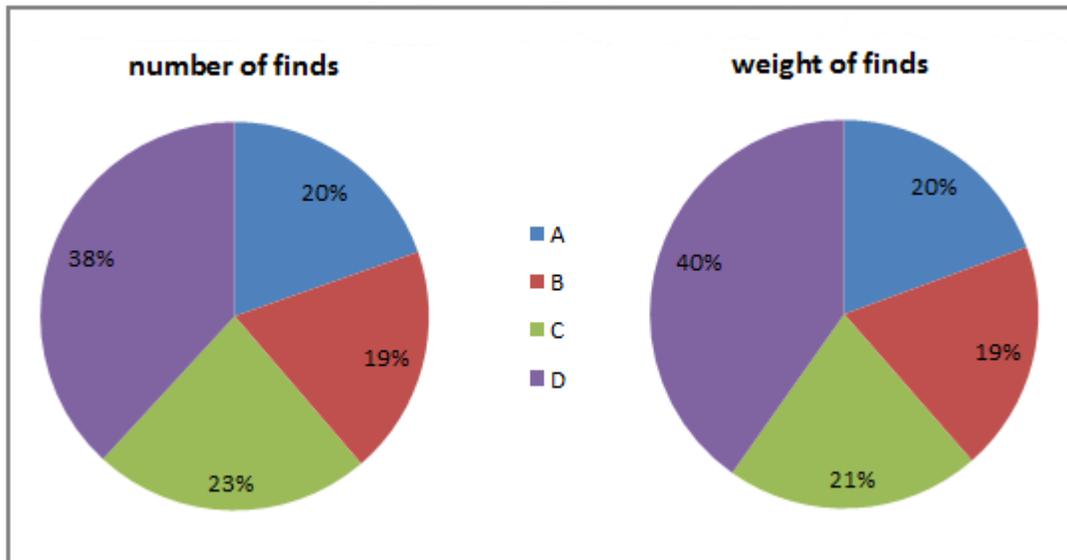
	Bone	CBM	Charcoal	Clay pipe	Coal	Flint	Glass	Metal	Pottery	Slate	total
A		8		1		1	4	1	18	2	35
B	1	12	1				9		7	4	34
C		26.60					1.33		13.30		41.23
D		10	1	1	1	6	23	2	22	2	68
total	1	56.6	2	2	1	7	37.33	3	60.3	8	178.23

Table 2 Normalised tally of weight(g) of finds per grid square

	Bone	CBM	Charcoal	Clay pipe	Coal	Flint	Glass	Metal	Pottery	Slate	total
A		189.0		2.6		38.6	19.2	66.4	90.7	11.8	418.3
B	27.4	271.2	0.6				57.1		27.8	29.3	413.4
C		339.4					3.2		114.5		457.1
D		300.4	5.5	1.0	4.8	58.8	125.7	146.7	206.7	17.5	867.1
total	27.4	1100.0	6.1	3.6	4.8	97.4	205.2	213.1	439.7	58.6	2155.9

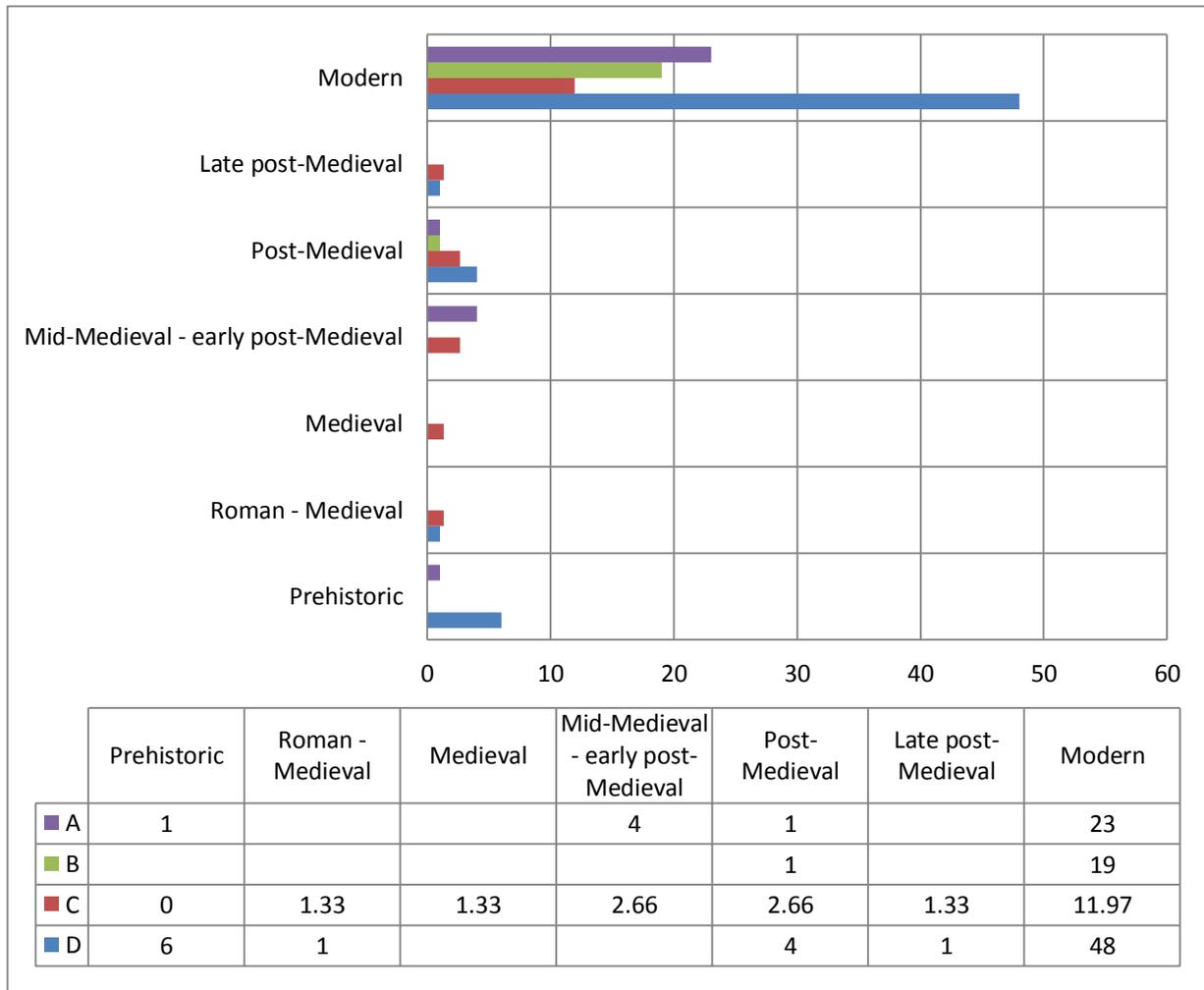
Tables 1 and 2 show that on counts of both number of finds and weight of finds, grid square D has the highest tally. Grid square proportions of the tally on both counts are very similar, a signal that neither count is skewed by, for example, one or two large bricks in the CBM tally

Figure 10: Proportion of finds per grid square



After normalising the data, the number of dated finds from square C can also be brought into line with the tallies from the other squares.

Figure 9: Normalised tally of finds per time period and normalised tally of number of finds per time period per grid square.



Clock Close can be readily identified on Langdon’s 1602 map. Unless the field sprang up overnight, the field in its 1602 form must have existed prior to Langdon’s survey but the archaeological evidence for use of Clock Close prior to 1600 is unconvincing.

The pottery finds pre-dating the Langdon survey are few and their identification/dating is uncertain. The PMR could possibly pre-date 1600 but cannot be argued to demonstrate use of the field prior to Langdon because its period of use covers the entire post-Medieval period, i.e. it was being manufactured to 1800 A.D. The only other finds that might pre-date Langdon’s survey are the mid-Medieval – early post-Medieval finds. These are all CBM and, as with the PMR, their end date of use is after 1600. Prehistoric apart, the only other pre-modern finds from the site are 18th century brick remains, so broadly dating to the late post-medieval. The pre-modern pottery and CBM is generally of

small size and weathered/eroded and is taken to have arrived as a result of manuring rather than indicating structural remains on or near to the site.

There is no finds evidence that might cast further light on the history of the field (e.g. when it was first enclosed) prior to its mapping in 1600 A.D. The pre-modern pottery and CBM finds suggest light and perhaps intermittent use of Clock Close for arable post-1600.

Modern finds from the site far outnumber all other dated materials. Most of the pottery and glass appears to be of very recent date but some modern period finds are older, a 19th century piece of tile for example, or are very highly likely to be older e.g. the clay pipe stems, a much crazed glazed pottery sherd and the willow pattern.

The worked flint is of interest and welcome in that GamArch is hoping to map its distribution locally. The identification of one of the flints is dubious but all of the other 6 worked flints came from the same grid square, square D.

The soil anomaly spanning squares D and C at the northern half of the grid is either geological in origin or anthropogenic (human made). Anthropogenic soils on farmland are usually imported. Importing soil onto agricultural land is usually undertaken to either improve the soil, a process known as marling, or to level the land in which case the land is known as made land. Imported soil might contain artefacts and this would have significant consequences for a small site and data-set such as we have at Clock Close. Pending a full survey nothing much more can be said other than that the anomaly might somehow be connected with the field's enlargement, an event which took place in modern times.

Recommendations

If any future work is conducted at this site then priority should be given to survey and sampling of the soil anomaly. Study of aerial photographs of the area should be included as a component of any survey. Even without survey, a rapid appraisal of the soil profile could be obtained via examination of the face of the steep sided ditch along the field's eastern boundary. This could show whether or not the anomaly is anthropogenic.

If any further fieldwalking is allowed a smaller sampling grid is suggested as this would better define the distributions of any finds.

A trawl of archives is highly recommended so as to ascertain past ownership or tenancy/leasing of the field. The local church itself should be able to help in this regard. Social history relating to the field should be further explored and recorded. Memories in particular should be recorded.

A good, preferably digital copy of the Langdon maps should also be a priority. The copies accessed by GamArch have been low to poor quality photocopies of portions of the map published in texts or online. Digital copies would not only assist in better understanding of Clock Close within a post-Medieval framework, an 'electronic Langdon' could form the basis upon which a landscape history project of the entire Parish could be based.

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