

Dup

**HOLYWELL COTTAGE, HARWELL, OXFORDSHIRE
SU 492889 (approx)**

RECORD OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING VISIT

SITE CODE HARC 94

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

OCTOBER 1994

INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook an archaeological monitoring visit to Holywell Cottage, Wellshead Lane, Harwell, Oxfordshire at the request of Oxfordshire County Council's Archaeology Service. They had been contacted by the cottage's owner, Mrs Nickerson, after the discovery of metal objects during groundworks for the construction of a garden shed.

BACKGROUND

Harwell is a large village towards the east end of the Vale of White Horse. The village has been part of Oxfordshire since local government reorganisation in 1974, but historically it lay in Berkshire. Harwell contains an impressive collection of medieval and post-medieval domestic buildings (see for instance Currie 1992, 136-62). The medieval/post-medieval shape of the village has largely been retained, despite infilling and slight expansion in the 19th and 20th centuries (compare, for instance, the 1st edition Victorian 1" OS map and the modern version, in Bond and Over 1988).

SITE LOCATION

The medieval church lies at the historic core of the village. Wellshead Lane extends westwards from the south end of Church Lane, and contains several medieval properties and buildings. Holywell Cottage is one of these, originally comprising a single cruck-built range extended during the later medieval period from two to three bays (Currie 1992, 162).

REASON FOR THE MONITORING VISIT

The owners wished to build a shed in their back garden. This necessitated some cutting back and levelling of the existing ground so that a concrete slab could be built for the shed to rest on. The County Archaeology Service asked to be notified of any discoveries, given the historic location of the site. Mrs Nickerson subsequently informed them that metal artefacts had been exposed during the groundworks. The site was then visited by Graham Keevill of OAU on 28 July 1994.

RESULTS

The site was rapidly examined. The excavations had only been shallow (c. 0.3 m at the time of the visit). A general area of modern rubbish dumping had been exposed. This appeared to consist of a shallow, wide scoop into the existing ground surface. Natural deposits were not revealed anywhere in the excavation. The metalwork had been laid to one side, and consisted of wrought iron window frames and window furniture, bucket hoops and handles, cans, and part of a tankard. Other pieces were noted in plan and section. Victorian and earlier 20th-century glass bottles had also been recovered. A single sherd of 19th-century red earthenware (?flowerpot) was noted. None of the finds were retained, and no further records were made. The site was not revisited.

CONCLUSION

The groundworks had not exposed any deposits or features of archaeological interest. Medieval and post-medieval finds were conspicuously absent. A Victorian/modern rubbish dump had been exposed. It is likely that the dumping occurred during a previous renovation of the cottage, as window fittings were especially notable among the metal artefacts.

REFERENCES

Bond C J and Over L 1988,

Ordnance Survey Historical Guides: Oxfordshire and Berkshire (George Philip/Ordnance Survey)

Currie C R J 1992,

Larger medieval houses in the Vale of White Horse, *Oxoniensia* **lvii**, 81-244

Graham D Keevill BA MIFA
Oxford Archaeological Unit
October 1994

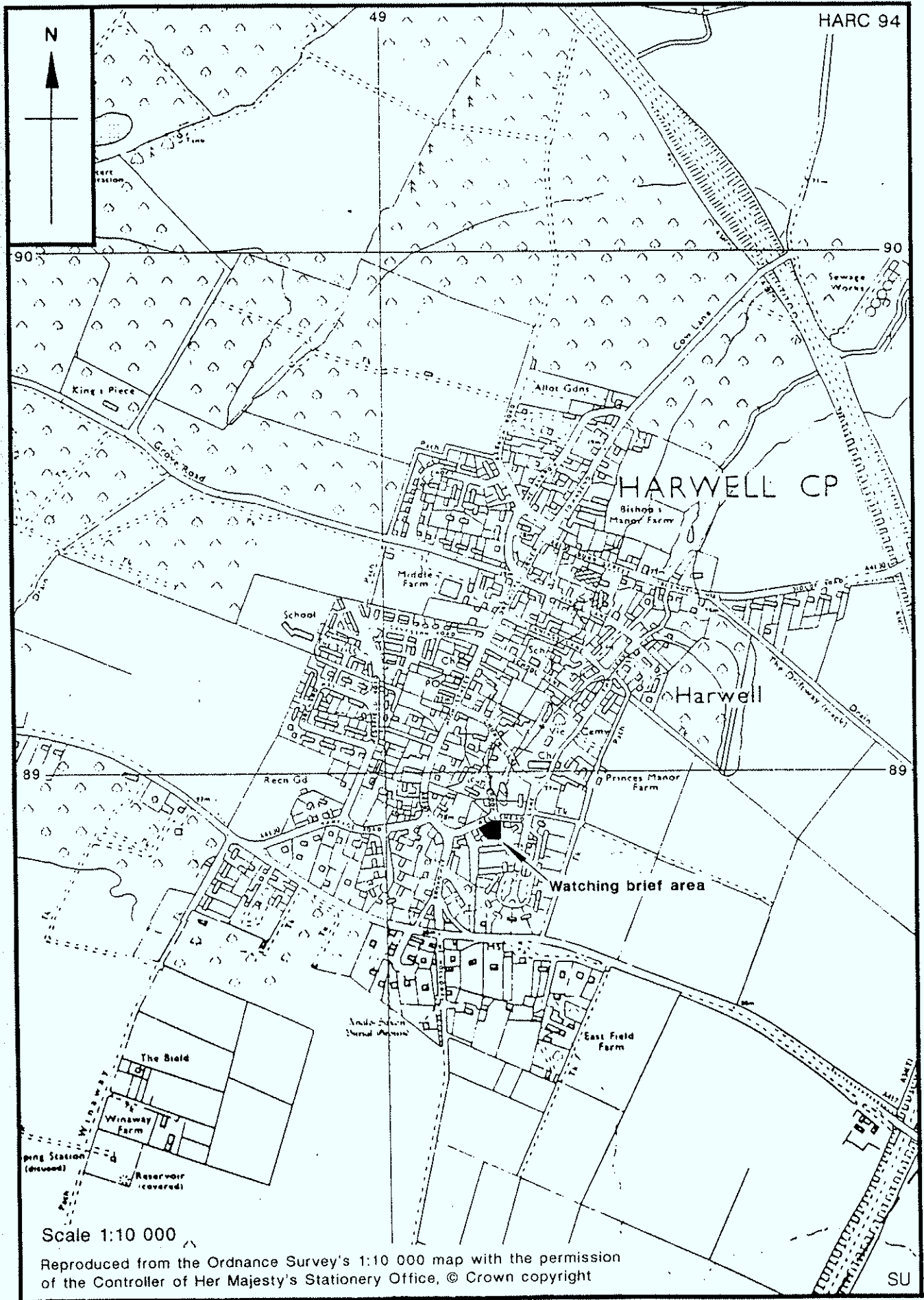


figure 1

Oxford Archaeological Unit
46 Hythe Bridge Street
Oxford OX1 2EP



Tel: 0865 243888 Fax: 0865 793496

Registered Charity No. 285627
Private Limited Company No. 1618597