

CAREW MANOR GROUP

Excavation Diary 2012

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● Background to the Excavation

The excavation is on the site of the Portioner's house in the southeast part of Beddington Park between the New Churchyard, Church Road and Croydon Road.

The Portioner was a cleric who was entitled to the tithes of the manor of Huscarls in Beddington Parish. The cleric must once have some religious duties but these had lapsed by the end of the Middle Ages and we do not know what they were or when the Portion originated. The house is first mentioned in 1361, when the then Portioner, Adam Houghton, claimed to have rebuilt it. In the 16th century the Portion was absorbed into the Carew estates and the house became the rectory of St Mary's church. The rectors continued to occupy the house until the late 18th century when there was a court case about the tithes. This resulted in the rector getting control of the Portion but he lost the house which was judged to be Carew property.

The Carew's – who lived in nearby Carew Manor – let the house to tenants until about 1843 when it was demolished.

There is evidence that the late medieval house stood on the site of the 19th century one. The house is shown on two early 19th century maps, a painting and a drawing and there is some other documentary evidence but we do not know much about it. The excavation aim is to find out more.

If you want to know more about the background to the excavation read the project design which can be downloaded from this site.

● **Sunday 12 August 2012 (Report 1 – Part 1)**

Today we set the site fence, laid out the two trenches and started taking the turf off the biggest one.

● **Monday 13 August 2012 (Report 1 – Part 2)**

Today we completed the turf removal from the big trench and started removing the top soil. We have found the tops of two walls one of which looks 18th or early 19th century and another of more uncertain date. We are not yet certain how these relate to the house.

Work continues tomorrow.

● **Tuesday 14 August 2012 (Report 2)**

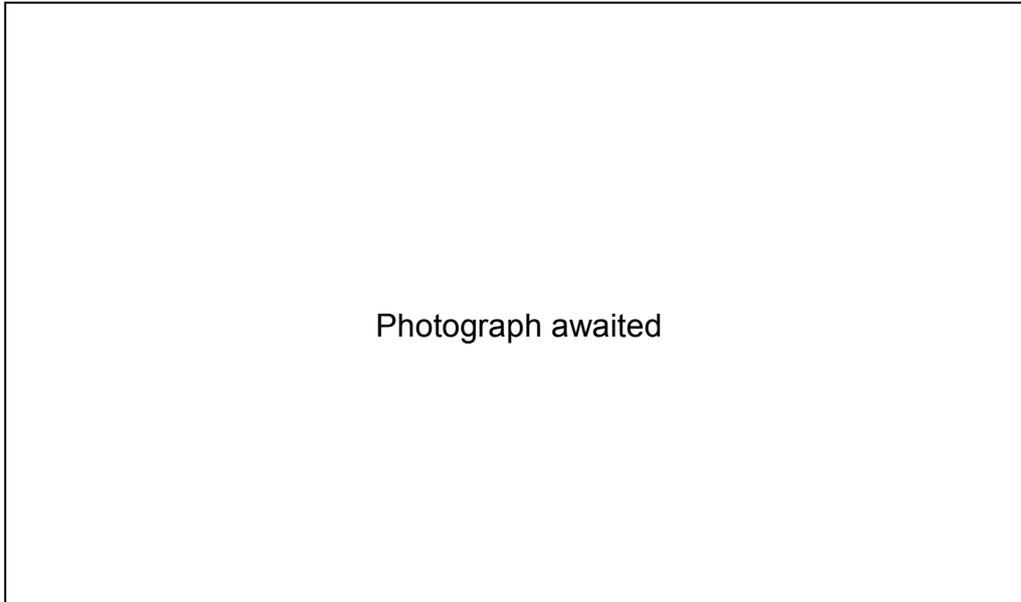
There has been steady progress today. We have nearly cleared the top soil and appear to have several layers of demolition in front of us. The top of several foundations are gradually emerging one of which is probably the north wall of the house.

We have found part of a tin glazed tile probably dating from the 16th or early 17th century. The design on it is unusual although similar tiles have been found in the former garden of Carew Manor.

Work will continue tomorrow if the weather permits.



The excavation in progress.



Tin glazed tile of 16th or early 17th century date.

● **Thursday 16 August 2012 (Report 3)**

Another day of steady progress. We have uncovered more foundations but they still don't seem to make a lot of sense. We will be looking at some of them in detail over the next few days and hopefully things will become clearer.

We found another piece of the spotty tin glazed tile (see report 2). This is rather surprising as the tiles would have been expensive when new. The sort of thing that would be found in a major country house like Carew Manor but not in the relatively modest Portioner's house. When the first piece was found I thought it just a stray item which had, perhaps, come from Carew manor in a the top soil used to cover the site after the house was demolished. The new find was firmly in the demolition rubble so this is less likely. Maybe the tiles were reused in the Portioner's house. In the past materials tended to be expensive and labour cheap so the reuse of materials was common.

Work continues tomorrow.

● **Friday 17 August 2012 (Report 4)**

Another day of steady progress uncovering the foundations. We have found a large area of mortar which was clearly the foundation for a tile floor. A couple of tiles are still in place – plain red ones not the tin glazed ones.

Another area seems to be developing into the fill of a cellar.

We have found another piece of the spotty tin glazed tile.

Work continues.

● **Saturday 18 August 2012 (Report 5)**

The site is gradually becoming more understandable as the excavation progresses. The south east corner of the trench seems to cover part of a cellar which we are gradually emptying. The walls are mostly stone although there is some brick. There is the site of steps which were been blocked off as part of some alteration to the house. We may have the site of the replacement steps but this is not yet clear.

I think the cellars are likely to be a 17th century addition to the house but this is still uncertain.

We have also found several mortar floors which were once covered with tiles. A couple of red floor tiles are still in place.

A second smaller trench has uncovered the gravel surface of yard. This was very well made with a thick layer of gravel and a chalk foundation under that. It looks like it was built for a tank but can never have had more than a horse and cart on it. We found a filled trench cutting through it. When we emptied the it we found a small brick drain. The trench had been dug to expose this, the drain roof had been removed and the trench filled. This seems a rather odd thing to do but the archaeological evidence for it was fairly clear.

Work will continue for a few more days although we are now doing less new digging and more recording.

● **Sunday 19 August 2012 (Report 6)**

Progress seems to have been rather slow today. We actually did a lot of work but there was not much in the way of new discoveries.

We have nearly completed the excavation the ground floor and have continued to empty the cellar but have not yet reached the bottom.

The recording of the small trench was completed and it has now been backfilled.

The site plan was completed and we also measured a lot of bricks which will help with the dating when the statistics have been processed.

Work will continue tomorrow activity is gradually shifting from excavation to recording.

● **Monday 20 August 2012 (Report 7)**

We have excavated a lot more material from the cellars and in one are we have reached the bottom of the walls without finding a floor. This must have been robbed out when the house was demolished. We also finished clearing an area of cobbled floor and carried out a small investigation of the foundations of the back wall of the house.

Excavation has now stopped. If we excavate more there would undoubtedly be further finds but we have done enough to achieve our objectives and it is now time to finish the recording and to think about what we have found.

The recording will take one or two more days and may produce more discoveries as we look at the structures in detail. After that it will be backfilling time.

● **Tuesday 21 August 2012 (Report 8)**

We have carried out a small amount of excavation to help resolve some queries but this has not changed the overall picture. We have finished the recording of the cellar and have started backfilling.

We hope to finish the recording of the rest of the trench tomorrow and backfilling will be resumed.

● **Wednesday 22 August 2012 (Report 9)**

We won't be working Thursday to Monday and will resume backfilling on Tuesday.

After yesterday's recording I feel a lot clearer about the interpretation of the site. I think the cellar walls are all one date apart from the brick infill and repairs. I think the bricks may be telling us that the cellar is the same date as the north wall of the house but this wants checking.

The date may be early 18th century but less certain of this.

The brick sizes and mortar provided a way of checking this which I look at today.

We finished the recording today so the excavation is complete apart from backfilling which is in progress and will continue next week. This is, therefore the last of the daily reports. I will however, be posting a preliminary summary of the results in the next couple of weeks so watch out for this.

E N D