

MANOR FARM, RUISLIP

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY OF THE OLD ROAD SURFACE

by Colin Bowlt

The main entrance to Ruislip Manor Farm is shown on the oldest map of Ruislip, that drawn by John Doharty in 1750 (see *Journal* front cover). It shows what appears to be a double gate at the entrance from the end of the High Street. No formal road past the pond is indicated (note the small pool on the right-hand side). Past the rick yard (what is now the bowling green) adjacent to the Little Barn (now the library) there is a five barred gate into the area which was later occupied by the Cow Byre and granary with the entrance across the moat leading to the Manor Farm House. The northern section of the moat was filled in 1888.

Most roads in early times appear to have been unmade. Manor Farm, however, was the most important site in Ruislip, apart from the church, and if any Ruislip roads were made-up one might expect it here (**Fig. 1**). In 2004 the Hillingdon Borough Council erected new lamp standards along the edge of the pavement beside the entrance road, as well as an additional three lamps on the north side of the 'stable block' and Guide Hut. Since part of the Manor Farm site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the work seemed to have archaeological implications I was commissioned, at short notice, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the work.

The only significant observation was the occurrence of rounded pebbles (cobbles) along the whole length of the Manor Farm road, from the Ruislip High Street to the gated entrance to the old farmhouse by the moat. Their occurrence is highly suggestive that they were from the old road/track into Manor Farm, and which may be still in situ beneath the modern tarmac road. Pieces of old brick, tile, chalk and flint were also found and were clearly remnants from former buildings. No dating evidence was found but the lack of any surface showing on the Doharty map may not be of significance in this respect.

July 2008: the roadway has been altered as part of the Lottery-funded work. The tarmac is now covered with gravel.

Museum of London site code: MFA04



Fig. 1 - View (1988) from St Martin's Church tower showing entrance and road into Manor Farm