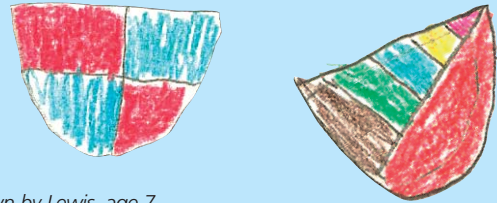


# The Moatfield Medieval and Tudor Days



Shield drawings drawn by Lewis, age 7

In the summer of 2004 and 2005 the Moatfield was transported back in time and over 300 local school children got to experience the Medieval and Tudor way of life. Children were able to play Medieval instruments and learn Tudor dances. A tiler worked with the children to create tiles using traditional methods, and images of the tiles were displayed at Bushey Library.

An apothecary (medicine man) handed out potions for all sorts of ailments and there were opportunities to dress up as knights and soldiers. The drawings in this leaflet are from the children at Hartsbourne School.



Tile displays created by local schools



## How to get there

### On foot:

The recreation ground is easily accessible on foot from Bournehall Lane, Bournehall Avenue and Moatfield Road. It is approximately 10 minutes walk from the Bushey Museum and Art Gallery and approximately 20 minutes walk from Bushey Library.

### By car:

There is a small car park next to the football club house accessed from Bournehall Lane.

### Public transport:

Buses W7 and W9 run between Watford, Bushey and Borehamwood. The nearest W7 bus stop to the Moatfield is in the High Street and the nearest W9 bus stop is in Bournehall Avenue.

Train - Bushey main line station (on the Silverlink Train service which operates in and out of London Euston) is approx 1 kilometre from the Moatfield. Both the W7 and W9 buses stop at the station.



# The Moatfield Recreation Ground, Bushey

## Its history and conservation



Featuring a fold out map - see back pages



©iStockphoto.com/Isilly Wallis - Flag Iris

# Introduction

## History

You may not believe it but the Moatfield is an historic site that dates from medieval times.

The recreation ground was once the site of a medieval manor house called Bournehall which was completely surrounded by a large moat. Although the house is no longer there, the name is remembered in the name of local streets such as Bournehall Lane, Bourne Road, Moatfield Road and the adjacent Bournehall School.

Bournehall is the modern spelling of the more ancient variants Bournhall, Bourn Hall and Burnhalle. A bourne (or burn) is an ancient word for stream, therefore, the name suggests a manor house (hall) near a stream. Indeed, the moat was once fed by a stream along the area where Moatfield Road is today but this was diverted under the road in the late 20th century.

The manor of Bournehall included some cottages at Clay Hill, which were linked by a direct lane to the manor house by Catsey Lane, part of which near the higher end of King George Recreation Ground still remains as a green lane. Catsey Lane was not such a steep descent for horses and carts as Clay Hill.

Today, the area around the Moatfield is surrounded by houses but up until the 1930s this area was all fields and Bushey was much smaller than today.

The site is 160 x 230 metres and now just has a moat on two sides. It has been identified as an Area of Archaeological Significance because of its size and good preservation.



# Further information

We hope you enjoy your visit to the Moatfield. If you require further historical information on Bushey please visit the Bushey Museum and Art Gallery in Rudolph Road (open Thurs-Sun, 11am-4pm).

This leaflet was produced thanks to research by Joanna Mansi, Grant Longman and the Museum of London Archaeology Section. Full reports of all the archaeology surveys can be found at the Bushey Museum and Art Gallery.

The project has been funded by the Local Heritage Initiative with additional support from the Countryside Management Service, Watling Chase Community Forest, the Bushey Museum and Art Gallery and the Archaeology Unit at Hertfordshire County Council.

For further information please contact  
**Parks and Amenities on Freephone: 0800 731 1810**  
**or by email: parks@hertsmere.gov.uk**  
**Website: www.hertsmere.gov.uk**



# The Moatfield Recreation Ground, Bushey

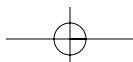
**Fold this map out to use as a guide when reading this leaflet**

**This instrument (left) is used to drill up to 3 metres into the ground. When removed the lower part contains a plug of soil. This soil contains layers which show a continuous timeline from the bottom of the plug to the top. Careful examination can reveal much about how people lived in times gone by. Each layer shows a period of time**

**Finds from the 2005 archaeological dig**

**Shoe (Oxford Brogue) Dates from 1870 -1920s**

**Archaeologist, Jo Mansi, talking to students from Bournehall School at the 2005 archaeological dig**



## Plants



### Iris

The Greek name iris means rainbow. It is one of the oldest cultivated plants with its use dating back to Egyptian times. The roots were powdered and used for scent. The petals were used as a dye and ink.

©iStockphoto.com/Tatiana Lebedeva - Iris



### Pinks (*Dianthus*)

The sweet scent of the pink has made it popular for cooking and perfume for over a thousand years.

©iStockphoto.com/Vasko Miokovic - Pink



### Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*)

From the Middle Ages the flowers have formed a traditional part of a bride's bouquet and they are associated with purity. All parts of the plant are poisonous and should not be eaten.

©iStockphoto.com/Olga Drozdova - Lily of the Valley



### Box (*Buxus sempervirens*)

Box is a popular plant for a small formal hedge, often seen in knot gardens and it is also used for topiary. It has traditionally been used for musical and navigational instruments.

©iStockphoto.com/Vera Bogaerts - Box



### Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Many myths surround the holly. There is a superstitious belief that it is unlucky to cut a holly down as it has always been seen as a tree that would ward off evil. Nowadays we still use holly leaves and berries for Christmas decorations and the wood for carving, sculpture and walking sticks.

Other plants included here are paeony, ferns and columbines.

SOURCE: McVicar, J (1994) *Jekka's Complete Herb Book*  
London: Kyle Cathie Ltd

**PLEASE NOTE: Do not eat any of these plants.**

**This is a self-guided walk. The red numbers in the leaflet are shown on the fold-out map at the back**

## The manor house and owners 1

Bournehall is first mentioned in 1231 when 'a hide of land in Bushey' was transferred from John de Martham to Ralph, son of Bernard.

The manor of Bournehall was about 240 acres of which the moated site round the manor house was 13 acres and the pigeon house fields about 4 acres. The total land in exclusive use of the lord of the manor was 120 acres. The remainder of the manor, including common fields and cottages was about 126 acres in various other parts of Bushey.

Bournehall was one of three manor houses in the Bushey area during the 13th century. Bushey Manor was by far the oldest manor and its manor court had more rights and duties than Bournehall and Hartsbourne. These two were created sometime around the 13th century.

Bournehall Manor, which included the house and its lands, was owned by a lord who was given special rights by the Crown in return for providing services such as men for the army, or food and goods, and paying tax. The lord had many people living on his land who were bound to him and worked the land in return for protection and a place to live. The lord was very powerful and people who worked and lived on his manor could not leave or marry without his permission. The grounds would have housed smaller outbuildings where these people lived.

A lord often owned more than one manor and such was the case with many of the owners of Bournehall who may not have lived there all year round.

Bournehall was associated with some powerful or notorious owners including knights and in later centuries persecuted Roman Catholics.



A medieval apothecary (medicine man) drawn by Luke, age 8

One infamous owner was Alice Perrers the notorious mistress of King Edward III. She was very unpopular and when Edward died the new King, Richard II, took away all her estates in 1377. A list of all her property was made and it mentions that Bournehall had a moat and a "well constructed" house.

In 1554 William de West tried to poison his uncle who owned the Moatfield at that time, so that he could inherit everything. He failed and the case went to Parliament where his uncle disowned his nephew.



From 1231 to 1635 there is very little information about the house except for names of the lords who owned the manor. But 16th century court rolls of Bushey Manor and other legal documents provide glimpses of life at Bournehall such as someone paying a fine for illegally brewing ale, a dispute over cattle and common assaults.



In 1428 it is recorded that Simon Wanlock was prosecuted at Bushey Manor court for pushing John Lything off the bridge and into the moat at Bournhall during the feast of St Botolph (17th June). Fortunately Mr Lything survived.

The physical descriptions of the house are limited. It was described in a 1635 property document as having eight rooms and a cellar while hearth tax records of 1662 record a house with six fireplaces. This is all we know about the house. Property documents also tell us that there were outbuildings, barns, stables, orchards, a garden, a fish pond and a pigeon house and by 1715 the manor amounted to only 17 acres.

The house was eventually demolished in the 18th century and the land became pasture. There is no record of why it was demolished. The last known occupier was Walter Bagnall. In about 1770 Bushey Parish Church, St James', then had a wooden gallery allocated to the Bournehall household. Sadly it no longer exists but it is shown in some watercolours from the early 19th century.

John Lything falling of the bridge in 1428.

Drawing by Leo, age 7



**Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Rosemary is steeped in myth and magic. Rosemary has many uses, especially in cooking but also the oil can be used for bathing, for poor circulation, as an insect repellent and for headaches.



**Hyssop** (*Hyssopus officinalis*)

Hyssop can be used in tea for coughs and chest complaints. Externally it can be used for bruises and burns. Hyssop can also be added to flavour dishes - it has a slightly bitter, minty taste.



**Thyme** (*Thymus vulgaris*)

An ancient herb used for its scent in baths and as incense, as well as to flavour savoury dishes.

©iStockphoto.com/Anna Milkova - Thyme



**Wormwood** (*Artemesia absinthium*)

Wormwood was hung by the door to ward off evil spirits. It is used in liqueurs and herb wines.

©iStockphoto.com/Nicola Stratford - Wormwood

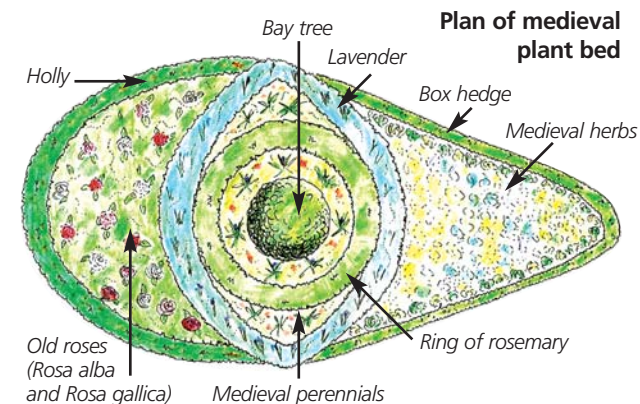


**Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*)

For centuries, sage has been known for its healing powers. The name Salvia means I save or heal. It can be used in tea for sore throats and tonsillitis. It is used widely in perfumes and soaps and to flavour liqueurs.

©iStockphoto.com/Greg Nicholas - Sage

**PLEASE NOTE: Do not eat any of these plants.**



## Herbs

The majority of the herbs you see here originate from the Mediterranean and were introduced to Britain during Roman times.



### Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*)

In medieval times, chamomile was used as a lawn or 'turf seat'. Walking or sitting on it releases a pleasant fragrance. It can also be used in tea for calming and improving the appetite.

©iStockphoto.com/Maria Bibikova - Chamomile



### Bay (*Laurus nobilis*)

Bay is an ancient plant and was much respected in Roman times. It was thought to protect against disease and witchcraft. Today it is used for flavouring soups and stews.

©iStockphoto.com/Daniel Tero - Bay



### Lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*)

The name comes from the word 'lava' to wash. Lavender has been used for centuries in bathing and for its fragrance in nosegays. It is also used for its soothing and calming qualities.



### Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

Fennel is widely used in cooking. Used in tea it can help digestion and prevent heartburn. Roman warriors took fennel to keep in good health.

©iStockphoto.com/Hazel Proudlove - Fennel



### Heartsease (*Viola tricolor*)

An infusion of the flowers has long been prescribed for a broken heart. It is also used to treat rheumatism.

©iStockphoto.com/Sondra Paulson - Heartsease



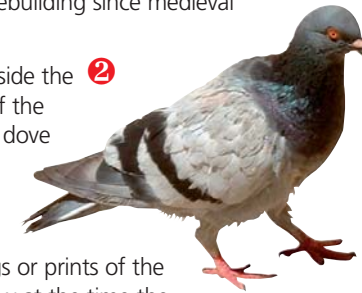
### Oregano or Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*)

This herb's name is Greek meaning 'joy of the mountain'. It was used by Romans for bath scent and massage oil. Marjoram tea eases heavy colds and can help settle upset stomachs.

**PLEASE NOTE: Do not eat any of these plants.**

The outline of the old house is shown on old maps as located in the north-west half of the field and in dry summers the shadow of E-shaped foundations has been visible in the middle of the field on an aerial photograph. If you look closely at the ground of Moatfield, especially near the Scout Hut, you will notice that it is uneven with humps and bumps in the grass. The house is suspected to have stood there. We do not know if the manor house demolished in the 18th century was the original house or whether there had been rebuilding since medieval times.

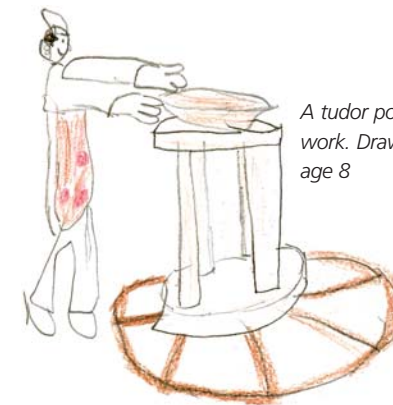
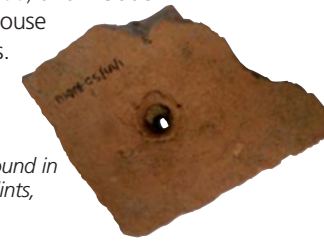
Bournehall School lies outside the moated area on the site of the manorial pigeon house or dove cote. Pigeons were a popular source of food in medieval times.



Unfortunately, no paintings or prints of the house survive. We do know at the time the house was demolished it had a tiled roof and that parts of it were made from brick. Many Hertfordshire manor houses are depicted in engravings by Drapentier in Chauncy's County History (dated 1700) and include some of Bushey manor house and its local surroundings.

*Peg roof tile*

*These were used from 1480 onwards. They have been found in great quantities with large flints, chalk and Tudor bricks.*



*A tudor potter hard at work. Drawn by Adam, age 8*

### The moat

3

The first mention of the moat is in 1378 but it was probably created in about 1230. It was a rectangular moat with a bridge across at one place. Unfortunately, half the moat has been silted up or filled in over the last hundred years or so.

There are over 200 moats in Hertfordshire. Moatfield is one of the largest and best preserved because it has no houses built on it and has not been damaged by ploughing. Moatfield is large in comparison with other moated manorial sites in the region. Most of the sites associated with homesteads have an average size of 75 x 75 metres whereas the Moatfield is 160 x 230 metres.



Moorhen

Most moats were built around large important houses, at first to protect against wild animals and thieves and also to keep farm animals from wandering, but later they



Frog

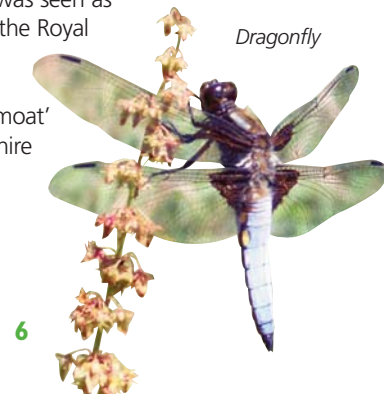
showed how rich the owner was. It would take a lot of work to dig out a moat as large as Moatfield. A moat would provide access to a ready supply of water and would act as a home for fish and duck which would provide fresh food for the owner. A moat also provided water to extinguish fires.

The function of the moat is likely to have changed over time as moated sites built in South-East England from the late medieval period to the mid-17th century became more of a status symbol than purely for defensive purposes.

### Recent history

The Moatfield has been a meadow from the late 18th century and a recreation ground from the 1930s when the surrounding area was developed for residential properties. It was also used as a local dump in the 1950s.

As early as 1910 Moatfield was seen as historically important when the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments in England labelled it as a 'homestead moat' in an inventory of Hertfordshire Monuments.



Dragonfly

6

### The medieval planting bed

6

The medieval manor was self-sufficient. The dovecotes, orchards and fishponds would provide food for the table all year round. The garden was a place to view beauty but also served as the supermarket, chemist and hardware shop with plants grown for eating, to treat ailments and for dyes.

#### There were three types of gardens in medieval times:

- The **Herber** was a small walled garden for quiet contemplation. It would contain flowering borders and turf seats of grass or chamomile.
- **Productive gardens** would have raised beds for vegetables and beehives for honey.
- Bournehall also had an **Orchard**. The orchard trees would be in formal rows of apples, pears, mulberries, walnut, chestnut, cherries and plums. Orchards also provided shady walks, a place to graze livestock such as sheep and places for archery.

Large estates also had **Parks**, places of woodland and open glades which provided a hunting ground for deer and boar.

The Moatfield planting bed gives an idea of the plants used in gardens in the medieval period. We know from looking at medieval paintings and tapestries that gardens would have contained roses, herbaceous plants, herbs, holly and box. This is not a true replica as plants at that time would have been widely spaced apart and planted individually. The bed was planted by the Friends of the Moatfield in November 2006.

There would have been very few varieties of **roses** in Medieval times, just the alba and gallica species. This bed includes *Rosa gallica mundii* and two modern varieties (*Rosa 'The Herbalist'* and *Rosa 'Glamis Castle'*) bred to resemble the old roses.



*O Rose, this painted rose  
Is not the whole.  
Who paints the flower  
Paints not its fragrant soul.*  
(Carmina Burana, 13th Century)

11

## The Friends of the Moatfield

The Friends of the Moatfield formed in 2003 because local people felt that the Moatfield was a valuable asset for young and old, providing sporting and leisure facilities as well as wildlife and historical interest. The group's aims include establishing and conserving wildlife habitats and educating the public in the wildlife and history of the site.



If you are interested in joining the Friends please contact the Hertsmere Borough Council's Parks department and your details will be passed on to the group.



## Archaeology

Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (HAT) carried out two very small investigations in 1991 and 1998 due to the creation of the play area and a goal mouth in the north and east of the field, but the results only showed evidence of modern activity on the Moatfield.

With funding from the Local Heritage Initiative in 2004 it was possible to carry out archaeological investigations to discover more about the house and moat. These included research into the county and local history archives and looking at old maps.

In 2004 a geophysical survey was conducted looking for building material underneath the ground. The survey was undertaken by students from the University of London. The area identified on the map was chosen as the most likely to retain archaeological features based on evidence from old maps. The south of the field, including the main football pitch by the clubhouse, was considered unlikely because it had been significantly levelled.

Maps and survey notes from 1799 to 1914 show a rectangular hollow associated with the demolished manor house in the north-west of the field near the scout hut. Brick and stone foundations were discovered here. E-shaped foundations may also be visible on a 1948 RAF aerial photograph located in the middle of the field.



A machine called a resistivity meter was used to scan the ground to look for clues of the old buildings. The machine works by sending electric currents into the ground. Readings can tell whether there is a wall or ditch underground based on the resistance to the electrical current.

The most noticeable feature is the huge circle in the middle of the field near the main footpath. This does not show up on any maps but traces of it can be seen on aerial photographs. A small excavation was carried out which revealed gravel and bricks which could suggest an old driveway or garden feature. The date is unknown.

*Remains of flint wall*



Can we see traces of the old house? It is hard to tell but the uneven ground in the north-west of the field may be a clue. Because the field has not been developed or built on, traces of old paths or walls from the manor house or outbuildings could survive under the surface. During very hot summers dry marks in the grass hint at foundations below.

The results from this resistivity survey helped to inform an archaeological dig in 2005 on the field. The survey had indicated a possible corner of the house or an outbuilding and three evaluation trenches measuring 2 x 1 metres were dug out by hand at this location. The dig discovered interesting finds such as medieval tiles and bricks and building material from when the house was demolished. There were also pieces of medieval pottery and an 19th or early 20th century shoe. Unfortunately, the exact location of the house foundations could not be determined because of the size of the small trenches, **5** but evidence of a small wall was found in association with pottery dating from 1170 - 1350.

Samples were taken in the moat to date the layers of soil and changes in the moat's profile in autumn 2005. The survey revealed that the moat was approximately 3 metres deeper than it is today. It is shallower now due to natural build up of leaves falling into the water and erosion of the moat banks. This erosion has also caused the moat to be wider than in the past. The upper materials were found to contain fragments of late post-medieval or modern brick and glass.

As part of the funding for the Moatfield, two school events were held in 2004 and 2005 with local schools. Children were able to experience the Medieval and Tudor way of life such as music and dance. They could also see and learn about armour, medicine and pottery and learn more about the archaeological investigations.

## Conservation

The moat retained water for a significant period along the south-east arm but the area had become overgrown by willow which cast heavy shade onto the moat and adjacent properties. It was decided in 2005 to improve this area for wildlife.



*Excavating the moat*

It was not possible to remove all the trees due to the archaeological constraints. Instead, the willows were 'coppiced' (cut back) which is a traditional management technique. The coppiced 'stools' create islands and form nesting sites for waterfowl.

The moat was dredged and made deeper in autumn 2005 so that water would remain in the moat all year round. This was carried out under the supervision of an archaeologist. It soon filled up with rain water over the winter and is now a haven for wildlife such as ducks, moorhens, frogs, dragonflies and damselflies. Aquatic plants such as flag iris and water starwort have naturally regenerated in the moat.

The Countryside Management Service and the Friends of the Moatfield regularly have workdays to enhance the recreation ground for wildlife and for the enjoyment of the public.

Their work includes planting native trees and hedges, removing scrub and improving footpaths. A map of the Greenspace Action Plan is on display in the Friends' noticeboard attached to the football clubhouse which shows the management proposals for the Moatfield.