

Medieval Settlement Research Group



**Annual
Report
1
1986**

**Medieval
Settlement
Research Group**

Annual Report 1 1986

incorporating

**The Medieval Village Research Group
Thirty-fourth Annual Report 1986**

and

**The Moated Sites Research Group
Fourteenth Annual Report 1987**

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EDITORIAL

On the 20th November 1986, the Medieval Village Research Group and the Moated Sites Research Group ceased to exist as separate bodies, amalgamating on the same day to form the Medieval Settlement Research Group.

As can be seen from the title page, this first Annual Report of the Medieval Settlement Research Group incorporates the two final reports of the MVRG and the MSRG, thus stressing, as it were, the continuity between the old and the new. This continuity is further emphasised by the inclusion in the Report of the retrospective and prospective papers given by leading members of each Group at the first Medieval Settlement Research Group Conference at Leicester in March. To some extent this has made the present Report rather a bumper volume, but it was felt a most appropriate way

of marking something as auspicious as the merging of the Groups.

The Editor is indebted to a number of people who have helped in the production of this volume. Edward Oliver of the Department of Geography, City of London Polytechnic, has carried out the phototypesetting and, aided by Nicholas Hall, the standardisation of the illustrations, and thanks are due to Professor Gwyn Meirion-Jones, previously Editor of the MVRG Annual Report, for continuing to make available the services of his department.

Mrs Betty Ewins has, as ever, acted as intermediary between the Editor and contributors, making the collection of material much easier than it would otherwise have been.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

At a series of meetings held at Birkbeck College, University of London, on November 20 1986 the two groups for research into moated sites and villages dissolved themselves and formed the new Medieval Settlement Research Group. The inaugural meeting of the Group was attended by thirty people who reflected the many disciplines and professions which have contributed to settlement studies. A new constitution was adopted (see p. 5), and officers and committee were elected. The meeting was purposeful and optimistic in tone, with a general desire being expressed to build on the achievements of the two previous groups and to make new advances in the subject. This spirit continued in the meetings of the committee that followed in the new year.

One concern has been to tie up the loose ends of the former groups, the main problem being the future of the large and complex archive of information built up by the village group. This fills many filing cabinets in Fortress House, and is a potentially important research tool if the information is easily accessible. For this reason a full-time worker has been appointed by the National Monuments Record for a year to put the archive in order and to computerise its contents (see p. 14).

The committee has also been tackling smaller, but still important problems involved in the transition from the two separate groups to their single successor, such as the storage of back numbers of publications.

The Group has three specialist working parties. The busiest is the Excavation Working Party, which has the task of looking at the applications to the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for excavation funding which are of direct interest to the Group. The Working Party has also been given the objective of

formulating an excavation policy for the Group: should excavation be spread over a large number of sites, or concentrated on a few, perhaps even one or two, major projects? The two other working parties are addressing themselves to the problems of preservation and presentation of sites. After the large-scale destruction of rural settlement sites in recent years, the preservation of those that remain must be an urgent concern of the Group, and discussions are being held with those concerned with a new Monument Protection Programme in English Heritage. Presentation is still in its early stages, but there is a possibility of a future programme of excavation and reconstruction on a deserted village site, in which the public will be able to see houses rebuilt and functioning in medieval style, while the evidence is being recovered elsewhere on the same site.

The Group is sponsoring a series of seminars and conferences, the first of which was at Leicester in March 1987, which looked back to the advance in knowledge of the last 40 years, and forward to future discoveries. The AGM in London (Birkbeck College, Dept. of Geography) on 4 December will be accompanied by a seminar on large research projects on rural settlement, and a conference to be organized by Bristol Extra-Mural Dept. on 25-27 March 1988 will have as its theme 'Dispersed Settlement'.

The committee is concerned to maintain and increase the membership of the Group. It is only by maintaining a large membership and a reasonable income from subscriptions that the work of the Group can be effective, and existing members are urged to persuade interested friends, acquaintances, colleagues and students to join the Group.

Christopher Dyer

MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH GROUP

Constitution

1. The Society shall be called the Medieval Settlement Research Group.
 2. The purpose of the Group will be the advancement of public education by promoting interdisciplinary involvement in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data relating to the history, geography and archaeology of medieval rural settlement by:
 - a) fostering interest in research and field work,
 - b) publishing from time to time the findings of the Group or any other material aiding the attainment of these objectives,
 - c) holding conferences, seminars and field meetings, and
 - d) offering advice to other bodies, organisations and individuals involved in the research into, and the conservation of, medieval rural settlement.
 3. Membership of the Group shall be by subscription, the amount of which, payable on 1st February annually, may be varied by resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting. On failure to pay their subscriptions, members will be expelled by decision of the committee after two calendar years have elapsed following the date on which the subscription fell due and after a written warning has been sent to this effect. Members whose subscriptions are in arrears shall not receive the Group's publications.
 4. The Committee shall have the power to fix the amount of any fees that it may be desirable for members or guests to be charged for attendance at conferences or other functions of the Group.
 5. The affairs of the Group will be managed by a Committee consisting of the officers and nine ordinary members. Ordinary committee members shall hold office for a term of three years and may not be re-elected until after a year has elapsed since their previous term of office. The Committee shall have the power to co-opt as it deems necessary.
 6. The officers of the Group shall be the President, Honorary Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Editor, Treasurer and any such other officers as the Annual General Meeting may from time to time deem necessary. The President shall be re-elected annually and may hold office consecutively for not more than three years. Honorary Vice-Presidents shall be up to four in number and shall be non-voting. Other officers shall be re-elected annually. At least 21 days notice shall be given to members of the Group of such vacancies as will be occurring on the committee at the time of the election. All nominations for election to the Committee shall be received in writing by the Secretary together with the names of the proposer and seconder, and must have the prior consent of the nominee.
 7. Decisions of the Committee shall be by simple majority, the chairman holding the casting vote.
 8. An Annual General Meeting shall take place at which elections shall be held, accounts approved, the auditor approved and other business transacted. Notice of every Annual General Meeting shall be circulated to all members at least 21 days before the date of the meeting. Accidental failure to receive notice of a meeting shall not be deemed to have invalidated that meeting.
 9. The subscription and all other property acquired for the purposes of the Group shall be deemed to be vested in the Officers of the Group as trustees for the members. The Accounts of the Group shall be circulated to members annually and will be audited by the auditor approved at the Annual General Meeting.
 10. Institutional members may nominate a representative to attend the Annual General Meeting or any other meeting organised by the Group, such representatives enjoying the same privileges as individual members.
 11. Any proposal for the amendment of the Constitution of the Group must be submitted to the Annual General Meeting. The text of the proposed amendment shall be circulated to the members with the notice convening the meeting. An amendment shall be regarded as adopted if a simple majority of the members present at the meeting vote in favour of it. The text of any proposed amendment must be submitted to the Secretary at least 8 weeks before the Annual General Meeting. No amendment shall be made which will cause the Group to cease to be a charity at law.
 12. The Committee shall have the power to appoint from the membership of the Group any sub-committee which it may from time to time deem necessary.
 13. In the case of the Group's dissolution, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, if there remains any property whatsoever the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Group but shall be given to or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having objectives similar to those of the Group.
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MEDIEVAL RURAL SETTLEMENT: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Conference Report

R. E. Glasscock

The first weekend residential conference of the M.S.R.G. took place at Leicester, March 27–29, 1987. About 70 people attended. Residential participants were accommodated in Beaumont Hall, University of Leicester, and we are indebted to Tony Brown of the Continuing Education Unit for excellent local arrangements.

As this was the first conference of a new group formed from a merger of the Moated Sites Research Group and the Medieval Village Research Group (both of which ceased to exist at the end of 1986) the theme of the meeting was part retrospective and part prospective. In a long and lively first-evening presentation Professor Maurice Beresford took us on an autobiographical excursion into 'Forty years in the field: medieval settlement in my lifetime'. This was vintage 'prolix Professor'; he spoke for getting on for two hours and got only then as far as the 32nd year of his life, 1952! Some members (but not all) remarked that they could have gone on listening into the night. His talk, linked to a different chronology which began c. 1407 with the anonymous map of Inclesmoor (published in R. A. Skelton and P. D. A. Harvey eds., *Local maps and plans from medieval England*, 1986), ranged widely from pioneers in the field of landscape history (Thomas Clerk's map of Whatborough, 1586; Dugdale; Bridges), via the use of map evidence by Seebohm and Maitland, to the gradual emergence of interest in field evidence in the thirties, notably by W. G. Hoskins and H. C. Darby. Beresford, a student of history at Jesus College Cambridge, 1938–41, described his own first forays into the field: Grantchester with John Saltmarsh; Sutton Coldfield and its infield-outfield system; early diggings at Stretton Baskerville — not to be confused with true archaeology. His radio talk on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the Black Death was heard, presumably among others, by a schoolmaster at Settrington in the East Riding, and by one of those curious 'accidents of history' this was the beginning of the story of how Wharram Percy came to take its place in the historiography of landscape study. John Hurst's arrival at a Wharram weekend in 1952 was considered a suitable moment to stop the autobiographical flow of words and slides . . . but we surely await part II at some future meeting?

The two other retrospective papers were also to some extent personal as both speakers had themselves played major roles in the work of the two earlier groups. Jean Le Patourel spoke on 'The work of the Moated Sites Research Group 1971–1986'. She talked of early work and excavation on moats, of the distribution mapping by Emery and Roberts, and of the Group's systematic programme of recording individual moated sites and their associated features on record cards. She paid tribute in this regard to the work of Alan Aberg and made frequent reference to the annual Bulletin of the Moats Group. She stressed that moats, like villages, could not continue to be studied as isolated features but had to be seen in the social contexts and landscapes of which they were part.

John Hurst (English Heritage) adopted a similar approach when looking at 'The work of the Medieval Village Research Group 1952–1986'. He described his early interest in excavation (Northolt and Norwich) and his growing awareness in the early fifties of the archaeological potential of deserted village sites, coincident with Maurice Beresford's interest in their history. In 1952 he teamed up with Beresford not only to excavate Wharram Percy but, with others, to form the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group. Under its auspices a centralised collection of information on deserted villages, including wherever possible aerial photographs from the Cambridge Collection, was built up. By 1965, 1700 sites had been visited by Hurst, Beresford and others; this programme of visiting has continued, if more intermittently, until the present. Hurst was generous in his thanks to the many who in different ways had supported the Group in funding and data collection at national and local levels, and to the hundreds of volunteers who had helped at Wharram Percy, the 'flagship' excavation of the Group. In conclusion he addressed problems of site protection, Guardianship, and management agreements, and underlined the fact that in over thirty years of work only a few DMVs had had any scientific excavation and that the remainder, where spared by ploughing, constituted a reservoir of evidence for the medieval period to be handed on to posterity.

Following these retrospectives the President, Christopher Taylor (Royal Commission), looked to the future in a forceful paper on 'The new Research Group — where do we go?' He set out by demonstrating, through slides, the remarkable diversity of English rural settlement forms: of nucleated and dispersed, of planned and unplanned, of large villages and single farms, of additions and shrinkage, of the polyfocal origins of many apparently nucleated villages, and of change over time. He emphasised that desertion was invariably a drawn out process, much of it post-medieval; that shrinkage was often a manifestation of population shift consequent upon decisions to engross or enclose. In his view, nucleation has never been the norm and he stressed the need for the new Group to pay much more attention than hitherto to the origins and evolution of dispersed settlements, not only to individual settlements but to whole landscapes, referring for example to part of Bedfordshire as "a planned landscape of dispersal". He was pleased to announce that this theme would be the focus of the second conference, scheduled for Bristol, March 25–27, 1988.

Christopher Dyer (University of Birmingham) in a paper intriguingly titled 'Sex and crime or land and manure: the future, of historical research?' drew attention to the increasing interest of (some) medieval historians, historical geographers, demographers and 'D-I-Y historians' in the social composition of medieval communities as revealed particularly through the evidence of court rolls. He stressed a new awareness of peasants as individuals, of the identification of families, and of intra-peasant

relationships, all getting away from notions of a simple landlord-peasant dichotomy. He presented a more flexible view of medieval society and an increased awareness of its complexity and achievement, illustrating those themes from recent work on communities, the land market, the origins of settlements, and, on the 'land and manure' side of his debate, agricultural technology and production.

The papers on the Sunday morning of the conference were devoted to three aspects of medieval settlement studies: recording, excavation and conservation. Alan Aberg (NMR) gave an update of the work of the National Monuments Record. Illustrating the on-going work from several sites he discussed the problems of suitably adapting very detailed site surveys for use on O.S. maps at various scales, reminding us of the vital role of topographical maps in making the public more archaeologically aware. He was glad to report that a computerised excavation record, compiled from the separate archives in London and Southampton (the O.S. archaeological record) was nearing completion. Sample print-outs were available for inspection at the conference.

David Austin (Lampeter), in a wide-ranging talk on excavation policy, drew attention to the very uneven and unsatisfactory state of existing archaeological organisation and structure, the more so since the recent closure of several units through lack of funding. He highlighted the tensions between local and national priorities in the use of public funds and, more specifically, argued for a limited number of large-scale, adequately-funded medieval excavations. Long-term projects are increasingly complex and expensive and need to be carefully planned with clear objectives. He urged the Group to face up to the related problems of what we need to know, how this is best achieved, by whom and at what cost. Only with a carefully considered strategy could the Group hope to influence public policy and its implementation in the years ahead and to build upon what had already been achieved by the M.V.R.G in this regard.

In the final paper on 'The conservation, interpretation and display of deserted village sites' Peter Wade-Martins

(Norfolk Archaeological Unit) made a devastating attack on the poor levels of government support for archaeology relative to agriculture. He argued that farming interests were represented at all levels of government and that despite the far larger numbers of people interested in aspects of conservation (for example, over a million in the National Trust, nearly half a million in the RSPB) the conservation movement had as yet made hardly any impact. He illustrated, particularly from Norfolk, the unprecedented rate of destruction of sites and habitats over the last twenty years, and argued for more sites to be scheduled and grants to be given for conservation of sites and environmentally sensitive areas. He saw the Group as one of many which should be lobbying the Government for more sites and monument protection programmes, including management agreements. Again using Norfolk examples he went on to castigate the D.O.E. and the new H.B.M.C. for what, in his view, were deplorably low standards of on-site presentation of information for visitors. His paper ended with a strong plea for the new Group, in association with other interested parties, to promote a feasibility study to find a suitable medieval site for long-term excavation and display.

Through this series of stimulating papers participants were left with no illusions about the work that lies ahead. Some of the doom and gloom about the destruction of sites was partially lifted by an afternoon excursion into the Leicestershire countryside where from the upper deck of a Sunshine bus the surviving ridge and furrow showed up with remarkable clarity; its extent surprised and heartened those who live and work in counties where it has virtually gone. Pilgrimages were made to the fine village earthworks at Knaptoft (Hoskins' first and initially unrecognised, deserted village in Leicestershire) and at Sulby, Northants. All-in-all a very rewarding and inspiring first conference with excellent reminders in the field of what we should try to preserve, linked to equally telling illustrations in the lecture room of the shortcomings of the present situation and the need for change. That there is a future role for the Group was never in doubt.

THE WORK OF THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE RESEARCH GROUP 1952-1986

J. G. Hurst

This paper summarises the type of work achieved by the (Deserted) Medieval Village Research Group over the last 35 years, rather than the results and their implications for our understanding of medieval rural settlement; these have been aired on various occasions elsewhere. The origins of the DMVRG will be discussed, followed by an account of the visits to sites, ground surveys, air photographs, validation of sites, preservation, rescue and research excavations and finally the progress of the *Annual Reports* in recording all the work between 1952 and 1986.

As this seems to be an occasion for nostalgia, perhaps I may be allowed to recall my first semi-conscious part in medieval archaeology. I was a precocious child, already determined to be a professional archaeologist from the age of five, though in the aftermath of Tutankhamun I was more interested in Egypt and the Middle East and did not think at that time about working in England. Nevertheless I visited medieval sites in the 1930s, so can almost beat Maurice Beresford's record and claim 50 years in the field. But like his my first years were passive not active. It is just one of many chances that my family came from the Leicestershire/Warwickshire border at Burbage and Earl Shilton, near Hinckley, so my first introduction to medieval field monuments was close to sites being worked on by Maurice Beresford from Rugby ten years later. Visiting my grandparents from 1932 I was taken to see the motte at Earl Shilton and the fishponds at Elmsthorpe; from their house I looked out over the shrunken earthworks of Elmsthorpe and walked by them to the station, not noticing in that semi-conscious stage their significance. It is also a coincidence that I lived in Knighton, Leicester, from 1934 to 1938, not far from the University where William Hoskins was becoming aware of DMVs. I was a constant visitor to Leicester museum, without knowing its curator, Frank Cotterill, who was then explaining as DMVs the earthworks that William Hoskins found. It was in 1936 that I made my first contact with a moat, visiting the impressive site at Evington which perhaps subconsciously raised the first glimmerings of interest in medieval rural settlement. My main visits, however, were to the more classy sites of Warwick and Ashby de la Zouche castles and the remains of Leicester Abbey. My first visit to a DMV was Ambion, though I did not notice it as I was visiting the site of the Battle of Bosworth.

During the war years little travel was possible and, living then in Sussex, my main visits were to prehistoric sites on the South Downs or Mesolithic sites in the Weald. On my return from military service in the Middle East, where I visited as many medieval as early sites, I started to read prehistoric archaeology at Cambridge in October 1948, just after the classic Postan seminar and visit to Leicestershire sites. My start in medieval archaeology was again pure chance, since many of us were appalled by the lack of instruction and started our own excavations to train ourselves. My choice was the moated site at Northolt, Middlesex, where, with Harry Norris (now in

the School of Oriental and African Studies) I started a 20-year project with the advanced aim at that time of excavating a medieval manor-house and its outbuildings; in fact I started with the outbuildings rather than the main building. This led me to meet Gerald Dunning and develop an interest in medieval pottery. Jack Golson had transferred from History, and we both directed one of the first urban rescue excavations at Norwich in 1951. As a result of discussions at this time, we agreed a joint project on DMVs, with Golson being responsible for the excavation and I concentrating on the pottery aspects. We first met Axel Steensberg from Denmark at the Edinburgh British Association meeting in August 1951 at the instigation of Kenneth Dauncey, who Graham Clark had hoped would take up that archaeological study of DMVs which Postan had suggested in 1948, but he was to drop out into industry. Golson and I first contacted Beresford to forge historical links in January 1952 and this led to my first visit to Wharram Percy in June 1952 just after I had joined the Ministry of Works in March.

Jack Golson went to Denmark to help Axel Steensberg at Store Valby and it was the chance that Donald Harden asked me to talk on DMVs at the September meeting of the British Association in Belfast that led me to work during the summer on DMVs and raised my considerable interest in far wider aspects than just pottery. I quickly saw the immense possibilities of the study of medieval rural settlement as a multidisciplinary research project, and it was at the classic meeting in the Milners' cottage at Wharram in August that Maurice Beresford, Gerald Dunning, Bill Singleton (architectural historian from Manchester University) and I decided to try and set up the DMVRG. I had already been collecting material all the summer for my Belfast lecture. In May I started a DMV card index with sites suggested by Martyn Jope, with whom I had already had contact over pottery. In June I made my first visit to the Air Ministry to look at vertical air photographs. In August I went to Cambridge to see Kenneth St Joseph's oblique DMV photographs and order and card the first prints. I also carded the Hoskins Leicestershire and Beresford Warwickshire sites, and compiled a first basic bibliography and a list of vertical and oblique air photographs.

In September, after the first public announcement of the DMV project at Belfast, I ordered a set of ¼-inch OS maps and started to plot DMV sites. In August Maurice Beresford made his first major DMV tour. I had visited single sites in May and July but in September visited a series of clay sites in Nottinghamshire with Ronald Butler. This was on bicycles in pre-car days and included the shrunken site of Shelford. In October the gazetteer of 1353 DMVs for chapter 10 of Maurice Beresford's 1954 *Lost Villages* arrived. I spent the rest of the year plotting them on the ¼-inch maps, carding them and checking 6-inch and 1-inch map references. These maps were traced for the Royal Archaeological Institute lecture in March 1953 and published in the 1954 *Yorkshire Archaeological*

Journal article on DMVs. Also in October I put forward first sites for scheduling to an apathetic MoW. I had discussions with C.W. Phillips to get access to local correspondents and arranged a series of articles in the *Archaeological News Letter* with Dorothy Woodforde. Jack Golson came back in October and we wrote to major figures for support. So by the time of the RIBA meeting on 22nd November the project was already rolling and the DMVRG was formed with Gerald Dunning as Chairman, Clifford Darby as Vice-Chairman, myself as general factotum, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor, and 25 members representing wide interests. Looking back it is remarkable how much was started and achieved in those first six months in 1952, which in fact set the whole pattern for filing the information, visiting sites, looking at air photos and planning an excavation project in a form which was to continue over the next 30 years. Jack Golson worked on Lincolnshire DMVs but went to New Zealand early in 1954, and is still in Australia. In 1954–55 the basic archive was compiled and irregular visits were made to 100 sites, but by 1955 the archive was sufficiently comprehensive for a planned programme of intensive fieldwork to commence, with the aim of visiting all the sites with Maurice Beresford so that there would be a uniform assessment; this was never completed as it was a Forth Bridge type of exercise: local correspondents added 900 sites to the original 1353, so that in ten years there were over 2200 DMVs identified.

Visits

The first year's programme in 1955 made a good start with 200 visits. We had the assistance over the years of many long-suffering students to help map read, take notes and drive. One of the first of these was Robin Glasscock. Others included David Ward, now Professor of Geography at Madison University, Wisconsin. The first areas visited were the classic DMV areas of Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire, with a disappointing foray into the south-east in Kent. It was hoped to increase the tempo in 1956, but politics intervened with Suez and petrol rationing; nevertheless 200 sites were visited. But only 100 sites were visited in 1957, as rationing was still in force throughout the year. So it was not till 1958 that a major push was possible, when Maurice Beresford and I visited 400 DMVs, so that 1000 of the 1668 known at the time were seen. These were the easy days, when sites were so close together that it was possible to visit 10 or more in a day.

Later progress was slower, as we tried to fill in missed or new sites, with sometimes only two or three sites a day and long drives between them. The numbers of visits dropped to 200 in 1959, to 100 in 1960, and 50 in 1961 and 1962, with a 1963 surge to 120 during preparation of the Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire monographs. By 1965 1700 of the 2000 then-known DMVs had been visited and assessed in a uniform manner by two people using the same criteria. It was this which enabled the preservation programme to be launched.

The term 'visit' needs defining. Clearly if ten sites a day were visited the inspection could not be comprehensive

or detailed. The main aim was to identify sites, confirm their positions and assess the earthworks. A major regret is that as no funds were available to buy 6-inch maps, and as there was not time to prepare tracings and xeroxing was not available, it was only possible to make basic sketches, listing the surviving buildings, noting which field the earthworks were in, and their quality, and categorising the earthworks. There was not time to search for the sites if they were not immediately around the farm which bore the name of the lost village. This had to come later with the examination of the St Joseph Air Photographs or information from local correspondents, so it was a national overview, as most of the central DMVRG work has always been.

After a nearly 20-year gap Maurice Beresford and I restarted a final programme, in 1984, 1985 and 1986, visiting sites in Craven in the old Yorkshire West Riding with Stuart Wrathmell, sites between the Tees and Ure in the North Riding with Mark Pharaoh and in Shropshire with Paul Stamper.

Ground Surveys

Ground Surveys of many kinds have been another important aspect of the Group's work. At the upper end of the scale have been the special surveys arranged in the 1950s by Phillips, for example the seven he had planned in Leicestershire in 1956. But this was too expensive to continue and regrettably many of the OS 25-inch surveys, produced for the national revision of the 1960s–1970s, leave a lot to be desired. Not only are they often inaccurate, as for example at Wharram, where they suggested that the houses are round rather than rectangular, but they often do not interpret features correctly, giving up where the earthworks are not clear and labelling quite definite features like cattle yards as quarrying. The best work was done by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, most notably by Chris Taylor, leading up to the corpus of sites in the Northamptonshire volumes which show what can be done if the surveyor has an understanding of the earthworks.

Many local correspondents, and more recently Archaeological Units, have also been producing good plans so that with these, and the air photo cover, there is now a considerable data base for more research on village planning, bearing in mind, however, that we usually see only the latest period. But again Chris Taylor has shown how one can often see different periods, as at Bardolfston, Dorset, or how the whole focus and layout of a village has changed as shown by many examples from Northamptonshire. Robert Hartley's work in Leicestershire in recreating whole landscapes has been particularly notable.

It is a pity that neither Maurice Beresford nor I had the flair for drawing accurate or tidy sketch maps on our visits but in fact even if we had the expertise, this would hardly have been possible in a moving car, where most of the spidery sketches on cards were produced. That clear, simple plans are possible has been shown by several local correspondents and it is appropriate to mention a plan of Goldicote in

Warwickshire, which I always show in my general DMV lectures, as a model of how this can be done to show both the earthworks and the position of the site without detailed knowledge of surveying. This was drawn by Chris Dyer in 1960 when he was still a schoolboy doing his O-levels. Similar sketch surveys can be made of destroyed sites, as I tried to show at Babingley in Norfolk in 1956.

Air Photographs

The first air photograph of a DMV was published in 1925 by O.G.S. Crawford at Gainsthorpe, Lincolnshire, but there was no serious interest till Beresford and Hoskins used the RAF vertical air cover just after the war. A Pilgrim Trust grant of £200 in 1952, then another £200 in 1958 plus £100 in 1960 enabled the Group to purchase air photographs, files and cabinets.

By 1956 1400 vertical RAF prints of 1100 sites at a shilling a time were purchased with the first £200. The price was then raised to 3/6 a print so, with the next £200, only another 600 prints could be bought making 2000 prints of 1500 sites purchased by 1960.

It had been intended to obtain stereo pairs of every site but the Group had to settle for only the best 500 due to lack of funds. In the early 1960s there were problems of access to the RAF photographs and by the time the collection was open again in 1967 prints were 8/- each with a 10/- search fee, which effectively stopped the purchase of RAF photographs by the Group. A similar collection could never be started now with prints several pounds each.

The first Cambridge St Joseph obliques had been purchased in May 1952 and in the 1960s it was decided to concentrate on these. But with the Pilgrim Trust funds expended no trust would give money for the continuing collection of photographs. In 1962 William Hoskins generously introduced us to an anonymous donor, one of his mature students who had worked on air photographs during the war, and who gave the Group £50 a year to buy Cambridge air photos for 14 years till 1975. After 25 years we are now able to reveal her name as Mrs Jean Duffield and acknowledge her help which made so much of the Group's work possible over such a long period and still continues today.

In 1966 Peter Grimes took over the Chairmanship of the Group from Gerald Dunning when he retired. It was through Grimes's influence, as an officer of the Council for British Archaeology, that it was possible to obtain grants from the CBA to speed up the buying of Cambridge air photographs. The Group received grants of £50 in 1969 rising to £125 a year between 1974 and 1979.

Validating

Work on the Group's files and records was concentrated on the validating of new sites suggested by local correspondents or found by the massive flying programme of Kenneth St Joseph from Cambridge. The Group had been very lucky in 1952, with the help of C.W. Phillips,

in obtaining access to the Ordnance Survey's 200 local archaeological correspondents, 100 of whom became regular contributors to the Group's records. The DMVRG is greatly indebted to him, as set out in the obituary in the 1985 *Annual Report*. These correspondents included amateur fieldwork pioneers from the 1920s and 1930s like Ethel Rudkin in Lincolnshire, Helen O'Neil in Gloucestershire and Tony Brewster in Yorkshire who, at a time when professional archaeologists were largely unaware of fieldwalking generally, and the presence of DMVs in particular, were regularly fieldwalking and recording DMVs; they were continuing in the 17th and 18th century antiquarian traditions of Dugdale, Thoroton and Bridges, at a time when academic minds, both historical and archaeological, seemed closed to the study of medieval settlement in the field. Again I have recently recorded some of this in more detail in obituaries in our *Annual Reports*.

In the same way that Maurice Beresford and I tried to classify all DMVs on the ground in a consistent manner, we also tried to assess, in a series of regular monthly meetings, the mass of data sent in by local correspondents according to set principles of categorising historical and archaeological data as laid down in the 1957 *Annual Report*. In the late 1950s we had the help of Robin Glasscock till he left for Ireland. But most significantly we had from 1961 the help of Betty Ewins for a day a week, and from 1962 that of John Sheail, for a day each month, without whose help over a period of more than 25 years the basic archive of the Group could never have been formed or maintained.

By 1958 315 new sites had been accepted, rising to 638 by 1963 and 910 by 1968, making a total of 2263 DMVs. The Group has been criticised for not taking more account of shrunken sites, but several were suggested by Maurice Beresford in *Lost Villages* in 1954, and over 600 were listed in the 1950s and 1960s. In *Deserted Medieval Villages*, 1971, it was suggested that shrunken sites were the most common type of earthwork in the country. 600 sites were also rejected as not having village status. These form the basis of the list of other medieval sites to be referred to the new Group. In a typical year (1965) 198 possible sites were analysed, of which 85 were validated as DMVs, 66 categorised as shrunken and 47 not accepted as of village status. County lists were published gradually in the *Annual Reports*.

All this work over the last 30 years has been voluntary and part-time and it has never been possible to catch up. Numerous applications to trusts for funds were turned down. It was never possible to get money to pay researchers, only to purchase files and air photos. Our only major success was in 1960 when Clifford Darby generously made nine months' research funds available to employ Mrs Grant to look at the documentation for the 12 Midland Counties on the ¼-inch OS Midland sheet. Gazetteers were compiled for 520 known sites and 170 new sites were identified. It was hoped that this might lead to a series of county monographs and period OS maps but, as no further funds were available, the data from 10 counties are still only on file. It was possible in 1965 and

1966, with the financial help of Herbert Finberg, and editorial help of Keith Allison, who had produced the basic Norfolk DMV list in the 1950s, to publish only two county monographs, for Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire in the Leicester Local History series. We then moved to the less ambitious project of a revision of *Lost Villages*, comprising an update of the historical information, gazetteers of the 2263 validated DMVs and of the 290 archaeological excavations which had taken place on medieval rural sites since the first work in the 1840s. Maurice Beresford was responsible for the historical side, I for the archaeology and John Sheail for the massive work of checking the list of sites. This came out in 1971 as *Deserted Medieval Villages*, with the first national map produced by Robin Glasscock, who became Treasurer in 1972. This same year the 'Deserted' was dropped, the Group becoming the MVRG. This change became increasingly necessary as, for example, the list of excavations included farms and hamlets as well as true DMVs. In 1961 Darby had arranged for Roy Versey to give the Group a tabulation of the Domesday Book data on DMVs and lost sites which, with Robin Glasscock's work on the 1334 Lay Subsidy, provided important basic data for the site-validating sessions. Another major voluntary effort was the untiring work by Mr Dodd, over a period of twenty years, from 1961 until his death in 1981, in the Public Record Office and British Museum Library looking up six major classes of document for topographical and population data. This is another important part of the MVRG archive which is available to researchers. Maurice Beresford in 1977 took over as vice-chairman from Clifford Darby on his retirement.

During the 1970s both Maurice and I had increasing professional commitments which prevented us from either organising programmes of visits, or holding the monthly validation meetings. As a result 2000 queries from local correspondents built up. The limited time available was utilised for assigning to their various categories many hundreds of new sites photographed by Kenneth St Joseph. For other sites new lists produced by local correspondents from 17 counties, such as Trevor Rowley for Shropshire, Mick Aston for Somerset, David Palliser for Staffordshire and Chris Dyer for Worcestershire were accepted by the group but without uniform validation to the same national criteria, making a total of some 2872 sites mapped by Robin Glasscock in 1977. The main change was the filling out of the non-Midland areas of classic desertion. At the same time the list of shrunken sites was doubled to 1174 and 872 sites were on the referral list. These lists have raised problems not only of status but also presentation, such as David Palliser's listing of three map references for a site which might be at middle, lower or upper farms with the village name. Maurice Beresford and I had, perhaps arbitrarily, chosen one as the most likely. This is perhaps not too important now that the new Group is going to study the total medieval rural settlement. With this in mind Maurice Beresford and I have spent the last year, since completion of the work on St Joseph air photos in March 1986, looking at the 2000 queries which have built up over the years, taking out the obvious shrunken sites, villages which are still there and non-villages like monastic sites.

Twenty-seven counties have so far been checked and by the end of 1987 it should be possible to refer a large number of cards of rural settlements to the new Group as a basis for their research.

Since 1977 the National Monuments Record have generously given the Group £300 a year, and in 1985 and 1986 £500, for work on the Group's files and records. This has enabled the Group to pay Betty Ewins's expenses after 15 years of being out of pocket. She has now been joined by Pat Lawton in the final stages of putting the archive in order and particularly making lists. The money has also enabled the MVRG to employ students, provided by Robin Glasscock, to help with these lists and other routine work.

The NMR have now appointed Jane Croom, for one year, to correlate all the varied cards which have accumulated over the last 35 years and to prepare a computer programme so that when the DMV archive is closed at the end of 1987 there will be a uniform index to all the data which has been gathered by the Group over so many years. With hindsight it is unfortunate that a card format was not agreed from the start but there were two reasons why this was never done. In the first place the DMVRG never had the funds to have 1500 cards printed; the first 1350 cards were formed by simply sticking on cut-up copies of Maurice Beresford's gazetteer and the other county articles. Second, the Group never had the resources to recard these, regarding it as more important to spend the time processing new material, which was entered up on a more regular basis for the more recent cards.

Preservation

Preservation has always been an important aspect of the Group's work, from the first lists of threatened sites and DMVs recommended for scheduling to the MoW in October 1952. During the 1950s some 200 DMVs were scheduled, with the aim of trying to protect the best 10% of sites. At this stage this was perforce somewhat arbitrary but was 30 years ahead of any other study of a class of site. By 1965, as a result of the 1700 visits to DMVs by the same two people assessing sites on a consistent basis, it was possible to try to place these sites in order of priority for preservation. This was attempted in the memorandum to the MPBW which suggested the firm preservation of the best 50 sites from various areas of the country and the taking into Guardianship of the six best sites.

In the event three sites were taken into care at Wharram Percy, Yorkshire, Gainsthorpe, Lincolnshire, and Hound Tor, Devon. This was due to the chance of ownership. Despite strenuous efforts, supported by the Ancient Monuments Board, the MPBW were unable to persuade any midland owners of clay sites to give up any of their rights to plough their sites in the future. The present English Heritage policy is to try to achieve the same preservation by management agreements rather than guardianship. But there are serious difficulties as has been shown by recent cases at Stallingborough, Lincolnshire, and Nether Adber, Somerset, where it is very much hoped that the County Council may be able to resolve the problem.

The Group have made two revisions to the preservation list, most recently for the formation of English Heritage in 1984. It had not, however, the resources for a major new assessment of either DMVs or ridge and furrow which it was also asked to advise on. The situation has now fundamentally changed with the English Heritage Monument Protection Programme which will look at classes of site nationally. A pilot scheme, which, it is hoped, will provide general criteria covering the whole range of medieval settlement covered by the new Group, is now proposed for Somerset. In any event there can be little doubt that 20 years after the DMVRG 1965 memorandum no other class of monument has been so consistently assessed nationally as have DMVs.

Rescue Excavations

It became apparent right from the start of the DMVRG in 1952 that more DMVs were being destroyed by post-war ploughing, and other developments, than during the 500 years since most of them were deserted. The Ministry of Works started a programme of excavations with the expansion of rescue archaeology. It was a fortunate chance that I was appointed to the MoW in 1952 to assist Gerald Dunning and was responsible for the allocation of rescue funds for medieval sites in the 1950s and 1960s.

In these two decades rescue excavations were carried out at several sites each year, either on a relatively large scale as at Hangleton, Sussex (1952–54), West Whelpington, Northumberland, from 1958 and Seacourt, Berkshire (1958–59), or more commonly on single house sites as at Wythemail, Northamptonshire (1954) and Riplingham, Yorkshire East Riding (1956). These added important regional examples of peasant house types and sequences to the research excavations in progress, but most of them were in the easy stone areas where the houses were clearly visible. A remarkable series of watching briefs was carried out by Rex and Eleanor Russell on 60 sites in Lincolnshire.

In the 1960s the DMVRG was able to steer the MPBW rescue funds not only to the neglected clay area sites like Thuxton, Norfolk, (1963–65) but also to fewer large area excavations typified by the work of Guy Beresford at Barton Blount, Derbyshire, in 1968, Goltho, Lincolnshire and Caldecote, Hertfordshire, culminating in the present massive multiperiod landscape project at Raunds, Northants. In the north work on stone sites continued at West Whelpington, and at Thrislington by David Austin. Before the start of the Archaeological Units in the mid-1970s the MVRG held the funds for DMV excavations and administered them.

Over the years the Group's advice has steered the limited Government rescue funds into a series of excavations over the country which has done a tremendous amount to form a wide base for our understanding of peasant houses, medieval villages and their complex development. The future of this liaison with English Heritage is a prime matter for discussion by the MSRG.

Research Excavations

Following on from the wide range of rescue DMV

excavations, three major research excavations were carried out in the 1960s by members of the Group, in addition to its main project at Wharram. For ten years between 1959 and 1968 Birmingham University excavated a Cotswold site at Upton, Gloucestershire, concentrating mainly on one toft which Philip Rahtz and Rodney Hilton published in the *Transactions, Bristol & Gloucestershire Arch. Soc.*

For nine years, from 1960 to 1968, Judy Minter excavated the Dartmoor village of Hound Tor, Devon, with a sequence of turf and stone houses. This was published by Guy Beresford in *Medieval Archaeology*. For six years, from 1963–1968, John Musty excavated at the Wiltshire chalk site of Gomeldon, excavating several tofts; the report has recently been published in *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine* due to the good offices of Christopher Chippendale, after sadly being turned down 15 years ago when the report was completed. These excavations provide a most useful addition of data towards our understanding of medieval peasant life.

In 1955 the Group attempted to run a clayland excavation at Wolfhampcote, Warwickshire, parallel with the Wharram Percy stone site, but with disastrous results. It not being known then that peasant houses were likely to be clean, with the muck in the yards, trial areas were dug in high phosphate areas, where no structures were found; matters were made worse by the very dry hot summer which baked the clay like concrete. It was clearly hard to find peasant house sites, in tofts 200ft square, in clay areas where no house foundations were visible, without stripping the whole enclosure. Resources for this had to wait another ten years.

The Group, wisely as it turned out, therefore decided to concentrate its excavation on a single site at Wharram Percy, on the Yorkshire Chalk Wolds, for a three-week season each year, based on Maurice Beresford's preliminary work between 1950 and 1952. For the first twenty years, the work was almost entirely voluntary and would never have got off the ground without the help of Clifford Darby in sending his Geography students from University College.

In the 1950s, the objects were first to confirm Maurice Beresford's contention that the site was a medieval village deserted about 1500, and then to excavate a medieval peasant house and, with the realisation of its complexity, half the toft. In the 1960s it was possible both to excavate a second peasant toft and also attempt the complete excavation of the Parish Church with a sample of its graveyard.

The situation was transformed in the 1970s with the giving of the site into Guardianship by Lord Middleton. This enabled a 20-year programme to be planned by MVRG and DOE, with the aim of excavating and presenting to the public a wide range of the activities of a medieval village, to counteract the partial impression of daily life gained from visiting other Guardianship monuments, which were mainly castles, religious houses and other major buildings. We are now 16 years into this

second stage of the 40-year project, which will be completed in 1990. The Universities of York and Hull will then continue research on the fieldwork and history of the landscape of the Wolds, to put what has been achieved in a wider context. The first SMA monograph on the two peasant tofts and the 12th-century manor house was published in 1979 and the second, on the church, is being published in 1987. Stuart Wrathmell as General Editor is now making plans for the full publication programme, with the now requisite cascade charts, which it is hoped to complete by 1995.

The decision, both by the Group and the DOE, to concentrate on one site has been completely vindicated by the remarkably complex results. The new Group will need to discuss what excavation, if any and where, it should carry out after 1990.

Annual Reports

The Group has tried in its *Annual Reports* over the last 33 years to summarise the work that they themselves have achieved, together with an account of the work of others interested in medieval rural settlement both in Britain and Europe.

The first reports from 1953 were simple, typed on one side and stencilled. These contained notes on the various aspects that I have described, work on the Group's files and records, visits, aerial photography, work by local correspondents, preservation of sites and rescue and research excavations.

In Report 13 (1965) the first foreign reports were published as a result of contacts made at the Munich Economic History Conference. These foreign reports have been a major feature for the last 20 years; it is hoped the MSRSG will continue them.

For Report 15 (1967) Philip Rahtz took over as Editor and the bulk was reduced by duplicating on both sides of the paper. In Report 18 (1970) a cover with line drawings, and for the first time illustrations, were introduced. Rahtz edited five Reports till 19 (1971) then Chris Dyer edited five volumes, 20/1 (1972/3) till 25 (1978), maintaining the high standard.

With Report 26 (1978) Gwyn Meirion-Jones became editor, introduced a glossy cover with air photo, and the report was typeset first on an IBM and subsequently on an AM phototypesetter which enabled the text to be justified in two columns. Meirion-Jones edited the remaining eight volumes till the final issue 33 (1985).

For the last four volumes (1982-1985) the MVRG received grants from the British Academy of £180, £220, £200 and £500 last year. I am glad to report that the Academy have granted £600 for the first report of the MSRSG.

Of crucial importance for the use of these Reports has been the compilation of the index. Wendy Gilding indexed the first 22 Reports up to 1974 and completed the work up to the last Report (33) in 1986. Donations of £119 from the readers of Richard Muir's book *Lost Villages of Britain* helped to produce and make available this index. The 1600 English and 600 Foreign entries show the wide scope of work over the 33 years.

The Library is thin on books, as the Group never had the funds to buy any, but still had many gifts over the years. The collection of offprints, though, must be the best collection on medieval rural settlement in the country. The foreign books and articles certainly form the only collection of its type and size anywhere. So I hope that all in all we leave to our successors in the MSRSG a major archive as a basis for the next generation of researchers into medieval rural settlement.

THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE RESEARCH GROUP INDEX

The Medieval Village Research Group Archive has been accumulated since the Group's foundation in 1952, and is diverse and varied in character. It contains a mass of evidence — historical, archaeological, topographical — relating to deserted and shrunken medieval settlements, which has been brought together and added to by different people over the years. The records of the M.V.R.G. are kept in card index boxes and filing cabinets, and are organized alphabetically by site name within pre-1974 counties. The Archive comprises over 6,000 index cards, one or more for every accepted DMV, giving a précis of information for each site, and over 2,000 foolscap files, holding more bulky material about a site where this exists. The information on individual sites varies in quality and quantity according to the county in which they are located and the date at which they were discovered. Nevertheless, for each DMV a minimum amount of information is usually available, and this consists of: National Grid Reference, one- and six-inch Ordnance Survey map sheet numbers; brief reports of visits to the site, a description of it, and a sketch map; data from standard documentary sources (e.g. Domesday Book, Lay Subsidies and other Public Record Office documents, and British Library manuscripts); Cambridge University oblique air photographs and RAF vertical air photographs; printed references to the site. Furthermore, many sites are classified, using standard abbreviations, according to status or nature of the site, its state of archaeological preservation, the survival of documentation, and the village's period of desertion.

The archive has been deposited on loan in the Archaeological Record Section of the NMR at Fortress House since 1978, and the record is now being computerized with assistance from the RCHM(England). The Royal Commission is funding a Record Assistant on a temporary basis to create a computerized index, which will be available on-line in the NMR when the project is completed, and while it will not contain all the details held at present on cards, the new database will offer ease of retrieval in many different ways and simplify searches of the paper archive. The work of computerization entails entering particular types of information drawn from the M.V.R.G. records onto a specially designed database, which provides profiles of individual sites but is capable of generalization over the whole country. There are five main categories of data for each site on the Medieval Village Research Group Index:

- 1 Location and administration**
 Site name (and alias)
 National Grid Reference
 Current administrative units
 National Archaeological Record Number
 1" and 6" OS map sheet numbers
 Who suggested the site, and when
 Site's status (eg. deserted/shrunken, migrated/resettled, former village/failed town)
- 2 Archaeological information**
 Archaeological classification (visual quality of site)
 Cartographic and photographic records
 Physical features of the site:
 surviving earthworks
 field system
 standing buildings
- 3 Historical information**
 Historical classification (quality of historical evidence)
 Presumed date for depopulation
 Former administrative units
 Village's presence/absence in national taxation records
 Existence of PRO and BL sources for the site
- 4 Archaeological history**
 Visits made to the site by John Hurst and Maurice Beresford, when and with whom
 Excavations: name of excavator, date of excavation, NMR Excavation Index number
- 5 Bibliography**
 references to both printed sources and secondary works.

The Index is being compiled on a Yes/No basis, indicating which types of information are available in the Archive for a particular site, thus making access to the M.V.R.G. records easier. A wide range of questions concerning, for example, the different periods of village desertion, the appearance of DMVs in medieval tax records, the features of DMV sites, their geographical location, the chronology of their discovery, and the contents of the Archive, can be asked using the facility to make enquiries on any field in the Index. A written user's guide is being prepared, and in the future, the County lists can be produced by computer.

Alan Aberg & Jane Croom

THE MOATED SITES RESEARCH GROUP: 1971-1986

Jean le Patourel

MSRG Mark 1, as we may call the old Moated Sites Research Group to distinguish it from the infant society that inherits its initials, was born in the aftermath of an archaeological weekend at Middlesborough organized by Alan Aberg on behalf of Leeds University's Extra-Mural Department. Moated sites had figured among the topics discussed, and it had become clear that though there was considerable interest in this class of earthwork, recording of individual sites was sporadic, incomplete and sometimes inaccurate.

The year was 1971, and for a number of reasons the problems presented by moated sites were very much in the air. To show how this came to be so it is necessary to go back a little. Omitting the vague stirrings of interest among early antiquaries, we may begin with the work of the Ordnance Survey in the mid-nineteenth century. Though the Surveyors, as a matter of policy, took no note of filled-in moats, or of the slight traces of many subsidiary enclosures, they did record a very considerable number of moated sites. At the turn of the century the earthwork committee of the Congress of Archaeological Societies built on this very early survey and divided the sites into classes F and G according to the degree of strength that surface indications seemed to suggest, a classification that was adopted for the earthwork sections of the early volumes of the Victoria County Histories. Though authors like Allcroft and Tristram took note, in their very different ways, of the existence of moated sites, the next step in the understanding of their significance was to come from excavation.

In the course of the first half of the twentieth century a very considerable number of excavations on moated sites was undertaken. Most, but not all, were confined to trenches across the moat or to small areas on the principal island. By the sixties the fashion for more open excavation had begun to spread, as for example at such sites as Scredington, Haddlesey, Writtle or Milton. It was still restricted, it is true, to the central island, and directed first and foremost to the development of the dwelling house, but archaeologists were raising their sights beyond the moat sections and wall arrangements that had been the preoccupation of earlier years. The diversity of occupation within the enclosures, the complex development of the enclosures themselves, the presence even of empty moats, were all factors drawing attention to the necessity for further archaeological research.

During the sixties, people began to address themselves to the more general problems of settlement. The geographers led the way with Emery's article on moated settlements in England, which looked at both East Anglian moats in relation to the geology of the region, and at the density of moats per square mile over England as a whole, using as a basis for calculation those recorded on the OS maps. Roberts followed with a dot by dot map of known sites which gave a better idea of their distribution within the counties. He also looked at moats

in the context of settlement pattern within the West Midlands, his special area of research at the time, an approach that anticipated the interests of the following decades. More or less simultaneously the Royal Commission, working in Cambridgeshire, was evolving a new method of classifying moated sites based on a combination of size and earthwork pattern, another development that was to influence most later work in the field. My own work at that time developed from the excavation of several large and complex moated sites in Yorkshire and involved the classification of the moats in that county, while Hedges was pursuing much the same line in Essex. Interest in the subject was reflected too in a growing number of undergraduate and post-graduate theses all embodying some element of field work.

In the late sixties and early seventies public involvement in rescue excavation was in course of reorganization and expansion in the face of threatened destruction to sites all over the country. Newly-formed archaeological Units, working for the most part through local authorities, were urgently assembling a sites and monuments record, each according to a local pattern, not necessarily compatible one with another. Clearly the time was ripe for some sort of organization not only to focus interest on an earthwork pattern as yet relatively little explored, but also to ensure some uniformity of recording, to assemble the available evidence on the subject, and to draw up a system of priorities for research and excavation.

The Cleveland conference with which I began had pinpointed some of the problems; a decision to form a group for the study of moated sites was taken within hours of its end and within a few weeks those known to have been working on some aspect of the sites had been contacted, and a steering committee formed, due to the energy of Alan Aberg, who was to become secretary and organizer-in-chief of MSRG Mark 1. There followed months of activity, defining aims, inventing a constitution, and designing a field card in a form that could really be used in the field, and by those not necessarily with previous fieldwork experience.

It would be unprofitable to spend time discussing the constitution of MSRG Mark 1, but it is significant, I think, that members of the first committee were heavily committed to excavation and fieldwork and mildly suspicious of documents other than good, straight-forward maps. In this they reflected contemporary archaeological thinking, which supposed that if everything seen in the ground were recorded all possible questions could subsequently be answered. Problem-orientated archaeology was still in the future, and though MSRG Mark 1 was to borrow much from DMVRG, as it was then, it tended to shy away at that time from the multi-disciplinary approach of the older group. There were other points of difference: the steering committee was determined on a formal constitution, with membership of the permanent committee rotating among those active

in the Group, with membership open to all those interested, and meetings, including an annual general meeting, open to all members.

The first priority of the new group was to record moated sites county by county throughout the country, to confirm and where necessary supplement the mid-nineteenth-century lists. It was intended that not only size, shape and condition of each moated complex should be recorded on the new field card, but also its relationship to church, to ridge-and-furrow, to township or parish boundary, and to any other observable landscape feature. Place was to be allowed for documentary references if known and, most important, for a sketch map of the complex (in the event many workers were to add a photograph). It was difficult to fit so much into so small a compass, but the success of the card was measured by the many hundreds successfully completed.

To ensure that this recording would be undertaken, it was necessary to bring the existence of MSRГ Mark 1 and its record card to the attention of as many people as possible, to which end I wrote a couple of short articles for *Amateur Historian* and *Current Archaeology*, while Alan Aberg, in conjunction with local Extra-Mural tutors or field officers, arranged a series of regional weekend conferences to explain the aims of the Group and the nature and use of its field card. Over the years, Cambridgeshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Liverpool, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk and Surrey were visited, one or two of them twice, as demand arose. Quite apart from the immediate and practical aims of these weekends, meeting the wide variety of moated complexes and the differing settlement patterns of the various regions proved very educative for those of us whose primary work had been within a single county. A weekend at Bristol stood apart from the usual pattern, for it was held in conjunction with the DMVRG and its programme aimed to explore common ground between the two groups involved in rural archaeology. Many of us hoped it might lead to a closer association, even an amalgamation, between the two, for it was obvious that the problems of the groups overlapped considerably. Many moats were in villages, deserted as well as thriving, just as many moats were themselves deserted in antiquity. But the time, as they say, was unripe, and the amalgamation was to be postponed for almost a decade.

Eighteen months after the formation of MSRГ Mark 1 the first Annual Report was published under the editorship of Alan Aberg; the second followed two years later under that of David Baker. Thereafter the Report was published annually, the editorship being taken over by James Bond in 1977 and by David Wilson in 1982. As in the case of the Annual Report of the village group, the greater part of each issue was devoted to summaries of field work and excavation that had taken place during the year, arranged according to county. Relevant publications of the year were listed, and any sites that had been scheduled, together with the names of sites threatened with destruction. It had been realized from the first that lack of money would preclude the purchase of air photographs for the Group's records, but the

numbers of any taken during the year that were known to include a moated site were listed. For the first few years each issue mentioned the Group's activities in the period in a brief editorial, a practice immensely helpful in compiling this paper, but one, unhappily, that lapsed rather quickly. No record at all was published, or indeed made, of the local meetings and the sites visited during the weekends, except, possibly, by the local societies concerned. The Report then, was conceived and run as an information booklet and progress report intended to keep members up to date on developments. In 1980 an experiment was made with the inclusion of several discussion papers, but this was not continued. In place of the brief county lists of recorded moats that characterised early issues, however, a number of important critical assessments of regional distribution patterns, accompanied by plans of local moated complexes appeared in later issues. They demonstrated an advance in methodology and research that may fairly be attributed, at least in part, to the existence of a group specialising in the study of this type of earthwork.

In 1978 the Group published, in conjunction with the CBA, *Medieval Moated Sites*, a research report intended to show the state of play as it appeared at the time. The volume, edited by Alan Aberg, included discussion of different types of evidence available and the significance of moated sites, together with a number of regional surveys. It has proved useful not only to workers in this country, but has been quoted in a sufficient number of foreign languages to demonstrate its wider acceptability. Among its appendices, was a preliminary bibliography of moated sites that was enlarged and updated in a separate publication by Harold Mytum in 1982. Finally, in the publication record of MSRГ Mark 1, must be mentioned *Medieval Moated Sites in North-West Europe*, No 121 in BAR's International Series, but this brings us to a different aspect of the Group's work.

At this distance in time it seems almost accidental that at the *Château Gaillard* Conference on the Loire in 1974 some of us became aware that the moated sites of the British Isles were part of a general phenomenon stretching over most of north-west Europe, just as village desertion in England was part of a much wider process of abandonment over the whole continent. There had, it is true, been less excavation of moated sites in European countries, for medieval archaeology was something of a post-war development in some. Nevertheless a few sites had been excavated, and a number of regional studies were under way in Belgium, France and Holland. It was already becoming clear that there was the same range of earthwork pattern as was to be found in England, as well as a similar variety in the kind of building enclosed by moats. A meeting was therefore arranged on a free evening to discuss joint problems, particularly the matter of terminology, which could well be a cause of confusion between one country and another. The participants agreed to draw up short statements of the situation in the various countries represented, and these were published in Report No. 2, and subsequently I was asked to contribute a paper on moated sites in England to *Revue du Nord*, with particular attention to British terminology.

The initial discussion at Blois was followed by further meetings at *Château Gaillard* conferences over a number of years. Meanwhile a weekend conference arranged at Leicester was attended by overseas archaeologists, and its proceedings were published as no. 121 in the BAR International series, with important contributions from Belgium, France, Holland, Ireland and Wales. The more general continental picture was the subject of a later conference at Pont-a-Mousson, whose proceedings were published in 1986 under the title *La Maison Forte au Moyen Age*.

In the early days of MSRG Mark 1 the Group's records were stored in Alan Aberg's house at Kirkleavington, for he it was who, as secretary, was responsible for answering the increasing number of queries from this country and overseas on moats and the problems of recording, preserving and excavating them. When he moved to the Royal Commission, the records moved with him to Liss, where their expansion caused problems of storage in his new study. At this point the National Monuments Record offered to store the Group's files, and an agreement was reached with the committee whereby they were to continue to be owned by MSRG Mark 1, but would be loaned to the NMR and housed by it, with access to the Group's members at all reasonable times. Under the terms of the agreement NMR would have the right to nominate one member of the committee. The solution to the storage problem has worked well and to the benefit of all parties, and should pose no problems for the amalgamation of the Group with the MVRG.

One of the problems that MSRG Mark 1 was concerned to address at the time that it was set up was that of priorities for excavation in the face of the multiple threats of destruction recognised at the time. It was a decade when those who funded rural archaeology were concerned with individual sites and with restricted historical periods, a single croft in a medieval village, a single house within a croft, one moat in a complex of moats, in contrast to the present interest in multi-period landscape archaeology. A memorandum was submitted to the then Department of the Environment, and subsequently to the local and central committees set up to advise on priorities in rescue archaeology. This was published in the Group's first Report along with a note drawing the attention of future excavators to the complex situation to be expected on many moated sites, and the necessity for looking beyond the buildings on the central island. We were especially concerned at the time with the archaeology of water control – sluice gates, leets and bridges – aspects of

moated sites previously somewhat neglected and the sorts of structure specific to this type of monument. Even at that time we were, of course, aware that moats were only one of a number of possible forms of enclosure for the wide range of possible monuments that had to be identified.

It is interesting to compare these early memoranda, reflecting, as they did, the preoccupations of the time, with the 'Policy for the Preservation and Excavation of Moated Sites' published in volume 12 of the Report in 1985. Talk, in 1972, had been all of excavation priorities; the emphasis in 1985 was on preservation and the presentation of sites to the public. The *Zeitgeist* had changed. The new 'Policy', however, demonstrated the success of the Group's earlier concentration of regional recording. The number of known sites had almost doubled, and under a third of these were in reasonable condition. Of the latter about 600 were scheduled, and so had some protection against destruction, but only one site of the couple of thousand in the country had the greater security of guardianship. Moreover scheduling had been something of a random matter, so that the protected sites reflected neither the range of monuments known to be moated, nor their areas of greatest incidence. In face of this situation MSRG Mark 1 were urging that, as a matter of policy, 10% of the moated sites in each county should be scheduled, and that these should represent as closely as possible the sort of sites to be found within the county.

The 1985 memorandum itemizes different types of habitation that experience has shown to be surrounded by moats, and reiterates the importance of the area beyond the moat which may be expected to be occupied by its dependencies. Little has changed here. A yearning can, perhaps, still be detected for the ideal moat for excavation, free of buildings, uncontaminated by post-medieval disturbance, uncomplicated by the presence of documentary evidence. Even sites intended for presentation to the public are viewed with an eye to ultimate excavation, though meantime it is recommended that consideration should be given to methods of management of those in guardianship, where standing buildings and even written evidence may be useful in explaining the character and development of the monument to the layman. In 1985 it was still too early to consider the possibility of presenting a medieval village that includes a moated site to the general public. This, perhaps, would be a worthwhile objective for MSRG Mark 2.

A DRAFT CHRONOLOGY OF DESERTED VILLAGE STUDIES

M. W. Beresford

1. Author's Preface

It seemed appropriate, at a conference which looked backwards and forwards in settlement studies, for a veteran to take the opportunity of bringing some discipline to his recollections and to scattered notes taken from others' researches and memories. It was a matter of regret, particularly for a meeting on the Leicester campus and with a field excursion to Knaptoft on the programme, that William Hoskins' health did not permit him to be present: but a recent discovery among the Group's earlier correspondence files has enabled the inclusion of unpublished written testimony which demonstrates how he, like others of us, stumbled unintentionally on his first deserted medieval village.

For the conference session a bare version of the chronology that follows was in the hands of the audience, and it was therefore possible to do what the printed page cannot allow — to add an illustrated commentary by means of slides. But a chronological exposition is bulky enough to take up all the space available here.

2. The Prehistory Of It All

Pride of place must be given to John Rous whose *Historia Regum Angliae*, written c. 1491 was unpublished for 250 years although the manuscript was known to the anonymous author of *The Discourse of the Commonweal of England*, written in 1549 and published in 1581. I have elsewhere rehearsed the numerous literary references to the depopulation of villages in the second half of the sixteenth century, that in *Pericles*, being perhaps the most distinguished. I have not previously reported that the antiquary John Leland recorded a desertion (1535–43): 'I rode half a myle and came to Towkey (Tubney, then Berks, but now Oxon) wher has ben a village . . . the church or chapell now remayneth'.

There seems to have been no other interest by a local topographer until Sir William Dugdale's references to desertions in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656) which reveal that he too had access to Rous' manuscript. The traveller and antiquary Abraham de la Pryme visited Gainsthorpe, Lincs, in 1697 but his notes remained unpublished until 1870. Similarly, John Bridges described the deserted site of Nobold in notes made c. 1720 but his work would not generally be known until the publication of the full *History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire* in 1791.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the conduct of litigation more than once involved testimonies from local juries such as that certain fields had once been villages or certain earthworks once a church; the best known is that of the Leicestershire jurors in 1586 whose testimony found its way onto Thomas Clerke's plan, showing 'the place where the town of Whatborough stood', and I have shown elsewhere that memories of former villages were similarly preserved on from Northumberland, county Durham, Yorkshire N. R. and Warwickshire.

It was not until 1770 that the title of Oliver Goldsmith's poem gave general currency to the term *Deserted Village*, and his concern was, of course, not with the distant past, but with an emparking depopulation that he had witnessed in 1761 at Nuneham Courtenay, Oxon. Four years after Goldsmith's poem a correspondent of *The Gentleman's Magazine* supplied a note on a site at Dalton, Westmorland, together with a sketch plan, but in a century which exhibited a lively antiquarian interest in the visible remains of prehistoric and Roman sites there seems to have been no appreciation of the remains of medieval villages.

Thus if I myself had been precocious enough in the year of my birth, 1920, to search in the British Museum library I would have found little more in print than was available in Goldsmith's day: in the map room I could have seen 'village, site of' alongside the delineation of earthworks on a few sheets of the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch maps; while on a two-colour folded map inserted in R. H. Tawney's *Agrarian Problems in the Sixteenth Century* (1912) I could have seen a transcript of Clerke's significant words about Whatborough.

The volumes of the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* that had then been published maintained a remarkable awareness that their parish histories were often of empty parishes. That for the Isle of Wight did not mention the Act of 1488 against the decay of towns(hips) in the Isle, the first anti-enclosure statute with its graphic preamble; an Island jury of 1559 had known better when they reported: 'we heare of many old streats and villages both of artificers and other cleyn dekeyed and no signe of eny howsinge'. Earlier antiquarian county historians such as Blore in Rutland, Thoroton in Nottinghamshire and Nichols in Leicestershire had done better as they followed Dugdale and Bridges in noting when a parish was virtually houseless. The privately sponsored *Northumberland County History*, then in progress, was more observant than the *VCH* contributors.

I might in 1920 have been fortunate enough to find Hadrian Allcroft's *Earthwork of England* (1908) with its notices of Cublington, Bucks, and the shrunken Bingham (Crow Close), Notts. In the archaeological literature I could have found that single houses or small groups had been surveyed or excavated at Woodperry, Oxon. in 1846, Yoden, Co. Durham in 1884, Trewortha, Cornwall in 1892, Whimpton, Notts. in 1906, Hullasey, Glos, in 1910, and Excete, Sussex in 1913. No Christopher Taylor had yet come to open the eyes of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments to the earthworks of the medieval landscape.

3. Growing Up In Ignorance

I was in fact no precocious *wunderkind* such as Biddle or Hurst, their vocation determined in the cradle. It is no secret that until a disastrous result in the Higher School Certificate examination in August 1937 I was

bored by History and lured by the glamour of Eng. Lit. It is a remarkable tribute to the therapeutic skills of one schoolmaster, William Roberts, that after a disillusioned transfer to History I was able to obtain a Cambridge exhibition award that December.

History at Cambridge, as seen by an undergraduate in 1938–41, had nothing to do with settlement studies. Medieval economic history was lively enough at that time in the hands of M. M. Postan and in some ways not divorced from the soil when he relayed Bloch and the Orwins to us. There was no contact at all with archaeology but, as John Hurst has shown, students of that subject were protected from any knowledge of medieval settlement. Geography might have been a bridge, for maps had always interested me, and a close friend did introduce me to H. C. Darby's *Historical Geography*, published in 1936. There I found much to help me relate economic history to the reality of the English landscape as I had begun to know it from the railway train and the Ordnance maps. Mapping past landscapes was a congenial idea for someone like myself bred on Ordnance Survey maps, and I was later to break into the pages of *Antiquity* with zeal for 'Mapping the Medieval Landscape', but since the maps that Darby and his publishers were using never descended to the interior of units as small as the parish, they avoided an encounter with the village-less parishes.

If at that time Darby led me so far but no further, his later appreciation of the potential of deserted village studies was of considerable importance: he was a founder member of the DMVRG; his Department at University College, London, provided the first subsidies that brought students to dig at Wharram Percy; and later, with the employment of Mrs Grant, provided the only funds that have ever been available for a continuous period of documentary research. Neither Hoskins nor I were ever full-time researchers, and no learned body ever offered to either of us funds that would have supported a full-time research assistant. Posterity will note that it was not only the archaeology of this subject which began on a shoestring.

I have elsewhere rendered thanks to John Saltmarsh, then University Lecturer in History, for introducing me to the idea that medieval agriculture had left its remains in the modern landscape but I cannot recall that he ever mentioned remains of villages to us, despite the fact that he and Darby had already carried out what would now be called fieldwork in a classic area of population decline, the Norfolk breckland. Had the ruined churches that they saw been accompanied by house and street earthworks of Midland quality perhaps they would have been made aware. It was my (and Hoskins') good fortune that our Midland homes gave us our first close encounters on clayland sites with hollow ways and house platforms and not the unrewarding sites of Essex or Kent.

Saltmarsh himself had considerable local history interests, and his *Times* obituary mentioned his famed historical walk-arounds of Cambridge streets. Yet, as far as I know, he was unaware, like the world of academic History in general, of the remarkable work in documents and the field which lay behind the gazetteers of Lincolnshire

desertions assembled by Canon Foster and first published in 1920. Archaeologists in their turn failed to build on the foundation laid on 3 April 1925 when O. G. S. Crawford took, and then published, his air photograph of Gainsthorpe in that county.

The teaching of History at Cambridge in my time, even of economic history, did not draw on local examples. Local history, as far as one ever heard the term, was the province of amiable amateurs publishing in the journals of local societies that, as far as I remember, did not appear on the shelves of the well-stocked Seeley History Library; and I recall no reading list with such articles. I do remember hearing A. L. Rowse's *Tudor Cornwall* being praised as a pioneer work in local history, and I bought a copy with some College prize money. Alas, I was then poorly equipped to assimilate it, for I had never been to Cornwall but I remember finding it disappointingly short on topography.

For myself, the prime interest then and for several more years was the administrative process of enclosure by Act of Parliament, and it was from that direction that I became aware of the potential of the visible remains of pre-enclosure agriculture that could be matched to pre-enclosure maps and surveys. And it was only in the course of measuring and recording ridge and furrow in Midland fields that I inadvertently encountered the earthworks of my first deserted village, but since William Hoskins had his first encounter earlier, with a more precise recollection of the baptism, it must have pride of place here.

4. W. G. Hoskins

William came across his first deserted village as inadvertently as I. He had left Exeter in 1931, after obtaining his M.Sc. by local research in Devon; he taught first at Bradford Technical College and then as Assistant Lecturer at University College, Leicester, principally in economics but then moving more and more into economic history. In 1933 he contributed 'The formation of parishes in Devon' to *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, his first published work, and in 1935 appeared the first of many contributions to the *Transactions* of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society, its subject being Anglian and Scandinavian settlement in that county; his 'Fields of Wigston Magna' appeared there in 1937.

When William spoke later about his Bradford years it was with pleasure and pain: as so often in his life he found himself pleased with the countryside around him but despairing of the philistines who seemed to inhabit it. I knew that he had made friends with Arthur Raistrick who combined a career in academic geography with a lifetime of exploration and exposition in the Yorkshire Dales, for it was Raistrick whom he later invited to write the West Riding volume in the *Making of the English Landscape* series, but it was only when I paid a visit to the nonagenarian Arthur at Linton in the autumn of 1986 that the conversation turned to William. Arthur then told me with modest Quaker pride that the young Hoskins (he was then barely twenty-three) had been a member of his extra-mural class on local history and archaeology during that Bradford period. I can now understand better why those first two papers for the Leicestershire *Transactions* were archaeological rather than historical.

For the circumstances of his first encounter with a deserted village at Knaptoft in the autumn of 1938 we have William's own testimony, sent to John Hurst for the Group's archives on 24 March 1969 but hitherto unpublished:

This was pure chance, as my wife and I went there to pick blackberries (a free meal in those days for underpaid assistant lecturers) and to see the remains of the church which were marked on the map. We cycled there, having no car. While roaming round the remains of Knaptoft Hall, I spotted a largish field to the north of the lane-end, heavily marked with what seemed to be a regular pattern of low earthworks. It was clearly a man-made site, but though I had a good working knowledge of English archaeology (even lecturing on the subject) I could not identify this type. In the spring of 1939 I took Frank Cottrill — then Keeper of the Department of Antiquities at the Leicester Museum — to the site to see if he could suggest an explanation of the pattern. He could not: he had never seen such a site before. However, a little later he telephoned from the Museum to ask if I had seen a plan in Hadrian Allcroft's *Earthwork of England* of a site near Bingham in south Nottinghamshire, which resembled the Knaptoft site in general appearance, and was attributed to the destruction of a village at some date in the past. . . This clue, provided by Cotterill, was the real break-through as it instigated me to search the medieval records for Knaptoft . . . it then became certain that this was the site of a deserted medieval village. I have a note that I was searching Knaptoft records, local and central, in the July of 1939. By the autumn of 1939 I had enough material on Leicestershire sites to enable me to give three lectures on them in adult education classes at Vaughan College, Leicester.

(These classes could hardly have realised that they were present at the first making of the Making of the English Landscape). Hoskins' memorandum continues:

I ought to say that I did not know then of Canon Foster's list of lost Lincolnshire villages, and do not think I came across this until after the War, and probably after I had published my first essay on these sites in Leicestershire. This was a pity.

A further note shows that I was taking adult students in the early summer of 1940 to see sites on the ground — at Ingarsby, Great Stretton, and Knaptoft. This was an Archaeology Excursion Course, open only to those who had attended the lectures during the previous two terms.

Further notes show that I was visiting — by bicycle — many sites in Leicestershire from March to November 1940 — Old Marefield in March, Ingarsby in April, Foston in September, and Frisby in November, and making notes from records. . . The result was that when I was whisked into the War Effort as it was called in July 1941 and went to a civil service job (the Price Regulation Committee) in London, I had a considerable mass of notes about these sites, both from ground observation and from records (by then all shut away, of course).

To save my reason as the War dragged on, I wrote up my notes — mostly during the endless boredom of firewatching nights in Westminster — and produced an essay for the *T. L. A. S.* on the Deserted Villages of Leicestershire. This appeared in the *Transactions* for 1945 . . . though I seem to remember that this actually appeared in 1946 as the Society was then a year in arrears with its publications. . .

In the meantime, I had established contact with a young man called Beresford, then Warden of an adult education centre at Rugby. I think he must have written to me some time in 1946 or '47 to say he was working on a site at Bittesby on the borders of Warwickshire or (sic) Leicestershire. I seem to remember going out to Bittesby to study it with him.

I don't know when Beresford began publishing his Warwickshire material, but as a result of our work in the two Midland counties we were invited to come over to Cambridge in June 1948 to speak to Postan's seminar or some such group. I spoke on the Leicestershire sites, Beresford on the Warwickshire. I remember Postan was distinctly sceptical at the start, but was fully persuaded by the end of the evening. He then demanded to be taken over to Leicestershire to see a good site, and the next day we travelled at high speed to south Leicestershire to see Knaptoft, still a good site. We travelled in two cars, if not three, fortunately — as Postan's brilliant driving at times might have ended the subject for ever by extinguishing all the scholars interested in the subject.

Though I kept up my interest in deserted village sites, I turned mainly to other kinds of field work and left it open to Maurice Beresford. He wrote to me, possibly some time in 1951, saying that he had been invited to write a book on Lost Villages by Lutterworth Press, and did I mind? This was a kind gesture. I replied saying that as far as I was concerned the field was clear for him. This work was published in 1954, but in the meantime he had published a stream of papers on these sites in various parts of the country; and the subject was obviously in safe hands. He may be able to fill in a date or two which I can't clearly remember, nor have a contemporary note.

In a covering letter he adds:

as regards the notes that are appended, they are authentic as I have kept a journal for forty years (not daily) and I can vouch for all the dates . . . If Maurice does not agree with the details where he comes into the picture, do let me know — but this is all correct to the best of my knowledge.

5. The Frontier Incident

Maurice comes into the picture with rather blurred focus. He cannot stimulate his memory from any surviving engagement diary earlier than 1952, and has never kept a journal nor retained much correspondence, so that if there were any conflict of testimony the Hoskins testament is clearly superior. As it is, I offer only small corrections: a Friday intervened between the Postan seminar and the field trip, and the latter had been part of the plan, not a sudden enthusiasm of Postan's. Nor do I recall scepticism followed by conversion. I was interested to see that my own memory of the wildness of car-driving is not over-dramatised, and I can add one other characteristic Postanism: there was a birdcall somewhere in the fields, and Steensberg asked what it was. Postan, who could never bear not being able to answer a question, instantly named the bird, but William, who knew about these things, whispered to me indignantly, 'It wasn't that at all'.

On the credit side, I must add that Postan was a man of immense enthusiasms, and always alert to the possibility of new technologies and crossing inter-disciplinary boundaries. I can see how the prospect of supplementing documentary research on medieval villages by fieldwork and excavation would have appealed to him at that stage in his work, for might it not reveal evidence for those contractions and expansions of population and economy in the pre-Black Death period with which his seminal article, 'The Chronology of Labour Services' had been concerned?

Hoskin's memorandum associates the village of Bittesby with our own first meeting but did not recall whether it was 1946 or 1947. However in November 1970 I

happened to find tucked into my copy of Hoskins' *Heritage of Leicestershire* a letter written to me on 4 September 1947, where he said

I fully expect to be in Leicester on the 15th, and have made a note of the date for our discussion of the ridge & furrow theory which I look forward to. . .

(The remainder of the letter was concerned with my forthcoming edition of an enclosure commissioner's notebook in the next volume of *Transactions*, to which William was also contributing.

I thought I might have discovered here the fateful invitation to our first meeting, there being an earlier meeting in 1946 and the subject Bittesby.

Many thanks for the copy of the original document. We must — I think — have become aware of frontier incidents (at Bittesby) about the summer 1946 — so next year will see our fruitful silver wedding, as it were. . .

Now Bittesby, as I have often stated, was the place of my own unintended encounter with deserted village earthworks. I was at Bittesby because, having already collated ridge and furrow with selions (strips) on a number of Midland pre-enclosure maps, I now wanted to go further and take some parish which had no such maps, and use its ridge and furrow to reconstruct its pre-enclosure landscape. Bittesby seemed ideal for the purpose: it was the smallest parish within the Rugby area; it was wholly under grass; and the railway embankment, now levelled, formed a good grandstand from which to oversee operations.

I bought the appropriate 25-inch O.S. sheets and set out one Saturday with Peter Ransom, a B.T.H. graduate apprentice, to make the survey that was to be the basis of the plan published in 1954 in my *Lost Villages of England*. The parish proved not to be all ridge and furrow, for alongside the railway the ridge and furrow gave way to the quite different earthworks, alas, also now levelled, of house platforms and hollow ways.

I am amazed that I had not already seen the significance of a parish lacking in both church and village. How can it be excused? My personal researches had been confined to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century enclosures but I did recall from my economic history that earlier enclosures had produced depopulations. Why had I not gone to look for the earthworks? Firstly, it must be stressed that writing on depopulation by economic historians had never cited specific places, Tawney's publication of the Whatborough map apart. Secondly, the conventional wisdom, as expressed by Sir John Clapham, Postan's predecessor at Cambridge, considered that desertions were few and their impact exaggerated. Thirdly, I knew that the Ordnance Survey marked archaeological features on maps as a matter of course, but I had never seen a map with 'medieval village, site of'. If there were such things, surely archaeologists would have told the Ordnance Survey about them? It is also significant that although I entertained hopes of going to Whatborough to collate its surveyor's selions with ridge and furrow, but was deterred by its inaccessibility from Rugby, I can recall no project (until much later in the deserted village researches) for visiting the actual 'place where the town of Whatborough stood'.

In retrospect one's blindness always amazes, and I recently encountered another example when I visited Dovedale where I had not been since I was a schoolboy. Between the ages of ten and fourteen I must have walked at least once a year from Thorpe Cloud station down to the Dovedale entrance at Ilam. What did I recently see there? Superb ridge and furrow in every field passed on the way; and next to Tissington station, from which we used to return, the parkland was equally corrugated; and it had never occurred to me to ask my geograohy teacher what it was.

But to return to Bittesby. I cannot recall exactly how it dawned on me that the earthworks must be the remains of the village itself. It may be that I went to Nichols' *Leicestershire* and there read evidence from the village. I certainly could not have been in touch with William immediately. I was aware of his name since each of us had made our debut in the *Economic History Review* in the 1943 volume, indeed occupying successive pages, neither of us, of course, with subjects connected with deserted villages. His paper on the Leicestershire desertions had not appeared, although his work would have been well known to the Leicester record office which I was then visiting weekly to work on pre-enclosure maps, and if I mentioned our survey of Bittesby it would have been natural for them to refer me to him at University College. I recollect everything about our first meeting there except the date and the agenda, for it was the first time that I had been in a University teacher's room since I left Cambridge in 1941, and I was rather overwhelmed to share a tea-table with a professor of history, Hoskins' friend Jack Simmons.

When, then, did I first go to Bittesby and thus be prompted to search for evidence of deserted villages nearer home in Warwickshire, and thence to the pages of Dugdale and to the medieval taxation returns? The only firm point in my own chronology of events is 26 March 1947 when I wrote a short piece for the *Birmingham Post*, 'In Search of Lost Villages'. I was obviously fairly advanced in the pursuit of Warwickshire desertions by that time, and I must have completed my gazetteer of sites in 1947 since on 10 December I delivered a paper, 'The Deserted Villages of Warwickshire' to the Birmingham and Midland Archaeological Society, which later appeared in their *Transactions*. So assuming that it took two years of very part-time research to deal with the Warwickshire sites, it seems likely that the Bittesby discovery took place in 1945.

6. Embracing Archaeology

William and I must have progressed from documents to digging at very much the same time, he at Hamilton, Leicestershire and I at Stretton Baskerville, Warwickshire. During the Steensberg-Postan expedition on 19 June 1948 he took the party briefly to Hamilton to see the trenches which he had opened there, but he must have told me about it earlier, for I had obtained an air photograph of Hamilton to illustrate a short general readers' piece, 'Lost Villages' in the *Ashridge Quarterly* of January-March 1948. Hoskins' own description of his venture is on record:

My 'excavation' at Hamilton is best forgotten. It was simply ignorant enthusiasm and produced nothing; though I have faint

recollection that someone more competent took over on another part of the site and uncovered a house-site with a good circular hearth in the middle of one room which local vandals came out and smashed up before we could take any photographs. Whether this was recorded I don't know . . .

That same spring, before leaving Rugby for Leeds on 31 March, I had exploited a schoolmaster member of an extramural class that I was teaching at Hinckley, Leicestershire, to recruit some of his heartier sixth formers for week-end excavations at Stretton Baskerville just over the Warwickshire border. The bravado of that entry into archaeology was more successful than its ignorant techniques deserved, for we uncovered without difficulty a circuit of walls from the parish church. The site, now a scheduled monument, subsequently took a more important place in the historiography of the deserted village, being the first to receive statutory protection as part of an arrangement to mitigate death duties.

My first embrace with archaeology, like many other first embraces, did not have matrimony in mind. It was to be a cut-and-run affair with limited objectives: my work on ridge and furrow had produced some scepticism and even hostility, so that my prime purpose was to show that the earthworks which fieldwork was bringing to light so extensively were not mistaken Roman or prehistoric settlements. Secondary was the aim of more precise dating for the period of the depopulation since the documentary evidence available suggested that depopulations recorded in the late fifteenth century had been preceded by others. My exploration of the returns from the 1377 poll tax had established that most sites were still then occupied, but even so it left a century intervening. A rapid reading of a textbook on archaeological techniques left the impression that a few trenches and sections would be sufficient to determine the first question and that a trip to the local museum curator with the pottery would settle the matter of chronology. I have no reason to believe that William's trenches at Hamilton did not have the same object.

June 1948 in retrospect was a remarkable month. Unknown to any of us except perhaps Clark, Kenneth St. Joseph flying over Buckinghamshire in search of Roman remains took photographs of earthworks at several deserted medieval sites, while on 26 June a Saturday ramble in the Yorkshire Wolds from Malton youth hostel took Philip and Eric Lawton and myself up the scarp from Birdsall to the isolated church at Wharram Percy and its surrounding earthworks, more substantial than anything I had seen in the Midlands and with shapes that were more obviously houses. The historical sources had suggested that depopulations were confined to the Midlands but here they now were on my new doorstep.

The immediate consequence of the discovery of Wharram Percy was not its excavation. A journey there and back, even when the railway line was still open, would hardly have left any time for work, but more importantly I had first to examine the documentary sources from Yorkshire analagous to those which I had found useful in the Midlands. I obviously had to go back to Medmenham and see what the air photographs had to reveal about Yorkshire. Most important of all, as a newcomer I had no access to a potential labour force. The Lawton brothers, my companions on 27 June, were friends from

schooldays and only one would be in Leeds in 1948-9. It would take time to meet those students and colleagues whom I was later able to recruit as volunteers.

July 1948 was hardly less remarkable a month than June. While on a visit to London I found in the British Museum Manuscripts Room a survey of 1625 which delineated the deserted East Lilling, N. R. By a coincidence, on 22 July Kenneth St. Joseph was flying a northern sortie, and not far from Roman Malton he observed and photographed earthworks at Wharram Percy which he recognised as similar to those he had seen in Buckinghamshire. He and I were oblivious of each other, however, for another three years.

Meanwhile, I was pursuing the historical evidence: in a volume of the Yorkshire Archaeological Record Series I found record of depopulation at Wilstrop, W. R. which was not too far from Leeds. Lilling could be reached by bus from York to Strensall or Sheriff Hutton, so that by early 1949 Lilling and Wilstrop were visited and permission to excavate obtained. Each excavation was conducted by a handful of volunteers, never for more than two or three Saturdays. Tools and techniques were primitive, although with hindsight these sites were not likely to have been productive, given our addiction to trenches and sections, for both were on clayland, with visible enough streets and house platforms but without stone house structures as could clearly be seen in the chalk at Wharram Percy.

The work at East Lilling formed the basis of a broadcast talk printed in the *Listener* for 5 May 1949. Possibly as a result of that talk I was visited by William Singleton, then of the Department of Architecture in the University of Manchester and then, until his early death, professor at York. He brought the offer of student labour, particularly with surveying and recording, and the first survey of the earthworks at Wharram was made by Geoffrey Worsley, a Manchester student.

The possibility of exploring so distant a site as Wharram Percy arose only because on 10 October 1949 the headmaster of the village school at Settrington happened to hear a talk which I broadcast for the BBC Northern Home Service, designed to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Black Death. I had mentioned a record of plague deaths at Settrington and in a letter Mr Winstanley asked whether I knew of a nearby village called Wharram Percy which was locally believed to have been a victim of the plague? If I was interested to work there, he was sure he could get permission from Lord Middleton, who was the owner of the site and a governor of his school; additionally we could use the schoolroom as a dormitory. The latter was a key facility, making the long journey worthwhile.

On June 9 1950 Mr Winstanley joined myself and two Leeds students at the site; one was Peter Tillott, later to become editor of the *VCH* City of York volume and the other, Keith Allison, soon to write his dissertation on the deserted villages of Norfolk and later the editor of the *VCH* for Hull and the East Riding.

The exercise book diary of Miss Myrtle Milner, whose family then lived in one of the three cottages adjoining

the site, records:

Friday 9th. The students arrived to do some excavating . . . Sunday 11th . The students have found some pieces of pot, a bone needle and a part of a knife or dagger and they haven't dug very deep. They are coming again next weekend too.

We did indeed, and again for the weekends of 8 and 15 June 1951, this time sleeping nearer the site in the disused schoolroom at Wharram le Street, but still a mile's walk away. The method of excavation was to establish the presence of an exterior wall by sectioning and then to follow the wall line to establish an overall plan; a section of wall at the north manor house revealed how much more substantial this building would be than the flimsier structure remaining from the peasant houses.

An interval of a year between our weekends shows how far from being a serious and continuing commitment Wharram Percy then was for me, and in the autumn of 1951 I organised several days' work at the much more convenient location of Steeton, W. R. and in May 1952 at Erleshow, adjoining Fountains Abbey.

By this time the historical side of deserted village researches was absorbing enough energy on its own, and excavation at Wharram might well not have progressed beyond the scale of Stretton Baskerville or East Lilling, for in June 1949 Margaret Stewart, book editor of the Lutterworth Press, read my 'Tracing Lost Villages', published in *Country Life* on 15 October 1948. She wrote suggesting that the subject might be expanded to a full-length book.

There are signs in my Royal Geographical Society lecture of 2 April 1950 that researches had moved beyond Warwickshire and Yorkshire, and by June 1951 I was clear of writing a centenary history for the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, had completed a gazetteer of Yorkshire sites for publication in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, and felt confident enough to sign a contract for *The Lost Villages of England*. A proposal that Kenneth St. Joseph and I should write *Medieval England: an aerial survey* had also come from David Knowles and the Cambridge University Press.

6. Beresford and Hurst

The winter after our second season at Wharram, on 23 January 1952, I received a letter from a John Hurst. He had graduated in the summer of 1951 and was then just about to leave his research studentship for a post in the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. His friend Jack Golson had told him that my excavations had yielded pottery, the centre of John's interest. On 10 April, just before leaving to work with Steensberg in Denmark, Jack came to see me in Leeds as John's ambassador, and on 13 April I sent him a bag of our finds. My letter reported that they had already been seen by Jean Le Patourel who

was then digging at Kirkstall Abbey and whose husband, John, was my colleague at Leeds; I also reported the dates assigned to our 1950 finds of pottery when I had submitted them to Rupert Bruce-Mitford after finding no local interest when I had taken them to Dudley Waterman at York.

It was a great relief to find someone who might be able to establish by means of the pottery what, after all, had been the main purpose of my beginning the archaeological toil, a chronology of desertion. It was even more when John accepted my invitation of 3 June to come and advise at the weekend planned for 20 June. As I said in a prophetic letter of 12 June, it would 'professionalise our amateur questionings'. He came at the time when mysterious earlier walls were beginning to appear at surprising angles under the floor of House Five, a portent of the complexity of rebuilding which would be found when the Research Group under John's direction subsequently excavated House Ten and House Six.

Our meeting was obviously cordial, despite what John's diary records of a professional's horror at an amateur's equipment and methods, and he travelled to Leeds on 25 June to advise me how to proceed at the weekend of 27 June when he had an engagement elsewhere. By 11 August he had arranged for Gerald Dunning and William Singleton to meet us at the house of Mrs Milner who had been our hostess while she occupied one of the Low House cottages at Wharram Percy but had moved on in the previous December to the railway cottage at Wharram station. This was the inauguration of the Research Group over tea and eggs from the Milner chickens.

I was sceptical of the realism of a research group, a concept perhaps familiar enough to archaeologists, yet in those days before the Research Councils for the social sciences unfamiliar to historians. Nevertheless I could only be much relieved at the prospect of having the archaeological direction taken out of my hands so that I could devote myself to organising recruitment, accommodation and feeding. This was a more suitable role for a prolix professor-to-be in his Long Vacations, and the other for the Man from the Ministry, giving up his annual leave for the heatwaves and storms of the Wolds. The rest of the story is properly his.

Note

An oral form of discourse has been preserved here as far as possible and reference citations did not seem appropriate. References to many of the 'prehistoric' researches and excavations appear in Beresford and Hurst, eds., *Deserted Medieval Villages: Studies* (1971). The Hoskins-Hurst correspondence is in the files of the former (Deserted) Medieval Village Research Group, now part of the National Monuments Record at the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments.

RESEARCH IN 1986

FIELDWORK

BEDFORDSHIRE

Gannock's Castle, **Tempsford**, is a medieval moated site in the ownership of Bedfordshire County Council. A scrub clearance scheme enabled a detailed survey to be undertaken (Fig. 1).

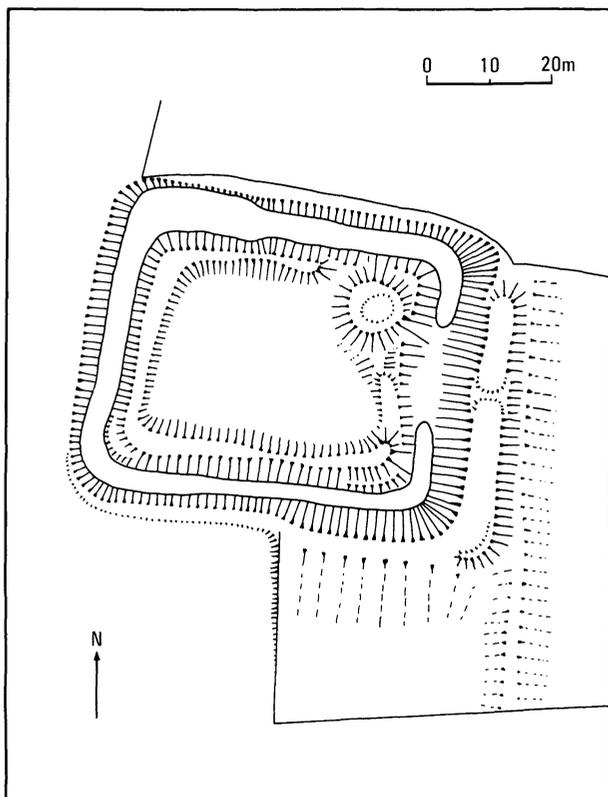


Fig. 1 Tempsford, Bedfordshire

DERBYSHIRE

H. Usher reports on work being done at Sharrow Hall, **Osleston and Thurvaston**, in the parish of **Sutton-on-the-Hill**. Osleston and Thurvaston were two separate manors in Domesday Book, but they shrank until they were joined together, eventually being absorbed by the parent village of Sutton-on-the-Hill. The site is adjacent to the boundary between Upper Thurvaston and Lower Thurvaston, and is the parish boundary between Sutton-on-the-Hill and Longford. The present day farmhouse seems likely to be of eighteenth-century date, possibly dating to the Parliamentary Enclosure period. To the east of the farmhouse is a large field called Night Pasture. This grass field shows a number of earthworks, many of which are rather vague, but there is a clear hollow way from the farm to the stream, and an irregular, roughly pentagonal moated site at SK 2362 3695. This moated site has been the subject of a study by the Archaeological Research Group of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society over the last three years. The moated site and several features have been plotted. The area within the moat has been dowsed and the foundations of a house have been suggested at the southern end. The ditch has been

sectioned, revealing a large quantity of roofing tiles following the ditch contour, together with sixteenth and seventeenth century pottery. This suggests a date for the demolition of the house on the island, the rubbish from which was used to partially infill the ditch. Historical records for the site are sparse.

R.F. Hartley reports that an earthwork survey was prepared of the settlement remains at Lea Hall, near **Tissington** (Fig. 2).

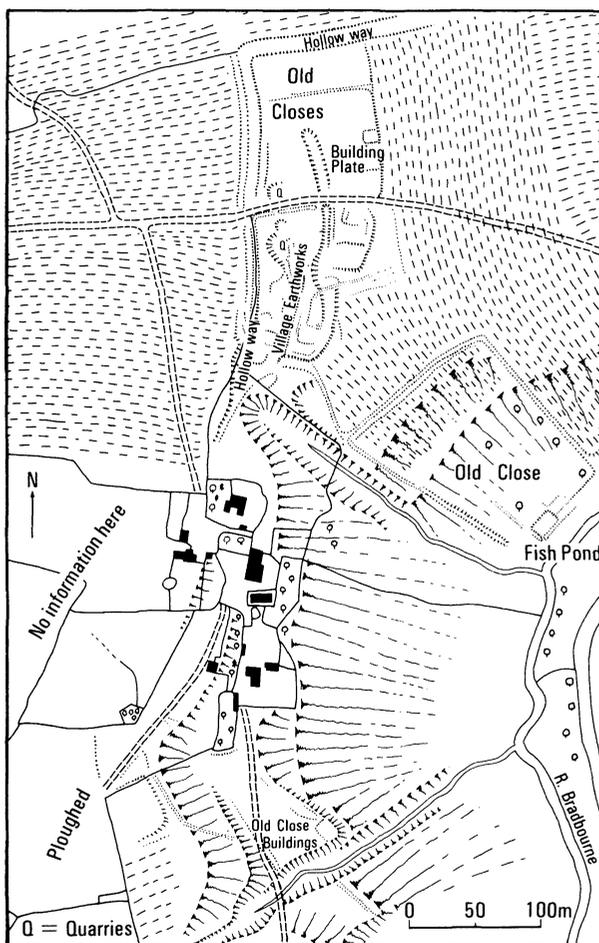


Fig. 2 Tissington, Derbyshire

DORSET

Alan Hunt reports that new earthwork sites have been identified at **Evershot** (ST 588 036), **Wraxall** (ST 577 007; 575 009), **Chilfrome** (SY 590 989), **Manston** (ST 817 152), **Fifehead Magdalen** (ST 775 212), and **Hammoo** (ST 819 145). Earthwork surveys and geophysical prospecting have continued at **Compton Valence** (SY 581 943) and **Wynford Eagle** (SY 583 959).

A gazetteer of deserted and shrunken settlements in the county is kept on a computer file in the Archaeology Unit at the Dorset Institute of Higher Education.

John Oswin continued to study the **South Winterbourne** valley sites. His documentary research has shed light on the late medieval shrinkage at **Ashton** (SY 661 879).

At **Fifehead Magdalen** a pipeline cut through a group of well-preserved earthworks and another badly eroded group. Earthwork surveys were carried out; medieval and post-medieval pottery was collected from the ploughed surface of the eroded area. Merry Ross observed the pipe trenching operation and recovered more pottery and some iron slag. A report on this site is in preparation.

Alan Hunt directed further excavations at **Woolcombe** (SY 553 953) in 1985 and 1986. Preparation of the site archive and analysis of the pottery continued at the Dorset Institute of Higher Education.

The *Bibliography of Dorset DMV sites* has been updated, and is held on computer file at the Institute.

Bailey, C.J. 'The deserted medieval village of West Bexington', *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 106 (1984), 120-123.

Green, C.S. 'Medieval site at Gussage St Andrew and Minchington, Sixpenny Handley', *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 106 (1984), 123.

Hunt, A.M. 'Woolcombe Farm', *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 106 (1984), 155-159.

Hunt, A.M. 'Naller's Farm, Askerswell' *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 106 (1984), 123-124.

Hunt, A.M. 'Woolcombe', *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 107 (1985), 172-173.

Hunt, A.M. 'Radipole' *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 107 (1985), 172.

Hunt, A.M. 'Bishop's Caundle' *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 107 (1985), 172.

Poulsen, J. 'A medieval site at Long Ground, Oakley Down, Wimbourne St Giles', *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 106 (1984), 153-154.

Ross, M.S. 'Kington Magna: a parish survey' *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 107 (1985), 23-46.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

D. Aldred and C. Dyer have planned the site of the deserted village at **Roel** (SP 075 248) and worked on the documents. This has resulted in the remarkable discovery that most of the inhabitants of the medieval village of Roel in fact lived at the eastern end of the nearby village of **Hawling**, and the site of Roel itself was apparently no more than a large hamlet. They are now considering the implications of this discovery in the general context of nucleation processes and village origins.

LEICESTERSHIRE

R.F. Hartley reports on a number of fieldwork projects in the county. Following the completion of various surveys of medieval earthworks, a report detailing all known sites in the **Melton** district has been completed, and will be published by Leicestershire Museums in Summer 1987.

Village earthworks at **Bilstone** and **Congerstone**, and fishponds at **Desford** have recently been surveyed.

Fieldwork by Mrs A. Tarver has led to the re-discovery of a moated site at High Woods, **Diseworth**, the recently abraded earthworks of which have been surveyed by R.F. Hartley (Fig. 3).

Village earthworks at **Shawell** and **Welham** have been surveyed, as have the moat and formal garden at **North Kilworth**, and publication is in hand of the large-scale fieldwalking project in the **Medbourne** area, directed by Peter Liddle.

OXFORDSHIRE (ex-NORTH BERKSHIRE)

J. Brooks reports that the Muster Certificates for Berkshire, 1522, transcribed and edited by John Brooks and Nigel Heard, are being published by the Faculty of Modern Studies of Oxford Polytechnic. Part II, covering the hundreds of **Ganfield** and **Wantage**, is already published. Part I, covering the NW of Berkshire and Part III, covering the SW, will be available shortly. Enquiries should be made to the Department of Humanities.

Oxford Polytechnic students have undertaken fieldwork exercises on various aspects of landscape history in the parishes of **Goosey** (SU 356 918) and **Denchworth** (SU 382 918).

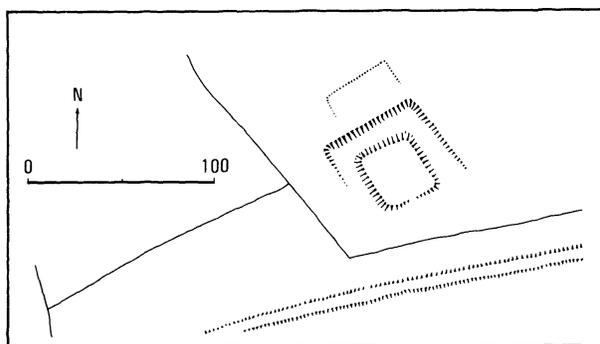


Fig. 3 Diseworth, Leicestershire

Earthworks of a medieval fishpond at **East Hanney** (ex-Berkshire SU 414 927) were surveyed by James Bond, following a planning application for building on the site (Fig. 4). The main pond measured c. 35m by 10m, and had been dug out below the natural ground level, its longer axis orientated approximately east-west with a dam c. 4m broad separating it from Letcombe Brook at the western end. The dam was breached at its southern end. At the upper end of the pond was a broad embayment c. 8m by 8m on its northern side. Two slight wave-cut platforms on the southern bank suggested that the water-level had been subject to some fluctuation during the life of the pond. Entering the south-east corner of the pond was a sharply-incised inlet leat, the middle length of which broadened into a long, narrow depression of c. 16m by

4m; a slight threshold at the bottom end of this middle section may represent the site of a sluiceway, suggesting a possible function as a small subsidiary pond. Below and to the north of this is a meandering depression which appears to represent an older stream course from which the water has been diverted. A possible building platform overlies one meander lobe, and the concave bank facing it is partly overlain by a further bank diagonal to the inlet leat. No documentation has been located for this site. The planning application which necessitated the survey was subsequently withdrawn.

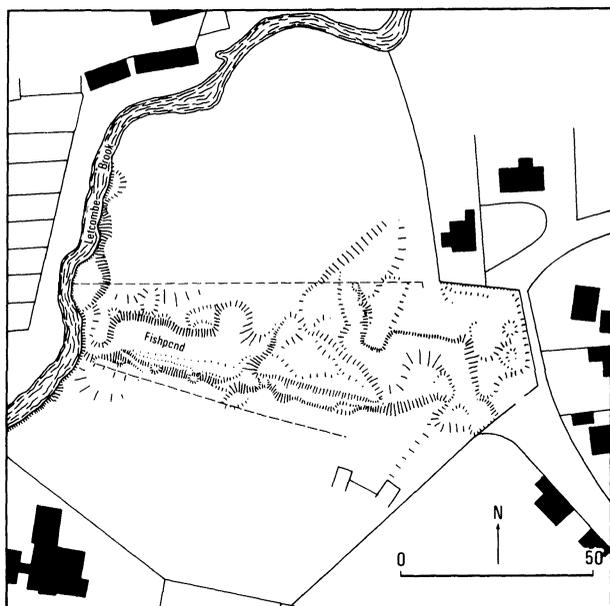


Fig. 4 East Hanney, Oxfordshire

Earthworks in a three-acre pasture field sloping down to the Simmonds Brook at the north-east end of the hamlet of **Upper Milton** in **Milton-under-Wychwood** (SP 261 174) were surveyed as a training exercise by James Bond with members of the Wychwoods Local History Society (Fig. 5). The north-east half of the field was occupied by four lynchets c. 12–14m wide, much disturbed by natural slumping and erosion and the passage of livestock and farm vehicles; these could be matched with strips in Coppice Furlong depicted on the 1842 tithe map. At the eastern extremity of the field the contour lynchets were interrupted by a series of vague, rounded earthworks, probably the stub-ends of ridge-and-furrow belonging to strips in Simmonds Brook Furlong. The earthworks in the south-west half of the field were more complex, and clearly represent part of the medieval settlement. The most prominent features were two parallel banks, 17m apart, running up and down the slope, both turning south-west through a right-angle at the top of the field to border a hollow-way c. 5m wide. This leads directly to a spring at the south corner of the field, where it also runs into a much deeper hollow-way. Within the angle of the lower, inner bank is a plateau c. 28m square, with the foundations of a building 7 by 5m in its western corner; stone footings of another building 5m wide and at least

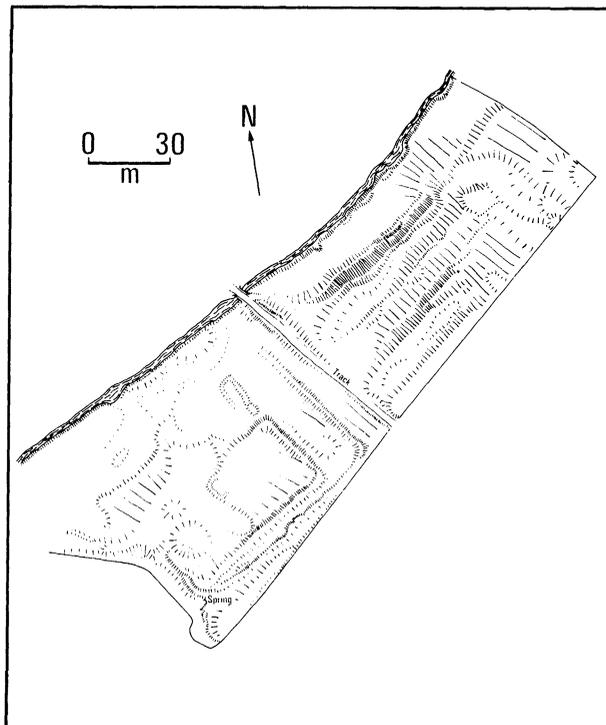


Fig. 5 Upper Milton, Milton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire

16m long were traced below the north corner of the square plateau. The south-west end of the field is occupied by two or three vaguely-defined rounded hollows, probably ancient claypits, and in the valley bottom intersecting cusped hollows indicate former stream meanders prior to the straightening of the brook carried out at the time of enclosure in 1846. Several sherds of medieval pottery, including a couple of Wychwood CX fabric (cf Mellor, 1982), possibly made at Ascott-under-Wychwood nearby in or after the thirteenth century, and a green-glazed sherd of fourteenth/fifteenth century Brill type, together with a few oyster shells were recovered from molehills in the settlement area. Further earthworks, less-clearly defined than those surveyed, were observed at intervals all the way along the village street between the existing houses for a distance of over 1km, and it is evident that the present diffuse and straggling form of Upper Milton hamlet is attributable to contraction leaving gaps within the original settlement area. Conceivably this process was linked with a migration to a new settlement area developing around the green at Milton-under-Wychwood itself.

Reference

Mellor, M. 'Medieval Pottery from the Wychwood', *Oxoniensia*, XLVII (1982), 133–36.

RUTLAND

The deserted hamlet of **Fregthorpe** near Ketton was ploughed up some years ago, and Robert Hartley fieldwalked the site this year (Fig. 6). Most pottery derived from the tenth to thirteenth century, mainly Stamford and Lyveden/Stanton wares. A single Roman sherd was found, and much eighteenth and nineteenth century pottery. Aerial photographs and maps show Fregthorpe to have been a compact, rectangular block of closes, measuring in total about 100 by 200m.

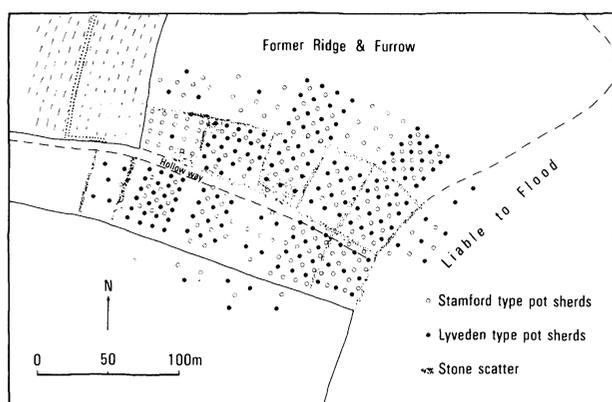


Fig. 6 Fregthorpe, Rutland

WARWICKSHIRE

C. Dyer has planned the earthworks of the deserted village site at **Chadshunt** (SP 349 529), a new site in Warwickshire in spite of this being a much-studied county. The site has Romano-British as well as medieval occupation.

The subject of one of the two of the 1986 summer conferences organized on behalf of the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers was 'Before Domesday: The historical Geography of Medieval England'. This took place at the University of Birmingham 13–15 July and was attended by some 75 delegates. A number of papers were concerned with the nature of pre-Conquest settlement and its relationship to farming units and estate demarcation, both in this country and on the continent. These are to be published by Basil Blackwell (Oxford) as a book entitled *Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, edited by Della Hooke.

WORCESTERSHIRE

C. Dyer continues with his work at **Pendock** (SO 818 340) which has a combination of earthwork, documentary and field-walking evidence, with the potential for a reconstruction of settlement development over a long period from prehistory.

EXCAVATIONS

CHESHIRE

Tatton

As a corollary to the excavations at Tatton Old Hall in 1978 and 1979 and on the site of the "village" at Tatton from 1980–85, two small scale excavations were carried out in the vicinity between April 5th and 20th, 1986. A trench was opened (with Ancient Monument Consent) within the Old Hall compound on the east side of the vehicular access (SJ 7566 8134) in preparation for the anticipated arrival of a timber-framed cottage to be re-erected on the site. This revealed no features earlier than the eighteenth-century when the area was adjacent to a large barn. A second trench was opened at SJ 7547 8116, to investigate a feature in the park. This was a bank c. 10m wide running at right angles to the bed of the Tatton Brook, cutting off the narrow valley of the brook at this point as it flows in a canalised form on a straightened course. The size, form, location and orientation of this feature led to the hypothesis that it might represent a dam, in which case the possibility presented itself that this might be a precursor of the known seventeenth-century dam and mill site at SJ 7590 8200.

Trenching below and across the bank showed that it had been constructed in ten layers within which there were two which should probably be interpreted as turf lines. The construction at this point had initially and successively created not a bank but a circular feature across which the trench cut an arc. The mound had been

made with considerable care, beginning with a small core of sandy material and expanded by the addition of subsequent layers with unusually clear horizons, in at least two episodes separated by a period sufficiently long for a turf line to develop. Divots of clay had been used to stabilise the base of one of these layers. Finds of pottery and brick of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came exclusively from the soil immediately below the turf. The sole finds from within the structure were flakes of flint.

The bank cannot have been intended to serve as a dam, as the sand composition is such that it would have been highly permeable and most unstable. Nor was it intended as a causeway by which to cross the stream or carry material from the pits on the opposite side of the valley. It could not be dated with any precision; it was constructed on peat which had developed naturally in the stream bed, and initial analysis of a column of peat from below the structure suggested an early prehistoric date¹. The feature was sealed by material the deposition of which post-dates the occupation of the village site.

To attempt to resolve the problems of function and date, the section was extended by 2m eastwards into the centre of the putative core of the site. On the basal peat in the extreme east of this trench was a row of peat blocks. The stratigraphy of the mound in this extension remained consistent with a near circular, domed feature rather than a bank as the primary phase of construction.

The problem of interpretation remains. The bank was constructed in a fragile but sophisticated and painstaking fashion, arguably in more than one episode. Initially it was built in a form that appears to have been more akin to a domed mound than a bank, on the peat of a small stream valley, in a chronological context that is open up to the period of emparkment. If the flint wasters are not redeposited the possibility arises of a prehistoric or early historic date. However, the find of a large scraper on the opposite side of the stream in 1985 emphasises the apparent ubiquity of prehistoric flints in the Park. Only excavation of the east end of the bank will resolve the problem and this is scheduled for Easter, 1987.

Reference

- 1 This analysis is taking place under the supervision of Dr Frank Chambers at Keele University.

Nick Higham

ESSEX

Essex County Council's Stansted Airport Project under Howard Brooks has carried out the following work.

Takeley, Colchester Hall (TL 555 237)

Work continued at this Domesday manor in an attempt to elucidate the date, sequence and form of both the buildings and the moated enclosures. At least three structural phases have been identified beneath the modern hall. Precise dating is difficult but it is certain that the foundations of a seventeenth-century brick house, superseded by the modern hall, were those built by the Russell family and that the earliest structure is part of the medieval Colchester Hall which fell into disrepair and was demolished in the mid-sixteenth century, at the dissolution. Many fragments of worked stone, some dating to the twelfth/thirteenth centuries, were reused in seventeenth-century rubble foundations. In general, continuous occupation and rebuilding have removed most of the archaeological deposits and the only area where early remains survived was under the garden of the modern hall. The moat system has also proved difficult to date since it has been regularly cleaned out. The cartographic evidence suggests that the main enclosure (containing the remains of the various Colchester Halls) is the earliest part of the system, potentially medieval in origin, but not necessarily earlier than the seventeenth century, and that the two outer enclosures are nineteenth/twentieth century additions.

Takeley, Great Coopers (TL 552 350)

A suspected medieval house platform and silted-up moat system, adjacent to farm buildings, were examined. Most of the site was shown to have been landscaped during the Second World War when a number of huts, associated with the USAF base, were constructed, the 'house platform' dating to this period. Although some of the moats appear to be early post-medieval, most are recent field drains. There is no reason to believe that the farm

or the moats pre-date the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries.

Takeley, Molehill Green

Site A (TL 563 243)

The remains of a small wooden structure, interpreted as a peasant's hovel, were located following the recovery of a concentration of medieval pottery. The plan of the building was *c.* 5 by 6m, 'D'-shaped, with lean-to sheds or open-ended structures. A badly-disturbed hearth was found inside and a possible cooking-pit outside the building. A preliminary date in the thirteenth century is suggested.

Site B (TL 562 245)

Excavation in an area where a pottery concentration was found revealed a number of early-middle medieval ditches or field boundaries.

Site C (TL 564 240)

Excavation on the site of a further pottery concentration revealed a hitherto unknown moated site, comprising an 'L'-shaped ditch or moat, varying in width from 2 to 7m, enclosing an area *c.* 1 ha, and running into a roadside ditch. It is likely that the new moat and a pond are part of a larger moated site, perhaps centred on Waltham Hall. Internal features suggest fence lines, drains and foundations of wooden buildings associated with a farmyard.

Birchanger, Pantile Farm (TL 524 215)

A concentration of medieval pottery, located during fieldwalking, prompted an area excavation to examine a potential occupation site. No structural remains were present and it is assumed that either ploughing had removed any structure, or that the finds represent a manure dump incorporating domestic refuse.

HAMPSHIRE

Farleigh Wallop

The spring and summer of 1986 saw the **Brighton Hill South** Heritage Project of the Trust for Wessex Archaeology undertaking extensive open-area excavations on the site of the lost Domesday settlement of **Hatch** (SU 600 490). A total of about 2ha. was machine-stripped to the chalk surface, exposing about half of both the outer and inner enclosures and including all of the full churchyard (Fig. 7). A large area was stripped to the south-west of the enclosures where extensive settlement remains were found. The chronological relationship of the open and enclosed components of the settlement will be established by analysis of the ceramics.

The churchyard was found to contain 264 burials. This does not present an accurate representation of the number of individuals as it was clear that graves frequently intersected and that some graves contained more than one body. More graves were also revealed within the church, which was completely uncovered. It was found to be of bipartite plan, with at least two constructional episodes, the chancel having been substantially enlarged during its lifetime.

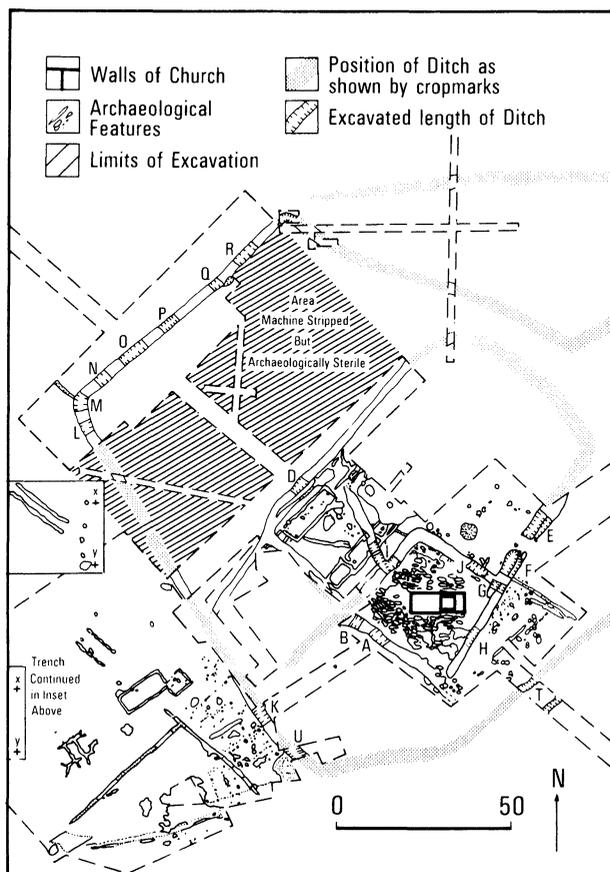


Fig. 7 Brighton Hill South, Hampshire

The south-west half of the inner enclosure contained a well, two ranges of timber buildings (at least five structures represented) apparently arranged around a courtyard, and a terraced area at the north-east end of those buildings. The terrace was about 0.5m deep and backfilled with building rubble: roof tile, large flint nodules and occasional blocks of ashlar. This deposit is interpreted as an episode possibly relating to the deliberate demolition of the church once the settlement had fallen into disuse.

The outer enclosure to the north-west of the inner enclosure was completely stripped and contained no archaeological features. It was nevertheless bounded by a very substantial ditch and is thus interpreted as a stock enclosure. To the south-east of the inner enclosure, and immediately outside its entrance, was a proliferation of post-holes. No buildings could be identified and most of the posts appeared to form fence lines. This area lay close to the valley bottom and might be interpreted as a garden or allotment area.

The extra-enclosure settlement contained at least eight timber buildings, defined by post-holes or slots, and in at least one case by a combination of the two. The largest structure (14 by 6m) was probably a farm building of some sort rather than a domestic structure. Other activity in this area included storage pits and a small kiln or oven, maybe a corn dryer.

It is possible that the extra-enclosure settlement was contained within a fence. Several very substantial post-

holes were revealed to the south and west of the buildings. These posts were unrelated to any of the buildings, but appeared to form a discrete entity in themselves. A 'track' defined by shallow flanking gullies led into the south-west corner of this possible fence. It should be noted, however, that the latter's circuit was far from continuous and several substantial gaps existed despite a careful search for associated features.

A more detailed correlation of the various areas of the settlement will be established during the winter of 1986/7. It is hoped that the chronological relationships between the individual elements will be defined by study of feature groups. Structural analysis will also be undertaken. It is expected that, subject to specialist reports, a report will be completed by March 1987.

G. D. Keevill and P. J. Fasham

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The Raunds Area Project

The Raunds Area Project combines large-scale rescue excavation with field survey and environmental and documentary research, in an examination of the evolution of the landscape in an area of 40 square kilometres of the Nene Valley in Northamptonshire. The study area comprises the Medieval parishes of **Raunds**, **Ringstead**, **Hargrave** and **Stanwick** which, in the Saxon period, may have comprised a single estate. The area stretches from floodplain meadows, through terrace gravels and the mainly permeable geologies of the valley sides, up onto the boulder clay plateau which was part of the Saxon 'forest' of Bromswold. In the medieval period Raunds lay within a typical Midland open-field landscape with nucleated villages and occasional hamlets. This project is examining whether the origins of that type of landscape lie only in the later Saxon period, or if its distinctive character has its roots earlier in the Saxon, Roman, or even Iron Age periods.

A general introduction to the project together with an interim discussion of the Saxon pottery sequence will be found in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 20 (1985). Interim reports on the main excavations and field survey program will be published in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 21 (1986). These projects are being funded by HBMC, Northamptonshire County Council and MSC.

The main fieldwork projects in progress or in post-excavation are

- 1 Fieldwalking survey of the whole Raunds Area.
- 2 Excavation of sixth- to fifteenth-century occupation on Furnells Manor in Raunds village.
- 3 Excavation of sixth- to seventh-century and late-Saxon to post-medieval activity at Langham Road in Raunds village.
- 4 Excavation of occupation from the sixth century to post-medieval on Burystead manor and the tenements fronting onto Midland Road in Raunds village.

- 5 Excavation of late-Saxon and medieval occupation on the deserted hamlet of West Cotton in Raunds parish.

A. Hannen

OXFORDSHIRE

Cumnor, Dean Court Farm (SP 476 159 to 474 061)

Further excavations of the medieval grange of La Dene were directed by T. G. Allen (not T. Williams as incorrectly reported in last year's MVRG Report) for the Oxford Archaeological Unit, funded by the Manpower Services Commission, H.B.M.C. and Thames Water Authority.

The present farmhouse consists of an east-west seventeenth-century block which was extended westwards in the eighteenth century, and again by the addition of a post-and-brick barn in the nineteenth century. A short wing projects south from the east end of the original house. This wing, marked Solar on plan (Fig. 8) proved to be a surviving late-thirteenth century block of two storeys, dated by blocked-up windows in the west wall. During repointing parts of further windows were discovered in the other outside walls and a drain-arch in the south one. It abutted an east-west chamber occupying almost exactly the same position as the standing farmhouse, which uses its walls as foundations. This chamber was probably built shortly before the Solar. Its east end was later divided off by a cross-wall, and a stone bench built up against the cross-wall in the south-east corner. Burnt patches upon successive clay and mortar floors suggest that the chamber had an open central hearth.

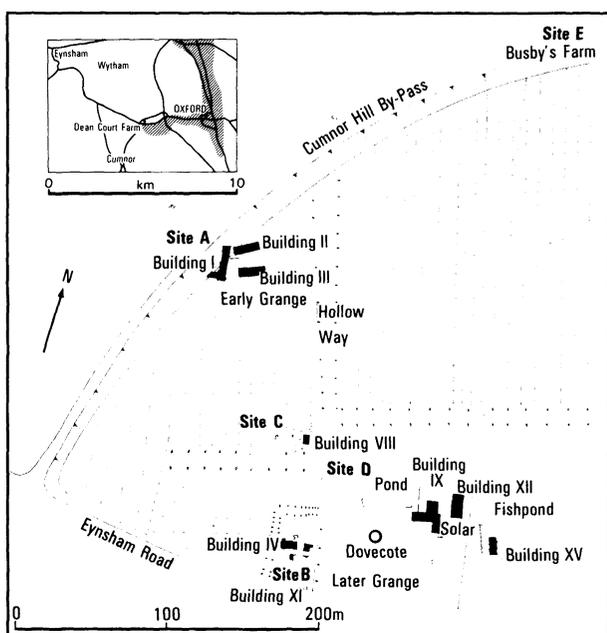


Fig. 8 Cumnor, Dean Court Farm, Oxfordshire

Abutting the chamber on the north side was a combined kitchen and bake-and-brew house, 8m square, whose walls survived nearly 1m high below ground. It was equipped with an elaborate water-supply system: water was fed from a tank outside the north-west corner along a V-profiled channel down the west side and then into two stone tanks running in series east-west across the middle of the kitchen. East of these was a larger tank from which a drain led out under the east wall of the kitchen. This was the drain containing early-fourteenth-century pottery reported on in 1985.

South of the tanks the kitchen had a succession of cobbled floors. Not all of this area was excavated, but burnt areas upon the outside of the chamber wall show that there were hearths up against it. North of the tanks successive floors were either of earth or mortar. At the east end were two circular ovens, and along the centre of the north wall was a hearth floored with slabs. The west end of the building had a large shallow pit in it.

Later the large drain leading out of the kitchen was filled in and cobbled over, and a new sluice and smaller drain running south-east were added to carry away the water from the stone tanks. The circular ovens were replaced by a square malting-kiln, and the adjacent fireplace on the north wall was probably supplied with a chimney at the same time. A rich sequence of carbonised deposits from use of the successive ovens has been recovered.

Access from the kitchen to the chamber was at the west end, where there was a passage between the kitchen and the wall parallel to it, which seems to have acted as a boundary to the domestic buildings.

East of the kitchen and chamber was another well-constructed stone building, XII, built at approximately the same date as the kitchen. It was demolished and rebuilt with wider and shallower walls in the seventeenth century, when it was also extended several metres further south. This post-medieval phase had a cobbled floor. At c. 7m wide this may have been the hall, but too little was excavated to ascertain the function of the building in either phase.

South-west of the domestic buildings a circular dovecote was discovered, 8.8m in diameter externally, 5.2m internally. This was of two phases. The first had a wall 1.8m thick and a limestone cobbled floor, built in the fourteenth century. Sometime in the late fifteenth or sixteenth century its walls were thickened internally and a new stone floor was laid. A large slab in the centre of this second floor perhaps indicates that there was a central post with a revolving ladder attached. The dovecote was pulled down before Rocque's map was compiled in 1759.

The area north of the dovecote and west of the boundary wall seems to have been a cobbled yard. There was a large

pond close to the wall until earlier this century; its origins are uncertain, but it was probably post-medieval.

Some 30m east of the domestic buildings part of a narrow stone building on a north-south alignment was salvaged, 3.2m wide internally and at least 11m long. This was perhaps a cowshed, with opposing wide cobbled entrances and earth floors either side. It sealed a pit and a ditch dating back to the fourteenth century. Between this building and the hall a long, wide, silt-filled channel was uncovered, which contained aquatic molluscs indicating that it had been a large open pond fed by running water. Its silts contained late fourteenth-century bottles. This was probably an open moat or fishpond in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the field in which it lies was called "Fishers" on early maps.

South of the enclosure containing Building IV, which was reported on in last year's MVRG Report, another late medieval building, Building XI, was recorded in section cut by the drainage ditch for the Eynsham Road. This contained a pitched-stone hearth with fifteenth-century pottery upon it.

Further work on the three stone buildings 200m north-west of the farm recovered the remainder of Building II, a simple rectangle 18m by 5m internally, and one half of the third, Building III, which was of almost identical size. The earliest occupation here consisted of a network of shallow gullies, pits and occasional postholes beneath the buildings, which date from the later twelfth century. Building I was erected at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and was flanked by a long succession of ditches. The second and third buildings were added in *c.* 1225 and *c.* 1260, and occupation now seems to have lasted into the fourteenth century. This area still appears to have been the original site of the grange, but it is now clear that there was a considerable overlap with the more substantial buildings on Site D.

SOMERSET (AVON)

Charlton, Almondsbury

Trial excavations by M. Coxah and R. Burchill on a small group of earthworks at **Elm Farm** (ST 5785 7980) previously recorded by Avon County Council, north-east of Brentry, were carried out on behalf of the MSC and City of Bristol Museum. The earthworks form a surviving part of the major village of Charlton, largely removed for the Brabazon runway.

The first period (A) of occupation consisted of charcoal, a series of post- and stake-holes and part of a gully.

A period B timber building on stone foundations is postulated overlying the structures of period A. There were spreads of stone and cobbling around it and possible impressions in this material for timber uprights. South of the building a stone structure was hearth-shaped, but

exhibited little sign of burning. The remains of a pond or substantial ditch were found to the south adjacent to the modern road. It had been partially backfilled with rubble.

Period C appeared to be one of abandonment for there was no further structural evidence until a long rectangular stone building with a stone floor, frequently rebuilt, was constructed in the eighteenth century.

Finds from the earliest structures suggested the site had been occupied from the eleventh century with a gap in the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. Finds and archive are deposited at the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Publication in *Bristol and Avon Archaeology*, Vol. 6, 1988.

Harry Stoke, Stoke Gifford

Excavations by R. Burchill, A. Nicholson on a set of well-defined earthworks thought to be part of the original Domesday village of **Harry Stoke** (ST 6220 7914), were carried out for MSC and City of Bristol Museum. Work was concentrated on a field to the south of the property known as 'The Paddocks'. Two small trial areas were excavated in order to establish the viability of the work prior to redevelopment of the site. The settlement was on the edge of what appeared to be the boundary of the earthworks. On excavation the remains of a dry-built stone wall defined this boundary and on the inside a stone yard. In the southern excavation remains of a substantial stone-founded building of two phases constructed on a terrace in the natural, were found. The structures had stone floors and large parts of the Pennant roof had fallen onto part of the floor. The pottery suggested a fourteenth to fifteenth century date for the structures. Finds and archive are deposited in the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Publication in *Bristol and Avon Archaeology*, Vol. 6, 1988.

Cleeve

Excavation continued in 1985 and 1986, hindered greatly by the weather. The north, south and east walls of the building postulated in 1984 have now been defined and the structure consists of at least two phases. It is of post-hole construction, but the south wall consists of closely-set smaller posts with a sill-beam foundation of flat stones outside it suggesting a double wall. Three rubbish pits beyond the walls, fencing and a drain were also excavated. The building appears to have had a short life in the twelfth century after which the site was abandoned.

The terracing appears to go with the beginnings of a field system and a deep soil against a revetted lynchet suggests ploughing during the period AD 1000-1200. South of this field 'cultivation trenches' suggest perhaps an area of garden.

In 1987 it is planned to complete the excavation of the building.

SURREY

Shepperton

Excavations took place at the Saxon County School (TQ 070 676) between 14 July and 26 September 1986 in advance of building works. The work was directed by R. J. Poulton for the Conservation and Archaeology Section, Planning Department, Surrey County Council and funded by the Education Department, Surrey County Council.

Earlier work on the site by Roy Canham ('Excavations at Shepperton Green 1967 and 1973', *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc.*, 30, 1979, 97-124) had revealed a burial ground and an associated settlement site occupied between the sixth and twelfth centuries A.D.

Little evidence for pre-historic activity on the site was found, apart from a scatter of worked flints, including a Mesolithic tranche axe. A sufficient scatter of Roman pottery and tile was, however, recovered to indicate that a Roman site lies nearby, perhaps where a resistivity survey of the adjacent playing field indicated the presence of stone building foundations below ground.

The character of earlier Saxon occupation remains elusive, but a notable discovery this year was a substantial midden deposit of early-Saxon date, which had been dumped in a natural hollow. Finds from this included plentiful animal bone and pottery (including stamped and decorated sherds of various types), as well as a number of bone artefacts, including two combs. The main period of occupation was revealed by a number of ditches running parallel to those found by Canham. This confirmed his suggestion that the site had been regularly laid out and indicated that this had occurred in the late-Saxon period. The site appears to go out of use in the twelfth century, though a scatter of medieval pottery may be sufficient to suggest that occupation did continue in the immediate vicinity, perhaps on a reduced scale.

Staines: Johnson and Clark

Excavations and site-watching on a 5000m² redevelopment site between High Street, Thames Street and Penny Lane (centred TQ 0349 7149) revealed that the southernmost third of the site had formed part of an inlet of the Thames throughout the Saxon and medieval periods. Two ditches of early- to mid-Saxon date, immediately north of, and parallel to the bank, are presumed to be a continuation of those that were found on excavations further to the east. The earliest deposition

of 'blackearth' that covers all Roman levels across the site contained Saxon pottery including a stamped sherd of late fifth or sixth century type. The High Street and most of the Penny Lane frontage zones had been destroyed by modern foundations, and Thames Street was considerably widened in recent times, so no medieval buildings were revealed in those areas. Close to the riverbank, however, a curious building of thirteenth/fourteenth century date with close-set parallel beams was uncovered; and further north, the deep flint-and-mortar foundations of a multiple-bayed building of similar date were found, the northern part of which may once have extended to the High Street. Penny Lane was found to have been laid out in the early thirteenth century over the line of a late twelfth century ditch, and a succession of timber-and-daub buildings were constructed on either side at its southern end. Some pits and wells associated with the Penny Lane buildings contained leather soles and off-cuts which may indicate the presence of a cobbler's workshop. The whole of the zone between the street and land frontages and the riverbank was used for pit-digging from the late eleventh to the fourteenth century, but there was almost a complete absence of late-medieval features or finds.

Staines: Courages Brewery

Site-watching and sampling excavations on an 1800m² redevelopment site between Church Street, Bridge Street and the River Thames (TQ 0327 7170) showed that most of the site had been part of the river or was periodically flooded meadowland throughout the medieval period. On the permanently dry land to the north, Saxon sherds and a penannular loom weight were found; an eleventh- or early twelfth-century ditch lay parallel to Church Street, and some post holes and a concentration of thirteenth-century pottery indicated medieval habitation along the Church Street frontage. A water course in the north-east corner of the site which was extant from the Roman period until the mid-thirteenth century, may be an earlier line of the Wraysbury River which together with its sister tributary, the River Colne, separated this area of dry land from the High Street area where all previous excavations in Staines have taken place.

Both excavations were funded by the developers under the auspices of Surrey County Council. Members of staff of the Planning Department (Conservation & Archaeology) directed work on both sites; P. Jones and N. Shepherd directed the first and P. Jones the second; both had the assistance of a Community Task Force team.

**INTERIM REPORT OF THE
THIRTY-SEVENTH SEASON
OF THE
WHARRAM RESEARCH PROJECT,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

Edited by

Paul Stamper

The season from 4–26 July 1986, together with long weekends in October 1985 and May 1986, was under the general direction of J. G. Hurst. Organisation was by Francesca Croft. It now looks as if during the final seasons of excavation (due to end in 1990) a fundamental reassessment of the evolution of the medieval and earlier landscape in the village area will be possible, and indeed necessary. This is due to the remarkable results of a geophysical survey of the village area by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, already completed over the northern end of the village. This is revealing that beneath the village earthworks are complex ditch systems, probably of two main phases. At the moment one appears to be late Iron Age, the other late Roman (below, North Manor). Selective trenching will be directed towards a fuller understanding of these systems and their relation to the village plan. A further discovery in 1986 which disturbed accepted theories was the establishment of an early-medieval date for the main earthwork in the village area, the so-called lynchet which divides the tofts from the crofts in the west row.

1. Parish Survey

Under Colin Hayfield's supervision a variety of projects on the area's high barns, woodlands and graveyards was carried out, several by undergraduates of the Geography Department of Birmingham University. In October 1985 trial excavations were undertaken at the site of the Roman farmstead at Birdsall High Barn, producing first- to fourth-century material.

Detailed publication of the Parish Survey should begin in 1987. The first monograph, on the Roman landscape, will include a detailed report on the above excavation.

2. Sites 82 and 83 — North Manor

Excavations supervised by S. Roskams.

82: The 'substantial Roman stone building' reported last year (*MVRG 31st Annual Report*, 1985, pp24–5) proved to be medieval. It measured at least 11m by 3m, and was mainly evidenced by a deeply-cut terrace in the chalk. This trench also located some mid-Saxon activity, including substantial and recut post-holes.

83: Re-excavation of a 1961 trench found painted wall plaster associated with a building always suspected to be the hall of the medieval North Manor. This building sealed the east-west inhumation located in 1961. That burial now appears to be of Saxon or early-medieval date, as beneath the soil horizon it cut were two intercutting ditches, one late-Iron Age/early-Roman. Both appear on the magnetometer survey, and it is beginning to look as

if there was a major reorganization of the landscape during the Roman period.

3. Site 81 — Toft 10

P. A. Stamper and R. A. Croft removed a 5m wide section across the main north-south lynchet. It proved to be of ?turf construction, and early medieval (?Norman) date. This bank (it has no ditch) is an integral part of the planned village's layout, and it is tempting to ascribe the layout of the whole west row of the village to the period of the bank's construction. The bank seemed to reinstate a boundary observed by underlying mid-Saxon ditches and surfaces. Saxon occupation apparently extended both east and west of that line though, suggesting that it did not comprise the limit of the Saxon settlement. A wide range of Saxon small finds (but no coins) was recovered from the site in addition to extensive collections of ceramic and faunal remains: combs, beads, part of a glass vessel, bone, bronze, and iron pins and needles, a small spearhead, a hammer head, a chisel and spindle whorls and loom weights.

4. Site 78 — Croft 6 West

P. Herbert completed the excavation of the multi-period ditch complex, which in part bounds a late-Roman to mid-Saxon farm surface. The site produced evidence that in the twelfth century the village boundary, a ditch, was moved inwards along the southern half of the village's west row by about 50m, truncating the crofts. The new ditch bisected an oven or kiln, perhaps used for crop processing.

5. Sites 51 and 74 — Low House Farm

S. Wrathmell continued to oversee work on the eighteenth-century courtyard farm. On site 51 the west range of the farm was fully exposed for the first time; excavations are showing that it had a complex history, and many changes of use and function are evidenced.

The basic plan of the farmhouse built in the 1770s can now be seen, and details of its internal fittings are being established.

6. Glebe North — Site 54

Further investigation was made by C. Harding of some features cut into natural and reported last year.

7. Site 77 — Glebe West

The latest levels of the late medieval ?benefice house began to be revealed as J. Wood removed extensive demolition deposits, some burnt, from around and within its walls. Demolition apparently took place in the sixteenth century.

WALES

GLAMORGAN, Cosmeston

The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust's programme of excavation and reconstruction at the deserted village of Cosmeston has continued throughout 1986 (Fig. 9). The excavation has been mainly concentrated on the area to the west of the former village street, where in 1984 medieval remains were discovered beneath an extensive metalled surface dating to the seventeenth century¹. Some of these remains were investigated in 1985 when Building G was excavated and interpreted as a 'hall-type' structure².

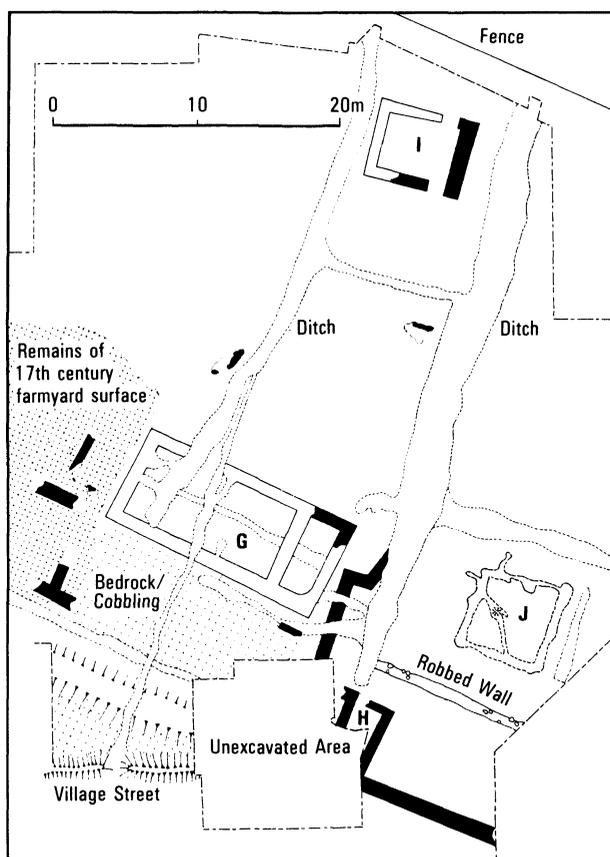


Fig. 9 Cosmeston, Glamorgan

The environs of Building G were drained by two ditches. These have proved to be far more complex than previously realised, having undergone numerous recuts and scourings during a likely four-hundred year history. Prior to the laying down of the late-seventeenth-century metalled surface, they were functioning both as drains and as property boundaries. At the western end of the excavation these two east-west drains were connected by two post-medieval cross ditches, forming a roughly square area totalling about 120 sq. m. Only the most easterly of these ditches has been fully excavated and was thus demonstrated to have been re-dug on a number of occasions. The last phase of this feature consisted of two smaller ditches separated by a 2.5m wide, centrally-placed gap, which possibly formed an entrance way into the plot. The cross-ditches appear then to have been primarily boundaries.

The plot formed by these boundaries contained a small, almost square structure (Building I) with a probable threshold in its north-western corner. The building remains had suffered from stone robbing and only robber trenches survived on its southern and western sides. The northern wall survived as a single course of flat lias slabs 0.6m to 0.8m wide, set within a shallow construction trench. These types of footing were very similar to the base of an apparently dry-stone-built boundary wall to the east of Building D on the east side of the village street. The use of flat slabs in the bottom course set within a shallow trench is still a technique used in the modern construction of dry stone walls. It seems likely that this was a technique being used at Cosmeston for the construction of dry stone walls and possibly also for bonded walls with shallow foundations. It may be that Building I utilised more than one wall-building technique in its construction as the robber trench of the building's southern end was much deeper than that created by the excavators' removal of the slabs from the northern end. At the southern end of the building, construction deposits were revealed consisting of stone scarfings and the red clay used in bonding the walls, but these were absent from the northern end. Furthermore, during the removal of a probable post-medieval fill from within the most northerly drainage ditch, large quantities of building rubble were encountered. This had been pushed into the ditch from the direction of Building I and included flat slabs, a door lintel and lias blocks of a type not represented in the *in-situ* remains of the structure. It seems likely that the structure was completely stone built, using more than one technique and that the surviving wall remains were not constructionally representative of the whole building.

No real floor surface was found within the building. Its internal features consisted of a slabbed hearth and a shallow trench at right angles to the eastern wall which might have been a beam slot for a partition wall. However, the proximity of the latter feature to the hearth indicates that they could not have been contemporary features. As the structure possessed a hearth, the building may well have been domestic in function, in which case it was a fairly squalid dwelling, possibly only a squatter cottage, erected some time after organised village life had ceased, at least in this area of the settlement.

Building I appears to be post-medieval in date, as its southern robber trench in part overlies the fills of the medieval phases of the southern drainage ditch. Furthermore, its destruction levels contained large quantities of white-washed wall plaster, a feature of post-medieval buildings in the Vale of Glamorgan. The structure was probably robbed and levelled at the same time as Building G, circa 1660-1680, and prior to the laying down of the seventeenth-century farmyard surface.

The plan and size of Building I and its surrounding ditches were similar to an area excavated in 1985. To the north of Building G and on the other side of the northern drainage ditch, a roughly square series of shallow depressions was excavated. To the north, this was bounded by a drainage gully which ran into a ditch on the structure's western side. To the east were the robbed remains of a probable dry-stone-built boundary wall. It now seems that the shallow depressions were beam slots

for a timber-built structure (Building J) of a contemporary date to Building I.

To the south of Building G and clearly showing through the late-seventeenth-century metallated surface were the walls of an apparently medieval structure (Building K). The dimensions of this building, approximately 10m by 6m, are very similar to those of the two previously-excavated house sites of Buildings A and D, suggesting that it also had a domestic function³. Such a probability for this structure and its locational relationship with Building G raises the possibility of Building G having had a primary agricultural function, rather than the domestic or communal function that was initially postulated. Such an identification tallies with the likely use of an external stair to gain access to a half loft at the building's northern end. The hardstanding formed of bedrock and metalling outside the building's south-eastern corner may well be a farmyard and some evidence was found for organic waste deposits overlying this surface.

During the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the area to the west of the village street was drained by the two previously-mentioned drainage ditches; such drainage was essential to habitation in the area due to the ease with which it floods. The northern ditch at its largest measured about 1.15m wide and 1.8m deep. Its earliest recoverable finds-producing fill contained thirteenth/fourteenth century pottery and a late-thirteenth-century bronze strap-end buckle. Towards its eastern end it cut through a set of walls of very crude construction of triassic and liassic limestone rubble. The walls were bonded with red clay, and within this matrix a few sherds were found of pottery containing large calcite grits, a type known at Cosmeston to pre-date the thirteenth/fourteenth century 'Vale' fabrics⁴.

The southern ditch, at its greatest size, was about 1.5m wide and 1.2m deep at the western limit of the excavation. As with the above ditch, most of the medieval fills survived only on the sides due to the frequent scourings. The small quantity of finds recovered from these were all contemporary with those from the northern ditch. It appears that this southern ditch was connected to underfloor drains within Building G and to a southern gable end drainage gully also belonging to that structure. Some medieval fills are still to be removed from this ditch, and its excavation will continue in the summer of 1987.

During the spring of 1986, further trial work was carried out on the site known as Cosmeston Castle, and believed to be the site of a fortified manor house. An area of 91 sq. m, largely consisting of two parallel trenches, was deturfed and cleaned. The visible archaeological deposits were recorded but not investigated. As with previous trial work on this eastern side of the 'Castle site', substantial masonry remains were encountered which included the possible base to a round corner bastion. Its size was too small to suggest that it might be the base to a tower mentioned as having been standing on the north side of the site in the fifteenth century. Amongst the large quantities of building rubble, a later-medieval glazed ridge tile was recovered.

The excavations undertaken in the past year have revealed a considerable amount of information regarding the settlement of the area to the west of the village street. It is now clear that there was a phase of habitation activity between the collapse of medieval occupation and the later, seventeenth-century developments. This can best be placed as having begun in the sixteenth century; the area to the west of the village street has produced some fragments of sixteenth-century ceramics and a few Tudor coins. It would appear that such settlement activity was of a low level of social status.

The rebuilding work has concentrated on the completion of an animal byre which was excavated in 1983 as part of a farmstead complex dating to the earlier fourteenth century⁵. A fourteenth-century kilnhouse consisting of a bake oven and a corn-drying/malting-kiln has also been reconstructed and will be roofed in the summer of 1987 when it is proposed to conduct experimental firings.

Further excavation to the west of the village street will be undertaken during 1987, including the excavation of the remaining medieval fills in the drainage ditches and the exposure and removal of more post-medieval surfaces in the south of the area. The reconstruction of the structures on the opposite side of the street will also continue throughout 1987-88.

References

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- 6 Newman, R., 'Cosmeston: A Medieval Village Reborn' *Archaeology Today* (April 1987), 42.

NORTHERN IRELAND

COUNTY ANTRIM

In 1981 we reported the discovery of upland settlements during field survey in south and mid- Antrim. Between 1982 and 1986 excavations as well as continuing survey and air photography have extended our knowledge of upland medieval settlement in the county. Excavation has been partly for research, to try to date newly-identified types of site, and partly rescue, in the context of grant-aided reclamation schemes in agriculturally less-favoured areas. Rural medieval settlements in Ireland have proved

difficult to locate: ridge-and-furrow is largely absent, and a recent review lists only a handful of excavated medieval houses. The results of the recent work in Co. Antrim are therefore of particular interest.

Excavation of one of a group of houses at **Tildarg** (J 2396 9656) showed it to have been a rectangular cruck-roofed structure, with everted-rim pottery and a radiocarbon date of c. 1265 A.D.¹ At **Glenmakeeran** (D 1654 3738) one of a group of sod-walled rectangular houses was dated to the medieval period by similar pottery. The excavators suggested seasonal occupation during the practice of transhumance². At **Craigs** (C973 180) a sod-walled rectangular house in an abandoned arable field system was

similarly dated by the presence of everted-rim ware, but radiocarbon dates are not yet available³.

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B. B. Williams and A. Hamlin

RESEARCH IN 1986 OVERSEAS

DENMARK

In 1986 Silkeborg Museum excavated a water-mill near Vejerslev, east of Silkeborg. The mill had a vertical wheel dated by dendrochronology to 1150, shortly after which time it was overturned by a flood. Huge amounts of oak had been used in the construction of the mill-complex, including a 40m-long mill weir. From the dam water was led to the mill house, which was only partially excavated. Its destruction by flooding meant that organic deposits such as wood, bones and leather were very well preserved. The final excavation will take place in 1987, after which it is hoped that it will be possible to totally reconstruct the mill house and machinery.

A similar mill, also near Silkeborg, with a vertical wheel of paddle-blade type, dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, was previously excavated by the museum.

It seems that the first water-mills came to Denmark about 900 A.D., perhaps brought from England by the Vikings and as far as we know, no mills with horizontal wheels have been found in Denmark, except in Borholm.

Christian Fischer

FRANCE

AUVERGNE

Novacelles (Puy-de-Dôme)

The borough of Novacelles is the result of a merger of two parishes which were part of a castle estate. The study of written documents, archaeological remains and plans shows, indeed, that these two parishes have originated from castles attributed to the thirteenth century and near which settlements have been established. (M. Boy, "Trois sites de la commune de Novacelles (P.-de-D.)" in *Chronique historique d'Ambert et de son arrondissement*, 1986, p.36-43.)

Pessat-Villeneuve (Puy-de-Dôme)

Pessat was the chief town of an ancient parish in the marshes of Limagne, of which the church of Saint-Martin has been known since the end of the twelfth century. The most ancient sanctuary, associated with the burial grounds, was set up in the ruins of a Roman-Gallic settlement. The church, which had become the centre of a priory and the focal point of a parish, was completely refurbished and rebuilt twice, particularly in the fifteenth century. Latterly, the religious buildings, the cemetery and the outbuildings have been enclosed by a large

drainage ditch. The priory and the church were abandoned in the first half of the seventeenth century to the advantage of a neighbouring village called Villeneuve. The anthropological study of the skeletons from the burial grounds is in progress. (B. and J. M. Sauget, *Archeologie et Autoroute. La Chapelle de Pessat. Ville de Riom*, musée Francisque Mandet, 1986.)

Saint-Victor-sur-Massiac (Cantal)

On the plateau of St. Victor-sur-Massiac, excavated from 1972 to 1982, the initial occupation was a *castrum* of the Low Empire protected by a rampart of earth across the terrain and within which stood a funeral church. The building was destroyed in the sixth century. The church was then rebuilt in wood and enclosed in a compound, reducing the range of the first defence system. In the Carolingian period it was an outbuilding of an estate situated at the base of the slope. After having been the focal point of a priory and refurbished for this purpose (eleventh to twelfth centuries) the church, enlarged, became the centre of a small village which took shape in the last centuries of the middle ages and organised itself progressively on a linear plan, modelled on the church and what was left of a neighbouring village. (L. Tixier and R. Liabeuf, 'Aménagements et constructions sur le plateau de St. Victor-sur-Massiac (Cantal) de la protohistoire au XVIIe siècle. Essai d'interprétation stratigraphique et chronologique. *Arch. Méd.* 1984, t.14, p.221-257.)

Collandre (Cantal)

The excavations of the abandoned village of Espinasse in the mountains of Cantal at an altitude of 1100m. at the superior limit of the settlement have been in progress since 1982. That the village existed from the beginning of the Carolingian period is evidenced by a fragment of polyptic. It seems as though the village still existed towards the end of the thirteenth century, but in the seventeenth its territory was turned into a grazing field in summer. Investigations, conducted in parallel with the excavations, on the ground and by air have revealed the existence in the neighbourhood of numerous other abandoned buildings; particularly it has been possible to identify the citadel which in the thirteenth century was the stronghold of the small domain to which Espinasse belonged. (O. Lapeyre, G. Fournier, R. Roche, M-C. Coste, "Etude architecturale et d'archéologie du paysage de villages désertés de la commune de Collandre (Cantal)", *Mémoire de maîtrise d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie* (Paris I, sous direction de L. Pressouyre, 1986 (manuscrit).)

G. Fournier

PROVENCE

A programmed excavation has been carried out on a castle mound within the precincts of the Centre for Nuclear

Studies of Cadarache (13115 Saint-Paul-les-Durance, France). This site is set in a rich archaeological context which includes several early sites, a vast necropolis of late antiquity, ruins of a medieval chapel and the castle of Cadarache.

The mound is composed of an ovoid hillock of about 75 by 40m at its base. The platform is more or less circular, 15m in diameter; on its circumference were some blocks of lime which have been shown to be the remains of a building of which only the foundation trenches have been found.

A preliminary sonic test organised last year had revealed the outline of two perpendicular walls. Some broken pieces of grey ceramic with a ledge "with pulley", well-known on the Provençal sites in the eleventh-twelfth centuries, have been found. This dating had been used as a working hypothesis.

The widespread excavation has brought to the light the outline of a fairly large building which remains to a great extent unexplored. The finding of a room orientated north-south with an inner width of 3.3m and at least 6.7m in length, has led to the discovery of a store-pit dug into the ground to a depth of 1.3m. To the north, a room perpendicular to the other one has been cleared. One can therefore assume an L-shaped building which would mark the boundaries of a courtyard facing south, sheltered from the prevailing mistral wind. In this presumed courtyard a store-pit, with a depth of 2.5m has been excavated. The 1987 campaign should enable the plan of the building as a whole to be exposed.

The ceramic material, for the most part consisting of grey fragments of the *pégau* type, has been enriched by fragments of a jug of pink clay varnished in green. This type of ceramic is known in Provence to have appeared only at the beginning of the thirteenth century. This gives a more recent dating. Metal finds, including a key, the clapper of a cattle bell, a belt-buckle, a knife-sheath fragment and some nails point equally to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The total collection of material is very small (80 medieval fragments) and shows an occupancy of short duration. One must add about 300 fragments of ordinary, old, very-worn ceramics found in the farmyard. The characteristics of this ancient occupancy remain to be defined.

In conclusion one should point out the value of excavating a wide area which not only enables us to have a precise knowledge of the sites, but has also enabled us to make more accurate the dating provided by the preliminary investigations.

D. Mouton

DOCUMENTS

Buildings of a Customary Tenant in Brassington, Derbyshire

An account for rebuilding a peasant house in 1441 was found by chance in the account rolls of the Derbyshire estates of the Duchy of Lancaster¹. Such accounts are rare, and this one is of particular interest because no small buildings of medieval date have survived in Derbyshire. The Latin text is translated in full apart from the reiteration of the word 'said', save where its absence would cause ambiguity, and of the phrase 'by agreement in gross' which follows each item.

Cost of remaking the house of a customary tenant

In wages of William Frome and his companions with their beasts and wagons, carrying 14 wagon-loads of oak and other timber felled by the carpenter in the king's wood at *Wattestonwalle*, according to contract, and carried from thence to the township of Brassington, a distance of 6 miles (*leuca*), taking for each wagon-load 13d. 16s. 4d.

In wages of Nicholas Bradshaw, carpenter, felling trimming, squaring and framing from the above timber the timberwork (*opus lignen'*) of a dwelling house of 4 bays and a barn of 3 bays for a customary tenant of the aforesaid township, in the place of other buildings which had fallen to the ground, by agreement with the Seneschall, 46s. 8d.

In 6 wagon-loads of dry straw bought from the vicar of Bradborne for the new roof of the dwelling house, (*domus mans'*) 8s., and for carriage from the vicarage to the said township for 2 miles, giving for the cartload 5d., 2s. 6d.

In wages of Thomas Elys, roofer, for 4 days at 5d. per day, 20d. and for his servant for 4 days at 3d. per day, 12d. with straw bought as above, and for watering and drawing it for covering the roof of the dwelling house, as examined in detail, 2s. 8d. (3s. 6d. crossed out).

In wages of a dauber with clay for the claying and daubing of the walls (*parietes*) inside the house called *parclozes*; and for ridging with clay and turves, 3s. 4d.

In preparing and carrying clay for the work and also for carrying stones for erecting and building the walls, 12s.

In wages of John Wyberleye, mason, for remaking and erecting the walls with materials as arranged above and from stock, 12s.

For straw bought for tempering with clay for levelling and ramming the floor of the said dwelling house, 2s.

In 5000 nails called lathnayles (4s.2d.) bought at Derby, at 9d. the thousand (sic.); nails called bordnayles (8d.); straw bought from the vicar of Bradborne (6s.8d.) for roofing a barn of three bays on the aforesaid tenement, new-made as above, and for wages of two labourers (8d.) drawing the straw and helping the roofer as agreed, and examined in detail, 13s.2d.

In wages of two masons, with stones previously acquired by them, building the walls of the barn up to mid-height, 5s.

In preparing and carrying clay for this work and for other work on the buildings on the tenement, 2s.

In cutting and carrying branches and brushwood in the woods of the manor and carrying them thence to the tenement and for working and winding them in the walls of the barn, 4s.

In carriage of one parcel of straw bought as above for roofing the barn, 4s.

In wages of a labourer occupied on unskilled work (*opera servilia*) on the buildings, both in clearing away rubbish and old timber and working with the mason, carpenter, and others at the time of the raising of the buildings, together with bread and ale bought at the time of the raising, as examined in detail, 4s.4d.

Total £6.15s.4d.

Brassington was a manor within the erstwhile Ferrers' Honour of Duffield in the uplands of north-west Derbyshire, incorporated into the Lancastrian estates². It was one of only two settlements among nearly fifty where the lord shouldered the cost of repair of peasant houses, which suggests, perhaps, that we have here differing manorial custom for elsewhere in this part of the Lancastrian estate, as in the west midlands generally, repair was the responsibility of the tenant³.

The four-bay house is likely to have measured at least forty feet, and more probably nearer fifty feet (15.24 m). The fact that it had more than one interior wall suggests a hall and two rooms, or just possibly a hall, a walled cross-passage, and a room beyond.

Thatched roofs are the norm in the west midlands, so it is not surprising to find one even on a stone-built house, in contrast to the situation in contemporary Yorkshire where stone roofs were common⁴. Cresting of the thatch was universal practice, though the use of turf, or turf and clay, for the purpose rather less so. Ramming a floor prepared with tempered clay was not always considered necessary, or at least does not appear in every account for peasant building⁵.

The masons provided some of the necessary stone, and some came from 'stock', i.e. from the reserve of building materials held on many manors, and sometimes itemised on the annual Reeve's account in place of the earlier stock account. Neither stone nor timber were costed because they derived from the manor itself, as did the material for much manorial as well as peasant building, a factor which makes it impossible to put a true cost on houses. Nails on the other hand, and other small iron work, had to be bought in the nearest town, but in this case hinges, hasps and locks, itemised in other similar accounts, are not mentioned. Possibly they were re-used from the old house.

Brassington is situated at *c.* 260m O.D.; Bradbourne, from whose vicarage the straw was bought, lies lower down the dale, something over 1½ miles distant by the steep direct route across the hill, which suggests that the *leuca* measured approximately a mile. The timber had travelled six miles, and six miles away in the Derwent valley beyond Wirksworth, another Duchy manor, was the nearest likely source of timber. The valley is still wooded, and the first edition OS map shows a piece of woodland marked *Kingslot* extending almost to *Watfield Farm*. Derby, the source of the necessary nails, is something over 13 miles away as the crow flies.

References

- 1 PRO, DL29/369/6/80
- 2 Blanchard, I. S. W., *The Duchy of Lancaster Estates in Derbyshire*, Derbyshire Arch. Soc. Record Series III, 1971, Fig. 1.
- 3 Dyer, C., 'English Peasant Buildings in the Later Middle Ages', *Medieval Archaeology*, XXX, 1986, 28-29.
- 4 Harrison, B. and Hutton, B., *Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland*, Edinburgh, 1984, 5; Faull, M. L. and Moorhouse, S. A., *The West Yorkshire Archaeological Survey*, III, 802; Leeds District Archives, MX 10/11.
- 5 Sharp, H. B. 'Some mid-fifteenth century small scale building repairs', *Vernacular Architecture*, XII, 21.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

NEW MEMBERS 1986

Clayton, P., 211 Marsh Lane, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV10 6SA.
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 The Librarian, Haddon Library, Faculty of Archaeology & Anthropology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ.
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RESIGNATIONS 1986

Bolton, P. M., Warwicks.
 Davies, M. E., Chalgrove, Oxford.

DECEASED 1986

Tebbutt, F., Sussex.
 Sutton, R. N. P., Stockport.

M.V.R.G. INTERIM STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT, 19.11.85-30.10.86

INCOME

Subscriptions		
by cheque/cash	568.00	
by banker's order	1153.00	
		1721.00
Sales		213.78
Donations		
Anonymous	670.00	
Others	40.00	
Richard Muir Fund	28.00	
		738.00
Grants		
National Monuments Record	500.00	
British Academy	500.00	
		1000.00
H.B.M.C. grants for excavation		
Wharram Percy 1986	4500.00	
Wharram post-excavation		
Second instalment 1985-86	7570.00	
Extra grant	1624.50	
First instalment 1986-86	5000.00	
Cash in hand		
in bank, 19.11.85	3164.97	
in petty cash	7.00	
	<u>25539.25</u>	

EXPENDITURE

Thirty-third Annual Report (1985)		
Typesetting		not yet paid
Printing		c.1500.00
Aerial photographs		46.00
Postage and administration		148.19
Refunds of subscriptions paid by banks in error		43.00
Secretarial expenses (1985)		145.80
Excavations		
Wharram Percy 1986		4500.00
Wharram post-excavation		14194.50
Cash in hand		
in bank, 30.10.86		6454.76
in petty cash		7.00
		<u>25539.25</u>

