

# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1 General by Rob Poulton

fig 1 The Friary Meux Brewery, situated in the angle between Onslow Street and North Street, was for nearly a century a familiar landmark to the people of Guildford. Its name preserved a faint memory that it lay on the site of a medieval Dominican Friary. Knowledge of the exact location of these buildings had, however, been lost in the centuries after its dissolution in 1538. In the early 1970s it was decided to redevelop the friary site and consequently in 1973 Felix Holling, fig 5, 19 & then curator of Guildford Museum, opened two small trial trenches. He discovered that footings of the friary buildings survived in good condition. Large scale excavation was clearly needed and 21 this was readily agreed to by MEPC, the site developers, and organised by and through the ch 2: 5 Department of the Environment and Guildford Museum. The work was funded by DoE, Guildford Borough Council and MEPC. Humphrey Woods then directed the excavations in conjunction with the first phase of demolition in 1974. The second phase of demolition did not, however, take place until 1978 and Woods then had other commitments which prevented him from taking charge. Rob Poulton, Field Officer with the County Archaeological Unit, was asked to direct this stage of the excavations.

This division of responsibility for the excavation work not surprisingly created some difficulties in the preparation of this report. In particular, the two main seasons of work (the results of Holling's work are incorporated into Chapter 2) had taken place under very different ch 2: 2 circumstances and hence had different aims and used different techniques. This resulted in ch 3: 1



Plate 1 Aerial view from the east of the excavation at 23 June 1974, showing the location of the Friary in relation to the modern Onslow Street (background) and (left) North Street. Photograph: National Monuments Record, Crown Copyright

primary records quite distinct in form and detail which proved hard to combine satisfactorily. This basic problem was added to by expected differences of opinion and emphasis between the two chief authors and further emphasised by the introduction of microfiche publication of level III (DoE 1975) reports. Responsibility for the different parts of the report is indicated in the list of contents. It may be noted here that the organisation of the report is the responsibility of Rob Poulton. Some aspects of this deserve further comment. Firstly, chapters 2 and 3, the excavation reports, were prepared quite separately with certain very limited exceptions and are published solely in microfiche: in the printed Synthesis, chapter 7, the results have been combined. Secondly, chapters 4 and 5 (the specialist reports) also appear only in the microfiche. In the case of chapter 4 the main points, and effectively a guide to its contents, are given in chapter 7: 3.2. The main reports in chapter 5 are similarly treated in Appendices 1 to 3. This form of publication inevitably required frequent cross-references. In order to avoid unduly cluttering the text these have been placed in the margin. Where a part of the report, rather than a particular page, is referred to the first figure gives the chapter and the figure(s) after the colon indicate the part referred to. Thus 'ch 2: 3.1.2' indicates part 3.1.2 of chapter 2. It should be noted that the figures, plates and tables are numbered in sequence with the printed, rather than the full microfiche, text. The archive has been lodged in Guildford Museum.

## 2 Acknowledgements

### 2.1 1974 EXCAVATION by Humphrey Woods

The excavation in 1974 was carried out by a small nucleus of professional archaeologists and a large army of local volunteers. The nucleus consisted of the author, Alice Pandrich, Jenny Tinker and Jerome Bertram. The published site drawings were the work of Miss Tinker.

To Felix Holling of Guildford Museum, I owe a particular debt of gratitude; not only did he find the site, but throughout the excavation gave us every kind of support and, since the end of the 1974 season, has provided constant assistance towards the completion of the excavation and its publication. Christopher Young has encouraged me through the ten years during which I have worked on the project. Mr Paul Waldock of MEPC Ltd could not have been more helpful, nor his company more generous. Thanks are also due to MEPC's demolition contractors, New Haw Enterprises Ltd. The work of processing the finds after the 1974 excavation was carried out by members of the Guildford Group under the leadership of J A Cowie. To Miss Cowie I would like to express my gratitude not only for this, but for her unfailing help in numerous other ways in the preparation of this report.

### 2.2 1978 EXCAVATION by Rob Poulton

Without the help of numerous people this work could never have been completed. Many are named below, but I would like to express my gratitude to everyone, named or unnamed, who helped in any way whatsoever. I am especially grateful to Felix Holling of Guildford Museum and David Bird then of Surrey Archaeological Society. The advice and help of Humphrey Woods was also invaluable in the early period. On site the co-operation of MEPC Ltd, New Haw Enterprises Ltd and Wimpeys Ltd was vital to the success of the work. Off site, Deardre Cunningham of Guildford Museum, helped in innumerable ways. On site the following were responsible for specific tasks: photography – Matthew Alexander: general site supervision – Denny Edwards and especially Steve Bond. Elizabeth Crowfoot and Justine Bayley came from the Ancient Monuments Laboratory to advise on the excavation of the lead coffin. Of the many who dug on the site, the following deserve special mention:- Mary Alexander, Mary Bolingbroke, Mike Chapman, Simon Clarey, Maggie Luck, Martin O'Connell and Andy Waters. Many of the drawings are by Mary Alexander who also helped with much of the other post-excavation work. Jac Cowie, Malcolm Eckett and Tony Miller also helped in this respect. Matthew Alexander and David Bird also gave help and advice. Our typist, Marie Scott, deserves particular thanks for her patience and skill in dealing with successive drafts of the text. The typing and other facilities provided by Surrey County Council after the author had joined the Conservation and Archaeology section of the Planning Department considerably eased the progress of the post-excavation work.

The various specialists who supplied reports or gave advice are named elsewhere, but particular thanks are due to Janet Henderson for her report on the human bone. Janet Henderson wishes to thank Justine Bayley for her help.

## 3 Geology and Topography of the Site by Rob Poulton

According to the Geological Survey (Sheet 285) the friary site lies in an area where the drift deposits change rapidly from upper chalk, first to lower terrace river gravel then to alluvium,

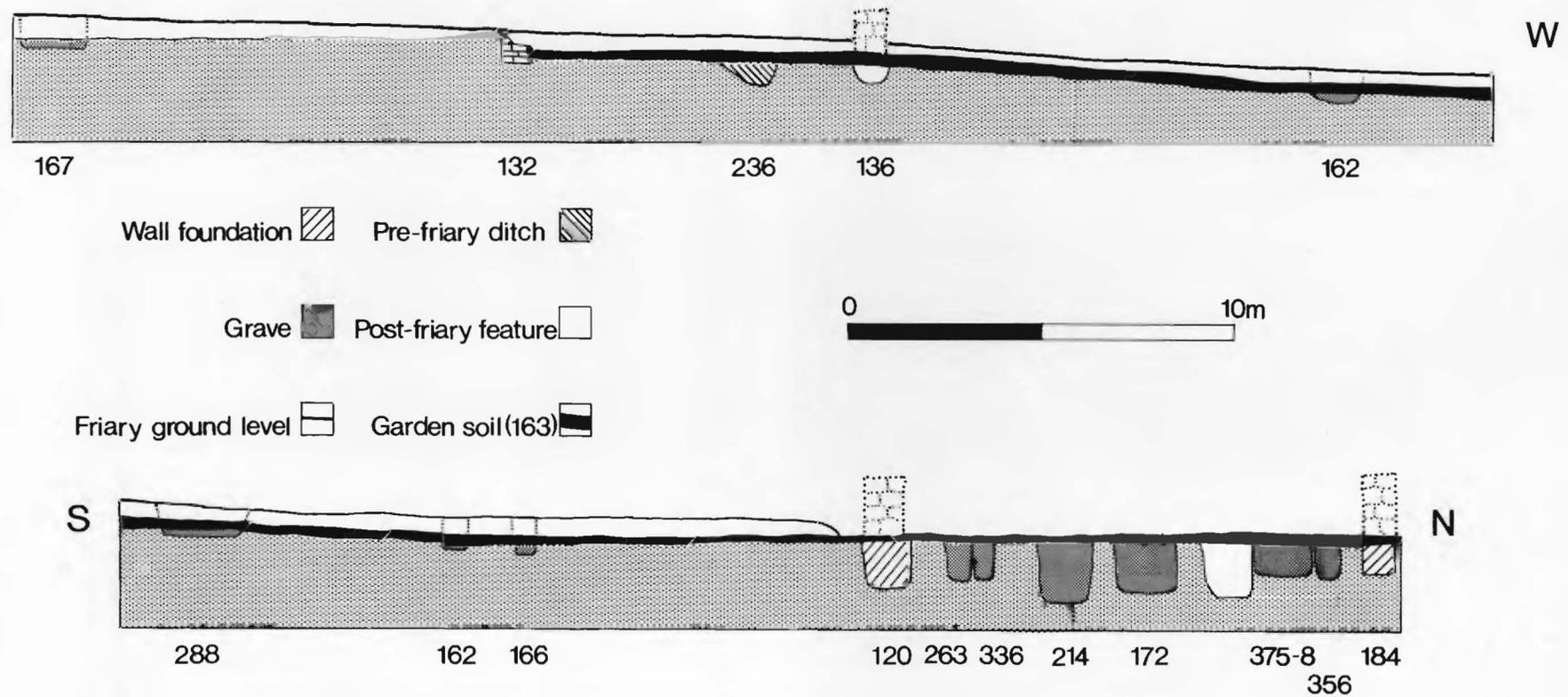


Fig. 2 Sections through the 1978 excavations, reconstructed from spot levels. Fig 6 shows the position of these sections through the site.



Plate 2 The mansion boundary wall (context 132) showing how it divided the site between two levels.

fig 1 following the steady slope from Woodbridge Road down to the river. In fact, within the excavated area, the 'natural' subsoil consisted solely of yellow-buff fine sand, presumably of alluvial origin.

fig 2a & b  
ch 3: 4  
fig 26  
ch 3:  
3.2.2.2  
fig 2

The marked slope in the friary area would naturally have required some earth moving before building in stone. During the 1978 excavation detailed levelling of the site enabled the recovery of evidence for changes in ground level wrought between the 13th and 20th centuries. The evidence is summarised by an east-west and north-south section. Two major periods of change may be noted. Firstly in the 17th century a mansion house was built and gardens laid out. Wall 132 divided the site into two levels and at the same time the area to its west was levelled, as the survival of only a few centimetres of the fill of graves such as 162 beneath 17th century and later garden soil makes clear. The area to the east may have been terraced at the same time; though the natural sand was immediately overlain by 19th century and later material, its level appearance is suggestive. The thick black line reconstructs the medieval and earlier ground surface by assuming a regular slope and an original depth of burial of *c* 75cm.

fig 19  
M21

In the north-south section, the ground line in the friary period is reconstructed according to similar principles. The difference here is that a comparison of the depth of burial inside and outside the nave of the church makes it clear that the church was terraced into the slope. It must be assumed that the friary buildings were constructed on more than one level, since otherwise building of the choir and east range would have required enormous quantities of earth removal. Furthermore, it looks likely that the precise orientation of the friary complex was chosen to minimise the difficulties and work in arranging the buildings on two (probably not more) levels. Presumably this was also the reason for the levelling up with sand in the area of the pre-friary structures in the north range. At that point, approximately 96cm of sand was added to the previous ground level but it was not possible to determine over how large an area this had occurred.

**CHAPTER 2 EXCAVATIONS IN 1974**  
**CHAPTER 3 EXCAVATIONS IN 1978**

**CHAPTER 4 THE HUMAN BONE**  
**CHAPTER 5 OTHER SPECIALIST REPORTS**

These chapters are in Microfiche, see the list of contents at the beginning of the volume.