

Two Sites in Betchworth, 1986: Excavations at Church Barn and in The Street

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with contributions from Geraldene Done, Beryl Higgins, Martin Higgins, David Higgins, Phil Jones and Anne Miles

and a note on human remains found beneath Priest's Cottage in 1988 with a report on the bones by Tony Waldron

Summary

The survey of a 17th century and later barn, together with excavations within the barn and elsewhere in the village, have formed the focus for an archaeological, topographical and historical study.

Introduction

This report deals with the excavation of two sites in Betchworth. The main excavation took place within Church Barn (Site 1) which stands at the end of Church Street.¹ This seven-bay barn is basically a 17th century building which incorporates medieval timbers. For a considerable time the barn had been in a dangerous condition and permission was sought by the owner to convert it into two dwellings. Before this was done the dilapidated part of the building was pulled down leaving the three northern bays standing. With the eventual rebuilding in mind it was considered prudent both to survey the barn in detail (this had for the most part already been accomplished by Martin Higgins) and to excavate the interior to find evidence for the construction date and for any internal arrangements it may have had. In addition, with the barn standing adjacent to a church of probable Saxon origins, it was hoped to find underlying evidence for the medieval village and perhaps for earlier buildings fronting Church Street.

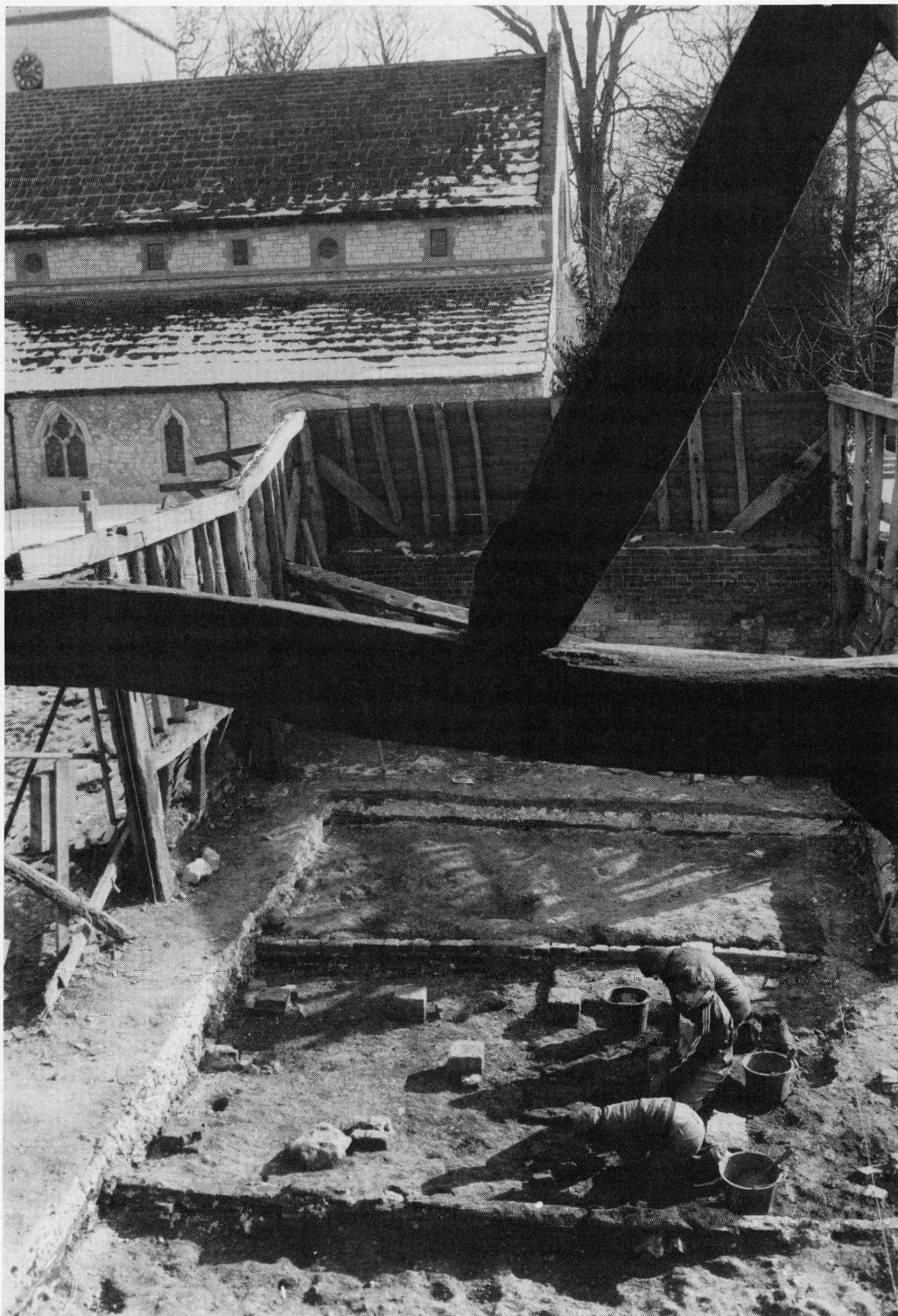
The second excavation took place elsewhere in the village on open land off The Street (Site 2), opposite Betchworth House. Here it was hoped to find evidence for houses demolished late in the 19th century and depicted on the 1634 Survey.

Work on the two sites lasted from mid-February 1986 until early May with few breaks, although freezing conditions during February were the cause of some difficulty on Site 1. The work on both sites was directed by the author with a voluntary labour force recruited after appeals in local newspapers.

The archaeological study of Surrey's villages has been a somewhat neglected subject, but they clearly have potential for excavation and it is hoped that this paper will go some way towards filling the gap.

Geological background

Betchworth is situated on a terrace near the confluence of the River Mole and a southward-flowing tributary stream which cuts the ridge of the Lower Greensand formation, here at its lowest and most indistinct. The village itself stands on a deposit of Taele gravel; Taele is a Norwegian term indicating permanently frozen ground which is impermeable to water. The deposit at Betchworth has been interpreted as a rapidly deposited gravelly slurry produced by possible seasonal thawing of the frozen ground surface (Dines & Edmunds



Pl 1. Betchworth: Church Barn, Site 1, trench 1. Excavating the threshing floor in February 1986. St Michael's church can be seen beyond

1933). This subsoil was encountered on both sites in all trenches excavated; five discrete deposits being identified. In trenches 2, 3 and 4 (figs 1, 9) an unyielding layer of fractured flints, 0.3m or more deep, was encountered. This gave way to a thinner deposit, of varying depth, composed of pea-sized and smaller chalk grits. In trench 1, in contrast, these deposits were absent although chalk grits were widely dispersed in medieval contexts or redeposited in patches. Beneath the barn a deep natural feature of uncertain origin was located which is discussed below. This deep 'channel' was bounded to the south by a truncated spread of red/brown gravel, surviving to c0.35m in depth. The wall of the graveyard stands on a bank which has the effect of raising the level of the graveyard above the surface of the gardens of the houses on the east side of Church Street. This bank, if of natural origin, may reflect the original height of the gravel deposit noted in trench 1.

With the exception of trench 5 these deposits of gravel, fractured flints and chalk grits overlay a more widespread deposit of red-brown brickearth. In building work observed elsewhere in the village (eg at Betchworth House) this brickearth was the only deposit present. Trench 5 lay entirely within an area of coarsely-sorted alluvial silt whose relationship with the nearby terrace deposits could not be examined.

Topographical and archaeological background

Betchworth lies to the south of the Old Reigate Road which would have provided the main line of medieval communication between Reigate and Dorking and points further afield. A subsidiary settlement existed at the former cross roads at the north end of The Street.

The core of the village is centred around the junction of The Street and Wonham Lane which runs east towards Reigate past the likely site of the medieval mill (Kennedy 1932). Church Street runs off the west side of The Street and ends at the lych gate to St Michael's church. The oldest surviving building in Church Street is 1-3, on the east side. Beryl Higgins suggests that this mid-15th century house, of which one bay of the former open hall survives, originally faced east, towards The Street.² It was later remodelled and now faces west. Thus Church Street may be a late- or post-medieval addition to the village plan, possibly to secure more convenient access to the churchyard which is otherwise entered through a narrow gap at its south-east corner.

The church was restored in 1851 and again in 1870 but still retains elements of the Norman building. During one of these restorations a fragment of Late Saxon stonework was found and this 'bloody-minded fragment' (Nairn in Pevsner 1962) can now be seen incorporated into the south window of the tower.

Prehistoric flintwork can be found in profusion in almost any of the fields surrounding the village, but the prehistory and early history of the area is dominated by the remarkable series of ill-recorded finds from many periods recovered from the so-called Box Hill or Barley Mow sandpit³ which lies 1km north-west of the village. These finds, mostly of pottery, were recovered during the 1920s and 1930s from the site manager and remain without proper context (eg Hooper 1929; Frere 1946; Toynbee 1969; Morris 1959; Needham 1987).

Historical Background by Beryl Higgins

By 1086, when the Domesday Survey was made, the nucleus of the village probably lay around the site of the church which is noted in the Survey. A mill worth 10s is listed. Betchworth and its neighbour to the east, Buckland, were both assessed at 2 hides, value £8, but Buckland had more people and ploughs, with no mention of meadow or woodland for pigs. It would appear that Buckland's totally arable economy needed more manpower to run than Betchworth with its downland for sheep and, south of the river, an unusually large area of woodland for 80 pigs. Buckland also had a church, and a mill worth 6s.

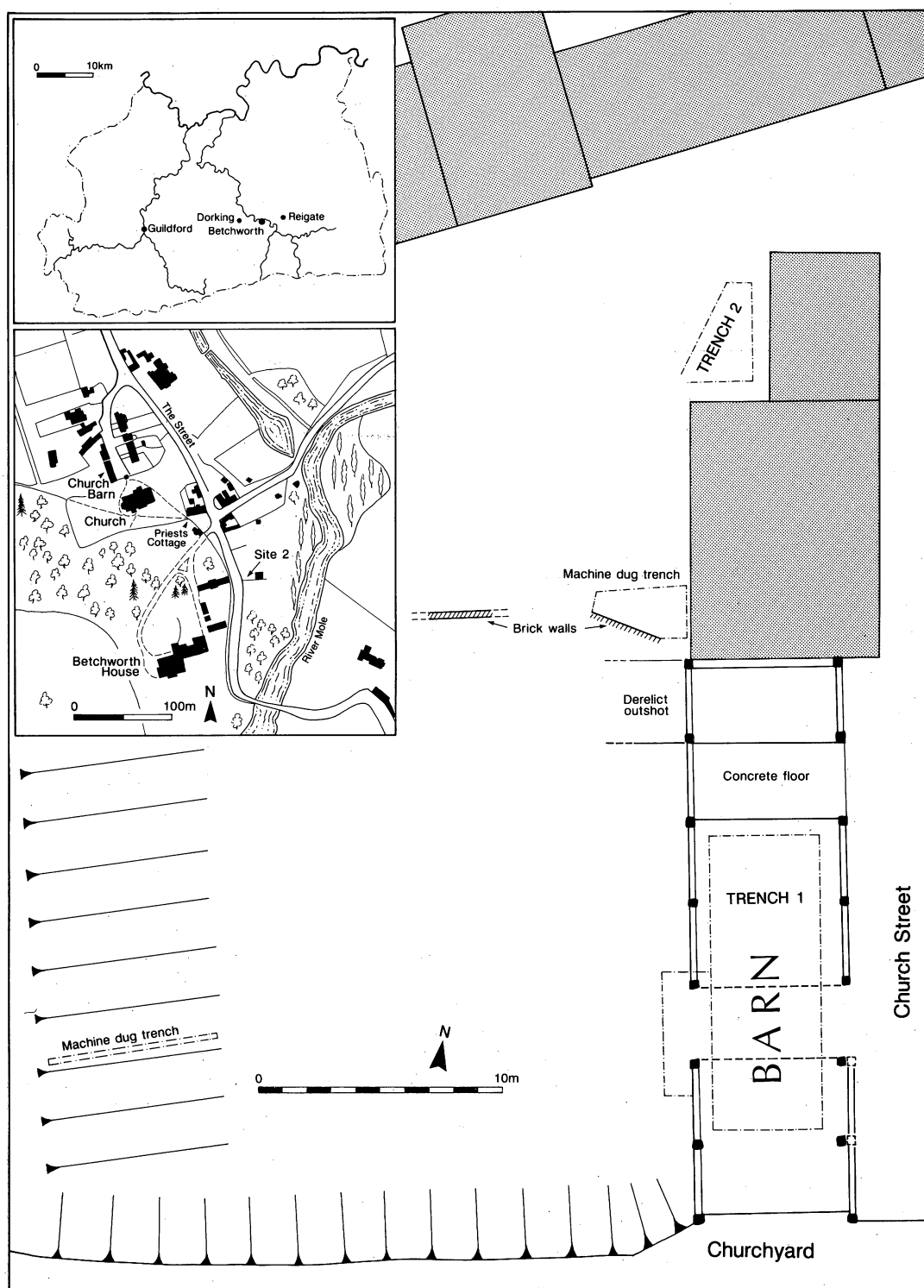


Fig 1 Betchworth: Site 1, Church Barn, showing locations of trenches 1 and 2 and areas opened by machine. The inset plan shows the location of Site 2

Prior to 1066 Betchworth had been held by the Saxon Cola and was then worth 6 hides. He held 25½ hides at Thorncroft near Leatherhead and 3 at Coombe, north-east of Kingston, the town where several Saxon kings had been crowned. So it appears he was an individual of some standing. Shortly after 1086 the Manor was divided into West Betchworth, with its manor house, where the ruins of the later castle now stand, and East Betchworth with its village, church, mill(s) and manor house. In 1199 the Manor of Wonham was split off from the east of East Betchworth, with its own mill and Home Farm.

In 1219 Brockham Manor was created from the west of East Betchworth. These sub-manors of Wonham and Brockham together with the hamlet of Newdigate continued to be administered by and send representatives to the manorial courts held at East Betchworth until at least the 17th century. East Betchworth itself continued to hold courts dealing with inheritance and land transfer right up to the 20th century.

After Domesday the next known document dealing with East Betchworth Manor is an account roll for the year 1262/3.⁴ This lists the receipts and expenses for the year. By this date only two tenants were still working the lord's demesne for two days each week; all the other customary tenants were paying quit rents, ie money in lieu of service. The beadle, the reeve and the oxherd appear to be rent free for the year because of their offices; they and their wives received food by custom at Christmas and Easter. Salaries were paid to the oxherd, the shepherd and the smith. The mill pond and the mill (iron work?) had some repairs done, as did the dairy and the barn. The crops stored in the barn are listed as 28 loads of wheat, 11½ loads of rye, 13½ loads of barley, 38½ loads of oats and 4 bushels of vetches. There were 3 horses, 11 oxen and 149 sheep before sales – 2, 8 and 142 respectively being retained, plus 9 ewes, 1 ram, 12 hoggets and some lambs. The granary contained one load of wheat. These buildings were probably the home farm complex (part of the present house is medieval).⁵ Another account roll survives for the year 1299/1300⁶ from which it appears that a fulling mill also existed at this time (Kennedy 1935).

The barn which forms the main subject of this report stood on church land and was probably where the main tithes of wheat, barley and oats due to the church were stored. A document of 1535 in the library of Reigate Priory lists the vicarial tithes due to the vicarage at Betchworth. They consist of eggs, fowls, ducks, wax and honey, apples, pears and other fruits, wool and lambs, hemp and flax. The patent rolls for 1302, 1312 and 1323 mention poaching of hares, rabbits, pheasant and deer from the lord's warrens which lay at the foot of the Downs. By 1634, both Brockham and Betchworth had warreners' houses in this area.

By 1634, when a full survey of the manor of East Betchworth was made,⁷ not only were the landholders named and land size, use and value given, but the rights of the copyholders and customs of the manor were detailed – the youngest son still inherited and a heriot of the best beast was due to the lord of the manor. Neither corn nor fulling mill was in use although both are noted in the survey to have existed previously. There was, however, a smithy and one or possibly two tanneries. The houses and barns of the village are shown clustered around the church to its north and east, and the 'newly-built manor house' on the site of the present Betchworth House is described in great detail. Its predecessor was probably where the Old House now stands, adjoining the home farm.

From the available evidence it would seem that East Betchworth village was of Saxon origin, clustered around a church, with a manor house, a mill and its common fields nearby to the north. To the south of the river the woodland was gradually cleared during the medieval period and large isolated farms established along the edges of the common lands so created. In the village itself corn and fulling mills, tanneries and a smithy are noted during the period. The medieval system of land tenure and inheritance appears to have continued until 1816 when the Enclosure Act finally amalgamated the remaining strips in the common fields, and formed fields from the last pieces of Gadbrook Common.

Church Barn by Martin Higgins

Church Barn is a timber-framed structure of seven bays with alternate queen-post and queen-strut trusses (fig 2). The length of the building before its partial demolition was 22.95m and its width 6.3m, but evidence came to light during alteration to show that there was once an aisle along the western side of the building. Three phases of construction can be identified although it is clear that much of the timber has been reused from an earlier non-domestic building, quite possibly an earlier barn on the same site.

In its earliest known form the barn was of six bays with threshing floors in the second and fifth bays.⁸ The wall framing from this period has survived and suggests an early 17th century date. Later in the century the southern end of the barn was rebuilt and extended by one bay and the whole building reroofed.⁹ This roof was subsequently dismantled and re-erected, omitting nine of the ten wind braces, in an otherwise faithful rebuilding.

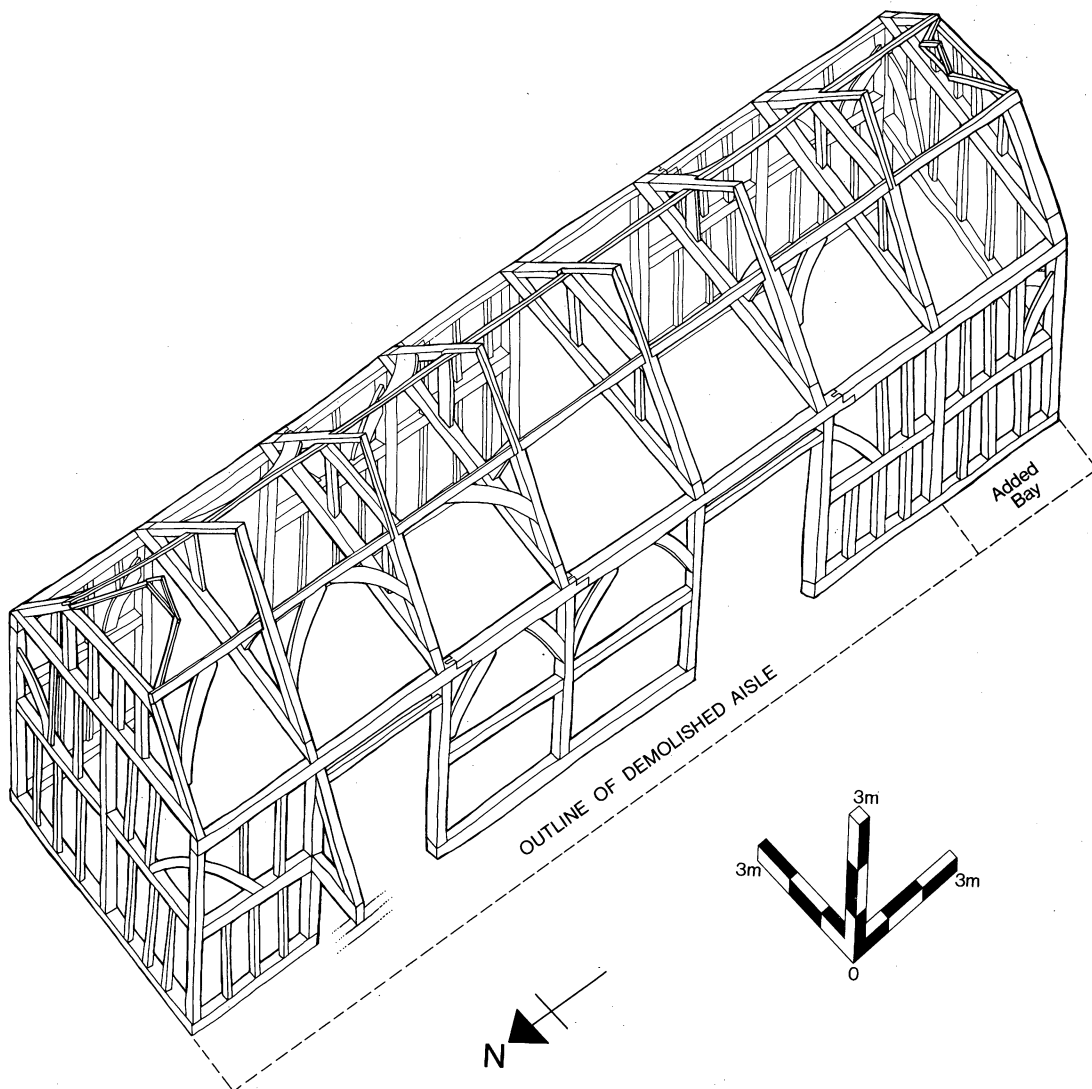


Fig 2 Betchworth: Church Barn. Reconstruction of probable arrangement of timbers. After M Higgins

Three types of wall framing occur. The first, found in the gable walls and six of the ten side-wall panels, consists of tension braces rising from mid-rails to bay posts. Tenoned but unpegged studs divide these bays into four equal parts. The second type of framing consists of arching braces with a pegged mid-rail but no sign of original studwork. This was explained when the weather-boarding was removed from the west wall of the building and empty mortices for aisle ties and aisle principals were revealed.¹⁰ It was not possible to determine whether the mid-rails were original to the structure. Two of the frames have no bracing at all, with clear evidence that the three studs above and below the mid-rail were original.

Barn roofs in the Betchworth area are predominantly of queen-strut construction, reputedly to facilitate the packing of crops right up to the rafters. The alternating form found here is not recorded elsewhere in the parish, and was probably used because of the great length of the building.¹¹ Over 70% of the rafters displayed an empty halving for a collar and many also had multiple nail holes on adjoining faces.¹² The reuse of old timbers was enforced by manorial law in southern parishes (Currie 1983). The 1634 survey of Betchworth's manorial customs makes no mention of this, although the right to cut timber was strictly governed by the lord.¹³ The provenance of the reused timbers in this case is not clear. The rafters show no signs of smoke-blackening, and are therefore most likely to have come from an earlier barn. Many of the second-hand mid-rails have stave holes and grooves for wattle and daub and may be domestic in origin. Also of medieval origin are the bay posts III and IIII, both of which have jowls.¹⁴

The single-aisled plan of the barn is relatively rare in Surrey with only seven examples recorded in the SPAB Barns Survey.¹⁵ This form should not be confused with the grand medieval aisled halls and barns. The single aisle is a characteristically 17th century form (Peters 1981, 20). The 1634 Estate Survey previously cited shows a barn on the site, with a house immediately to the north. At this time both were on church land so no details were given in the terrier. Church use is supported by the lintel pieces being on the field side of the barn, and not facing the road, as would be expected if the barn were built for secular use. By the time of the 1843 Tithe Award a T-shaped arrangement of buildings existed on the site, including the church timber yard. When the new vicarage was built in 1877 the previous church land seems to have passed into the hands of the Betchworth estate. Church Barn was sold in 1986 and since the excavation reported on here has been dismantled and re-erected as two dwellings.

The excavations

SITE I EXCAVATIONS WITHIN AND AROUND CHURCH BARN (figs 3-7; M fig 18, Microfiche 129; pls 2-5)

After internal clearance of fallen debris, trench 1 (12 × 4.5m) was laid out within the barn (fig 1). This was the largest area available and avoided the concrete threshing floor to the north and, to the south, the precariously supported fallen structure of the end wall. Two main phases of activity were found; the earliest was further subdivided into Phases 1a and 1b.

Phase 1a Initial Phases

Beneath the central part of the barn was a deep channel (63), aligned east-west, whose northern extent is uncertain (figs 3, 5E). Unfortunately, due in part to the depth (c2.5m) of the archaeological deposits below the present floor of the barn, only a fraction of the deepest deposits within the channel could be safely investigated. This was confined to a section about 1m wide adjacent to the eastern side of the trench. The combined depth of the deposits which filled the channel was c1.5m.

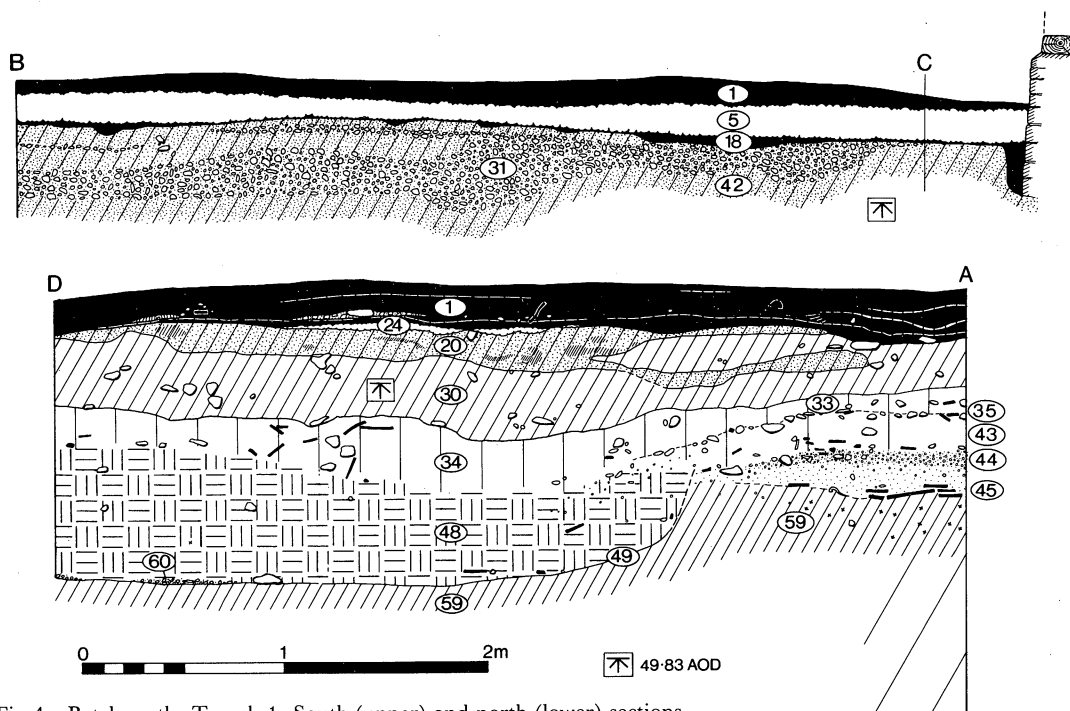


Fig 4 Betchworth: Trench 1. South (upper) and north (lower) sections

The lowest deposit encountered was gravel (65) formed of chalk grits and chips of Upper Greensand, with larger pieces of flint gravel further south. Above this was a light grey silt (64) with thin bands of brown staining threading and dipping through it. This layer was sterile of finds and merged with a light yellow/grey, charcoal-flecked silt (62) which contained two flint blades and a core as well as a few burnt flints.¹⁶ Near the surface of this layer was found a late Romano-British greyware sherd and on the surface of the layer the partly-articulated and butchered skeleton of an ox (66) (pl 2). This burial was associated with a few sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery, a greater

quantity of which was found above it in layer 59 which merged with layer 62. Layer 59, a dark grey/green charcoal-flecked silt, also contained a little animal bone and some prehistoric flintwork as well as fragments of mortar. Overlying part of layer 59 was layer 61, a chalk-gritted brickearth, which faded out and merged into layer 59. It was not possible clearly to differentiate layer 61 from the brickearth which formed the side of the channel. On the surface of layer 59/61 was a patch of charcoal (55), perhaps a hearth, and a 0.83m length of charred timber (poplar or willow) (fig 5E).

Interpretation

There is little in the visible topography of the village that explains or indicates the presence of the deep channel found below the barn. The feature is interpreted as a natural 'channel' on the basis of the gravel deposit at its base and by its wide and slack profile and by other considerations. The feature did not extend as far as trench 2. The author does not feel competent to explain this feature in either geological or hydrographical terms but it may relate to the truncated natural deposit of gravel found beyond the lip of the channel, in the south of trench 1, and whose apparent continuation, as described earlier, is a visible bank, outside the barn to the east. This could at least reflect the continuation of the channel if indeed both channel and bank are connected geologically.

With the exception of the Romano-British sherd none of the material of either prehistoric or medieval date from any of the layers of silt appeared abraded or water-rolled. This suggests that the channel did not contain running water although it may have been water-filled. Whatever its geological interpretation it seems that the channel was a visible feature



Fig 3 Betchworth: Trench 1. East (upper) and west (lower) sections



Pl 2. Betchworth: Ox burial (66) from layer 62. Scale in inch divisions

in prehistory. The Romano-British sherd may have been washed in from the adjacent ploughsoil. There is no evidence here for occupation before the late 12th or early 13th century when the channel was still sufficiently prominent to be used for the dumping of small amounts of rubbish, commencing with the disposal of the unwanted remains of a butchered ox carcass.

About 300 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery were found, some articulating with others (see Jones, below); none was very large. The pottery may have been introduced into the channel with organic debris. Few similar sherds were found elsewhere on this site. This may suggest that the focus of settlement lay some distance away and that debris was being transported to this hollow for disposal. If there had been an earlier Saxon occupation nearby, then pottery of this period would surely have found its way into the channel.

Phase 1b Later medieval

Lying above layers 61 and 59, the upper silty fill of the channel, was a sequence of deposits of different character to those described under Phase 1a. These were cut to the west by a later feature and interleaved with a more general build-up of green/grey, gravel-flecked clayey soil (40/43) which was spread across much of the trench (figs 3, 4). Layer 40/43, which contained a dense scatter of roof tile fragments, had been truncated horizontally at the south end of the trench to provide a level platform for construction of the barn. It contained the burial of a pig but because of the truncation it was unclear whether this had been deposited during Phase 1 or during the life of the barn.¹⁷

The lowest of the Phase 1b deposits (fig 6B, C) was a substantial dump of burnt daub, flat-surfaced plaster fragments and much reddened flint (54) and, above it, a layer of clayey loam (53) which merged with layer 40/43. Next was a deposit of charcoal-rich soil (52) and above that another layer (51) merging with layer 40/43. Above layer 51 was a concentrated dump (45) of medieval roof tile (figs 3, 5C, pls 3, 4) and pottery which contained part of what may be an anthropomorphic louver (fig 14). Above this was a thin layer or surface of flints (46) which merged with chalk-flecked loam (44, fig 5B). Layer 47, a deposit of similar character to, and possibly part of, layer 44 lay a little to the south-west.



Pl 3. Betchworth: Site 1, trench 1. Detail of layer 45, the medieval tile dump, showing large shell-tempered sherd in foreground and louver fragment beyond, in section. Scale in inch divisions

This sequence of deposits had been cut by the tongue-shaped terminal of a flat-bottomed feature (49), 3.4m wide, which also penetrated the upper silting of the channel below (figs 3, 4, 5A, B, 6A, pl 4). The outline of this feature was initially difficult to distinguish from surrounding layers. The sloping sides of (49) had been roughly surfaced with a mix of stone, flint and tile (35, fig 5A). Feature 49 was filled with a homogeneous grey/green clayey material

(48) which merged into a similar layer (34). At and below the junction of these layers was much roof tile, positioned both flat and vertically, as well as some large pieces of stone. At one point at the base of layer 48 was a thin spread of gravel, stone and tile fragments (60). The clay fill of (49) merged with and was sealed by layer 33, a grey clay and gravel deposit, 0.16m deep, which in turn merged horizontally into the widespread layer 40/43.

Interpretation

The hollow formed by the partly-filled channel continued in occasional use throughout the 13th century and into the 14th century (Jones, pottery report below) as a dump, largely for building materials. Layer 54 may represent the demolition of a timber-framed building or an oven or kiln. The interleaving layers of clayey soil which merged with layer 40/43 probably represent intervals when soil washed into the hollow from higher deposits on either side. The flint layer (46) may represent a metalled surface. The filling of feature 49 may be rather later. Other than some residual material, pottery was largely absent from this feature which had been dug through the dumped deposits of demolition debris which by this time would no longer have been visible. The vertical positions of the tiles in the fill of this feature suggest that they may have fallen from a building immediately beyond the excavated area into a deposit of mud. The nature of the fill suggests that this feature had held water and may have been a small pond. There was no evidence for cleaning out, nor for recutting. The tiles from feature 49 were of a finer quality than those in layer 45 but suggest only a late medieval date. Other than pottery, bone and tile there were very few

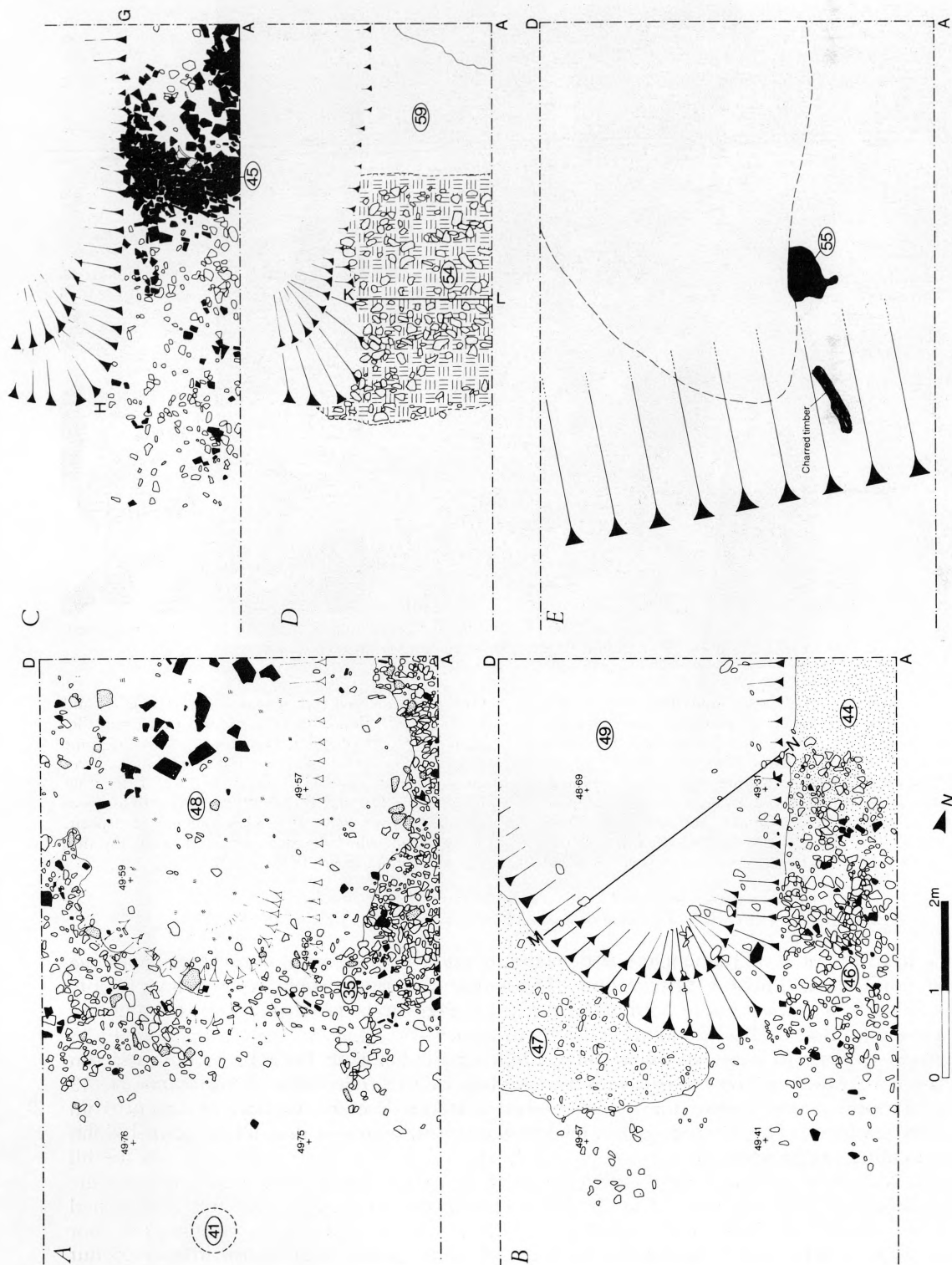
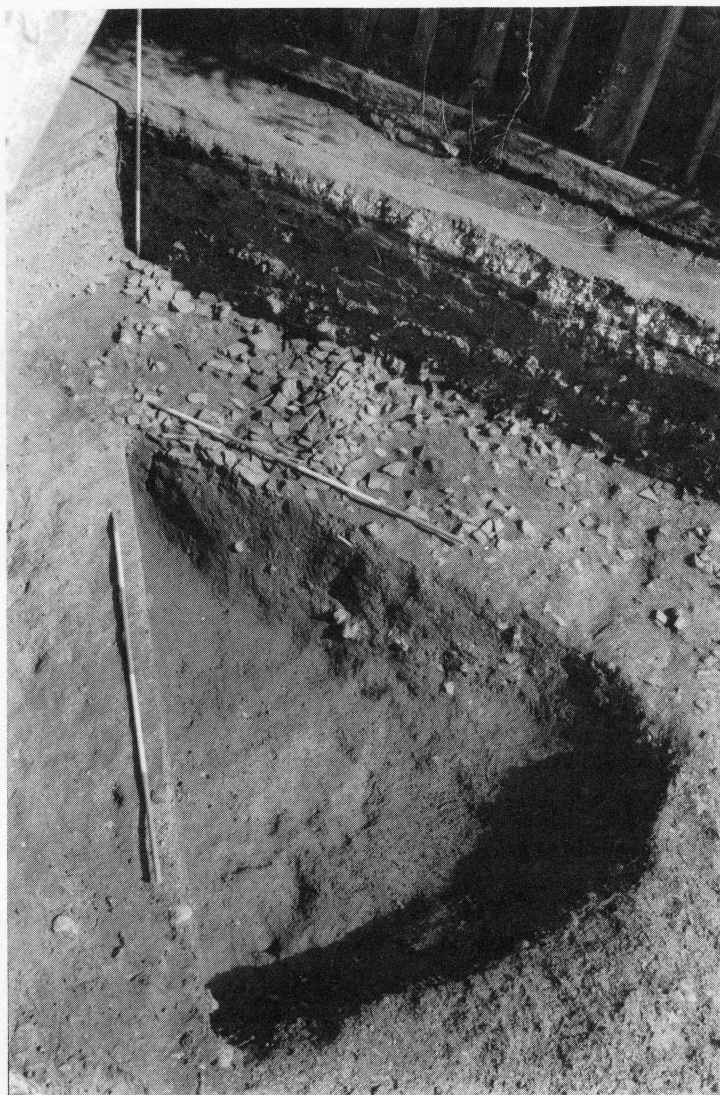


Fig 5 Betchworth: Trench 1. Sequence of plans showing Phase 1 deposits. A, layers 48, 35 and 41; B, layers 46, 47 and feature 49; C, layer 45; D, layer 54; E, charcoal layer 55 and burnt timber overlying filling of 'channel'



Pl 4. Betchworth: Site 1, trench 1. Terminal of feature 49 cutting layer 45. Scale in foot divisions

finds from Phase 1b. Frequent metal detector surveys yielded only a handful of nails and three other objects, none of special note. The length of twisted bronze wires (M fig 19.10) was found in a vertical position within the diffused edges of layer 34, which again suggests that the fill of feature 49 may represent a mud deposit.

Phase 1b deposits were sealed by others connected either with the construction and use of the barn within which the excavation took place or its predecessor. A wide area of the latest Phase 1 deposits, particularly in the south of trench 1, had been truncated to provide a level platform. The limited dating evidence suggests that this had taken place by the 16th century at the latest.

Phase 2 Church Barn

This phase relates to the construction and use of the barn and is described in more detail on microfiche (84-6).

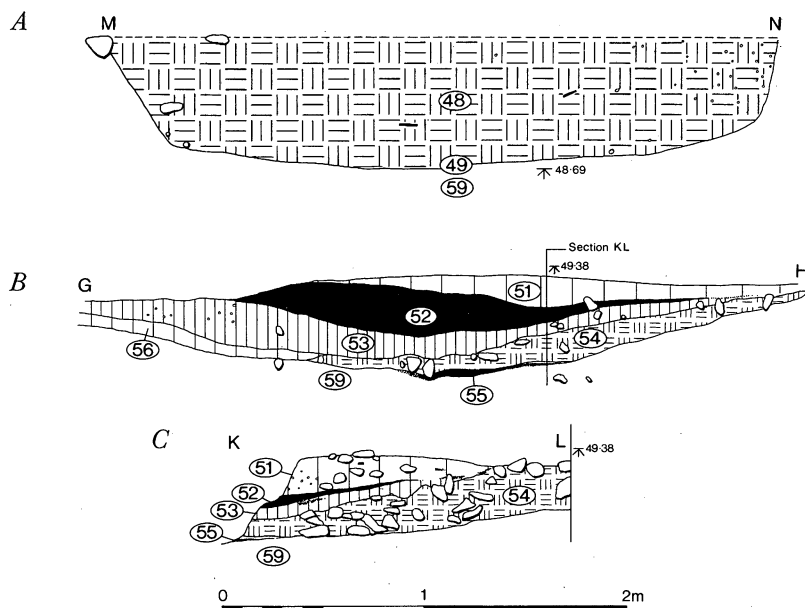


Fig 6 Betchworth: Trench 1. A, section through feature 49; B and C, sections through medieval rubble and charcoal deposits

Covering the northern half of trench 1, tailing off to the south and sealing layer 33 of Phase 1b, was a deposit of gravel (30) containing a few tile fragments, with a thin surface of brickearth (20, figs 3, 4). The combined maximum depth of these deposits was c0.5m. These are interpreted as levelling layers which may derive from the truncated bank of gravel and brickearth which crossed the southern half of the trench. The truncated surface of the gravel formed the floor in the south of the barn. At the junction of layers 20 and 30 was a worn post-1860 halfpenny.

Above these layers were spreads of flooring material (figs 3, 4, 7), mostly of chalk, which were separated by the brick side walls (9 & 10) and internal supporting pillars (15) of a hollow threshing floor (fig 7, pls 1, 5) which was placed between one of the two pairs of opposed entrances. Three post holes (36, 37, 39)¹⁸ may indicate an earlier structure in this position. The threshing floor had gone out of use and had been filled earlier this century. Cutting through the floor deposits to the north of the threshing floor was a series of 35 stakeholes (M fig 18, Microfiche 129).

Sufficient material was found to date most of the deposits in Phase 2, with the probable exception of layer 30, to the late 19th century, the remainder being of even more recent date.

Discussion

The main feature of interest was the remains of the threshing floor which had presumably been constructed of tightly-fitting planks attached to joists supported on the three rows of brick piers and the side walls, so providing a void beneath. Loudon (1835, 451) describes various methods of constructing threshing floors using planks or bricks, but in contact with an existing floor. However, when constructing wooden floors he observes 'It is evident . . . that where barn floors can be made hollow they must be much better for the purposes of threshing upon, than such as are either placed on brickwork, or the ground. From their greater pliability and elasticity in threshing upon, the grain is of course threshed out with more ease certainty and despatch'. The Betchworth floor seems to have been broken up and to have gone out of use perhaps at the onset of more mechanised operations when heavier equipment would need to be supported.

The series of stakeholes is interpreted as evidence for hurdle partitions for the winter penning of livestock although no pattern is coherent.



Fig 7 Betchworth: Trench 1. Plan of excavations within Church Barn showing late 19th century floor layers and threshing floor supports

Martin Higgins (above) dates the barn to the early 17th century with reused late medieval components. However, with the possible exception of layer 30, whose date is unclear, none of the contexts ascribed to Phase 2 can be dated earlier than the late 19th century. Layer 30 is interpreted as the redeposition of gravel and brickearth to form a level platform for the barn. When this was done is unclear as there is an apparent wide temporal gap between the latest, late medieval, Phase 1 deposits and those of Phase 2. The lack of intervening deposits suggests that the barn was refloored anew in the late 19th century while the lack of 16th or 17th century material sealed by layer 30 could suggest that a barn earlier than the present structure (which incorporates earlier components) occupied this site. It need not imply a wholesale Victorian dismantling and rebuilding of the barn although this may have happened.

The lack of any flooring deposits which can be shown to date between the late Middle Ages and the late 19th century is perhaps not surprising in a building used continually for storage of perishables where erosion rather than accumulation of floor surfaces might be expected. It is unclear whether such floor deposits had existed and were removed in the late 19th century or whether they are represented solely by layer 30. A similar lack of dating evidence or superimposed flooring deposits was recorded during limited excavation within a much older building, the late 12th century barn at Coggeshall, Essex (Andrews & Boutwood 1985). Here the excavated floor deposits were concluded to be of post-medieval date.

Trench 2 and Other Work on Site 1

Trench 2 (fig 1) was opened to the north of the barn, adjacent to recent outbuildings, with little useful result.



Pl 5. Betchworth: Site 1, trench 1. The 19th century threshing floor supports, fully excavated. View looking south, scale in foot divisions

A natural surface of packed flint was reached at a depth of 0.55m. This was overlain by a thin layer of loam which contained a little 18th century material. The opportunity was also taken to open two trenches by machine (fig 1). This was done before the deep channel with its Saxo-Norman deposits had been found and with hindsight these trenches could have been more usefully sited. A long trench was cut to

section a low and wide bank dividing the grass-covered former stockyard to the west of the barn. There was no sign of any accompanying ditch and only recent material was found. The second trench was cut near the barn's north-west corner to look for a continuation of feature 49. There was no sign of this and again only a natural flint surface overlying a chalk deposit was found.

Conclusions

The area now occupied by the barn, although adjacent to the church, seems always to have been peripheral to the medieval settlement. No sign of any building was found within the excavated area although there is plentiful evidence in the form of demolition debris for substantial buildings. The probable louver fragment, an object indicative of some status, is likely to have derived from a substantial building. A natural hollow of uncertain origin, perhaps always water-filled, was used as a convenient dump for rubbish and latterly for building rubble from the late 12th century onwards. This hollow gradually became filled both by the dumping and also by erosion from slightly higher ground to the south and by more general accumulation. A small pond, whose banks were revetted roughly with rubble, was dug perhaps in the late Middle Ages but silted rapidly, soon becoming obscured. After a further period the site was levelled to form a platform for the construction of a building, probably a predecessor of the present barn which was erected in the 17th century. After various alterations including the removal of an aisle and the insertion of a threshing floor in the late 19th century the barn was rebuilt as two houses after dismantling in 1985.

SITE 2 EXCAVATIONS ON LAND OFF THE STREET (figs 1, 8-11, pl 6)

As work on Site 1 drew to a close a series of trial trenches was opened on land on the east side of The Street (figs 1, 9). On this land had stood, until their demolition in the late 19th century, a row of cottages. The reasons for the cottages' demise and non-replacement are unknown although several unconvincing suggestions were postulated during our work.



Pl 6. Betchworth: Watercolour by Edward Hassell, 1825, showing cottages formerly standing in The Street. The view is looking south. Reproduced with thanks from the original in possession of Mrs V Houghton

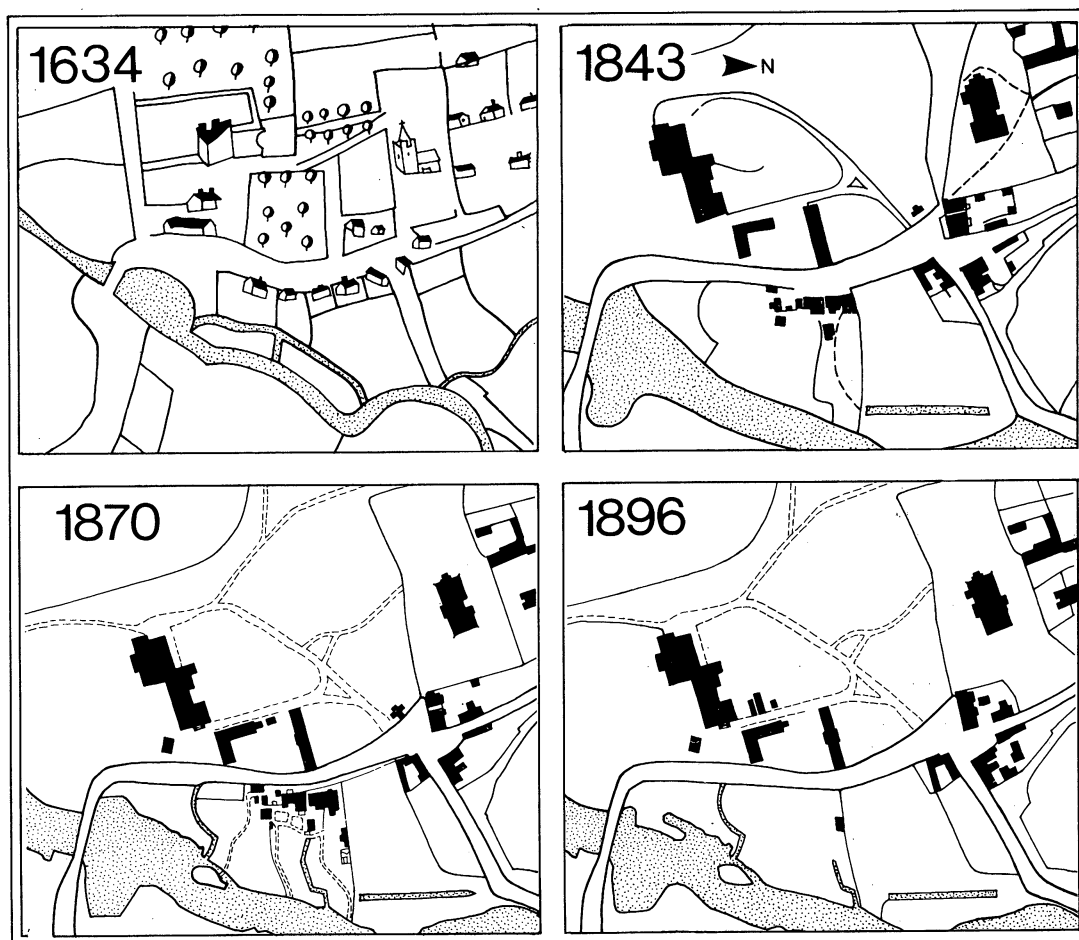


Fig 8 Betchworth between 1643 and 1896 showing eventual disappearance of cottages in The Street, opposite Betchworth House. Not to scale

Records may well exist to show why these buildings were removed. The estate map of 1634 clearly shows a line of houses fronting the road in this position (fig 8). Their plans and details of their garden arrangements are depicted on the OS 25" map of c1870, and in less detail on the Tithe map of 1843. By 1896 when the OS 25" map was resurveyed the houses had all gone.

Fortuitously Edward Hassell made the group the subject of one of his many watercolours in 1825 (no 1766, Batley & Moss 1984; pl 6). Although less helpful for the interpretation of the excavated evidence than is the 1870 map, the drawing is nevertheless invaluable.

The site of this excavation is now open land above the River Mole. An old boundary bisects the site of the cottages and to the south of this, are slight earthworks in an old orchard. Continuing the sequence from Site 1, three trenches were opened (fig 9). Trenches 3 and 4, which were later combined into a single area, were sited on the terrace. Trench 5, which was later extended, lay on sloping land a little to the east. It was hoped to find remains of the northerly cottage in the group.

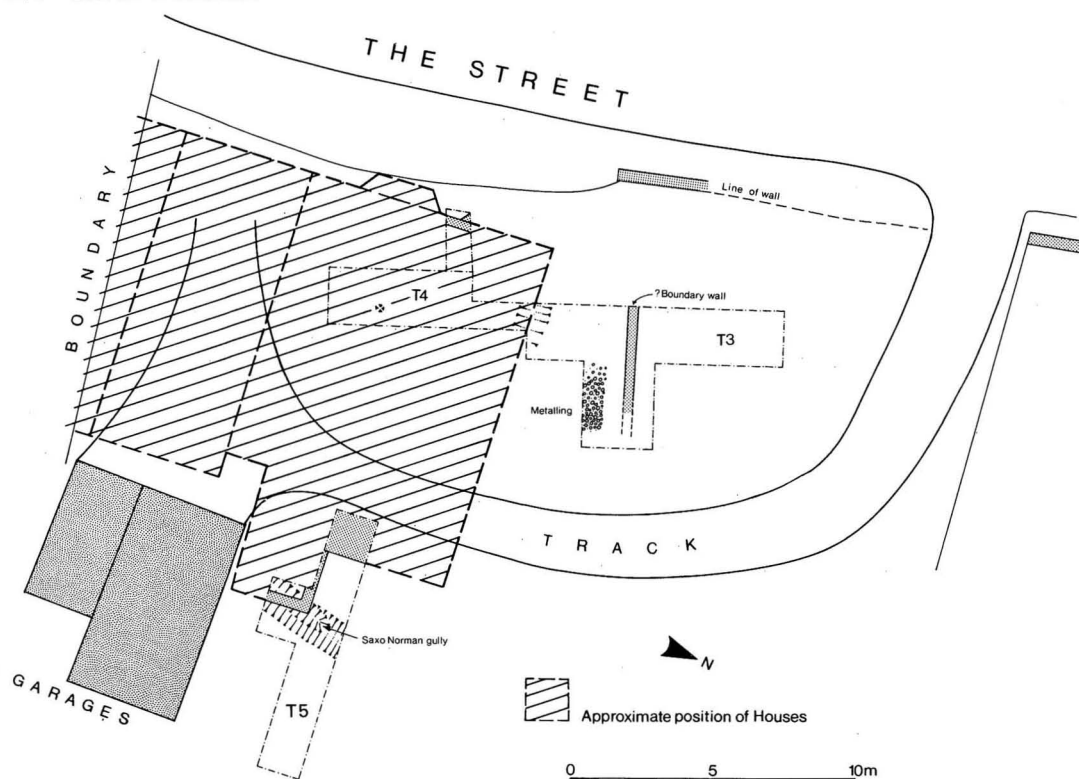


Fig 9 Betchworth: Site 2, The Street. Location of trenches 3 to 5 and postulated ground plan of houses based on the excavated remains and on the plan shown on the c1870 OS map

The stratification encountered is described summarily. Layers and feature numbers are here preceded by the trench number. Evidence of the medieval period from trenches 3 and 4 was confined to a thin scatter of 13th and 14th century sherds on the surface of the flint subsoil. In trench 5 a shallow gully (5.11, figs 9, 10B, 11 sections OP, QR, WX), 0.18m deep, contained a considerable amount of mid to late 12th century pottery which was not found elsewhere on this site. This gully cut into the surface of a layer of flints tightly-packed within a gritty charcoal-flecked clay (5.14) that filled an undated, apparent linear feature (5.13) orientated similarly to 5.11.

In all three trenches the remains of the buildings known to have stood here proved to be scanty. In trenches 3 and 4, with the exception of a post hole (4.3 in trench 4) dated to the 17th century, no features clearly earlier than the early 19th century were found. These latter are interpreted as part of a boundary wall (fig 10A) and an area of metalling lying to the east of the site of the northern cottage whose front

wall was located in an extension of trench 4 (fig 9). The cottage's northern wall may be represented by a hollow at the junction between trenches 3 and 4. These trenches also yielded a few sherds of 17th and 18th century date. Evidence for a building in trench 5 was confined to the mortar base for a wall (fig 10B) (5.27, probably an extension identifiable on the c1870 OS map) and various layers at the west end of the trench. Although containing a little earlier material, none of these could be dated earlier than the early 19th century. There were no other structural remains. A widespread layer of dark soil (5.5, fig 11) contained little material earlier than c1750. This dark soil sealed three pits of unknown purpose and uncertain, but probably post-medieval, date (5.20, 5.22, 5.24, figs 10B, 11 sections OP, ST, UV) which contained sand and brown clay and which had cut into the soft alluvial silts. A vertical-sided gully (5.17) was found in the estimated position of the eastern wall of the northern cottage. Its purpose also remains uncertain.

Discussion

The linear feature (5.11) may be the earliest evidence for occupation found on the site and although sterile of finds it pre-dates the 12th century gully. Its fill gave the impression of

its being of natural origin but the charcoal flecks suggested otherwise. The medieval gully was too shallow to have been an effective ditch and may perhaps have been a foundation trench, although a spot on the nearby terrace would be more appropriate for a building.

Residual medieval material was present in all three trenches and the slightly greater concentration on the surface of the flint subsoil in trench 4 may be suggestive of gardening rather than agriculture in view of this confined strip between road and floodplain. Little can be said of the pits cutting the alluvial deposits in trench 5 although they may represent tree planting.

None of the evidence relating to the cottage suggests a construction date much earlier than the mid-18th century, with the exception of the post hole in trench 4 which may date to the 17th century. The c1870 OS map (fig 8) shows in this position an L-shaped building with a bay window facing the road and with a rear extension. The wall foundation found in trench 3 may be a boundary wall. Layers 5.15 and 5.4 are floor layers and are of 19th century date. The lack of any obvious wall foundation or foundation trench serves only to emphasise the apparent flimsy nature of the cottage and the scantiness of its remains. It

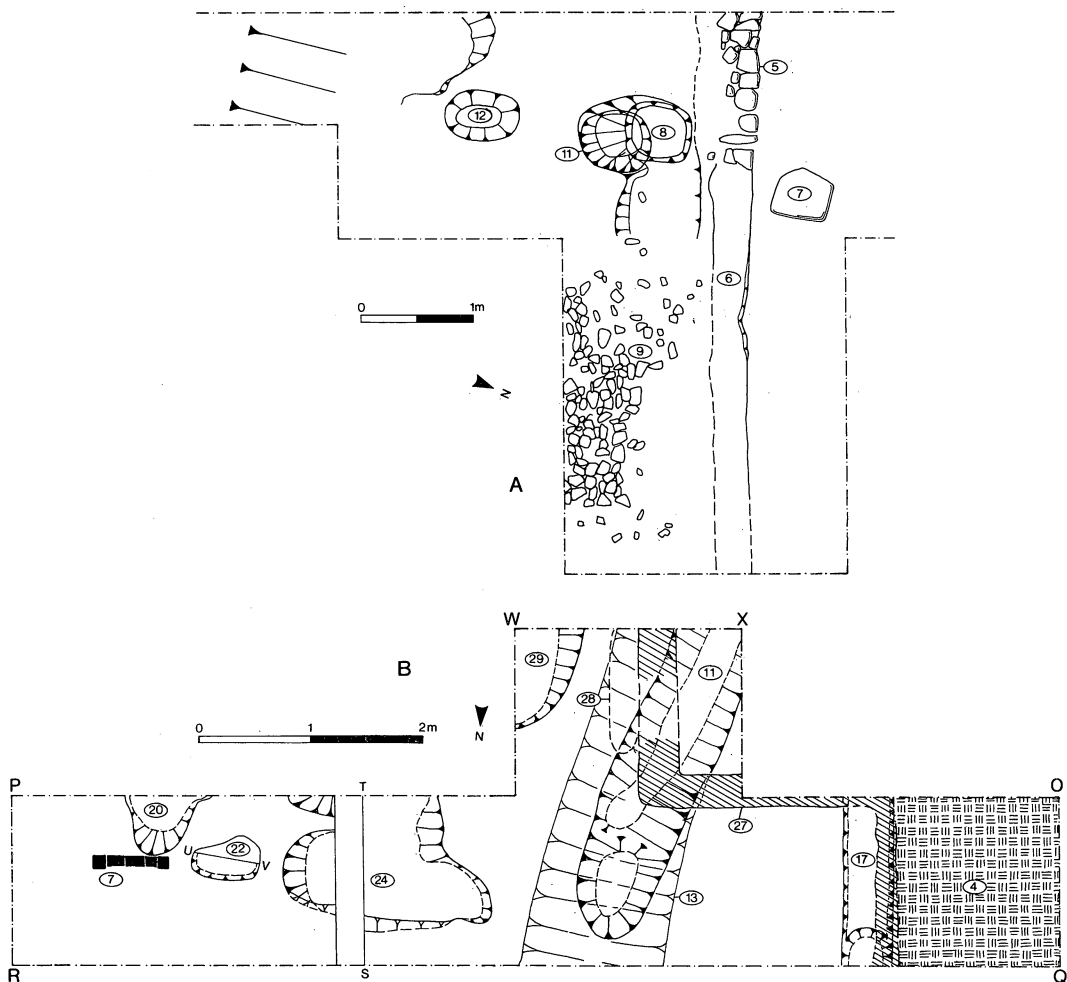


Fig 10 Betchworth: Site 2. A, plan showing features found in part of trenches 3 and 4; B, excavated features in trench 5

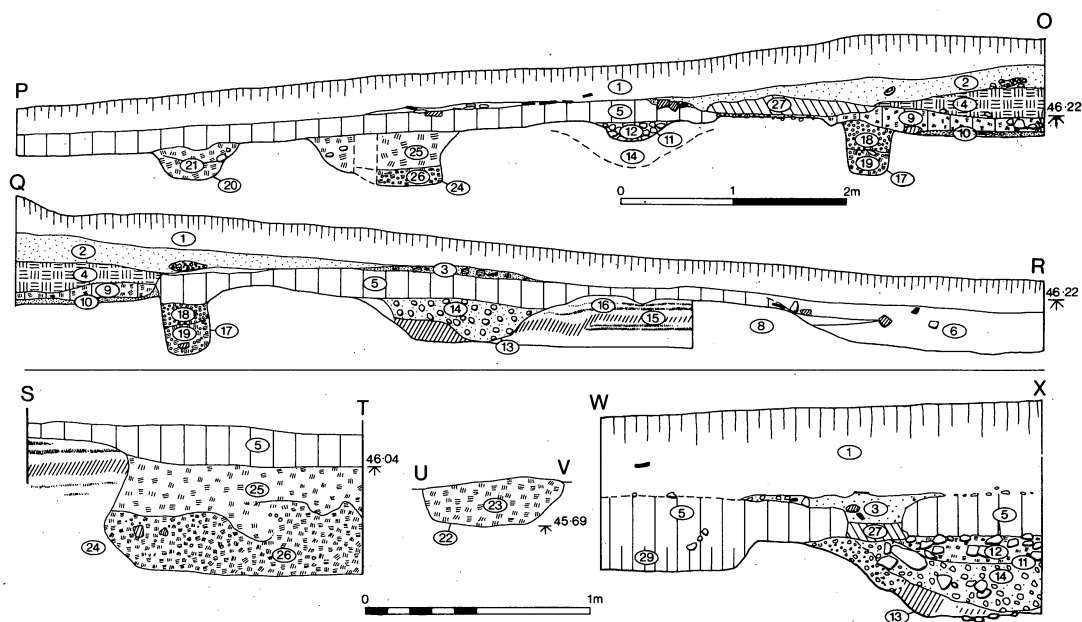


Fig 11 Betchworth: Site 2; trench 5. Sections

may be that the earliest part of the building had stood on the terrace, in which case its original rear wall remains to be found. The probable position of the cottage is shown in fig 9.

The lack of any clear evidence in the form of either finds or structures for a building of 17th century date or earlier is the most puzzling aspect of this work. At present no suggestion is offered for this anomaly.

The pottery (figs 12–15) by Phil Jones

694 sherds (8944g) were examined from 24 medieval contexts, all but one of which related to Phase 1 on Site 1. The exception was a gully, context 11, on Site 2, which contained probably the earliest assemblage of pottery found so far within the village. The gully had probably been filled during the mid to late 12th century. The earliest assemblages from below the barn on Site 1, were probably of late 12th or early 13th century date, and the latest of these contain 14th century type pottery, although some could be of early 15th century date.

A full catalogue of pottery is in Microfiche 107–28.

Discussion

This collection of pottery, excavated from two sites within the village, may be a representative sample of wares that were in common use at Betchworth from the 12th to the 14th centuries. The only means by which this could be tested; of course, is if further excavations were to take place.

Shelly ware of the west and north Surrey early medieval tradition is rare within the assemblage from Site 2, context 11, slightly more common in some later 12th and early 13th century assemblages, but becomes rare again, and possibly residual, in later 13th and 14th century contexts.

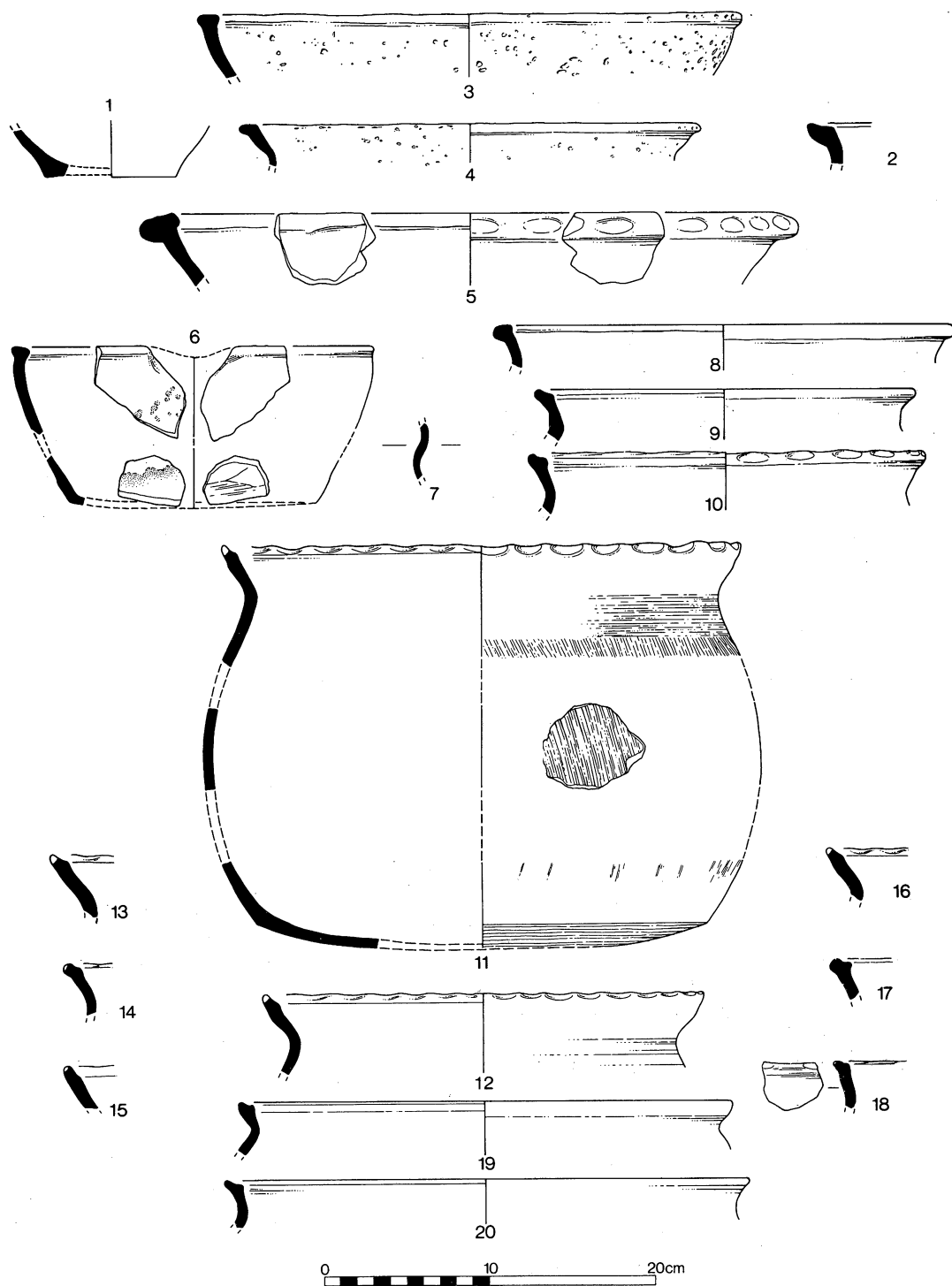


Fig 12 Betchworth: Medieval pottery from Site 1 (1-20). Scale 1:4

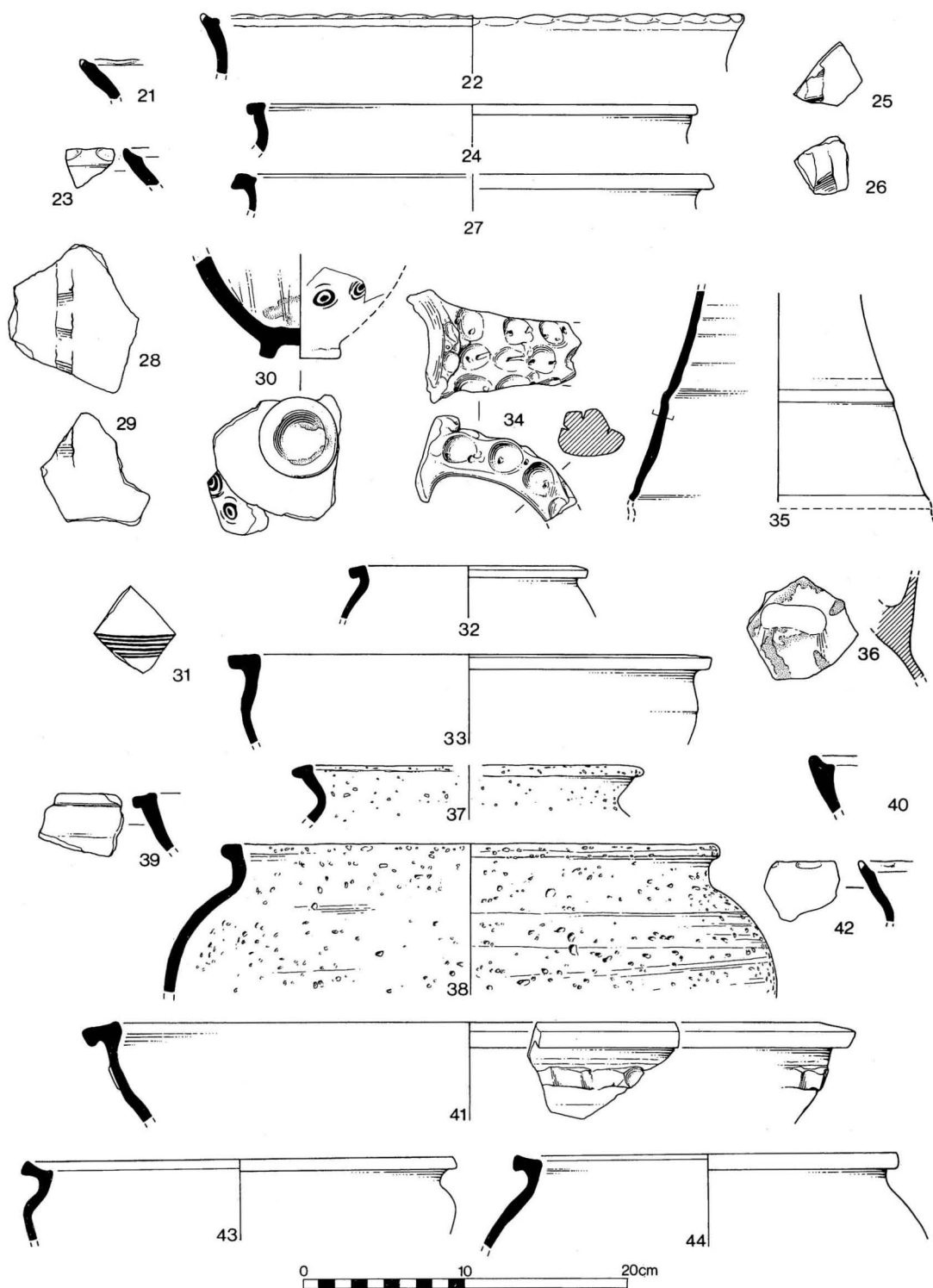


Fig 13 Betchworth: Medieval pottery from Site 1 (21-44). Scale 1:4

Brown/grey sandy sherds form the larger part of what is probably the earliest assemblage, context 11 on Site 2, which could be of early to mid 12th century date, especially since over a third of all the pottery from it was of an archaic poly-tempered ware Q1c, that was not found in any later context. This is very similar to RGC types that were found in Saxo-Norman deposits at Reigate (Jones in Poulton 1986, 64). It is remarkable that not a single sherd of any other Saxo-Norman type was recovered, and may indicate that wherever else the late Saxon settlement of Betchworth may have been, it had probably not been in the vicinity of either of the two excavated sites within the village.

Brown/grey sandy ware seems to have remained dominant until sometime during the 13th century, when its distinctly orange variants that had previously formed a lesser proportion of all earlier context assemblages, took over as the major pottery for both kitchenwares and tablewares. The orange wares, some of which are very similar to those excavated at the Earlswood kiln near Reigate (Turner 1974), remain dominant in all of the later 13th and 14th century contexts that were excavated.

It is uncertain whether any of the pottery was from the kilns of the Limpsfield area in east Surrey (Prendergast 1974). A few of the more reduced sherds included as being of Grey/brown sandy ware could be from that source, including, perhaps, the finger-impressed and slashed jug handle from layer 51 (fig 13, 34).

Sherds of only one whiteware vessel were recovered, which were from a cooking-pot of late 13th or 14th century type. Study being undertaken of the pottery from recent excavations at Reigate (Jones in Williams *et al*, forthcoming), is indicating that there was a similar rarity of early whitewares, which do not seem to have formed a significant proportion of the pottery that was used in the town, until the 15th century.

A fragment of a medieval louver (fig 14) by David Williams

This fragment was found in a dump of medieval roof tile (45) in trench 1, Site 1. Jones (above) suggests a date in the late 13th or 14th century for the pottery from this layer but the deposit probably represents the demolition of a building. The tiles and the louver (which may have derived from the same building) may be earlier than this.

The fragment is in a sandy fabric (Q3A) with a dark grey core and dark reddish surfaces. The entire exterior and the rim is covered with a poorly-applied brown or olive green glaze with many rounded pellets of lead. Unfortunately too little survives for much to be said about its original form. Its manufacture seems to have originated with a narrow, plain, flaring rim and a carinated neck onto which have been luted various protrusions of which only the stubs now survive. The front of the object bears a face made from a pinched pad of clay with deep sockets for eyes, and a protruding tongue. The nose is a little damaged. A luted ring of clay constricts the rim aperture to c3cm. The stub of some attachment survives on the rear and there are indications of the former existence of some protrusion on the one surviving side. Below the mask is the base of a cylindrical addition which has been attached by piercing the wall of the vessel. Some grey staining on the interior could derive from smoke.

The identification of the object as a louver rather than a highly-decorated jug rests both on the odd nature of the object as well as its context in a dump of roof tile. The lack of evidence for a handle attachment and the added constriction to the rim both suggest it is not part of a jug. On the other hand the mask seems rather too miniature for an object placed on a roof ridge. A jug fragment from Reigate bears similar faces also positioned just below the rim and the suggestion in that case was that the idea may derive from contemporary French imports (Williams 1983, 70, fig 8 no 82) although with so simple a device that need not be so. The fabric and the poorly-applied glaze might suggest that the louver dates to the first half of the 13th century.

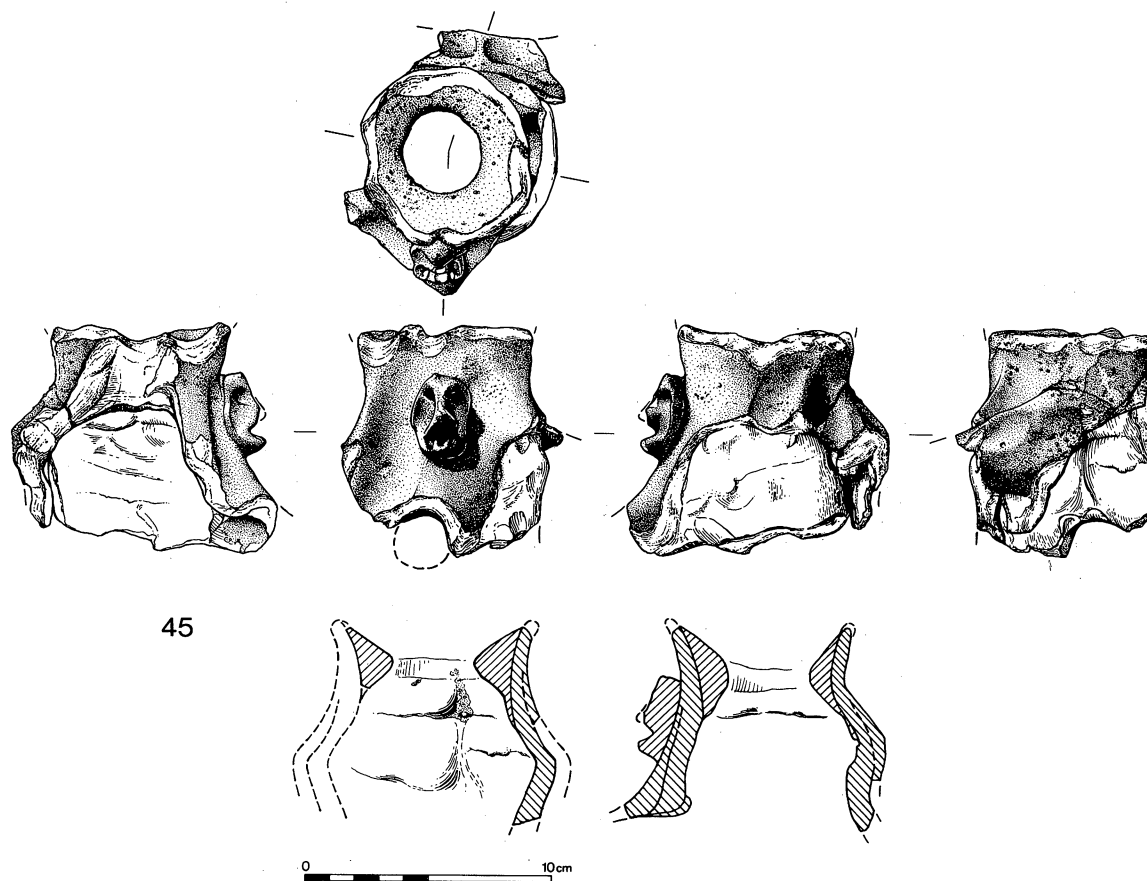


Fig 14 Betchworth: Anthropomorphic louver fragment from Site 1, trench 1, layer 45. Scale 1:3

The ceramic smoking pipes (fig 16) by David Higgins

In total 133 fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from the two sites (11 bowl 114 stem and 8 mouthpiece fragments). Site 2 also produced seven conjoining sherds of a porcelain pipe and, as a result of the excavations, groups of pipes collected during gardening activity at three of the houses in Church Street were brought to the author's attention. Each of these groups is considered individually in Microfiche 95-102.

Discussion

Site 1 produced only a few late fragments of pipe. These presumably represent odd fragments incorporated in the build-up of floor levels, and are all of types common in the area. All of the other finds represent domestic waste deposited about cottages in the village. These sites all include 17th century fragments showing that smoking became widely adopted within the community. The early pieces are all plain, but by the 18th century marks show that Guildford, and later Dorking, appear to be the main supply sources. During the 19th century a wide range of decorative pipes was used and, increasingly, these appear to have been supplied by London makers. The most notable feature, however, is the presence of elaborate German porcelain and French pipes. Documentary sources show that these would have been many times more expensive than the English clays and yet they clearly formed a small, but consistent, part of the pipes in use. There were many large houses built in

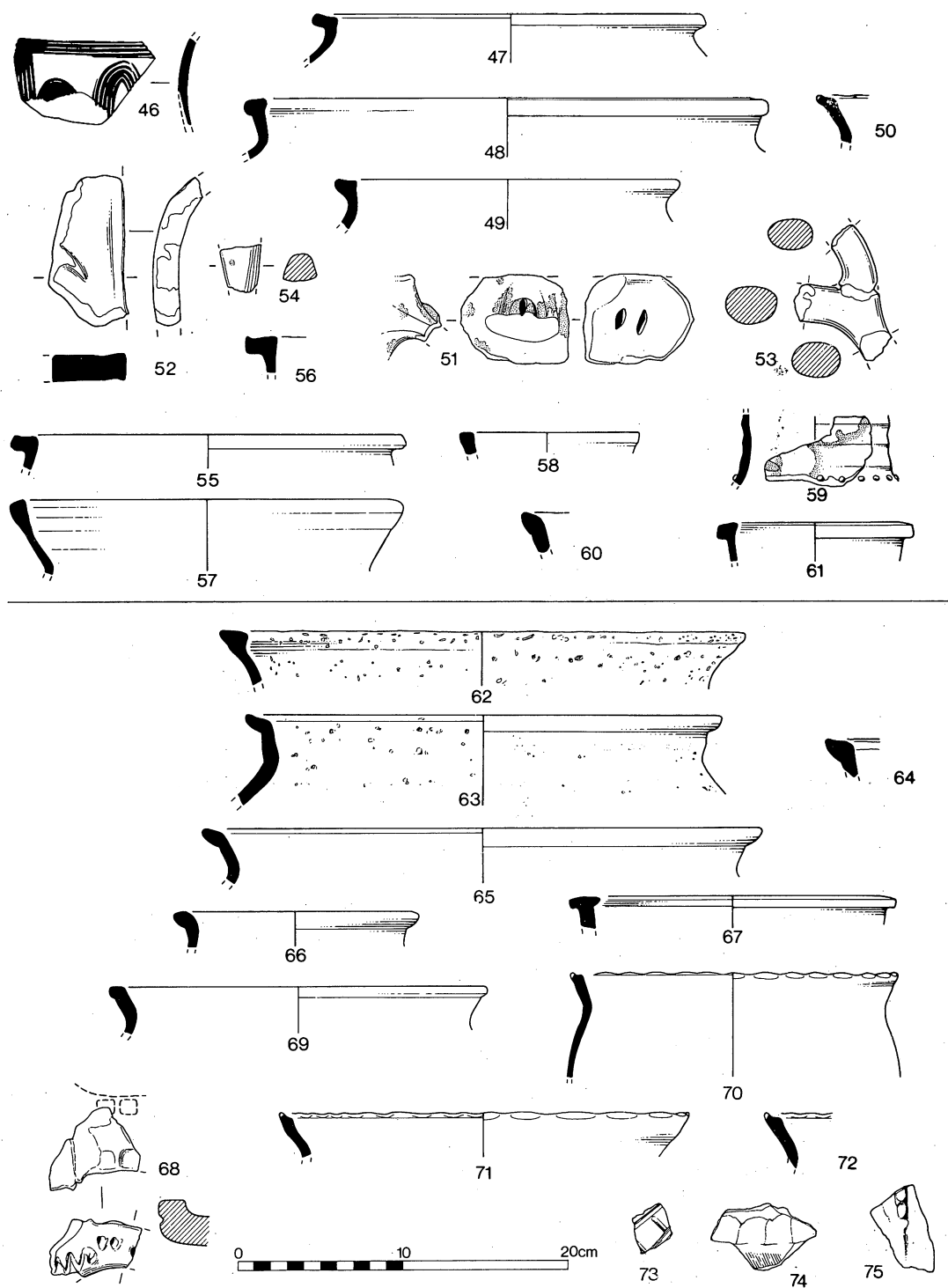


Fig 15 Betchworth: Medieval pottery from Sites 1 (45-61) and 2 (62-75). Scale 1:4

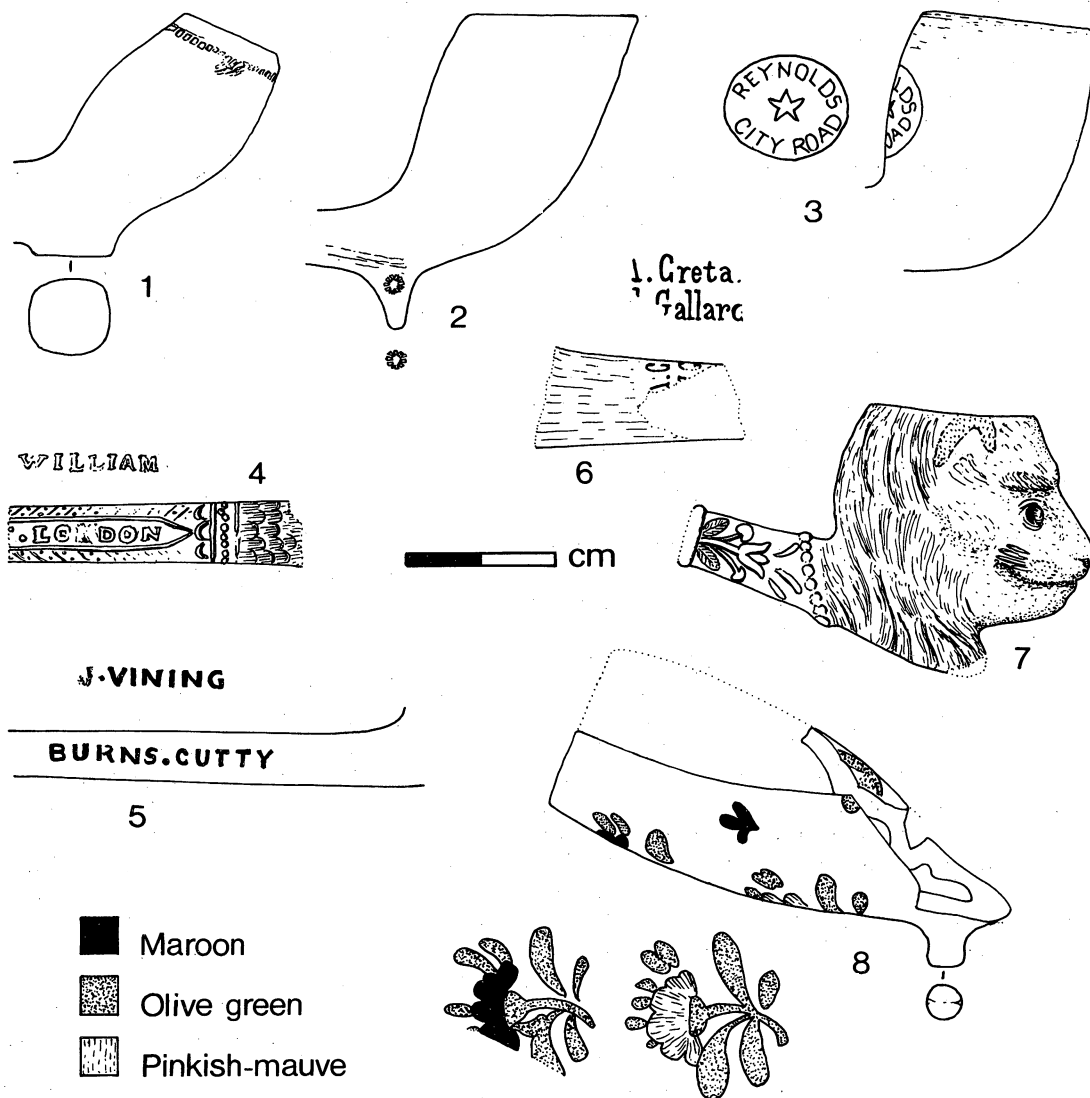


Fig 16 Betchworth: Clay pipes. Scale 1:1. Drawn by D Higgins

Betchworth during the later 19th century and, as more pipe groups become available for study, it will be interesting to compare the Betchworth villagers' pipes with groups from other areas to see if this factor influenced the choice or range of pipes they used.

The animal bone by Geraldene Done

Only material from Site 1 was examined. Detailed information is given in Microfiche 103-5.

Phase 1a

The bone is dominated by much of the skeleton of an ox aged about three years. The right calcaneum, astrogalus and malleolus were ankylosed into a solid mass - unusual in a relatively young animal. The joint may have suffered from trauma. Signs of butchery

were confined to knife marks on the ribs and the vertebral bodies, some of which occur as sagittal halves.

Phase 1b

Horse, ox, sheep/goat, pig and domestic fowl were identified. A pig aged about 1 year was recovered from Context 40/43.¹⁷ There were no signs of butchery on the pig.

Phase 2

Cattle, sheep, pig and domestic fowl were noted. Also rabbit, hedgehog and crow.

Charcoal by Ann Miles

See Microfiche (106).

Human remains found beneath Priest's Cottage (fig 17)

During August 1988 builders employed on the refurbishment and modernisation of the so-called Priest's Cottage, a 17th century timber-framed building situated at the south-east corner of the graveyard of St Michael's church, uncovered human remains. The burials were found while the floor of the house was being lowered. While police officers visited the house archaeological interests were not considered and the bones were lifted by the workmen without record and muddled together for reburial. Two burials (fig 17) seem to have been encountered *in situ* but both were badly disturbed and incomplete. Burial 1 was found in a position straddled by the original external wall of the house, and partly beneath a later outshot. Burial 2 lay some 4m further north, within the outshot and adjacent to the external brick chimney. Both were aligned roughly east-west. In view of the poor preservation of the burials (no skulls remained) and the method by which they were uncovered doubt must be cast on one of the builders' observations that one burial lay prone. Other bones were found elsewhere during the work, mostly it is understood, within the area of the outshot. Both burials lay in a brickearth deposit; no signs of coffins were reported. Following their examination the remains were re-interred within the graveyard.

The burials were clearly made prior to the construction of the house and were fairly shallow, 0.5 to 0.6m. below the present surface of the graveyard. Although it is possible that these burials represent persons buried beyond the bounds of the graveyard it is more likely that the original limits of the burial ground had become obscured in antiquity, as happened in Dorking (Hayman 1990), and lost to memory by the 17th century. There was no evidence for dating other than that provided by the building itself although a few sherds of late medieval Cheam white ware were found beneath the floor elsewhere in the cottage ('1 foot down in front of the chimney').

The skeletal remains were submitted to Dr Tony Waldron PhD, MD. Dr Waldron comments:

There are at least three skeletons represented by the bones recovered from the site, two male and one female. All were fragmentary and had suffered considerable post-mortem damage.

Male 1. The sex of this skeleton was determined from the morphology of the pelvis. The individual was about 35–45 years of age at death, judging from the appearance of his pubic symphyses, and his height was 172.8 cm (± 4.32), calculated from the length of the left ulna.

Male 2. This was an extremely fragmentary skeleton and the sex was assigned from the measurement of the maximum diameter of the head of the left femur.

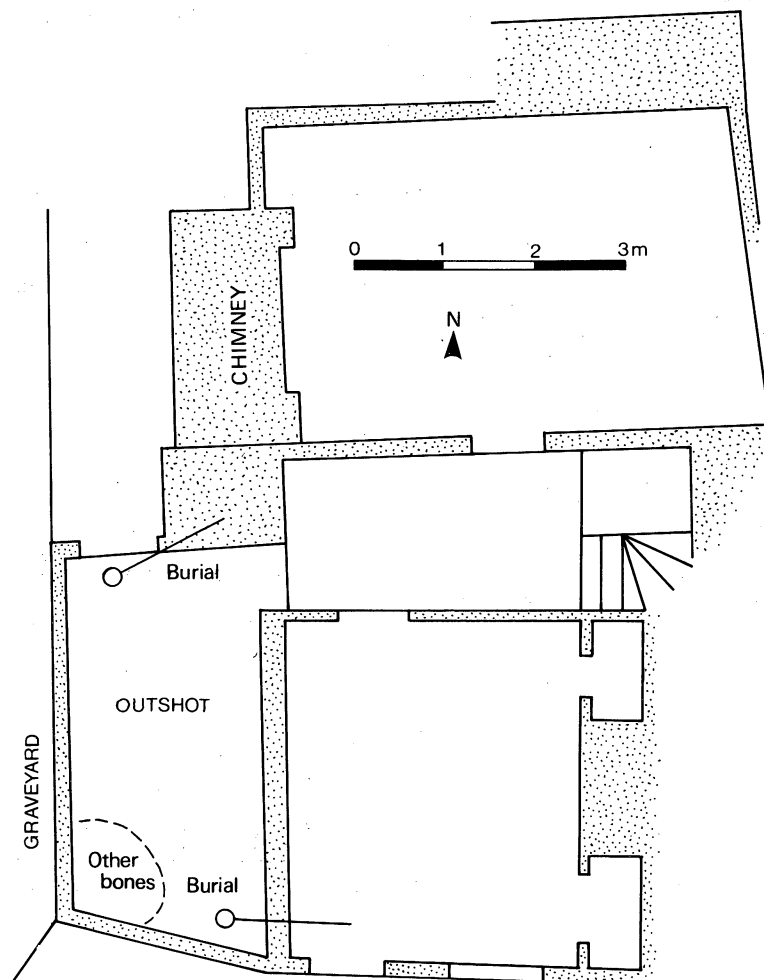


Fig 17 Betchworth: Plan of Priest's Cottage showing reported positions of burials

Female. This skeleton could be sexed from the pelvis. The woman was between 25 and 35 years of age judging from the wear on the teeth in the left mandible. She was 160.1cm (± 3.66) in height, based on the length of the left tibia. From the appearance of the pelvis it is likely that she had borne children but there is no means of telling how many. She had prominent muscle attachments on both femurs and tibias which may indicate a rather vigorous way of life.

There were no pathological changes in any of the bones examined, nor in the four teeth which survived from the female skeleton.

NOTES

1 Grid references: Site 1, TQ 2105 4975; Site 2, TQ 211 495

2 DBRG Surrey. Report No 2320

3 This sandpit (TQ 201 504) has been extended considerably to the east in recent years but occasional visits by the writer have failed to recover any archaeological material except flintwork, or any archaeological features

- at all. The nature of this multi-period site remains unknown but may have been focussed on the isolated hillock – now the site of a large house – immediately south of the sandpit.
- 4 Noticed and transcribed by Vivien Ettlinger in April 1986 on the dorse of MS A1776, Arundel Archives.
 - 5 DBRG Surrey, Report No 978.
 - 6 SRO Ph 738c
 - 7 SRO Ph 55
 - 8 Carpenters' marks on the main posts are consecutive from I to X; posts 'eleven' and 'twelve' were unnumbered since they were originally corner posts. Empty matrices for the down braces exist in the latter pair, the tie-beam over dates from the period of extension.
 - 9 Carpenters' marks on the internal queen-posts and queen-struts run consecutively from I to VI, ties from I to VIII.
 - 10 Part of the aisle tie and part of the aisle principal of post II had survived until the weather-boarding was removed. These had been recorded by MH in 1982 and enabled the reconstruction illustrated (fig 2). A tenon to take a lateral cill beam running from arcade post to outside wall was found to have survived on the bottom of post II during reconstruction. Post VI rested on a padstone. The aisle extended the whole length of the barn but not all bays had principal rafters. Only two bays seem to have been open to the body of the barn. No evidence of the porches remains.
 - 11 All other 17th century barns in the parish are of three or four bays.
 - 12 70% of the rafters were from a crown-post roof and thus were of medieval origin. Medieval rafters were set flatways, but were subsequently set upright. The highest carpenters' mark on the medieval rafters is XXXIII, suggesting a roof of six bays or more.
 - 13 1634 survey map and terrier of East Betchworth manor, SRO Acc300. Article 12; oak and beech belonged to the lord and could only be cut by copyholders with his permission while ash and elm could be cut freely.
 - 14 The teazle tenons are off-centre, suggesting a late medieval date. Surrey's 'medieval' framing continued to c1550. The tie beam is not contemporary since it has central mortices.
 - 15 Information kindly supplied by Rod Wild who coordinated the survey, which recorded c1200 barns.
 - 16 I am grateful to Roger Ellaby for examining the small amount of flintwork.
 - 17 Geraldene Done (pers comm) suggests an earlier rather than a Victorian date for the pig on the grounds of stature and nutrition.
 - 18 36: 11.5 × 14 × 12cm deep; 37: 16 × 20 × 15cm deep; 39: 10 × 16.5 × 9.5cm deep.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavations, which relied entirely on voluntary help, would have been rendered quite impossible without the help and cooperation of many individuals and bodies both from the village and beyond. The work was aided financially with contributions from the Surrey Archaeological Society and Beechams Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

Permission to excavate was readily given by the Hon James Hamilton of Betchworth House and I am grateful to both him and his wife, now Lord and Lady Hamilton of Dalzell, for their interest, assistance and cooperation throughout our work. Of the large number of individuals, many of whom attended the excavations regularly and often in poor weather, the following deserve special mention: Rachel Ball, Robert Coffey, Rosalind Coombes, Louise Flood, Beryl Higgins, Joy Keen, Steve Munroe, Paul Pattison, Rupert Parma, Steve Robinson, Jane Stemp, David Williams (no relation), Ann Weatherstone, and Maj Peter White, headmaster, and the boys of Bury's Court School. To David Higgins, who co-directed the first week of the excavation, I am particularly indebted for his help and encouragement on many occasions. Others giving valuable assistance included Geoff Colombe, who provided accommodation for our equipment, and Derek Hughes who helped in many ways, and the late Bob Burtenshaw for his help in metal-detecting.

This report would have been rendered of less value without the efforts of those specialists who have contributed towards it and of those who provided references or read through various versions of the text. Any remaining errors are my own.

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