

## Excavations at East Shalford Manor in 1962 by A J (Tony) Clark

### Introduction

In 1962 Mr Edward Armstrong-Macdonnell reported finding ‘ancient’ pottery in the bed of the Tillingbourne river, close to a moated area on the southern bank. A J (Tony) Clark undertook a trial excavation of an area on the island of the moat where resistivity survey had indicated the possible presence of buildings. Only a note containing a description of the buildings excavated was published at the time (Anon 1962), and in the interim the archive has deteriorated and some might have been lost. However, the paper archive recovered on the death of the Director includes a plan prepared for publication, a somewhat impressionistic watercolour of the excavated site and a small number of notes, letters and photographs. Two boxes of finds deposited at Guildford Museum (acc no RB1879, now AG 25134) and marked ‘Shalford Manor Farm’ almost certainly come from this site and are assessed here. The main object of this note is to place the excavation plan in the public domain and to suggest an identification for the site.

The site (Surrey HER 311) is in a pasture field known as Poundley’s Meadow, east of the present village of Shalford (fig 1; TQ 0145 4740). It lies on alluvial deposits overlying

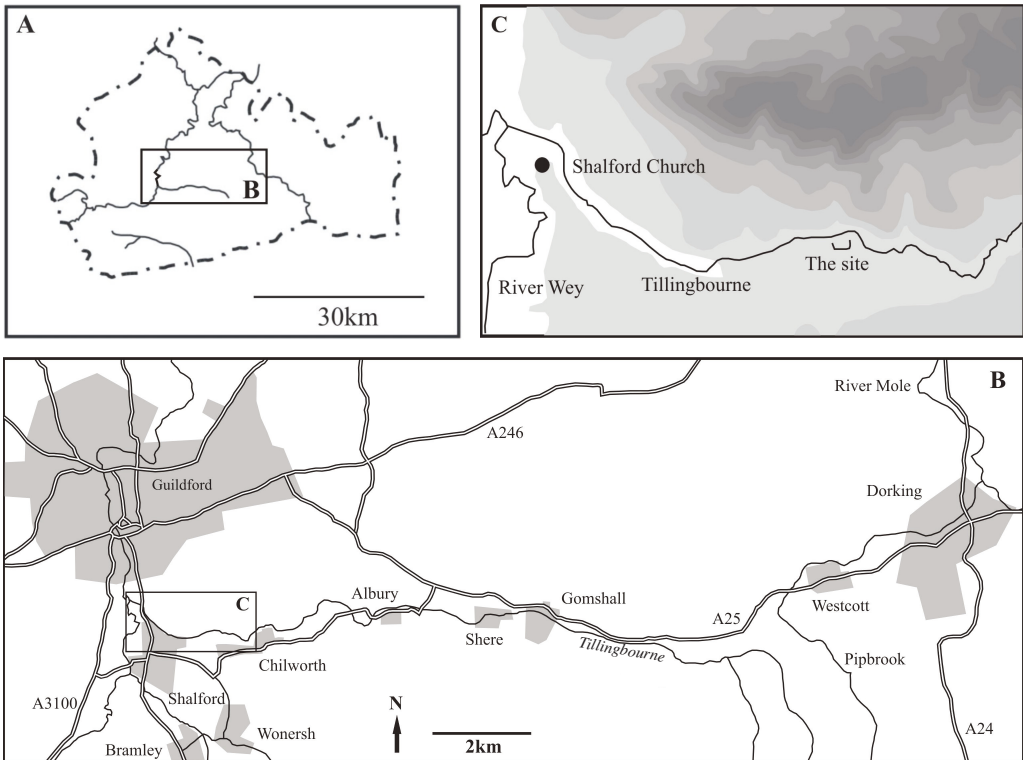


Fig 1 East Shalford Manor. Location and topographical setting of the moated site. The shaded contours are shown at 5m intervals with land over 125m OD (white) to land below 35m OD (white). (© Crown copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved)

Atherfield Clay, at a height of *c* 40m OD. Three sides of the moat are visible as depressions and form an enclosure some 80m east–west. The fourth, northern, leg is less distinct but is *c* 30m from and parallel to the Tillingbourne giving a north–south dimension of *c* 50m.

### The excavation

No plan locating the trenches within the moated island was found in the surviving archive, but an attempt has been made to place them by combining information from aerial photographs with the watercolour painting of the excavation (fig 2); it is acknowledged that this can only be considered an approximation. The excavation plan (fig 3) shows the exposed masonry walls and the published description (Anon 1962) reads: ‘The house seems to consist basically of a long hall 15ft [4.6m] wide overall at the east end. Part of the south wall, a projecting porch or staircase well on the north side, and a sleeper wall 24ft [7.3m] to the north, apparently part of separate half-timbered buildings, were traced, and the east end of the house was examined in some detail. Here the foundations were 3ft 6in [1.1m] deep and up to 3ft [0.9m] thick. There had been an earth floor, sunken towards the centre with wear, above which all internal wall faces had been plastered. Fragments of window and possible door frames of carved chalk, and many roof tiles with nail holes, were found. Kitchen refuse associated with the sleeper wall included a green-glazed pottery spout in the form of a bizarre bird’s head, probably late 13th century [now apparently lost], and an Anglo-Gallic jetton, probably within the bracket 1279–1350’. Also recorded was a ‘cusped chalk window frame from the main building, which could be 15th century’ in date. This strongly suggests that at least a late phase of this building was of masonry construction.

A typed commentary on some photographs found in the paper archive and possibly made for an exhibition further describes the ‘sleeper’ wall as ‘base of a presumably half-timbered wall, probably of the kitchen, besides which pottery and oyster shells were found in profusion. A sleeper beam once lay on the wall, which contained holes to key the beam; also the mortar forms a rim on the right along what had been the side of the beam’.

Although the note (Anon 1962) states that ‘the foundations at least [...] were built of mortared slag blocks’ both the watercolour and a contemporary photograph of the porch/staircase well show mortared sandstone. A letter in the archive of another site excavated by

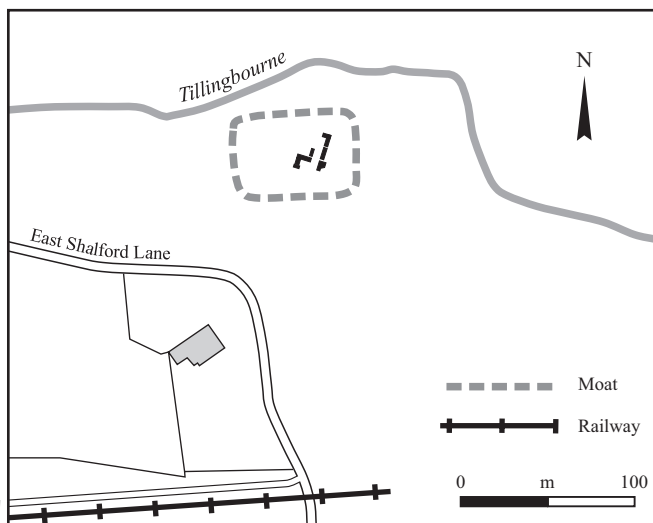


Fig 2 East Shalford Manor. The excavation of the moated site, redrawn by Julie Wileman by combining information from a watercolour by F Gilbert Bentley in 1962, the excavation plan drawn by A J (Tony) Clark and aerial photographs of the moat.

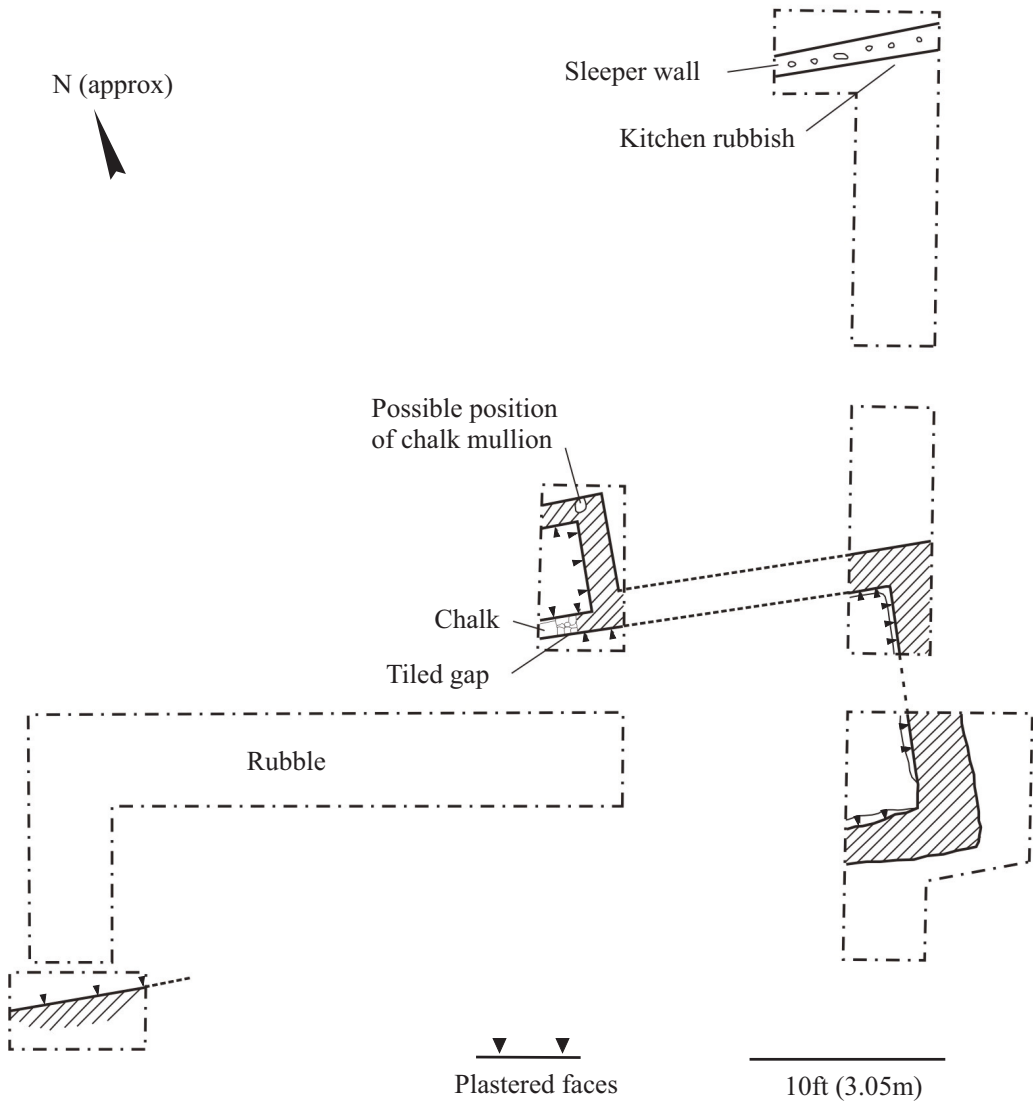


Fig 3 East Shalford Manor. Plan of the excavation derived from that drawn by AJ (Tony) Clark in 1962.

Tony Clark, that on Coneyhurst Gill, Cranleigh, notes that the 'slag' from Shalford Manor had later been identified by Justine Bayley as ironstone.

### The finds

The finds had been stored in paper bags, which had deteriorated to the extent that most were loose and these have been classified as 'unstratified'. Small amounts could be assigned to trenches 1, 1a, 2 and 3, but unfortunately the plan does not identify the trenches by number. However, since there seems little difference between the bag contents and the unstratified finds, and the overall number of artefacts surviving is small enough to raise doubts that the assemblage is complete, the archive will be assessed as a single entity. The total assemblage comprises a jetton, 31 bone fragments, 43 pot sherds, 60 oyster shells, three pieces of wall

plaster, ten pieces of clunch, some with cut surfaces and moulding (but not the cusped window frame mentioned above), five fragments of roof tile and a fossil echinoid.

The deposition record for the jetton (Guildford Museum TRB 616) states that it was found in ‘Trench 1, north end. Thin rubbish spread beneath tile spread lying on basal soil, depth 1ft 6in [0.48m]’ and it has been identified from a description by Enid Dance, then of Guildford Museum, as an English jetton with pictorial obverse similar to Mitchiner (1988) nos 198–207, and contemporary with his bust-jettons *c* 1280–1343. Obverse: shield of arms, unclear but probably three lions *passant*, the arms of England. Reverse: short cross Moline. Both sides with a pelleted border.

The pottery included one small, unstratified, piece of shell-tempered ware, probably S2, which is generally dated *c* 1050–1250 but occurs in the Guildford area with assemblages, including early whitewares, dated to the mid–late 13th century, and at Thorncroft, Leatherhead in an unstratified collection of mainly 13th and 14th century date (Jones 1998). The grey/brown sandy ware tradition is represented by six sherds of FQ2 and a single sherd of Q2 both common in 12th and early 13th century contexts. The remaining 36 pieces of pottery lie within the Surrey whiteware tradition (28 sherds of WW1A; seven sherds of WW1B and one sherd of WW2); production in this tradition continued from the second quarter of the 13th century through the 15th century (*ibid*).

The fragments of wall plaster were very abraded, but appeared to have been attached to masonry rather than wattle and daub, and the site plan makes it clear that the inner walls of the masonry building were plastered.

### Reinterpretation of the site and its buildings

Since the 1960s considerable debate has surrounded both the identification of buildings on medieval seignorial sites and the reasons underlying moat construction. In view of this a more modern interpretation, necessarily speculative in view of the limited information available, is offered here.

Two-storey masonry buildings were widely believed to represent the main house with a first floor hall (eg Faulkner 1958) – the medieval hall being the public space within which the lords exercised their social roles through high visibility. However, it is clear that at least from the 9th century, when Alfred the Great had both *aula* (hall) and *camera* (chamber), high-status settlements might have more than one important building. Analysis of documentary evidence and acceptance of the effects of differential survival has led to the conclusion that two-storey masonry buildings probably represent chamber blocks that would have attended now often lost timber-framed, single-storey halls (Blair 1993). Further discussion suggests that this tradition of communal hall associated with a separate block of private rooms originated in England and was transported to Normandy after 1066 (Impey 1999).

At Stretham, West Sussex, excavation of a moated site within the manor of the bishop of Chichester produced evidence of a number of buildings dated to between the late 12th century and abandonment of the site in the late 15th century. Among these was a hall which, given the relatively slight foundations, was probably timber framed (building F) and a building with massive foundations of ashland greensand (building D), probably of two storeys, with a garderober draining into the moat. This latter building may have provided accommodation for the bishop when visiting his distant manor (Funnell 2009).

At Alsted on the North Downs near Merstham, two buildings were assigned to period 1, *c* 1250–*c* 1270. The first, a rectangular building with strong foundation originally described as a first floor hall, would now be thought of as a chamber block, while a nearby rectangular area of gravel and flints, then identified as a barn or an earlier hall, could have been a contemporary open hall (Blair 1993; Ketteringham 1976).

If the site under discussion follows this pattern then alternative identifications of the excavated buildings can be offered. The ‘hall’, with its substantial, masonry foundations, could instead have been a chamber and, if the projection was a stair well, then a two-storey

chamber block. The building to the north might then represent a timber-framed open hall. Aisled halls appear to have been more common than unaisled ones (Grenville 1997, 78–86), but the evidence from Shalford Manor is insufficient to differentiate between the two forms.

No plan survives to show the location of the buildings within the moated area but the watercolour painting can be used to provide an approximation (fig 2).

Seigneurial and ‘homestead’ moats have also received considerable attention since the 1960s and the impetus underlying their construction has been varyingly assigned to a need for defence, drainage or a wish to emulate their social superiors. Although the Shalford site is on low-lying land, higher ground could have been accessed just north of the Tillingbourne, and the location seems to have been one selected to allow the creation of a water-filled moat rather than one that necessitated drainage. In France at least, the aristocracy allowed under-tenants to build shallow moats, but not to add earthen banks or major masonry walls, thus limiting both their potential for defence and for presenting too much of a challenge to the higher status of the lord (Bar 1981). In East Anglia it has been found that manorial *caputs* and freehold farms in peripheral locations are more likely to be moated than farms under customary tenure (Martin 2012), and it is this requirement for visible expression of status that probably underlies construction of the moat by a manorial lord at East Shalford.

Nevertheless, an imperative related to defence should not be discounted. Land pressure, food shortages, heavy taxation, particularly to fund the wars of Edward I in the mid-1290s as well as those against Scotland and France in the first half of the 14th century, and the Great European Famine (1315–22) led to considerable social stress and endemic lawlessness during the ‘long’ half-century from 1290 to 1348. A moat could provide protection for property against local unrest and in the south-east Midlands there is a correlation between the distribution of moated sites and that of above-average wealth (Platt 2010). The isolated location of East Shalford Manor may have encouraged its owner to guard his family, its food stores and other wealth from a desperate local peasantry.

## Discussion

Shalford lies within the western portion of the Blackheath Hundred, and was part of a probable Late Saxon ‘multiple estate’ based on Bramley (Blair 1991, fig 9 D). In 1086 the present Shalford church appears to have been one of three assessed under Bramley, and the church assessed under Shalford *vill* that at its Wealden outlier, Alfold (*ibid*, 122; English & Turner 2004). The Domesday Survey description of Shalford describes the tenurial situation of the estate centre thus: ‘*Duo fratres tenuerunt tempus rex Edwardus. Unusquisque habuit domum suam, et tamen manserunt in una curia, et quo voluerunt ire potuerunt*’ (expanded by John Blair), which translates as: ‘Two brothers held it before 1066. Each had his own house but they remained in one court; they could go where they would’ (Morris 1975, 19). This appears to indicate a joint inheritance by two brothers, one of whom probably built a second house within an existing farmyard or courtyard complex, although the complex could have been constructed *de novo* to suitably accommodate this unusual tenurial situation (John Blair, pers comm). The location of this centre is unknown.

The post-Conquest history of the manor of Shalford, or East Shalford, entails descent within the de Wateville family as under-tenants of the de Clares until the reign of Henry II, after which it passed through a number of hands until its division in *c* 1297. One part passed by marriage to the Clifford family, becoming the manor of Shalford Clifford, while the other part, after becoming escheat to the Crown on the attainder of Hugh le Despenser in 1326, was granted to William Hatton and eventually became the Manor of Shalford Bradestan (*VCH* 3, 108–9). In 1543/4 the two parts were reunited when Sir Anthony Browne, who had inherited Shalford Bradestan the previous year, purchased Shalford Clifford, and the joined holding has since descended under the name East Shalford Manor or East Shalford Farm.

The construction date of the excavated buildings cannot be assessed with any certainty in the absence of any stratified assemblages. However, the contemporary report suggests

occupation during the 13th and early 14th centuries, and the jetton and pottery recovered would accord with this dating. Construction may have reflected the possible need to build at least one new *caput* after the division of the manor in *c* 1297 although, given the presence of grey/brown sandy ware in a sample of pottery, albeit small, would suggest a somewhat earlier date. Despite extensive documentary research (by Margaret Dierden), it has not proved possible to show in which of the two manors the site was situated.

Unfortunately, the site has been ploughed repeatedly since the 1960s and the present state of preservation of the archaeological remains is unknown. The archive from Tony Clark's excavation has been consolidated at Guildford Museum under accession number AG 25134.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Abigayle Smyth made the archives deposited in Guildford Museum accessible for study; Pamela Savage identified the medieval pottery; John Blair clarified the meaning of the Domesday Book description of Shalford; Margaret Dierden discussed the problems in differentiating between land owned by the manors of Shalford Bradestan and Shalford Clifford, and Martin Higgins commented on a draft of this note – to all these I am most grateful.

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