

# Acton Court

The evolution of an early Tudor courtier's house

by Kirsty Rodwell and Robert Bell



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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with contributions by

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## Summary

Acton Court, on the outskirts of the village of Iron Acton, in South Gloucestershire was a moated manor house, constructed in the 13th century on an older site as the capital message of the Acton family. It was inherited in 1364 by Sir John Poyntz from his aunt, the widow of the last of the Actons, and remained in the ownership of the Poyntz family until 1683. Until the late 15th century, no member of the Poyntz family held any position of more than local significance. However, Robert Poyntz was a protégé of Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, whose sister was Edward IV's queen, and whose illegitimate daughter Poyntz married in 1479. He became a courtier, survived the reign of Richard III, supported Henry Tudor, and was knighted at Bosworth Field. Henry VII dined with Sir Robert at his house on 23 May 1486, while on his way to Bristol during the course of a royal progress. Robert Poyntz remained in favour after Henry VIII succeeded to the throne, achieving the position of chancellor to Queen Catherine of Aragon; and in 1520, shortly before his death, he attended the King at the Field of Cloth of Gold, accompanied by two of his sons and his daughter-in-law.

Sir Robert Poyntz's close association with the Tudor dynasty and his service under both Henry VII and Henry VIII probably explains the royal favour shown to his grandson, Nicholas Poyntz. Nicholas was a young man of twenty-three when he inherited Acton Court from his father, Sir Anthony, in 1532. He was a friend of Richard Rich, and of Richard Cromwell, Thomas's nephew, and was in the King's entourage at the Calais interview in October 1532. He was given a command during the Irish rebellion of 1534–5, and was knighted after this campaign. The ceremony may have taken place at Acton Court, for between Saturday, 21 and Monday, 23 August Henry VIII, accompanied by Queen Anne Boleyn and their retinue, stayed at the house during the course of a 13-week royal progress through the west of England in the summer of 1535. Archaeological investigations have demonstrated that the east range of the surviving house was built and decorated expressly for this visit and other goods such as pottery and glass appear to have been imported for the occasion.

Excavation has revealed that the house which Nicholas inherited in 1532 was compact in plan, tightly enclosed by its surrounding moat. It consisted of three distinct ranges, 13th-century in origin. The south range contained the main entrance through the porch and the screens passage, with the hall and parlour/great chamber to the west, and the buttery and pantry to the east. North-west of the hall was a first-floor chapel, attached to which were lodgings and chambers, added from the late 13th century onwards. To the east of the south range was the kitchen. A fourth, unexcavated

range probably stood in the north-east corner of the site.

The house was extensively rebuilt in the early 15th century, and c 1500 was embellished by Sir Robert Poyntz with fireplaces and other architectural features in the French flamboyant style. These were broken up and thrown into the moat as building debris c 1550. North of the house, beyond the moat, Sir Robert created a walled garden, for which Nicholas Kratzer, the King's horologist, designed the stone sundial dated 1520, found at Acton Court.

To construct the new east range Nicholas Poyntz demolished the medieval kitchens and replaced them with service buildings further east, beyond the moat. Like the medieval house, this range is built of the local Pennant sandstone bedded in loam, and would originally have been rendered externally. Cotswold limestone (often reused) was used for window surrounds and other dressings. The arrangement of the rooms at ground-floor level is uncertain, because of remodelling twenty years later. However, much of the first-floor layout still survives, comprising three large high-ceilinged rooms, each with fireplace and garderobe, lit by windows of eight or more lights. The window in the principal south elevation was an ingenious oriel within the thickness of the wall, which has affinities with the former 'Holbein' gate at Whitehall.

Some of the internal decoration has survived later alterations. The north room had a painted frieze with a shell-hood over the fireplace, now in a poor state of preservation, and a trompe-l'oeil ribbed ceiling with applied bullions. However, the most outstanding survival is the painted frieze on the south wall of the central room, executed in a classical style known at the time as 'antike' work. The design is painted in grisaille with touches of red, green and ochre on a black ground and is of a quality unparalleled in any surviving 16th-century house in England. At this period it must have been executed by craftsmen employed by the Royal Works. The wall below was panelled, which retains traces of ochre colouring. During the excavations, quantities of moulded stucco, from a ceiling and a fireplace overmantel, were found in the mid-16th-century backfill of the east arm of the moat. This was associated with the east range and is one of the earliest examples in England of this form of decoration.

No building accounts have been preserved, but the range has been dated precisely by tree-ring analysis of the primary tie-beams and roof-timbers, which has indicated a felling date of 1534–5. The combination of the tree-ring date and the internal layout and decoration leaves little room for doubt that the range was built specifically for the King's benefit, and represented the latest taste in both the planning and decoration of royal lodgings.

The removal of the medieval kitchen meant that temporary kitchens had to be erected to the east of the moat, in order to cater for the extensive royal retinue. They were linked to the house by pentices. In honour of the occasion, sets of ceramic plates and containers of Spanish and Italian origin were acquired. Examples of these exotic items, discarded no later than the 1540s, and possibly immediately after the visit, were discovered in the backfilled moat. They were accompanied by fragments of superb Venetian glass vessels, which are also likely to have been purchased in advance of Henry's visit. There are also important groups of small finds, including unique items such as children's long-bows, from the moat.

The construction of the east range marked the start of a major programme of rebuilding by Sir Nicholas, which continued intermittently until his death in 1556. New north and west ranges were built, the south range modernised, and the medieval moat infilled to create an outwardly regular courtyard house. The ground floor of the east range was divided up to form lodgings: one room retains its decoration of moulded plaster Tudor roses, and the connecting passages have interesting constructional graffiti, as well as ships, names and dates. A long gallery occupied the whole of the north range at first-floor level. It has a painted frieze of Latin texts and a classical stone fireplace-surround with close

affinities to work at Lacock, Wiltshire. Nicholas Poyntz, like William Sharington, was a member of Somerset's circle and shared their tastes in architecture.

The external form of the 1535 house was dictated by its internal function, but the later rebuilding shows a developing concern with symmetry in the external elevations, which is linked to the introduction of classical architectural detail as an integrated part of the overall design. These ideas were worked out more fully at Nicholas Poyntz's lodge, Newark Park, Ozleworth, Gloucestershire, a new house of c 1550, which with its high compact form prefigures architectural developments of the later 16th century.

The descendants of Sir Nicholas Poyntz undertook no major building work. A stair tower was added between the north and west ranges in 1576, and before the Civil War the present east courtyard was created, altering the axis of the house from south to east. The family was progressively encumbered by debt and, following the death in 1680 of Sir John Poyntz without direct male heirs, the house was sold and the estate was split up. The building was greatly reduced in size, and converted into a farmhouse, which it remained until its sale in 1984. It is thanks to this relative decline in fortune that the mid-16th century appearance of the house is so uniquely well preserved.

## Résumé

Acton Court, qui se trouve aux abords du village d'Iron Acton, dans le sud du comté de Gloucestershire, était un manoir avec fossé, construit au XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle, sur un site plus ancien, comme demeure principale de la famille Acton. En 1364, Sir John Poyntz en hérita de sa tante, veuve du dernier membre de la famille Acton et le manoir resta propriété de la famille Poyntz jusqu'en 1683. Aucun membre de la famille Poyntz n'occupa de position dont la notoriété dépassa la région avant les dernières années du XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Toutefois, Robert Poyntz fut le protégé d'Anthony Woodville, comte de Rivers, dont la soeur était la reine d'Edouard IV, et dont Poyntz épousa la fille illégitime en 1479. Il devint courtisan, survécut au règne de Richard III, apporta son soutien à Henri Tudor, et fut fait chevalier sur le champ de bataille de Bosworth. Henri VII dina avec Sir Robert chez lui le 23 mai 1486, alors qu'il faisait route vers Bristol dans le cadre d'un déplacement de la cour. Robert Poyntz resta en faveur après l'accession au trône d'Henri VIII, se voyant offrir la position de chancelier auprès de la reine Catherine d'Aragon, et en 1520, peu avant sa mort, il servit le roi au camp du Drap d'Or, accompagné de ses deux fils et de sa bru.

Les liens étroits entre Sir Robert Poyntz et la dynastie des Tudor et son service à la fois auprès d'Henri VII et d'Henri VIII expliquent probablement pourquoi on accorda des faveurs royales à son petit-fils, Nicolas Poyntz. Nicolas était un jeune homme de vingt-trois ans quand, en 1532, il hérita d'Acton Court de son père, Sir Anthony. Il était l'ami de Richard Rich et de Richard Cromwell, le neveu de Thomas, et il faisait partie de l'entourage du roi à l'entrevue de Calais en octobre 1532. On lui offrit un commandement au cours de la rébellion de 1534-35 en Irlande, et il fut fait chevalier après cette campagne. Il se peut que la cérémonie ait eu lieu à Acton court, car entre le samedi 21 et le lundi 23 août, Henri VIII, accompagné de la reine Anne Boleyn et de leur suite, séjourna dans cette maison au cours d'un voyage de la cour de treize semaines dans l'ouest de l'Angleterre pendant l'été 1535. Des investigations archéologiques ont démontré que le corps de bâtiment est de ce qui reste de la maison a été construit et décoré expressément pour cette visite et que d'autres articles tels que de la poterie et du verre semblent avoir été importés pour l'occasion.

Des fouilles ont révélé que la maison dont Nicolas avait hérité en 1532 avait été construite selon un plan



compact, étroitement enserrée par le fossé qui l'entourait. Elle consistait en trois corps de bâtiment distincts, datant à l'origine du XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Le corps de bâtiment sud comprenait l'entrée principale par le porche et le passage orné d'écrans, le vestibule et le parloir/la grande salle se trouvaient à l'ouest, la dépense et l'office à l'est. A l'étage, au nord-ouest du vestibule se trouvait une chapelle, à laquelle se rattachaient des appartements et des chambres, ajoutés à partir de la fin du XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle. A l'est du corps de bâtiment sud se trouvait la cuisine. Un quatrième corps de bâtiment, qui n'a pas été fouillé, se situait probablement au coin nord-est du site.

La maison fut extensivement reconstruite au début du XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle et, vers 1500, fut embellie par Sir Robert Poyntz qui y ajouta des cheminées et autres ornements architecturaux dans le style français flamboyant. Ceux-ci furent brisés et jetés dans le fossé comme débris de construction vers 1550. Au nord de la maison, au-delà du fossé, Sir Robert créa un jardin entouré d'un mur, pour lequel Nicolas Kratzer, l'horloger du roi, conçut un cadran solaire qui date de 1520 et qui se trouve à Acton Court.

Pour construire le corps de bâtiment est, Nicolas Poyntz démolit les cuisines médiévales et les remplaça par des bâtiments destinés au service plus loin à l'est, au delà du fossé. Tout comme le manoir médiéval, ce corps de bâtiment est construit en pierre Pennant, grès de la région, sur une assise de torchis, il aurait été couvert d'un enduit à l'extérieur. De la pierre calcaire des Cotswolds (souvent réutilisée) fut utilisée pour l'encadrement des fenêtres et d'autres parements. Nous ne sommes pas certains de la disposition des pièces au niveau du rez-de-chaussée, en raison de réaménagements vingt ans plus tard. Toutefois, une grande partie de l'agencement du premier étage subsiste encore, il comprend trois grandes pièces à hauts plafonds, chacune avec cheminée et garde-robe, éclairées par des fenêtres à huit carreaux ou plus. La fenêtre de l'élévation principale au sud était une ingénieuse fenêtre en encorbellement creusée dans l'épaisseur du mur, qui a des affinités avec l'ancienne porte 'Holbein' à Whitehall.

Certains éléments de décoration intérieure ont survécu à des modifications ultérieures. La pièce nord était ornée d'une frise peinte, avec un chapeau en forme de coquillage au-dessus de la cheminée, maintenant en piteux état de conservation, et un plafond à nervures en trompe l'oeil avec des décors appliqués. Cependant, le vestige le plus extraordinaire est la frise peinte sur le mur sud de la pièce centrale, exécutée dans le style classique connu à l'époque sous le nom d'ouvrage 'antike'. Le motif est peint en grisaille, avec des touches de rouge, vert et ocre sur un fond noir et est d'une qualité qui n'a son égale dans aucune des maisons du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle ayant survécu en Angleterre. A l'époque, elle a dû être exécutée par des artisans employés par la Manufacture Royale. Le mur en-dessous, recouvert de boiseries, a gardé des traces de

couleur ocre. Au cours des fouilles, on a trouvé dans les remblais datant du milieu du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle du bras est du fossé, des quantités de moulages en stuc provenant d'un plafond et d'une étagère de cheminée. Ils étaient associés à la partie est et constituent l'un des plus anciens exemples de ce type de décoration en Angleterre.

Aucun document relatif aux bâtiments n'a été préservé, mais on a pu les dater précisément, grâce à l'analyse des cernes d'arbres des entrants et des bois de charpente primaires qui a donné une date d'abattage de 1534-35. La combinaison de la datation des cernes d'arbres, de la disposition des pièces et de la décoration intérieure ne laisse que peu de place au doute que l'aile fut construite exprès pour le bénéfice du roi, et représente la dernière mode en matière à la fois d'agencement et de décoration des demeures royales.

La suppression de la cuisine médiévale signifiait que l'on dut ériger des cuisines temporaires à l'est du fossé, de manière à pouvoir subvenir aux besoins de l'importante suite royale. Elles étaient reliées à la maison par des appentis. En l'honneur de cette occasion, on fit l'acquisition de services d'assiettes et de récipients en céramique d'origine espagnole et italienne. Des exemples de ces articles exotiques, dont on s'est débarrassé au plus tard dans les années 1540, et peut-être immédiatement après la visite, ont été retrouvés dans le remblai du fossé. Des fragments de superbes vaisseaux en verre vénitien, qui avaient probablement aussi été achetés en prévision de la visite d'Henri, les accompagnaient. On a également retrouvé dans le fossé des ensembles importants de petites trouvailles, parmi lesquelles se trouvaient des objets uniques tels que des arcs d'enfants.

La construction de la partie est a marqué le début d'un programme de reconstruction majeur, à l'instigation de Sir Nicolas, qui s'est prolongé, par intermittence, jusqu'à sa mort en 1556. On construisit de nouveaux corps de bâtiment nord et ouest, on modernisa le corps de bâtiment sud et le fossé médiéval fut comblé pour créer une maison à cour à l'extérieur régulier. Le rez-de-chaussée du corps de bâtiment est fut divisé pour former des appartements : une pièce a gardé sa décoration de moulages de roses Tudor en plâtre, et les passages qui les reliaient offrent d'intéressants graffiti relatifs à la construction, ainsi que des bateaux, des noms et des dates. Le premier étage du corps de bâtiment nord était entièrement occupé par une longue galerie. Elle possède une frise peinte avec des textes latins et un encadrement de cheminée classique en pierre qui a d'étroites affinités avec un ouvrage à Lacock, Wiltshire. Nicolas Poyntz, tout comme William Sharrington, faisait partie du cercle du Somerset et ils partageaient les mêmes goûts en matière d'architecture.

L'aspect extérieur de la maison de 1535 était dicté par sa fonction interne, mais les reconstructions ultérieures font preuve d'un souci croissant de symétrie dans les élévations extérieures, celui-ci est lié à l'introduction de détails architecturaux classiques comme

partie intégrante du projet d'ensemble. Ces idées furent mises en pratique plus complètement dans la loge de Nicolas Poyntz, à Newark Park, Ozleworth, Gloucestershire, une nouvelle maison datant d'environ 1550, qui de par sa forme haute et compacte, préfigure l'évolution de l'architecture à la fin du XVIème siècle.

Les descendants de Sir Nicolas Poyntz n'entreprirent pas de travaux de construction majeurs. Une tour avec escalier fut ajoutée entre les bâtiments nord et ouest en 1576, et, avant la Guerre Civile, fut créée la cour actuelle, ce qui changea l'axe de la maison du sud

à l'est. Progressivement, la famille s'endetta et, à la suite de la mort en 1680 de Sir John Poyntz, sans descendant mâle direct, la maison fut vendue et le domaine morcelé. La taille du bâtiment fut fortement réduite et il fut converti en ferme, ce qu'il resta jusqu'à sa vente en 1984. C'est grâce à ce revers de fortune relatif que l'aspect milieu du XVIème de la maison a été si bien préservé, ce qui est unique.

**Traduction: Annie Pritchard**

## Zusammenfassung

Acton Court, am Rande des Dorfes Iron Acton in Sued-Gloucestershire gelegen, ist ein von einem Wassergraben umgebenes Herrngutshaus, welches im 13. Jahrhundert auf einer älteren Niederlassung als Hauptresidenz fuer die Actonfamilie erbaut wurde. Es wurde im Jahr 1364 durch Erbschaft an Sir John Poyntz von seiner Tante, der Witwe des letzten der Actons, vermacht. Das Haus verblieb im Besitz der Familie Poyntz bis 1683. Bis ins spaete 15. Jahrhundert hielt kein Mitglied der Familie Poyntz eine wichtige Position ueber das Lokalgeschehen hinaus. Das aenderte sich mit Robert Poyntz einem Favoriten des Earl Rivers, Anthony Woodville, dessen Schwester Koenigin von Edward IV war und deren illegitime Tochter Poyntz im Jahre 1479 heiratete. Er wurde danach ein Angehoeriger des Hofstaats. Er ueberlebte die Regierung von Richard III, unterstuetzte Henry Tudor und wurde bei Bosworth Feld zum Ritter geschlagen. Waehrend er auf seiner koeniglichen Tour auf dem Weg nach Bristol war, dinierte Henry VII mit Sir Robert in dessen Haus am 23. Mai 1486. Robert Poyntz verblieb auch nach der Uebernahme des Throns durch Henry VIII in gutem Ansehen bei Hofe und wurde Kanzler der Koenigin Catherine von Aragon, und besuchte in 1520, kurz vor seinem Tod, den Koenig auf dem Feld des Goldtuches, begleitet von zwei seiner Soehne und einer Schwiegertochter.

Sir Robert Poyntz's enge Beziehung mit der Tudor-Dynastie und seine Leistungen unter Henry VII und Henry VIII erklaren moeglicherweise die koenigliche Gunst, welche seinem Enkelsohn Nicholas Poyntz gezeigt wurde. Nicholas war ein junger Mann von 23 Jahren, als er Acton Court in 1532 von seinem Vater, Sir Anthony, erbte. Er war ein Freund von Richard Rich und von Richard Cromwell, der Neffe von Thomas, und war ein Mitgleid des koeniglichen Gefolges bei dem Calais-Interview im Oktober 1532. Er war ein kommandierender Offizier waehrend der Irischen Rebellion von 1534-35, und wurde nach dieser Kampagne zum Ritter geschlagen. Die Zere-

monie dafuer fand vielleicht sogar in Acton Court statt, da zwischen Sonnabend dem 21. und Montag dem 23. August Henry VIII und Koenigin Anne Boleyn und deren Gefolge, waehrend Ihrer 13-woechigen koeniglichen Tour im Westen von England im Sommer von 1535, in dem Haus zu Gast waren. Archeologische Untersuchungen haben ergeben, dass der oestliche Seitenfluegel des noch stehenden Hauses speziell fuer diesen Anlass gebaut und dekoriert wurde, und das andere Gueter wie Geschirr und Glass extra fuer diese Gelegenheit importiert worden waren.

Ausgrabungen haben gezeigt, dass das Haus, welches Nicholas im Jahre 1532 geerbt hatte, kompakt in der Auslegung und von einem Wassergraben eng umschlossen war. Es bestand aus drei unterschiedlichen Hausfluegeln und stammt aus dem 13. Jahrhundert. Der suedliche Fluegel beinhaltete den Haupteingang, die Veranda und die Trennungspassage mit der Grossen Kammer zum Westen gelegen und der Speisekammer und Vorratskammer zum Osten. Nordwestlich der Halle war eine Kapelle im ersten Stockwerk, an welche Wohnunterkuenfte und Kammern seit dem spaeten 13. Jahrhundert angebaut wurden. Zum Osten des Suedfluegels war die Kueche. Ein vierter noch nicht ausgegrabener Hausfluegel befand sich in der nordoestlichen Ecke des Bauwerkes.

Das Haus wurde Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts ausfuehrlich renoviert und wurde um circa 1500 von Sir Robert Poyntz mit Kaminen und anderen architektonischen Mitteln in ausgeschweiftem franzoesischen Stil verschoenert. Diese wurden jedoch um 1550 abgerissen und deren Ueberreste in den Wassergraben geworfen. Noerdlich des Hauses und ausserhalb des Wassergrabens legte Sir Robert einen Mauergarten an, fuer welchen Nicholas Kratzer, des Koenigs Uhrmacherkuenstler, die Sonnenuhr konzipierte, welche auf 1520 datiert und die in Acton Court gefunden wurde.

Um den neuen Ostfluegel zu bauen, riss Nicholas Poynts die mittelalterlichen Kuechenraume ab und baute neue Dienstgebäude weiter oestlich ausserhalb

des Wassergrabens. Wie auch bei dem mittelalterlichen Haus, ist der neue Fluegel aus dem oerllichem Pennantsandstein gebaut und mit Lehmerde verschmiert, und waere original aeusserlich verputzt gewesen. Cotswold-Kalkstein (oftmals wieder verwertet) wurde fuer Fensterumrandungen und andere Dekorationen benutzt. Die Anlegung der Raeume im Erdgeschoss ist unbekannt, da es nach 20 Jahren wieder umgebaut wurde. Jedoch findet man im ersten Stock noch vieles in der originalen Auslegung, mit drei grossen Raeumen, jeder mit hoher Zimmerdecke, Kamin und Garderobe und durch Fenster mit acht oder mehr Lichtern erhellt. Das Fenster im suedlichen Hauptaufriss war ein geniales Erkerfenster innerhalb der Hauswanddicke, welches Aehnlichkeiten mit dem "Holbein"-Tor in Whitehall hatte.

Einige der inneren Dekorationen haben spaetere Umbauten ueberlebt. Der noerdliche Raum hatte ein gemaltes Fries, mit einer Schalenhaube ueber dem Kamin, jetzt in einem schlecht erhaltenen Zustand, und einer *trompe-l'oeil*-Rippenzimmerdecke mit aufgesetzten dekorativen Schlusssteinen. Das jedoch bei weitem hervorragende ueberlebende Stueck ist das gemalte Fries and der Suedwand des zentralen Zimmers, welches in einem klassischen Stil ausgefuehrt wurde, der zu der damaligen Zeit als "Antike" Arbeit bekannt war. Das Muster ist zum grossen Teil in Grisaille mit Spuren von Rot, Gruen und Ocker auf schwarzem Untergund und ist von einer Qualitaet, die unvergleichlich zu anderen Haeusern des 16. Jahrhunderts in England ist. Waehrend dieser Zeit wurden solche Arbeiten nur von Handwerksleuten durchgefuehrt, welche fuer die koeniglichen Werkstaetten arbeiteten. Die Wand darunter war verkleidet, und Spuren von Ocker sind darauf sichtbar. Waehrend der Ausgrabungsarbeiten wurden Quantitaeten von geformten Stueck von einer Zimmerdecke und einer Kaminueberhaube in einer aus dem 16. Jahrhundert stammenden Aufschuetzung des oestlichen Arms des Wassergrabens gefunden. Dieses wurde dem Ostfluegel des Hauses zugeordnet und ist eines der fruehesten Beispiele dieser Art von Dekoration in England.

Keine Wiedergabe der Bauarbeiten ist erhalten geblieben, das Alter des Fluegels wurde jedoch praezise durch eine Baumringanalyse der Stuetz- und Dachbalken datiert, und deutet auf ein Faellungsdatum von 1534–35 hin. Die Kombination von Baumringanalyse und der inneren Raumauslegung sowie die Dekoration laesst kaum einen Spielraum fuer Zweifel uebrig, dass der Fluegel speziell fuer das Wohlbefinden des Koenigs gebaut wurde, und stellt den neuesten Trend damals in Bezug auf Planung und Dekoration von koeniglicher Unterkunft dar.

Das Entfernen der mittelalterlichen Kueche bedeutete, dass die neuen vorlaeufigen Kuechengebäude oestlich des Wassergrabens errichtet werden mussten, damit man das grosse koenigliche Gefolge verpflegen konnte. Diese neuen Gebaeude waren durch Saeulengaenge mit dem Haus verbunden. Um

den Anlass zu ehren, wurden ganze Saetze an spanischen und italienischen Porzellantellern und Porcellangefaessen eingekauft. Beispiele dieser exotischen Stuecke, welche nicht spaeter als 1540 und vielleicht sogar gleich nach dem koeniglichen Besuch weggeworfen wurden, konnten aus der Aufschuetzung des Wassergrabens geborgen werden. Begleitet werden diese Stuecke von Fragmenten von vorzueglichen venezianischen Glassgefassen, welche man wahrscheinlich schon vor dem Besuch von Henry beschaffte. In dem Wassergraben wurden ausserdem noch eine Fuelle an anderen wichtigen kleineren Fuenden gemacht. Unter anderen einmaligen Stuecken wurde dort auch ein ein Langbogen fuer Kinder gefunden.

Die Konstruktion des Ostfluegels markierte den Start fuer wesentliche Umbauarbeiten durch Sir Nicholas, welche unterbrochen bis zu seinem Tod im Jahre 1556 ausgefuehrt wurden. Neue Nord- und Westfluegel wurden gebaut und der Suedfluegel wurde modernisiert. Der mittelalterliche Wassergraben wurde aufgefuellt, um ein nach aussen normales Haus mit Hof darzustellen. Das Erdgeschoss des Ostfluegels wurde aufgeteilt um verschiedene Unterkuenfte zu schaffen. Ein Raum hat noch heute seine Dekoration von Tudorrosen aus geformten Gips und die Verbindungsgaenge hatten interessante konstruktionswandmalereien, sowie Schiffe, Namen und Daten. Das gesamte erste Stockwerk des Nordfluegels wurde von einer langen Gallerie eingenommen. Diese Gallerie hatte ein gemaltes Fries von lateinischen Texten und einen Kamin mit traditioneller Steinumantelung, welche sehr stark mit Arbeiten in Lacock, Wiltshire verwandt waren. Nicholas Poyntz wie auch William Sharrington war ein Mitglied des Somersetkreises und beide teilten den gleichen Geschmack in Architektur.

Die aeussere Ansicht des Hauses aus dem Jahr 1535 wurde durch seine innere Funktionalitaet bestimmt, doch zeigen spaetere Umbauten ein gesteigertes Bewusstsein, wenn es um die Symmetrie der aeusseren Flaechen geht. Dieses ist verbunden mit der Einfuehrung von klassischen architektonischen Details als ein integriertes Element des gesamten Designs. Diese Ideen wurden weiterentwickelt und um circa 1550 in dem Bau von Nicholas Poyntz' neuem Haus in Newark Park, Ozleworth, Gloucestershire umgesetzt, welches durch seine hohe kompakte Form den architektonischen Entwicklungen des spaeteren 16. Jahrhunderts vorauslaeuft.

Die Nachfahren von Sir Nicholas Poyntz unternahmen keine wesentlichen Bauarbeiten an dem Haus. Ein Treppenturm wurde zwischen dem Nord- und Westfluegel im Jahre 1576 angefuegt, und noch vor dem Buergerkrieg wurde der heutige Osthof geschaffen, welches die Achse des Hauses von Sueden nach Osten verschob. Die Familie wurde mehr und mehr von Schulden geplagt und nach dem Tod von Sir John Poyntz im Jahre 1680 und ohne maennlichen

Erben, wurde das Grundstück verkauft und der Besitz aufgeteilt. Das Gebäude wurde wesentlich verkleinert und in ein Bauernhaus umgebaut und verblieb so bis zu seinem Verkauf in 1984. Den fehlenden Mitteln zur Renovierung des Hauses ist es zu verdanken, dass das

Haus in seinem einmaligen Auftreten erhalten geblieben ist.

**Uebersetzung: Norman Behrend**



# Glossary and Abbreviations

Currency	Pounds, shillings and pence (pennies) were usually abbreviated as <i>£</i> , <i>s</i> , and <i>d</i> . (In one document in Chapter 2, Appendix B, pound is abbreviated as <i>ld</i> .) There were 12 pence to 1 shilling and 20 shillings to 1 pound.
<i>Cyma</i>	A curved moulding, in section concave above, and convex below. This is known as <i>cyma recta</i> (shaped like an elongated S. The curve is reversed in <i>cyma reversa</i> .)
Dozen	(“dosen” or “dosyn” in Chapter 2, Appendix B) Noun, denoting a set of twelve.

## Measurement, area

Acre	One acre = 0.4 hectare (approx)
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## Measurement, weight or volume

Bushel (bushell)	Formerly, a dry measure of 8 gallons. (One gallon = 4.546 litres)
Oz	Ounce: for precious metals, 1 ounce was 1 twelfth of a pound troy. For weighing other substances, there are 16 ounces to one pound (lb): 2.2lb = 1 kilogram.
Peck	Formerly, a dry measure of 2 gallons, one quarter of a bushel.
Merlon	The rising element in an indented (embattled) parapet.
OB	Outbuilding
Pair	(“peyre” in Chapter 2, Appendix B) A set of two similar articles, eg sheets
XRD	X-ray diffraction
XRF	X-ray fluorescence

## Preface

'Saturday, 21 Aug, Bristowe to Acton, Mr. Poyntz's place, and there Sunday, 7 m(iles). Monday, 23 Aug, Acten to Mr. Walshe's (at Little Sodbury) ...' This is the only written record of the visit to Acton Court by Henry VIII and Queen Anne Boleyn in the summer of 1535, during the course of a 13-week royal progress through the west of England. Until 1985, when the house came to the notice of English Heritage, it was not appreciated that a much more substantial memorial to this event survives in the form of the east range of the standing building. The history of its acquisition, and the subsequent restoration and research programme is described in Chapter 1 by Paul Drury.

It was appreciated from the outset of the project that the house was a significant survival from the first half of the 16th century and it was hoped to elucidate the demolished parts of the building by excavation. However, the quality and complexity of the evidence this revealed could not be anticipated, nor the unique groups of contemporary artefacts recovered from the then unknown moat. The survival within the house of high quality painted friezes in 'antike' style contemporary with the royal visit, and of objects such as the signed sundial, dated 1520, found in building debris, combine to make Acton Court a unique survival from a formative architectural period, which is under-represented amongst extant 16th-century houses.

This report has been structured to integrate the above- and below-ground archaeology as closely as possible. The topographical setting of the house is described in Chapter 1, and the historical evidence is discussed by Jean Manco in Chapter 2. The development of the medieval house and its environs from the

13th to the early 16th century is the subject of Chapter 3. This information was recovered entirely by excavation or earthwork survey, and the discussion sets the house in its contemporary context. Chapter 4 describes the fabric of the house from its apogee in the mid-16th century through until its sale in 1683, combining excavated and structural evidence; Chapter 5 gives the evidence for the 16th-century interiors. Chapter 6 discusses the significance of the 16th-century house, its architectural parallels and how it functioned as a building. Chapter 7 describes the building's use as a farmhouse after 1683, again combining excavated and structural evidence. Robert Bell wrote Chapter 3, except for the discussion of the 15th-century house, Kirsty Rodwell Chapters 5 and 6, and the remainder have joint authorship.

Specialist reports by a number of different authors are the subject of Chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 deals with structural materials such as floor and roof tiles, architectural fragments including the sundial, decorative plaster fragments, architectural woodwork and window glass. There are also reports on the tree-ring dating, graffiti and the translation of the Latin texts in the long gallery. Chapter 9 contains reports on the artefacts related to daily life which were found during the excavations. These include large, well-stratified and extremely important groups of 16th-century pottery and glass, amongst which there are many imports, and also of 16th- and 17th-century small finds. Further reports describe the coins, clay tobacco pipes, leather, textile remains and unique items such as children's longbows. Environmental reports cover vertebrate remains and plant and animal macrofossils.





# 1

## Introduction

### *The rescue of Acton Court*

by Paul Drury

A visitor to Acton Court might easily imagine himself a hundred years ago, when less attention was commonly paid to the maintenance of old buildings. Although it is still inhabited, this substantial mansion is now in a state of advanced decay which is extremely picturesque, but must lead eventually to a partial collapse of the structure.

So wrote Neil Burton on the occasion of a visit by the Royal Archaeological Institute during their Summer Meeting in 1977 (Fig 1.1). In the time of the Keedwell family, owners since the end of the First World War, the condition of the house had deteriorated, although it continued to be occupied until the early 1980s. The farm buildings and walled enclosures generally declined with the house, but some crude work was done to adapt them to changing needs. In constructing a new access road into the south court in 1974, a group of late medieval floor tiles were discovered reused in a path close to the east wall of the court. Their recording by Bristol Museum (B Williams 1979) hinted at the interest and potential of the site, although the significance of the standing building, then listed Grade II, was still not recognised; in 1977 it was thought to be essentially of early 17th-century date but inexplicable plan (Burton 1977).

The death of Trevor Keedwell in 1982 led to 'the Acton Court Estate' being sold by auction by the beneficiaries of his grandfather's will on 17 September 1984 (Sandoe Luce Panes 1984). The house, by now described as 'a rurally situated period property with historic associations, in partially derelict state requiring large expenditure' was sold separately from the majority of the south courtyard and agricultural land, which were bought by the adjoining farmer. The house, with only 2.18 acres of land, was purchased by the Bristol Visual and Environmental Buildings Trust ('The Trust'), a 'revolving fund', charitable, building preser-

vation trust which had done much good work in the city. Such trusts operate by acquiring historic buildings in poor condition, repairing them, usually with the aid of grants, and then reselling them on the open market; obviously, they must at least break even to survive.

The importance of Acton Court now began to emerge. During 1985, Rob Iles, then Avon County Archaeologist, recognised and surveyed the extensive earthworks surviving in the surrounding fields (Iles 1986, 55–6). The Trust employed a team, under the Youth Opportunity Programme, to clear the large quantities of rubbish and scrap metal which had accumulated around the house. In the process, a polyhedral limestone sundial, reused as a building block but carrying the date 1520 and the initials of its designer, was found just outside the south wall of the east range (White 1986; Chapter 8, Fig 8.26).

The sale of the land away from the house destroyed its viability as a single dwelling. It also became clear that its structural condition was parlous; parts were propped with old telegraph poles, and near to collapse. For the Trust to break even, it would be necessary to divide the house itself vertically into three units, and to create four further houses from the outbuildings. In February 1985, Northavon District Council granted planning permission for such a scheme, on the basis that it represented the only way to 'save' Acton Court; but its viability still depended on a major grant being obtained, which for the first time brought the newly created English Heritage into the picture. A site visit in August immediately confirmed that Acton Court dated substantially from the early 16th century, and a report produced over the following weekend by the writer (then an Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings with English Heritage) established the structural sequence, and with it, the importance of the house. It was evident both that the standing building

*Figure 1.1 (facing page)*  
*Acton Court in 1908, the east court viewed through the gate*  
*(photograph: Country Life).*

represented a very substantial part of a major courtier's house; and that the outline of the remainder was discernible to the west, suggesting the high archaeological potential, and sensitivity, of the site. The house and its environs were scheduled as an ancient monument on 12 September 1985, and metric survey commissioned.

Commissioners of English Heritage were therefore in no doubt that Acton Court was of outstanding importance in the national context, and thus eligible for grant aid; but it was equally clear that its importance as it was now understood would be very seriously compromised by the Trust's scheme. It would have entailed extensive rebuilding of the standing structure, the division of its most important spaces, and major disturbance of the buried archaeology, as well as the loss of the less tangible, but none the less highly evocative, atmosphere of the site. The only acceptable way forward was conservative repair of the house as a single entity, accompanied by detailed analysis of the building and the site. The Trust, and in particular its Secretary, Dorothy Brown, had played a crucial role in the rescue of the house, but such a project was clearly beyond its resources. After some initial hesitation, understandable given the scale and complexity of the problem that faced them, English Heritage Commissioners agreed, in November 1985, to acquire the house on terms which reflected the value of the Trust's acquisition and subsequent stewardship. An option was granted, and the purchase completed in October of the following year. However, the house was not acquired for display as a sterile monument; it was to be returned to private ownership and use once repaired, English Heritage acting for the first time in the manner of a 'revolving fund' trust for outstanding buildings where the scale and complexity of the problems necessitate its involvement.

There was a rapid start on emergency works to stabilise the building. Detailed recording and analysis of the fabric by Kirsty Rodwell, and excavation by Robert Bell of the Bath Archaeological Trust, not only in advance of ground disturbance, but also to recover the plan of the Tudor house and its relationship to its medieval predecessors, were integral parts of the strategy. Negotiations were opened to secure an option to purchase the historic environs of the house, that is to say the remainder of the scheduled area, both to safeguard their archaeological interest, and to enlarge the

landholding sufficiently to make Acton Court viable as a country house.

By early 1987, structural repair work was sufficiently well advanced to begin negotiation with a purchaser, Rosehill Corporation, who, with their architect Peter Ware, took responsibility for the management of the repair works from English Heritage early in 1988, once the structure of the east range had been secured. A building agreement, leading to a freehold sale on completion, was signed in August 1994. At the same time, after protracted negotiation, the surrounding land was acquired, thus reuniting the historic core of the Acton Court Estate. Repair of the house was completed early in 1998; final fitting out, and the repair of the outbuildings, was to be finished a year later. A condition of the sale is that the house be open to the public on sixty days each year for ten years from completion of the repair, and twenty-eight days each year for a further ten years.

## The investigations

*by Robert Bell*

The contract for the archaeological work was put out to tender and awarded to Bath Archaeological Trust. BAT's brief was to recover the plan of the demolished parts of the Tudor mansion, to record evidence of any earlier buildings on the site, and to locate the formal garden, the existence of which was implied by the sundial.

The research design was, to some extent, dictated by the position of the boundaries of the property purchased by English Heritage. It was defined on the north side by a fence, c 15 m north of the house; on the west side by the partially standing west wall of the west range and the west wall of the south court; on the south side by a line running across the middle of the south court and by a modern track leading from the south court to Latteridge Road; and on the east side, by the road itself. The west arm of the moat and the earthworks recorded by Rob Iles were beyond the limits of the property owned by English Heritage, and excavations here were restricted to evaluation trenches.

Most of the excavations were carried out over the course of three twelve-week seasons, between Autumn 1986 and Summer 1988 (Fig 1.2). Before the work started, M J Rees and Co Ltd of Almondsbury was commissioned by Central Survey on behalf of English Heritage to produce a 1:200 survey

of the whole site, and a 1:500 survey of the site and the fields within the scheduled area. Grid points, aligned on the Ordnance Survey national grid, were fixed in the ground at regular intervals (every 20 m, where possible), covering the whole of the property. This proved to be extremely useful, and greatly facilitated the accurate planning of the site.

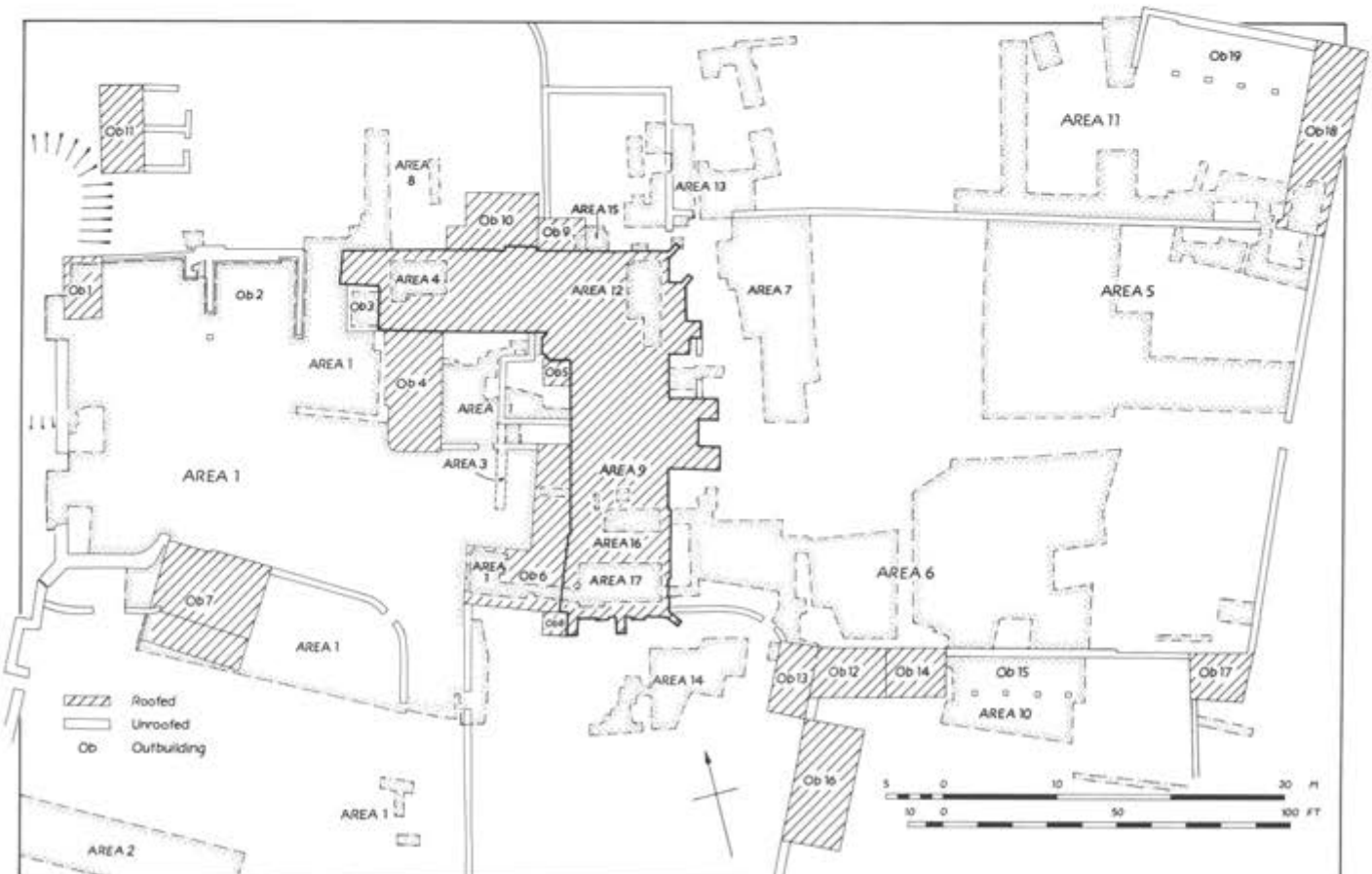
During the first season the west range, the west part of the south range and the chapel were located. A sample area in the south court (Area 2) was also examined. In the 1987 season, the chapel, the central part of the south range and the demolished part of the north range were excavated. A trench was dug across the north arm of the moat (Area 8), and the east and south arms were also sampled. Three areas within the east court (Areas 5-7), as well as areas to the south and north of the east court (Areas 10-11), were investigated.

In January 1988, following a geophysical survey of the field to the north of the house by English Heritage's then Ancient Monuments Laboratory, now the Centre for Archaeology (AM Lab Report 28/88), Trenches A-J were excavated in the north

and west fields to determine their archaeological potential and to attempt to date and interpret the visible earthworks. This was the only occasion when a mechanical digger was used at Acton Court for purposes other than backfilling (although certain parts of the service trenches between the house and Latteridge Road were also subsequently machine-dug). The work was carried out with the kind permission of the landowners, Messrs Thomas of Lodge Farm.

During the third season, in Spring-Summer 1988, the rest of the south range of the house was investigated, along with the south porch and part of the inner courtyard. The north-east and south-east corners of the moat were also located (Areas 13-14). In February and March 1989, part of the primary west arm of the moat, sealed beneath the Tudor floor-bedding which had been found in 1986, was examined. Further excavations were carried out in April and May 1993 adjacent to the house and near the north-east corner of the east court, on the lines of proposed service trenches, and in May 1996 the outer moat or ditch was recorded in pipe trenches, to the south-east of Area 10 and in the south-east corner of

Figure 1.2 The location of the excavated areas.





the east court. Finally, the area to the east of the south court was recorded in August 1997 prior to the creation of a new car park.

Only a fairly small proportion of the interior of the standing house was excavated, because most of the existing stone floors were to be retained. However, in 1987, three small trenches were dug (Areas 4, 9 and 12), and in autumn 1989, Areas 15–17 were recorded in advance of building works. Areas 12 and 16 were extended in Spring 1993 prior to the excavation of service trenches. It is also worth emphasising that although the line of the moat was largely established, only *c* 15 per cent of the portion which was backfilled in Periods 4.3–4.5 was fully excavated. Similarly Area 2 represented only *c* 5 per cent of the northern half of the south court. No work at all has been done in the southern half, although the collapsed tower at the south-west corner was recorded in 1993 and 1998.

#### Building recording

*by Kirsty Rodwell*

The photogrammetric survey of the house was carried out for English Heritage by the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York: it encompassed all the external elevations of the house, with attached outbuildings, and plan outlines at four levels. Some of the detached outbuildings and boundary walls were recorded photogrammetrically and the remainder by rectified photography. After consultation it was decided to plot this information at a principal scale of 1:50 with limited enlargement of complex areas to 1:20. Pennant rubble was not individually plotted, except where it formed part of features such as relieving arches, but all limestone was included. Internal elevations and sections were built up by hand measurement, reversing the photogrammetric exteriors to use as a base, and the outlines were developed into full plans (Figs A2–A3). Although not inherently complex, considerable localised movement in the rubble walls would have rendered this very difficult through hand measurement alone. The interiors were initially too cluttered and subdivided to allow rectified photography, but this was undertaken at a later stage in the restoration for record purposes.

This survey information was assembled into twenty-nine elevations of the house, outbuildings and boundary walls and used

as a basis for the structural analysis of the fabric. As these elevations are multi-period, they are published with the plans in an appendix at the end of the report: all sixteen elevations of the house are included (Figs A4–A9) together with a selection of the rest. The reference system used in the report for the standing building is explained in Appendix 1. This is based on architectural subdivisions and does not continue the context system used for the excavations, as this was not considered appropriate to the nature of the evidence. Where excavated information augmented the fabric record this has been added to the elevation. The initial survey was completed by the end of 1987, but additional information was added as strip-ping-out and repairs proceeded. Final drawings were produced in 1994 and there has been limited further updating. An extensive general photographic survey of the house and its environs was undertaken by RCHME in 1986, before repair work commenced and scaffolding was erected, and this was augmented by English Heritage and the authors as restoration proceeded.

Architectural fixtures and fittings were recorded individually at an appropriate larger scale. These included roof trusses, doors, windows, fireplaces, mouldings, and other internal decoration, and form the subject of Chapters 4 and 5. After cleaning and conservation in 1990, photogrammetry was used to record the painted frieze in Room 10, but the frieze in Room 1 and the graffiti in the passages R17 and R18 were recorded primarily by hand: by tracing onto acetate. Inter-floor and roof deposits were sampled for artefacts but found to be 19th-century or later, with two exceptions: the Period 4.1 ceiling plaster recovered from the lowered ceiling over Room 6 (Chapter 5), and the wooden construction offcuts found below the floor in the south-west corner of the same room (Chapter 8).

Significant new structural information continued to come to light until a late stage in the project. In 1995 the near-complete garderobe in Room 6 was opened up (Fig 4.9); vital evidence for the reconstruction of the south window was revealed in Room 11 (Fig 5.10); and 16th-century screen fragments were found in Room 1, when a window seat was dismantled for floor repairs (Chapter 8). In 1996 additional constructional details of the mid-16th-century south court walls were revealed during their restoration.

## Modern topography

by Robert Bell

Iron Acton, Gloucestershire (formerly Avon), is 14.5 km north-east of Bristol, 5 km west of Chipping Sodbury, and 3 km west of the expanding new town of Yate (Fig 1.3). The parish is very roughly rectangular in shape, measuring c 4.5 km from west to east, and 2.5 km from north to south (Fig 1.4). It is still predominantly agricultural and, apart from the village itself and the hamlet of Latteridge, which is 1.5 km to the north-west, settlement consists of scattered farms. The only exceptions are on the eastern edge of the parish, where the mining hamlet of Engine Common developed in the late 19th century, and where a modern industrial estate encroached from Yate during the late 1980s.

Iron Acton itself is essentially a linear village (Fig 1.5), consisting of a single street (High Street). The church of St James the Less is situated at its east end, close to the junction of the roads to Yate and Rangeworthy. At the west end, the roads to Bristol and Thornbury meet, forming two sides of the Green. There has been relatively little

modern development in the village: a few new houses facing the Green, some infilling on the north side of the High Street, and a post-war housing estate on the south-east edge of the village, off Nibley Lane.

Acton Court is located 0.8 km from the church and 0.5 km north of the west end of High Street, on the west side of the road to Thornbury (known as Latteridge Road). It remains isolated from the main village, an isolation which has been emphasised by the construction in 1969–70 of the by-pass round the north side of Iron Acton.

## Physical geography

Most of the parish is between 50 m and 70 m above Ordnance Datum. The River Frome, which rises 8 km to the east, at the foot of the Cotswold scarp, forms part of the southern boundary of the parish, and flows westwards, 0.5 km south of the village, before turning south towards Bristol. The Ladden Brook flows south-west across the western part of the parish in a broad low-lying valley, joining the Frome at Cog's Mill, just beyond the parish boundary. Latteridge is situated on a ridge running parallel to and

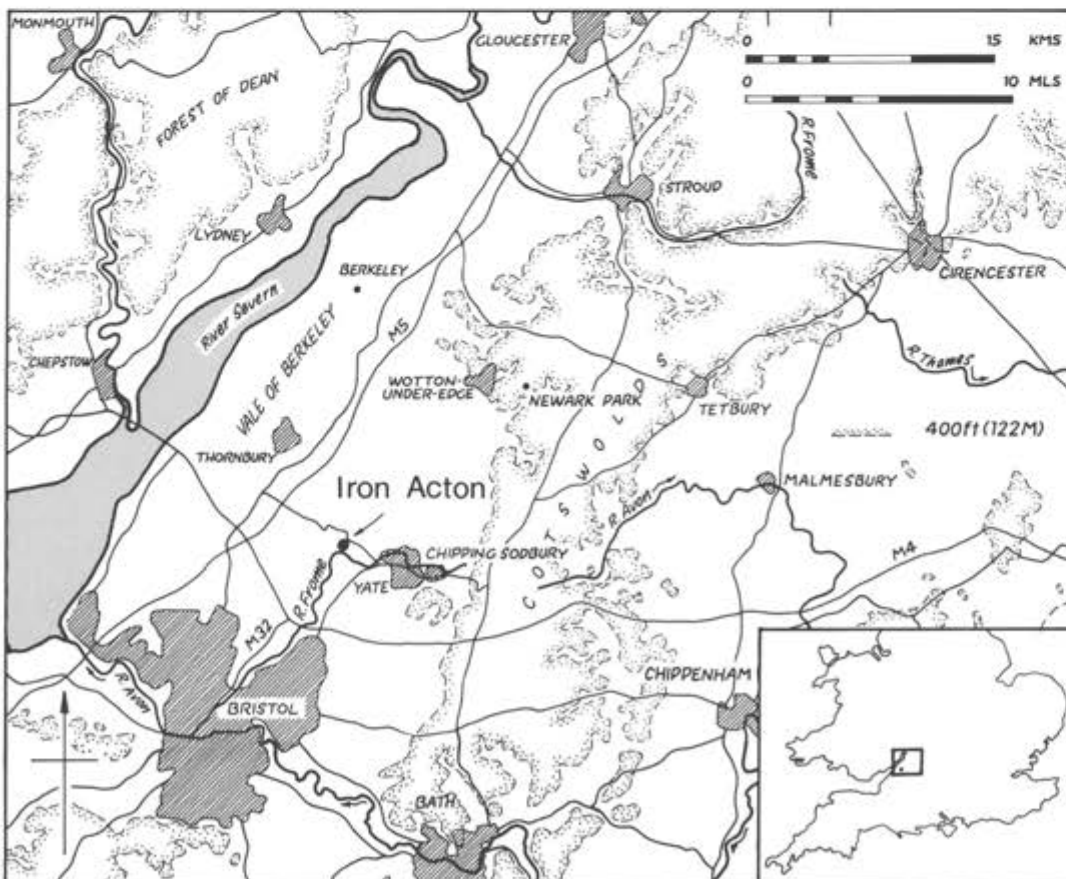


Figure 1.3 Iron Acton in relation to Bristol and the Cotswolds

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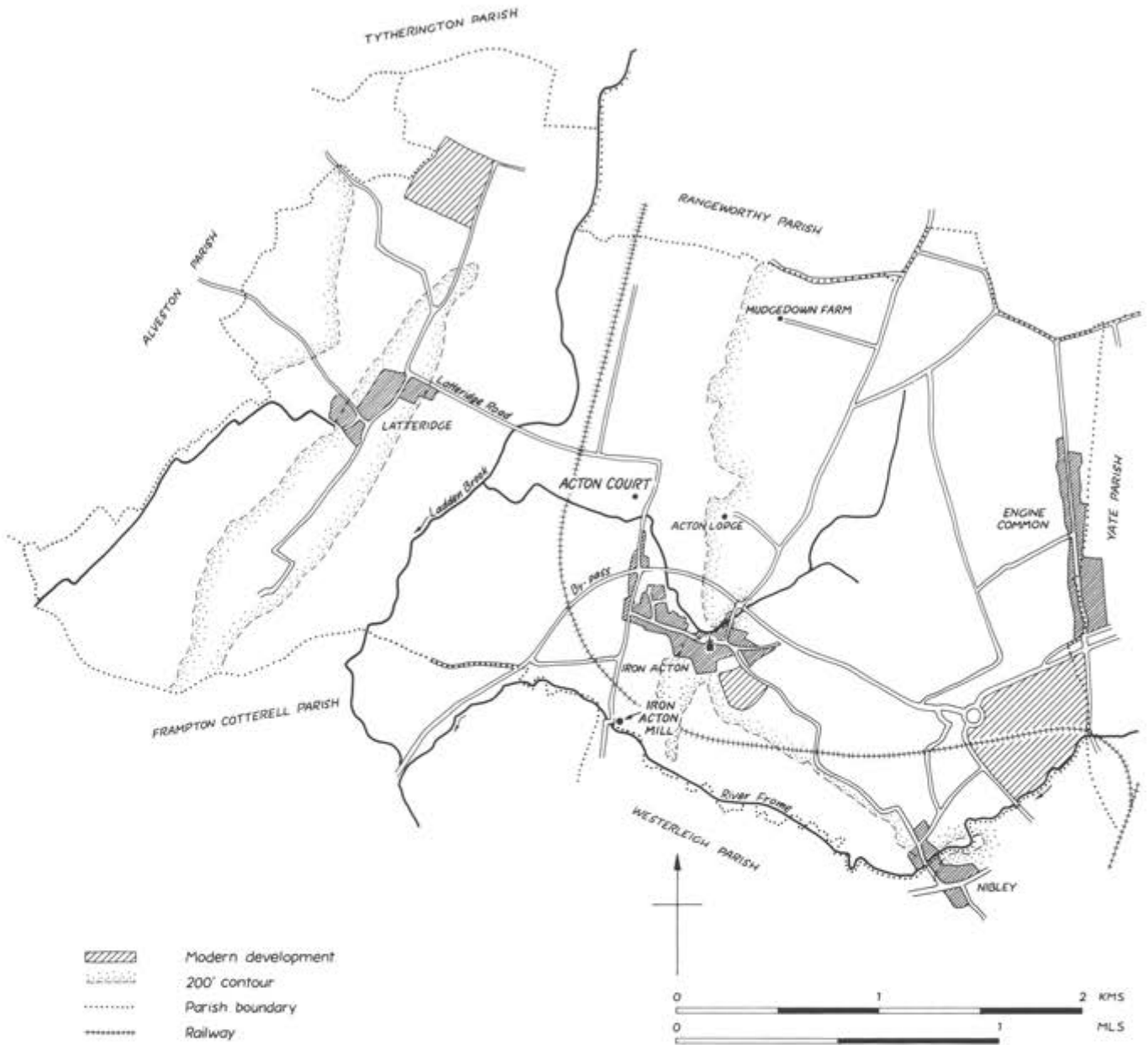


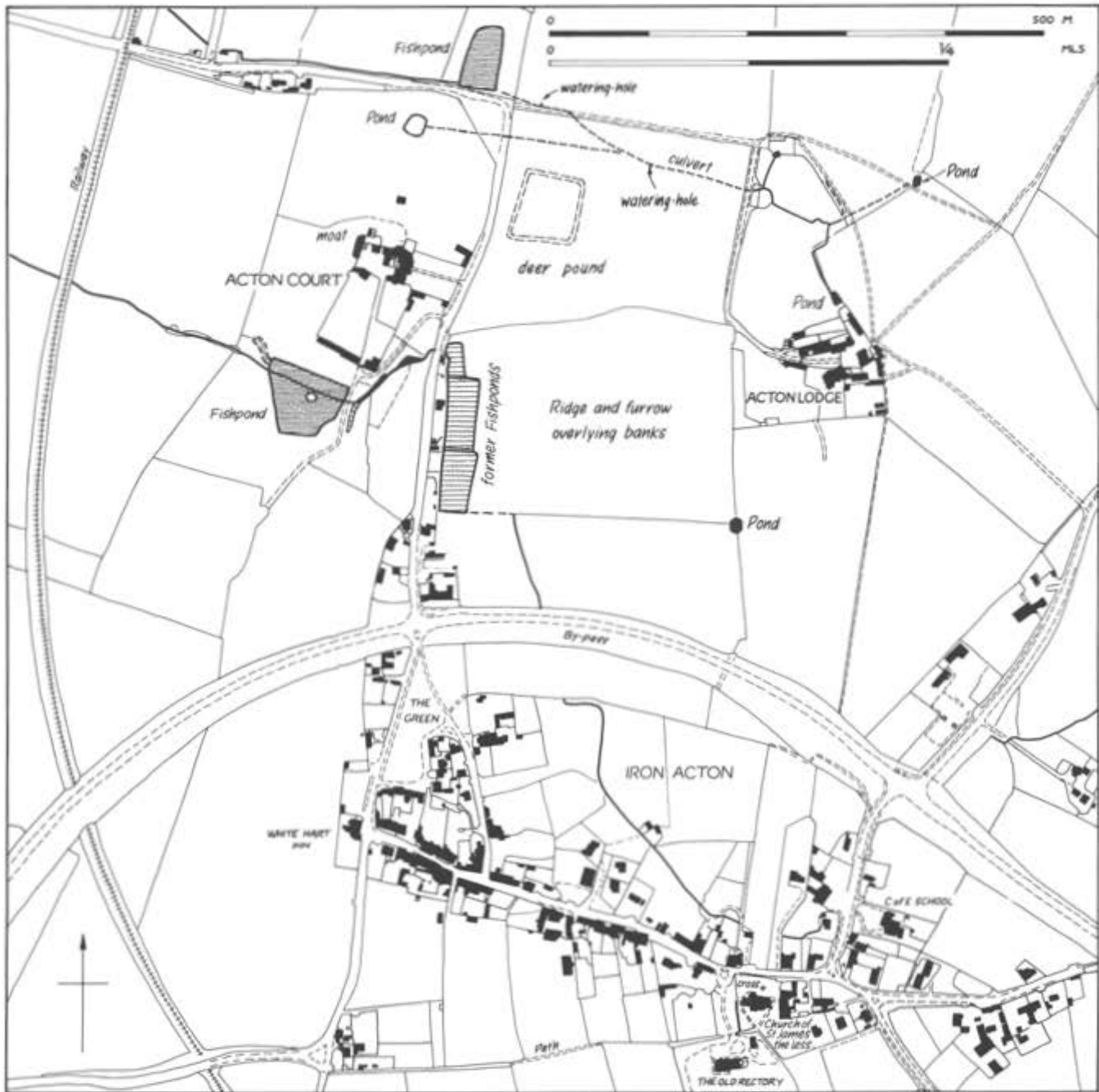
Figure 1.4 Iron Acton parish.  
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on the west side of the Ladden Brook. On the east side of the valley, the land rises up gently to form a fairly level terrace. Acton Court is situated on this terrace, on the 55 m contour. The ground rises slightly more steeply 250 m east of the house, forming a scarp, on the edge of which Lodge Farm (formerly Acton Lodge) is sited, c 10–12 m higher than Acton Court. Beyond the scarp is a level plateau. Numerous springs rise along the side of the eastern scarp. In the north-east part of the parish, springs feed a stream, which runs along the north edge of the village. It then heads north towards Acton Court, but loops round to the south,

75 m from the house, before eventually flowing into the Ladden Brook.

**Geology**

In the central and eastern parts of the parish, Carboniferous strata, principally Pennant Sandstone, are exposed (Fig 1.6). The Lower Sandstone, forming part of the Middle and Lower Coal measures, is exposed on the eastern edge of the parish, around Engine Common. Most of the plateau and the actual village of Iron Acton overlies Pennant Sandstone, which belongs to the Upper Coal Measures. It is interleaved with beds of shale, which have weath-



ered to clay and have formed hollows where they have been eroded.

The scarp to the east of Acton Court, is caused by a geological fault in the Pennant Sandstone. The Pennant extends in a band, between 2.5 km and 5 km wide, from Rangeworthy, in the north, to the River Avon at Hanham, on the eastern outskirts of Bristol, interrupted only by the Kingswood Anticline, where the Lower Coal Measures surface again. Near the southern boundary of the parish, several narrow coal seams outcrop. They belong to the Upper Coal Measures and form the northern edge

of the elliptically shaped Gloucestershire Basin (Buchanan and Cossons 1969, 74–5 and 79). These are overlaid by sandstones in the Supra-Pennant series.

The coal seams in both the lower and upper series have been worked in the past. Three collieries, mining the lower series of the coal measures, were shown on the 1881 25-inch OS map at Engine Common, very close to the eastern boundary of the parish, though they ceased operations in the early 20th century. These seams were, however, being exploited at an earlier date, since a 1709 survey of Iron Acton manor refers to

Figure 1.5 Acton Court and Iron Acton village.

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'about Thousen Eakers of Common having Tyle and paving and Cole on it' (WRO 947 (Estate): 799).

The seams of the upper series were also mined, and in the 17th century there were numerous coal-pits in Westerleigh parish, immediately south of Iron Acton (Ravensdale 1988). Several former coal pits on the north bank of the River Frome, within Iron Acton parish, are marked on the Geological Survey 6-inch Geological map. Some of these are likely to have been contemporary with the Westerleigh pits, and the 'Two loads of Coalpitt Timber', mentioned in the 1680 inventory of Acton Court (Chapter 2, Appendix B), may have been intended for these and other local workings.

Iron was both mined and smelted locally, and shafts were dug to extract haematite from the sides of the fissures in the Pennant. The name 'Cinderford', mentioned in a mid-10th-century charter describing the boundaries of Glastonbury Abbey's Pucklechurch estate, and identified as the ford across the River Frome adjacent to Iron Acton Mill, provides evidence that the industry was well established by the late Saxon period (Grundy 1935, 213–14; Finberg 1975, 54). In 1086, the Pucklechurch estate, which included Westerleigh, to the south of the River Frome, was providing Glastonbury Abbey with '100 lumps of iron, less 10' (Moore 1982, 8:1). In the late 18th century great quantities of iron cinders were visible in several places in Iron Acton parish (Rudder 1779, 213). There was an important though short-lived revival in mining operations at Frampton Cotterell between 1862 and 1874 (Buchanan and Cossons 1969, 127–9), and also at Iron Acton, where shafts were dug *c.* 1 km north of Acton Court. They were abandoned in the 1870s (Anstie 1873, 100).

The principal geological resource was the Pennant Sandstone itself, which was easily accessible and was the standard local building material until well into the 19th century. Two quarries, both of which were on the Acton Court estate, are mentioned in the 1840 tithe assessment. One was on the west side of the Green; the other was on the east side of the road to Rangeworthy. However, as the archaeological excavations demonstrated, there must have been many others at different periods which were subsequently filled in.

The only part of the parish where stone is not readily obtainable is around Latteridge and in the valley of the Ladden Brook,

where the Coal Measures are unconformably overlain by Triassic strata, mainly red Keuper Marl. In the vicinity of the Brook, the marl is covered by alluvial clay, which also forms the flood-plain of the River Frome.

Acton Court itself sits on an outcrop of Pennant Sandstone (Fig 1.6). The outcrop forms a level strip, varying in height by no more than *c.* 0.5 m. It has a maximum width of 80 m, narrowing to 50 m in the field immediately to the north of the house, where there is a slight rise in the level of the bedrock. Its southern limit is between the far end of the south court and the large fishpond, and it is exposed between the stream and the south-east corner of the south court. It was also visible, even before the start of the excavations, in the western part of the east court. Along the west side of the site the edge of the sandstone outcrop forms a natural terrace, (though artificial dumping has extended the terrace westwards) beyond which is a stratum of shaley clay containing decayed Pennant, which dips eastward beneath the Pennant. On the east side of the outcrop the Pennant disappears below a second stratum of clay.

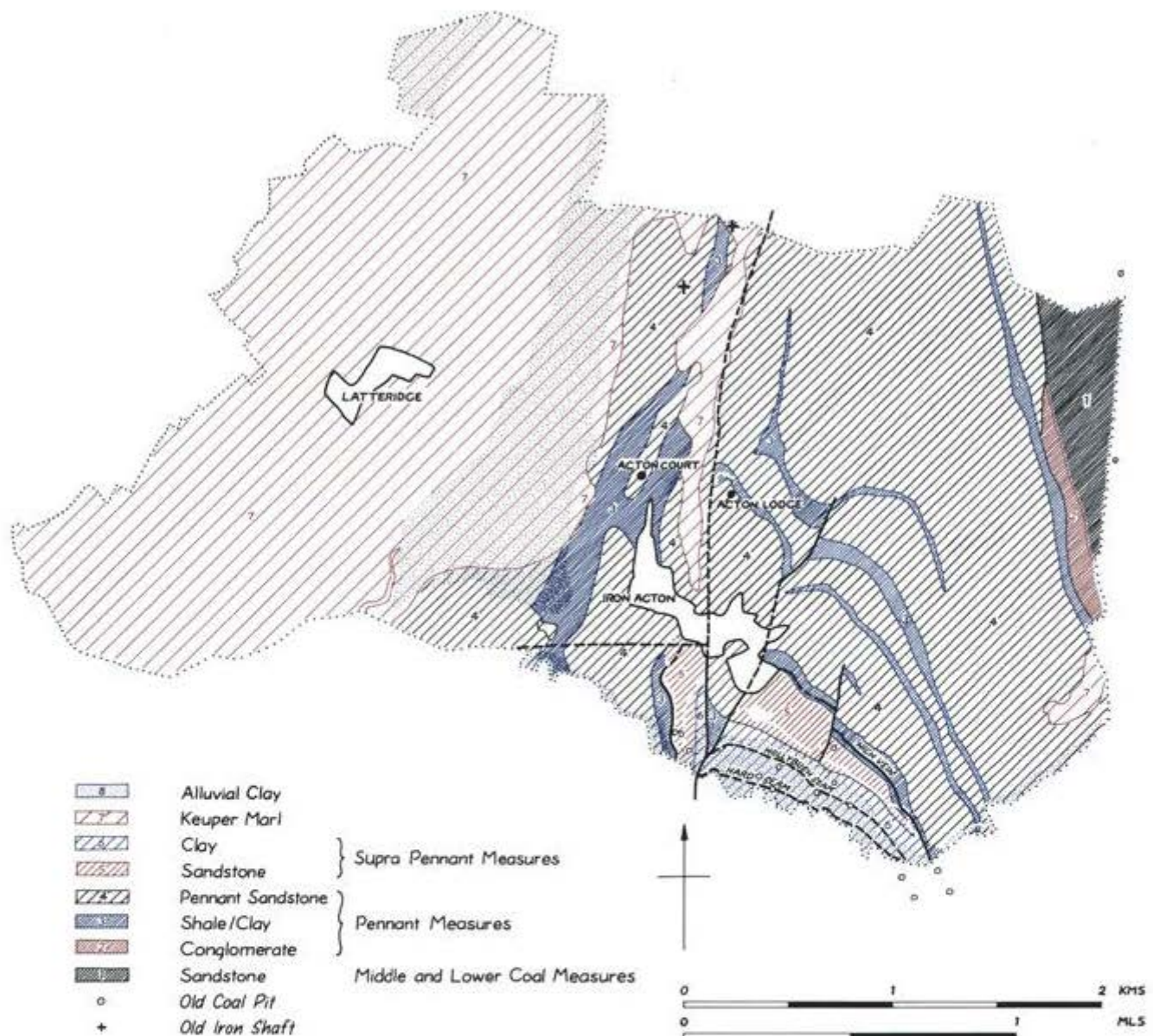
The outcrop forms a flat, dry and solid natural platform, which to some extent, at least in Periods 1–3, may have influenced the location of any buildings contemporary with or earlier than the Period 3 manor house. As a settlement location, it was certainly preferable to the area immediately west of the outcrop, which is low-lying and poorly drained.

The sandstone bedrock varies in appearance across the site. In places, it is extremely smooth; elsewhere, it is very fractured and, especially at the edges, it is soft and rotted. It is also split by a number of small natural fissures. Where it is undisturbed, the bedrock is generally overlain by a layer of dark red gritty soil mixed with Pennant gravel, which forms a natural sub-soil 0.1–0.2 m thick.

### Summary of phasing and dating

The phasing of the site, which is divided into five main periods, is summarised below, with a synopsis of the dating evidence for each phase. All Period 2 and later features in the immediate environs of the house are shown on Fig 1.7. Period 1 covers occupation on the site prior to the mid-12th century, represented mainly by





residual finds, and Period 2 12th- and 13th-century features antedating the construction of the moated manor. Period 3, which has five phases, traces the development of the medieval manor from its construction in the mid-13th century to its partial demolition in 1535, and Period 4 covers its apogee as a Tudor courtier's house. This has four phases within the short time span of *c* 15 years (1535–*c* 1550) during the life of Sir Nicholas Poyntz, and a long period of relative inactivity (Periods 4.5–4.6) under his descendants. Period 5 covers alterations to the house from its sale in 1683 to the present day.

*Period 1:* Residual finds.

*Date:* Roman to mid-12th century.

*Dating evidence:* Romano-British pottery and ceramic roof tiles; rectangular fields sealed beneath ridge and furrow in field on east side of Latteridge Road, facing house. Bath Fabric A spouted pitchers: late 11th-early 12th century.

*Period 2:* Structures, enclosures, quarries and features cut by moat and sealed by Period 3.1 manor house.

*Date:* Early 13th century.

*Dating evidence:* Fill of quarry; pottery,

Figure 1.6 The geology of the parish.

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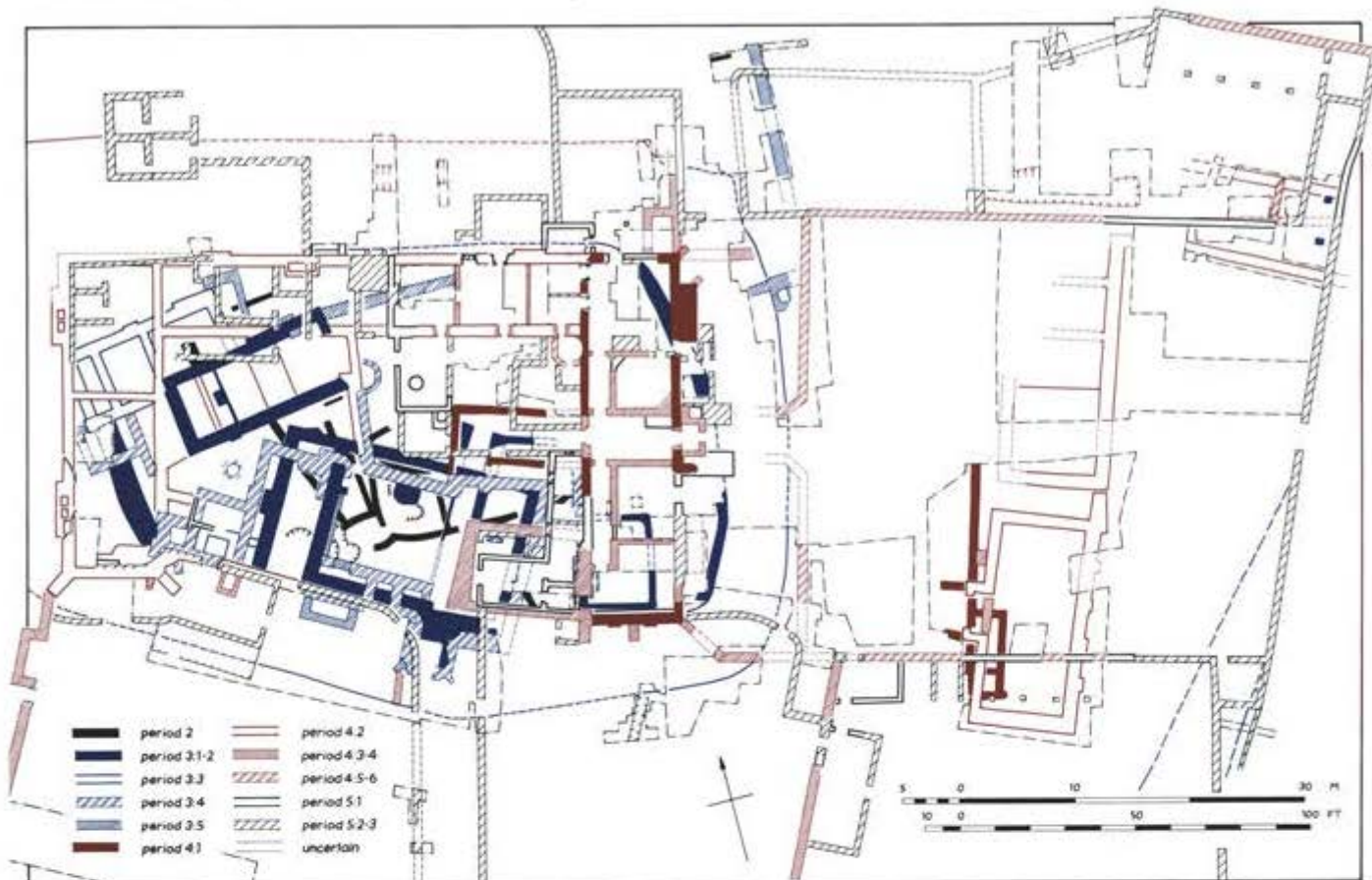


Figure 1.7 Phase plan, all periods.

mainly limestone-tempered and Minety-type cooking pots. From other Period 2 contexts: Ham Green cups; mid-12th to early 13th century. Horseshoe, mid-12th to mid-13th century. Mudstone spindle whorl, 12th to 13th century.

**Period 3.1:** Construction of moat and manor house (Rooms A–E, G and S).  
*Date:* Mid- to late 13th century.  
*Dating evidence:* Make-up at west end of Room G: Bristol Redcliffe jugs, mid- to late 13th century.

**Period 3.2:** Construction of eastern extension of Room G and porch at north end of Room B (screens passage).  
*Date:* Late 13th to mid-14th century.  
*Dating evidence:* Construction horizon relating to Room G extension; ceramic ridge tiles, mainly Bristol, decorated with applied strips and knife-cut crests, with occasional Nash Hill tiles, late 13th to 15th century.

**Period 3.3:** Construction of Rooms H–K and M–P1/2.  
*Date:* Late 13th to mid-14th century.  
*Dating evidence:* Robbing of curtain wall beneath Room J: pottery, including Bristol

Redcliffe jugs with plain applied strips and a wide slashed strap handle; also a Nash Hill cooking pot.

**Period 3.4:** Rebuilding of south range and Room S (kitchen).  
*Date:* Late 14th to mid-15th century.  
*Dating evidence:* Construction of new buttress ‘under the arch of the gatehouse’, providing *terminus ante quem* for rebuilding of porch and south range: 1465/6. Robbing of 3.1 porch abutment: Minety-type wheelthrown bowl, late 14th to mid-15th century.

**Period 3.5:** Refurbishment of house interior; Room F2 (oriel window); Room L and gallery; walled garden to north of house.  
*Date:* Late 15th to early 16th century.  
*Dating evidence:* Discarded sculpted fireplaces, 1490–1510. Discarded Canynges/Bristol group floor tiles, 1481–1515. Date on sundial, 1520.

**Period 4.1:** Demolition of Room S. Construction of east range and temporary structures east of moat.  
*Date:* 1535.  
*Dating evidence:* Dendrochronology; felling

date for east range structural and roof timbers spring 1535.

*Period 4.2:* Demolition of Rooms H–N; construction of north and west ranges. North and west arms of moat recut. Construction of ancillary buildings, Rooms 34–6 (possibly immediately after Period 4.1).

*Date:* Late 1540s to early 1550s.

*Dating evidence:* Classical fireplace in Room 1 (long gallery) has close stylistic connections with work of the ‘Somerset’ school of c 1550 (cf Lacock Abbey, built *temp* Edward VI). Coin in infill of Room H, beneath west range; Edward VI penny in name of Henry VIII, 1547–51.

*Period 4.3:* Replanning of ground-floor rooms in east range with new partitions; rebuilding of east end of south range. Infilling of moat from south porch to north-east corner. Construction of walled south court.

*Date:* Mid-1550s.

*Dating evidence:* Graffito on interior of porch to cross passage in east range (Room 18) providing *terminus ante quem* 1556. Latest coin in bottom of moat between arms of porch; unworn Mary groat 1553–4.

*Period 4.4:* New doors and windows in north range. Infilling of remainder of south arm and most of north arm of moat.

*Date:* Mid-1550s.

*Dating evidence:* Classical doorcases in north range related to details at Newark Park, built by Sir Nicholas Poyntz *temp* Edward VI.

*Period 4.5:* Stair tower in angle between north and west ranges (Room 14) constructed.

*Date:* 1576.

*Dating evidence:* Dendrochronology; felling date of timber stair-treads winter 1575/spring 1576.

*Period 4.6:* Demolition of ancillary buildings on east side of house. Creation of east court. Abandonment of north walled garden. Defensive ditches on north side of house.

*Date:* Early to mid-17th century.

*Dating evidence:* Civil War period ditches containing large group of clay tobacco pipes, dated c 1631–59, provide *terminus ante quem*, cutting through east wall of garden and respecting north wall of east court.

*Period 5.1a:* Demolition of south range and Room 32. North range truncated. Domestic occupation confined to east half of north

range and north half of east range. First generation of farm outbuildings (including OB 4, 6 and 12).

*Date:* Late 17th to early 18th century.

*Dating evidence:* Hearth tax assessment thirty-two hearths, *terminus post quem* for reduction of house, 1672. Death of Sir John Poyntz 1680. Sale of house and estate in lots by his widow, 1683. Graffito on north side of east range cross passage, J. Manning (first tenant farmer) 1691. The ‘house part pulled down’, possibly by 1696, certainly by 1712. Inventory of John Manning’s goods and chattels provides *terminus ante quem* for reduction of area of domestic occupation, 1709. Malthouse (OB 6) on site of demolished Room 22, in existence by 1709. Demolition material in Room 32: latest coin Charles II farthing, early to mid-1670s; latest tobacco pipe bowl 1670–1700; wine bottles c 1680–90. Infill of south porch garderobe: complete tobacco pipe in five fragments, 1650–80. Demolition spread above infilled south moat: pottery, including Westerwald drinking jug with initials ‘AR’, early 18th century, pre-1720; clay tobacco pipes c 1690–1730; wine bottle 1690–1710. Infill of garderobe on west side of west range: pottery, including South Somerset bowl and tin-glazed vessels, early 18th century; tobacco pipes, early 18th century.

*Period 5.1b:* Agricultural use of west range and west half of north range, followed by demolition.

*Date:* Mid- to late 18th century.

*Dating evidence:* Track through gateway cut into west wall of west range: wine bottle 1730–80. Fill of garderobe at west end of former south range: pottery, Staffordshire/slipware and combed press-moulded dish, mid-18th century. Rubble spread over south half of west range: pottery, late 18th/early 19th century. Rubble beneath OB 1: cylindrical wine bottle, 1760–70. Fill of well: pottery, including creamware and pearlware, late 18th/early 19th century.

*Period 5.2:* Creation of cobbled farmyard; construction of second generation of farm buildings (including OB 1, 2 and 7).

*Date:* Early 19th century.

*Dating evidence:* Tithe map, providing *terminus ante quem* for construction of farm buildings on site of former west range and west half of north range, 1840. Construction trench of drain along south side of OB 2: clear-glass apothecary bottle and wine

bottle, early 19th century. Construction layer of OB 7 (cider-house): free-blown wine bottles, late 18th century.

*Period 5.3:* Construction of third generation of farm buildings and alterations to east range.

*Date:* Mid- to late 19th century.

*Dating evidence:* Ordnance Survey map (1881), showing alterations since 1840, including construction of farm buildings along south boundary of south court and

creation of kitchen garden on north side of house. Date stone on barn at south-east corner of south court, 1849. Date stone on new wall replacing demolished south stack in east range, 1888. Porch next to north stack in east range, later than Loxton drawing, earlier than Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society photograph, 1888-98. Construction trench of link wall between OB 1 and OB 2: bottles, late 19th century.



## 2

# The history of Acton Court

by Jean Manco

### Domesday

The Domesday survey records two manors at Acton, later known as Iron Acton, in the Bagstone Hundred of Gloucestershire. Before the Conquest they had been held by Ebbi, a man of Britric son of Algar, and Harold, a man of Alfwy Hiles. Ebbi's estate had passed to Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, and was held from him by Ilger. Harold's estate had been granted to Maud of Flanders, queen of William I, and before her death in 1083 she had granted it, together with the manor of Wickwar, to Humphrey the Chamberlain, who was probably a member of her household.

In 1086 Humphrey the Chamberlain held two and a half hides at Acton valued at 40 shillings. Ilger also held two and a half hides valued at 40 shillings. Ilger had one and a half ploughs, while Humphrey's manor included half a plough. The obvious interpretation is that one plough-team was shared between the two manors. In the same way, Ilger had half a mill and Humphrey one and a half mills, so it would appear that a mill was held in common (see Appendix A). The way in which the vill is so evenly split suggests that Acton was originally a five-hide unit, divided before 1066 between two heirs. Such a division was made at Butcombe, in North Somerset, where Wulfwaru left her estate to be divided equally between her eldest son and youngest daughter, sharing the principal residence 'as evenly as they can' (*Eng Hist Docs*, 116). Many places named in Domesday were divided between two or more manors, but it is generally difficult to establish the boundaries between them. At Iron Acton the boundary was preserved by an unusual circumstance.

After the accession of William Rufus, the manors which had once belonged to Maud of Flanders were granted to Robert FitzHamon and became the honour of Gloucester (*Peerage*, V, 682-3). The honour included the valuable manor of Thornbury, which became the *caput* of a wider estate.

Wickwar and the half of Acton that had been held by Humphrey became a knight's fee (or two half fees) attached to Thornbury.

Under the Normans some of the Saxon hundreds recorded in Domesday became increasingly inconvenient units of administration. Bagstone Hundred disintegrated as manors held from Thornbury were drawn into a new Hundred of Thornbury and the remnant was evidently too small to survive as a unit. In 1220 it was known as the Hundred of Agmead (Barkly 1887, 331), but by 1303 it had been absorbed by the Hundred of Grumbald's Ash (*Feudal Aids*, II, 249).

The two manors within Iron Acton parish were therefore in different hundreds. The hundred boundary was not mapped until the 19th century and in this later form may incorporate adjustments following land-enclosures. However, the relationship between the boundary and the village of Iron Acton is significant. The 1881 Ordnance Survey map shows Thornbury Hundred encompassing the western half of the village with the Church of St James, whereas part of the eastern village, from the churchyard wall, was included in the Hundred of Grumbald's Ash (Fig 3.44). The hundred boundary therefore indicates the division of a pre-existing village.

The Church of St James is presumably of Saxon foundation, since it incorporates a Saxon fragment in its fabric (Dobson 1933, 269 and pl II, fig 8). Churches were frequently built by the manorial lord, in which case he had the right to present the incumbent (Platt 1981, 1-3). Such a church was characteristically sited close to the manor house (R Morris 1989, 248-50), so the Saxon manor house at Iron Acton was most probably near the church. A mill stands close to the village on the river Frome. Since mills tend to remain on the same site, however often they are rebuilt, one or both of the Domesday mills was probably in the same position. The open field system was certainly in operation in Iron Acton by the 14th century (*Cal Close R2*, I, 512-13) and



presumably dates from the same period as the settlement.

An equal division of such a settlement would therefore have its complications. Both lords would have rights in the mill and church, and the individual strips of the two manors would be intermixed in the open fields. The complex interweaving of the hundred boundaries within the parish of Iron Acton is consistent with such a history (Fig 3.44). The rights of the two manors in the church are discussed below. If the manor house was once shared, as at Butcombe, this is scarcely likely to have proved a satisfactory long-term arrangement. It would appear that in the later Norman period, when both manors had resident lords, two new manor houses were built approximately a third of a mile from the village to the north and south. Acton Court can clearly be shown to be the chief house of the manor of Iron Acton at a later date, while the manor house of Acton Ilger apparently stood on the site of the present Algar's Manor (Manco 1995, 92).

The manor of Acton Ilger was clearly named after the Domesday tenant, to distinguish it from the other manor at Acton, though this appellation is not documented until the 13th century. In the mid-12th century, Richard Foliot sold the manor of Acton [Ilger] to Robert Fitzharding (*Chart Berk*, 12). Robert died in 1171 and his son Maurice of Berkeley had a charter from Foliot confirming his possession of Acton with 'his part of the church' (*Chart Berk*, 15). The manor then passed through various hands (Manco 1995, 91–2) and in 1303 Acton Ilger was held by Henry de Mareys as a quarter of a knight's fee (*Feudal Aids* II, 249). Henry de Mareys was still alive in 1316 (*Cal Close* E2, II, 291), but by 1346, John de Acton, lord of Iron Acton, had acquired Henry's quarter fee in Acton Ilger (*Feudal Aids* II, 283). The acreage of the manor of Iron Acton almost doubled between 1312 and 1322 (see Appendix A) suggesting that it had absorbed the major part of Acton Ilger by the latter date. From this period, the two manors were under the same lordship, though for centuries afterwards, documentation intermittently recognised the distinct existence of Acton Ilger.

### The Actons

Humphrey the Chamberlain held land in eight counties and is most unlikely to have lived at Acton, one of his lesser manors.

Since he had no tenant in Acton or Wickwar, his estate there was probably run by a steward or bailiff from the larger manor of Wickwar. The later pattern of feudal tenure indicates that Wickwar was the dominant manor of the pair. Humphrey's heir or successor was evidently Henry de Orescuilz (Fry and Thorp 1924, 38). In the 12th century Henry and his descendants seem to have lived at Sandford Orcas on the border between Dorset and Somerset. After the death of Richard de Orescuilz in 1206 (*Pipe NS* XX, 20), his lands were divided between his sisters; Maud de Harptree gained the bulk of Humphrey's Domesday manors in the West Country, which had descended by 1234 to her grandson, Robert de Gurney (*Fees*, 753; *Fines Som* I, 77–8, 361–2).

The date at which Iron Acton was subinfeudated is unknown, but the family which took its name from Acton appears in the records from the mid-12th century (Table 1). William de Acton witnessed five charters of Earl William of Gloucester (1147–83). All are undated, but one can be dated from internal evidence to c 1155–60 (*Glouc Chart*, 44, 75, 125, 135, 186). This and three of the other charters were written by a scribe who was dead by 1176, so William would appear to be the antecedent of John de Acton, who was fined for a forest offence in Gloucestershire in 1176 (*Pipe* XXV, 1280). References in 1195 and 1201 to a John de Acton (perhaps the son of the previous John) failing to perform military service (*Pipe NS* VI, 17; XIV, 48) or as a knight assisting the justices of the eyre in 1221–2 (*Eyre*, 130, 208, 300) indicates that he held land in Iron Acton by knight service. Two and a half hides would be a poor knight's fee and it is not surprising to find John de Acton in debt to two Jews in 1204–5 (*Rot Oblat*, 236, 315; *Rot Lit Claus* I, 49).

The Acton family preference for the name John makes it impossible to construct a secure family tree in the absence of evidence for births, marriages and deaths (Table 1). It seems reasonable to surmise, though, that the Sir John de Acton who witnessed a charter relating to Frampton Cotterell in 1257 (*Cal Chart* I, 475) was the son of the John living c 1200, for in 1287 John de Acton, lord of half of Iron Acton, testified that his grandfather John had a gallops in Iron Acton in the time [1199–1216] of King John (Placita, 243).

The tenure of Iron Acton at this time was a complex feudal chain. In 1284 or 1285 John de Acton held it under the name

of its hamlet of Latteridge from Roger de la Warre, lord of Wickwar, who held it of Anselm de Gurney, who held it of the Earl of Gloucester as one knight's fee of the manor of Thornbury (*Feudal Aids* II, 243).

The grant by Richard Foliot to Maurice of Berkeley referring to 'his part of the church' of Acton suggests that the advowson was originally shared between the two manorial lords, perhaps alternating between them. It seems likely that the Actons became sole patrons from the time that Acton Ilger fragmented. The earliest recorded presentation was on 15 February 1273, when John de Acton presented his son John (*Reg Giff*, 55: this clerical John was probably not the eldest legitimate son, who would be amply provided for as the heir. It is therefore more likely that he was an illegitimate child).

The John de Acton who testified to his grandsire's gallows was a man of some local significance. He was summoned to fight against the Welsh in 1282 or 1283 and the Scots from 1296 to 1301 and was knighted by 1285 (*Parl Writs* I, 423-4; II, 426). He represented both Gloucestershire and Herefordshire as a knight of the shire and played an active part in local administration in both counties.

By the time of his death in 1312, Sir John had greatly increased the family estates and held lands in five counties (*IPM* V, 411). He had capital messuages at both Cheddar in Somerset and Iron Acton, the latter described as having a garden, two dovecotes and a park (see Appendix A). Sir John had made two provident marriages. The first, to an heiress, Margery de Aller, had by 1272 brought him property in Somerset and Devon (*Cal Pat* H3, VI, 693). The second, to Sybil, a well-dowered widow, added lands in Herefordshire and Hampshire. Sybil was the niece of Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, who bequeathed to her in 1302 'one cup to the value of 100 shillings, and one silver pot for wine, and another pot for water, and the best gold brooch I have, except those specifically bequeathed' (*Reg Geynes*, 58). Sybil's family had prospered in the church. Another uncle was Walter Giffard, Bishop of Bath and Wells 1264, Archbishop of York 1266-79. Her aunts were the Abbesses of Wilton and Shaftesbury (Sanders 1960, 86-7).

Sir John's heir was John, son of John de Acton, aged 24, evidently his grandson (*IPM Glos* V, 134-5). The young man was already the heir to the manor of Elkstone

and part of Winstone in Gloucestershire. These properties had been settled on John de Acton and his wife Elena in 1303 by John le Brun, presumably the father of Elena (*Cal Pat* E1, IV, 131). John le Brun also settled the manor of Beercrocombe in Somerset on John and Elena, if another legatee, named as Elizabeth Malherbe, left no heirs (*Fines Som* I, 322). By 1319 this manor too had fallen to John de Acton (*Reg Drok*, 20). This amassing of property by marriage placed the Actons among the most affluent of the Gloucestershire gentry (Saul 1981, 226-7).

John (c1288-1362) clearly had an advantageous start in life. However, in 1321 he followed John Giffard of Brimpsfield into a rebellion against the hated Despensers, favourites of Edward II. In March 1322 John de Acton fought at Boroughbridge, where the rebels were routed by the king, and he was imprisoned in Pontefract and elsewhere for over a year (*Cal Close* E2, III, 421, 580; IV, 46). His lands were confiscated by Edward (*Cal Fine* III, 84). They were evidently plundered. The king himself stayed at Iron Acton in January and February 1324 (*Cal Pat* E2, IV, 351; *Itin* E2, 252-3) and had timber felled there two years later (*Cal Mem*, 2120).

After Edward II's overthrow in 1327, John de Acton, by then Sir John, regained his lands and proceeded to demand redress. He accused a number of persons (including one of the late king's stewards at Iron Acton) of breaking his houses at Acton and Elkstone, felling trees, reaping corn, fishing his fishponds and carrying away stock and goods. His manors in Somerset had suffered similar pillage (*Cal Pat* E3, I, 284-5). However, the misfortune of royal confiscation has left us a detailed account of the manor of Iron Acton at this time, its every asset noted by a careful royal clerk. The manor house itself is described as a court with various rooms, a barn, cowshed and sheepfold (see Appendix A). There is no specific mention of a chapel, but Sir John seems to have employed a chaplain. Reginald le Mareschal, priest, was instituted to the parish churches of Beercrocombe in 1343 and Iron Acton in 1348, having previously been 'in the service of Sir John de Acton' (*Reg Shrews*, 1813; *Reg Brans*, 397).

Sir John married no less than four times without managing to produce a surviving child.<sup>1</sup> By 1335 it would seem he despaired of progeny. In that year he settled the inheritance of two Somerset properties in the event of his death without direct heirs. His

Table 1 The Actons of Iron Acton

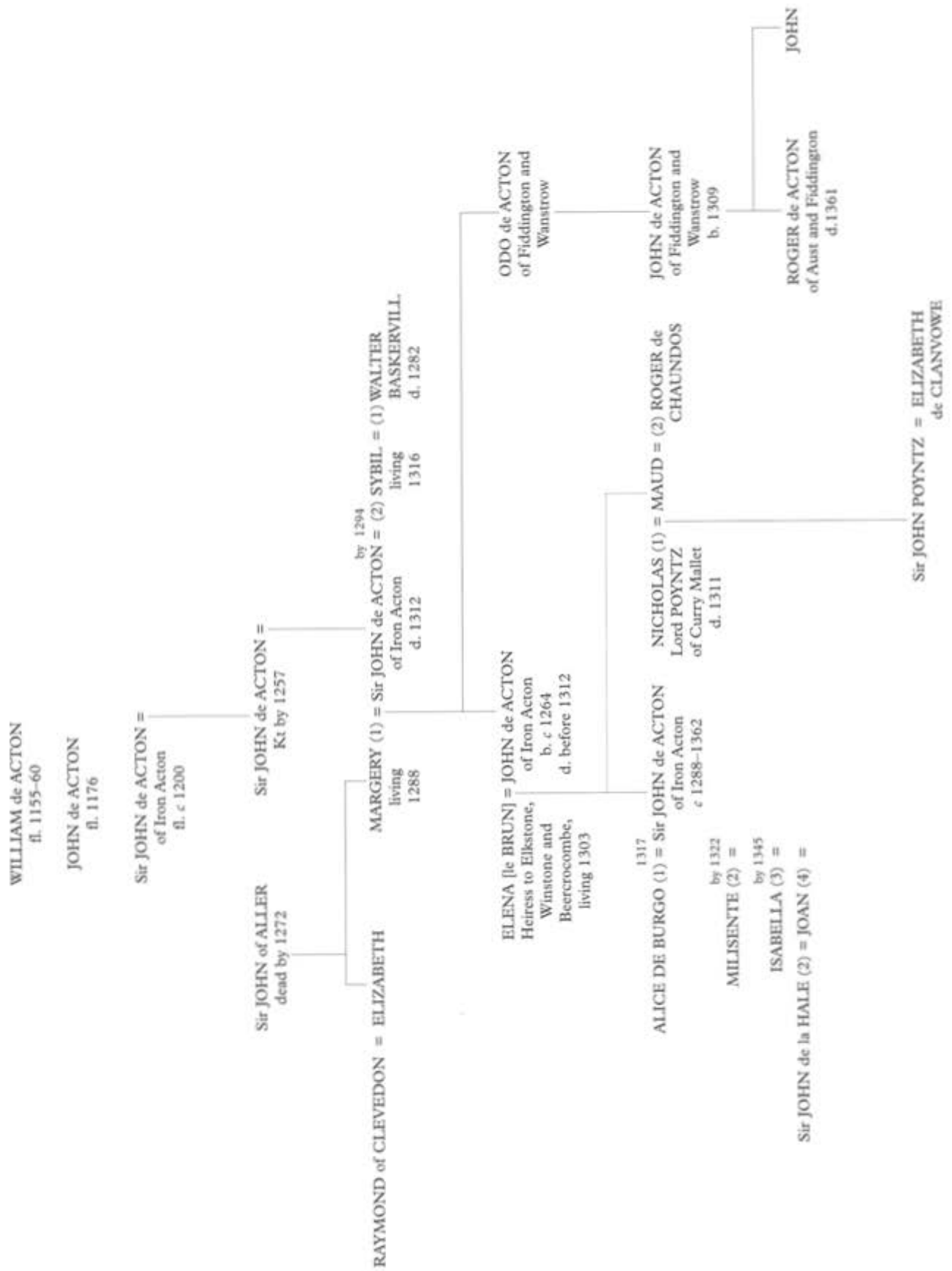
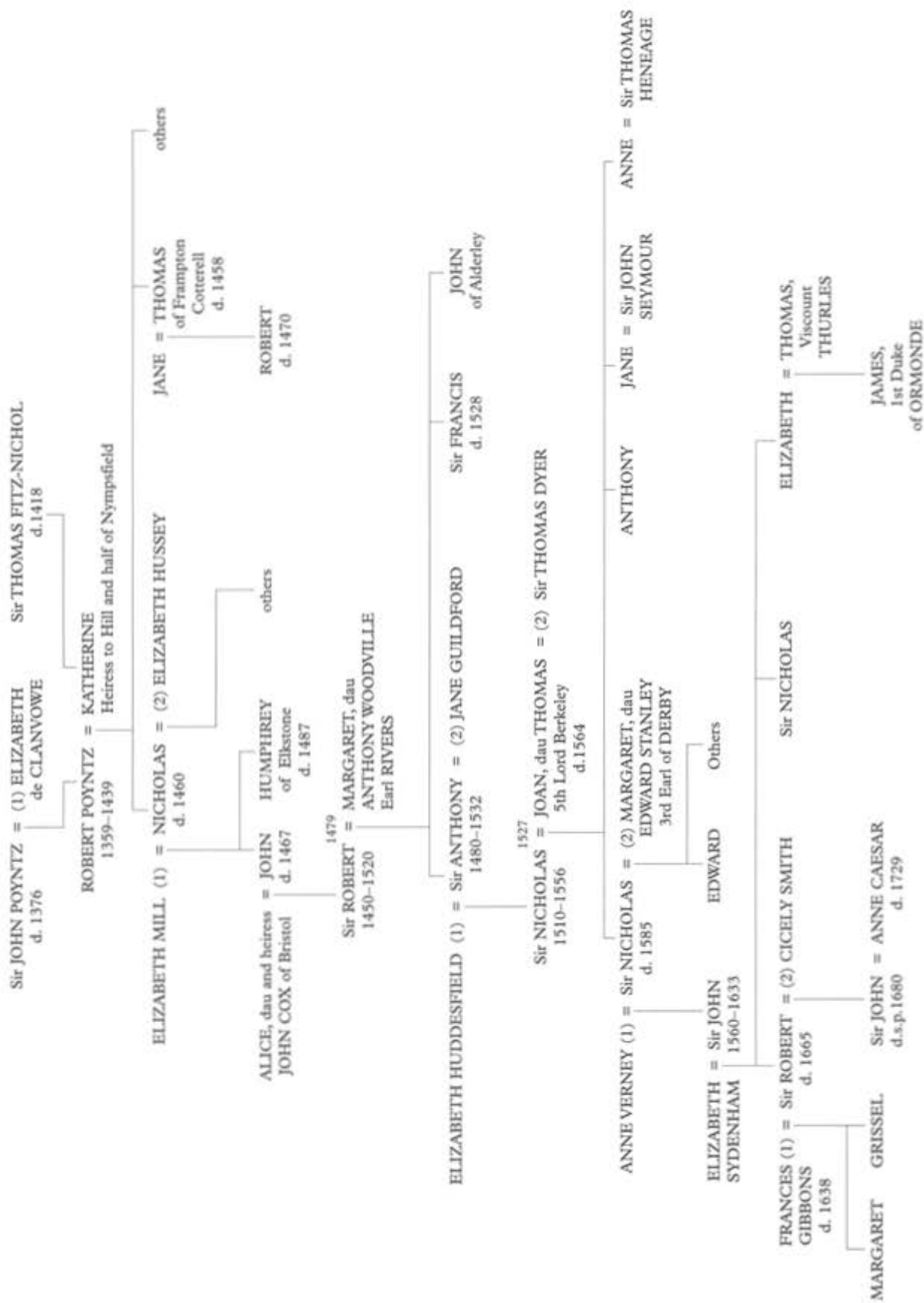


Table 2 The Poyntzets of Iron Acton





half of the manor of Aller was to go to a cousin, who held the other half. Cheddar was intended for his mistress, Margaret de Raleigh. The arrangement for Margaret evidently gave offence, since Cheddar was held from the Bishop of Bath and Wells. In 1339 Sir John de Acton was excommunicated by the Bishop on a charge of fornication with her. Cheddar was later settled on Thomas Lord Berkeley (*Fines Som* II, 170, 177, 235; *Reg Shrews*, 346–7, 349). Then in 1346 Sir John sold his manor of Beercrocombe in Somerset outright to another cousin, John son of Odo de Acton (*Fines Som* II, 230). This left a much less widely scattered estate. When Sir John died in 1362, only the Gloucestershire lands at Iron Acton, Elkstone and Winstone were inherited by his heir, Sir John Poyntz (*Cal Pat* E3, VI, 52; *Cal Close* E3, XI, 317–18). Iron Acton had been held by Sir John de Acton jointly with his fourth wife Joan, who therefore had a life interest in it (*Cal Close* E3, XI, 321), but she relinquished her claim to Sir John Poyntz in 1364 (*Cal Close* E3, XII, 61–2).

### Medieval Poyntzes

The first Poyntz lord of Iron Acton was a younger son of Nicholas Lord Poyntz, baron of Curry Mallet, Somerset, by his second wife, Maud (presumed to be the sister of Sir John de Acton). Sir John Poyntz could scarcely have known his father, who died at the age of 33 (*Peerage* X, 674–5). His mother, well provided for with five and a half fees in dower, made a rapid second marriage to Sir Roger de Chaundos (*Cal Close* E2, II, 168) who held lands in Herefordshire (*IPM* X, 1310) and Sir John evidently lived in that county until he inherited Iron Acton (Table 2). His eldest son was born in Herefordshire (*IPM* E IV, 457).

In 1344, Sir John Poyntz and his half-brother, Sir Thomas de Chaundos, led a raid on Hereford prison to liberate certain parties arrested after a dispute in the city. A band of knights and their squires then effectively laid siege to Hereford, preventing food and wine from entering the city, putting the mills out of action and denuding the surrounding lands of livestock (*Cal Pat* E3, VI, 419–20). Might tended to be right in these lawless years.

A string of Gloucestershire appointments followed Sir John's move to Iron Acton. He was sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1368 (*Cal Fine* VII, 392) and a knight of the shire in 1368–9 and again in 1371 (*Cal Close* E3, XII,

480; XIII, 101, 289). His lesser functions included that of commissioner of the peace (*Cal Pat* E3, XIV, 344), but this did not noticeably increase his respect for the law. A neighbour, William de Clynton, complained that Sir John Poyntz and others had taken advantage of his absence as a prisoner of war to hunt in his park at Tytherington. They had broken in, attacked his men, tied them to trees and stakes and carried off his deer (*Cal Pat* E3, XVI, 58–9).

Sir John died early in 1376 owing £40 to Alderman Peche of London (*IPM Glos* VI, 128–9). Considering that his lands were yielding less than £30 a year in rents, out of which he had agreed to pay £5 a year for life to Ponce Poyntz, and 13s 4d to John Kyng (*IPM* XIV, 321; XV, 19–20), this was quite a burden for his heir, Robert. In 1376 Robert was still a minor and his wardship and marriage were granted to John de Beauchamp (*Cal Pat* E3, XVI, 305). A wardship was expected to be profitable and an heir in these circumstances commonly came into an asset-stripped estate. Certainly John de Beauchamp made no attempt to settle the debt to Alderman Peche. Robert came of age in 1381 (*Cal Close* R2, I, 446) and in the following year the sheriff was ordered to seize his lands until this debt had been paid (*IPM Glos* VI, 128–9). Robert seems to have satisfied John Kyng's claim on the estate by a grant to him of lands in Iron Acton and Latteridge ('Ladryge') at a nominal rent (*Cal Close* R2, I, 512–13).

These early years cannot have been the most prosperous for Robert Poyntz and in 1394 he was granted exemption from knighthood (*Cal Pat* R2, V, 511), the cost of which was high. Robert clearly preferred to serve his overlords in a more rewarding capacity. Elkstone and Winstone were held from the king, Iron Acton from the Staffords (successors to the Earls of Gloucester as lords of Thornbury), and Robert took office under both. In 1396, 1400, 1403 and 1415 he was the royal escheator in Gloucestershire and the March of Wales (*Escheat*, 53–4) and he served frequently on local commissions from 1399 to 1422 (*Cal Pat* H4, I, 211, 313, 554; H5, I, 315; II, 251, 326, 418, 453). In his other role, he acted as the Stafford steward in the counties of Gloucestershire, Hampshire and Wiltshire from 1405 to 1416 (Rawcliffe 1978, app B), the beginning of a long association between the Poyntzes and the Staffords. At the age of 56, he followed his father into parliament,

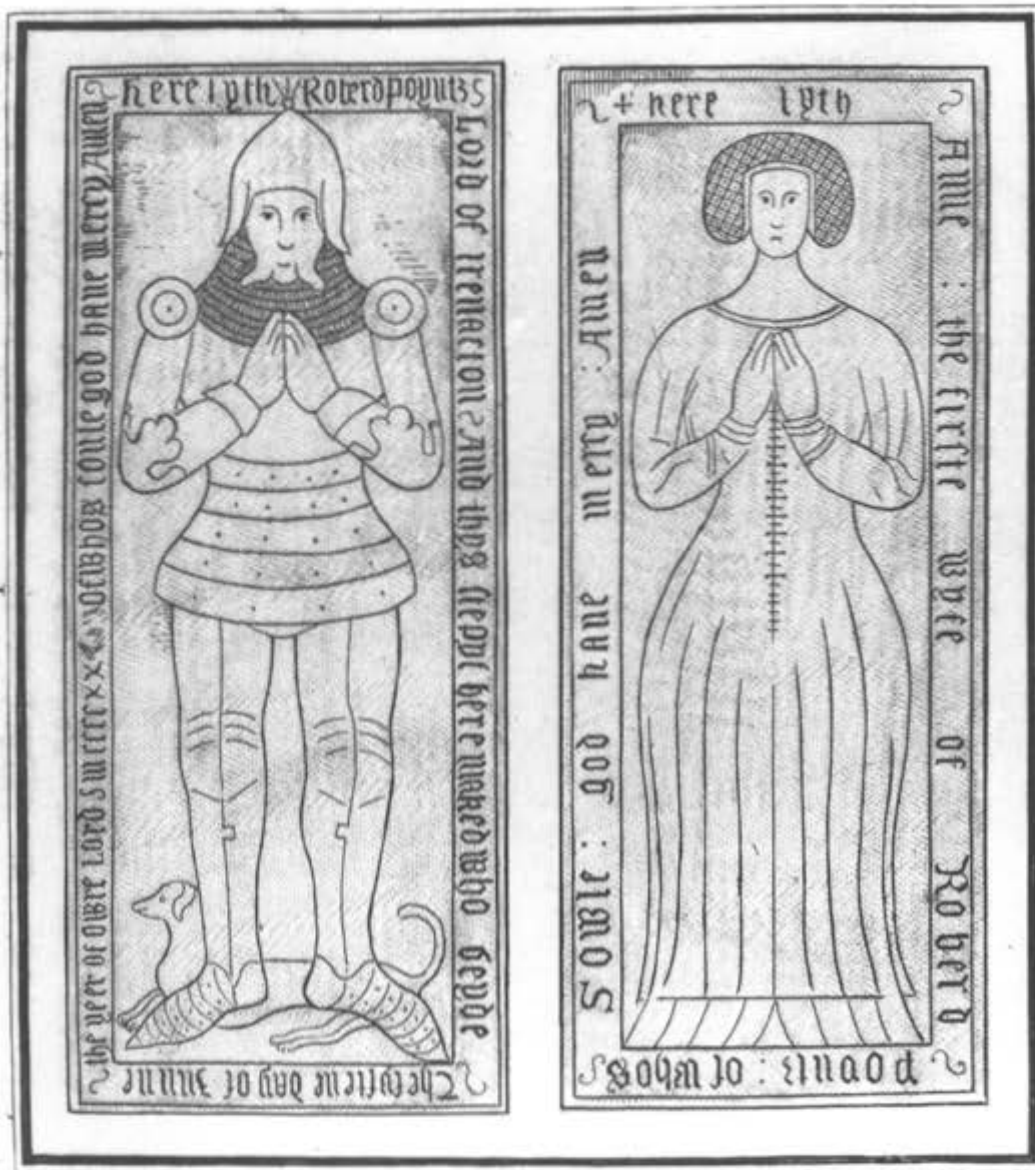


Figure 2.1 Tomb slab of Sir Robert Poyntz (d 1439) and Anne his wife, engraved by Samuel Lysons 1803 (photograph: Gloucestershire Record Office).

representing the county in 1415 and 1417 (Williams 1898, 32–3). Robert improved the family fortunes by marriage as well as by his own energies. His second wife, Katherine, was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas FitzNichol, who died in 1418 leaving her the manor of Hill and half of Nympsfield, both in Gloucestershire (*IPM E*, iv, 38; *Cal Close H5*, i, 493; ii, 158–9).

When Robert died in 1439 (*Cal Fine xvii*, 53), he was buried in Iron Acton church with a gravestone depicting him in armour he probably never wore and inscribed 'here lyth Roberd Poyntz Lord of Irenacton And thys stepyl here maked who deyde The fyftene day of Junne the yeer of owre Lord MCCCXX[XIX] Of whos soule god have mercy Amen' (Lysons 1803,

pl 2: Fig 2.1). From this it seems Robert built the church tower, and the massive stone cross outside the church can also be attributed to him. It bears his arms – Acton impaled with FitzNichol. Further proofs of the piety of Robert and Katherine were the indulgences granted them in 1413 for a portable altar and remission of their sins in the hour of death (*Cal Pap Let vi*, 384).

Robert's heir was his eldest son Nicholas Poyntz, a man of around forty who had already made his mark in the county. His career followed a similar pattern to his father's; he was the escheator for Gloucestershire in 1425 and 1435 (*Escheat*, 53–4), a knight of the shire in 1431 (Williams 1898, 34) and from 1435 he was retained by the Staffords. Nicholas was clearly a man of

energy and ability, who had been given a training in law. He was the attorney of Humphrey (Stafford), Duke of Buckingham, in a suit of 1438 (Rawcliffe 1978, app C) and became the receiver of the Stafford estates in Gloucester, Hampshire and Wiltshire in the same year (Rawcliffe 1978, app B). The post was no sinecure:

Poyntz...had to deal with a seemingly endless round of routine business. His itinerary after the annual audit at Michaelmas 1439, for instance, certainly left him with little time for anything else. No sooner had his accounts been examined than he was summoned to attend Duke Humphrey at Writtle in Essex; the late Dowager's creditors were awaiting payment and there were other problems – such as poaching in the local parks and the supervision of repair work – which needed immediate attention. On his return to Thornbury, Poyntz made three separate inspections of the surrounding farms and manors, followed by a tour of the entire receivership for the collection of rents and the examination of his ministers' accounts. During quieter periods he seized the opportunity to negotiate entry fines and supervise the election of officials in the local courts. (Rawcliffe 1978, 47)

The following year Nicholas was in Brecon as an itinerant justice for the Duke of Buckingham (Rawcliffe 1978, app C) and as joint tenant of Bronllys Castle and various lands near Brecon. The ownership of this castle was in dispute, being claimed by both Henry V and Buckingham (*Cal Fine* xvii, 179–80) putting Nicholas in a position of some delicacy. He must have had the confidence of both parties. Clearly Nicholas spent a good deal of time in the saddle and it is impossible to be certain where he made his main home. However, Iron Acton had been held by his parents jointly (*Cal Close* H6, iii, 401) and his mother probably continued to live there as a widow, since she made over her manor of Hill to Nicholas in 1448 (*Cal Pat* H6, v, 148). This manor house, just three miles from Thornbury, would have made a convenient base for a Stafford administrator.

Nicholas acted as Stafford receiver until seven years before his death in 1460 (Rawcliffe 1978, app B). He left ten chil-

dren by two marriages and seems to have been determined to provide for all of them. Having purchased the manors of Brokenborough and Daglingworth from James, Lord Berkeley (*Cal Pat* H7, i, 433), he settled them in 1450 on two of his sons by his second wife (*Cal Close* H6, vi, 134). A third son of this marriage was given half the manor of Nympsfield, part of the FitzNichol inheritance (*Cal Pat* H6, ii, 204). His second son received Elkstone, leaving his heir, John, with the two chief manors, Iron Acton and Hill. John gained other property by marriage. By 1451 his wife was Alice, daughter and heiress of John Cox (*Cokkes*), a wealthy brewer of Bristol. She brought valuable Bristol properties into the Poyntz family (*Comp St Aug*, 178–9; Leech 1997, 29, 108, 180).

Iron Acton had been settled on Nicholas's second wife, Elizabeth, for life (*Cal Close* H6, vi, 465), but a manorial account roll suggests that John was actually living there in 1465–6. The collector of rents complained that John had seized all the profit from the gardens and orchards and that beasts of the chase had not ventured into the park because John's drovers were occupying the major part of it with their own animals. It was presumably John therefore who supervised the repair work carried out in that financial year on various parts of the fabric including the gatehouse (see Appendix C).

John Poyntz in 1462 took on his father's office of Stafford receiver in three counties (Rawcliffe 1978, app B), but survived little over four more years. His six children were all minors, so in February 1467 the wardship of his eldest son, Robert, was granted to Thomas Herbert, one of Edward IV's esquires of the body (*Cal Fine* xx, 190).

### The rise of the Poyntzes

At the time of his father's death, Robert Poyntz was probably studying law in Gray's Inn (Smyth iii, 224) and hoping to enter the Stafford service. However, this early link with the royal household altered the course of his life. He came of age in 1471 (*Cal Pat* E4–H6, 279) and had become a king's esquire certainly by 1478, when he was made steward of Sodbury and Barton Hundred during the minority of Edward, son of the executed Duke of Clarence (*Cal Pat* E4–R3, 99). Edward IV's household knights and esquires were a small, trusted group who divided their time between the Court and their

home counties, where they played an important part in enforcing royal authority. In February 1474 the king's brother-in-law, Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, was commissioned to raise a force in Hereford, Gloucester and Shropshire to crush an insurrection in Wales. Among those called upon to assist him in Gloucestershire was Robert Poyntz (*Cal Pat* E4-H6, 429).

It would seem that Robert, 'a learned and remarkable man' (Smyth, III, 224), earned the favour of the notably cultivated Earl, for five years later he was married to the Earl's only child, Margaret, born of a much-loved mistress. Her marriage portion was intended to include land worth £400 a year (BL MSS SI 3424, fol 7b), which would have been a considerable increase in wealth for a man whose rent roll in Iron Acton was under £50 a year (WRO 947E/794). This settlement may not have been honoured, but the link with the Woodvilles drew Robert closer into the royal circle. In 1482 he was appointed constable for life of St Briavels Castle in the forest of Dean (jointly with his father-in-law, Earl Rivers, and Thomas Beynam) (*Cal Pat* E4-R3, 261) and also steward for life of the Duchy of Lancaster in Gloucestershire (Somerville 1953, I, 636). In November of that year he took office as Sheriff of Hampshire (*Cal Fine* XXI, 694).

However, in April 1483, Edward IV died unexpectedly after a short illness and the political climate changed dramatically. The new young king, Edward V, was taken into custody by his uncle, Richard of Gloucester, to forestall the coronation planned by Edward's mother, the queen. Her brother Earl Rivers was arrested and the queen herself fled into sanctuary. By June Richard had declared his nephews illegitimate, imprisoned them in the Tower of London and seized the throne. Richard traded on the unpopularity of the Woodvilles, so favoured by Edward IV, and they were his immediate targets. Earl Rivers was beheaded at Pontefract, leaving a will naming Robert Poyntz as one of his executors (Bentley 1831, 246-8). The Woodville connection put Robert under suspicion and Richard lost no time in removing him from his more strategically significant posts. Already by late April, Robert had been replaced as Sheriff of Hampshire by William Berkeley (*Cal Fine* XXI, 730) and he was ordered to surrender Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight to Berkeley in early May. Clearly Richard considered it a priority to have a

loyal man guarding the harbours of the Solent and Southampton Water. Then on 21 May Robert was replaced as joint constable of St Briavels (*BL Harl* 433, I, 26-7; II, 1).

Presumably Robert supported the rebellion against Richard III in October of that year. However, the poorly co-ordinated revolt failed. It had been led by Robert's Stafford overlord, Henry, Duke of Buckingham, who was captured and executed. Robert himself was pardoned (*Cal Pat* E4-R3, 521) but cannot have felt at all secure. When Henry Tudor landed in Wales in August 1485, Robert joined him and was knighted on the battlefield of Bosworth (Gairdner 1898, 363-5, note 8). Henry VII immediately confirmed Sir Robert's appointments under Edward (*Mat* H7, I, 58, 579; *Cal Pat* H7, I, 97), and added the posts of sheriff of Gloucestershire (*Cal Fine* XXII, 95) and deputy at Bristol to Sir John Fortescue, chief butler of England (*Cal Pat* H7, I, 320). Sir Robert also became steward of Thornbury (*Mat* H7, I, 58), which was in royal hands following the death of Buckingham, whose heir was still a child.

Early the following year Henry secured the Tudor dynasty by his marriage to Elizabeth of York, eldest daughter of Edward IV and a first cousin of Lady Margaret Poyntz. Lady Margaret's illegitimacy does not seem to have been any bar to royal recognition. On 23 May 1486 Henry dined with Sir Robert at Iron Acton on his way from Gloucester to Bristol. Sir Robert had been one of the king's considerable escort on this first progress (Leland, *Coll* IV, 186, 198-9). A payment of £50 to Sir Robert in the following year 'by way of reward' (*Mat* H7, II, 225) was probably intended as compensation for his expenses in entertaining his sovereign. Henry was to make another brief visit to Acton in August 1496 (Bentley 1831, 109).

Sir Robert was now a king's knight, appearing as such in the grant to him in September 1486 of the office of Constable of the Forest of Dean (*Cal Pat* H7, I, 114), and his brother Thomas had also joined the royal household. Thomas officiated as an esquire of the body at the elaborate christening of the heir to the throne, Prince Arthur (Leland, *Coll* IV, 205). The Poyntzes had become a courtier family. Many of Henry VII's closest advisors came from knightly or gentry families and he raised few to the peerage. Crown servants were generally rewarded with waged offices, which would ensure their loyalty by



keeping them dependant on royal patronage, rather than titles and gifts of land. The Poyntz family were to become wealthy through their connection with the Crown, but were never among the great landed magnates.

### Early Tudor courtiers

Sir Robert must have spent as much time on the move as his grandfather to satisfy the demands on his time. He was six times sheriff of Gloucestershire and almost continuously a commissioner of the peace (*Cal Fine* XXI, 373, 639; XXII, 95, 462, 574, 740; *Cal Pat* H7, I, 481; II, 640; *LP H8*, I, 1537). He also held multiple local stewardships (*Cal Pat* H7, I, 408; Rawcliffe 1978, app B), as well as being at the king's command in matters martial or ceremonial. For example, in September 1494 Sir Robert was commissioned to muster the army for Ireland and ship them aboard vessels in Bristol (*Cal Pat* H7, II, 27). The very next month he attended a tournament at Westminster to celebrate the bestowing of the title Duke of York on the infant Prince Henry (*LP R3*, H7, I, 404).

His local appointments were so numerous that Sir Robert would have had to delegate local authority in order to play a significant role at Court. There is no evidence that he did so until towards the end of his life, when he became chancellor to Queen Catherine of Aragon (*LP H8*, Add I, 165, 177). His brother Thomas then acted as his deputy steward at Kingswood Abbey (Lindley 1954, 123). In the 1490s Sir Robert personally held court as steward of St Augustine's Abbey and patrolled the premises during a dispute with the citizens of Bristol (*White Book*, 32, 40).

Sir Robert evidently had a strong interest in the thriving port of Bristol. As the king's agent there, he was not confined to the shore. During Henry VII's campaign in 1497 against Scottish support for the pretender Perkin Warbeck, Sir Robert not only helped to muster 2000 men (*Cal Pat* H7, II, 93), but also captained the *Henry of Brystoll*, a hired merchant vessel (*Nav* H7, 341). In 1517 he made a greater profit from his properties there than from Iron Acton (GRO D1086/M1). He chose to be buried in the church of Gaunt's Hospital (now the Lord Mayor's Chapel) in Bristol 'in the Chapel of Jesus which latelie I have caused to be new edified'. The Poyntz chapel was not quite finished when Sir Robert made his will in October 1520 and he left his executors to

arrange for the windows to be glazed and the interior furnished (Maclean 1886, 98–9).

By the time of Sir Robert's death, many of the lands which had been dispersed to Poyntz cadets of earlier generations had returned to the senior branch, along with additional lands. Thomas, second son of the first Robert Poyntz of Iron Acton, held land in Frampton Cotterell and in 1457 had purchased the manors of Hempton, Hinton and Sturdon from Nicholas Stanshaw (BRO AC/D3/13–16). After the death of his son Robert in 1470, these manors were inherited by his sisters (BRO AC/D3/23; *Cal Pat* H7, II, 192). Leland (*Itin*, II, 13–14) tells us that the major part of this property came to the senior branch by purchase and exchange. Elkstone, Brokenborough and Daglingworth presumably returned through lack of immediate heirs. However, the lands originally purchased from James, Lord Berkeley, were the subject of lawsuits by his heirs culminating in a judgement in 1514 awarding Daglingworth to Maurice, Lord Berkeley, Little Marshfield to Sir Robert Poyntz and giving them each a quarter of the manor of Brokenborough (Smyth, II, 203). Sir Robert was therefore able to bequeath to his son and heir Sir Anthony Poyntz the Gloucestershire manors of Iron Acton, Acton Ilger, Gasteylins Court in Frampton Cotterell, Hill, Stanshawes, Hinton, Sturden, Elkstone and Little Marshfield and a quarter of the manor of Brokenborough in Wiltshire, as well as smaller parcels of land and the valuable properties in Bristol (GRO D1086/72).

Sir Anthony had lived at Frampton Cotterell in his father's lifetime (GRO D1086/T2/25), though his first wife, Elizabeth, had a life interest in nine manors in Essex, Hertfordshire and Huntingdonshire (*Cal Close* H7, II, 544). Sir Anthony was sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1508 (*Cal Fine* XXII, 902), but held no other appointments in the county until after his father's death, and so was free to devote his time to the Court and the sea.

In 1512 Henry VIII embarked on war with France and although the first season's campaign was a total failure, he pressed on in the next year. Anthony Poyntz was employed to hire suitable Bristol ships for the king's navy. He procured three small, but 'gorgeous shippes for ther burdon', including the 160-ton *Trinity*, which Anthony captained himself. They joined the fleet, led by the *Mary Rose*, in March 1513. Henry routed the French in August and made peace the follow-

ing year from a position of strength. By that time Sir Anthony was captain of one of the largest ships of the fleet, the 700-ton carrack, *Kateryn Forteleza* (*LP H8*, I, 1661, 1698, 1728, 2304, 2686, 2842, 2938; *LP war*, 97).

To cement the peace treaty with France, Henry arranged a marriage between his sister Mary and Louis XII, which took place in August 1514. Chief among the waiting women who accompanied the Princess Mary to France was her former governess, Lady Jane Guildford, who was to become Sir Anthony's second wife. She was a courtier of long standing, the widow of Henry VII's household controller, and had been coaxed out of retirement for this post, for which Henry considered her experience and knowledge of French ideal qualifications. However, almost immediately after the wedding Louis decided to dismiss Mary's English servants, leaving her alone in a strange land. Mary wrote to her brother and Wolsey, begging to have 'my mother Guildford' returned to her. Wolsey wrote helpfully to Louis commending Lady Guildford as wise and discreet, but in vain. The constant presence of the Lady Jane was frustrating the king's efforts to woo his young bride (*LP H8*, I, 3355, 3356, 3381, 3416; II, 569).

Presumably Sir Anthony met Lady Jane at Court. His first wife, Elizabeth, was probably the Elizabeth Poyntz who nursed Prince Arthur (son of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon) for the few months that he lived (*LP H8*, I, 885(8)). Sir Anthony himself had joined the royal household by 1516, when he took part in a joust of honour and his brother Francis became an esquire of the body at around the same time. This was the period when their father was acting as chancellor to the Queen and their uncle Thomas was still an esquire of the body, so the family was strongly represented at Court (*LP H8*, II, 874, 1507, 2735). None of them attained high state office, but both Sir Anthony and Francis were entrusted with at least peripheral roles in diplomatic missions.

In 1518 Sir Anthony took part in an embassy to France (*LP H8*, II, 4409). Then when Henry VIII himself journeyed to France to meet Francis I in June 1520, his vast and extravagantly-arrayed entourage included Sir Robert, Sir Anthony and John Poyntz and also Sir Anthony's daughter and Jane Guildford, by then his wife. Francis Poyntz does not appear in the lists of attendant courtiers, but he certainly had a cos-

tume made for the jousts which formed part of this competitive display of royal wealth (*LP H8*, III, 206, 704, 1554). His would have been a minor role in the spectacle, since he was not a knight, but perhaps he managed to distinguish himself in some way. Sir Robert's will, made in October 1520, mentions a gift of plate to Francis from the French king (Maclean 1886, 98-9). However, the Field of Cloth of Gold was the high watermark of the Poyntzes' Court attendance. Sir Robert was dead by the end of the year and Sir Anthony had increasing obligations elsewhere.

Within months of his father's death, Sir Anthony was plunged into deep political waters. Edward (Stafford), 3rd Duke of Buckingham had come under the suspicion of the king, to whom he was dangerously closely related. Buckingham controlled vast estates and had powerful connections. He was in a position therefore to press a claim to the throne. In the circumstances, the duke's magnificent new castle at Thornbury, begun by 1511, could have been seen as a provocation. Sir Anthony Poyntz was among those who gave evidence at Buckingham's trial for treason in May 1521 (*LP H8*, III, 1284). Relations between the Poyntzes and the Staffords had deteriorated under the 3rd Duke. No Poyntz held a Stafford office after he came of age. The Poyntzes, including Anthony, had celebrated Epiphany at Thornbury in 1508, along with other gentry of the neighbourhood and the Abbot of Kingswood (*Rel Eng*, 93). Yet later in that same year, Buckingham proceeded against Anthony for a debt of £40 (Rawcliffe 1978, 244). Then in 1517 Buckingham supported the deposition of the Abbot of Kingswood, resisted by Thomas Poyntz as acting steward of the abbey (*LP H8*, II, 3173; Lindley 1954, 123). Sir Anthony probably needed no pressurising to testify against Buckingham, who was duly executed. His extensive lands were forfeit to the Crown. (In 1531 Sir Anthony and Thomas Poyntz were among those commissioned to search and survey the castle and manor of Thornbury (*LP H8*, V, 119 (61)).

In the middle of 1522, Henry renewed the war with France. Sir Anthony captained the *Santa Maria* that year and was part of the force that ravaged Picardy under the Earl of Surrey. The following year, he was a vice-admiral with command of a fleet of ten ships on the sea between Wales and Ireland, led by the *Mynyon*. His task was to intercept the expected French attempt to enlist



Scottish support (*LP H8*, II, 2409, 2419, 2480, 2937, 3256, 3270, 3281, 3358; *Chron Cal*, 32; PRO E315/480). However, Henry lacked the funds to sustain the war and Sir Anthony was soon back in Gloucestershire.

He took over his father's stewardship of St Augustine's Abbey (*Acc St Aug*, 142, 162, 173), Sodbury and Barton Regis (*LP H8*, II, 3510), of which he later became the tenant (*LP H8*, IV, 6542), and almost certainly that of Kingswood Abbey, since his heir was chief steward there at the Dissolution (*LP H8*, XIII, 433). He was also steward of Portbury in Somerset (*LP H8*, VI, 196(8)) and keeper of several parks and forests in Gloucestershire and Somerset.<sup>2</sup> From 1523 he served on local commissions (*LP H8*, III, 3504; IV, 547, 6248, 6516; V, 1694, 119 (70)) and was twice Sheriff of Gloucestershire (*LP H8*, III, 3583; IV, 4914).

His brother Francis remained in the royal household, and in May 1527 he was knighted and sent to Spain with other more experienced envoys on a delicate diplomatic mission. They were to mediate between the Emperor Charles V and the defeated King of France on the question of hostages and booty (*LP H8*, III, 492, 999, 1899; IV, 1413, 3130, 3143, 3144). Sir Francis may have been chosen for his polished manners – a Venetian diplomat reported him 'as polite a person as any of his colleagues in this kingdom' (*SP Ven* VI(3), app 86) – or perhaps his command of Latin, still the chief language of diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> However, he made little personal contribution to the complex negotiations and did not enjoy his experience of Spain: 'The country is tedious to those who follow the court here when the Emperor removes, especially for those who came in post. Having neither bed nor other stuff to carry with them, they find on their arrival nothing but bare walls.' In November Sir Francis reported to Francis I in Paris and he was home by the end of the year. He died the following June in an outbreak of 'sweating sickness' that killed a number of the Court (*LP H8*, IV, 3375, 3591, 3592, 3663, 4422).

His brother did not survive him many years. Sir Anthony died on 19 December 1532 at Iron Acton (*LP H8*, Add 1, 803). An inventory of his plate at Acton survives, along with another of furnishings from the same batch of documents, which may be assumed to belong with it. Together they present a picture of a wealthy household of the period; rooms hung with tapestries and furnished with carved oak chairs and chests

imported from Flanders. A Turkish carpet and cushions covered in velvet, tinsel or embroidery added to comfort. The trussing beds and coffer, which were designed to be packed easily for travelling, suggest a household much on the move, but there must also have been a four-poster bed, since the hangings for it are listed: six pieces of arras, a tester and counterpane. Sir Anthony had a silver-gilt basin and ewer emblazoned with his coat of arms and his board was amply supplied with salts, goblets and apostle spoons in silver or silver-gilt. Other items – altar cloths, holy-water pot and pax – would have been used for family Mass (see Appendix B).

A careful division of this valuable plate was made between Sir Anthony's widow Lady Jane and his son and heir, Nicholas Poyntz, one of his executors. Sir Anthony's surviving brother, John Poyntz of Alderley, would appear to have been another executor. Lady Jane accepted the manors of Elkstone and Stanshaws in dower, rather less than she was entitled to, but Hill had evidently already been settled on her for life and Nicholas agreed that she should also have possession for life of the contents of the house at Hill. She had a London house in Blackfriars, left to her by her first husband, and purchased from Sir Nicholas half of Sir Anthony's possessions there. It would seem from this that Sir Anthony had kept three houses ready for use (ESRO SAS G21/22, 25, 30).

### Sir Nicholas Poyntz the builder

If Lady Jane's dower is included, Nicholas Poyntz inherited an estate with a yearly value of around £270 (ESRO SAS G21/28; GRO D1086/72). The average landed income of a knight at this time has been calculated as around £190 a year, while the average peer probably owned lands worth £1000 a year (Hoskins 1976, 54). The Duke of Buckingham at his death possessed property to the value of £6045 a year, making him second only to the king in wealth. These calculations, of course, do not take into account the income from offices held by the Poyntzes, but Sir Anthony's lands alone placed him among the wealthier of his rank, though well below the builder of Thornbury.

Nicholas was twenty-two or twenty-three when his father died and his portrait by Holbein three years later depicts a wispy bearded, weak-jawed youth (Fig 2.2). By

contrast the Holbein drawing of his uncle John Poyntz of Alderley is a striking study of a strong but thoughtful face (Roberts 1993, 70). Nicholas was too young for the responsibilities he inherited and it is not particularly surprising that there were complaints. As high steward to the Bishop of Worcester in Gloucester, Nicholas gave immediate offence by acting much as he chose and ignoring established practice (*LP H8*, vi, 533, 1274).

This stewardship may have been held by his father. Certainly Nicholas was granted the stewardship of the great court held yearly at St James near Bristol, Sodbury and Fairford, Gloucestershire, which had been held by his father and grandfather as part of their stewardship of Sodbury and Barton. He also took over as keeper of three out of the four local parks and forests that had been in Sir Anthony's hands. Through the influence of Thomas Cromwell, Nicholas added to these the post of keeper and master of the hunt of Micklewood Chase and Whitcliff Park in Gloucestershire (*LP H8*, v, 166; vi, 133, 196, 1383(10)).

Cromwell had risen to power by counselling the breach with Rome required for Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn in January 1533. The Boleyn faction were reformers in religion though Henry would not countenance any deviation from the tenets of the Catholic faith, other than placing himself at the head of the Church in England. However, under Cromwell the Council gave reformers like Hugh Latimer licence to preach. Possibly it was Cromwell's influence that ensured that John Erley, a disciple of Latimer later arrested for heresy, was permitted to preach in the churchyard at Iron Acton in the summer of 1533. Or perhaps the Poyntz link with Bristol, a nest of unorthodoxy, was the deciding factor. The mayor and several merchants of Bristol came to Iron Acton to hear Erley preach (Powell 1971, 151).

Cromwell's attitude to Nicholas seems to have verged on the avuncular; he was clearly willing to confer favours, while checking his indiscretions. Nicholas was a friend of both Cromwell's much-favoured nephew, Richard Cromwell, and his protégé, Richard Rich, which may explain this indulgence. In June 1533 Cromwell tried to nip in the bud a burgeoning feud between Nicholas and John Berkeley, who were both bound over to keep the peace. Nicholas wrote an injured letter complaining to Cromwell that Berkeley's servants had killed



one of his rangers in Kingswood forest 'and he has occasioned me divers times to fight with him. I have kept myself peaceably, chiefly through your command' (*LP H8*, vi, 660, 684).

The following year Nicholas was given another outlet for his energies. Henry VIII's break with Rome precipitated a revolt in Ireland in June 1534. By September 'young Poyntz' had a command there with his uncle Sir John St Loe (*LP H8*, vii, 1167). They had no easy task and the rebellion was not broken until the following spring.

Figure 2.2 Sir Nicholas Poyntz, 1510–56, by Hans Holbein (photograph: The Royal Collection © 2004, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)



Nicholas was knighted after this campaign and the ceremony may have taken place at Iron Acton. The king visited Nicholas there in August 1535. Henry's schedule allowed for four days in Bristol, followed by two days at 'Mr. Poyntz's place' (*LP H8*, viii, 989), but when he arrived at Thornbury, plague was raging in Bristol and plans were changed. The Court stayed in the safety of Thornbury. Nevertheless the king himself slipped secretly into Bristol (Seyer 1821, 214) after a royal courier prepared the way on 21 August. The courier then visited Acton Court on 22 August, so the king presumably rode over from Thornbury a day or two later for a rather briefer visit than had been intended (Excursion 1898, 19). Leland (*Itin*, v, 99) provides a description of the house that Henry VIII would have seen:

Acton mannor place standithe about  
a quartar of a myle from the village  
and parochie churche in a playne  
grounde on a redde sandy soyle.  
Ther is a goodly howse and 2 parks  
by the howse, one of redd dere, an  
othar of fallow.

This was not Sir Nicholas's first contact with the Court. He had been in the king's huge retinue at the Calais Interview in October 1532 and was subsequently present on great state occasions, such as the christening of Prince Edward and the reception of Anne of Cleves (Bath, iv, 2; *LP H8*, xii, 911; xv, 14). Sir Nicholas was a cousin of Henry VIII through the Woodville connection, but he apparently attracted no particular royal attention after this one visit to Acton.

In February 1538 Sir Nicholas and his uncle John Poyntz were among the commissioners appointed for the dissolution of Kingswood Abbey, of which Sir Nicholas had been steward. Immediately Anne, dowager Lady Berkeley, wrote to Cromwell offering him a bribe of £100 if he would favour her rather than Sir Nicholas Poyntz for the grant of the abbey and its lands. The bid failed. Sir Nicholas was granted a 21-year lease of the whole property in March which amounted to a continuation of his stewardship, since his rent to the Crown, £245 8s 8d, was the exact yearly value that the commissioners had put on Kingswood (*LP H8*, xiii(1), 199, 259, 433; Lindley 1954, 129). This could only be a temporary measure and Nicholas was anxious to buy. Sir Richard Rich wrote to Cromwell in

August 'I have received your letters in favour of my friend Sir Nicholas Poyntz, and am right glad the King has granted his suit to purchase certain possessions of the late house of Kingswood' (*LP H8*, xiii(2), 89). But evidently Henry changed his mind, for in October 1539 Richard Cromwell wrote to his uncle 'I think my friend Mr Pointes will wax in a frenzy about his purchase because the King has made answer to Master Chancellor that he shall not have it'. He begged Cromwell's intercession 'for he is in very ill case, having, with great reproach in his country, sold his lands to pay for it'. Sir Nicholas had been kept waiting at Court a month at great expense, he pleaded (*LP H8*, xiv(2), 266). It would seem that Cromwell did use his influence with the king, for in February 1540 Sir Nicholas was granted approximately a quarter of the Kingswood estate for £835 10s. The main elements of his purchase were the manors of Ozleworth and Bagpath, near Wotton under Edge in the Cotswolds, but he also took the opportunity to acquire such small properties as had belonged to the abbey in Iron Acton and Hill (*LP H8*, xv, 282(57)). The lands Sir Nicholas had sold were the manors of Stanshaws and Sturdon (for £740), Hinton (for £240) and Elkstone (BRO AC/D3/28-30; BRO 01027/5; GRO D184/T35). Between 1538 and 1542 he also sold the bulk of the Bristol property (Leech 1997, 66, 107, 177, 201-3).

Possibly Lady Berkeley lay behind the difficulties. There had been ill feeling between the Poyntzes and the Berkeleys following acrimonious lawsuits in the time of Sir Robert Poyntz. With the intention of healing the breach, a marriage had been arranged between Nicholas Poyntz and Joan, daughter of Thomas, 5th Lord Berkeley; the wedding took place at her home at Yate on Midsummer Day 1527. However, Joan's eldest brother Thomas, 6th Lord Berkeley, married a termagant with the appropriate name of Ann Savage, whose avarice alienated her husband's relations. The Lady Ann ran the Berkeley estates during the long minority of her son Henry and by this time had a running vendetta with the Poyntzes. She fostered local grievances against Sir Nicholas, who seems to have taken revenge in attacks on her property. Various Star Chamber proceedings resulted (Smyth, II, 162-5, 235, 250, 268-70).

Lady Ann apparently had some influence at Court, while Sir Nicholas lost his most valuable advocate with Cromwell's fall in

1540. Sir Nicholas was arrested and sent to the Fleet in October 1541 on a complaint from Lady Ann. There he was initially kept in solitary confinement. Lady Joan Poyntz appealed to the Privy Council to examine the case themselves, as she had no faith in the impartiality of the commissioners appointed to enquire into it. She pressed with some success for speedy action on this and her husband's liberty in the interim. Sir Nicholas was freed in January 1542 on condition that he stayed in London, kept the peace and would reappear before the Council. However, he was back in the Fleet in May for failing to keep his bond to the Council and imprisoning a man who had informed against him. In June Sir Nicholas was finally discharged and his disputes settled (*Proc PC* VII, 250-1, 262, 277, 286, 289, 298; *Acts PC* I, 5, 8, 9, 10).

He suffered no permanent disgrace. The following year Sir Nicholas was in command of the navy in the west in the preparations for war with France. Then in 1544 he captained *The Great Galley* to Scotland, where the army marched on Edinburgh. The countryside was looted and burned for five miles round and Sir Nicholas crossed the Firth of Forth and burnt Kinghorn. Later in the year he took part in the invasion of France, where Hardelet Castle surrendered to him without a fight (*LP H8*, xviii(1), 966; xx(1), 264, 273, 483, 533, 643; xx(2), 424, app 10).

Edinburgh yielded a great haul of booty and no doubt Sir Nicholas took his share, but in July 1546 he still owed the king £541 for his ex-Kingswood properties (*LP H8*, Add 1(1), 1760). Nonetheless, according to John Smyth (III, 307), writing within living memory, it was in the reign of Edward VI (1547-53) that Sir Nicholas built a house at Ozleworth 'partly with the stones and timber of the demolished monastery of Kingswood, scarce two miles distant, and partly with the stones pulled from the crosses in the parishes thereabouts'. It was known as The New Work and appears as such, perched on top of a hill north of Wotton, in Saxton's 1577 map of Gloucestershire. Certainly what is now Newark Park was complete when Sir Nicholas made his will in 1556, for he left his wife Joan his 'new house at Osilworth that standith upon the hill and the parke that the same house standith in' (PRO PROB 11/39).

Sir Nicholas had twice served as sheriff of Gloucestershire (*LP H8*, xiv(2), 619(38); xx(2), 910(52)) and then in 1547 he was

returned as an MP for the county (Bindoff 1982, III, 148). He may already have been in favour with Protector Somerset. Certainly by the time of Somerset's fall in October 1551, Sir Nicholas was seen as a close adherent, for he was arrested at the same time and sent to the Tower with the Protector. He was not released until March 1552 (*Acts PC* III, 495; Wrioth Chron II, 58). Sir Nicholas perhaps came under suspicion through a family link. His daughter Jane was married by 1556 to Sir John Seymour, Somerset's illegitimate half-brother.

As a member of this circle, Sir Nicholas cannot have welcomed Mary to the throne, but he was informed of events in London and wrote to warn his uncle Sir John St Loe that Mary had been proclaimed queen (Jackson 1864, 310). St Loe was at Longleat with Sir John Thynne, having been ordered to muster forces for the support of Jane Grey. This news seems to have decided them against any attempt at resistance. However, as MP for Cricklade in 1555, Sir Nicholas joined St Loe in opposition to a government bill and his views and connections brought him under suspicion of treason (Bindoff 1982, I, 20; III, 260; Loades 1965, 210-11).

Sir Nicholas did not live to see the accession of Queen Elizabeth. He died in November 1556, leaving six sons and three daughters. Five sons were minors and Sir Nicholas's will gave his widow Dame Joan control of them and their inheritance until they were twenty. They were provided for out of his newly acquired lands. His heir Nicholas inherited the manors of Iron Acton, Ozleworth and Hill, though his widow had a life interest in Hill and the house and park at Ozleworth. An annexed list of Sir Nicholas's debts includes £200 to John Seymour 'so that he assure my daughter Jane a lvinge' (PRO PROB 11/39; C142/109/51).

Sir Nicholas's will made no allusion to his spiritual welfare and left nothing to charity. His political links suggest sympathy with the Reformation, but he was clearly not a man of deep religious feeling. He spent Christmas Day gambling in 1544 (*LP H8*, XXI(2), 417). If we can believe the scandal-loving John Aubrey (*Lives*, 251), who had 'some small acquaintance' with his great-grandson, Sir Nicholas built Newark 'to keep his whores in'. Certainly he had no hesitation in pulling down crosses to use as building materials. Sir Nicholas's robustly

independent spirit is perhaps best summed up by the motto he chose for his portrait 'I obey whom I must, I serve whom I please and I am what I merit'.

### Elizabethan Poyntzes

Nicholas Poyntz was barely of age when his father died, but he had already been touched by the violent politics of this unsettled period. In May 1555 he married Anne Verney (PRO C142/107/51), sister of Francis and Edmund Verney and niece of Lord John Bray, all of whom were shortly involved in the 'Dudley Conspiracy'. Led by Sir Henry Dudley, its aim was to remove Queen Mary by force and place Elizabeth on the throne. The plot leaked out and Anne's brothers and uncle were indicted in 1556, though all were pardoned and released the next year. Sir Nicholas Poyntz the elder, though suspected of complicity, was not arrested (*LP Verney*; Loades 1965, 210–13, 228, 233).

When Elizabeth came to the throne, many of the conspirators of the Marian years gained instant reward. Nicholas Poyntz was made a Knight of the Bath at Elizabeth's coronation in January 1559 (*Eng Hist Rev*, xxv, 553) and appointed an esquire of the body (*Cal Pat Eliz* 1, 332). In that same year he was returned as MP for Totnes (Hasler 1981, III, 243). However, no valuable office came his way and in August 1559 financial distress forced Sir Nicholas to leave the Court. He begged Robert Dudley to make his excuses to the queen, 'some regard that I have of those I am bound to have care for compelleth me to search the way how to save that piece of my living which yet is ungedged or unsold' (Longleat Dudley MS 1, 77<sup>r</sup>, 78<sup>v</sup>). His problems were serious enough to warrant the immediate sale of all his lands in Ozleworth except the park around the house in which his mother was living. At the same time, his father's 21-year lease on the remaining ex-Kingswood properties expired and Sir Nicholas did not renew it. Instead in 1560 he was granted Crown lands in Pucklechurch at a rent of £40 a year, with a clause protecting him against a decline in their value (*Cal Pat Eliz* 1, 128, 142, 332, 360).

Sir Nicholas's widowed mother married Sir Thomas Dyer, whose treatment of her broke her heart. She died in March 1564 with her son at her bedside and he poured out his anguished feelings to Sir William Cecil. Dyer was not a man, Poyntz argued,

but a monster and 'though there be no law provided for such fine murders yet I am most assured there is laid up a law in the conscience of the Queen's Majesty, which I trust will appear'. Lady Joan had been sent £50 by Elizabeth to buy medicine, with letters from both the queen and Cecil which gave her great solace in her last hours (BL MSS Lans 7/79, 179). The following year Sir Nicholas sold Newark Park (*Cal Pat Eliz* III, 1321).

At the time of his mother's death, Sir Nicholas was out of favour with the queen. Certain indiscretions had incurred her displeasure (BL MSS Lans 7/79, 179). However, he had friends at Court, notably his sister Anne and her husband, Sir Thomas Heneage, later vice-chamberlain of the Queen's household. Both were well liked by Elizabeth and may have been able to soften her annoyance. Certainly Sir Nicholas was back at Court in the latter half of this decade, getting embroiled in the rivalry between two royal favourites, the Earls of Ormonde and Leicester (Carte 1736, I, lxiv, 4).

In Gloucestershire Sir Nicholas served as a commissioner of the peace in 1564 (*Cal Pat Eliz* III, 121) and on the Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes for the Diocese in 1574 (Price 1937, 66–7). In 1570 he acted as sheriff; then in 1571 he represented the county in parliament (Hasler 1981, III, 243). In 1574 he hosted a meeting of the Privy Council. Elizabeth made a progress through Gloucestershire that year and stayed at Berkeley Castle on 11 August (Nichols 1823, I, 392). When she moved to Bristol on 14 August Sir Francis Walsingham visited Sir Nicholas at Iron Acton, where the Council sat after dinner (*Wals*, 3). Possibly Sir Nicholas was chagrined that the queen herself stayed away, for in May 1575 he wrote to Anne Heneage from Cannon Row (*Finch* 1, 210):

You wot well I was deceived in her that now doth govern, but her forgetfulness, though it disgraced me before the world and diminished my portion, hath benefited my soul, I doubt not...And for your wonder why I come not to the court, being so near it, how willingly, tell me, would you go into hell, to salute the devils there, though you were standing on the brink thereof ... [I] do not care the value of the stinkingest weed in your garden for the greatest personage living that intendeth to do me wrong.



By this time his wife Anne was dead and Sir Nicholas was looking for a second bride, though with some misgivings. While denying ambition, he was clearly reluctant to saddle himself with a penniless or spendthrift wife. His choice fell upon Margaret, daughter of the Catholic Edward Stanley, 3rd Earl of Derby. The Stanley wealth ensured her a tempting dowry (Maclean 1886, 82-4). Under her influence Nicholas became a Catholic, which completed his retreat from the Court. In 1580 his name appears on a list of Catholics who had been gaoled or put under house arrest. The Poyntzes harboured a Jesuit and even contemplated moving to Spain. Sir Nicholas was in constant communication with the Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, as was his brother Anthony (Trappes-Lomax 1961, 68; McGrath 1969, 24-5; SP Span III, 570-1).

However, Anthony Poyntz's motives were by no means straightforward. He convinced Mendoza that he was as strong a Catholic as his brother and that his only aim was to serve the king of Spain. In fact he was employed in Walsingham's secret service. Mendoza was completely won over and sent Anthony to Spain in March 1586, describing him to King Philip as 'a man of 34 or 36 years of age, of good disposition, lean, and well built, with a fair beard, and he has between his eyebrows a slight scar at the root of the nose'. The king was more suspicious and treated him with caution. The English Catholics he most trusted had a bad opinion of Anthony (SP Span III, 570-1, 573, 662, 689-90; iv, 12; *Leycester*, 177, 208; Maclean 1886, 77-8).

This double dealing had no visible effect on family ties. When Sir Nicholas made his will in 1585 (PRO PROB 11/68) he left Anthony his best gelding and half his clothing. In marked contrast to his father, his first bequest was £20 to the poor and he left a silver spoon to each of his godchildren, to be engraved 'Godchild, God give thee his grace'. But his major concern was to provide for the children of his second marriage. The manors of Hill, Tockington and, after the death of Lady Margaret, the manor of Iron Acton and Acton Ilger descended to the son of his first marriage, John Poyntz. However, these lands had been entailed. Furthermore John had been made to enter into a fearsome legal bond as soon as he came of age, with a penalty of £10,000 if he failed to respect the provisions of his father's will or Lady Margaret's jointure (Maclean 1886, 80, 82-3).

The will does not suggest straitened circumstances. Sir Nicholas, it appears, could afford to scatter wedges of gold for keepsakes with a liberal hand (see Appendix B). Indeed he was described by Mendoza as very wealthy at the time of his death. This seems a little surprising for a man who a decade earlier had been anxiously counting the cost of a wife. Margaret Stanley may have brought him a notable dowry, but she was not a great heiress. Perhaps here we see the rewards of a quiet rural life. As Sir Nicholas turned his back on the extravagant Court, he may have focused his attention on his estates and a more careful husbanding of resources. At least one of the deer parks at Iron Acton was disparked in 1582 (*Smyth*, 64), presumably to be given over to more profitable use.

Sir Nicholas may have been in failing health by that time, for he paid a visit to Bath (*Acc Bath*, 68-9), whose thermal waters were becoming better known in the Elizabethan period. It was in vain. He died on 1 September 1585 and the superstitious spread the tale that thousands of ravens had been seen on his house and the church at Acton a month after the burial. Lady Margaret did not long survive him and in her case the omen of Catholicism was taken to be the interminable quacking of ducks (*Almondsbury PR*, 178). At the time of Lady Margaret's death, her sons were still children, the eldest, Edward, being about eleven years old, and they came under the care of Sir Nicholas's executors. All were sent to Oxford (Foster 1891), the first Poyntzes of Iron Acton to receive a university education.

### The decline of the Poyntzes

Sir Nicholas's heir, John Poyntz, was twenty-five when he inherited and may have been drawn to the queen's attention by his aunt and uncle Heneage. Elizabeth granted him a Crown lease of Exmoor Forest and Chase at an annual rent of £46 13s 4d in 1588 and he was knighted the same year (Maclean 1886, 87). Sir Thomas Heneage was then reaching the height of his career. In 1589 he became vice-chamberlain of the royal household and the following year he was appointed chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Presumably his patronage secured his nephew the appointment as surveyor of the south parts of the duchy in 1591 (Somerville 1953, I, 448).

Sir John was sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1591 and a Member of Parliament for the





Figure 2.3 Sir Robert Poyntz, 1588–1665  
(photograph: City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery).

county in 1593. As an MP he was a Privy Councillor and sat on several committees, including that for the relief of maimed soldiers and mariners (*SP Dom E*, III, 124; Hasler 1981, III, 242; *Salisbury*, IV, 295). Sir Walter Raleigh was another member of this committee and they seem to have been well acquainted. Aubrey (*Lives*, 181) tells the story that Sir Walter took a pipe of tobacco in a stand at the park at Acton ‘which made the ladies quit it till he had done’.

However, Lady Heneage died in 1593 and Sir Thomas two years later and Sir John had few appointments thereafter. His post with the Duchy of Lancaster ceased in 1598 (Somerville 1953, I, 448). He purchased Beverstone Castle from his cousin John Berkeley in 1597 and probably overreached himself by so doing. He was living at Beverstone in December 1598, but it was sold not long afterwards (Smyth, III, 101; *Salisbury*, VIII, 505). By the turn of the century, Sir John was being sued by creditors

and for the next twenty years he was intermittently outlawed, imprisoned and generally hounded for debt (*Salisbury*, XIV, 222; *SP Supp*, 68/92, 127/68; *Acts PC*, XXXI, 5). The lease of Exmoor was reclaimed by the Crown. Sir John mortgaged and eventually sold the manors of Hill and Tockington, which involved him in legal wrangling with his brother Edward, since they were entailed. Edward naturally claimed that Sir John had forfeited his bond of £10,000 (Maclean 1886, 82–4). By 1614 Iron Acton had evidently been made over to his heir Robert (WRO 947E/797), presumably to prevent distraint. Sir John lived on until 1633 and was buried at Iron Acton.

Despite Sir John’s financial problems, both his surviving sons were educated at Oxford. Robert matriculated at Brasenose in 1605 and must then have paid for his brother Nicholas to study at Magdalen. Nicholas graduated in 1625 and then entered the Middle Temple (Foster 1891). Aubrey (*Lives*, 172–3) described Robert as ‘a loyal, sober, and a learned person. His study, law; chiefly towards the Civil Law’ (Fig. 2.3). He took a keen interest in politics, and partisan feeling could get the better of him. In 1624 he interfered in the voting in a by-election. He was a commissioner of the subsidy that year and ordered the assessors to bring their bills of taxation on election day to a place 18 miles from Painswick, where the count was to be held. Robert was MP for Gloucester himself in 1626.

Both he and his brother Nicholas were made Knights of the Bath at the coronation of Charles I. This did not prevent Sir Robert from joining the other commissioners in the county in refusing to pay the forced loan which Charles attempted to exact in 1627. He was imprisoned until January 1628 (Willcox 1940, 29–30, 117–18). However, Charles, in dire need of funds to prosecute war with France, agreed to summon parliament. In March Sir Robert was returned for Gloucestershire (Williams 1898) to a House of Commons of like-minded men, determined to resist arbitrary exactions. This parliament pressed upon Charles the Petition of Right, which condemned forced loans and imprisonment without trial. A decade later, as sheriff of Gloucestershire, Sir Robert displayed little enthusiasm for imprisoning and seizing the cattle of those who refused to meet the king’s demands for ship money. If he was obliged to do so, he reported (*SP Dom C1*, XII, 337), there would not be prisons or pen-

folds enough in the county to receive them, the revolt in Gloucestershire was so widespread.

But Sir Robert was no fiery radical. He was not a member of the Long Parliament and wrote *A Vindication of Monarchy and the Government long established in the Church and Kingdome of England, against the assertions and practises of the innovators during the last Parliament of Charles I*, the product of an eloquent and scholarly conservatism. When it came to war, Sir Robert was for the king. He was closely connected to James Butler, later 1st Duke of Ormonde, the Lord-Lieutenant and Royalist commander in Ireland. James was Sir Robert's nephew, son of his elder sister Elizabeth, who had married Thomas, Viscount Thurles. As a young man, James had spent the year 1630 with his uncle Sir Robert at Iron Acton, being tutored in Latin by his chaplain. Later he visited Sir Robert on his travels between London and Ireland (Carte 1736, I, 9).

In the autumn of 1642 parliament and the king both recruited supporters in the West. Bristol was the key to control of the area; parliamentary forces seized the city in December 1642, but in July 1643 it fell to the royalists (McGrath 1981, 12–15, 23–32). There was a royalist garrison at Acton Court (PRO C22/640/39), but Sir Robert Poyntz chose to live in Bristol some or all of the time it remained in royalist hands (PRO SR 33/210, 197–203). Bristol fell to the New Model Army in September 1645 and Prince Rupert was allowed to leave with the royalist gentry who had taken refuge with him, presumably including Sir Robert and his family (McGrath 1981, 37–42).

In the spring of 1647 the war in England was over and the defeated king was in the hands of the parliamentary army. The Earl of Ormonde decided to come from Ireland to confer personally with Charles. He arrived in August and stayed with Sir Robert at Iron Acton until he obtained a pass from Sir Thomas Fairfax to see the king at Hampton Court (Carte 1736, II, 11; *Egmont* I(2), 383, 439). No doubt Sir Robert was advised of the political practicalities. In January 1648 he loaned the Corporation of Bristol £800 at five per cent interest (Latimer 1900, 219). The following year he had to compound for his estate, Iron Acton having been taken into the hands of the Gloucestershire Committees and let (see Appendix A).

During the Civil War Sir Robert's only

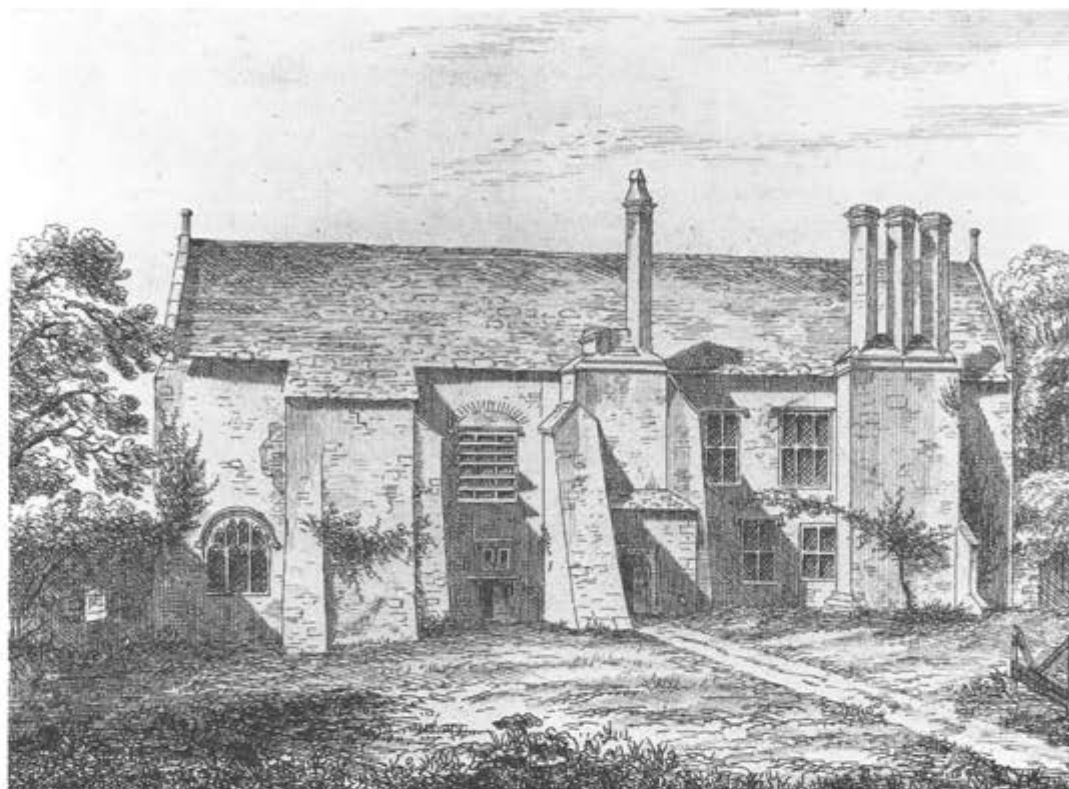
son, John, was born. Sir Robert had two daughters by his first wife, Frances, whom he had married very young. She had brought him an estate in Kent worth £74 a year, which was to be divided between his daughters on his death (PRO SP23/210, 197; Maclean 1886, 90). Frances Poyntz died in 1638 and by 1657 Sir Robert had married her former maid, Cicely Smith (WRO 947E/137 a/F1). It seems (Aubrey, *Lives*, 173) that John was born before the marriage, which helps to explain the legal tangle that followed.

Shortly before he died, Sir Robert settled the manor house and half the manor of Iron Acton on Dame Cicely as her jointure and the other half of the manor on his son. The marriage settlements of both his daughters had included an interest in Iron Acton. Margaret's interest was bought out for £300, but Iron Acton was entailed on Poyntz Porter, Sir Robert's grandson by his other daughter (WRO 947E/137 a/F2, F4, F8).

In a will opening 'I Robert Poyntz a stranger and a Pilgrim on earth as all my forefathers were', he declared his loyalty to his sovereign and the established church, £80 was bequeathed to the poor of local parishes and all his books, manuscripts and papers to his son John (see Appendix B). Sir Robert was buried at Iron Acton in November 1665, having lived to see his son become a knight in the February of that year (*Le Neve*, 202). This was one of the few marks of royal recognition to follow the publication of his *Vindication of the Monarchy* in 1661. In March 1663 Sir Robert had been granted the right to hold two yearly fairs at Iron Acton. After his death the title of Baronet was offered to his son, but nothing of more solid worth (*SP Dom C2*, III, 95; v, 500).

Sir John had studied at Oriel College, Oxford, and Lincoln's Inn and probably practised law (Foster 1891). He certainly entered into a great deal of expensive litigation to break the entail on Iron Acton after his father's death. There was an Act of Parliament in 1667 to settle half the manor on Sir John, who paid £2000 to Poyntz Porter to release his interest. From then on, Sir John was never out of debt. He took out multiple mortgages (BRO AC/AS 4/22; WRO 947E/137 a/201) and his debts at the time of his death were calculated at £16,000. He died in his lodgings in the Middle Temple in October 1680 (*Ormonde NS*, v, 468–9), the last of the Poyntzes of

Figure 2.4 The east range, engraved by Samuel Lysons, 1803, from a drawing of 1793 (photograph: Gloucestershire Record Office).



#### Iron Acton.

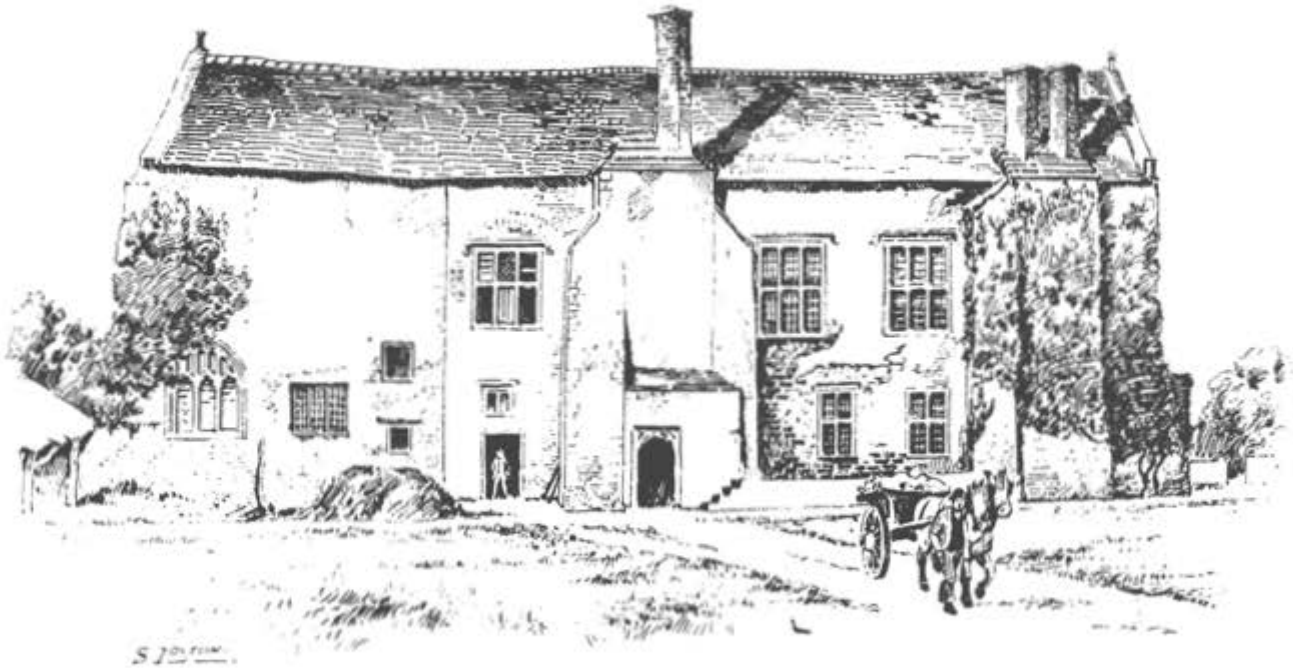
An inventory of his possessions at the time of his death makes a sad contrast to the luxury of 1532. Sir Anthony Poyntz left silver and silver-gilt plate to the value of £287 (ESRO SAS G21/27), while Sir John had only £2 5s worth of pewter. Even including hay and timber, the two most valuable items on the list, his goods and chattels were appraised at less than £100 (see Appendix B). Judging by contemporary local standards (Moore 1976), this is far closer to what might be expected of a small yeoman farmer than landed gentry. Sir Robert Southwell reported to the Duke of Ormonde that everything of value had been scattered to the four winds. Pictures had been seized by the under sheriff, but he would see if any could be returned. Presumably Ormonde was anxious to retrieve family portraits and he seems to have been successful in so doing. In late 1684, he had four Poyntz portraits at Kilkenny (*Ormonde NS*, iv, 7).

#### The sale and demolition

Neither the Duke of Ormonde nor any other relative wished to acquire the heavily mortgaged manor of Iron Acton. Sir John's widow, Lady Anne Poyntz, therefore sold

the estate in lots (WRO 947E/137bF36). A number of tenants bought their own holdings. The two largest purchases were by Dr Robert Toope and Thomas Lystun. Lystun bought The Lodge and Mudgedown, while Dr Toope acquired the manor house, former park, demesne, manorial rights and two fairs for £6416.

Dr Toope's purchase was made in July 1683, but in June 1684 he sold the property to William Player of Gray's Inn (WRO 947E/137 b). It would appear that difficulty in maintaining mortgage repayments then forced Player to sell the manor to the barrister Sir Samuel Astry of Henbury in June 1688 (WRO 947E/137b, c). On Sir Samuel's death in 1704, his widow Dame Elizabeth inherited his entire estate. In May 1707 the manor of Iron Acton formed part of the settlement when she married Simon Harcourt of Pendley, Hertfordshire, also a barrister and Master of the Crown Office. When Elizabeth died in December 1708, Simon Harcourt tried to claim the Astry estate, but lost the case to Elizabeth's daughters (Bantock 1982, 226–30). They sold Iron Acton in October 1709 to William Roach of Cromhall. (The house and park had been let in October 1706 to James Manning.) Then in February 1711, Roach conveyed the manor to Calthrop Long



with Manning's son as a tenant (WRO 947E/137c; BRO AC/AS/4/20).

A cryptic note in a pedigree (see Appendix A) indicates that part of the house was pulled down in the late 17th or early 18th centuries. In 1672 Lady Poyntz had paid tax on thirty-two hearths, a house far larger than necessary or practicable for the tenant farm that Acton Court became. Atkyns, compiling his county history about 1707–8, says that Simon Harcourt had a very great house and park at Iron Acton, but Atkyns may not have been in close touch with developments at Acton Court (Atkyns 1712, 204). By then the building was actually occupied by James Manning and a room-by-room inventory of his possessions in 1709 indicates that little of this 'very great house' remained as living quarters (see Appendix B). In 1793 Lysons sketched the remnant for his *Collection of Gloucestershire Antiquities* (Fig 2.4).

Acton Court continued in the hands of the Long family as owners until 1846, when it was sold to Joseph Blackwell at auction (WRO 515/24). The Longs retained the lordship of the manor until 1881, when it was bought by Major Castle, along with Sir Robert Poyntz's fairground, which had on it a toll house and fives court (WRO 515/30). These appear on the parish tithe map of 1840, along with field names which provide clues to earlier features of the estate: Great

Park, Long Park and Fish Pond Lease. North of the house was a six-acre pasture called the Cunnygar, mentioned in the 1683 deed of sale as the 'conygree or conywarren' (rabbit warren) adjoining the house. This field name seems very ancient; a 'pasture called the conyngere' is mentioned in 1376 (see Appendix A).

### Tenant farmers

From 1706 Acton Court was a tenant farm. The first yeoman tenant, James Manning, was an arable and dairy farmer. Unlike Sir John Poyntz, he owned few luxuries. The pictures, maps, carpets and old cushions that provided the last echoes of a vanished wealth in 1680 do not find their equivalents among James Manning's possessions, but his farm was far better stocked and clearly prosperous (see Appendix B). When he died in 1709, his son James succeeded him. James junior died only five years later, leaving the farm in the hands of his mother, but it was evidently run by her son-in-law, William Cotterell, for part of the period of her tenancy (GRO Wills 1710(115), 1715(7); WRO 790/58).

By 1775 John Nichols had taken over as tenant (GRO Q/REL 1). A John Nichols, perhaps the son of the earlier John, took out a lease on the property in 1804 and farmed there for many years, succeeded by his

*Figure 2.5 Line drawing of the east range by Samuel Loxton, c 1890 (reproduced by kind permission of Bristol Reference Library).*





Figure 2.6 The east range in 1908  
(photograph: *Country Life*).

widow Ann (WRO 515/24). Ann was still alive, aged seventy-five, at the time of the 1851 census, but her son John had taken over the 300-acre farm, employing ten men, five boys and four women. His marriage on St Valentine's Day 1849 was celebrated in style with a ball at the White Hart Inn. His bride Julia Cornock was 'the beautiful and accomplished daughter' of the owner of Acton Lodge (*Bath Chronicle* 22 February 1849, 4). In 1881 John proudly recorded on the census form that his son William was a champion ploughman. John was followed in the 1890s by his third son, Henry Nichols, who was the tenant over the turn of the century. In 1906 Henry acted as secretary to the West Gloucestershire Farmer's Club (*Kelly's*). From the 1880s the house became the subject of antiquarian interest for its connections with the Poyntz family (Appendix A) and there are a number of contemporary drawings and photographs which show that at this time the building was well maintained (Fig 2.5; Appendix D).

Not long after the *Country Life* photograph of the east front (Fig 2.6) was published in 1908, the farm was taken over by Mark Keedwell, who proved a most unsatisfactory tenant, but the farmland was in such foul condition that it could not easily be relet. The suggested solution was for Mr Keedwell to purchase, which he duly did in 1918 (GRO D2299/1659). (At that time it was a farm of around 265 acres, but when he died in 1949, a family division of the land left only about 100 acres attached to Acton Court.) An estate agent's description prior to the purchase concludes hopefully 'the house carefully restored would be rein-

stated to its position as one of the most important residences in the country' (see Appendix A). Nothing of the kind was to happen. When Mark Keedwell's grandson Trevor married in 1946, he brought his bride to a home without even running water or electricity. Piped water was laid on in the 1960s, but prior to that the family used a well. However, modern agricultural machinery replaced horse-power during the Second World War and the stables were then used for some years as a riding school. In 1982 Trevor Keedwell died and Acton Court was bought two years later by the Bristol Visual and Environmental Buildings Trust. It was subsequently purchased by English Heritage.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In 1317 John settled a quarter of the manor of Stathe on himself and Alice de Burgo (*Fines Som*, II, 66). In 1321/2 his wife was named Milisente (see Appendix A). In 1345 a papal indulgence was granted to John de Acton and his wife Isabella of the Diocese of Worcester (*Cal Pap Let*, II, 290). His widow was Joan.

<sup>2</sup> Okeley Park, Gloucestershire, October 1523 (*LP H8*, III, 3495); Kingswood Forest, Gloucestershire and Filewood Forest, Somerset, May 1529 (*LP H8*, IV, 5624); Berkeley Park, Gloucestershire, March 1531 (*LP H8*, V, 166(22)).

<sup>3</sup> Sir Francis translated *The Table of Cebes* from Latin. This was a moral tract 'showing how mortal creatures, blinded by ignorance, wander in this world, and cannot attain to very felicity, for that they be misled by false opinions, and wrong meanings.' It was evidently published posthumously, for the printer's preface apologises for possible errors, explaining feelingly that his copy of the MS 'was somewhat cumbrous, what for the interlining and ill writing'.

## Appendix A: contemporary descriptions

**1086 (Domesday, 6/1, 69/6, 69/7)**

In BAGSTONE Hundred

The Bishop of St Lo holds 'ACTON' and Ilger from him.

2½ hides. In lordship 1 plough;

4 villagers, 5 smallholders, 1 male and 2 female slaves with  
1½ ploughs.

¼ mill at 16d; meadow, 10 acres; woodland, 1 furlong.

The value is and was 40s.

Ebbi, a man of Britric son of Algar, held this manor.

[Land of Humphrey the Chamberlain]

in Bagstone Hundred

ACTON. Harold, a man of Alfwy Hiles', held it and could go  
where he would. 2½ hides. In lordship 1 plough;

3 villagers and 3 smallholders with ½ plough.

2 slaves; 1½ mills at 64d; meadow, 5 acres.

The value is and was 40s.

The queen gave these two villages of Acton and Wickwar to  
Humphrey.**1312 (IPM Glos v, 134-5)**Inquisition Post Mortem 18 November, 6 Edward II [1312],  
on lands of John de Actone in co. Gloucester.The said John held the manor of Irene Actone of Roger de la  
Warre in chief by the service of 1 knight's fee.

value per annum

1 capital messuage with a garden and 2 dovecotes .....6s 8d

120 acres of arable land .....30s

40 acres of meadow .....60s

12 acres pasture .....6s

A park with no underwood or herbage  
beyond the sustenance of the beasts .....nil

2 water-mills .....20s

6 free tenants, paying rent .....25s

10 natives, each holding 1 messuage

and ½ virgate land .....30s

and doing work worth .....26s 8d

6 natives, each holding 1 messuage and ¼ virgate .....18s

3 natives, each holding 1 messuage and ¼ virgate .....12s

8 cottars, each holding 1 cottage and 1 curtilage .....8s

Court pleas and perquisites .....6s 8d

Total value of manor .....£12 19s

**1322 (PRO E142/24: Survey of confiscated lands in  
Thornbury, Glouc. 15 Edward II [1321/2])**

John de Acton held in Irenacton: .....value per annum

1 court with various rooms/houses (domibus)

and a barn and cowshed and sheepfold

of which the land is worth .....2s

1 garden with a (court)yard 3½ acres .....3s

1 dovecote .....8s

2 fishponds of which the fishing is worth .....4s

257 acres arable land of which: 100 @ 4d

100 @ 2½d

57 @ 1d

total .....58s 11d

46 acres meadow of which: 26 @ 18d

20 @ 12d

total .....59s

11 acres pasture in various places .....5s

1 park of 37 acres of which wood and pasture .....10s

2 water-mills .....50s

pleas and perquisites of court .....20s

Total .....£10 19s 11d

14 free tenants holding a total of 4 messuages,

1 water-mill, 5 virgates and 33 acres .....£4 4s 1d

12 villeins each holding 1 messuage

and ½ a virgate .....£1 16s

and doing work worth .....£3 8s

4½d

4 lesser villeins each holding 1 messuage and ¼  
of a virgate .....9s

and doing work worth .....18s

6 customary tenants each holding 1 messuage and  
¼ of a virgate .....£1 4s

6 customary tenants each holding 1 messuage

and 7 acres .....18s

17 cottagers holding a total of 17 cottages and

26 acres .....£2 4s 8d

Customary dues .....£1 17s 1d

Bruer - rent for various tenements .....£3 0s 4d

Total value .....£30 9s 3½d

John de Acton held the aforesaid manor and Milisente his  
wife and the heirs of the body of John from John la Ware as ½  
a knight's fee.**1376 (PRO E149 41(18))**Inquisition Post Mortem 13 May 50 Edward III [1376] on  
lands of John Poyntz, knightThe said John held the manor of Irenacton of Hugh, earl of  
Stafford, by knight service.

value per annum

The buildings .....nil

3 carucates arable land .....£1

33 acres common meadow .....£2 4s

50 acres pasture .....£1 13s 4

A separate pasture called the conyngere .....£1 6s 8

A park: underwood .....nil  
pasture beyond support game .....£2

A dovecote .....3s 4

A garden, pasture of .....1s

Court pleas and perquisites .....£1 6s 8

Rents of assise .....£24 8s 8

[Total value of manor £34 3s 8d]

**c 1540 (Leland, Itin v, 99)**Acton manor place standithe about a quartar of a myle from  
the village and paroche church in a playne grounde on a  
redde sandy soyle. Ther is a goodly howse and 2 parks by the  
howse, one of redd dere, an othar of fallow.

**1649 (PRO SP23/210 (203))**

A p[ar]ticular of the Estate Reall and p[er]sonal of Sr Robert Poyntz knight of the Bath  
 First he hath severall small tenem[en]ts lying  
 in the Countie of Kent...  
 [of which he is tenant for life] .....£74 p.a.  
 In the Countie of Glouc' he hath the manner  
 of Iron Acton w[hi]ch is in Demean[s] .....£55 p.a.  
 In old rents .....£50 p.a.  
 And a Parke of coarse wette grounds  
 by estimac[i]on 100 acres, never lette for any rent  
 but Kept still for deere value.....£25 p.a.  
 All this his estate in Gloucestershire  
 is now lette by the Comittees of Gloucester  
 for a hundred and twentie pounds p[er] annu[m]

.....[signed] Robert Poyntz  
 [Submitted with a petition from Sir Robert dated 15 March  
 1648 i.e. 1649 new style dating]

**1683 (WRO 947E/137b)**

Indenture 16 July 1683. Assignment from Mr Oldfield and Mr Atwells to Mr Ridley and Mr Coules in trust for Dr Toope of the House, Park and Demesne of Iron Acton.  
 All that Capitall Messuage or Manc[i]on house and scite of the Mannor of Iron Acton with all the Outhouses Courts Yards backsides gardens and Orchards thereto belonging And also the Conygree or Conywarren thereto near adjoyning and all ways waters and easements thereto apperteyning All which said p[re]misses are scituated together in Iron Acton on the same side of the way whereon the said Capital Messuage is standing And also all that Parke or ground in Iron Acton to the said Capital Messuage near adjoyning and inclosed with a stone wall and paled commonly called Acton Parke and formerly used as a Parke containing One hundred fifty three acres together with the wood or grove of timber within the same park and all those closes formerly parcell of the said parke one part thereof is now called the Rayles and containe thirty acres the other commonly called the New Grounds and containe twenty eight acres and also all those seven Closes commonly called Brookmeadows and Horsecroft lying near together and adjoyning Acton Parke which are parcell of the Demesne lands of the said Mannor and all those two Closes one whereof lyes on the North side of the parke and containeth five acres and the other lyeth on the Eastward side of the said parke and containeth two acres parcell of a Tenement formerly in the tenure of Edward Short and all those Messuages scituate in Iron Acton Acton Ilgar Frampton Cotterell and Latteridge now or late in the severall tenures of Edward Short Samuel Hellier William Walter Thomas Hobbes and Alice Legg widow and all those two fairs holden yearly [and all profits and perquisites of the manor of Iron Acton]

**1696–1712 (Le Neve, 203).** [MS dated 1696, but additions may have been made up to Le Neve's death in 1712.]

[Sir John Poyntz] lived at Iron Acton, he gave the estate to his widdow who sold it to ... the house part pulled down.

**1709 (BRO AC/AS 4/20)**

Counterpart 15 October 1709. Conveyance by Sir John Smith and others of the Mannor of Iron Acton to Mr William Roach. All that Capital Messuage or Manc[i]on house...with the Mault house.

**1793 (Lysons 1803, notes on plate 64 (Fig 2.5).** [The original sketch for this plate is dated 1793: Gloucester Public Library 8967.]

[The manor house of Iron Acton was] formerly the residence of the ancient family of Poyntz. It was of very considerable extent. The only part remaining is that which is here exhibited [in accompanying print]. At the east end [sic] is the chapel, now converted into a cellar; in the window of which are some remains of painted glass. Several apartments have been formed out of the great chamber, which was very spacious and lofty: the upper part of the walls, richly painted in fresco, may be seen immediately under the roof and above the ceilings of the present apartments. This building is now used as a farm-house.

**1886 (Maclean 1886, 100–1)**

The ancient Manor House of Iron Acton probably consisted of a central building, facing east and west, with north and south wings, forming a portion of three sides of a quadrangle. The eastern elevation of the present central building was figured by Lysons eighty years ago ... Scarcely any change, externally seems to have taken place in it since. The three-light Perpendicular window at the north side [sic] is traditionally said to have lighted the domestic chapel, or oratory. We are, however, very doubtful upon this point. The whole area at the south end of the building originally formed one very spacious apartment, though it is now divided by a modern wall, forming a portion of it into a stable, leaving a passage at the back leading to the part supposed to have been the chapel. That part is now used as a cellar, and we do not find any remains therein, such as a piscina, in support of the tradition. Nevertheless, if it were used merely as an oratory, probably it never had a true altar, and a piscina would not be required.

The eastern front, which contained the principal entrance, is approached through a large rectangular courtyard, measuring from east to west about 165 feet, and from north to south about 120 feet, having a handsome arched entrance of late date, the spandrils of the gate-way being filled with carved ornamentation in low relief of the Poyntz crest and sprigs of oak-leaves and acorns. The elevation of the western façade is very similar to that of the eastern, except that it is connected at the north end with a wing extending north and south [sic], and is rendered more picturesque by having, in the angle thus formed, a semi-octagonal tower which contains a good newel stair-case, the stairs of which are composed of solid blocks of oak.

Entering the building from the eastern front, we find a wide passage straight through the house, having on each side solid walls. On the left is the large apartment above mentioned, to which there were probably two doorways of good workmanship, one on each side of the room, but that against what is now the stable is built up. In the wall on the right remains the old buttery hatch, shewing that the kitchen and other domestic offices were on that side.

From the western courtyard there is another special entrance to the north wing, having over the door a shield of

the Poyntz arms. This wing would appear to have been shortened at west end, or at least the wall has been rebuilt, for in the walling are inserted stones, irregularly, bearing the date AD 1642. This wing must have been an important portion of the building, and perhaps contained the state apartments. The rooms are handsome, large, and well lighted, especially on the upper floor.

On the upper floor of the south end of the main building, over what we conclude was the hall, there was also a spacious room. The roof of the whole building is of solid oak. It is constructed on the queen-post principle, but of rough character, without any ornamentation. The rooms were all ceiled. About three feet [*sic*] below the original ceiling of the room we have last mentioned, a modern ceiling has been constructed, between which and the upper ceiling there are remains on the walls of decorations painted in tempera. The walls below have been repeatedly whitewashed.

The mansion for the last 200 years has been converted into a farm-house, for which purpose it was, and indeed still is, vastly too large, notwithstanding that a great portion of it has been taken down and removed. Even, almost within living memory, at least within 100 years, the process has been continued, and it is thought that the ashlar work of which the Fives-Court in the village green is constructed consists of the materials of the old mansion. The interior of what remains has also undergone extensive alterations and is so filled with modern partitions that, in the time at our disposal for its inspection, we were unable to form any very clear idea of its original arrangements.

#### 1898 (Excursion 1898, 2)

The large courtyard on the eastern side of [the manor house at Iron Acton] is entered by a handsome gateway, in the spandrels of which in low relief, appears the Poyntz crest, an arm, the fist clenched, issuing out of clouds, with oak leaves and acorns, badges of the Actons. On comparing the building, as it now appears, with Lysons' view, we find that the eastern façade has been injured in the present century by the removal of the porch in the centre and of the great chimney stack with its internal fireplaces on the south-west. A hundred years ago a huge buttress was erected to protect the bulging walls; another has been added lately. Over the doorway of the north wing are carved the Poyntz arms: barry of eight, azure and argent.

#### 1912 (GRO D2299/1659)

Fine Old Historical Residence and 241 acres.

To be sold ... an exceptionally interesting old house, originally dating from the XIV century, rebuilt during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and considerably altered during the time of Charles I, and bearing on the western gable a tablet of carved stone with the date 1642. It is built on the site of the home of the Actons, and in close proximity to the house are still to be found the fortified walls pierced with embrasures and loopholes and having corner turrets, which were doubtless in bygone times enclosed by a moat ... The house originally consisted of a central building facing east and west, with north and south wings, the former of which remains. It is a lofty building built on 2 floors of local stone, with strong mullioned

windows and doorways, and gabled roof, lying well back from the road, protected on the east front by a large courtyard, to which entrance is gained through a handsome arched gateway, built probably during the reign of Charles I, in the spandrels of which appear in low relief the arms of the Poyntz family. The house is entered under a porch under the great centre chimney stack through a stone arched doorway, giving access to a flagged hall, measuring 22 ft. x 12 ft., extending the depth of the house with a corresponding doorway on the west side to the quadrangle, and which is flanked by small windows with iron centre bar; on the right and left are passages which lead through old stone arch doorways, on the left to the chapel, lighted by stone mullioned windows; there is a XV century perpendicular window which originally lighted the apartment, but it is now bricked up from the inside, the stone tracery however still remains; part of the room has been partitioned off and is now used as a stable. The rooms to the north end and on the right of the hall were undoubtedly used as a kitchen, as is evidenced by a buttery hatch in the wall of this hall; a passage leads to other rooms, which are at present subdivided into smaller rooms by wooden partitions for the convenience of the farmer who uses the house as a residence. They are, however, most spacious and lofty and could be easily converted into several noble reception rooms. There is a subsidiary entrance on the east side with a quaint porch lighted by a curious perpendicular window, and on the north wing is another porch and entrance. In the north-east angle of the quadrangle is an octagonal tower, containing a magnificent specimen of a newel circular staircase; this is of solid oak, each tread being fashioned out of solid logs cut away so as to allow of head room. The woodwork is in splendid preservation, and is as sound as when it was put in some 450 years ago; to the left of this tower is an entrance to the north wing from the quadrangle with the Poyntz arms carved in an escutcheon above the doorway. On the upper floor is a fine lofty apartment above the chapel, measuring 37 ft. 6 in. x 21 ft., which was evidently the original banqueting hall, with a parlour or private dining room for the lord and his family at the north end. Part of the upper floor is now used by the farm tenant, and is subdivided into 5 bed rooms and a bath room, and beyond in the north wing is another large chamber measuring 34 ft. x 16 ft. In one or two of the bed rooms is a quantity of old oak panelling.

The property is one which should strongly appeal to anyone who is desirous of possessing a really fine old historical place, and the house carefully restored would be reinstated to its position as one of the most important residences in the country.

#### 1930 (Robinson 1930, 97)

Many traces of the moat [of Iron Acton Court] are distinguishable on the west side and the large fishpond, minus the water, with the stonework for outlet and inlet, is still plainly visible. Part of the old boundary wall stands on the south-east side, and one of the original watch towers, although somewhat dilapidated, is still to be seen in the corner of the wall. It contains a fireplace and was capable of accommodating several men.



## Appendix B: household contents

**1303 (Reg Geynes, 58)**

Item, to the Lady Sibilla de Acton, my niece, one cup of the value of 100 shillings, and one silver pot for wine, and another pot for water, and the best gold brooch I have, except those specifically bequeathed. [Extract will Godfrey Giffard, late Bishop of Worcester.]

**1413 (Cal Pap Let, vi, 384)**

The pope to Robert Poyntz, donsel, nobleman, and Catherine his wife, damsel, noblewoman, of the diocese of Worcester. Indull[gence] to have a portable altar.

**1519 (LP H8, iii, 206)**

Sir Anth. Poyntz and Joan Guldeford his wife. Grant, during the life of the said Joan, of a tun of Gascon wine annually, free of all duties.

**1520 (Maclean 1886, 99)**

To my son Francis Poyntz ... all such plate that I had of the said Francis, which he had of the gifte of the French king. [Extract will Sir Robert Poyntz]

**1532 (ESRO SAS G21/22)**

This Invytatory of such plate as is in the howse of Acton made the xxiiiith day of December in the xxiiiith yere of the reign of Kyng Harry the viiith [24 December 1532]

[\*]First a Basyn and a yewer w[i]t[h] a Cover p[ar]cell gylt Wyth his armes Weyng [weight not stated]  
It[e]m a basyn and an yewer w[i]t[h]out a Cov[er] p[ar]cell gylt  
It[e]m a boll basyn w[i]t[h] an yewer the yewer p[ar]cell gylt  
[\*]It[e]m ii pott[es] p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [68 oz]  
It[e]m viii Spones w[i]t[h] thapostell[es] p[ar]cell gylt weyng [14½ oz]  
It[e]m a gylt pott w[i]t[h] a Cover Weyng [15 oz]  
It[e]m vi boll[es] p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [166 oz]  
[\*]It[e]m ii Can[dle]stykk[es] p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [31½ oz]  
It[e]m a Nest of Whyte goblett[es] w[i]t[h] a Cov[er] Weyng [49½ oz]  
[\*]It[e]m a Nest of goblett[es] w[i]t[h] a Cov[er] p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [54 oz]  
It[e]m Chafyng dyssh Weyng [64 oz]  
It[e]m ii White pott[es] Weyng [73 oz]  
It[e]m ii Salt[es] gylt w[i]t[h] a Cover Weyng [23% oz]  
It[e]m a lowe Salt p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [7% oz]  
[\*]It[e]m a gylt Coppe w[i]t[h] a Cover Weyng [13% oz]  
[\*]It[e]m a holyWater pott p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [14% oz]  
[\*]It[e]m a spyce plate half gylt Weyng [42% oz]  
It[e]m a dosyn Sponys w[i]t[h] thapostell[es] p[ar]cell gylt [20% oz]  
[\*]It[e]m a dosyn Sponys w[i]t[h] maydens hedd[es] gylt Weyng [23% oz]  
It[e]m a sylv[er] lampe Weyng [4% oz]  
It[e]m a sylv[er] pece w[i]t[h] a yere weyng [14 oz]

It[e]m ii lytlyll boll[es] p[ar]cell gylt Weyng [38 oz]  
It[e]m a powder box gylt Weyng [5% oz]  
It[e]m a pax gylt Weyng [5% oz]  
It[e]m ii platers Whyte Weyng [weight not stated]  
It[e]m a Spone Whyte Weyng [1% oz]

Wherof delyv[er]ed to Nycholas poyntz Esquyer Son and heyre of S[ir] Antony poyntz knyght and John poynt[es] Gentyلمان by a byll by theym sealed and subscriybed beryng date the day herof all these p[ar]cells folowyng Fyr[st] the basyn and yewer w[i]t[h] a Cov[er] p[ar]cell gylt w[i]t[h] his armes, ii pott[es] p[ar]cell gylt, ii Can[dle]stykk[es] A Nest of goblett[es] w[i]t[h] a Cov[er] of the Wyht of liiii ownc[es] the gylt Copp w[i]t[h] the Cov[er] the holywater pott the Spyce plate half gylt the dosyn Spones w[i]t[h] maydens hedd[es] [\* These items are marked 'delyv[er]ed' in the MS] [Weights have been converted from Roman to Arabic numerals]

**1532 (ESRO SAS G21/26)**

First a Covering w[i]t[h] a p[ar]t[ic]kt [£3 10s]  
It[e]m iii pec[es] of arris of the passion p[ri]ce [£13 12s]  
It[e]m a pece of arris of Justing p[ri]ce [£2 15s]  
It[e]m a Counterpoynt lynyd w[i]t[h] blew buckra[m] [£4 13s]  
It[e]m a vestme[n]t of old Cloth of Gold p[ri]ce [£2]  
It[e]m vi pec[es] of arris with pochis and a square testm[er] and a Counterpoynt [\*] [£2\*]  
It[e]m a Counterpoynt of old Skarlett p[ri]ce [1s]  
It[e]m a Trussing bedd of Crimsyn velvett and blew p[ri]ce [£4]  
It[e]m a Trussing bedd of old satten Russett and blew [13s 4d]  
It[e]m ii bedd[es] of Downe w[i]t[h] Fustians and pelows [£2 13s 4d]  
It[e]m ii auter Clothis of old velvett p[ri]ce [£1]  
It[e]m iii litill old Cheyars [1s]  
It[e]m vi Cochyns of Imagery [2s]  
It[e]m v old Carpett Cochyns [2s 6d]  
It[e]m a Cofur of waynyscote [8d]  
It[e]m ii litill Trussyng Cofurs [2s]  
It[e]m ii Trussing bedd[es] in bagg[es] [10s]  
It[e]m a Turkes Carpett p[ri]ce [£1]  
It[e]m iii litill Carpett[es] p[ri]ce [18s]  
It[e]m an flannanders Cheyar p[ri]ce [1s]  
It[e]m ii Cochyns of Tynsell and ii of velvet p[ri]ce [£1]  
It[e]m a flannanders Chest p[ri]ce [6s 8d]  
It[e]m a Redd standard p[ri]ce [5s]  
It[e]m a flatt flannanders Cofur [6s 8d]  
It[e]m vi Tabull Clothis of diap[er] p[ri]ce [£1 10s]  
It[e]m ii Towells of diap[er]  
It[e]m iii Neck Towells  
It[e]m a Cowbord Cloth  
It[e]m a Dosen diap[er] Napkins [13s 4d]  
It[e]m iii Diap[er] Table Clothes [£1 6s 8d]  
It[e]m ii Towell[es] of Diap[er]  
It[e]m a dosen of Diap[er] Napkins and an half p[ri]ce [10s]

It[e]m vi peyre of Sheet[es] of iii breed[es] p[ri]ce [£1 4s]  
 It[e]m iiiii Sheet[es] of iiiii breed[es] [10s]  
 It[e]m iii peyre of Sheet[es] of ii breed[es] [8s]  
 It[e]m vi peyre of palett sheet[es] [12s]  
 It[e]m vi peyre of Canves sheet[es] [6s]  
 It[e]m vi pec[es] of old verdergret and small sure Woren [6s]

S[um]ma [£46 19s 2d]

[\* *Item struck out in MS*]

[*Estimated values have been converted from Roman to Arabic numerals.*]

**1556 (PRO PROB 11/39 (22 Wrastley))**

I bequeathe unto Nicholas Poyntz myne Eldest sonne my harnes and Armor and all my horses and Mayres ... [and] all my new hangings. [Debts] Item to Pepwelles[\*] man of bristowe v li. Item to Pepwell[\*] for a tune of wyne. [Extracts will Sir Nicholas Poyntz.]

[\* William Pepwell was a Bristol merchant, importing sherry or 'sack' from Andalusia: (Vanes 1979)]

**1585 (PRO PROB 11/68 (42 Brudenell))**

Item if my brother Anthony Poyntz happen to survive me, Then I give to him my best gueldinge which I use for myne owne saddell with all his furniture, And also an other sufficient gueldinge with his furniture meete and convenient for his man. Item I give unto my daughter Mary Syddenham one danske Cofer called my Ladyes Chest nowe standing in the p[ar]lo[r] in my house at Iron Acton with all the Lynnen therein. Item I give to my servant Raffie my Roane ambling nagge. Item I give to every of my godchildren one silver spoone double guilt of the value of twelve shillings whereuppon to be engraved This Sentence (Godchild, god geve the his grace) to be provided by my exequutors. Item I give unto John Pointz my sonne All my furniture for houseine and my best sworde and dagger and twoe of my best trotting geldings. Item I give to my Lorde Herbert, To Sr Thomas Heneage, To my good sister the Lady Heneage, To Sr Edward Stanley, To Sr Moyle Fynche, To my Lady Fynche my neece, To my Cossen Mr Thomas Throckmorton One litle wedge of fyne Angell golde waighing one ounce, by everie of them to be made into some thinge or Jewell to werre or kepe for my sake (yf it please them.) [Extracts will Sir Nicholas Poyntz]

**1666 (PRO PROB 11/321 (121 Mico))**

Item I give unto my sonne John Poyntz all my books manuscripts and papers and to be carefully kept and preserved for him untill hee shall accomplish the age of Twenty years. Item I give unto Mr Thomas Smith the best horse or Mare I have at the tyme of my decease. [Extracts will Sir Robert Poyntz]

**1680 (PRO PROB 4 18515)**

A True and p[er]fect Inventory in[dent] of all and singular the goodes Ch[at]tels and Creditts of Sr John Poyntz late of Iron Acton in the County of Gloucester knight sometimes of the Middle Temple dec[ease]d taken and app[rais]ed the 14th day of December Anno Dni 1680

Inprimis all the Pewter being eighteen dishes  
 and three dozen of Plates.....[£2 5s]  
 Item Two brass pots, and a small kettle.....[£1 5s]  
 Item The Jack with other Irons .....[5s]  
 Item Five Feather Beds and Bolsters, and six Pillowes.....[£1 10s]  
 Item three Flock beds.....[£1 10s]  
 Item Twelve Pictures.....[£2 10s]  
 Item All the Cheeze .....[£5 10s]  
 Item Nine Hogs .....[£4 10s]  
 Item some old Chaires, Barrels Tables,  
 and other Lumber .....[£2]  
 Item all the Hay .....[£28]  
 Item One old horse and a Cow .....[£3 5s]  
 Item Four greate old Cushions .....[4s]  
 Item One suite of Curtains .....[16s]  
 Item Five Blankets Three old Rugs, and two counterpane [£2]  
 Item all the Linnen .....[£2 10s]  
 Item all the Timber Cut downe .....[£11 1s]  
 Item Two loads of Coalpitt Timber.....[£1 10s]  
 Item One Cart.....[£1 5s]  
 Item One Pyllion, Two clothes, One safeguard,  
 with a Hood, and side saddle.....[£1 7s]  
 Item Four Maps.....[1s 6d]  
 Item Two greene Carpets .....[5s]  
 Item Two Couches.....[6s]  
 Item the best bed and all belonging to it.....[£5]  
 Item Eighteen dozen of Bottles .....[18s]  
 Item Three looking Glasses .....[17s]  
 Item Two Gittars .....[£1 10s]  
 Item Six Cedar Planks .....[10s]  
 Item Three Turkey workd Chaires .....[15s]

Summa Totalis hujus Inventory .....[£92 6s]

**1709 (GRO: Inventory 1709 (45))**

An Inventory of [th]e Goods and Chattles of James Manning of [th]e p[ar]ish of Iron acton In [th]e County of Gloucest[er] yeo[man] late deaceded, taken and apried by us whose Names are hereunto Subscribed this tenth day of August 1709

	l	s	d
Imp[rimis] Wareing Apanel .....	03	00	00

It[em] In [th]e kitchin Twenty dishes of Pewter one dozen of Plates Three Brass Candle Sticks, one Warming Pan, Three kittles, Three Potts, two Spits, one Jack; a pair of Andirons one pair of Slice and Tounge Two Cheese Presses Six Chairs one Settle one Table Bord w[i]th other Utinsills .....	07	00	00
---	----	----	----

It[em] In [th]e Parler Two Round Tables Six Leather Chairs one pair of Brass Andirons one pair of Iron Doggs one paire of Slice and Tounge Three Joynt Stooles and fire Grate .....	02	15	00
---	----	----	----

It[em] In [th]e Seller five Barrels Two Salting Tubs one Dresser Two Beer Horses .....	02	00	00
--	----	----	----

ACTON COURT

It[em] In [th]e Dayry Three Chees Tubs Six  
pales Three Trendles Twelf Chees  
Vates one Churon Two Brewing Stands  
w[i]th other utinsells.....03 00 00

It[em] In[th]e Best Chamber one Bed w[i]th  
Curtens and Valliants one Green Rugg  
one pair of Sheets one Blanket a kase  
of Druers a Chest one Trunk one pair  
of Andirons Six Chairs a Looking Glass  
one Silver Tankerd five Silver Spoons  
Cash In hand .....25 00 00

It[em] In [th]e Parler Chamber Two Beds and  
Bedsteeds w[i]th their apurtinances  
one Side Bord one Box on Chest and  
Two Chairs .....06 10 00

It[em] In [th]e Maides Chamber one Bed and  
Bedsteed w[i]th [th]e apurtinaces  
there unto belonging .....02 00 00

It[em] In [th]e Chamber over [th]e kitching  
one Bed w[i]th [th]e apurtinances .....02 00 00

It[em] In [th]e Mans Chamber one Bed w[i]th  
[th]e apurtinances ..... 02 00 00

It[em] In [th]e Chees Laft Ten Cheese Bords  
Two Chees Rackes one pair of Scales and  
weights five Tun of Chees .....100 00 00

It[em] Corne on [th]e Ground .....100 00 00

It[em] fifty Two Cowes Thirteen young Bests  
four Oxen Two Horse Best.....239 00 00

It[em] fifteen fatt and poor Piggs .....015 00 00

It[em] one Wagon one Dungpott a pair of Drags  
w[i]th other Plow Harness w[i]th other  
Goods not befor apraised.....016 10 00

It[em] fifty Tun of Hay.....050 00 00

Total .....575 15 00

Will Machin  
John Bampton Apraysors

[Endorsed] 17 May 1710 Test[amentum] Jacobi Manning  
nup[er] de Iron Acton defunct

## Appendix C: building accounts and hearth tax

**1465/1466 (WRO 947E/794)**

Iren Acton: The account of John Symond collector of rents  
[29 September 1465 to 29 September 1466]

Repairs: And on the cost of making one stone wall with a chimney in the same in the Deyhous and of a new roof of the same both in timber and tiling and laying on one new Somer with florebemes fixed in the same for a certain room in the aforesaid house wherefor sawing the planks remaining there for the flooring of the same room and one new arche for the gatehous there facing the park with a chimney above the said arche and 1 new botras made under the same and tiling of the broken up part of this gatehous and also laying on one new Walplate above the door [of the] panetre and mending of a certain Dormant above the said Walplate this year ...£77s 8d

**1468/1469 (WRO 947E/794)**

Iren acton: The account of John Symond collector of rents  
[29 September 1468 to 29 September 1469]

Outside payments: And to wit to John Bampton for mending the stone walls of the park, punfald and Orchard for 3 days at 4d

And for mending 1 hooke at the great gate this year – 2d

And on the costs of making 1 Snede and 1 Ryng for 1 breresyth in the keeping of Robert Janyn for putting down the briars with – 2d

And on 1 bar with a key bought for the posternedore in the park leading to the church this year – 4½d

And to wit to a certain plumber mending two breaches of gutters within the manor there this year – 10d

**1537/1538 (WRO 947E/794)**

Iron Acton: The account of Richard Widbourne bailiff [29 September 1537 to 29 September 1538]

And in moneys paid by the said Bailiff this year to various workers working at the aforesaid Acton namely to masons, carpenters, plumbers, tilers, sawyers, labourers, and for various necessities bought for the use of the same ....£5 17s 11d

**1672 (PRO E.179/247/14)**

Lady Poyntz 32 [Hearths]

**1742 (WRO 947E/1048)**

An Accot. of Work done at Acton House  
for the Revd Mr Long October 10 1742

For a Journey to Bristol and Horse .....	£0	2	6
For a Day 2 Men, taking up the Old Floor .....	0	3	4
For a Day my Self, mending the Joists.....	0	1	8
For ½ Day Do. ....	0	0	10
For 23 Foot of Oak quarter .....	0	3	8
For Laying of 936 Foot of Flooring.....	2	6	3
For Slitting of 60 Deals .....	0	15	0
[Total].....	£3	13	3

An Acct. of Work Done at Acton house by me Isaac Naish  
December 1742

To 1 Days Work ½ James Hart .....	2s	06d
To 1 Day ½ the Boy.....	1s	00d
To 2 Pecks of Hair .....	8d	
To 200 of 3d Neils .....	6d	
To 2 Sacks of Lime .....	1s	04d
[Total].....	6s	0d

**1744 (WRO 947E/1048)**

An Acct. of Work Done at Acton farm by the order of Mr  
Rutland for the Use of the Revd Mr Long by Willm. Stiff 28  
Novem. 1744

To Eight Days My Self and Boy .....	00	13	4
To Do. My Boy .....	00	06	8
To 1000 of Tile .....	00	18	0
To 300 of four foot Hart Laths.....	00	5	0
To 1000½ of Tile pins.....	00	2	0
To 1000 of 3d Neils.....	00	1	8
To Half 100 of 10d Do. ....	00	0	5
To 200 of 6d Do.....	00	1	0
To a pan Crease .....	00	0	3
To 4 Sacks of Lime.....	00	2	8
To ½ a Bushell of Hair .....	00	0	8
To 1 of Lodder .....	00	0	10
[Total] .....	£02	12	6



## Appendix D: illustrative sources

### 1 Maps and Plans

- 1577 Christopher Saxton's is the earliest map of Gloucestershire and all subsequent maps for over a century were based upon it.
- 1777 Isaac Taylor's map of Gloucestershire was the first on a large scale and based on a new survey, from which all succeeding maps up to the first Ordnance Survey were compiled.
- 1828–31 Ordnance Survey of Gloucestershire 1 in = 1 mile.
- 1840–2 Tithe Map of the Parish of Iron Acton (BRO EP/4/32/24)
- 1846 Map of the Property of Walter Long Esq in the Parish of Iron Acton 9 Chains to an inch [Reduced version of Tithe Map with particulars of sale 1846] (WRO 515/23)
- 1881 The Property of Walter Long Esquire In the Parish of Iron Acton 3 Chains to an Inch [Copied from Tithe Map but marked with lots corresponding to sale particulars 1881] (WRO 515/27)
- 1881 Lands at Iron Acton: Property of Walter Long [no date, but marked with lots to correspond with 1881 sale particulars] (WRO 515/27)
- 1881 Ordnance Survey of Gloucestershire 25 in = 1 mile
- 1895 Plan of Acton Court Estate 1:2500 [Copied from OS 1881, but numbered to correspond with sale particulars 1895] (GRO D1388 SL 8/18)

### 2 Prints, Drawings and Photographs

- 1793 Samuel Lysons, Manor House at Iron Acton. Drawing of east front dated 1793 (Gloucester Public Library 8967)
- 1803 Samuel Lysons, Manor House at Iron Acton. Etching from drawing 1793 (Lysons 1803, pl 64; Fig 2.5)
- 1886–7 Roland Paul, Iron Acton Court, int[er]ior of Courtyard. Drawing, with others of Iron Acton church which are dated 1886 and 1887 (Library of Society of Antiquaries, Paul Collection)
- 1880s Samuel Loxton, Iron Acton Court. Drawing of east front, from a series mainly published in the late 1880s in the *Bristol Observer* (Avon Central Library, Loxton collection: Fig 2.6)
- 1898 Iron Acton Manor House: entrance gate, east front, window in the porch, courtyard. Photographs (*Trans Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeol Soc*, 21, 2–4)
- 1908 Iron Acton Manor House: gateway, east front. Photographs (*Country Life* 28 March 1908, 456–7: this vol, Figs 1.1, 2.6)
- 1921 Iron Acton: gateway to the Court House. Photograph (Tipping 1921, pl xviii)
- 1930 One of the Ancient Watch Towers at Iron Acton Court. Photograph (Robinson 1930, 91)
- 1930s G Buckler, Acton Court, Iron Acton. Drawings of courtyard and gateway. (G Buckler, *Some Notes on Iron Acton*, no date but advertises The Clove Hitch Craft Shop, owned by Cora Harding, who appears in *Kelly's Directories* of 1935 and 1939 as an antique dealer at Iron Acton)

# 3

## The medieval manor house

### Description of the excavations: Pre-Period 3 features

#### Period 1

A few flints, mostly undiagnostic flakes or flake fragments, but including four scrapers, provided the only evidence for possible pre-historic activity. Apart from a single microlith of later Mesolithic type in the old soil horizon in Area 2, they all derived from historic contexts.

A thin scatter of Roman tile fragments, fairly evenly spread across the site, and mainly small and worn, was also found. The majority were from early ground surfaces and Period 2 contexts, particularly from beneath the south range of the moated

house and from Area 2, though one piece came from the fill of a Period 2 quarry in Trench C, near the north edge of the north field. Among them were pieces of combed box-flue tiles. Two pieces of building tile were built into the Period 3.1b south bridge abutment, and three sherds of Roman pottery were also found, including an unabraded mortarium base in the fill of the quarry beneath Rooms A and D (Chapter 9). It is clear that the material was already on the site before Period 2 and was not imported as hardcore at a later date.

#### Period 2

Four phases of activity in Period 2 were identified (Figs 3.1, 3.3 and Fig 3.4, Sections 1–2). The best stratified evidence sur-

Figure 3.1 Plan, Period 2 features.

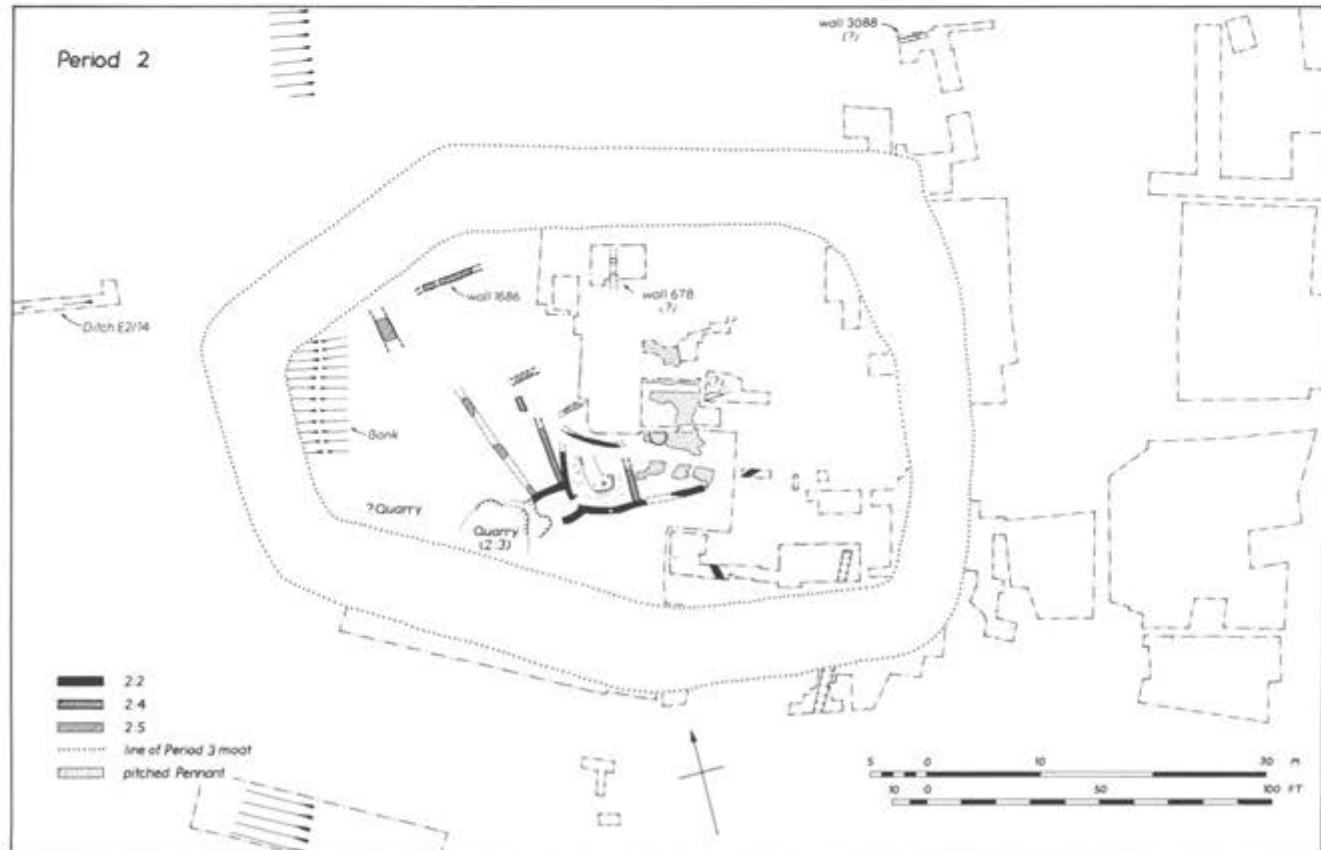
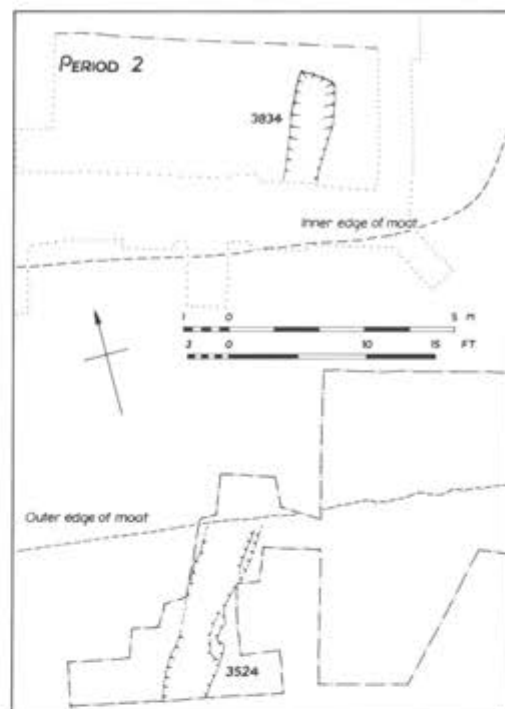


Figure 3.2 Period 2: gully beneath the east range and south of the moat.



vived beneath Period 3 Rooms A–D and the courtyard to the north, where a series of walls was recorded. There was at least one structure, which subsequently underwent alterations. There were also extensive traces of occupation elsewhere in the area later enclosed by the moat, and indications that the occupation continued to the north and the south, beyond the moat. Generally only short lengths of walls remained between later intrusions, and most of them could not be directly related to each other, but they all appeared to belong to the same general period.

### Phase 1

The earliest stratified feature was a gully (1977). It was only partially excavated, because it was thought to be a natural fissure, similar to one found in Area 5, but analysis of the site records strongly suggests that it was man-made. The gully was at least 1.2 m wide and was cut 0.6 m into the Pennant bedrock, and the layers overlying it had subsided in such a way as to indicate that it returned northwards and that its eastern terminal was butt-ended. It was filled with red silt mixed with charcoal, small pieces of Pennant rubble, and lumps of decayed limestone. A post, 0.3 m in diameter, had been set vertically in the centre of the feature, and clear traces of the post-pipe (1966) were visible. This was the only post which was recorded, but it is possible that there were

others and that the gully formed the foundation trench of a fence or palisade.

A second butt-ended gully (3524/3834), only 0.9 m wide, but cut into the bedrock to a similar depth as 1977, was found beneath Room S (Fig 3.2). It was earlier than Period 3, since it originated to the north of the moat and continued to the south of it (Fig 3.4, Section 4) though it was not necessarily contemporary with 1977. The two features may also have had different functions, because at the northern end of 3834, its lower fill consisted of large slabs of Pennant mixed with grey loam. As there was no evidence for any posts within it, it may have been an open boundary ditch that had been intentionally backfilled. South of the moat, 3524 continued in use during Period 3.

### Phase 2

Feature 1977 was filled in and an irregularly-shaped structure, defined on its west side by wall 1453/1466, and on its south side by wall 1225/1392, was erected (Fig 3.5). In its original form it may have been bounded on its north side by wall 1467, though this was not parallel to the south wall and may have been unrelated to it. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, it was bounded by wall 1849. Its eastern wall was not found. The walls were slightly curved, and were made of coursed Pennant bonded with bright reddish-brown or orange clay. They survived to a maximum height of three courses (0.2 m), and were all *c* 0.6 m wide. At the south-west corner of the structure, a doorway led into a subrectangular annexe or porch. The annexe was 2.3 m wide and at least 2.5 m long, and its north and south walls (1841 and 1451) were bonded to the walls of the main structure, demonstrating that they were contemporary. A cobbled surface (1483/2177), consisting of worn Pennant gravel bedded in red loam, covered the interior of both structures. It was fairly level, except where it had subsided into the Phase 1 gully (Fig 3.4, Section 1), and extended at least 14 m northwards.

### Phase 3

A quarry (1861) was dug, truncating the west end of the Phase 2 annexe. It was not fully excavated, but the roughly stepped north and east edges were located. It measured at least 6.5 m by 6 m, with a minimum depth of 1.2 m, and was backfilled with large voided Pennant rubble and red gritty clay (Fig 3.4, Section 3). Sealing the quarry fill was a layer of smooth dark grey-



Figure 3.3 Period 2: structures beneath Rooms A, B, C, K and the courtyard.



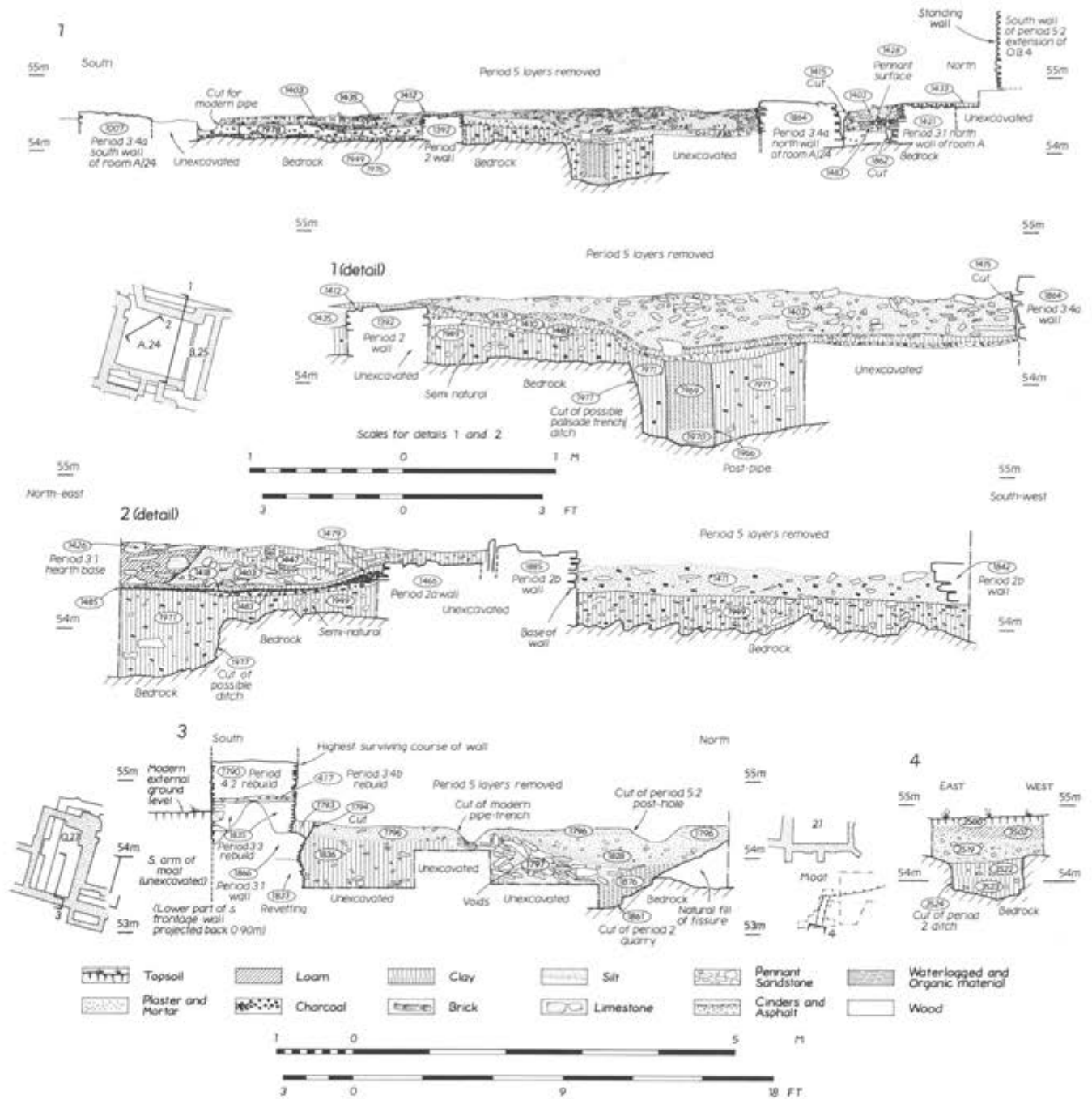


Figure 3.4 Sections 1-4: early features.

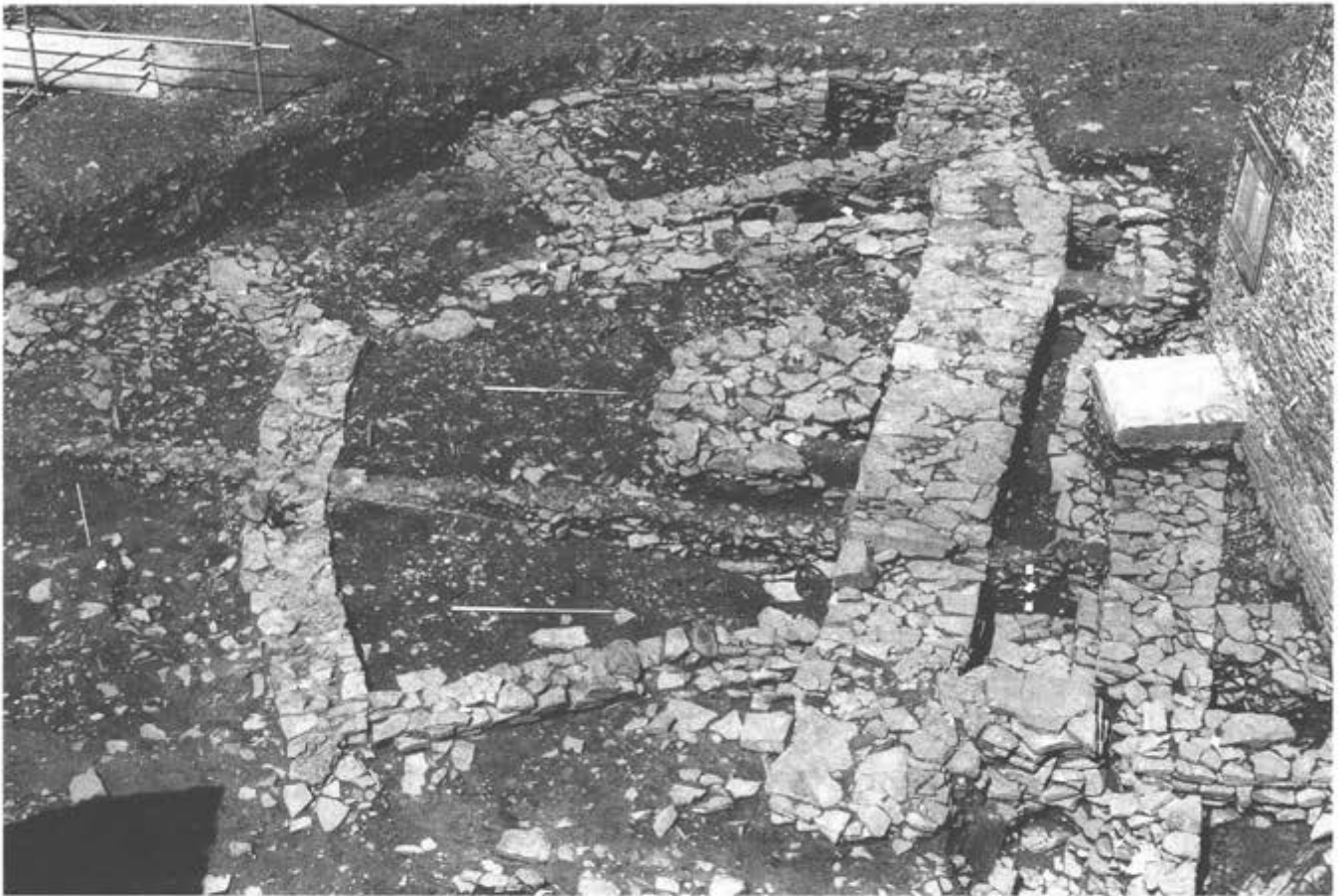
brown silt, containing numerous flecks of charcoal (1796). This layer, or its equivalent, was ubiquitous, and appeared in all the fully excavated areas to the west and south of the main Phase 2 structure. An identical silty layer (1448) overlay the cobbled surface within the annexe.

A second quarry may have been dug further west. The Pennant bedrock beneath Period 3.3 Room P2 stepped down abruptly to a depth of 0.85 m (see below and Fig

3.28, Section 22), in a manner that suggested that the edge was man-made rather than natural. In addition, the foundations of the Period 3 walls in this area were much deeper than those immediately to the east and north.

#### Phase 4a

The Phase 2 structure was partly rebuilt and was subdivided internally. The primary west wall was replaced by a new wall (1885),



immediately adjacent to it, which butted against the north side of the former annexe, and overlay an horizon of smooth dark brown silty loam with charcoal flecks (1411). This was the same as the layer sealing the quarry. An internal partition (1391), 0.4–0.5 m wide and bonded with yellow clay like the other secondary walls, was inserted.

Within the newly formed west room, thin lenses of yellow clay and charcoal (1410 and 1485) had accumulated above the original cobbled surface. They were partially covered by a layer of crushed limestone and mortar (1418), which was spread over the interior. Generally it was fairly thin and patchy, but in the south-east corner, lumps of decayed limestone were piled up against the base of the partition wall. The layer, like the earlier cobbles, slumped down into the former gully. It overlay part of the south wall, adjacent to a posthole (1465) which was cut into the wall core, suggesting that a doorway was inserted at this point. More than fifty stakehole voids, mostly *c* 50 mm in diameter and 50–70 mm deep, had been cut through the earlier floor and, where it existed, the new surface. Three

other isolated stakeholes were recorded 5 m south of the building. They were probably within a second structure or enclosure, the only evidence for which was wall 1085.

Within the main building, there were no stakeholes east of the partition. Instead, the primary cobbles were covered by a new surface 1198/1938, consisting of pitched Pennant fragments laid at an angle of *c* 30 degrees. This in turn was overlain by smooth orange clay, with some traces of burning on it. The surface occupied an area measuring at least 6.5 m from west to east (its eastern edge was not located) and *c* 9.5 m from south to north. Set in the surface was a circular area of pitched Pennant (1944), *c* 1.6 m in diameter, which may have been the base of a standing feature or, more likely, a hearth. Beyond the northern edge of the pitched surface, and also overlying the primary cobbles, was an area of concentrated Pennant rubble lumps (2176) with worn upper surfaces. It was bounded on its east side by a line of large flat sandstone slabs (2175, maximum 1.35 m by 1.10 m), bedded in yellow clay. These possibly formed part of a rough path. Apart from the fact that both post-

*Figure 3.5* Period 2 structures beneath Room A, from the east (photograph: Robert Bell).

dated the cobbles, the relationship between the pitched surface and the rubble surface/slabs is unknown. The former was almost certainly internal whereas the latter may have been external, though if they were separated by a wall, it was concealed beneath an unexcavated baulk.

#### Phase 4b

There was no direct relationship between the Phase 4a and 4b walls, and it is uncertain which phase was chronologically later. They could have been contemporary, despite the differences in their alignments. They were, however, both later than the Phase 3 quarry. A second wall (1842) butted against the north side of the former annex, and two short lengths of what was presumably the same wall survived towards the north-west (1845/142). It may have been related to walls 1771 and 1849, both of which were roughly at right angles to it though, as suggested above, the latter may have been built in Phase 2. No internal surfaces survived, but a concentrated area of burning (1868), possibly another hearth, was found adjacent to the south side of 1771.

Elsewhere, there were other fragmentary walls predating the Period 3 manor house. None of these could be attributed to a specific phase, though wall 1686 was on a similar alignment to the suggested Phase 4b walls. Outside the north-east corner of the Period 3 moat was another narrow wall (3088; Fig 3.1), indicating that the Period 2 structures continued beyond the north edge of the excavation. The only wall which was completely out of character was 1741. It was much more substantial than the rest of the Period 2 walls, measuring 1.2 m in width, but it was cut by the Period 3.1 north wall of Room G and may have been related to that.

On the western edge of the site a possible bank was cut by the Period 3.1 curtain wall. It was made of smooth orange-brown loam 1259/1596/1604, beneath part of which a level rubble spread 1299/1608 had been laid (Fig 3.20, Sections 18 and 19). The base of the bank was at least 3 m wide, but it survived to a height of no more than 0.6 m, because it had been slighted in Period 3. This appeared to form the western boundary of the occupied area, and followed the edge of the natural terrace.

At the end of Period 2, the walls were demolished, and concentrated rubble, mixed with clay and considerable amounts of charcoal, was spread over the site. Within

the structure beneath Rooms A–C, the layer 1403 sealed the Phase 4 surfaces and covered part of the south wall. It was itself overlain by a similar layer 1447, which contained rotted limestone. Beneath the later courtyard, to the north of Rooms B and C, identical material covered the Phase 4 pitched surface and slabs (1172). It was generally c 0.25 m thick, though it was 0.4 m thick further north (Fig 3.33, Section 29, context 1687). It predated the construction of the Period 3 house, but may have been deposited only a short time previously, to level up the site before the start of building operations.

#### *Earthworks and features in the north and west fields*

Ridge and furrow survives in the west half of the north field (Fig 3.39). It overlies the natural clay, and appears to respect the Penant outcrop. To the west and south-west of the house, it has been obliterated by wartime ploughing, though the area has subsequently reverted to pasture. However, there are traces of it to the south-west of the large fishpond. It is also very clear in the fields between Latteridge Road and Lodge Farm. In both areas, to the west and east of the house, the land may have been under arable for only a relatively short time. To the west, the land is low-lying and until recently was very poorly drained, while to the east the survival of an earlier field system beneath the ridge and furrow indicates that it was not regularly ploughed over a long period.

Immediately west of the Period 3 moat, in Trench E2, was a ditch (Fig 3.7, Section 8), 4.4 m wide and 0.7 m deep. It was filled with very dark grey silty clay containing organic material (E2/13), and along its east side was a bank, 0.8 m high, which was sealed beneath the Period 4 bank along the outside of the recut moat. The same ditch was also found further south in Trench F (Fig 3.40, Section 44), though here its bank had been almost entirely levelled. It was aligned parallel to the edge of the natural terrace, and probably predated the primary moat, though this could not be demonstrated. The northern limits of the ditch are unknown, so its relationship with the ridge and furrow could not be established. However, they were both earlier than the Period 3 double-banked boundary.

Two quarries were seen in section (Fig 3.40, Section 43) at the north end of Trench C, which was the only trial trench in the



north field to be sited above the sandstone outcrop. Both quarries were *c* 1 m deep and were filled with rubble and reddish-brown loam. They were sealed by a layer of firm greasy reddish-brown clay. The pottery from within their fill was of similar date to the material from the quarry beneath the Period 3 manor house.

### Period 3: The medieval manor house

No part of the Period 3 manor house remains standing, and the lowering of the farmyard surface in Period 5.2 removed nearly all the floor and make-up layers that had not already been destroyed by Period 4 Tudor building activity. In contrast to the well-preserved surfaces in the Period 2 structures, the only floors relating to the primary manor house which were still even partly *in situ* were those at the west end of Room G and the south end of Room S. Evidence for the later medieval floors, except in Rooms J and R, had also disappeared. However, despite all the later disturbance, the actual Period 3 wall footings survived remarkably well.

The precise order in which the different parts of the house were constructed and altered is not entirely certain. It is possible to establish a structural sequence explaining the development of the south range. Similarly, the development of the range centred on Room G can also be understood. But in the virtual absence of direct stratigraphic links, it is much more difficult to establish an overall sequence that can be applied to both ranges. With the exception of Room F2, which was faced externally with mortared sandstone blocks, all the wall footings consisted of coursed Pennant rubble with, in the later phases, occasional reused limestone blocks. They were all bonded with loam, apart from some of the Phase 5 work, and where there was no direct relationship, the construction phases could be distinguished only by differences in the colour and texture of their matrices. This method was not always totally reliable because there were variations even in the matrices of walls belonging to the same phase.

Despite these reservations, and bearing in mind that only a very small proportion of the medieval ranges beneath the present standing house have actually been investigated archaeologically, it is nevertheless possible to produce a coherent picture of the development of the pre-Tudor house.

### Phase 1

#### *The inner moat*

The inner moat was clearly contemporary with the Phase 1 house (Figs 3.6, 3.7, Sections 5–7 and Fig 4.49, Section 37). Its south arm must have been excavated before the south range was constructed, since it cut through the fill of the Period 2 quarry (1861). The coursed Pennant retaining wall (1833), with which the quarry fill was faced off, was directly overlain by part of the south frontage of the Phase 1 south range (walls 1012 and 1866; Fig 3.4, Section 3).

The moat enclosed an island, *c* 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) in area, which was subrectangular in shape and had a maximum length of 56 m and a maximum width of 34 m.

The only part of the moat which remains open is the north half of the recut western arm. Most of the rest of the moat was filled in during Periods 4.3–4.5, but it was possible to define its edges fairly precisely. The line of the outer edge of the east arm, including the north-east and south-east corners, and of the south arm, from the porch westwards, was located. The alignment of the primary north and west arms was more problematic, since the former was widened and the latter was recut in Period 4.2, but presumably their outer edges were parallel with their inner edges.

The latter were reasonably clear on the north and west sides of the island and also along the central and western part of the south frontage, despite encroachment by later buildings. Further east, the inner edge of the moat was largely inaccessible since the scaffolding surrounding the present house was standing directly above it. Nevertheless, part of it was found, and the position of the internal north-east and south-east corners could be accurately estimated as a result of the excavations inside the house at both ends of the east range.

The whole of the moat, apart from the west arm, was cut into solid Pennant sandstone. Originally its base was remarkably level, varying in depth from *c* 1.6 m below the surface south and east of the house to 2 m at the north-east corner. The west arm was cut through shale and clay. This would have been very much easier to dig, and was in any case shallower because the natural terrace sloped down towards the west.

In profile, the moat was flat-bottomed. In the sample areas which were totally excavated, both sides of the east arm and the outside of the south arm were almost verti-



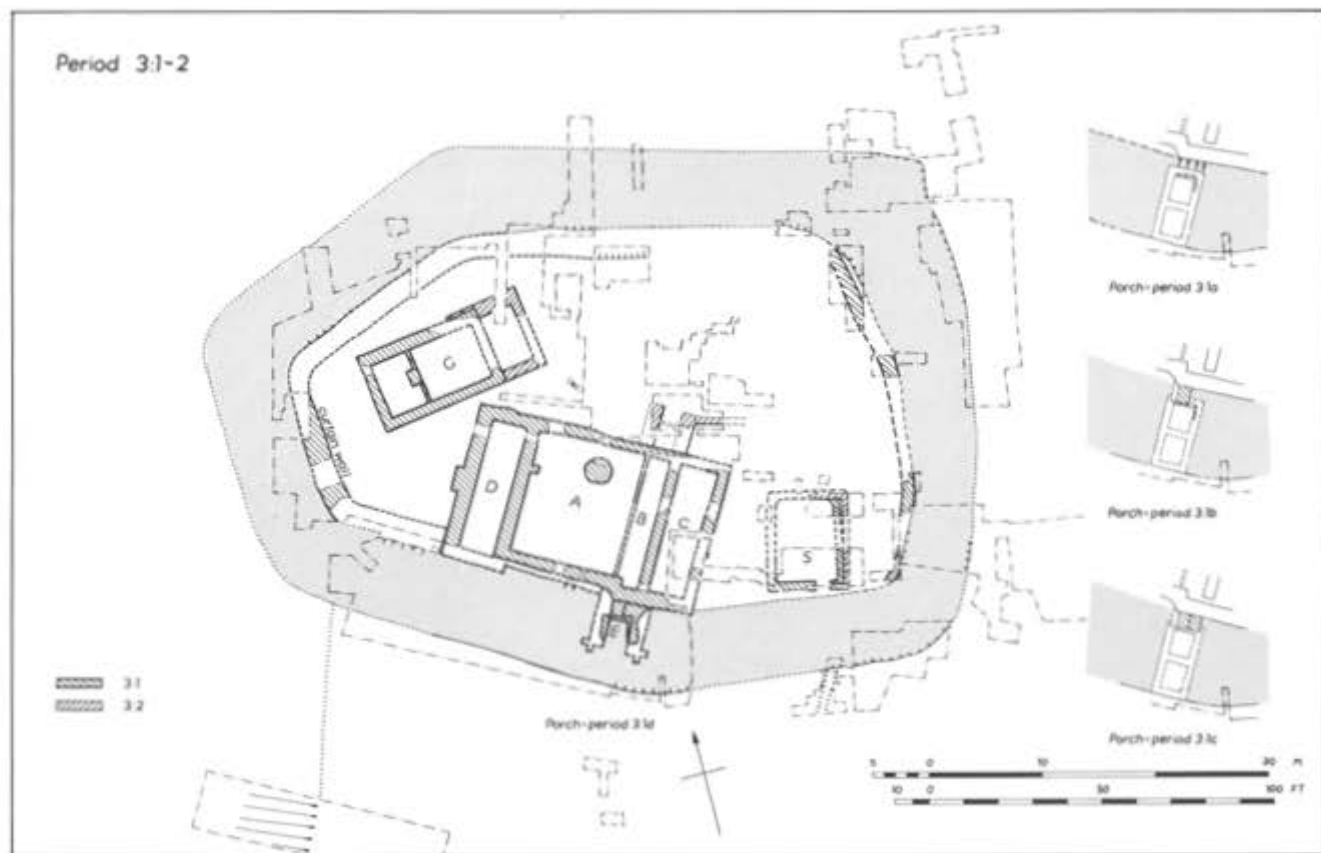


Figure 3.6 Plan: the house in Period 3:1-3.2.

Figure 3.7 (facing page) Sections 5-8: moat.

cal (as near vertical as the natural bedding of the Pennant would allow), whereas the inner edge of the north and south arms sloped at an angle of 45 degrees. The south arm was 7.5 m wide (Fig 3.8; reduced to 6.5 m in the vicinity of the main entrance to the house), while the east arm was 5.8 m wide. The primary north arm was probably *c* 7 m wide.

The sides of the east arm (except at the north-east corner where they sloped down fairly gently through the bedrock) were faced with coursed Pennant rubble bonded with orange-brown sandy loam (Fig 3.9). Most of the outer edge of the south arm was also faced, though the facing was not continuous and some of it was purely cosmetic, filling indentations in the natural rock, rather than acting as a retaining wall. The inner edge of the south arm was revetted only where the moat cut through the backfill of the Period 2 quarry (Fig 3.4, Section 3). The shale and clay, through which the west arm was cut, was supported by a much more substantial wall (1279), 2 m thick, which was inserted in front of the Period 2 bank, and stepped down into the moat (Fig 3.20, Sections 19 and 21). There must have been an external bank along the outside of the west arm, but it was replaced in Period

4.2 when the moat was realigned, and there was no evidence for it in Trench E2. An earlier bank was found beneath the Period 4.2 earthwork (Fig 3.7, Section 8), but this appeared to be related to a Period 2 ditch rather than to the moat.

The moat clearly contained water and a horizontal line, 0.8 m above its base, could be seen on the sides of the south porch, below which the loam matrix of the walls had been washed out (Fig 3.11, Sections 9-11). Additionally, the revetting along the outside of the south arm respected the Period 2 ditch (3524), suggesting that part of the earlier feature remained open. It must have served purely as an overflow channel for surplus water, because its base was more than 1 m above the moat bottom.

The nearest source of running water is the stream, which passes within 70 m of the south-east corner of the moat, but it is at a lower level than the moat and cannot have supplied it with water. Instead, the water, at least in the primary moat, appears to have derived entirely from seepage. It is however possible that groundwater may have been channelled into the north-west corner of the moat by utilising part of the Period 2 ditch along the foot of the terrace. Similarly, the

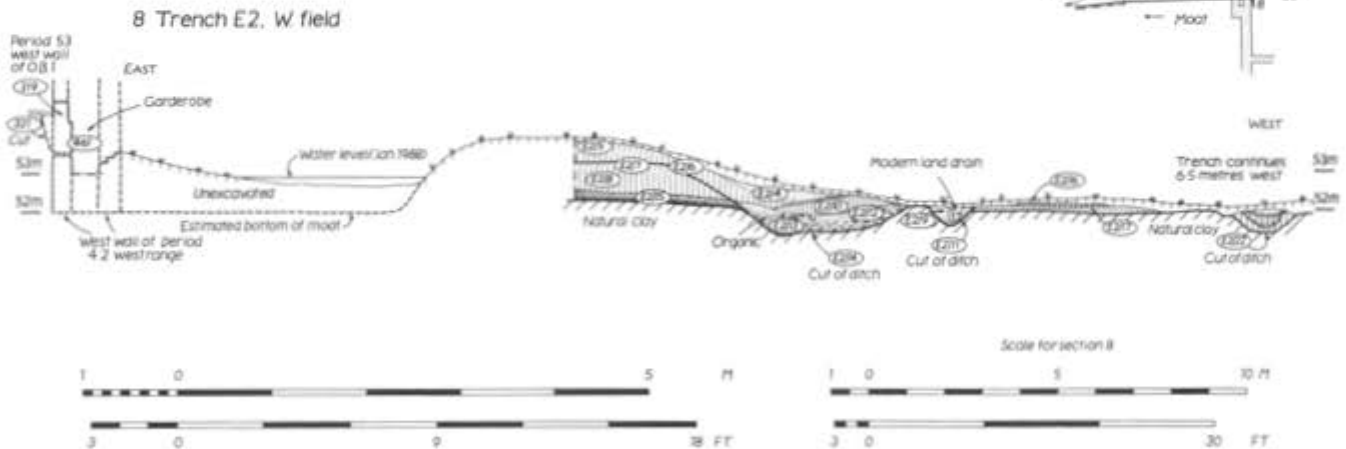
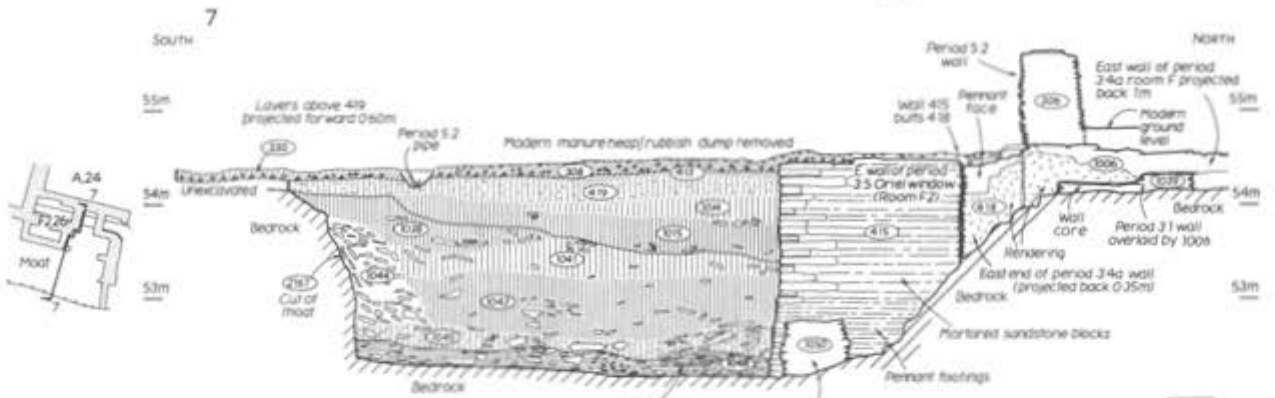
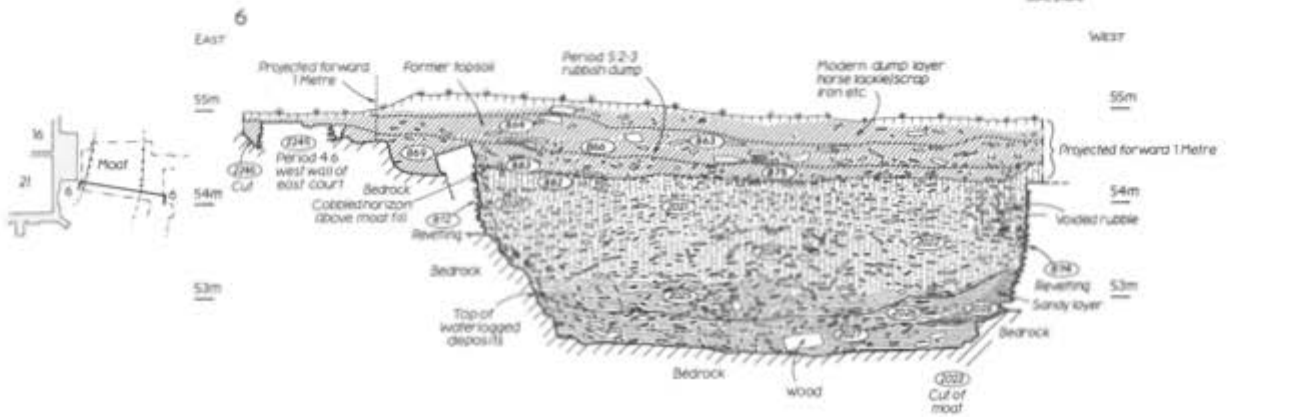
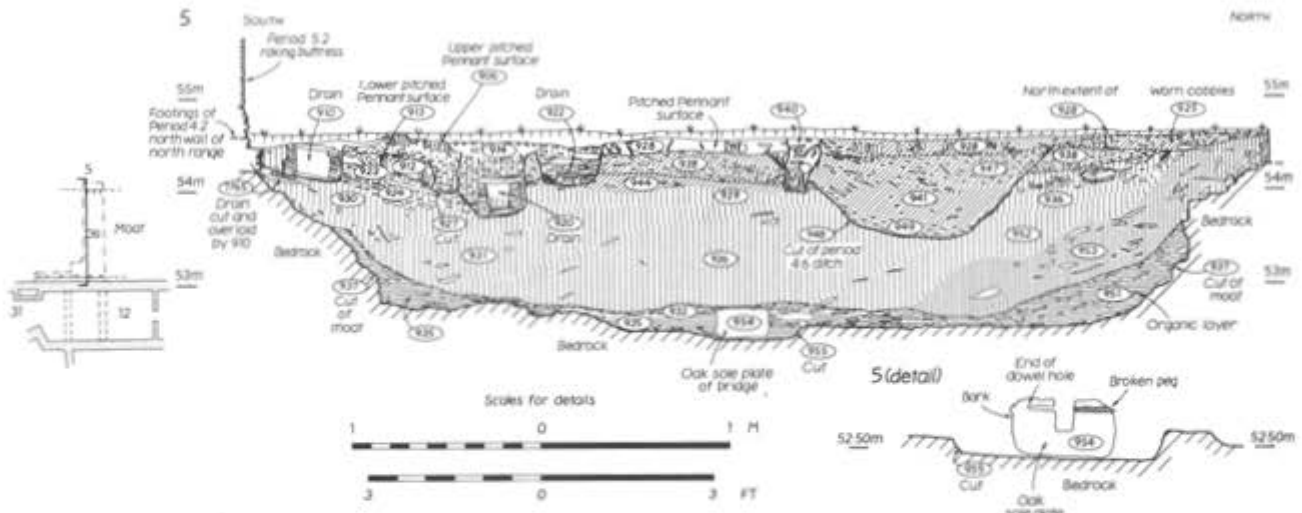




Figure 3.8 South moat, west of the porch, from the south (photograph: Robert Bell).

main outlet was probably at the south-west corner. Both corners were unfortunately beyond the limits of the excavation.

There was no clay lining to the moat, nor would it have been required. Observation of those parts of the moat which were totally excavated demonstrated that water quickly seeped into them in wet weather, and drained away again only very gradually, suggesting that the moat would have contained water except during the driest weather.

#### *The house*

The primary house consisted of at least three distinct elements (Fig 3.6); a range along the south frontage, containing the most important domestic rooms and the main entrance (Rooms A–D); a separate building (Room G), adjacent to the north-west corner of Room D and on a completely different alignment to it; and a range to the east of Room C, the extent of which was established although it could be only partially excavated (Room S). There is sufficient space for a fourth range beneath the northern half of the present east range, but it remains totally unexcavated.

#### *Rooms A–D*

The south range contained a hall (A) with a north arcade and aisle (Fig 3.10). Its east side was partitioned off to form a screens passage (B, 1.8 m (6 ft) wide). Rooms A and B together measured 11.8 m by 11 m (38 ft 9 in by 36 ft): all dimensions are internal and at footing level. They were flanked by two long narrow rooms (C and D), almost identical in size: these measured 11.6 m by 3.2 m (38 ft by 10 ft 6 in), and gave the range an element of symmetry. The wall footings had a fairly consistent width of 0.9–1.2 m, though the central part of the south wall of Room A (1039) had a maximum width of 1.35 m. Part of its north wall (1421/1843) was only 0.7 m wide, which was probably its true width. The footings were built in construction trenches, and survived to a maximum height of 0.28 m. However, the foundations of the west wall of Room A (1010) were unusually deep, stepping down 1.35 m through the fill of the Period 2 quarry.

The walls were all bonded with smooth red or reddish-brown loam, and apart from



some pieces of unworked limestone in the south wall, were made entirely of Pennant rubble. The deep foundations of 1010 consisted of courses of Pennant separated by bands of red loam, 30 mm thick.

The central part of the south frontage was set back *c* 0.8 m from the edge of the moat, though it was flush with the face of the underlying walling (1833) retaining the quarry fill (Fig 3.4, Section 3). In contrast, the frontages of Rooms B, C, and D were built on the very edge of the moat.

Evidence for a north aisle within Room A was provided by a rectangular footing (1850), 3.1 m (10 ft) south of the north-west corner of the room. It was bonded to the west wall, with which it shared the same matrix, and projected out 0.5 m into the room. It was probably the base of the western respond of an arcade. No other pier bases survived, though this is not surprising given that the arcade was removed in Phase 4a and the farmyard surface was below floor level.

Within the central bay there was a substantial rubble feature (1426), set back slightly from the line of the arcade. It was bonded with red loam and was cut through the Period 2 levelling layer 1403 (Fig 3.4, Section 2). Its north side had been removed by a Phase 4 wall, but it appeared to be roughly circular, measuring 2.1 m by at least 1.6 m, and probably formed the base of the main hearth.

The footings of the screens between Rooms A and B (1434) were fragmentary and consisted of a single course of Pennant slabs, 0.3 m wide, parallel to the east wall (1396).

The whole of Room C was excavated apart from the south-east corner, which was inaccessible. Most of its north wall had been destroyed when the room was rebuilt, and no primary internal features survived.

Similarly, there were no features within Room D, to the west of Room A. Externally, however, the base of a chimney stack (162), measuring 2.15 m by 0.6 m, was bonded to the west wall (164/190). The original south wall of the room (1866), forming part of the south frontage of the house, had been rebuilt several times on the same line, but it could be seen in section (Fig 3.4, Section 3) and had a similar matrix to the other Period 3.1 walls. The only other distinctive aspect of the room was its north-west corner. The north wall (169) was built separately from the west wall, with footings stepping out 0.3 m on



Figure 3.9 East arm of the moat; above, from the west (photograph: Robert Bell).

both the north and west sides. The west wall was built afterwards and butted against it, though it did not belong to a later phase, since both walls had identical matrices and were clearly related.

#### *The entrance*

The principal entrance to the house was at the south end of the screens passage (Room B). The moat was spanned by a fixed bridge, initially made entirely of wood. Subsequently its north end underwent two alterations, before the stone porch was finally constructed. These changes formed four sub-phases within Phase 1 (Fig 3.11, Sections 9–11).

#### *Phase 1a*

A sleeper wall or sill (2410), made of thin coursed Pennant rubble, stood on the bottom of the moat. It had a maximum height of 0.4 m and was laid parallel and adjacent to the moat's inner edge. It was at least 2 m in length, and judging by the angle of the slope of the moat edge it was probably *c* 0.7 m wide, though only its outer face was visible.



At its east end, it was bonded to an identical sill (2411), set at right angles to it and projecting out 1.8 m across the moat. The matrix of the footings had been almost entirely washed out, but there were traces of orange-brown loam, similar to the material in the revetting walls of the moat. There were no signs of footings below the west arm of the porch. Either they had been removed completely or else they were hidden within the core of the porch wall. It is not clear whether the sills originally extended across the whole width of the moat since any traces of sills further south would have been destroyed in Phase 5, when the moat was deepened. The sills would have supported the sole-plates of a trestle bridge with a total span of 7 m. It may have been a fixed two-span structure, though it is conceivable that the southern span may have been capable of being raised, counterbalanced by the northern span.

#### Phase 1b

An abutment (1482), was built against the base of the south frontage wall (1405), from which it projected 1.5 m (Fig 3.12). It was faced on its south and east sides, but its west side had been destroyed when the west arm of the porch was rebuilt in Phase 4a. It had a maximum height of 1.15 m and was at least 1.2 m wide. The south face rested on the sleeper wall, which was partially robbed. This face contained irregularly sized pieces of Pennant, up to 70 mm thick, which were unevenly laid. Built into the face and the core were several fragments of Roman building tile. The east face was on the line of the central axis of the screens passage. The abutment was clearly secondary, and was probably added when one of the original timber uprights failed, or showed signs of rotting.

#### Phase 1c

A second abutment (2406) was built alongside the Phase 1a feature, and butted against its east face. The full width of the new abutment was unclear, because it had no definite eastern edge. It was probably narrower than 1482, though it was similar in height and shared the same matrix (light reddish-brown loam). However, it was more crudely built. It had no west face, and the coursing of its south face was still more uneven, containing larger slabs of Pennant (up to 0.1 m thick). The feature leaned towards the east to the extent that although it touched 1482 at the bottom, there was a gap 60 mm wide

between the two faces at the top. This eastern abutment represented a later repair to the north end of the bridge, and was probably not significantly later than the Phase 1b work.

#### Phase 1d

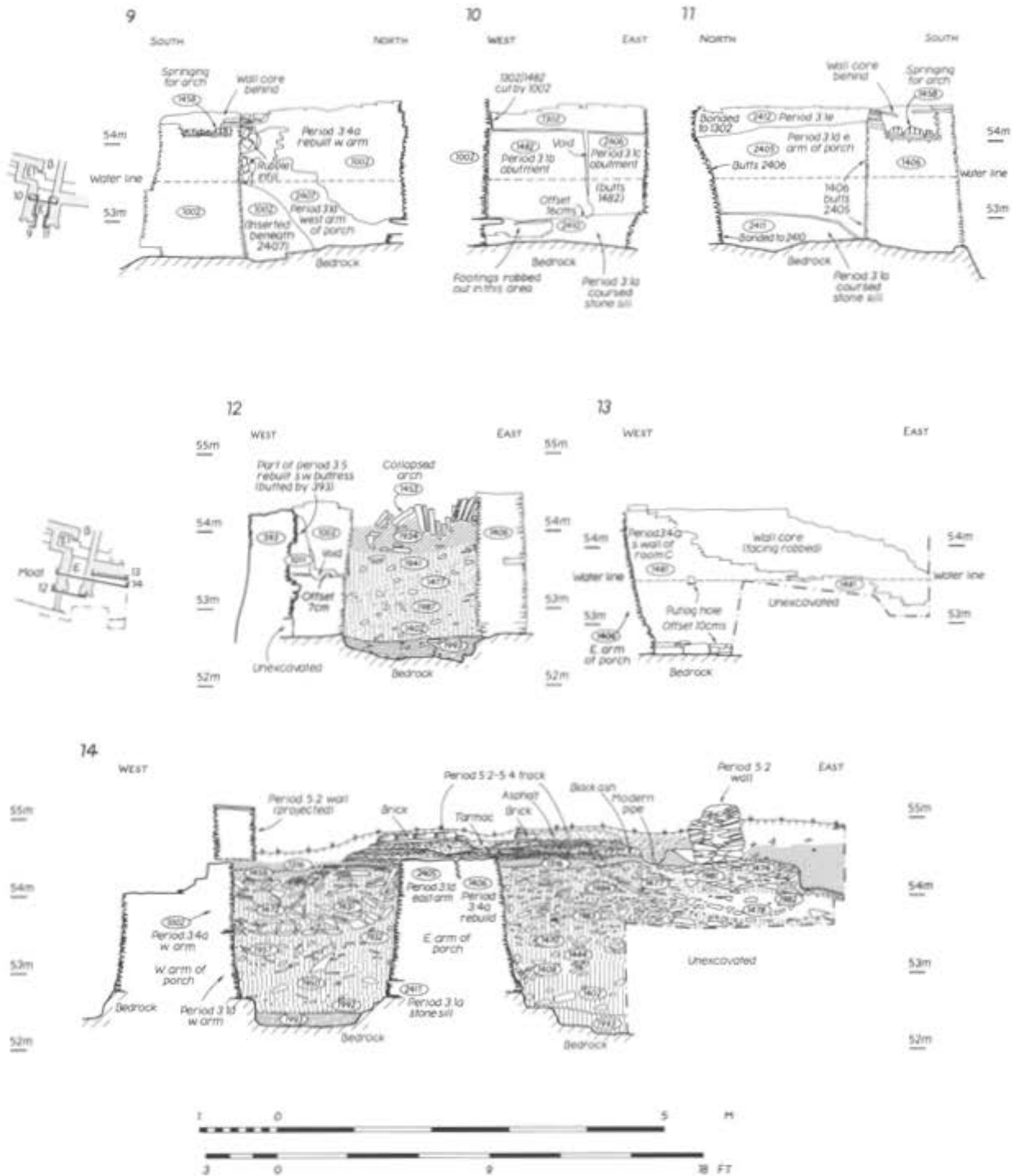
The south porch (Room E) was added, replacing altogether the northern half of the primary bridge. Part of the inner face of the west arm (2407) survived, although it was very largely rebuilt in Phase 4a. Much more of the primary east arm (2405) remained *in situ*. It butted against the south face of the eastern abutment, and further north, butted directly against the south wall of the house. It stood on top of the primary sleeper wall 2411, but on a slightly different alignment. Only a long stump of walling was visible, since the outer half of the arm and the whole of its south end had been completely rebuilt. Adjacent to the house it was 1.2 m wide and it projected at least 3.8 m to the south, surviving to a maximum height of 1.6 m above the bottom of the moat. The stone rubble courses were fairly evenly laid and were set in a deep red-brown loam matrix which was identical to the matrix used elsewhere in the Phase 1 building. On the basis of this evidence, the porch is attributed to the first phase of the medieval house, although how much later it was added obviously depends on how long the three preceding sub-phases of bridge construction lasted. As in the primary timber phase, the span between the porch and the south side of the moat may have been fixed, although there could equally well have been a draw-bridge.

#### Phase 1e

The tops of the earlier abutments were tied together and overlaid by six courses of well-laid Pennant (1302), bedded in orange loam. These were bonded to the highest surviving courses of the east arm of the porch (2412), which were also laid more evenly than the lower courses. The distinction between Phases 1d and 1e probably represents a break within the same general building operation, rather than a completely new phase of reconstruction.

#### Room G

Room G was a rectangular building, detached from the main south range (Figs 3.13, 3.14, and Fig 4.14, Section 35), although there was a gap of only 1.3 m between its south wall and the north-west



corner of Room D. As originally constructed, it measured 9.5 m by 5.1 m (31 ft 3 in by 16 ft 9 in) and was aligned 8 degrees north of grid east. Its alignment was very similar to that of the Period 2 walls, which may have influenced it, though Room G was clearly later. The south and west walls (75 and 100) were both 0.8 m wide, while the north wall (120/1570), which cut through

one of the Period 2 walls (1741) was 0.95 m wide. Only a very short stump of the east wall (1773) survived. All the walls were bonded with silty red-brown loam.

Within the building, a step was cut in the natural Pennant, 3.5 m from the west end. It was 0.3 m deep and was revetted with coursed rubble (250). The revetting appeared to be associated with the east side

Figure 3.11 Sections 9–14: porch.



Figure 3.12 Abutments at the north end of the porch interior, from the south (photograph: Robert Bell).

of a small sub-cellar and respected a rectangular projection (251), measuring 1.25 m by 0.9 m. The faces of both 250 and 251 were rendered. The latter may have formed the base of a pier supporting the floor above.

There were no traces of any medieval floors in the shallower part of the building. These were removed when the floor level was lowered during the major Period 4.2 alterations to the interior. In the sub-cellar, however, several sandstone slabs (1821) remained beneath the Period 4.2 infill, the largest of which measured 0.4 m by 0.4 m by 0.06 m. These were probably the remnants of the primary floor.

#### *Room S*

Room S formed another detached building, erected to the east of the south range, but on

a different alignment to it (Fig 3.10). It was revealed in Areas 16 and 17 beneath the southern third of the present east range, and was only partially excavated. Nevertheless, portions of all four sides and three of the four internal corners were found. The structure was roughly rectangular and measured internally 7.5 m by *c* 5.4 m (24 ft 6 in by *c* 17 ft 9 in). There was a marked difference between the south half of the building, which had stone footings, and the northern part, which would have rested on wooden sill-beams.

Much of its south wall (3827) was hidden beneath a Period 5.1 thickening wall which formed the south side of Room 22, though its inner edge was visible and its full width (0.75 m) was revealed after part of the thickening wall was removed during restoration work. Most of the west wall (3816) was directly overlain by the west wall of the Period 4.1 east range, but a short length was uncovered beneath the Period 4.3 doorway. Part of its inner edge also survived further north, underneath the Period 4.3 fireplace, but its outer edge was inaccessible. It was at least 0.45 m wide, and probably had the same width as the south wall, to which it was bonded. Both walls were made of coursed Pennant rubble, surviving to a maximum height of 0.20 m (five courses) and shared the same matrix. This consisted of smooth deep red loam. The south end of the east wall (3828), also bonded to the south wall, was 0.70 m wide, reduced to 0.45 m at a distance of 1.5 m from the south-east corner. It partially overlaid the infill of the northern terminal of the Period 2 ditch 3834.

At the north end of the building, in contrast, the walls were represented by beam-slots, with coursed rubble pads positioned at the north-east corner (the north-west corner was not located). Two phases of the east wall were recorded. The earlier slot (3712) was 0.45 m wide with a depth of 0.15 m, and was filled with dark grey silt and small pieces of Pennant, with a pad of rubble (3713) at its northern end. Immediately to the east of it was the slot for the wall which replaced it (3725). This was 0.20 m deep and 0.35 m wide, broadening to 0.55 m further south. It was on a slightly different alignment from the primary slot and appeared to be converging on it. The rubble pad at its north end (3727) also formed the east end of the slot for the north wall (3723), which had been extended eastwards, cutting through the primary rubble pad.

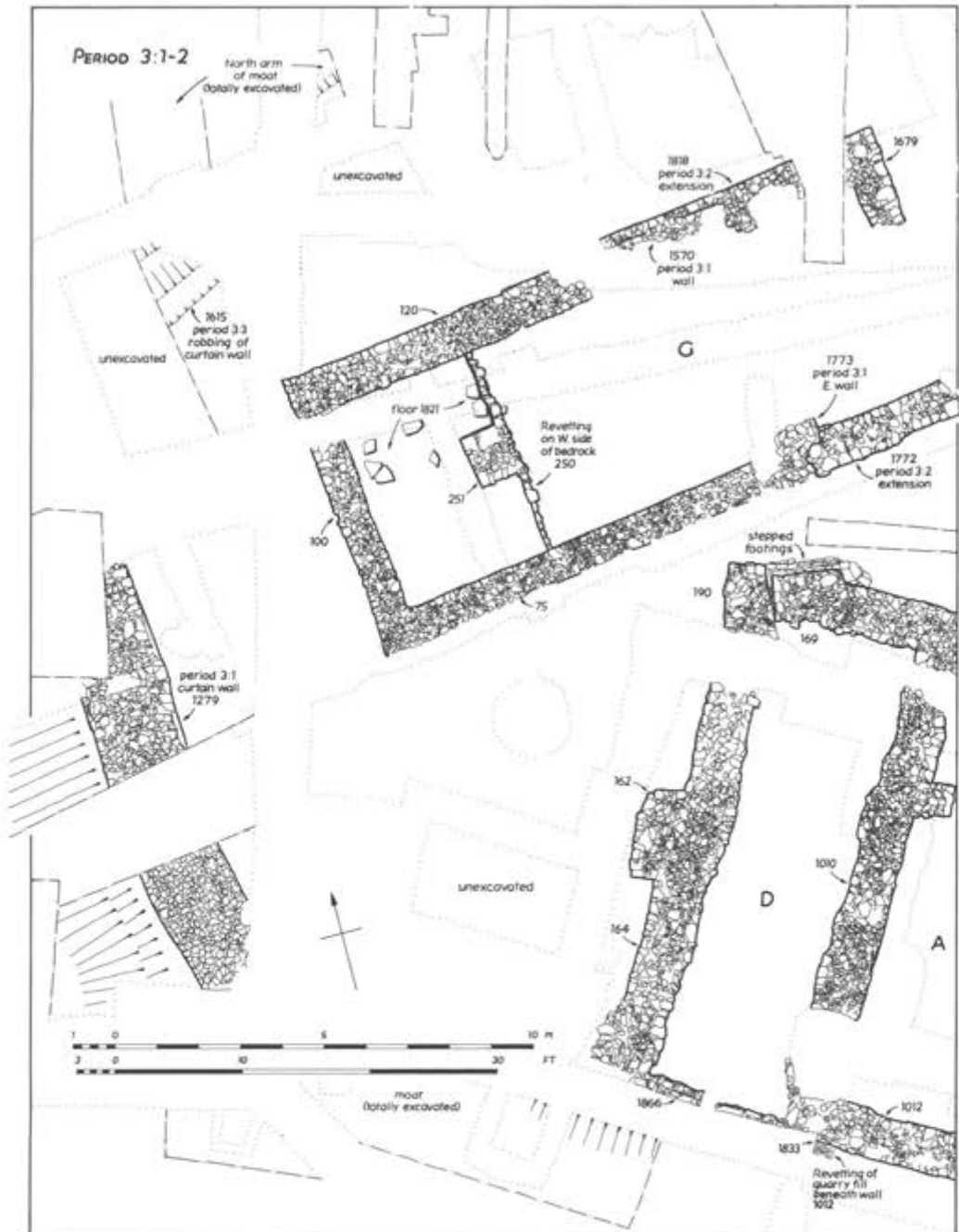


Figure 3.13 Room G and the curtain wall.

Patchy areas of flooring survived near the south end of the building. They consisted of irregular Pennant slabs (3831), measuring on average 0.3 m by 0.2 m by 0.02 m, which were set in sandy orange loam mixed with greasy grey clay and charcoal. The flooring was probably primary, since it was sealed by the same silty layer which also overlay the south wall. Near the south-east corner of the structure there was a gap in the north face of the south wall, 1.5 m wide, in which a floor-slab remained *in situ*. This may have repre-

sented an alcove or opening rather than robbing. There was no evidence for a fireplace or hearth within the excavated part of the building.

In the absence of a complete plan it is difficult to establish the structural development of the building. The matrices of the stone walls were identical to the matrices of Rooms A–D and G, suggesting that, like them, Room S belonged to Phase 1. From its inception, it may have been a hybrid building, partly stone-built and partly tim-





Figure 3.14 Room G, from the east  
(photograph: Robert Bell).

ber-framed. Alternatively the original structure may have been entirely timber-framed, but the south part was subsequently rebuilt (or underbuilt) in stone. A third possibility is that it was a stone structure, perhaps square, with a timber-framed annexe attached to its north side, though this would require the existence of an unlocated north wall. What is clear is that there were two phases of beam-slots at the north-east corner of the building/annexe. The later slot is attributed to Phase 2.

#### *The curtain wall*

The wall (1279), which survived beneath the Tudor west range, 5 m west of Room G,

was 2 m wide and was bonded with smooth red silt (Figs 3.13, 3.15 and Fig 3.20, Sections 18 and 21). It was partially robbed but the lower part of its outer face remained *in situ*, resting on the bottom of the moat. Further north, it had been completely removed by Room H, and to the north-east it was replaced by the north wall of Rooms J–K, all of which were constructed in Phase 3. Beneath the north half of Room J, it had been robbed out entirely, but the cut of the robber trench (1615) was clearly visible. The edge of a cut, running parallel to and 2.2 m south of the edge of the moat, was also found in Area 4, beneath the standing part of the Tudor north range. This was almost certainly associated with the robbing of the curtain wall.

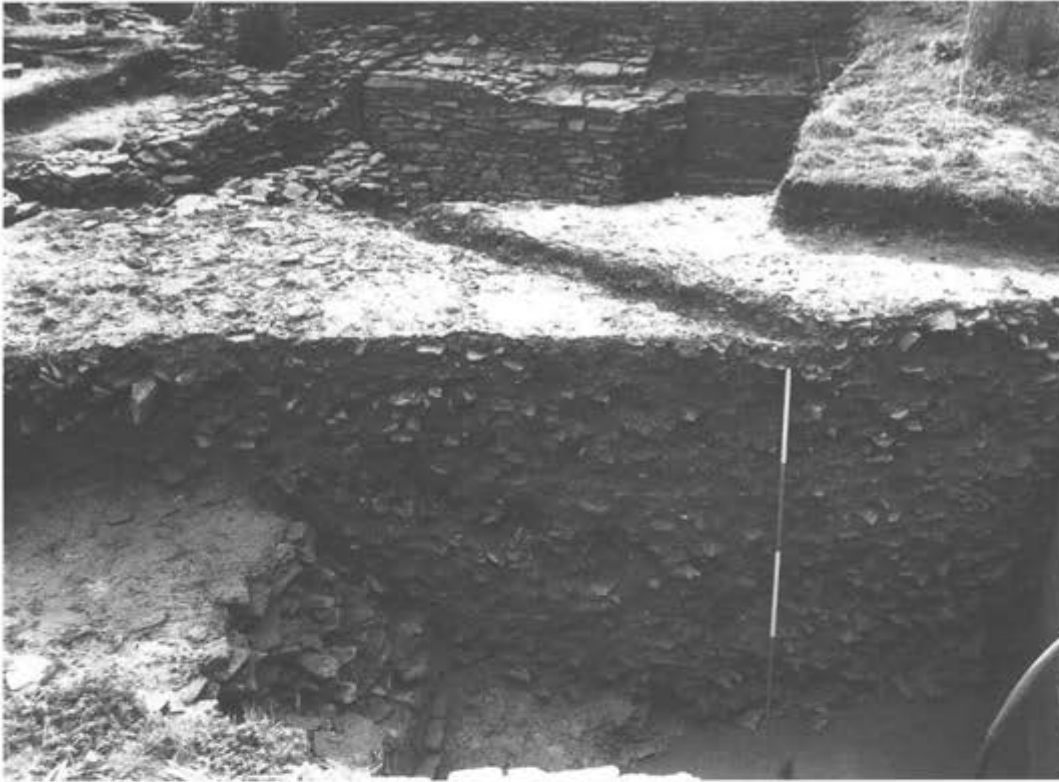
In Area 12, beneath the north end of the present east range (Fig 3.16), the footings of the wall (2910) ran along the edge of the eastern arm of the moat but did not step down into it. They consisted of concentrated Pennant rubble, resting directly on the natural bedrock. The bottom course of the outer face survived but the inner face had been robbed, leaving a maximum width of 1.4 m. The wall was cut through by the construction trenches of the north and east walls of the Period 4.1 east range. Further south in Area 7, just outside the east range, a band of rubble (2267) with a maximum surviving width of 1 m continued along the edge of the moat. Only its surface was revealed but it appeared to serve as revetting along the side of the moat and also as the foundations of the curtain wall.

Near the southern end of the east arm of the moat a similar band of rubble (Fig 3.10; 874), initially interpreted purely as revetting, may also have formed the base of the wall. It was not possible to establish whether the wall terminated at the south-east corner of Room S or whether, perhaps more likely, it continued round in front of Room S as far as the south-east corner of Room C.

## Phase 2

### *Room G*

Room G (Fig 3.13) was extended 4.2 m (13 ft 9 in) eastwards, and the primary east end wall (1773) was demolished. The north-east corner of the Phase 2 building, including part of the new east wall (1679) was located, though the south-east corner had been removed in Period 4. The walls of



*Figure 3.15 The curtain wall and west moat beneath the west range, from the north. (photograph: Robert Bell).*

the extension had the same width as the primary walls. However, they were set in bright yellow loam, which contrasted with the red-brown loam used in Phase 1. The south extension wall (1772) overrode and was bonded into wall 75, whereas the new north wall (1818) was not merely bonded into 120/1570 but also continued westwards for a short distance, forming an external thickening 0.3 m wide which butted against the old wall.

#### *The north porch*

North of the south range, and respecting the alignment of the passage (B) were two sets of coursed rubble footings, 1.7 m apart (Fig 3.10). The footings on the west side (1153) were at least 0.8 m wide, and had been truncated by the Period 4.1 pentice. Those on the east side (1168) were 1.3 m wide. Both survived to a height of 0.3–0.45 m and their matrix consisted of smooth yellow-brown loam with flecks of charcoal. Their relationship with the north wall of the south range was unclear, because they had been disturbed by later features, but there was no evidence that they were bonded into it. They appeared to form large, roughly square rubble pads, linked to the south range by rather more superficial footings, possibly butting against the north wall. They probably supported the arms of a north porch.

Butting the east side was a wall (1165), 0.7 m wide, with a bright yellow sandy loam matrix which was similar to the matrix of the extension walls in Room G. It could not be fully uncovered because of the position of the modern scaffolding, and it clearly continued eastwards beyond the limits of the excavation. It was not parallel to the north wall of Room C and probably linked the north porch with an undiscovered building, on the same alignment as Room S and to the north of it.

The wall was butted on its south side by a stone-lined drain (1175), which disappeared beneath a modern wall, and did not emerge on the other side. This would seem to imply that it changed alignment under the wall. It was probably the same feature as drain 1182, which was integral with the porch and ran beneath both footings with a slight fall towards the north-west. It was 0.25 m wide and 0.2 m deep, and had originally been capped with thin Pennant slabs, some of which had collapsed into the drain. The same drain 1182/1863 was recorded on the west side of the Period 5 outbuilding, turning towards the north and apparently respecting the extended east end of Room G. It was not located further north, but it was overlaid by a Phase 3 drain (1814/1683; see below). The earlier drain provided the

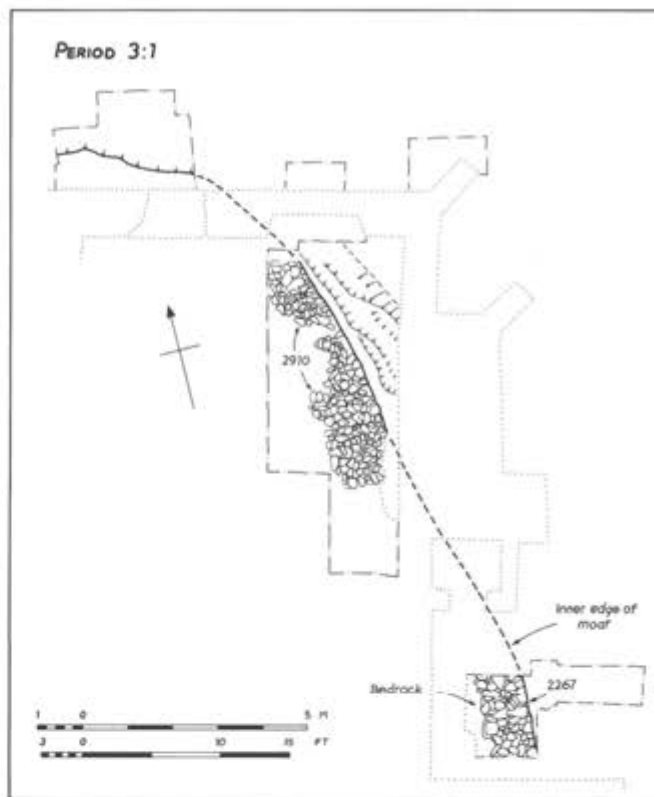


Figure 3.16 The north-east corner of the curtain wall.

only stratigraphic link between the north porch and the extension of Room G.

### Phase 3

#### Room G

The south and west walls of Room G were thickened externally, and possibly refaced (Figs 3.17, 3.18). The whole of the south wall, including the Phase 2 extension, was butted by a length of walling (97), 0.3–0.4 m wide and set in a matrix of sandy orange-yellow loam. The new face was bonded to the existing wall at the junction between the Phase 1 and the Phase 2 work, and further west it was overlaid by a small buttress, also bonded into the old work. At the same time, additional walling (99), was built along the outside of the primary west wall. The north wall of Room G remained unaltered.

#### Rooms H–K

Rooms H, J and K (Fig 3.18) were added to the north and north-west of Room G, respecting its alignment. All three rooms were clearly constructed at the same time, since their outside walls were in bond. Equally clearly, they were built in Phase 3, since the south wall of Rooms H and J (77) was bonded to the wall thickening on the

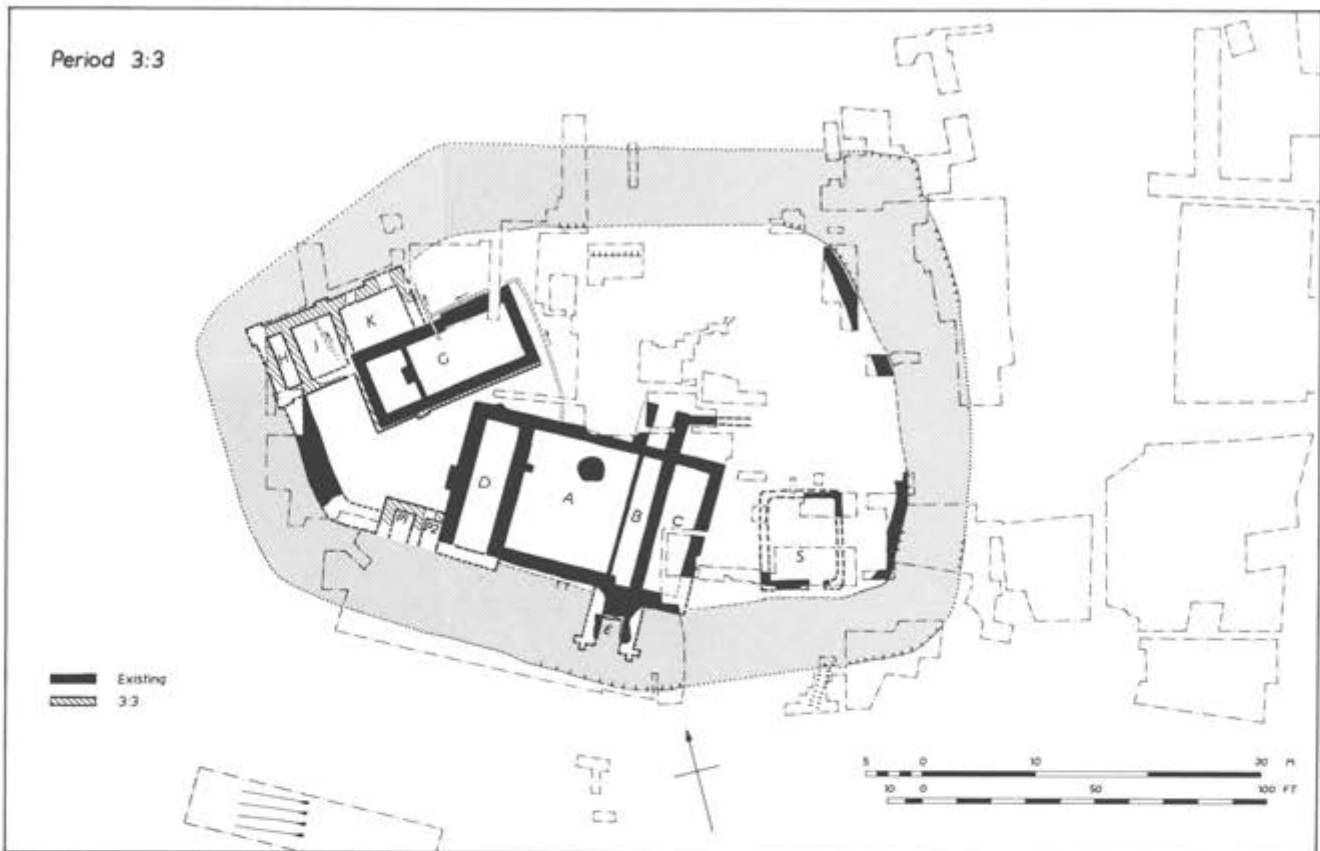
west side of Room G. The junction between them, overlaid by the east wall of the Period 4 west range, could be seen in the side of a modern pipe trench (Fig 3.20, Section 15). The junction between the east wall of Room K (1690) and the Phase 1 north wall of Room G had been destroyed by a Period 5 drain, but the outer face of the earlier wall was continuous, indicating that it was butted by 1690. Similarly, the internal wall dividing Rooms J and K (424) would have butted the north-west corner of Room G.

The overall structure was 12.5 m (41 ft) in length. Its outside walls varied in width between 0.9 m and 1.1 m, and shared the same matrix (orange-brown sandy loam), which was nearly identical to that of the thickening of the walls of Room G. The internal walls were 0.8 m wide. Almost the whole of the north-west corner had been destroyed when the Period 4 west range was built. Much of the south-west corner was beneath a tree, but a short buttress, extending westwards, was visible. It was rendered and was probably one side of a clasping buttress.

In order to accommodate the new structure, at least part of the Phase 1 curtain wall (1279) was demolished. It was truncated by wall 77, and further north and along the inner edge of the north arm of the moat, it was completely removed. It was replaced by the north wall of Rooms H–K (172), which was built up from the bottom of the moat (Fig 3.20, Section 18). The outer face of 172 was covered with off-white render. This material also covered two rectangular projections, both of which were integral to the wall. These were probably buttresses, though it is possible that the one on the north side of Room J was the base of a chimney stack.

#### Room H

This narrow rectangular 'room' extended out into the west arm of the moat, directly on the line of the former curtain wall, and was evidently a large garderobe (Fig 3.20, Sections 16 and 17). It measured 5 m by 1.4 m (16 ft 6 in by 4 ft 6 in), and had a maximum surviving depth of 2.1 m. Its internal wall faces were very well constructed of narrow carefully laid rubble, averaging 50 mm in thickness. The west face of wall 280 in particular was almost exactly perpendicular. Its east side was not exposed but, like wall 172, it may have been built freestanding in place of the curtain wall. The west wall (218) incorporated two



arches (Fig 3.19), both *c* 1 m wide and 1 m high (from the base to the crown), separated by a piece of walling 0.45 m wide. Like the walls, they were built exclusively of Pennant rubble. They continued beneath the Tudor wall, but were blocked by its outer face. Above the arches, and spanning them both, was a relieving arch. A few of the voussoirs forming the north side of this feature were *in situ*, and the line of its intrados was visible on the south side. A small patch of rendering survived on the highest surviving courses of the inner face of the wall, but there was no indication of any slots for joists at ground-floor level.

#### Room J

The room measured 5 m by 3.75 m (16 ft 6 in by 12 ft 3 in), and was the only part of the building in which any traces of flooring survived (Fig 3.20, Sections 17 and 18). The whole room was excavated to just below floor level, and the area beneath the eastern half was totally excavated. The robber trench (1615), in which the north wall was built freestanding, was filled with orange-yellow silty clay and rubble (1616). The east wall (424), despite being

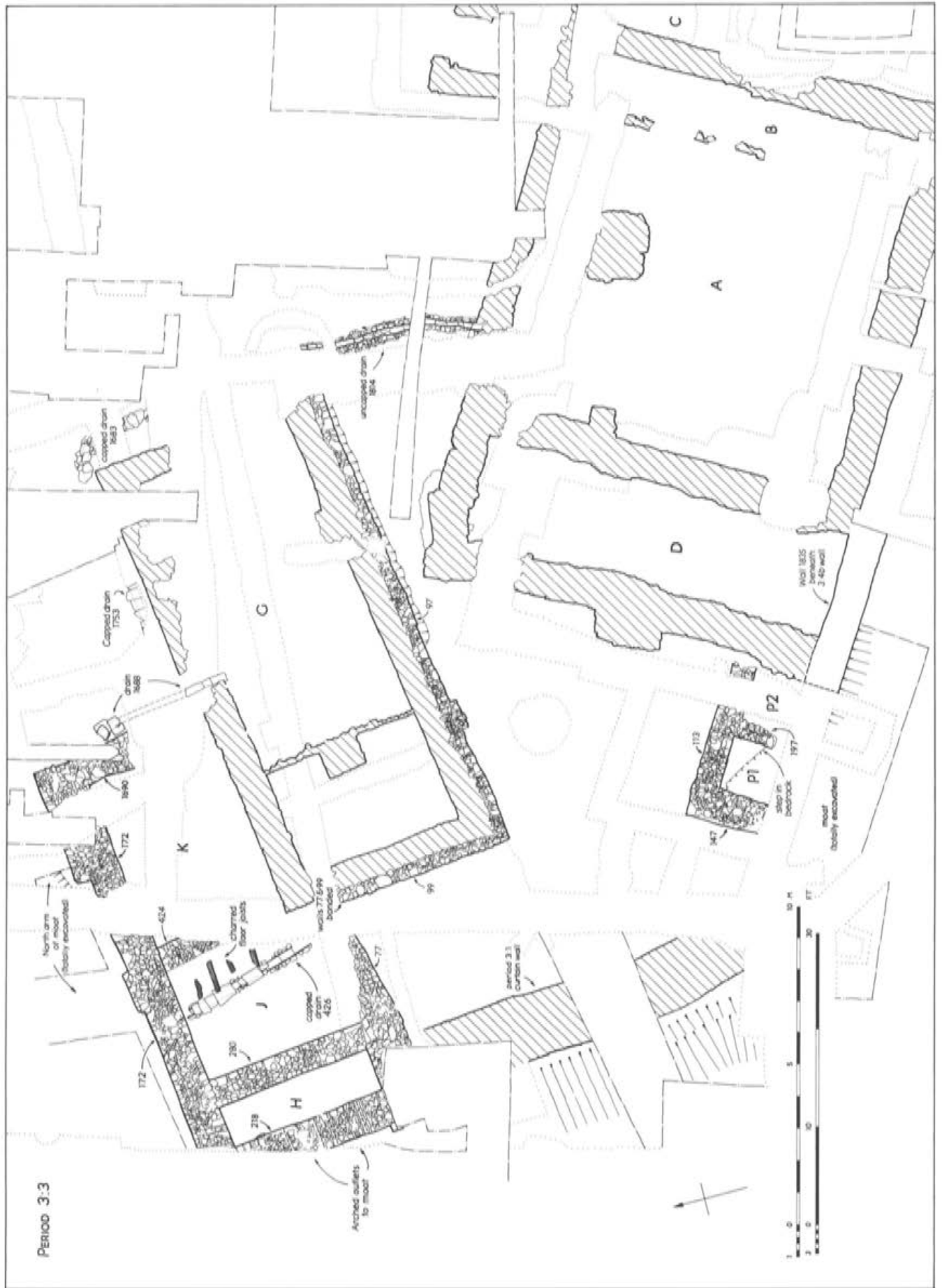
partially robbed, was also butted by this material, demonstrating that it was not a later insertion.

Layer 1616 was sealed by a layer of red silty clay (429) which formed a level platform, through which a drain (426) was cut. It was aligned south–north and decanted into the moat through the north wall, though the actual outlet was removed when the wall was partially robbed in Period 4.2. The drain was 0.25 m wide and 0.1 m deep, and had coursed rubble sides. Both its base and its capping stones consisted of large Pennant slabs. Concentrated in the north-west quadrant of the room, and at the same level as the top of the drain was a spread of horizontal slabs (1598), presumably laid in order to consolidate the infilled robber trench. The drain and 1598 were both sealed by a layer of firm plastic clay (1540). This acted as bedding for the timber floor joists. Four of these (1541–44), aligned west–east, survived in the eastern half of the room. They were all 0.14 m wide and the spacing between them varied from 0.4 m to 0.6 m. They appeared as charcoal stains. The charcoal was probably the result of intentional charring, since there was no evi-

Figure 3.17 Plan: the house in Period 3:3.



Figure 3.18 Rooms H-K, P1 and 2.





dence of burning elsewhere in the room. There was no trace of a fireplace, though all except the lowest courses of the north wall had been robbed near its junction with the east wall.

#### *Room K*

The room was devoid of features or make-up and occupation layers, and its walls had been much more disturbed by later intrusions than those of the other two rooms (Fig 3.18). It measured 4.4 m by 5.3 m (14 ft 6 in by 17 ft 6 in).

Externally, the east wall was respected by a stone-capped drain (1688), similar in construction to drain 426, which ran from the interior of Room G into the north arm of the moat. It was probably joined by drain 1683/1753/1814, which replaced the Period 2 drain (1863) and flowed along the east and north sides of Room G. Its point of origin was immediately outside the primary north wall of Room A, which was demolished in Phase 4a. It had definitely gone out of use by Phase 4b, when it was truncated

by the construction trench of a pentice wall (1805) and the footings of a stair tower (1800). Both drains almost certainly belonged to Phase 3, though the drain along the side of Room K had a much longer life, remaining in use after the Period 4 north range was constructed.

#### *The south range: Room D and Rooms P1 and P2*

The south wall of Room D, forming part of the south frontage, was rebuilt. The core of the primary wall (1866) was retained, but it was embedded in the new wall (1835), which was built on precisely the same alignment as its predecessor, though its matrix, consisting of smooth orange loam, was completely different (Fig 3.4, Section 3).

At the same time, two small rooms (P1 and P2), interpreted as a pair of garderobes, were added to the south-west corner of the range (Fig 3.18). Like Room H, they were probably constructed on the line of the Phase 1 curtain wall. Their north wall (113) had a matrix of orange-brown silty loam

*Figure 3.19 Double-arched garderobe, Room H; from the north (photograph: Robert Bell).*

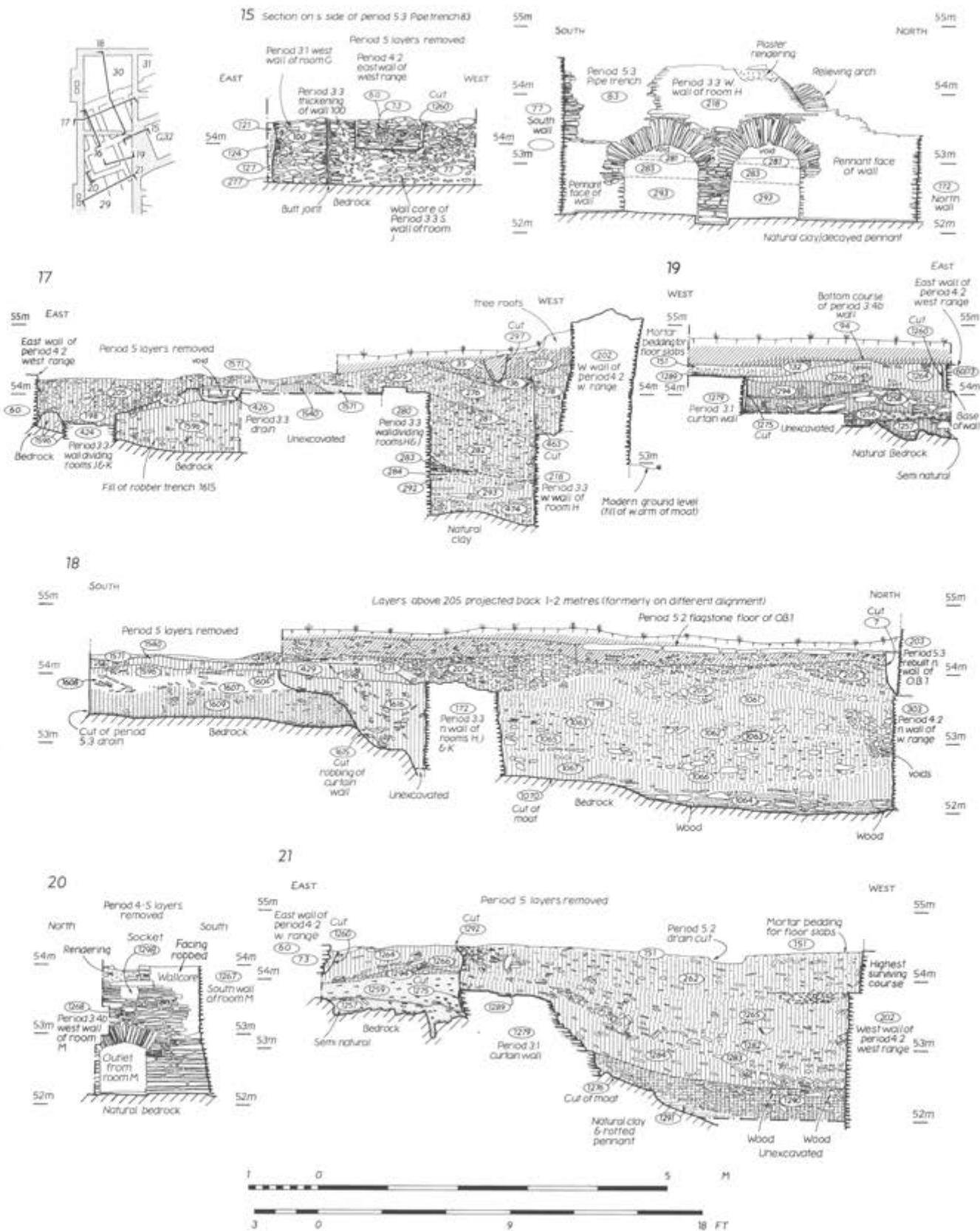


Figure 3.20 Sections 15-21: lodgings under east range.

with patches of red clay, and appeared to butt against the west wall of Room D. The west wall of P1 (147) and the wall dividing P1 and P2 (197) were bonded to 113, and both rooms were 1.8 m (6 ft) in width. How far they projected into the moat is uncertain, but the inner face of the Phase 4b frontage rode over 147, so it clearly continued southwards. Only a stump of 197 survived, since it was cut through by later walls and had been robbed towards the south, but it was probably similar to 147, which was 1 m wide. Although both walls rested on the natural Pennant, 147 was 0.75 m deeper than 197. The edge of a step in the bedrock, which made no sense in terms of the Phase 3 construction work, ran obliquely beneath Room P1, suggesting that the builders, after removing the curtain wall, encountered an infilled Period 2 quarry (Fig 3.28, Section 22). There were no signs of any construction trenches, indicating that the infill had been dug out, and the walls of P1 and P2 had been constructed freestanding.

#### The curtain wall

As demonstrated above, the Phase 1 curtain wall circuit was definitely interrupted by the Phase 3 buildings. But the parts of the wall

enclosing the north and east sides of the house may have remained standing. The length of walling along the west edge of the site may also have survived until Phase 4, even though it was truncated by the south wall of Room H. Its base certainly continued as a retaining wall.

#### Phase 4

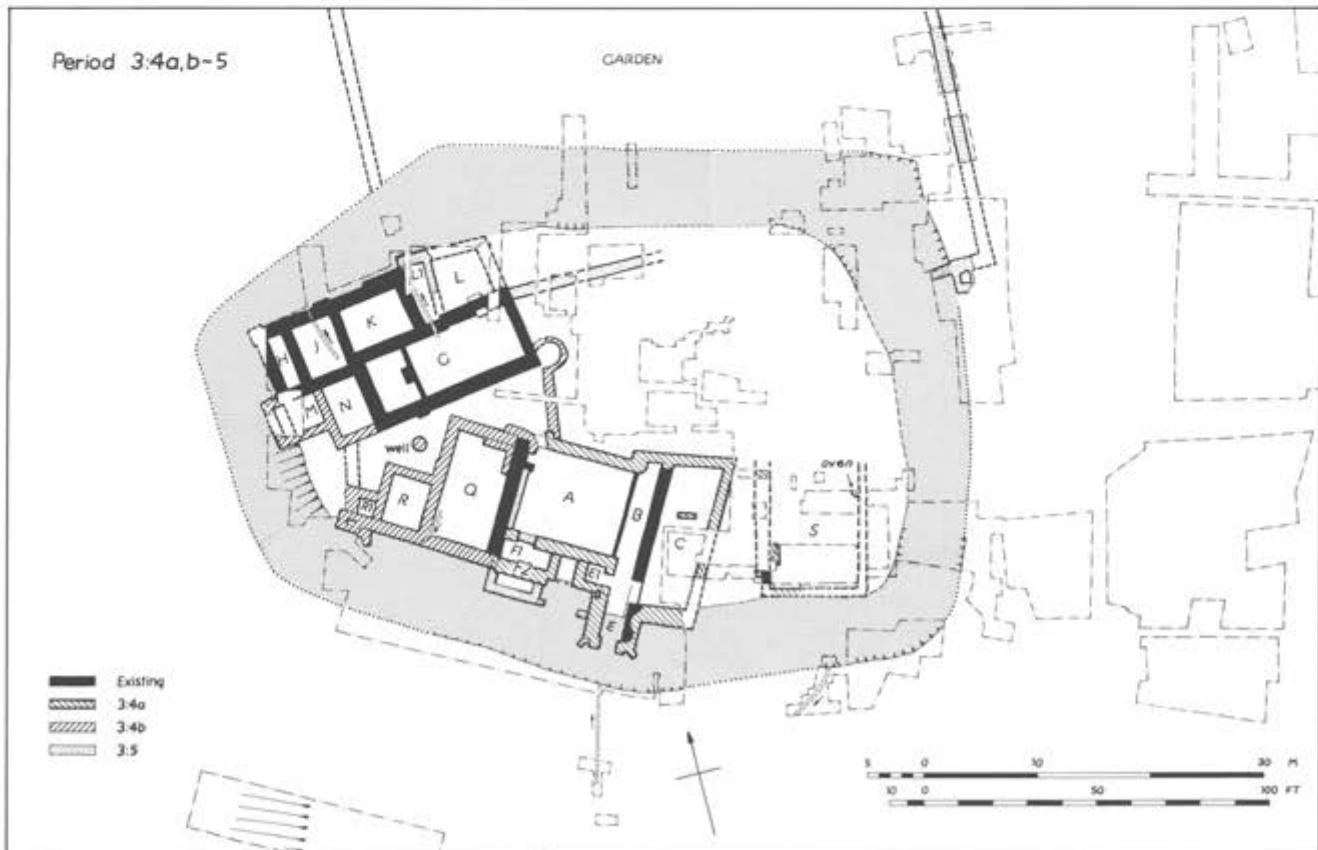
Most of the south range and Room S were rebuilt, and Rooms M and N were added to the west end of Room G (Fig 3.21). The work was carried out in two separate building campaigns (Phases 4a and 4b). In Phase 4a, Room S and the central and eastern part of the south range were reconstructed. In Phase 4b, the western part of the south range was completely remodelled and Rooms M and N were built.

#### Phase 4a

##### Rooms A–C

The north and south walls of the hall (Room A) were demolished, and were replaced by new walls, which were set in from them (Fig 3.22). The width of the room was reduced to 7.8 m (25 ft 6 in), and a more open floor space was provided by

Figure 3.21 Plan: the house in Periods 3:4a–b and 3:5.







removing the Phase 1 arcade, north aisle and hearth, the base of which was truncated by the construction trench of the north wall. The primary west and east walls remained standing, so the length of the room was unchanged. Similarly the position and width of the screens passage (Room B) was unaffected. The footings of the new walls, and also those of the north wall of Room C, incorporated very large slabs of Pennant with a maximum size of 0.8 m by 0.5 m by 0.15 m, grey in colour rather than the usual deep red or purple. They were bonded with smooth yellow-orange clay containing numerous flecks of limestone and charcoal, a matrix which was common to all the walls in Phase 4a.

The north wall (1864) returned to the existing north-west corner of the room, to which it was probably bonded, though the junction had been destroyed by later walls. It also returned northwards on the west side of the screens passage (Room B), and was bonded to the new north wall of Room C (1221). The footings of the south wall of Room A were built in two distinct parts (1007 and 1009), separated by a gap, 1.5 m wide, which formed the entrance to Room F1 (see below). Both parts of the wall were built in substantial construction trenches, which became progressively deeper towards the west as the footings stepped down into the underlying Period 2 quarry. The south-west corner of the room had been badly damaged by a substantial modern intrusion, but the lowest courses of the west end of wall 1009 survived, butting against the primary west wall. At its east end, 1007 had a short southern return (1400), which respected the west side of the screens passage and formed part of the east wall of Room E1 (see below).

Room C, like Room A, was almost entirely rebuilt, and the primary north, south and east walls were demolished. The new north wall (1221), tied into the surviving west wall by a short link (1252), was constructed on a different alignment from that of its predecessor, and virtually obliterated it. The Phase 4a alignment was the same as that of the Phase 2 wall (1165), further north, which was now demolished along with the north porch. It is possible that 1165 was replaced by a similar wall extending beyond the north-east corner of Room C (the outer face of which was just beyond the edge of the excavation).

In contrast to the north side of Room C, the new east wall (1083/1222) was built par-

allel to and along the outside of the existing building. The south frontage was moved 1.45 m southwards, and wall 1481 was built freestanding from the bottom of the moat, surviving to a maximum height of 1.9 m. Traces of rendering were attached to its outer face, but towards the east most of the face had been robbed and only the wall core remained (Fig 3.11, Section 13). It followed the line of the moat and was not precisely parallel to the former south wall (1405). The gap between them was filled with coursed rubble (1994).

Room C, as reconstructed, was slightly larger than before, and its walls were no longer at right angles to each other. It now measured 13 m by 4.35 m (42 ft 8 in by 14 ft 3 in). Internally, no contemporary features were recorded apart from a narrow partition wall (1242), 0.4 m wide with a maximum of four remaining courses, which was attributed to Phase 4a mainly because it was aligned on the new north wall.

#### *Rooms E and E1*

Room E1 was created in the angle between the porch and the south wall of Room A, forming a square stair turret. Its west wall (1005) butted wall 1007 and its south wall (1004) was built immediately south of the demolished primary frontage, resting on the slope of the inner edge of the moat.

The porch (Room E) was substantially rebuilt in exactly the same position as the earlier porch and incorporating some of its fabric (Fig 3.23). The west arm cut through the partial robbing of the former bridge abutment 1482, and was bonded to the south wall of Room E1 (1004). A garderobe shaft (1003) was set in the wall thickness at the south-east corner of Room E1. At ground level it was very narrow and rectangular, measuring only 0.53 m by 0.32 m, but lower down where it cut into the bedrock at the side of the moat, it was trapezoidal in shape, with maximum dimensions of 1.1 m by 0.68 m. The outlet into the moat was 0.5 m square, with a large lintel slab above, which was integral to the outer face of the west arm of the porch (1002). Most of this arm appeared to be new. Although part of the inner face survived from Phase 1, it had been underpinned as well as overlaid by Phase 4a work (Fig 3.11, Section 9). The angle buttress at the south-west corner of the porch arm, new in Phase 4a, was completely rebuilt in Phase 5.

Rather more of the original fabric in the east arm of the porch was retained, but the



Figure 3.23 Porch, with house behind, from the south  
(photograph: Robert Bell).

outer part (1406) was reconstructed and was bonded to the old work (2405). Also new was the south end of the arm, and the diagonal buttress (1407). The east arm, like the west arm, was battered out *c* 0.3 m towards the base, and rested directly on the bedrock. The buttress (Fig 3.24) included an offset which was tied in to the batter of the porch arm. Above the offset, two separate decorative bands were formed with reused limestone blocks, which had been recut to fit round the angles between the buttress and the east and south faces of 1406. The banding was clearly intentional, since nowhere else in the porch was there any reused limestone. The rest of the buttress above the offset was made of sandstone slabs, *c* 40 mm thick, some of which had also been roughly shaped to bond into the

porch arm. At the top of the offset, a crude attempt had been made to create a chamfer, by shaping the Pennant rubble, which was coarser and thicker towards the base.

The springers for an arched support below floor level survived on the inner faces of the returns at the south end of the porch. Most of the voussoirs remained, though the arch itself had slumped when the moat was filled in during Period 4.3 (Fig 3.11, Section 12). The arch presumably served to support the timbers which would have spanned the 2 m wide gap between the arms of the porch and the 3 m span between the porch and the south side of the moat.

The rebuilding of the east arm of the porch was begun before the new south wall of Room C was constructed, since the former was butted by the latter. But since the four highest surviving courses of each wall were bonded together, they were virtually contemporary with each other.

#### Room F1

The new south wall of Room A (1007) was butted by 1006, which overlay the footings of the primary frontage and formed the east side of Room F1 (Fig 3.7, Section 7). Its south side (418), constructed adjacent to the outer face of the old wall, was built up from the side of the moat (Fig 3.28, Section 25). It was rendered externally, like the other Phase 4 frontage walls, and returned to the south-east corner of Room D, which it butted. The corner had been repaired with coursed stone (1795) set in the same matrix as 418, suggesting that although the repair was earlier, the two features were almost contemporary. Room F1 (Fig 3.25) was obviously an oriel window, projecting south from Room A, and measuring 4.15 m by 1.8 m (13 ft 6 in by 6 ft).

#### Room S

The Phase 1 structure was enlarged and totally rebuilt in stone (Fig 3.26), although much of the new work was concealed beneath later walls or was in areas that were either unexcavated or inaccessible. The footings of the primary south wall (3827) and the flooring (3831) were sealed by a layer of dark brown silt containing much charcoal and patches of yellow clay (3818). The wall was replaced by a new wall (3829), of which only the inner face was visible because it was incorporated in the south wall of the Period 4.1 east range. Its full width was unknown but, like the frontage walls in the Phase 4a south range, it was

probably built up from the side or the bottom of the moat, flush against the outer face of the Phase 1 wall. Its matrix consisted of orange loam.

In contrast, the stone sill of the primary west wall (3816) appears to have been retained and widened. New walling (3846), with a matrix of yellow clay with white specks, was added to its western edge. They had a combined thickness of 1.25 m. Set in the wall was a fireplace (3804). It had a pitched Pennant base, bounded on its east side by a line of narrow kerbstones standing on edge. The feature, which projected 0.65 m into the room and was at least 1.60 m wide, is still visible, standing 50 mm proud of the present east range floor. The back of its base, which was observed beneath the Period 4.3 fireplace in Room 22, had been partially robbed but appeared to overlie the eastern edge of the primary west wall.

Beyond the north-west corner of the primary building (the position of which can be estimated although it was not actually located) a short length of the entirely new part of the west wall (2190) was recorded. It consisted of large Pennant slabs set in bright yellow clay, and was very similar in appearance to the Phase 4a north walls of Rooms A and C. Its full width was unknown because its eastern edge was concealed beneath the west wall of the Period 4 east range, but it was at least 1.05 m wide, and may have been the same in width as the thickened wall further south. It is uncertain if the west wall of the building was of a standard width throughout, or if the two recorded portions of the wall were wider than the norm because they formed parts of stacks, associated with fireplaces. If the latter explanation is correct, then there must have been a second fireplace in addition to 3804.

The east wall of the new building was not found. It was either directly beneath or immediately to the east of the Period 4 east range wall, though no traces of it were seen in Area 6. The south-west quadrant of a circular oven (3721) was recorded in Area 16, just beyond the north-east corner of the Phase 1 structure. It had a pitched Pennant base, laid in a herringbone pattern, with a curved stone surround bonded with hard creamy-white mortar. Its overall diameter was estimated to be 1.45 m, though its north-west quadrant was unexcavated and its eastern half had been destroyed by the Period 4 east range wall.

The north wall of Room S almost certainly lay beneath Room 18 or the northern



half of Room 19, neither of which was excavated. Internally the length of the new structure was at least 10.3 m (33 ft 8 in), and its width was *c* 8 m (26 ft 4 in).

*Figure 3.24 Detail of south-east porch buttress (photograph: Robert Bell).*

#### *Other features*

Wall 295, near the south-west corner of the south range, may have belonged to Phase 4a. It predated the Phase 4b garderobe and was overlaid by the west wall of Room R1 (Fig 3.28, Section 22). Only its east face was visible, but it appeared to be 1.2 m wide and had the same matrix as the other walls further east. Its northern end had been totally removed by the east wall of the Period 4 west range, but it seemed to be leading towards Room G. It appears to have replaced the curtain wall immediately to its west, part of which may have survived the Phase 3 building work, but now was demolished to ground level. Its relationship to Room P1 and its function are unknown.





Figure 3.25 South frontages, west of porch, from the east (photograph: Robert Bell).

#### Phase 4b

Rooms P1 and P2 and the north and west walls of Room D were demolished, and the western part of the south range was completely rebuilt (Fig 3.27). The frontage wall to the west of Room F1, with a garderobe at its west end, was constructed first; then Rooms Q and R were erected; and finally Room R1 was added. However, they must have been virtually contemporary given the continuity of the frontage wall.

The former south wall of Room D (1835), itself a Phase 3 rebuilding of the primary wall, was reconstructed again as wall 417. To the west of Room F1, this appeared as a thin sliver, 80 mm thick, with a matrix of gritty reddish-orange loam (Fig 3.4, Section 3). It overlay 1835, but there was no direct relationship with the Phase 4a repair

(1795). Context 417 continued west of Room D as wall 63, cutting through the dividing wall between Rooms P1 and P2, and riding over the west wall of Room P1.

A garderobe (279) was built at the western end of the new frontage, and its north wall (70) was integral with 63. The most common matrix used in the Phase 4b work was dark reddish-brown sandy loam. However, the matrix of the west wall of the garderobe (62) was brighter and reddish-orange in colour, indicating that there could be significant variations, even between walls that were demonstrably contemporary. The rectangular garderobe shaft was incorporated in the thickness of the wall, its south wall (27) projecting forward 0.5 m from the line of the frontage. The size of the shaft was unclear, because its east side was altered in Period 4, but it measured 0.56 m in width and emptied into the moat through a tall, narrow, slightly pointed arch (Fig 3.28, Section 23). The south-east corner of the garderobe appears to have been supported externally by a buttress (2165), bonded to the footings of the south face (2164). However, their precise relationship was uncertain because they were partially concealed beneath later walling joining the Period 4 west range to the Period 3 south range, and it is possible that they predated the garderobe. Without totally dismantling this part of the south frontage, it cannot be fully understood.

The garderobe and the main south wall, like the Phase 3 walls which they replaced, were built freestanding on the bedrock at the side of the moat, instead of being trench-built. Their outer faces were both covered with rendering, which also overlapped the sides of 2166, a square drain outlet incorporated in wall 63/417 (Fig 3.28, Section 26).

#### Room Q

Room Q, which replaced Room D, was shorter and wider than its predecessor and measured 9.8 m by 5.3 m (32 ft by 17 ft 6 in). The east wall of Room D (1010) was retained but the remainder of the room was entirely new. The north wall (117) butted 1010, and continued the line of the Phase 4a north wall of Room A (1864). Curving round the outside of the north-east corner of the room, and butting the outer face of 117, were footings 1858. Internally, the east and north walls were also butted by footings (1851 and 1852), which probably supported a spiral staircase, replacing the earlier stairs

in the north-west corner of Room D. The east side of the staircase must have been joined to the north wall of Room A. The gap between them was filled by the footings of a Period 2 wall, on which a linking wall must have been laid, though no traces of it survived.

The north wall of Room Q (117) had stepped foundations, set in a construction trench, which cut through the footings of the former west wall of Room D. The new west wall (67) cut through the north and west walls of Room P2 (Fig 3.28, Section 22). Bonded to its outer face was the base of a chimney stack (116). There were no surviving floor levels within Room Q, but there was a contemporary drain (41) in the south-west corner, which flowed through the outlet built into the south wall (see above). The drain must have been largely rebuilt in Period 5, as its sides were set in hard pink mortar, but it probably utilised the line of an earlier medieval drain, built into the thickness of the west wall.

#### Room R

Room R was contemporary with Room Q, since its north wall (112) was bonded to the west wall of Room Q, but it was slightly later in the construction sequence than the south frontage wall (63), which was butted by its west wall (111/115). The room measured 4.5 m by 3.8 m (14 ft 9 in by 12 ft 6 in), and its walls were 0.8–0.9 m wide. Wall 111/115 abutted the west wall of Room P1 and, like 63, was built directly on the bedrock. After the walls had been constructed, Room P1 was infilled with orange-brown clay with numerous fragments of rubble (206), and reddish-brown clay (149). Layer 149 was sealed by a layer of crushed white mortar floor bedding (150), identical to 91, in the north half of the room. Two tiles, set in 91, were recorded *in situ*, adjacent to wall 67. These provided the only evidence for an internal tiled floor anywhere within the medieval building.

#### Room R1

Room R1, in the south-west corner of the range, was 1.5 m (5 ft) square. Its north wall (108) butted 111/115, and its west wall (242) butted the north side of the garderobe (70), though it was bonded into it at its north-west corner. The matrix of 242 consisted of orange-brown silty loam, contrasting with the matrix of the south wall. It directly overlay the Phase 4a wall (295),

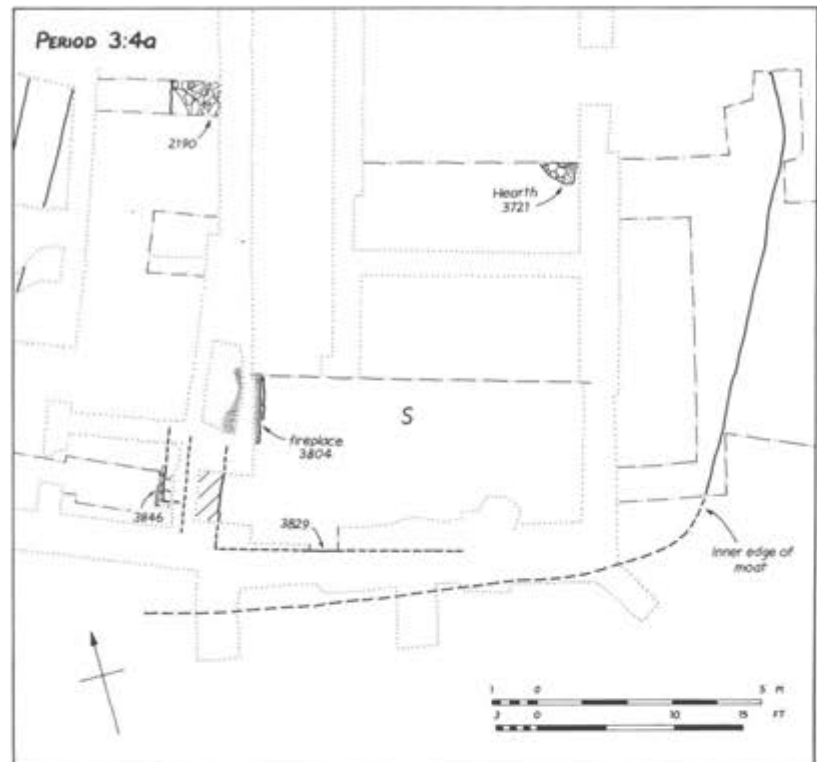


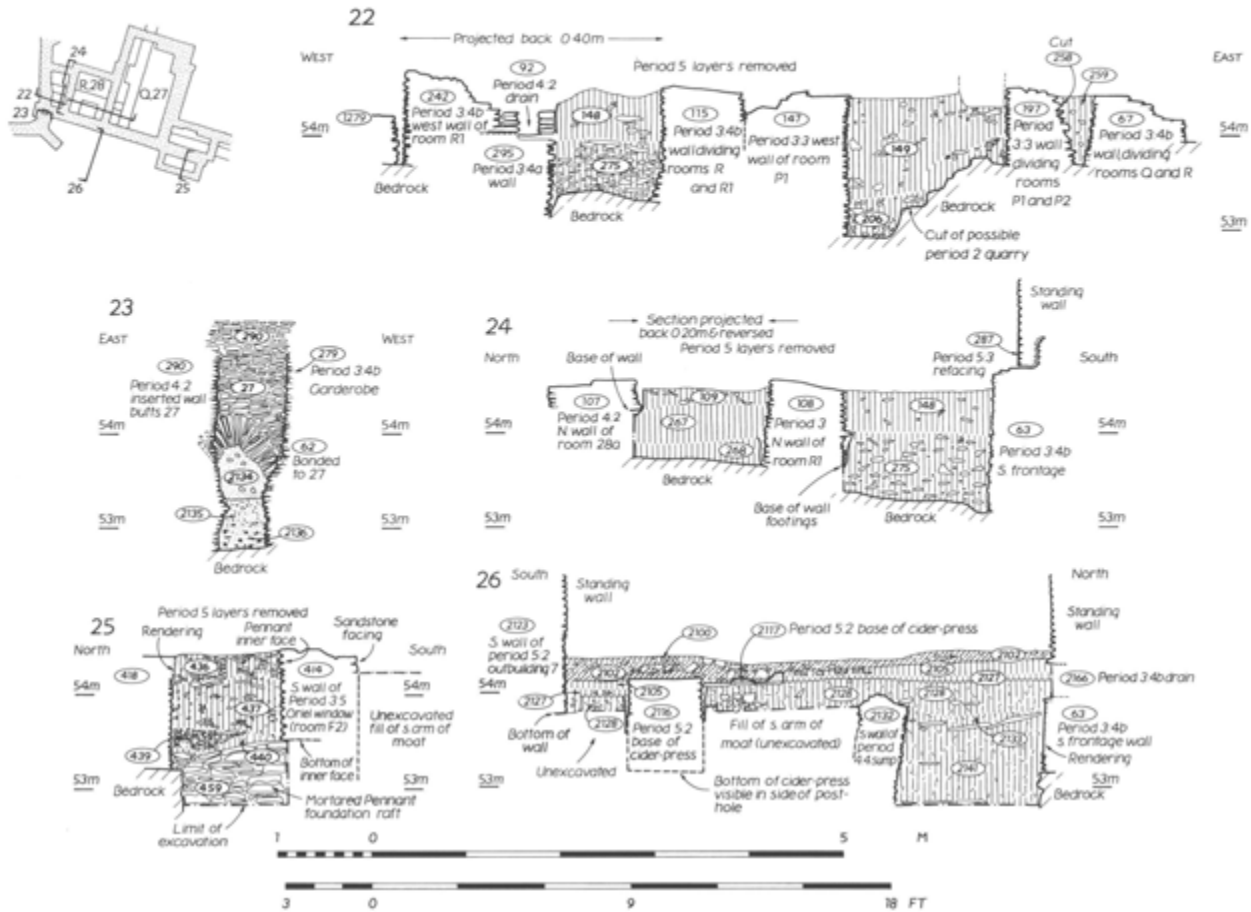
Figure 3.26 Room S.

which may have remained standing beyond the north-west corner of Room R1. The outer face of 242 was very crude, and was built in a construction trench cutting through the demolished Phase 1 curtain wall. The north wall was also set in a construction trench cut through the lowest layer of backfill behind the frontage (275). A layer of orange clay and rubble (148) was then deposited to complete the backfilling to floor level. The floor itself had been removed (Fig 3.28, Sections 22 and 24).

#### The triangular areas between the south range and Room G

Immediately north-east of Room Q, wall 1805 butted against the northward return of Phase 4a wall 1864. It was 0.7 m wide, and at its northern end it was bonded to a set of semicircular footings (1800). These were very narrow, varying in width between 0.35 m and 0.55 m (Fig 3.33, Section 28), and probably represented the foundations of a timber stair tower, though the relationship with the east wall of Room G had been destroyed by a Period 4 wall. Wall 1805 was likely to have formed the east side of a penitence, linking Room Q with Room G. Walls 1800 and 1805 both had the same matrix (orange-brown loam) as the base for the





stairs in the corner of Room Q, and they were all probably contemporary.

A very fragmentary tiled and flagged surface (1669) survived in the open triangular area defined by Rooms Q, G and wall 1805. The tiles and the rectangular Pennant flagstones were set diagonally to wall 1805 in a bedding of white mortar (Fig 3.33, Section 27). The flagstones, in a strip measuring at least 2.3 m in width, parallel and adjacent to wall 1805, probably formed a path within the pentice. They may have been laid at the same time as the tiles in the courtyard, though it is possible that they were secondary, replacing a primary tiled path after it became heavily worn.

The well (80; Fig 3.29), in the open area bounded by Rooms G, Q and R, was also attributed to Phase 4b, on the basis of its matrix and its location, which was almost exactly equidistant from the surrounding buildings. It was 1.15 m in diameter, but its full depth was unknown, since it was excavated to a depth of only 1.85 m. It was lined with evenly laid Pennant rubble, generally

about 50 mm thick, though some reused pieces of limestone were also incorporated in the side of the shaft, and had been shaped to fit the curve. There were no mouldings on the visible faces of the stones. The material within the excavated part of the well was Period 5.1 infill, and gave no indication of its construction date. It could conceivably have been dug later, but given its matrix and the amount of limestone in its lining, it was unlikely to be any earlier.

**Rooms M and N**

Rooms M and N were erected on the west side of Room G. Only a small part of Room M could be excavated because a large tree was growing directly above it, but it clearly contained another garderobe, which was a smaller version of Room H. The outer face of its north wall (1293) butted against the corner buttress at the west end of wall 77, though the core of the wall was tied in to the buttress. The actual north-west corner was hidden within the thickness of the west wall of the Period 4 west range, which

Figure 3.28 Sections 22–26: south range.



Figure 3.29 West part of the south range, from the north  
(photograph: Robert Bell).



stepped over it, but it would have projected out *c* 1.4 m further into the moat than Room H. The internal north-west and south-west corners of the garderobe were both revealed and since, in contrast to Room H, the demolished Phase 1 curtain wall appeared to have been utilised as its east wall, it would have measured 3 m by 1 m (10 ft by 3 ft). It survived to a maximum height of 1.8 m above the bottom of the moat.

The outer faces of the walls within the moat were all rendered, though only occasional traces of the rendering survived. An arch was incorporated in the west wall, and there may have been a second or even a third arch further north. The arch was smaller (0.7 m high and 0.65 m wide) and the actual wall was thinner (0.6 m) than the equivalent feature in Room H (Fig 3.20, Section 20). Directly above the crown of the arch was a rectangular socket (1298), which was too big to be a putlog hole. The wall was built with large thin slabs of Pennant, and was battered *c* 0.1 m towards the bottom. Like the other walls in Rooms M and N, it had a matrix of smooth red silt with flecks of limestone and charcoal, similar to that of the Phase 4b south frontage wall, and significantly different from that of the walls

of Rooms H–K. The south wall (1267), which like the north wall was 0.75 m wide, butted against the former curtain wall. Overall, including the garderobe, Room M measured 3 m by 4 m (10 ft by 13 ft).

The dividing wall between Rooms M and N (94) was built on top of a layer of red clay (1264), which was similar to layer 429 beneath Room J, and had a maximum thickness of 0.35 m (Fig 3.20, Section 19). Only a single course of footings remained, and these were cut through by a Period 4 drain (87), which had removed the junction between 94 and the south wall of Room J. The south wall of Room N had been entirely destroyed by later walls, but it is likely that it returned to the south-west corner of Room G. Room N measured *c* 5 m by 3.2 m (16 ft 6 in by 10 ft 6 in).

Although the north wall of Room M was tied in to the buttress supporting the south-west corner of Room H, there is strong evidence that Rooms M and N belonged to a later phase than Rooms H and J; the walls of Rooms M and N were thinner than those to the north, and their matrices were quite different. Also the Phase 3 thickening and possible refacing of the west wall of Room G implied that there was no building to the west of it until Phase 4.

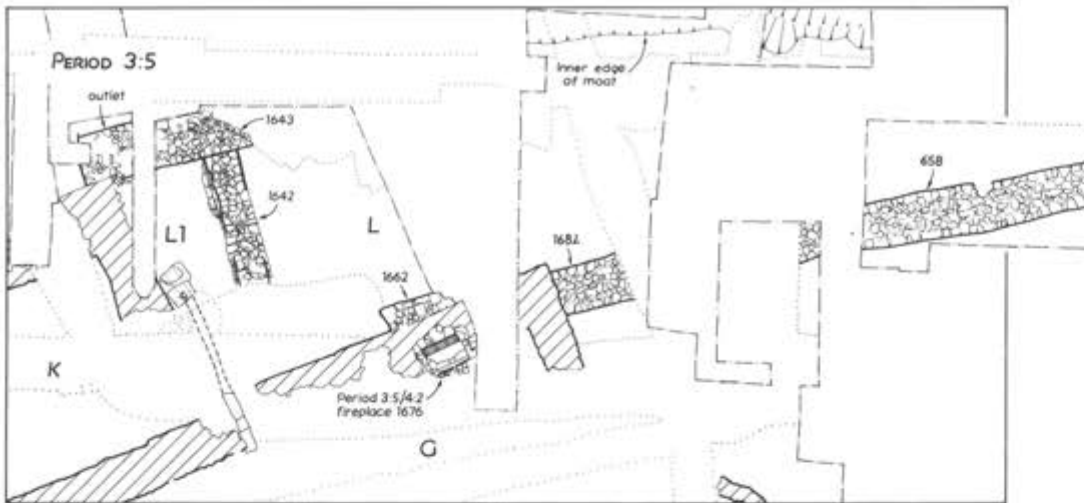
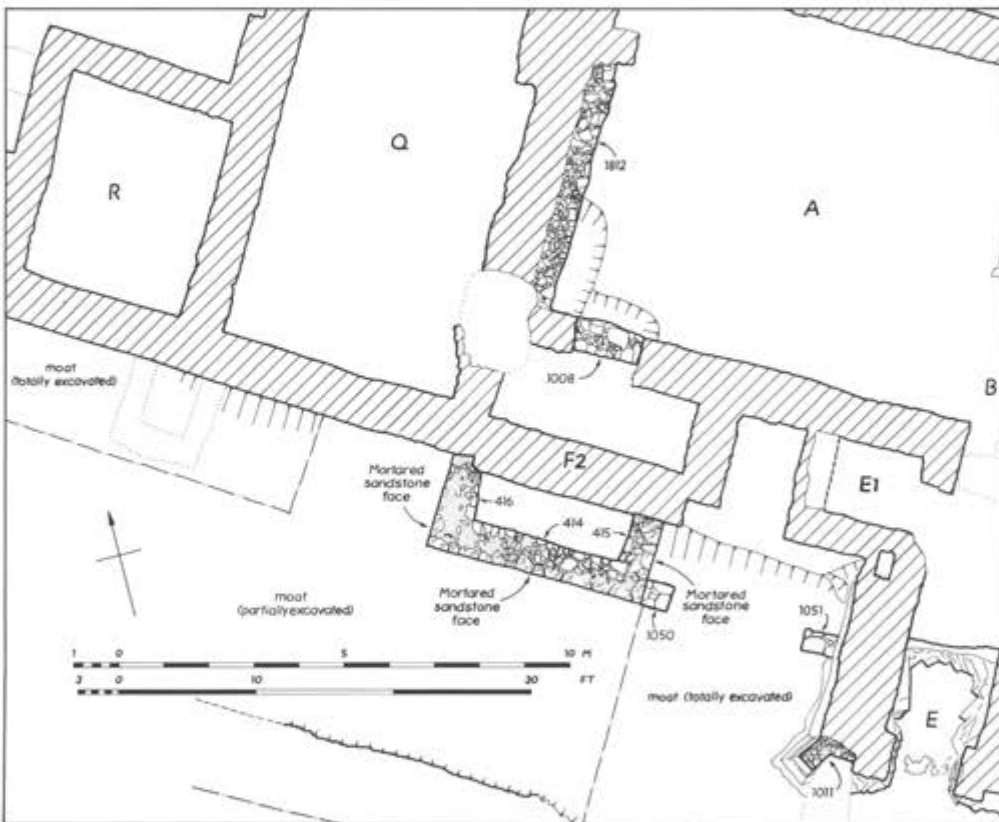


Figure 3.30 Period 3:5:  
Room F2 and Rooms  
L/L1.



## Phase 5

### *The south range*

The buttress at the south-west corner of the south porch was rebuilt (Fig 3.30). The new buttress (1011) had the same dimensions as the Phase 4a south-east buttress 1407, and the foundations of both of them tapered down to the bedrock from an offset, above which they were vertical. But whereas 1407 was bonded in loam and was made of Pen-

nant with decorative bands of limestone, the offset and upper courses of 1011 consisted of sandstone slabs, bonded in a very pale sticky grey ash mortar. The slabs extended over the full width of the buttress, and were generally 40 mm thick, with vertical tooling on their faces. The bottom part of 1011 was made of coursed Pennant rubble, bonded in the same mortar. A small part of the south end of the west arm of the porch was rebuilt at the same time (Fig 3.11, Section 12).

Figure 3.31 South arm of the moat, west of the porch, section and oriel window; from the east (photograph: Robert Bell).



The Phase 4a oriel window (Room F1) was extended southwards into the moat (Fig 3.31). Its original south wall (418) may have been demolished to below floor level, and a new larger window was created (Room F2). Internally, the extension measured 3.3 m by 1.15 m (10 ft 9 in by 3 ft 9 in). Its east wall (415) butted the outer face of F1 (418), while its west wall (416) returned to the junction between 418 and the south frontage, to which it was bonded.

All three sides were faced externally with rectangular blocks of grey sandstone, bearing vertical tooling marks and measuring on average 0.6 m by 0.09 m. The sandstone was very similar to the slabs used in the south-west buttress of the porch. Analysis of samples indicated that although it did not come from a source in the immediate vicinity of Acton Court and was calcareous, in contrast to the Pennant, nevertheless it was a Coal Measures sandstone and may have been quarried in or close to Iron Acton parish. The blocks were set in mortar, which differed from the matrix of 1011, since it was pinkish-white in colour and was very hard, containing charcoal flecks and numerous small lumps of limestone. The sandstone blocks did not rest directly on the bottom of the moat. Instead, they were laid on coursed Pennant rubble, 0.8 m high (Fig 3.7, Section 7). The walls survived to a maximum height of 2.35 m.

The sandstone was not rendered, presumably to provide a contrast with the south frontage. The inner faces of the walls were made of Pennant rubble, and sat on a mortared rubble raft (459). The area within the walls was filled with a series of layers (437–40), consisting mainly of reddish-brown clay and rubble with flecks of mortar (Fig 3.28, Section 25).

Butting the south-east corner of Room F2 was a rubble pier-base (1050). It included one worked block of limestone and was bonded with light orange sandy loam with flecks of plaster. It projected 0.6 m eastwards and was 0.58 m high. It was matched by a similar base (1051), 0.38 m high, which butted the west arm of the porch, and projected 0.7 m westwards. They probably supported vertical timbers, and may have been built in Phase 5, though they might have been constructed in the early part of Period 4.

The west wall of Room A (1010) was thickened, at least below floor level and possibly up to ceiling level. Footings (1812) were built in a construction trench and stepped down through the fill of the Period 2 quarry. They were 0.5 m wide and butted against wall 1010. They also butted against the north side of the Phase 4a south wall (1009). They were set in yellow loam, and consisted mainly of Pennant rubble, though



Figure 3.32 Fireplace in the north wall of Room G, from the south (photograph: Robert Bell).

they included several pieces of undecorated glazed tile. The fill of the construction trench also contained tile fragments as well as rubble and large pieces of plaster. Clearly contemporary with 1812 was 1008, which filled the gap left in the Phase 4a frontage between 1007 and 1009. Very large and irregular pieces of Pennant were used in its construction, and like 1812, it contained tile fragments. It also shared the same matrix and was set in a wide construction trench. Wall 1008 appeared to be a sleeper beneath the entrance to the oriel window, and was probably associated with the creation of Room F2.

#### *The south and east arms of the moat*

The level of the bottom of the moat, from which the oriel window (Room F2) was constructed, was 0.4 m lower than the bedrock on which the rebuilt south-west buttress of the porch stood. This suggests that the south arm of the moat was deepened during Phase 5, and that the new buttress predated the window. The porch and buttresses (and also the south frontage to the east of the porch) were left standing on plinths or shelves of unexcavated natural Pennant. The south half of the east arm of the moat also seems to have been deepened, probably at the same time. Its base was at

precisely the same level as the base of the south arm, and was 0.4 m below the lowest course of the primary revetting walls. From Phase 5 onwards it was 2 m deep, like the rest of the moat.

#### *Room G*

A fireplace (1676) was inserted in the north wall of Room G near the north-east corner (Fig 3.30, Fig 3.33, Section 29). The back consisted of thin courses of Pennant, set in a hard white mortar with small limestone inclusions. Butting it was a single row of vertically pitched Pennant pieces, 0.16 m wide. A large limestone slab, 1.1 m by 0.46 m, was laid flush with the pitched Pennant, and was overlaid by the sides of the fireplace, also made of mortared Pennant (Fig 3.32). The west side had been removed, but the mortar bedding for it was still visible. The whole feature measured 0.85 m by 0.65 m. The base of the associated chimney stack (1662) was built in a construction trench, and butted the outer face of the north wall.

The fireplace is attributed to Phase 5, because the hard white mortar is closely comparable with the mortar used in the frontage walls of Room F2. However, the possibility that the feature was added during the Period 4.2 alterations to Room G cannot be ruled out.



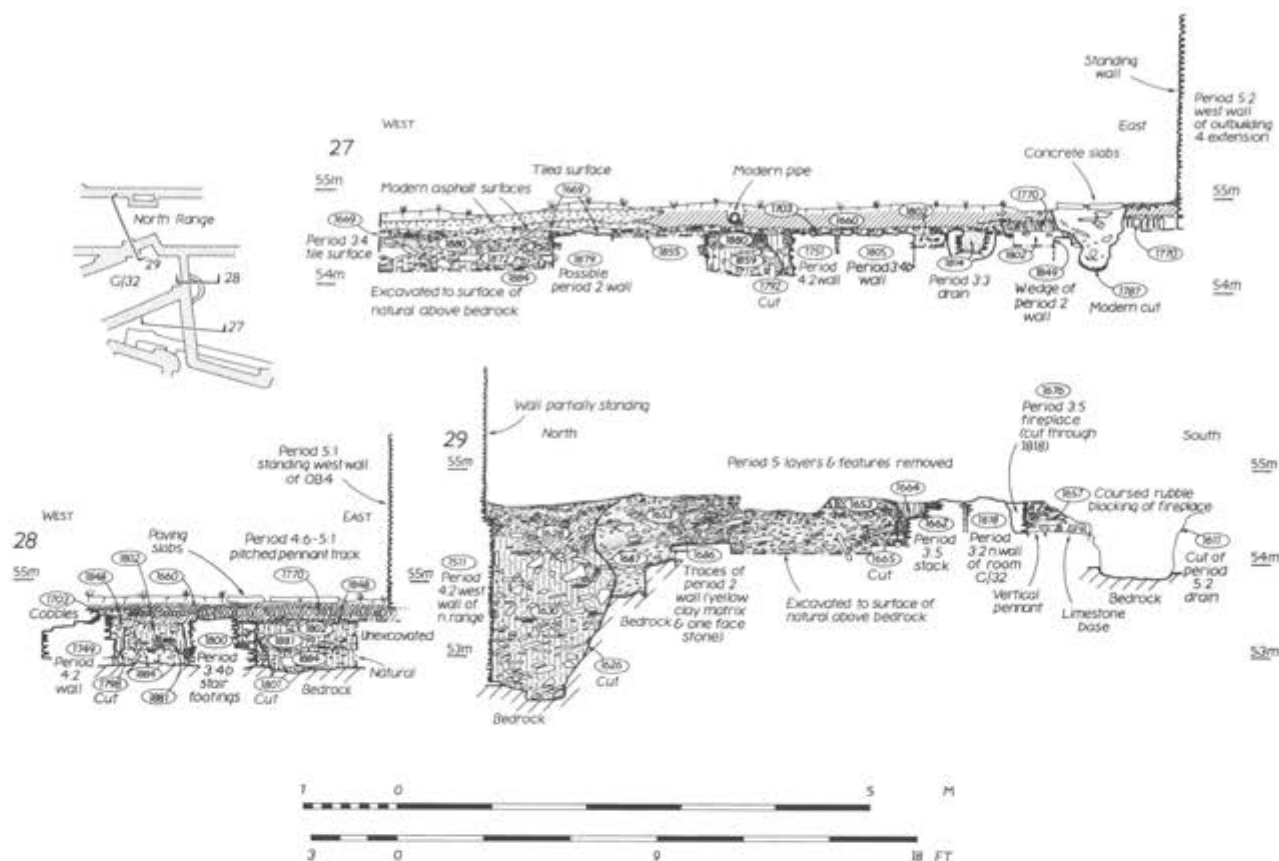


Figure 3.33 Sections 27–29: north range and courtyard.

### Rooms L and L1

These rooms were added to the east of Room K, and the north of Room G (Fig 3.30). They were definitely later than Phase 3 but predated the Period 4.2 north range. They were probably constructed in Phase 5. The new building was 5.1 m wide, but its length is unknown, because its east wall, which almost certainly returned to the north-east corner of Room G, was hidden beneath the standing wall of a Period 5 farm building. The north wall (243/1643), 1 m wide and bonded in bright yellow-brown loam, oversailed the north-east corner of Room K by 0.5 m, butting against the rendering on the outer face of wall 172. It was built up from the side of the moat and survived to a height of *c* 0.9 m. No traces of external rendering survived. The Phase 3 drain (1688) was incorporated within it, and its outlet, which was located, though not fully excavated, was at least 0.3 m wide.

The north wall continued eastwards, stepping down into the north arm of the moat, but much of it was destroyed when the Tudor north range was constructed. It was butted by a partition wall (1642) which divided Rooms L and L1. The latter was

probably a passage, wider at its north end than at its south end because its east wall was not parallel to the east wall of Room K. The passage appeared to be related to the Phase 5 north court, interpreted as a walled garden, and may have been linked to it by a bridge across the moat. No floor layers survived in either of the rooms.

Butting the north-east corner of Room G, adjacent to the presumed south-east corner of Room L, was a wall (1682), 1 m wide and bonded in light yellow-brown loam. The same wall continued eastwards across Area 4 (658). It was freestanding and probably formed the north side of a ground-floor pentice. At first-floor level it would have supported a gallery, as it continued to do in Period 4.1 after the construction of the new east range. It linked Room L with the unexcavated Period 3 building beneath the north half of the east range. Like Room L, the gallery would have been at right angles to the north-south axis of the walled garden and would have overlooked it.

### The area south of the house

Apart from Area 2, and two other much smaller trenches, there were virtually no

excavations in this part of the site, and no evidence for any structures was found.

The modern ground surface within the south court is fairly flat, though towards the west side it dips away *c* 0.5 m. However, the natural slope westwards is more marked (Fig 4.40, Section 36). The surface of the natural shale and clay beneath the west wall is 1.9 m lower than the surface of the bedrock recorded just outside the south-east corner of the moat in Area 14. The change in level is very gradual across most of the court, though 10 m from the west wall, the slope becomes significantly steeper.

A humic brown or grey-brown soil horizon (536/543/549), virtually Pennant-free, and generally 0.2–0.3 m thick, covered the whole of Area 2. A slight hollow on the south edge of the trench was filled with similar material (560). Further down the slope, the soil (544) became siltier and greyer. Along the lip of the slope and overlying this horizon there was a roughly linear band of concentrated and compacted gravelly rubble (555). To the east, there was a dense layer of rubble (553/554), generally flat though probably random, which contained tile fragments of both Roman and medieval date. It hardly existed on the north side of the trench, but became progressively thicker towards the south, with a maximum depth of 0.1 m.

The rubble to the east of 555 was overlaid by an upper soil horizon (547/548/550), consisting of smooth reddish-brown loam with yellow clay blotches. Like the rubble, it was very thin against the north edge of the trench, but thickened to *c* 0.15 m towards the south.

It was difficult to assign these layers to a specific phase, though they were all earlier than Period 4. The rubble spreads and upper soil horizon might be related to buildings in the vicinity, and it was noticeable that they did not continue down the slope. The band of rubble on the edge of the slope could have been a path, but alternatively it may originally have formed the base of a bank.

The only definite Period 3 features located to the south of the moat were two stone-lined drains, both of which had stone bases and were capped, though most of their capping stones had been removed. Drain 482 flowed from south to north, and decanted into the moat opposite the porch (filled in during Period 4.3). It was at least 9.5 m long, though its point of origin was unknown since it had been robbed out fur-

ther south. It was laid at an angle to the probable line of the approach track, and its outlet, which cut through the revetting at the side of the moat, was precisely on the central axis of the porch.

The second drain (3520) flowed in the opposite direction, from the south edge of the moat towards the south-west. It replaced the Period 2 ditch, part of which had continued in use as an overflow channel after the moat was constructed, and was actually set in the ditch, adjacent to the moat. Its sides were bonded with smooth yellow loam and it was probably built in Phase 4a or Phase 5. It was obviously abandoned when the moat was filled in, and predated the laying out of the south court. It may have emptied into the pond discovered in Trench J.

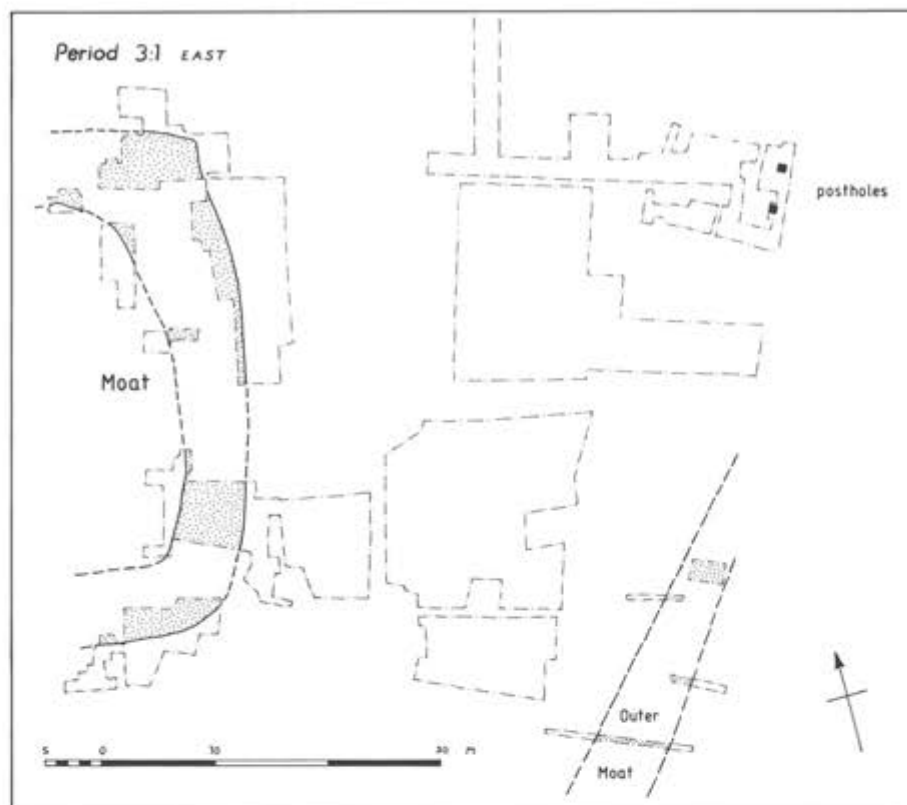
### The area east of the moat

#### Phase 1–3

Two very large postholes (2818 and 2829), both of which were cut into the natural silty clay beyond the edge of the Pennant outcrop, were recorded near the north-east corner of the east court, adjacent to the eastern boundary wall (Figs 3.34, 3.35). The northern posthole (2818) measured *c* 1.10 m by 1.40 m and was 1.40 m deep. The packing within it (2815) consisted of coursed horizontal stone slabs, though the top course was set vertically. The substantial stump of an oak post (2826), with a maximum height of 0.75 m and measuring 0.52 m by 0.50 m in section, survived *in situ* (Fig 3.36). It was well-preserved in waterlogged conditions and had been abandoned following the removal of the rest of the post after it had rotted through below ground level. The void above the stump was filled with fairly loose dark red silty clay (2819). The top of the southern posthole (2829) was heavily disturbed by a much later feature (792/2827) dug alongside the eastern boundary wall, and it was only partially excavated, but it appeared to be very similar to posthole 2818. It measured at least 1.20 m by 1.20 m and a small part of the pitched stone packing (2830) survived on its east side. Its full depth is uncertain; nor is it known whether the base of the post itself survived, although at a depth of 0.70 m the ground was equally waterlogged.

Judging by the size of post 2826 and the fact that it was set 1.40 m into the ground, the two posts probably formed a gateway, *c* 3 m wide. Although the posts were on the same alignment as the east wall of the

Figure 3.34 Period 3.1 features east of the moat.



Period 4.6 east court they must have been considerably earlier. They predated the Period 4.2 construction of Room 36, the north wall of which sealed the packing for the northern post, and on stylistic grounds are likely to be attributable to the early part of Period 3. However, the possibility that they were even earlier and belonged to Period 2 cannot be entirely ruled out.

#### *The outer moat*

Most of the outer moat was outside the limits of the property acquired by English Heritage in 1986 (Figs 3.34, 3.39). It was discovered in 1996 during the excavation of a pipe trench running eastwards from OB 16 to Latteridge Road, south of Area 10. The inner and outer edges of the feature were recorded but its base was not reached. Further pipe trenches in the south-east corner of the east court revealed more of the inner edge and also the base of the moat. A small trench south of OB 17, between the modern boundary wall and Latteridge Road, located the outer edge again, and a complete profile of the moat was recovered in a machine-dug archaeological trench close to the junction with the stream, on the south side of the modern car park.

The feature was linear and extended over a distance of at least 60 m. It was cut into the natural clay beyond the eastern edge of the sandstone outcrop, with which it was roughly parallel. Both sides were revetted by coursed Pennant rubble and were slightly battered. The west side was straight and was on the same alignment as the west side of the canalised part of the stream, whereas the east side followed a different alignment. As a result the moat became progressively wider towards the south-west. It was only *c* 4.5 m wide beneath the south-east corner of the east court, whereas it was 6.5 m wide adjacent to the modern gateway east of Area 10, and in the archaeological trench near the junction with the stream was 8.5 m wide and *c* 1.1 m deep. It was flat-bottomed. Its base was remarkably level, dropping by no more than 0.20 m (from 52.30 m to 52.10 m OD) over a distance of 60 m.

In order to construct the southern end of the moat the stream was diverted along its present sharply angled course. The west side of the earlier stream bed, which was only partially excavated because of flooding, was filled with tip layers of orange-brown silt with occasional twigs, and concentrated Pennant rubble. The main fill of the stream bed consisted of grey silt containing oyster

shells and fragments of wood. The infill layers were sealed by a horizontal band of smooth orange-brown alluvial silt, 0.15 m thick, on which a rough coursed wall, 1.3 m wide and forming the east side of the moat, was constructed. Its inner edge rested on two oak planks.

The precise phase in which the outer moat was built is uncertain, as is its point of origin. It was possibly contemporary with the inner moat, though this has yet to be proved. The best potential source of dating evidence is likely to come from the infilled former stream bed, assuming that the diversion was primary.

### Phase 5

The only stone structures that could definitely be assigned to Period 3 were located on the outer edge of the moat, near its north-east corner (Fig 3.37; Fig 4.49, Sections 37, 38). They consisted of a shallow subrectangular vertical shaft (2216), with a semicircular arched outlet into the moat (Fig 3.38). The arch rested on a layer of brown clay (2237), which overlaid the lower courses of the primary revetting along the side of the moat. The shaft was bonded on its north side to a wall (2059), which may have continued eastwards to join the eastern boundary wall of the garden (3089). This could not be demonstrated because the southern end of the latter wall had been completely robbed, but they were almost at right angles to each other and may well have been contemporary. The shaft and outlet probably formed part of a garderobe, though there is no other evidence for the structure with which it was associated.

Contemporary with the garderobe was a wall (2223), which was overlaid by the lowest voussoir of the outlet arch, though its upper courses butted against 2059. It was 1 m wide and its matrix was smooth orange-brown loam with flecks of white plaster. It stepped down into the moat, extending at least 2.3 m westwards, and had been partially robbed out. The remaining part of the wall was sealed by the Period 4.3 moat-fill layers, which also filled the surviving portion of the shaft.

The wall may have formed the north side of a sump, projecting a short distance into the moat. However, there was no sign of any return wall further south. It was unrelated to the Period 4.1 east range, since directly opposite it was the blank wall of the northern stack. Most likely, it was connected to the unexcavated medieval building beneath

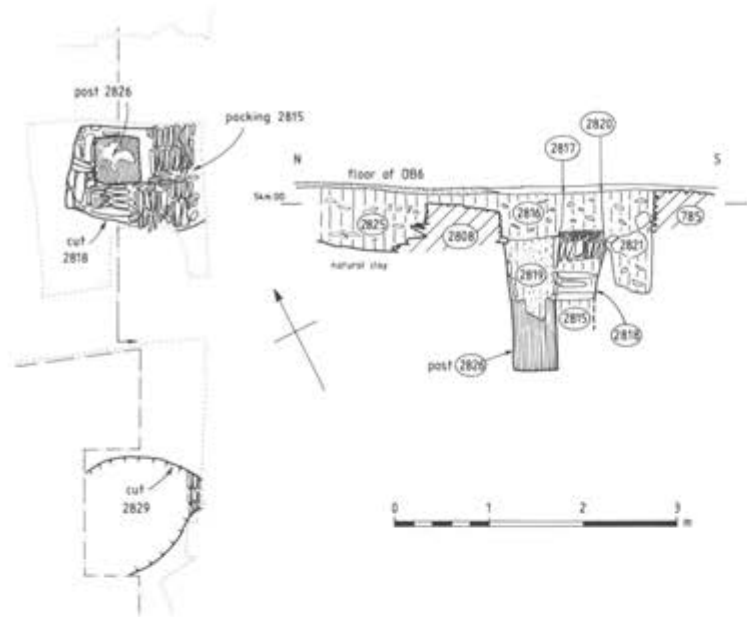


Figure 3.35 Plan and section of posts 2826 and 2829.

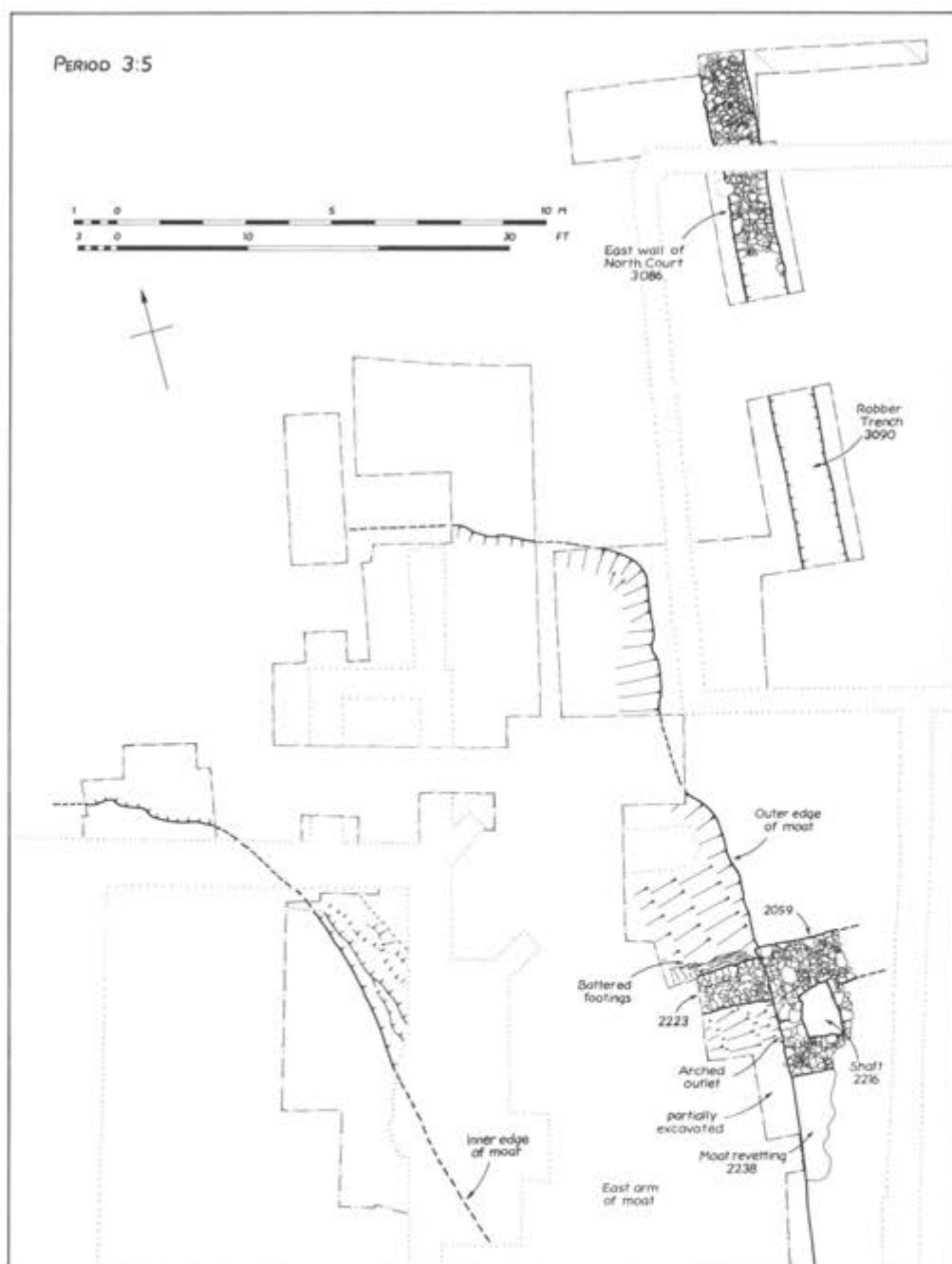
the east range. If this interpretation is correct, the wall must have incorporated an arch spanning the east arm of the moat. It may have provided a link across the east arm of the moat between the house and the south-east corner of the garden, similar to the suggested link between Room L1 and the west side of the garden across the north arm of the moat. On these grounds, the garderobe and walls on the outer edge of the moat are attributed to Phase 5.

Figure 3.36 Waterlogged post 2826 (photograph: Robert Bell).





Figure 3.37 Period 3:5: the north-east corner of the house and the moat.



### Earthworks and features in the environs of the house

#### Period 3.1–3.3

To the west and north-west of the house is a pair of parallel banks and ditches, aligned roughly north-south and overlying the ridge and furrow (Figs 3.39, 3.40). In Trench E2, the eastern bank (E2/10) was built on top of a layer of rubble, which sealed the fill of the Period 2 ditch. Further south, the banks have been almost levelled, so their relation-

ship with the embankment on the north side of the fishpond is uncertain. Similarly it is unclear how they related to the primary moat.

Immediately north of Trench D, they turn at right angles and run westwards towards the edge of the field. The banks are best preserved in this part of the field, and survive to a maximum height of 0.75 m. An RAF aerial photograph, taken in 1946 (CPE/UK/1912, no 4046), shows that they formerly continued at least 200 m towards



*Figure 3.38 Outlet on the outer side of the east arm of the moat, from the south-west (photograph: Robert Bell).*

the Ladden Brook, but they have since been destroyed by ploughing. The banks formed a quite substantial boundary, probably of a deer park (see below). Possibly contemporary with them was a single bank and ditch, which headed eastwards across the north part of the field, on the same line as the north arm of the larger boundary.

To the south-east and south of the house, two sets of fishponds were built (Dennison and Iles 1985, 39 and fig 3). A chain of three rectangular ponds, becoming progressively smaller in size towards the north, formerly existed on the east side of Latteridge Road, and were described as 'Old Fishpond' in the 1842 Tithe apportionment. There was no significant fall in level between them, and they were either extremely shallow or else they were embanked. They were separated by dams which were visible in the RAF aerial photograph. They were filled in during the 1970s, though the stream which fed them still respects their outer edges.

On the west side of the road, just beyond the southern edge of the Pennant outcrop, is a fourth fishpond, trapezoidal in shape. Its eastern edge is obscured by modern tipping, but it measures 0.5 h (1.2 acres) in area. It currently has a maximum depth of 1.7 m, though it may originally have been deeper.

It was dug through shale and clay, and except on its south side, it was embanked. The embankment on the south-west side was 1.1 m high, and the ground level outside was only 0.6m above the level of the bottom of the pond. All the sides were revetted with coursed rubble. Most of the revetting has collapsed because of tree-root action, but short lengths of it survive. On the north side, there is evidence of a second phase of stone facing built against the face of the primary revetting. In the centre of the pond is a circular island, c 9 m in diameter and 1.3 m high. This is fairly overgrown, but traces of stone revetting remain here as well.

At present, the stream flows westwards across the northern half of the pond, but this course appears to be modern. Originally there was a bypass channel within the pond, running round its southern edge. Beyond the south-west corner its course can still be seen, cutting through the ridge and furrow. The main outlet was at the north-west corner. Like the sides of the pond, it was revetted and led into a channel. Only a very small portion of this remains open, but the 1946 aerial photograph shows a much longer ditch, now destroyed, continuing across the field to the west.

## Period 3.4–3.5

A series of springs feed into a reservoir 200 m north of Lodge Farm. From the reservoir, the water flows into a stone-lined and stone-capped underground culvert which runs westwards down the hill. Its course is indicated by two rectangular watering places, where the culvert opens out. The one nearer to the road is 1.5 m wide and 0.9 m deep. A short length of pitched Pennant track leads down into the water from either side to provide access for the cattle which still use it.

The culvert must divide into two branches. One branch flows into the south-east corner of the fishpond on the north side of Latteridge Road, 275 m from the reservoir. The fishpond is quite different in character from the ponds on the south side of the house. It is cut into the sandstone bedrock, and although it is overgrown and partially flooded, it has a depth, in places, of at least 5.75 m. In origin it was almost certainly a quarry, though it is described as a fishpond in the Tithe apportionment. The culvert supplying it with water is 0.3 m high and 0.1 m wide and is built in a construction trench which cut 1.7 m into the rock.

The second branch of the culvert must pass beneath the road, since it cuts through the sandstone outcrop and feeds into a pond in the north field. The culvert (C/12) is identical in size and construction to the underground channel north of the road, and cut through the Pennant outcrop to reach the pond (Fig 3.40, Section 43). Water still flows through it. The pond itself is cut through the ridge and furrow into the underlying clay, and presently measures *c* 25 m in diameter. It may originally have been smaller, but constant trampling by cattle has flattened and blurred its edges. There was no trace of any stone lining, though a spread of large pieces of Pennant was found in Trench G, near the point at which the culvert entered the pond. No outlet drain was located in Trench B, on the downhill side of the pond, and the route along which water was channelled has yet to be discovered.

A second pond, lined with coursed rubble, was found in Trench J, south of the south-west corner of the moat (Fig 3.40, Section 45). It was infilled with modern material, including breeze blocks, but it was not a modern feature, and almost certainly predated the Period 4.3 south court. The position of its south side is indicated by two sycamore trees, and it appeared to be roughly 10 m wide. Its precise shape was unclear, but

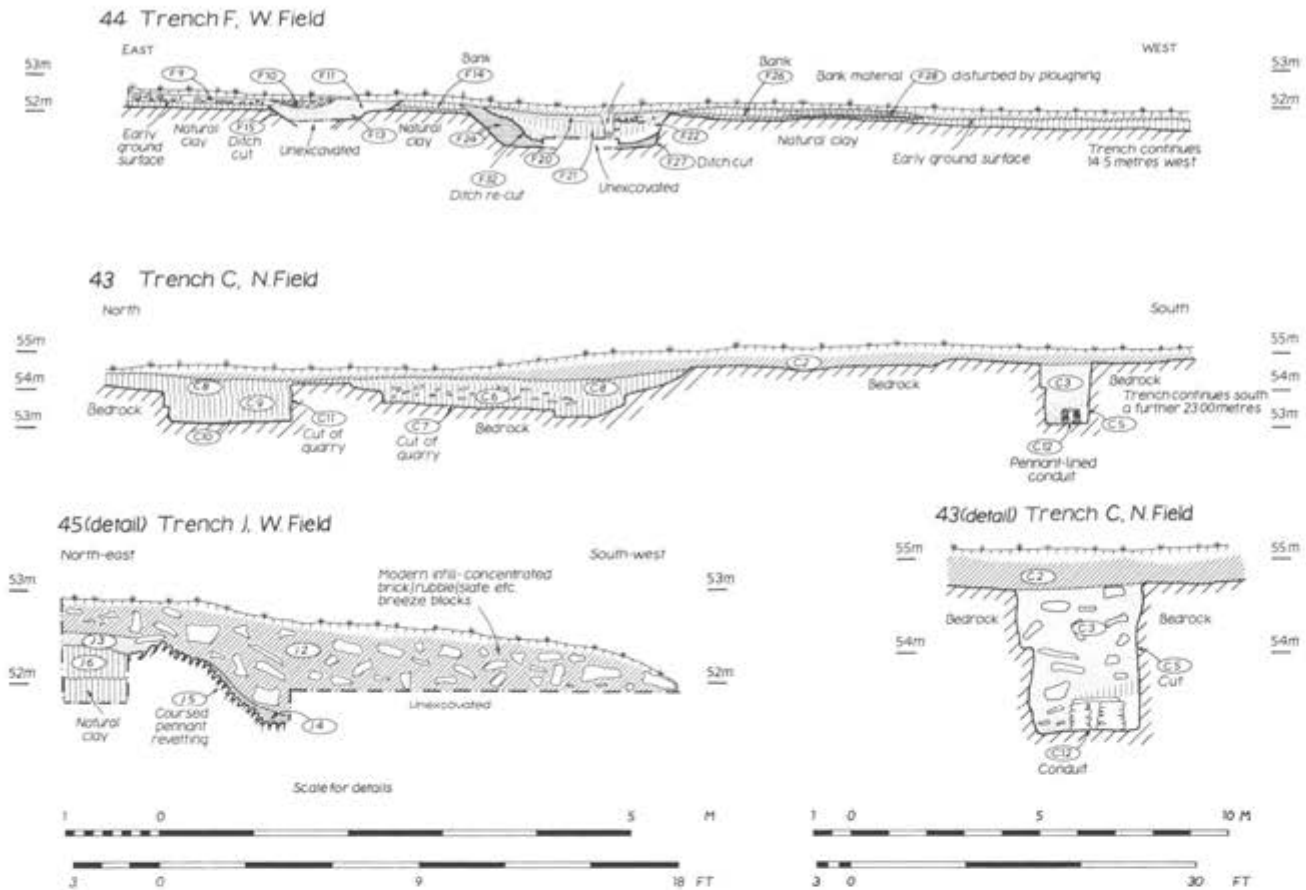
it may have been oval rather than circular. Unfortunately the relationship between the pond and the west wall of the court could not be established owing to lack of time. Presumably the pond was fed with water from the moat, but further work would be required to discover how they were linked.

A ditch, heading north-westwards across the west field and curving northwards along the west edge of the north field, was evidently intended to carry water away from the pond. The ditch cut through both the east and north arms of the double-banked boundary, and was flanked on its west side by a bank, which was 6.5 m wide and survived to a maximum height of 0.75 m.

Possibly belonging to these periods is an embanked enclosure to the east of Latteridge Road. It is roughly square in shape and measures *c* 60 m by 60 m. It is surrounded by a bank with an internal and external ditch. The external ditch and bank continue southwards from the south-west corner of the feature as far as the stream. The enclosure shows clearly on aerial photographs and is also visible on the ground. It post-dated the ridge and furrow, but its relationship with the culvert is unclear.

The north court was aligned on the north side of the Period 3 house, rather than on the earlier boundary banks or the Period 4 mansion. Its west and north boundary walls showed up quite distinctly on the geophysical survey. The line of its east wall, which was located near the north-east corner of the moat (see above), appeared within the north field as a low bank. The area enclosed by the walls was *c* 0.4 ha (almost exactly 1 acre), and was 52.5 m (*c* 175 ft) wide. The west wall extended 75 m (*c* 245 ft) beyond the outer edge of the moat, but the east wall, which was parallel to it, was longer, measuring 92.5 m (*c* 300 ft).

Four rectangular areas of Pennant rubble, respecting the central axis of the court, were visible on the geophysical survey. Other similar areas may exist, but the survey was uninformative in those parts of the field which overlay the natural Pennant. At the north end, a series of narrower linear earthworks could be seen. Iles suggested these might be pillow mounds, given that the north field was called Cunnygar on the Tithe map (Iles and White 1986, 55). Alternatively he thought they might represent house platforms. Either explanation might be correct, but since they were all aligned exactly on the court, it is much more likely that they represent garden features. The



archaeological evidence from the south-east corner of the court indicated that it was laid out before Period 4.1, and probably belonged to Period 3.5.

## Discussion

### Period 1: Romano-British occupation

The evidence for Romano-British activity on the site was limited to three sherds of pottery and a thin spread of roof and flue tile fragments (see Chapter 8). However, they may conceivably have derived from a building of some pretension located on the Pennant outcrop, either to the north-east or south-west of the moated medieval house. A similar quantity of tile fragments (in terms of weight) was recovered from the plough-soil above the Roman farmhouse at Ironmongers Piece, Marshfield, Avon (Barford and Hughes 1985). Subsequent excavations on that site demonstrated that the structure contained complete tegulae, minus their flanges, spanning a hypocaust, and also imbrices which were used as hot air flues.

The main roofing material consisted of Penant slates (Barford 1985), which would also presumably have been used in Roman buildings around Iron Acton.

The small rectangular fields between Latteridge Road and Lodge Farm, the boundaries of which are still visible as low banks beneath ridge and furrow in what later became the eastern deer park, provide further possible evidence for Romano-British activity in the vicinity of Acton Court. Although they have not been surveyed, they appear to be comparable to the pre-medieval fields, measuring 50 m by 40 m, which form part of a larger complex on Dundry Down, 7.5 km south of Bristol (Iles and White 1985, 58–60 and figs 5–6). ‘Celtic’ fields also survive beneath ridge and furrow in the park at Badminton, Gloucestershire (RCHME 1976, 6 and pl 42) and further examples of Roman or late Iron Age field systems exist on Bathampton Down, on the outskirts of Bath, and on Durdham Down, Clifton, Bristol (Iles 1983, 48–9 and fig 1; Russell and Williams 1984, 25).

The Roman road from Bitton to Berkeley Road (Margary road no 541a) passes through the south-east corner of Iron Acton

Figure 3.40 Sections 43–45: north and west fields.



parish, and forms the parish boundary across Engine Common. Northwards, in the direction of Charfield, the line of the road is visible as a cropmark, and in places its agger survives (Margary 1973, 141). No other traces of Romano-British occupation have yet been found elsewhere in the parish.

Furthermore, relatively few Roman sites have been located in any of the neighbouring parishes. This is largely attributable to the considerable area of land still under pasture or woodland, and there has also been a lack of systematic fieldwork (Iles 1984, 39). Many sites in Yate and Chipping Sodbury, where well over 500 ha of land have been covered by housing and industrial estates since the 1960s, have probably been destroyed without being recorded or even observed. The only recorded Roman find from any building site in Yate is a 3rd-century coin hoard (Frere 1990, 348).

In contrast, a detailed archaeological survey of the southern Cotswolds parish of Marshfield, involving extensive fieldwalking, found evidence for a network of Roman farms, frequently less than 1 km apart (Russett 1985, 23–4 and fig 10). Although no other parish in south Gloucestershire has been the subject of such intensive fieldwork, a similar density of sites is implied by the pioneering rescue excavations, in 1969 and 1970, along the line of the south Gloucestershire section of the M5 motorway. These suggested that there was a high density of Roman settlements and farms in an area previously thought to have been almost devoid of occupation apart from the known villas at Cromhall and Tockington Park Farm (Fowler 1977, 41 and fig 1).

More recently, the discovery of two occupation sites during fieldwalking in Tytherington parish (*c* 4 km north of Acton Court), suggests that the distribution of Roman farms along the sides of the valley of the Ladden Brook may be comparable, in terms of density, to the pattern of settlement revealed in the Marshfield survey (Iles and Kidd 1987, 48; Rawes 1980, 185). Both sites were situated close to the 55 m contour, on the western edge of the broad valley of the Ladden Brook. Further upstream, two other sites in Yate and Wickwar parishes have also been located on the right bank of the Brook (Rawes 1980, 186).

The Roman building material in the vicinity of Acton Court may represent another of these farms or small settlements, probably associated with the rectangular fields immediately to the east. They are

likely to have been located at regular intervals (*c* 1–1.5 km) along the edge of the valley on the left bank of the Brook, approximately between the 55 m and 65 m contours. Within Iron Age parishes, other sites might also be predicted in the vicinity of Latteridge, continuing the chain of settlements found in Yate, Wickwar and Tytherington parishes, and also along the north side of the River Frome.

## Periods 1–2:

### 11th to mid-13th centuries

The earliest post-Roman pottery from Acton Court consisted of heavily weathered sherds of Bath Fabric A cooking pots and spouted pitchers, which can be dated to the second half of the 11th or the early 12th century (Chapter 9). They were all in residual contexts, and predated all the Period 2 features and structures within the excavated area. No pre-Conquest pottery or other artefacts were found.

There was clearly a considerable amount of activity in the 12th to early 13th centuries on the site subsequently occupied by the moated manor house. The surviving evidence was very patchy and neither the function nor the layout of the wall-footings could be fully established. However, there was no evidence for an earlier manorial hall, such as that excavated at Kings Stanley, Gloucestershire (Evans 1989, 38–9 and fig 4), which dated to the mid-12th century and was of aisled timber-framed construction, with stone sills.

The pottery in the fill of the quarry, which consisted overwhelmingly of 12th- to early 13th-century cooking-pot sherds, indicated that there was domestic occupation on the site, or nearby. The buildings may have formed part of a settlement, as at Bradwell Bury, Buckinghamshire, where a series of 11th- to 12th-century timber buildings within crofts were found beneath a 13th-century moated manor house (Mynard 1976).

Alternatively the structures beneath Acton Court may have been purely agricultural or semi-industrial. The only stratified artefacts besides the pottery were a horse-shoe and two spindle whorls or weights. Many of the walls may simply have enclosed animal pens, though the partitioned building containing the stakeholes could conceivably have been a weaving shed, with either a stone or wooden superstructure. Four similar structures, of uncertain function but rec-

tangular in shape and dated early to mid-12th century, were recorded within the small ringwork at Hillesley, 10 km north-east of Iron Acton. They had similar narrow stone rubble footings, which were bonded in sandy soil, and two of them had a rounded corner like the south-west corner of the Phase 2 structure at Acton Court (Williams 1987, 157 and fig 8).

Occupation in Period 2 was not confined to the area beneath the later house. It clearly continued to the north and south of the Period 3 inner moat and is likely to have spread over most of the Pennant outcrop in the north field, judging by the pottery in the quarries at the north end of Trench C. This consisted entirely of sherds of limestone-tempered and handmade sandy ware cooking pots, identical to some of the 12th- to early 13th-century material in the fill of the quarries sealed beneath the Period 3 house. South of the inner moat, in Area 2, the pre-Period 4 ground soil also contained late 11th- to early 13th-century pottery, though it was mixed with late medieval material.

The site was apparently undefended, though it seems to have been defined on its east side by the gully and on its west side either by the bank on the edge of the terrace, or the bank and ditch which ran parallel to the terrace. Worth noting is that the Period 2 walls were generally on the same alignment as the west edge of the terrace in the north field.

The presence of limestone in Period 2.4, albeit in the form of decayed lumps, indicates that in addition to the quarrying of Pennant sandstone on the site, non-local stone was being imported, probably to be incorporated in a high-status building in the vicinity, such as a manorial hall. Halls were certainly being constructed in stone elsewhere in the region before the late 12th century, and two examples still survive: at Horton Court, a prebendal hall built *c* 1140; and at Saltford Manor, a secular house built *c* 1155 (Little 1985, 158–9). It is not known when stone replaced timber as the normal local building medium. At Stoke Gifford, 6.5 km to the south-west, the change appears to have occurred only in the mid-14th century (Russell 1986, 36). At Iron Acton, however, there is no reason why even minor outbuildings or boundary walls could not have been erected entirely in stone in the 12th century, given the easy availability of Pennant sandstone and the use of drystone walling.

The existence of a manor house predating the moated house would also be consis-

tent with the documentary evidence, which indicates that John de Acton held the manor, later to be known as Iron Acton, by military service at the end of the 12th century (Chapter 2).

The Period 2 walls can perhaps be interpreted as ancillary structures and enclosures associated with this earlier house, which was possibly situated to the north-east of the moated house, on the highest part of the Pennant outcrop. The location of the new Period 3 house, otherwise a far from ideal site around which to construct a moat, becomes explicable if it was selected because of its proximity to the old house.

The presence of residual late 11th- to early 12th-century pottery implies an even earlier phase of activity, not represented within the excavated area by any structural remains, and raises some interesting questions about the origins of medieval occupation in the vicinity of Acton Court and its relationship with the village of Iron Acton. It has been argued convincingly (Manco 1995) that the two manors recorded in 1066, each of which was two and a half hides in extent, were the product of the division of an earlier five-hide estate. The ownership of the parish church is known to have been shared in the mid-12th century and later evidence indicates that the village itself was divided between the manors of Iron Acton and Acton Ilger. This suggests that the church and the village both originated in the late Saxon period when Iron Acton was still under single ownership (Chapter 2 and Manco 1995). Aston has noted that in Somerset planned villages were being planted on Crown estates as early as the 9th century, and on the estates of Glastonbury Abbey in the 10th century (Aston 1985, 93). Iron Acton may provide another example of a regularly planned pre-Conquest settlement (Aston 1986, 97), though it need be no earlier than the 11th century.

Manco has proposed the reasonable hypothesis that, prior to the division of the estate, the late Saxon manor house may have been located close to St James's Church. In contrast, neither of the two medieval manor houses was within the village. Acton Court, the capital messuage of Iron Acton manor, was situated 0.8 km to the north-west of the church, while the manor house of Acton Ilger, adjacent to Acton Mill, was 0.5 km to the south-west. This move away from an existing nucleated village can be paralleled elsewhere. For example, after the pre-Conquest division of

the estate and nucleated village of Hawling, Gloucestershire, a new manor house, church and settlement were established at Roel, 2 km to the north (Aldred and Dyer 1991, 144, 149–53).

Less convincing is Manco's belief that the chief house in Iron Acton manor was established at Acton Court no earlier than the late Norman period, at least a century after the division of the five-hide estate. Clearly a shared occupation of the late Saxon manor house could only have been a short-term solution and there seems no reason why Harold and Ebba, the two tenants at the time of the Conquest, should not have had their own houses. The most likely locations would be close to the site of the future medieval manor houses. No tenant was named in 1086 on Humphrey the Chamberlain's estate at Iron Acton (formerly Harold's manor), granted to him along with Wickwar by Queen Maud. This has led to the suggestion that the estate was run by a steward based on Wickwar, there being no chief house on the estate at Iron Acton until it was subtenanted in the second half of the 12th century. While Domesday Book cannot of course be cited as proof of late 11th-century occupation in the vicinity of Acton Court, conversely the absence of a named tenant does not preclude it. The residual late 11th- to early 12th-century pottery clearly indicates that part of the site was occupied not long after the Conquest, although the nature and status of this occupation is as yet unclear. There may be similarities with the sequence proposed for Caldecote, Hertfordshire, where the first manor house was erected *c.* 1200 when the manor was subtenanted, but the earliest excavated building, interpreted as a steward's house and sited 80 m away from it, was constructed in the mid-11th century (Webster and Cherry 1978, 179–81).

## The medieval manor house

### Period 3.1–3.2 (mid- to late 13th century)

#### *The moat*

This had an important influence on the layout of the house, and formed a serious constraint on its subsequent development both in the medieval period and later, since the area which it enclosed was a mere 0.2 ha (0.5 acres). The majority of known moated

sites in south Gloucestershire fall within the size range 0.3–0.8 ha (0.75–2 acres), as has also been observed in Oxfordshire (Bond 1986, 151). Even larger examples exist, such as Barrs Court, Gloucestershire, where the moat encloses 1.1 ha (2.7 acres) (Russell 1980). At the Bishop of Hereford's manor at Prestbury, Gloucestershire, both the main and the subsidiary moats were 0.9 ha (2.2 acres) (O'Neil 1956, fig 1). The moated house site at Acton Court was unusually small for the capital message of a rising gentry family. It was comparable in scale to the former ringwork at Hillesley (Williams 1987, figs 8–9) and the park lodge at Hill (both Gloucestershire).

Its size was dictated by the underlying geology, since it was largely cut into the Pennant sandstone outcrop. Most moats were constructed on clay subsoils, because they were easy and cheap to construct and maintain (Le Patourel and Roberts 1978, 49). Certainly there was a marked preference for clayland locations in north Somerset (Aston 1986, fig 8.1) and also in Gloucestershire, where there were only a very few sites in the Cotswolds, but a much greater number in the Vales of Gloucester and Berkeley and in the north-west part of the county (Rawes 1978). Others have also been located in the area south-east of Cirencester, between the Cotswolds and the River Thames (M Aston, pers comm). Rock-cut moats were relatively rare, although other examples are known, such as the moat surrounding Beverston Castle, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire, which was dug through limestone.

At Acton Court, the difficulties and expense involved in digging a moat with a maximum width of 7.5 m and a maximum depth of 1.6 m through sandstone would have been compensated by the ability to use the excavated material in the construction of the new house. The moat was, in effect, a linear quarry, and would have provided most, if not all, of the required building stone. The house and the moat were clearly contemporary, but the excavation of the moat must have been reasonably well advanced before work on the house was begun. The south arm, at least, was dug before the south range was erected, because it cut through the fill of the Period 2 quarry, the revetting of which was directly overlaid by the primary south frontage wall.

The nearest source of running water is the stream, which flows within 70 m of the former moat. However, they were uncon-



nected, in contrast to stream-fed moated sites such as Bradley (Iles and Popplewell 1985) and Wanswell Court, Gloucestershire (Cooke 1881–2, 310–11). The environmental evidence indicates that the moat contained standing water (Chapter 9), probably deriving from seepage rather than springs, though ground water may have been channelled into its north-west corner along part of the Period 2 ditch at the foot of the terrace. Similarly, the main outlet was probably at the south-west corner, from which surplus water could have passed back into the ditch.

Observation of those parts of the moat that were totally excavated showed that water quickly seeped into them in wet weather and drained away only very gradually. This suggests that the moat would have contained water except during the driest spells. In the late 15th or early 16th centuries, however, the natural water source may have been supplemented by spring water brought to the moat in an extension of the culvert which fed the north pond.

Moats, as distinct from ditches around ringworks, were constructed from the mid-12th century onwards, though the majority appear to have been dug during the period 1200–1325 (Le Patourel and Roberts 1978, 51). There is therefore nothing unusual about the proposed mid-13th-century date for the moat at Acton Court (based on the absence of Bristol Redcliffe ware sherds in the pottery assemblage within the infilled Period 2 quarry but their presence in the primary make-up at the west end of Room G). It is probably typical of its region, but there has been no systematic study of the origins of moated sites elsewhere in north Somerset and Gloucestershire, and hardly any have been investigated archaeologically. Similarly, the published documentary evidence is extremely limited, providing at best only a *terminus ante quem* for the digging of the moat.

The moat surrounding the Bishop of Hereford's manor house at Prestbury, Gloucestershire, was certainly in existence by 1290, when the turning bridge was repaired, though it may have been dug at the same time as the house in the late 12th or early 13th century (O'Neil 1956, 21–2). At Eastington, in the Vale of Berkeley, the manorial moat was stocked with sixteen dozen pike in 1402, but the date at which it was constructed is unknown.

Normally the origins of a moat can be suggested only through indirect evidence.

For example, William de Valence, a half-brother of Henry III, was granted the manor of Moreton Valence, also in the Vale of Berkeley, in 1247, and erected a new hall in 1253 (*VCH Gloucs* 1972, 210). The moat may well have been dug at the same time, though an earlier date cannot be ruled out since a manor house, held by William de Pontlarge, is mentioned at Moreton *c* 1225. At Yate Court, Gloucestershire, 4 km north-east of Acton Court, a licence to crenellate was obtained by John de Wyllington in 1299 (Bazeley 1898, 9–10). It is possible that the substantial moat, enclosing both the house and an outer court, was constructed as a result of this licence, at the same time as the early 14th-century gatehouse (removed in the 1920s). However, the manor had been purchased by the Wyllingtons in 1207, and the much narrower inner moat between the outer court and the house, described in a 16th-century survey (Fox 1898, 22) may have been dug considerably earlier than 1299.

A parallel for this is provided by the excavated site at King's Stanley, Gloucestershire, where an oval moat, 12.8 m wide, replaced a primary enclosure ditch, only 3 m wide, in the mid- to late 12th century (Evans 1989, 38–9). Similarly the manor house known as St Cross Nunnery, now beneath Chew Valley Lake, Somerset, acquired a moat in the late 12th or early 13th century, which was subsequently recut and extended *c* 1300. The primary moat was, however, preceded by a row of pits, serving as a ditch, which partially enclosed the site (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977, 143–4).

In each of the cited examples, a house seems to have stood on the site before the moat was constructed. At Acton Court, in contrast, the moated 13th-century house was built on a fresh site, though it was probably close to its 12th-century predecessor. No other examples of this phenomenon have been identified locally. However, at Mixbury, Oxfordshire, the moated site of Beaumont's Castle cuts through a slighted ringwork (J Bond, pers comm), and in Yorkshire several moated houses were constructed immediately adjacent to motte and bailey castles (Le Patourel 1973, 17 and fig 7).

#### *The hall range*

The building (Fig 3.6) contained three principal units: a hall with a screens passage (Rooms A–B), flanked by transverse rooms



(C–D). These projected slightly forward from the hall, but shared a common north wall, and can perhaps be seen as embryonic cross-wings. The layout of the range was fairly standard and was similar, for example, to the 14th-century hall range at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire (Girouard 1978, 38, fig 1). In fact its symmetrical and integrated plan was more typical of 14th- than of 13th-century houses (Wood 1965, 74). It is difficult to know if it was unusually advanced since there are few plans of 13th-century buildings of similar status. A comparable hall range at Wanswell Court, Gloucestershire, is dated *c* 1450–60 by the corbel-heads supporting its roof (Burton 1977), but since a house existed here by 1256, it is possible that it is in fact earlier, or at least reflects the plan of its 13th-century predecessor.

The hall at Acton Court is interesting in that it contained only one aisle. Most 13th-century stone halls had either two aisles or none at all, although a single-aisled hall is known at Warkworth Castle, Northumberland (Wood 1965, 42). There are no local parallels, but this is probably because many manorial halls which may originally have contained aisles were, like Acton Court, rebuilt without them in the late medieval period.

The arcade is likely to have been supported by wooden columns, standing on stone bases. There was no evidence for the intermediate bases, but this is not surprising since they probably rested directly on the floor of the hall and would have been removed when the hall was reconstructed in the early 15th century, leaving no traces below floor level. However, the position of the hearth base, which was set back from the line of the arcade, within the north aisle and on the central north–south axis of the hall, suggests that there were three bays, each *c* 3.65 m (12 ft) wide. This would mean that the hearth was framed by the central bay, and the screens passage passed through the eastern bay. Alternatively, there may have been four bays, each 2.75 m (9 ft) wide, as proposed for the rebuilt Phase 4 hall (see below). This scheme would allow the screens passage to occupy the fourth bay but would have the disadvantage of concealing the hearth behind the column between the second and third bays.

In 13th-century halls open to the roof, the usual source of heat remained the traditional central hearth, set in the main body of the hall. The siting of the Acton Court hearth in the centre of the north aisle would

appear to represent an intermediate stage in the evolution of the wall-fireplace, which was common from the early 15th century onwards. There was no external chimney stack, and smoke from the hearth may have escaped through a louvre in the roof above the aisle. Alternatively, the hearth could have been covered by a hood of plaster or wood, projecting from the side wall, as with the first-floor fireplace at Bennett's Hall, Shrewsbury, dated 1250–60 (Wood 1965, 257–8, 261–3).

Room C, to the east of the screens passage, was a service room. It was possibly subdivided by partitions (though these do not survive) to form a buttery and pantry, separated by a central through-passage linking the hall and the kitchen (Room S). At first-floor level, there is likely to have been a secondary solar, perhaps connected to a gallery above the cross-passage, overlooking the hall. The means of access to the upper room is unknown, but the footings of the south wall of the range were thick enough to have incorporated a newel staircase, close to the south-east corner of the hall. This could have been entered through a doorway leading directly off the cross-passage or, as in the mid-14th century Northborough Manor, Northamptonshire, through a door in the corner of the service room (Wood 1965, 137).

Room D, to the west of the hall, is more difficult to interpret. In 13th-century houses, the ground-floor room beyond the high end of the hall frequently served as a storage cellar. However, it could have been a private withdrawing chamber, with a similar function to a parlour. Although references to secular parlours do not occur before the second half of the 14th century (Girouard 1978, 58–9), there are two reasons for thinking that the room was used for domestic occupation, rather than simply for storage. First, the substantial stepped footings indicate that the stairs to the first-floor chamber were located at the north-west corner of the room, on the opposite side from the hall. If the room had been a cellar, it is more likely that the stairs would have been immediately adjacent to the hall, as at Old Soar, Plaxtol, Kent, dated *c* 1290 (Wood 1965, 69, fig 26). Secondly, the primary chimney stack bonded to the outer footings of the west wall suggests that not only the upper but also the lower room was heated by a wall-fireplace.

The room above was the solar or great chamber, which served as the principal pri-

vate room in the house, for the exclusive use of the owner and his family. Like the chamber above the service room, its length was three and a half times greater than its width. It may have been a single undivided room. Alternatively it could have been partitioned to form a sitting/dining room, heated by the wall-fireplace, with a smaller bedchamber to the south, in the manner of the service solar at Yardley Hastings Manor House, Northamptonshire, built in the mid-14th century (Wood 1965, 75, fig 30b).

The main entrance to the house was at the south end of the screens passage, and was approached by a wooden bridge across the moat, supported by transverse and longitudinal base-plates resting on stone sills. The substantial porch (Room E), projecting out into the moat and creating the impression of a small gatehouse, was not an original feature, and may simply have been an architectural embellishment, attached to an otherwise plain doorway. However, it may have had an additional purpose. It possibly replaced the northern half of the bridge, which appears to have failed despite the substitution of the northernmost timber bridge support by two successive stone abutments. Since the porch shared the same matrix as the rest of the primary building, the wooden bridge in its original form may have had only a very short life. Insufficient evidence survives to establish whether the bridge was fixed, like the bridge across the outer moat at Yate Court, Gloucestershire, described in the mid-16th century (Fox 1898, 22), or whether it was a counterbalancing drawbridge, like the turning bridge repaired in the late 13th century at Prestbury, Gloucestershire (O'Neil 1956, 21–2). Given that it led directly to the screens passage within the house rather than through a gatehouse into a courtyard, and therefore must have been crossed on foot rather than on horseback, the Acton Court bridge was probably fixed.

Precise parallels for the porch are difficult to find. There is a larger late 13th-century example at Sheldon Manor, Wiltshire, and a similarly sized porch at Clevedon Court, Somerset, dated *c* 1320 (Cooke 1957, pls 21, 24; Quiney 1977), both of which are supported at their corners by angle-buttresses. However, neither of these was constructed from the bottom of a moat like the porch at Acton Court.

As at Clevedon Court, there was another porch at the opposite end of the screens passage. Although they were both additions to

the original range, it would appear – judging purely from its matrix – that the north porch was later (though not necessarily significantly later) than the south porch.

#### *The kitchen range (Room S)*

This was adjacent to and on the east side of the service end of the hall range, but was separated from it by a narrow triangular court. Unlike the hall range, it was timber-framed, resting partly on narrow stone sills and partly on timber sill-beams (though the stone sills may have been a secondary insertion). In its primary form it was fairly small, measuring *c* 7.5 m by 5.4 m (24 ft 6 in by 17 ft 9 in), and despite the rebuilding of the east wall, probably in Period 3.2, it remained essentially the same size until Period 3.4a. Internally the only excavated features were a patch of stone flooring and a possible alcove in the south wall, near the south-east corner. This may have been one of perhaps several fireplaces or hearths. The principal hearth was probably located in the centre of the building, an area which remains unexcavated.

In 13th- and 14th-century houses the kitchen was often detached from the hall, and was linked to it by a covered pentice (Wood 1965, 247–50). It was not unusual for the kitchen to have been timber-framed even when the hall itself was built in stone. At Northolt, Middlesex, the detached Period II kitchen (1300–50) was timber-framed with a central hearth. It measured 30 ft (9.10 m) square and was linked to the stone hall by a pentice (Hurst 1961, 214–15, 239–41). At Weoley Castle, Warwickshire (Oswald 1962–3, 109, 112–23), the kitchen, dated *c* 1200–60, was larger, measuring 41 ft 3 in by 22 ft 6 in (12.52 m by 6.85 m), but it was also made of wood, whereas the hall was of stone. A good local example of a 13th-century kitchen has been excavated at Prestbury Moat, Gloucestershire (O'Neil 1956, fig 2 and 16–18). It was stone-built, measuring 48 ft by 29 ft (14.6 m by 8.84 m) and was constructed some time before 1289, when the pentice connecting it to the hall was erected. It contained at least two hearths, one at either end of the building.

#### *Room G*

At ground-floor level this is likely to have been used purely for storage. At its west end was a sub-cellar, on the east side of which was a rectangular stone base which probably supported a central pier. The building was extended eastwards in Period 3.2 but the

remodelling of the interior in the 16th century destroyed any other details of its original form.

The room above the storage cellar was probably a chapel. There are three reasons for this interpretation. First, the building was situated very close to the corner of the solar. Secondly, its walls had the same matrix as the hall block, and it was respected by the curtain wall and the moat, implying that they were all constructed at the same time. Finally, it was considered to be of sufficient importance to be incorporated in the Tudor mansion, despite its inconvenient location in the angle between the new north and west ranges.

The only other possibility is that it was a residual detached first-floor chamber block (Blair 1993). This explanation is, however, very unlikely. Its foundations clearly cut through Period 2 walls, and although they shared the same general alignment, this may have been because they were both influenced by the alignment of the pre-existing terrace, to the north-west of the house. It may also be more than a coincidence that its alignment was almost west-east. An additional argument against this interpretation of the building's function is that separate first-floor chambers tended to become redundant in the 13th century when integrated hall and upper chamber blocks, such as Rooms A and D, were constructed.

There is no specific mention of a chapel at Acton Court, although there is a reference in the 1340s to a chaplain formerly employed by Sir John de Acton (Chapter 2). However, many manorial chapels are documented elsewhere in southern Gloucestershire. For example, the owner of Wanswell Court applied for permission to erect a chapel in his house in 1256 (Burton 1977), and in 1275 Sybil Cotele obtained a licence for an oratory at her house at Frampton Cotterell (Reg Giffard, 84, fol 63). At Yate Court a chapel stood on the east side of the base court (Fox 1898, 22), and there may also have been a chapel associated with the manor house of Acton Ilger, as indicated by the 16th-century field name Chappelheys. A few still survive, such as the 15th-century chapel at Lower Court Farm, Long Ashton, Somerset (Leech and Pearson 1986, 14–15).

While some 13th-century chapels were at ground level, as at Penhallam, Cornwall (Beresford 1974, 114), many were at first-floor level with a storage room beneath. One documented example was at Freemantle, Hampshire, where in 1251 Henry III

ordered that a chapel should be built beyond the Queen's chamber, with a wine cellar beneath (Colvin 1963, 940–1). Chapels were frequently attached directly to the solar/great chamber, as at Manorbier Castle, Pembrokeshire, dated *c* 1260, and Charney Basset Manor House, Oxfordshire, dated *c* 1280 (Wood 1965, 230–1). At the excavated Bishop's Palace at Prestbury, Gloucestershire, the 13th-century chapel, which had to be rebuilt in 1341 because it was ruinous, was parallel to the solar and shared a common wall (O'Neil 1956, 21–2 and fig 2).

The chapel at Acton Court was physically separate from the hall range, but the gap between them was so narrow that it could easily have been bridged by a passageway leading from the top of the stairs at the corner of the great chamber. There would presumably have been an outside staircase, providing an alternative means of access for the household, and protecting the privacy of the owner and his family. This may have been located on the north side of the building, opposite the family entrance, above what became Room L1 in Period 3.5.

No other primary structures are known. However, there was almost certainly a fourth range in the north-east part of the moated enclosure. Most of this area, beneath the standing building, remains unexcavated, but it was probably occupied by another service range to the north of the kitchen, possibly containing a brewhouse or further storage rooms. There may also have been a rear exit on the north side of the house, providing access to the farm complex (probably located to the north-east) by means of a second bridge across the moat.

#### *The curtain wall*

This appears to have formed an uninterrupted circuit around the inner edge of the moat from the south-west corner of the hall range to the south-east corner of the kitchen. Its footings were located along the south-west side of the moated enclosure, at the north-east corner (beneath the north end of the Tudor east range), and along the east side. There may also have been a further length of walling on the south edge of the moat between the kitchen and the hall range. Very few parallels for manorial enclosure walls of this date are known locally, though at Yate Court in the mid-16th century, the base court, which contained various service buildings as well as the chapel, was 'walled with Rough stone and embated



with walkes on the wall' (Fox 1898, 22). This wall, like the gatehouse which formed the main entrance, was probably built shortly after a licence to crenellate was obtained in 1299. Another example, still surviving, is the wall alongside the linear moat at Olveston Court, Gloucestershire, but it is probably 15th-century in date.

### Period 3.3 (late 13th to mid-14th century)

#### *The south range (Fig 3.17)*

Most of this part of the house remained unchanged, although the south wall of Room D was rebuilt and a pair of garderobes (Rooms P1 and P2) was added to the south-west corner of the range, necessitating the removal of a short length of the curtain wall. Room P1 would have served the first-floor great chamber, and Room P2 the ground-floor room, which clearly had a domestic function by Period 3.3 at the latest. At first-floor level, the new layout was very similar to that of the solar at Manorbier Castle, Pembrokeshire (c 1260), and Old Soar, Plaxtol, Kent (c 1290) (Wood 1965, 69 and fig 26), which had passages leading off each of the outer angles to the chapel and to the garderobe. In both these examples, the garderobe was contemporary with the room it served, whereas at Acton Court the garderobes were a later improvement, as at the royal hunting lodge at Clipstone, Nottinghamshire in 1251. Here, Henry III ordered that 'the wall at the foot of the king's bed in the king's chamber' should be broken through in order to construct a privy chamber (Wood 1965, 379).

#### *Rooms H—J*

The principal alterations were in the north-west part of the moated enclosure, where the curtain wall was demolished and robbed out in order to accommodate a new range on the north side of the chapel. At ground-floor level this consisted of two rooms (J and K). Room J had a wooden floor, with a stone-capped drain beneath it, but nothing is known about the interior of Room K; nor is it clear whether either of them contained a fireplace. There may have been one in Room K, judging by the external projection at its north-east corner, which was large enough to support both a chimney stack and a clasping buttress. However, the narrow projection further west was probably just the foundation of a buttress supporting the north wall of the range at its mid-point.

On the west side of Room J was a substantial double-arched garderobe (Room H), forming a single unit extending across the full width of the range. A similar garderobe, early 13th-century in date, was attached to the north end of the wardrobe at Penhallam Manor House, Cornwall (Beresford 1974, 106 and fig 27), and is thought to have been accessible only at first-floor level. This may also have been the case at Acton Court, though it is more likely that the garderobe was divided by a partition at ground-floor level and served both Room J and the chamber above it. The purpose of the new range is uncertain, but it was almost certainly a two-storey building, and possibly contained two suites of lodgings, each consisting of a heated parlour, an unheated bed-chamber and a garderobe.

The full extent of the other modifications to the house at this time is difficult to estimate. The south and west walls of Room G, containing the chapel, were certainly thickened at footing level, but it was impossible to establish whether they were completely refaced or whether only the lower parts of the walls were strengthened.

### The Period 3.1–3.3 house: summary

Although there are no detailed surveys of the house in the medieval period and no surviving building accounts before the mid-15th century, Period 3.1–3 can be safely attributed to the Acton family, who held the manor in the late 12th century and retained it until the termination of the male line in 1362. The identity of the individual(s) responsible for the construction of the moated manor house and the subsequent additions and alterations must, however, remain speculative. Little is known about the Actons in the first half of the 13th century, apart from their knightly status, and it is just conceivable that the builder of the new house was either the John de Acton who had a gallows in Iron Acton in the reign of King John, or else his son.

However, the prime candidate is the Sir John de Acton who held the manor by 1273 and died in 1312. He certainly had the economic means, having considerably enhanced his family's fortunes through two successive marriages to heiresses. The first of these must have taken place by 1265 (his son was of full age by 1285). If the house was built by him, it was probably during the period c1265–c1290. How much time elapsed before the Period 3.2 additions were



made is unknown, but again it can be tentatively suggested that they were carried out before 1312.

If the proposed chronology is correct, it places Acton Court in the company of other fortified manor houses, which were newly built or significantly altered in the second half of the 13th century. This development can be seen especially well at Acton Burnell Castle and Stokesay Castle (both in Shropshire), where licences to crenellate were obtained in 1284 and 1291 respectively (Pevsner 1958a, 47–9, 294–6). The best local parallel, as mentioned above, is the neighbouring Yate Court, with a licence to crenellate dated 1299.

It has been argued that manor houses acquired defensive walls and moats between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries because of the breakdown of law and order (Platt 1978, 108–15). But many supposedly defensive houses were in reality indefensible against serious attack, and contained architectural features that were not remotely defensive in character. At Stokesay Castle, Pevsner observed that in the hall of *c* 1270–80 the size of the windows facing onto the moat indicated a sense of security matched by no other country at this time. Similarly, at Acton Court, the hall fronted directly onto the moat. There was no gatehouse as such at the entrance to the moated house complex (in contrast to Yate Court), though there may have been one, yet to be located, protecting the approach across the outer moat (see below).

In his study of Cambridgeshire moated sites, Taylor proposed that the principal motive for their construction was not the need for defence or even drainage, but rather the emulation of the genuinely defensive castles of the aristocracy by members of the gentry class and freemen (Taylor 1972, 246–7). This surely provides the best explanation for the apparent paradox at Acton Court between, on the one hand, the protective curtain wall and moat, and on the other hand, the unprotected hall range. The curtain wall was an architectural feature which was no more defensive than the crenellated walls enclosing the 16th-century south court. The moated house probably represents John de Acton's determination to provide himself with a new capital message befitting his improving social status. It was almost certainly not designed for the purpose of physical protection.

The superficial nature of the defences becomes obvious in the light of the Period 3.3

additions to the house. As with the earlier phases, their dating is imprecise. But it seems a reasonable assumption that whoever was responsible for removing much of the curtain wall, it was not the person who erected it in the first place. The ceramic evidence points to a late 13th- to mid-14th-century date (Chapter 9). The alterations may have been made by the last Sir John de Acton, grandson of the suggested builder of the original house, during his period of ownership between 1312 and his death in 1362. Like his grandfather, he also made a good marriage which brought in further properties, and in addition he appears to have acquired most of Acton Ilger manor. By 1322, when the Acton properties were confiscated by Edward II, the family had reached the peak of its prosperity.

By this stage there was clearly a desire to increase the available accommodation and to improve the domestic facilities of the house. The site was so restricted that this could be done only by removing much of the curtain wall and, in the process, destroying even the pretence that the house was fortified, despite the survival of the moat. The provision of lodgings and garderobes (innovations which were absent from the original house) evidently took precedence, and the wall survived only as a link between the various ranges. At Yate Court, in contrast, the embattled walls were retained, but since they enclosed an area three times larger than that at Acton Court, there may not have been the same pressure to utilise the space available.

### The 15th-century house (Fig 3.21)

During Period 3.4 the principal range of the house was almost completely rebuilt, only the cross-walls at either end of the hall being retained from the earlier phases. The work was carried out in two stages: first the hall (A) and rooms to the east and south (C, E, F and S); then rooms to the west (Q, R), with further additions to the range centred on Room G (M, N).

Apart from the walls in the moat, work of this period does not survive above foundation level, but the comparisons to be made are almost exclusively with standing buildings. There is evidence throughout the region for a general rebuilding in stone at manorial level during the 15th century (and sometimes before, for example Clevedon Court), and the historic counties of

Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset each contain a number of houses which are substantially of this period. However, this is usually the earliest work to survive in a complex building sequence, and these houses would benefit from further research into their structural history.

In addition to the information provided by the plan, architectural fragments recovered from the moat and elsewhere allow comment on the form of windows and other elements of internal decoration.

### Period 3.4a

The length of the hall was unaltered from previous phases, at 11.6 m (38 ft) including the screens passage, but the width was reduced to 7.85 m (25 ft 9 ins), which would have enabled the range to be covered by a single-span roof. Surviving examples in the region are commonly of arch-braced collar-truss type, with straight principal rafters (Hall 1983, 34), such as Lytes Cary, Somerset (Dunning 1991, 87), Hazelbury Manor, Box, Wiltshire (Hussey 1926, 307) and Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire (Hussey 1922, 441). The structural reason for this alteration is borne out by a comparison of

hall dimensions (Table 3), which shows that Acton Court and Little Sodbury are almost identical in size. However, it also places the house at the upper end of the range for county gentry or wealthy merchants. It is very much smaller than a hall of the greater aristocracy, such as Berkeley Castle (for other examples see Emery 1985, 290), and is also exceeded in size by one of the Bishop of Winchester's lesser properties, East Meon, Hampshire, rebuilt in 1395–6.

Comparison with halls of similar length, such as Athelhampton, Little Sodbury and Great Chalfield suggests that Acton Court had four bays; the slightly longer hall at Icomb Place has five. The balance of probability is in favour of the roof resembling Little Sodbury, or Wanswell Court, with tiers of purlins linked by curved windbraces, although ceilings are not unknown in the region, for example Great Chalfield (National Trust 1986a, 7).

Footings for the screen survive, indicating one of the door positions. There are two possible treatments of the superstructure; a gallery, such as survives at Cothay Manor, Somerset (Lloyd 1931, 363, fig 602) or a timber-framed partition, forming an internal jetty to a large first-floor room, as at Little

### Table 3

Arranged in descending order of area. Dimensions are given in feet and include the width of the screens passage

	<i>Size</i>	<i>Sq ft</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Berkeley Castle Glos	62' x 32'	1984	Sackville West 1989, 14
East Meon Hants	48' x 26'	1248	Roberts 1993, 466
Clevedon Court Som	c40' x 26'	1040	Wood 1965, 63.17
Acton Court Glos	38' x 25'9"	978.5	
Little Sodbury Glos	c42' x 23'	966	Wood 1965, 65.64
Yate Court Glos	40' x 24'	960	Fox 1898, 22
Icomb Place Glos	c45' x 21'	945	Royce 1882–3, 180
Athelhampton Dor	38'3" x 21'3"	813	RCHM 1970, 11
Great Chalfield Wilts	40'2" x 20'2"	810	Wood 1965, 65.62
Ashleworth Glos	c37' x 19'	703	Wood 1965, 64.53
Lytes Carey Som	c33' x 21'	693	Wood 1965, 66.81
Woodlands Wilts	31' x 21'	651	Wood 1965, 64.42
South Wraxall Wilts	31'8" x 19'9"	625	Wood 1965, 64.45
Wanswell Court Glos	26' x 23'	598	Oswald 1954, 897
Hazelbury Wilts	c33' x 18'	594	Hussey 1926, 280

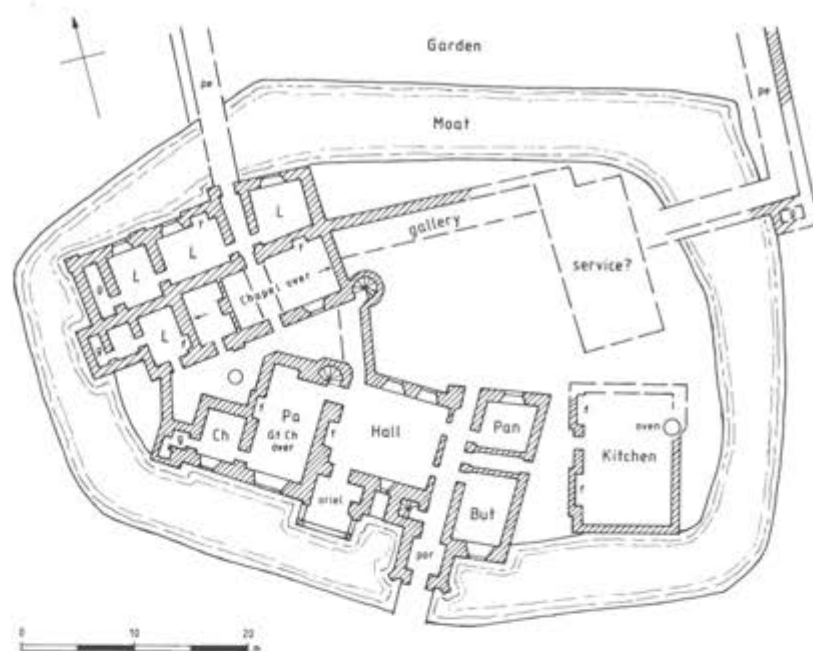


Figure 3.41 Reconstructed ground-floor plan of the Period 3.5 house showing possible room use:

But – buttery,  
Ch – chamber,  
f – fireplace,  
g – garderobe,  
L – lodging,  
Pa – parlour,  
Pan – pantry.

Sodbury, and also in less pronounced form at Bewley Court, Wiltshire (Slocombe 1992, 73). The fact that the north-west corner of the cross-wing to the east is aligned on the end of the screen supports the latter possibility.

Halls in great houses retained a central hearth into the 15th century and beyond (Wood 1965, 58), but in lesser houses of manorial status wall-fireplaces became universal at this period. They can be placed on the principal elevation, for example South Wraxall (*ibid*, pl Xa) or Wanswell Court (Oswald 1954, 895), on the opposite wall, for example Hazelbury (Hussey 1926, 308) or Icomb Place (Royce 1882–3, 183), or at the dais end, for example Woodlands Manor (Tipping 1937, 23, pl 29) or Athelhampton (RCHM 1970, pl 95). At Acton Court the fireplace appears to have been at the dais end, where one of the surviving earlier walls was thickened to accommodate the hearth. The foundation that survives dates to Period 3.5, but this is probably a testimony to frequent use. It is not known what form the surround took; with the exception of Wanswell Court, the examples cited above all have simple mouldings, but fragments of two late 15th-century fireplaces were recovered from the moat and are discussed below.

The principal entrance to the hall was through the porch on the south front (Fig 3.41), an earlier feature rebuilt at this period with thin diagonal buttresses. It survives to a height of 1.80 m from the bottom of the moat. The projection in the angle between

the porch and the hall probably housed a newel stair, giving access to a porch chamber with its own garderobe, and chambers at the east end of the hall; this would be facilitated if they were jettied over the screens passage. The superstructure probably resembled the porch at Little Sodbury (Kingsley 1989, pl II), which has diagonal buttresses, a four-centred outer arch, a two-light chamber window and a gabled roof. It was originally freestanding, unlike the otherwise very similar porch at Great Chalfield, which is flush with the cross-wing (Sykes 1988, 60). The porch at South Wraxall is also similar, but has a flat roof behind a plain parapet (Tipping 1937, pl ii). The Period 3.2 porch at the north end of the screens passage was demolished and not replaced.

The small room projecting from the south-west corner of the hall can be interpreted as an oriel. Similar rooms survive at South Wraxall, Great Chalfield, Ashleworth and East Coker (Wood 1965, 104; Dunning 1991, 30), and formerly existed on both sides of the hall at Little Sodbury. These projecting rooms have an upper storey and when well preserved, as at Great Chalfield and South Wraxall, create a balanced elevation in conjunction with the porch. Clevedon Court, built in the first half of the 14th century, formerly had a paired porch and oriel on both hall elevations (National Trust 1972, 4). At Acton Court the oriel does not match the depth of the porch, probably because of the constraints of the moat; South Wraxall is also fairly shallow. This room was enlarged in Period 3.5.

To the east of the hall lay the service rooms, which were also rebuilt at this period. The ground floor of the cross-wing would be the usual position for the buttery and pantry, and the footings for a partition survive, apparently dividing the space into two rooms of unequal size. However, it is more likely that this is one side of a kitchen passage, which if reconstructed, would be aligned on the centre of the hall. The kitchen was only partially excavated but seems to have remained detached across a small court in the south-east corner of the moated area. It was built in stone, on a larger scale than its timber-framed predecessor and measuring at least 10.35 m by 8 m (34ft by c 26 ft 6 in). Its west wall contained one large fireplace, and possibly a second, and a circular oven base was built against the inner face of its east wall. The location of the kitchen in relation to the hall would

imply a triple arrangement of service doors in the screens passage (Wood 1965, 128), such as survives at Clevedon Court and Haddon Hall (National Trust 1972, 4; Girouard 1978, 38). Both these houses also have kitchens separated by a courtyard from the buttery and pantry. A similar arrangement is implied by the 1583 survey description of medieval Thornbury Castle (Kingsley 1989, 187), where the kitchens but neither the hall nor buttery survive.

Other service buildings, which have not been excavated, must lie beneath the Period 4 east range. These rooms are particularly prone to demolition and alteration and are seldom as well preserved as standing buildings at manorial level. However, the detailed inventory of Bewley Court, Wiltshire, dated 1418, lists a brewhouse and larder in addition to the kitchen and pantry, as well as more purely agricultural buildings, such as a stable, granary and goathouse (Harvey *et al* 1987, 66). At Acton Court considerations of space would place these, with barns, dairies, and other animal accommodation, outside the moat. Within the moat there must have been cellars for beer, wine and general storage. The undercroft to the chapel, unchanged from Period 3.3, probably served one of these functions.

Over the buttery and pantry there was normally at least one good quality chamber. An inquisition post mortem dated 1397 on the Earl of Arundel's manor at Keevil, Wiltshire, mentions a great chamber (separate from the 'chief chamber' at the other end of the hall) 'with a latrine, and below that chamber is a pantry and buttery' (Slocombe 1992, 21). At Thornbury Castle a set of chambers known as 'the Earl of Stafford's lodging' was situated over the buttery and pantry in a part of the medieval house retained in the 16th-century rebuilding (Hawkyard 1977, 52). Great Chalfield provides a good surviving example; the room has an oriel window echoing the great chamber at the other end of the hall (National Trust 1986a, 11). At Acton Court this room was potentially 13.2 m (43 ft) long by up to 7 m (23 ft) wide if jettied over the screens passage, which suggests subdivision into two chambers. This was the case at Athelhampton, where the State bedroom, which is approached by a separate stair turret and has a fine original fireplace, was divided from a second chamber by a wooden partition (RCHM 1970, 13; Rodwell personal observation 1992). The internal length of the range is 15.3 m (50 ft) and

the rooms 7 m and 8 m (23 ft and 26 ft). At Acton Court a slight thickening of the east wall suggests that the southern room was heated, and there would also be scope for a garderobe in the south-east corner, emptying into the moat.

### Period 3.4b

West of the hall the old and rather narrow Period 3.1 solar block was replaced by a new range, comprising a suite of rooms of decreasing size; the larger measuring 9.9 m by 5.4 m (32 ft 6 in by 17 ft 9 in), the smaller 4.5 m by 3.6 m (14 ft 9 in by 11 ft 9 in), and opening off it, a closet with a garderobe. This location at the high end of the hall would suggest that the principal room on the ground floor was the parlour (for a discussion of the earlier house see above), a room which appears in contemporary literature from the second half of the 14th century, and is mentioned in inventories from the 15th century (Girouard 1978, 58). An early local example is the Bewley Court inventory of 1418 (Harvey *et al* 1987, 66), where the contents make it clear that it was used as a living room; on the floor above was a bedroom with an adjoining latrine. The great chamber at this house was over the buttery. The Keevil Manor inventory of 1397 (Slocombe 1992, 21) makes no specific mention of a parlour but does describe 'a chamber below the said great chamber and another chamber and latrine next thereunto', which appears similar to the room arrangement at Acton Court.

Access to this room may have been through the oriel, but was more probably from the north-west corner of the hall, where thickened foundations suggest the position of a stair to the upper floor. These are not preserved well enough to indicate its exact form, but suggest a winding stair in an external projection. At Woodlands Manor there is a stair to the missing great chamber in this position, opening off a lobby to the chapel undercroft (Tipping 1937, 18). A similar arrangement seems to occur at Acton Court, where this corner of the hall is linked to Building G by a new wall, which is probably the east side of a pentice; it terminates in the circular foundation for a newel stair to an upper level. Staircase projections to the hall, of related but not identical form, occur at Blackmoor Farm, Somerset (Dunning 1991, 64), and a number of south-western priest's houses (Pantin 1957, 142).



The principal room on the first floor can be interpreted as a great chamber, and its dimensions are similar to surviving examples at Great Chalfield, Cothay Manor (9.3 m by 5.7 m (30 ft 6 in by 18 ft 10 in); *c* 10.6 m by 4.9 m (*c* 35 ft by 16 ft), Wood 1965, 80) and Fiddleford Mill, Dorset (9.5 m by 5 m (31 ft by 16 ft 10 in), RCHM 1970, 275). Bewley Court has a smaller great chamber, measuring 6.5 m by 4.3 m (21 ft 3 in by 14 ft 3 in), which like Great Chalfield was lit by an oriel window (Brakspear 1912, 398). These rooms all have elaborate open roofs of arch-braced type, and were heated by wall-fireplaces, although none of the original surrounds survive. At Acton Court the fireplace position is indicated by a thickening of the west wall, which presumably served both floors. The smaller unheated room was probably a privy chamber, which may have served as a bedroom, and opening off this was a closet with a garderobe. This arrangement appears to demonstrate the development of suites of private rooms that took place in the 15th and 16th centuries (Girouard 1978, 51–8).

The range to the north-west was also extended by the addition of rooms (M, N) west of the chapel. These were provided with another large garderobe projecting into the moat, and were probably storeyed. They can be interpreted as two more pairs of lodgings. The increasing provision of lodging accommodation throughout the 15th century has been studied at great houses such as South Wingfield, Derbyshire (Emery 1985, 312), but can also be seen locally at manorial level. At Court Farm, Lower Almondsbury, Gloucestershire, two 15th-century lodging ranges, including a gatehouse, are all that survive of a moated manorial complex belonging to St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol (Rodwell 1991, 188). Lodgings over a gatehouse also survive at Olveston Court, Gloucestershire, another fragmentary manor of some consequence in the later 15th century, when it was owned by John Walsh, an associate of Sir Robert Poyntz (Ellis 1983, 185–7; Verey 1976, 316). There are also well-appointed lodgings in the entrance-front at Icomb Place (Royce 1882–3, 182).

Little architectural detail survives from this phase of the house, although there are fragments which may be derived from the archways to the porch and the oriel, and a number of window mouldings (see Chapter 8, where the problems of attributing stone fragments are discussed). A window head

found in the moat next to the porch (Fig 8.7.3), one of several of the same type, probably indicates the pattern used in the hall; similar windows occur in the hall at Ashleworth of *c* 1460 (Kingsley 1989, 7). Such a window would fit the restricted space on the south elevation between the porch and the oriel, with two further windows in the north wall, corresponding to the two central roof bays.

The three-light window reset during Period 4.3 in the east range (Fig 8.7.1) also belongs to this phase of the house. It is almost identical to the window of *c* 1435 in the hall oriel at South Wraxall (Wood 1965, pl LV, H), and could have originated in the same position. However, the Acton Court oriel was rebuilt in Period 3.5, which suggests either that the window was reset more than once, or that it occupied a different position. This does not preclude the likelihood that there was more than one window of related type, as at both Great Chalfield and South Wraxall. Other possible locations are the great chamber, although this may have had an oriel, the parlour, or most probably, the chamber over the buttery, which was not rebuilt until Period 4.3. It is also possible that it was the east window of the chapel; there is a similar, slightly larger example in the chapel at Woodlands Manor (Tipping 1937, 20).

#### Date

There is very little archaeological dating material associated with the Period 3.4 house, and the only documentary reference is the *terminus ante quem* provided by repairs to the porch of 1465–6 (Chapter 2, Appendix C). However, the foregoing discussion of the elements of the house plan makes it clear that the parallels are with features developing from the mid-14th century and becoming widespread in the first half of the 15th century at manorial level. This is supported by the date of architectural elements such as the windows, which can probably be associated with this phase of the building.

This rebuilding of an essentially 13th-century house was probably commissioned by Robert Poyntz, who acceded to the estate in 1376, when still a minor, and died in 1439. In the years before 1400 he appears to have been relatively impoverished, but he held numerous public offices and made two advantageous marriages. He is also known to have undertaken other building work; there is a cross, bearing the arms of his second wife, in Iron Acton churchyard, and he

probably also built the church tower (Verey 1976, 276). A date for the rebuilding of the house in the first three decades of the 15th century therefore seems reasonable. His son Nicholas (d 1460) is a less likely candidate, for his administrative duties as receiver of the Stafford estates meant that he was frequently travelling, and Iron Acton may not have been his principal residence. His son John held the manor for only seven years, during which time the repairs mentioned above were carried out, and it passed after John's death to his eldest son, Robert.

### Period 3.5

Robert Poyntz held the manor for over fifty years (1467–1520), but made no major changes to the basic size and scope of the accommodation it provided. He was, however, responsible for altering its visual appearance in ways which can be glimpsed archaeologically from both structural and artefactual evidence, and seem stylistically to have been directly influenced by his experience of the Court. He was the first of his family to move in these circles, serving when a young man as king's esquire to Edward IV, and holding a variety of offices under Henry VII, by whom he was knighted; Henry visited Acton Court in 1486.

The principal alteration to the hall range was the addition of a projecting rectangular bay window (F2, Fig 3.21) to the south elevation, doubling the size of the Period 3.4 oriel room. This rose from the bottom of the moat and is unique among walls at Acton Court in being mortared and constructed of thin, squared sandstone blocks which were intended to be visible. This appears to have been the base for an elaborate oriel with a large expanse of glass, of a type which became popular in the later 15th century (Wood 1965, 108). Manorial examples usually have canted sides, as at Athelhampton (RCHM 1970, pl 94), Icomb Place (Royce 1882–3, pl XXI) or Hazelbury Manor, Box, an archaeological reconstruction by the architect Harold Brakspear (Hussey 1926, 280). Rectangular oriels became popular in great houses from the second decade of the 16th century (Wood 1965, 108), but it is probably no coincidence that they also occur on the great hall at Eltham, rebuilt by Edward IV c 1479–83 (Thurley 1993, 20).

Additions to the north-east corner of the chapel block (L) are probably associated with the laying-out of a garden north of the moat and are discussed below.

Evidence for the appearance of the interior is provided by the glazed floor tiles (Chapter 8), which include a single Spanish fragment, the linenfold panelling reused as a board in the Period 4 house (Fig 8.28), and the collection of architectural fragments recovered from the moat and elsewhere (Chapter 8). These include two fireplace surrounds, a doorcase, a small window, a figurative label stop, a crocketed pinnacle, and bands of foliate ornament, whose detailing is French rather than English. The fireplaces provide a date for the group of c 1500 (Figs 3.42, 3.43), and stylistic similarities suggest that the pieces can be attributed to the same mason. The presence of the fireplaces and smaller fragments in the south moat, where they were deposited c 1550, suggest that they were derived from rooms in the vicinity, probably the great chamber and the parlour, although the hall is a possibility for the larger of the two fireplaces. The smaller fragments, which also include part of a royal arms, indicate an elaborate suite of decoration, including door or window surrounds and, apparently, canopied niches. The window and large doorcase fragment (Figs 8.7.2, 8.11.31) had a different history; the former was reused in the Period 4.3 house, and the latter was deposited in the north field, suggesting that it came from a part of the house not demolished until c 1700. It is possible that both were used in a refurbishment of the entrance porch.

These fragments give a glimpse of an unexpectedly opulent domestic interior, but they are not the only work of this type which can be associated with Robert Poyntz. In Iron Acton church there is an early 16th-century monument to an unknown member of the Poyntz family (perhaps the first wife of Sir Anthony), which is clearly carved by the same mason and is also French in character. Viewed from this perspective it is instructive to look again at the elaborate chantry chapel attached to St Mark's Hospital, Bristol, where Robert Poyntz and his wife are buried; the chapel was largely complete by the time of his death in 1520 (Pevsner 1958b, 393). This has an English-style fan vault set with his own and the royal arms, but door, window and reredos mouldings are French in character, and so is the delicacy and high relief of the foliage ornament on the eight canopied niches. Work of the same quality can be seen elsewhere in St Mark's, notably in the chancel, restored c 1500 by Miles Salley, Bishop of Llandaff, which contains his tomb and an elaborate reredos (Roper 1913, 10).

Figure 3.42 Female head,  
on a fireplace surround  
from the south moat  
(Figure 8.17)  
(photograph: Marek  
Lewcun).

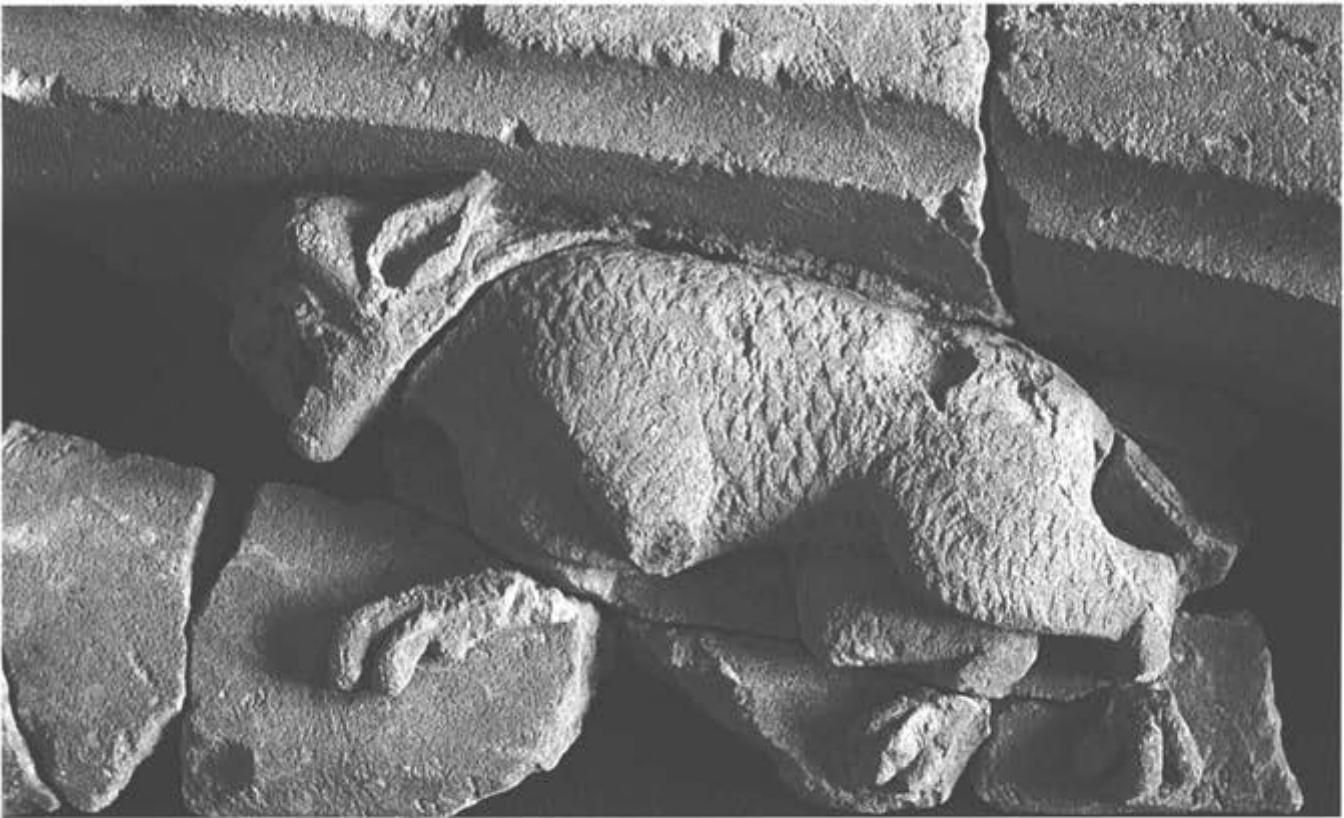


These monuments in St Mark's chapel form part of a group of tombs specific to the Bristol area (Gomme *et al* 1979, 66), which also include Thomas Mede and his wife (d 1475) in St Mary Redcliffe, Sir Richard Choke (d 1486) at Long Ashton, and Sir John Newton with his wife Isobel (d 1499) at Yatton, where they built a chantry chapel and the elaborate south porch (Pevsner 1958b, 350; cf screen of Chapelle de St Esprit, Rue, Somme). However, it has not hitherto been suggested that they can be attributed to a late 15th- and early 16th-century school of Bristol-based French masons. The opportunities for elaborate display within a restricted space offered by this type of flamboyant ornament would have particular appeal to a wealthy merchant and must also have been employed in a domestic context. Unfortunately no contemporary interiors survive, but drawings provide some indication of what used to exist. 'Colston's' house (Gomme *et al* 1979, 73) formerly had a projecting polygonal stone fireplace of *c* 1520 in a French style unrelated to those at Acton Court, but similar to one at Verdelles, Sarthe (Babelon 1989, 39).

The presence of French masons in England in the early 16th century is attested from documentary sources (Colvin 1982, 23), but has usually been considered in relation to the introduction of Renaissance

ornament (Morris 1989, 133). The surviving examples of such work are principally monuments, but also include the Loire School capitals from Chelsea Old Church, dated 1528 (Summerson 1983, 31–2), and some of the windows at Wolfeton House, Dorset (M Howard 1987, 178; Sykes 1988, 171). The influence of French flamboyant architecture on masons working in eastern England during the first half of the 15th century has been discussed by Woodman (1986, 79–92), who also draws attention to the hybrid nature of the Henry VII chapel at Westminster, which was started in 1503 (*ibid*, 145–8; Pevsner and Cherry 1973, 406), and incorporates many elements derived from French sources. Although Robert Poyntz as a courtier must have known this building, which was completed within his lifetime, the masons who constructed his own chapel appear, from the other examples, to have been Bristol based. The existence of such schools, working wholly in the Gothic manner, is almost entirely unstudied, but is unsurprising in a port like Bristol, which at this period was extremely prosperous, and had widespread trading contacts, especially with south-west France and Spain. Robert Poyntz, in common with other gentry in the region, had profitable commercial interests there. These are reflected by the use of Spanish poly-





chrome tiles in the Poyntz chapel and at Acton Court, and by the presence there of Spanish pottery (Chapter 9, 16th- and 17th-century pottery) and a Portuguese coin (Chapter 9, Coins, jettons and tokens, Catalogue no 26), also occurring in some quantity in Bristol.

The limited amount of structural alteration undertaken by Robert Poyntz at Acton Court during his long tenure must be an indication that the basic size and scope of the accommodation, built by his great-grandfather half a century earlier, was still considered suitable to his station. This contrasts with the situation half a century later, when the ambitions of his grandson Nicholas resulted in wholesale rebuilding. In this he was unusual: the majority of the Gloucestershire gentry retained their medieval houses until the late 16th century, when there was the start of a general rebuilding (Kingsley 1989, 4). The extent of this can be gauged in the engravings made by John Kip as illustrations for Sir Robert Atkyns' *Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* of 1712 (many are illustrated in Kingsley). As a consequence many medieval manor houses suffered one of two fates: extensive rebuilding, which rendered the original plan unrecognisable,

or downgrading to a working farm, usually coupled with partial demolition. Local examples of the former include Badminton, Dyrham Park, or Ashton Court (ibid, 53, 211; Pevsner 1958, 220); and of the latter, Acton Court itself, Yate Court, Olveston Court (Verey 1976, 316, 414) and Court Farm, Lower Almondsbury (Rodwell 1991, 188), which was replaced by a new house, Knole Park, on a different site (Kingsley 1989, 117). Apparently 'classic' surviving houses such as Great Chalfield or Little Sodbury are also misleading, in that they are products of restoration, often sensitive, but placing them in early 20th-century settings, from which ancillary buildings have been cleared: Little Sodbury had an entrance court with a gatehouse (Tipping 1937, 106), and Great Chalfield is one range of a former courtyard house (National Trust 1986a, 6).

This poor survival rate has led to an underestimation of the overall size and architectural pretensions of 15th-century gentry houses in the region (Kingsley 1988, 45; 1989, 7). However, a composite picture emerges from the individual examples cited above, of design elements which include the use of moats and gatehouses to provide an impressive approach; a courtyard or double-

*Figure 3.43 Running animal, on a fireplace surround from the south moat (Figure 8.17) (photograph: Marek Letocun).*



courtyard plan, and the balancing of architectural features on the principal elevations. This increasing concern with external appearance can also be seen in timber-framed buildings of the south-east (Smith 1992, 29).

Such fashions must have been disseminated by the family associations and rivalries of this relatively small social class. For example in the parishes adjoining Acton Court, Yate was one of the numerous Berkeley holdings and their principal residence from 1491, when the castle was left to the Crown; they also held the manors of Stoke Gifford and Dodington (Kingsley 1989, 83, 176). Members of the Poyntz family, including Sir Robert's son Anthony, lived at the manor of Frampton Cotterell (Hall 1983, 36). The neighbouring manor of Olveston was held from 1475 by John Walsh, who had a similar career to Robert Poyntz: among numerous other posts he was receiver-general of all Berkeley lands in Gloucestershire, and comptroller of customs in the port of Bristol (Bristol Library Typescript, 5; Kingsley 1989, 123). In the 1480s he married Elizabeth Forster of Little Sodbury manor, and in 1496 was arranging marriage covenants for their children with Robert Poyntz. Little Sodbury remained in the Walsh family until 1608. The manors of Siston and Dyrham were held by the Denys family, who held a succession of local and court appointments under Henry VII and Henry VIII (Johnson 1989, 36; National Trust 1983, 43–4). In this social context the house at Acton Court is probably not atypical. However, of these eight adjacent manors, only Little Sodbury, with which it has many points in common, is well preserved. Of the remainder Yate is ruinous, Frampton Cotterell and Olveston have survived in part as farms, and the remainder have been completely rebuilt, sometimes on a different site.

### The environs of the medieval house

It should be stressed that the research programme at Acton Court concentrated on the house and its owners and occupants. A detailed study of the medieval field system and changes in agricultural practice, for example, would require more extensive documentary research and fieldwork, and would need to form part of a more broadly based parish survey. With this proviso it is nevertheless possible to discuss some of the

manorial elements in the medieval and Tudor landscape (Fig 3.44).

Agriculture formed the basis of the manorial economy, and there were evidently several buildings associated with the demesne farm. Also related to the house were dovecotes, fishponds, a rabbit warren and a deer park, all of which, like the farm buildings, were mentioned in 14th-century documents. Other features, added later but in existence at the time of Henry VIII's visit, were a walled garden and a second deer park.

The garden can be precisely located, and some of the other features can be tentatively identified on the ground. Fortunately it is possible to place them in their local historical context, because a considerable number of similar manorial features elsewhere in southern Gloucestershire have been surveyed and published.

#### *The garden*

A garden was mentioned in 1312, 1321–2 (when the survey referred to a garden with a yard covering 3? acres) and 1376. There is no documentary evidence at all for a 15th- or 16th-century garden. From the late 17th century onwards gardens are mentioned again, but only in very generalised terms along with outhouses, courtyards and orchards, and it is only in the 19th century that their actual location is known. In the 1842 tithe appropriation accompanying the 1840 map, there were gardens in the north-east quadrant of the south court and on the east side of the north field, adjacent to Latteridge Road. By 1881, when the 1:2500 OS map was surveyed, the garden in the north field appears to have been converted into an orchard, and a kitchen garden had been laid out immediately to the north of the east range of the house.

The earthwork and geophysical surveys and the excavations immediately north-east of the house revealed a walled court on the far side of the north moat (Fig 3.45), occupying an area of *c* 0.4 ha (*c* 1 acre). It extended *c* 80 m (260 ft) beyond the outer edge of the moat and had a maximum width of 51 m (167 ft). This almost certainly contained a formal garden, which would explain the symmetrical layout of rectangular areas of rubble around the central north–south axis of the court, shown in the geophysical survey. Although the picture is confused because of the presence of Civil War period ditches and possible pillow mounds, most of the areas of rubble probably represent the



foundations of raised beds. The court was aligned on the terrace to the north-west of the house, which appears to be artificial and is likely to have been created no later than Period 2. Its west wall closely followed the edge of the terrace and its central axis was at right angles to the north side of the late medieval house, itself influenced by the alignment of the terrace.

One of the original points of access to the court was at its south-east corner, from a part of the house which was demolished to accommodate the new east range. It must therefore have been constructed before 1535. A possible date is provided by the sundial, designed by Nicholas Kratzer in 1520, and clearly intended to be a garden feature. The garden could have been laid out before then, but it is unlikely to have been any later, and can almost certainly be attributed to Sir Robert Poyntz.

In addition to the walled garden itself, there were several features that may have been associated with it. They included the roughly circular pond beyond the north wall of the garden, and a stone-lined pond, also circular but now infilled, which was located on the south-west side of the house. This decanted into the open conduit and bank running obliquely across the fields to the west and north-west of the house. The northern pond is still fed by an underground culvert, c 350 m in length, which flows westwards down the slope from a reservoir on the north side of Lodge Farm.

A similar culvert, up to 400 m long, has been recorded at Kelston Manor, Avon. It supplied water to a fountain and the now-demolished manor house, before passing beneath the churchyard in a vaulted tunnel and flowing into a flight of three fishponds.

Figure 3.44 Historical topography of the parish.

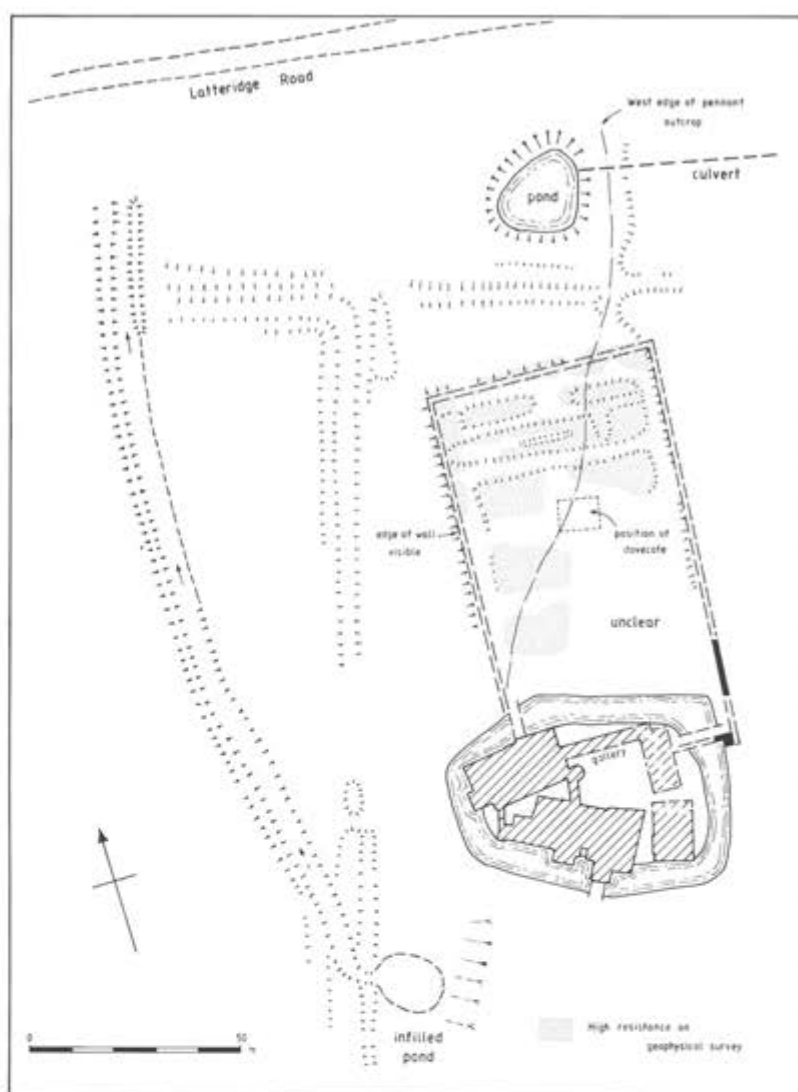


Figure 3.45 Evidence for the garden and watercourses north and west of the house.

It was probably constructed when the house was rebuilt, between 1574 and 1589 (Edgar and Iles 1981, 69). The culvert and the northern pond at Acton Court were undated, but the south-west pond predated the west wall of the mid-16th-century south court. An early 16th-century date, although unproven, would be perfectly acceptable.

The relationship between the ponds and the garden has yet to be established. However, one possibility is that a watercourse, either open or covered, was built from the northern pond down the centre of the garden from north to south, feeding into the moat, and flowing out, via the south-west pond, into the embanked conduit. The entire water system is of considerable interest and deserves further investigation to confirm its date and to determine how it actually functioned.

The sundial is also of great importance (Fig 3.46), because it is a very early example of a type of garden feature generally associated with a slightly later period in Henry VIII's reign. Kratzer is known to have designed two other polyhedral sundials at Oxford, both of which may have been made in 1523. They were set in the orchard of Corpus Christi College and in St Mary's churchyard respectively (Chapter 8). But the seven dials in the Privy Orchard at Hampton Court were not acquired till 1530, and the sundial in the Great Garden at Whitehall, possibly attributable to Kratzer, may have been made as late as the 1540s (Strong 1979, 25 and 38).

There would be nothing unusual about the creation of a new garden at Acton Court in the early 16th century. Several other contemporary gardens are known in the region to the north and north-east of Bristol. At Horton Court, for example, a covered Italian-style loggia, overlooking the garden and decorated with roundels containing the busts of Roman emperors, was built by William Knight, a civil servant, diplomat, and future Bishop of Bath and Wells. Formerly set in the garden wall was the inscription 'Wilhelmus Prothonotarius Ano 1521' (Iles 1984, 45), though its reliability as dating evidence is questionable since it may have originated in the house and been moved to the garden at a later date.

At Little Sodbury, 2.5 km south of Horton Court, the walled enclosure to the west of the house (now called the Bowling Green) is another possible example of a garden. It was probably constructed by Sir Robert Poyntz's son-in-law, John Walsh, who was also responsible for creating a park there in 1511 (Lay and Iles 1979, 11–12). It was built out over a steep slope in front of the house and was supported by a massive buttressed retaining wall on the downhill side. It measures 145 ft by 135 ft (c 44 m by 41 m), with raised banks 1.5 m high and 2 m wide round all four sides.

Of particular significance, however, were the third Duke of Buckingham's gardens at Thornbury Castle (8 km north-west of Acton Court), created as part of his major rebuilding programme, which was carried out from 1508 onwards. There were two gardens, situated on the south and south-east side of the newly constructed south range. They measured c 150 ft by 100 ft (45.5 m by 30.5 m) and c 200 ft by 105 ft (c 60.6 m by 31.85 m) respectively, and covered an area of three-quarters of an acre

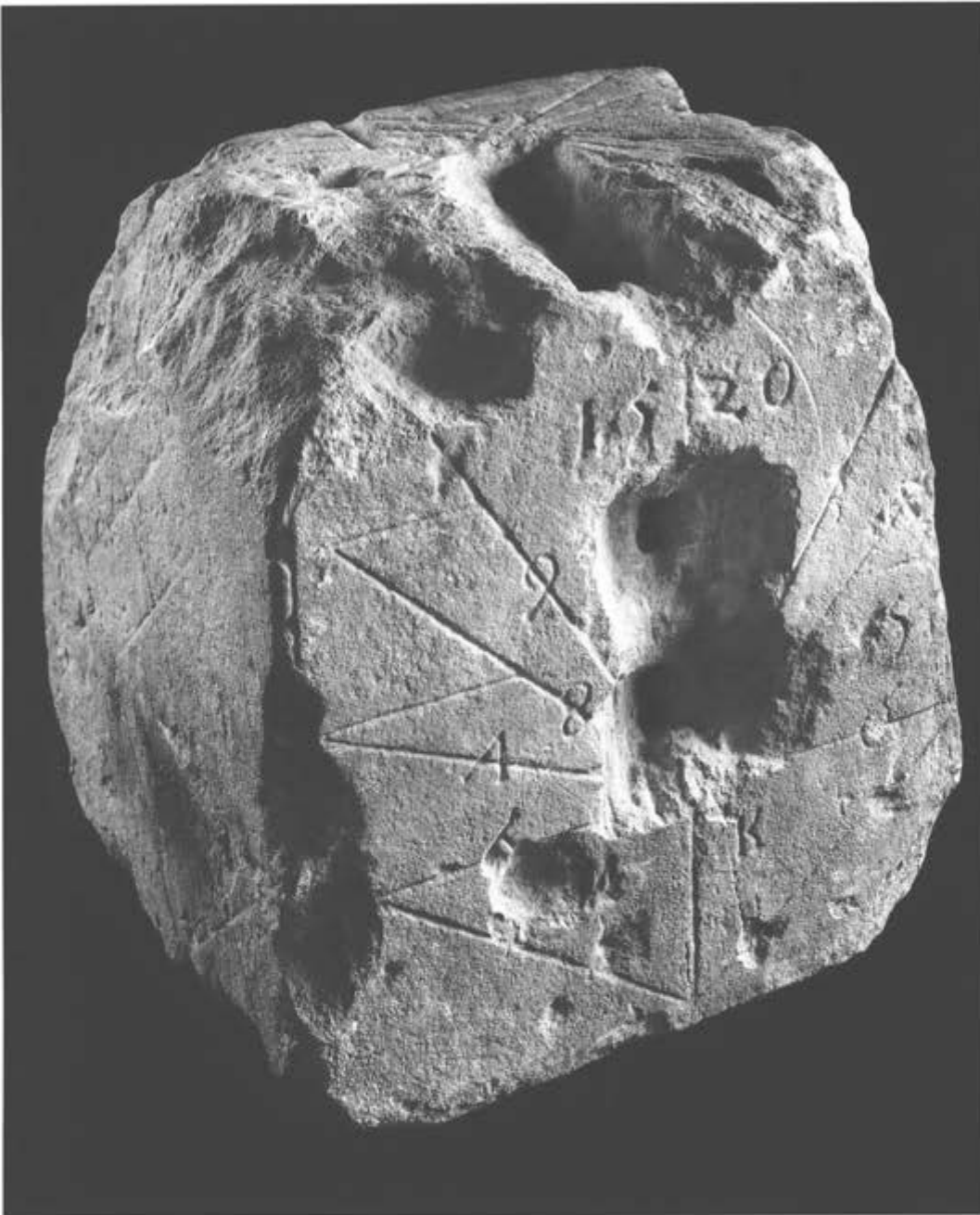


Figure 3.46 *The sundial*  
(photograph: English  
Heritage A870163).

(0.3 ha). A garden wall was built in 1515, and in 1520 John Wynde, the Duke's gardener, was laying out 'knotts' (Harvey 1981, 136; Hawkyard 1977, 53 and 57).

In 1521, after the impeachment and execution of Buckingham, Thornbury Castle was forfeited to the Crown and in the same year a detailed survey of the property was made, which included a description of the gardens (*LP H8*, III, no 1286). The Privy Garden, overlooked by the Duke's apartments in the south range, was surrounded on the other three sides by wooden galleries, serving as

covered walks at first-floor level and offering a semi-aerial view of the garden. On the west and south sides they were attached to embattled stone walls, with windows through which the outer court and the adjacent churchyard could be seen. The doors which provided access from the house to the galleries at first-floor level still exist, though the galleries themselves have long since been dismantled. A later survey of Thornbury Castle, made in 1583, stated that the galleries were built above cloistered walks 'paved with Brick Paving' (Leland, *Coll*, II, 658).



Another two-storey timber-framed gallery was built by Wolsey at The More, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, after the acquisition of the house by St Alban's Abbey, of which he was titular abbot. This was 253 ft (77.1 m) in length and extended across the north moat out into the garden (Colvin 1982, 164–7, fig 16). The inspiration for the galleries at both Thornbury Castle and The More appears to have been Henry VII's palace at Richmond (Coope 1986, 45–6), where wooden galleries, built on stone walls and supported by wooden posts, ran round two sides of the garden. They were built between 1503 and 1505 (Colvin 1982, 224, 228, fig 22).

At Acton Court a first-floor gallery ran along the north side of the house at right angles to the central axis of the garden, providing a view of it with the north arm of the moat in the foreground. This gallery linked the north-east corner of the chapel and an as yet undiscovered building occupying the site of the north end of the 1535 east range. The gallery was retained when the new range was constructed and a doorway provided access to it from Room 6. Its full height is known because of the fortuitous survival of the scar of its roof pitch on the once external west wall of Room 6 (Chapter 4, Fig 4.4). It would probably have looked similar to the galleries at Richmond Palace, with a stone wall carrying a timber-framed superstructure (Thurley 1993, fig 41). The gallery may have been influenced by the near-contemporary example of Thornbury Castle, but there is no reason why Sir Robert Poyntz, himself a courtier, should not have been directly inspired by the royal works at Richmond.

In Period 3.5, there must have been two bridges across the moat, linking the house with the garden. On the west side, access to the bridge across the north arm of the moat would have been through a ground-floor passage (Room L1). On the east side, the bridge would have crossed over the east arm of the moat to the south-east corner of the garden (Figs 3.41, 3.45). It is highly unlikely that first-storey galleries continued round the edges of the walled court. However, it is quite possible that the walks were protected by covered pentices, as in the garden of the Castle of Alençon, painted in 1526 (Harvey 1981, pl 83). The walks may also have been 'paved with Brick Paving' (ie tiles), as at Thornbury Castle. It is conceivable that the late 15th–early 16th-century tiles, which formed the path found to the

south of the house in 1974, derived from the garden walks rather than the actual house. The garderobe, located on the outer edge of the east arm of the moat, may have been related to the walk. The garden walls were probably crenellated, like the walls of the later south court or the embattled walls at Thornbury. The actual garden layout may have borne a resemblance to the Great Garden at Whitehall, shown in the background of a painting dated *c* 1545 (Thurley 1993, fig 282; Strong 1979, pl 13), where raised beds were surrounded by painted wooden rails and heraldic beasts surmounting marbled wooden columns.

It is not known what alterations were subsequently made to the garden but the means of access to it from the house certainly changed between 1535 and *c* 1555. The only direct access from the new east range was from the north-west corner of Room 6, at first-floor level, via a newel stairway which led down to ground level, from where there must have been a new bridge across the moat. The early 16th-century gallery and bridge across to the west side of the garden were retained until the new north range was erected in *c* 1550. This replaced the earlier gallery, providing a view, albeit oblique, over the garden. It also removed the Period 4.1 stair tower. For a short period the only access to the garden was through the cross-passage in the centre of the range and across the bridge, the base plate of which was found in the excavations. This was evidently considered to be inadequate and a second stair tower (Room 33) was added to the north-east corner of the east range, with access from a doorway cut in the side of the great window (Chapter 4). The effect on the garden of the Period 4.2 widening of the north arm of the moat must have been very short-lived. After only about five years, most of the moat was filled in, and the bridges became redundant. The garden survived until the second quarter of the 17th century. The stair tower was then demolished and its foundations were sealed, dated by a group of clay tobacco pipes to the period 1620–50. The north and east walls had evidently been pulled down by the early 1640s since they were cut by Civil War ditches, which would not have been required as defences if the walls had still been standing.

#### *The agricultural buildings*

No medieval or Tudor agricultural buildings remain standing, nor were any found in the

areas which were excavated. But the documentary evidence indicates that two dovecotes existed in 1312, and in the 1321–2 survey a barn, cowshed and sheepfold are also mentioned. By then there was only one dovecote, referred to again in 1376 (Chapter 2, Appendix A). Since the moated manor house was constructed in the mid-13th century, it is reasonable to assume that some of the associated farm buildings were contemporary with it.

The farm buildings were clearly not within the moated enclosure, which was too small to accommodate them, but they were probably sited not far beyond. The most likely location was to the north-east of the house, where traces of walls, showing as parchmarks and earthworks, were visible during the dry summer of 1989. These may well be medieval and Tudor in date. It is possible that, just as the moated house appears to have been built on the site of 12th-century outbuildings, so the medieval farm buildings may have been erected on the site of the earlier manor house. Parts of the earlier house could even have been converted to agricultural use in the mid-13th century.

Support for this theory comes from the two massive earthfast wooden posts, forming a gateway *c* 3 m wide, which were found close to the north-east corner of the east court. Unfortunately attempts to obtain a date for the surviving post from a dendrochronological sample were unsuccessful, but it is unlikely that the gateway was built later than the 13th century, and it could be earlier. Earthfast posts were still regularly employed in major structures until the early 13th century, after which they tended to be replaced by sill-beams or plinths, although the tradition persisted into the 14th century (Beresford 1987, 125–6). At Acton Court, however, any gateway constructed after the 13th century would almost certainly have been either timber-framed or else built entirely in stone. The gateposts are most unlikely to have been related to the moated house, the main entrance to which was on the south side; however, they could easily have provided an entrance to the farm complex and even to the earlier manor house.

The outer moat (Fig 3.39) appears to have formed the eastern boundary of the manorial complex. Only a few short lengths of it were located south-east of the house, but it may actually have originated near the north-east corner of the north field, contin-

uing southwards, partly sealed beneath the modern road. It then changed alignment and continued in a straight line to join the canalised stream to the east of the south court. If this interpretation is correct, it would have had a total length of *c* 270 m. It may have been contemporary with the inner moat surrounding the house, since they were similar in width and both had Pennant retaining walls, although the latter was rock-cut. It probably had a dual function, acting as a drainage ditch (although its base appeared to be level), while also delimiting the manorial complex, including the farm buildings, beyond the moated house itself. The sharp right-angled bend in Latteridge Road may be respecting the north-east corner of this outer enclosure. The outer moat was presumably traversed by bridges, one of which may have been immediately east of the wooden gateway. A second bridge, across the stream, may have been associated with a detached gatehouse, possibly sited to the south of the moated manor house.

In the period between the late 14th and early 18th centuries, the only agricultural buildings which are specifically documented are a dairy, or 'deyhous', repaired in 1465–6, and a 'shepewouse', mentioned in the manorial accounts for 1516–17 (GRO D1086/M1). The dairy appears to have formed part of a larger building, one of whose stone walls contained a chimney. This was not unusual, and in East Anglia, documented examples of 13th- and 14th-century dairies incorporated in bakehouses, brewhouses or servants' quarters have been found (Le Patourel 1980, 41). Some of these examples were situated within the main manorial enclosure, and it is conceivable that the Acton Court dairy formed part of the presumed medieval building beneath the north end of the Tudor east range. It is more likely, however, to have been outside the moat, like the other farm buildings. The early 16th-century sheephouse (possibly the same as the 14th-century sheepfold) may have been isolated from the main farm complex. It was referred to in conjunction with Laddon Meadows, and was perhaps located near Ladden Brook, in which case it was at least 0.5 km west of the house.

The 16th-century farm is likely to have remained in the same general area as the medieval farm, and some of the many existing buildings may have continued in use. It would have been relatively unobtrusive, because it would have been partly hidden from view by the east wall of the garden.

*The fishponds*

The earliest reference to fishponds at Acton Court is in the 1321–2 survey. There were two, of which the fishing was worth 4 shillings. John de Acton's complaint in 1327–8 about the theft of his fish during the period when his property was forfeited to the Crown presumably related to these same ponds. No ponds were recorded in the 1312 inquisition post mortem, but since it contained fewer details than the later survey, this may simply be an omission rather than an indication that the ponds had not yet been constructed. There are no other known references to fishponds until 1709, when William Roach noted a 'fine fish pann' in his survey of the manor of Iron Acton (WRO 947 (Estate): 799).

Five fishponds survived until the 1970s, though the three on the east side of Latteridge Road, (described as 'Old Fishpond' in 1842), were subsequently filled in. It is difficult to establish which of the five existed in the early 14th century, but the flooded subrectangular quarry, c 200 m north-east of the house, can probably be discounted because it is fed by a culvert, thought to be early 16th-century in date. It is almost certainly a later feature, though there are 14th-century examples from Warwickshire of flooded marlpits being used to store fish (Aston and Bond 1988a, 419–21).

The 1321/2 survey may have referred to the fishponds on the south and south-east side of the house (treating the chain of three ponds as a single pond). While it cannot be proved that they were all contemporary, nevertheless it is quite possible that they were originally built in the 13th or early 14th centuries. The arrangement of rectangular ponds in conjunction with a much larger pond containing an island, though unusual in the region, is certainly not unique. A similar but undated configuration survives at Rangeworthy, only 2 km north-east of Acton Court (Dennison and Iles 1985, fig 3, nos 8 and 9), though there the ponds are on either side of a stream rather than directly linked. At both places it is of course possible that the ponds underwent later alterations. Without archaeological excavation it is difficult to know whether, for example, the islands are medieval features like those recorded in 1299 in the Bishop of Worcester's fishponds at Alvechurch, Worcestershire (Aston and Bond 1988b, 442–4), or whether they are later additions.

In their study of Worcestershire, Aston and Bond noted that while fishponds were

recorded on some royal, baronial and monastic estates in the mid- to late 12th century, they were most frequently mentioned for the first time at the end of the 13th century and in the early 14th century (Aston and Bond 1988b, 437, 444 and 450–2). This might be due to the lack of earlier manorial records, but it is an observation that might equally well be applied to southern Gloucestershire. Although William de Putot possessed a fishpond in 1231 at Mangotsfield, stocked with thirteen bream sent from the royal fishpond at Feckenham, Worcestershire (Aston and Bond 1988b, 438), most references tend to be rather later. In the late 13th century, money was granted by the Bishop of Bath and Wells to Bath Priory to construct fishponds at Bath (Dennison and Iles 1985, 34), while in 1334–5, a fishpond, stocked with eels, was made in Marlwood Park, Thornbury, at a cost of 33s 6d (Franklin 1989, 159).

Fishponds were very expensive to construct and maintain, and were a major social investment, since freshwater fish were considered to be a luxury food in the medieval period (Dyer 1988, 33–5). The ponds at Acton Court, in existence by 1321/2, provide another illustration of the pursuit of status by the Acton family, and may have been constructed at the same time as the moated manor house, or shortly afterwards. No freshwater fish bones were recovered in the excavations (the only bones were from sea fish), but they were presumably consumed in the house, in both the medieval and the Tudor periods.

*The rabbit warren*

'A separate pasture called the conyngere' was documented in 1376, when it was valued at £1 6s 8d (Chapter 2, Appendix A). 'Connygarth' was mentioned in the manorial accounts for 1516–17, and the 1683 indenture relating to the sale of the house referred to 'the Conygree or Conywarren thereto adjoining'. It must have been on the north or north-west side of the house, since most of the north field was called 'Cunnygar' in 1842.

There is no clear evidence for pillow mounds in the north field. The linear mounds at the far end of the former north court are more likely to be garden features, though they could conceivably postdate the garden. However, the north edge of the 'conyngre' was probably defined by the single bank and ditch, which continues eastwards from the north-east corner of the deer



park boundary. It is on a completely different alignment from the north court, and apparently predates it, suggesting that the medieval warren may have been overlain by the early 16th-century garden. Bones recovered from mid-16th-century contexts and, in larger numbers, from a late 17th-century context, indicate that rabbits continued to be eaten, and it is possible that the warren was re-established on its old site after the garden was abandoned.

The rabbit warren is likely to have been created at a later date than the fishponds and the western deer park. Given its value, it would surely have been mentioned in the 1321–2 survey if it had existed by then. References to warrens elsewhere also suggest that they were slightly later features, though some were recorded in the first half of the 14th century. At Tormarton, Gloucestershire, a warren belonging to John de la Ryvere was broken into in 1336, and hares, rabbits and partridges were removed from it (Lay and Iles 1979, 10). In Oxfordshire, by comparison, the earliest references to warrens are in the second quarter of the 14th century (Bond 1986, 154).

Warrens tended to be located close to the main house, as at Barrs Court, Oldland, Gloucestershire (Russell 1980, 7–8), or within the park, as at Tormarton. Pillow mounds were not a standard feature, though undated examples survive close to neighbouring houses such as Yate Court and Little Sodbury (Iles 1986, 119–21). By no means all rabbit warrens were, as at Acton Court, medieval in origin. At Dyrham, Gloucestershire, there were two warrens, both of which were within a park which was only created in 1511. Rabbits were still being taken in large numbers from the northern warren in the mid-19th century (Iles 1983, 53 and fig 6). It is not known when the Acton Court warren ceased to be used, though the 1683 sale indenture suggests it was still functioning at that date.

#### *The deer parks*

On his journey through south Gloucestershire in c 1540, Leland observed two parks next to the house, one for red deer, the other for fallow deer (Chapter 2, Appendix A). There are two sets of 'park' field names in the 1842 tithe appropriation, indicating that the parks were to the west and east of the house (Fig 3.44). Most of the west park, also known as Acton Park, can be located because it survived long enough to be mentioned in the 1683 sale indenture. Docu-

mentary references to the east park are minimal (though no papers relating to the Acton Lodge estate have been investigated). It seems to have had a much shorter life and was disparked in the later 16th century, but it too can be identified by topographical features and field names.

#### *The west park*

This was the earlier of the two parks. It was first mentioned in 1312, and there are further references to it in 1321–2, 1376 and 1382. These indicate that its value as an agricultural resource in addition to its value as a source of venison was increasing during the 14th century. In 1312, it had 'no underwood or herbage beyond the sustenance of the beasts'. In 1321–2, the wood and pasture were worth 10 shillings, and by 1376, the pasture beyond the support of game was worth £2, although the underwood was worth nothing. A further investigation of the property in 1382, following the inquisition post mortem of 1376, noted that the great timber from a wood called 'le park' was worth half a mark, in addition to fencing (*IPM Glos* VI, 128–9).

The manorial accounts for 1465–6 record repairs to the gatehouse facing the park, while those for 1468–9 describe the mending of the stone park wall and of the 'posterndore' in the park leading to the church. The accounts also indicate the revenue from the park, which amounted to £5 6s 8d in 1466–7 and £6 13s 4d between 1469 and 1472.

Apart from Leland's statement, there are no 16th-century references to the park. It still contained deer in 1649, but had ceased to be used as a park by 1683, although at that date it was still known as Acton Park and survived as a recognisable feature in the landscape. Atkyn's mention of Simon Harcourt's park at Acton Court in 1707–8 must be an anachronism since it had already been divided up into closes, and 'the wood or grove of timber' in the park, referred to in 1683, had been 'felled and cutt down' by 1709 (BRO AC/AS 4/20).

The park occupied only 37 acres (15 ha) in 1321–2, but was later considerably enlarged. In 1649 its estimated size was 100 acres (40.5 ha: almost certainly an underestimate) and in 1683 it contained 153 acres (62 ha), though by then it was no longer used as a park. The sale indenture indicates the limits of the park at its maximum extent. Its northern boundary, surviving as a pair of banks and ditches (although largely



ploughed out in the 1950s) ran roughly parallel to Latteridge Road. By the 17th century and probably before then, the boundary may have been alongside the road, since the field which was still called 'Rails' in 1842 was within the park in 1683. The field between 'Rails' and Ladden Brook, called 'Horesecroft' in both 1683 and 1842, was described as 'adjoining the parke', so the western boundary must be represented by the present hedgeline which continues south-westwards in an unbroken line as far as the parish boundary.

The south side followed the parish boundary and, further east, was respected by the main road into the village from Bristol. The main road is joined by the lane from Acton Mill and makes a sharp turn northwards along the eastern boundary of the park. This raises the possibility that the original road line may have been diverted when the park was extended. The two fields in the south-east corner were known as Long Park and Great Park in 1842.

Beyond the White Hart public house, which was built on a plot carved out of the former park in 1709 (WRO 947 (Estate): 723), the line of the eastern boundary is much less clear. It could have continued up the west side of the properties facing onto the Green, and then along the west side of Latteridge Road. Alternatively, as shown on Figure 3.44, it might have returned westwards as far as the narrow linear field known as 'The Walks', before turning north-eastwards again. 'The Walks' could conceivably be a residual feature, providing access through the park to the meadows adjacent to Ladden Brook.

It is uncertain whether the large fishpond was within the park or just outside it. The park boundary probably ran parallel to its northern edge, but excavations would be required in order to confirm this point. To the north of the pond and adjacent to the west side of the moat, the eastern boundary of the park survives as a pair of banks and ditches, though like the northern boundary, part of it has been levelled by recent ploughing. This is probably the original park boundary, which may well have been realigned when the embanked open conduit was constructed obliquely across the north-east corner of the park. The boundaries, as proposed, would have enclosed an area of *c* 159 acres (64 ha), fairly close to the figure of 153 acres (62 ha) given in 1683. At that date the park was 'inclosed with a stone wall and paled', though no part of the wall now remains standing.

It is likely that the portion of the park north of 'The Walks' was in fact the primary park, mentioned in 1312. If this is correct, then the park must have been extended southwards at some stage. The reference to 'the posterndore in the park, leading to the church' may indicate that it had been enlarged before 1468–9, since one possible location for the door was at the south-east corner of the park, opposite a path which still leads to the church.

#### *The east park*

The only specific reference to a second park was made by Leland, indicating that it was in existence by *c* 1540. However, the ground which was disparked by Sir Nicholas Poyntz II in 1582 (when the deer were destroyed) was almost certainly the east park. The 'Parke of coarse wette grounds ... kept still for deere value' in 1649, must surely be the west park, which occupied a more low-lying area, mostly on alluvial clay.

The extent of the east park can be defined with some confidence, despite the lack of documentary evidence at present. The position of its north-east corner is indicated by four fields, the names of which all contained the element 'Park' in 1842. Its eastern edge was marked by the road to Rangeworthy and, where they diverged, by the boundary between the manors of Iron Acton and Acton Ilger. Its south side was probably on the line of a field boundary leading to the Green, and its west side ran along the edge of the Green, the fishponds and Latteridge Road. The north side was defined by a wall or hedge heading eastwards from the north-east corner of the northern fishpond. This was shown on the 1840 tithe map, though it had been removed by 1881, when survey work was carried out for the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map. It linked up with the north side of Hollow Park, thereby completing the circuit. With these boundaries, the east park would have been smaller than the west park, occupying an area of *c* 122 acres (49.4 ha).

Surprisingly, given the absence of any visible boundary banks or walls (a further indication that it was the later of the two parks), rather more physical evidence survives in the east park than in the west park. The most important feature is the tower which forms the core of Lodge Farm (Fig 3.47), and is still standing to its full height. It was built almost exactly in the centre of the park, and would have overlooked the whole of the enclosed area, including the



otherwise-concealed narrow valley to the north. It also had a clear view of the house, to the west, and the parish church, to the south.

Only a very superficial external examination of Lodge Farm has been carried out, but it is clearly a complex structure, having undergone several major alterations before it passed out of the ownership of the Poyntz family in 1683. However, the tower was evidently contemporary with the park and was probably built in the 15th or early 16th centuries. It may have served as a prospect tower, like the 15th-century tower at Knole Park, Almondsbury, Gloucestershire (Kingsley 1989, 117–19). It could also have combined several other functions, acting as a hunting stand, a gazebo or a banqueting house, or a keeper's dwelling, like the Elizabethan lodge at Hardington, Somerset (McGarvie and Harvey 1980, 150–1). There is a strong possibility that it was the stand in which Sir Walter Raleigh smoked his tobacco pipe (Chapter 2).

The square enclosure immediately east of Latteridge Road is also likely to have been associated with the park, and could be a deer pound. Similar features are recorded at Thornbury, where the 1521 survey of the executed Duke of Buckingham's property described '13 proper pounds, well watered with a spring, being enclosed with a pale' in the New Park (*LP H8*, III, no 1286). Two other features of interest are the watering holes within the park, on the line of the underground conduit running down towards the pond on the north side of the early Tudor garden. They are currently used for watering cattle, but were probably originally provided for the deer.

The history of the parks adjoining Acton Court closely reflects the history of emparking elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Although a park at Sodbury is mentioned in Domesday Book (Iles 1986, 119), and the royal hunting park of Alveston was enlarged in 1130 by taking in cultivated land (Moore 1982, 10), the creation of seigneurial parks

*Figure 3.47 Acton Lodge from the west (photograph: Robert Bell).*

began only after the disafforestation of the royal hunting preserve of Kingswood/Horwood Forest in 1228. This covered an area of c 200 square miles (c 518 sq km: virtually the whole of what is now the administrative area of South Gloucestershire), and certainly included Iron Acton.

Only certain parts of the Forest were actually heavily wooded in 1086, such as the areas around Thornbury, and the foot of the Cotswolds scarp between Old Sodbury and Hawkesbury (Iles 1986, 117). A furlong of woodland was recorded on the Acton Ilger estate in 1086, and there was evidently some woodland in the park at Iron Acton in 1382. Indeed, a grove of timber still survived in 1683. But the immediate area was by no means densely wooded, and judging by the amount of ridge and furrow still visible on post-war aerial photographs, much of the western part of Iron Acton, including Latteridge, was under cultivation by the 13th century. In 1312, even after arable land had been incorporated in the primary deer park, the majority of the recorded land on the manorial estate was still being cultivated, since there were 120 acres (48.5 ha) of arable, as opposed to 12 acres (4.8 ha) of pasture and 40 acres (16 ha) of meadow.

The earliest known park in southern Gloucestershire after the 1228 disafforestation is Eastwood Park, created by Gilbert Clare IV on his Thornbury estate and in existence by 1281. Marlwood, the second of the Clare parks near Thornbury, had been laid out by 1296. Franklin suggests that several parks, such as the one at Yate Court, first mentioned in 1302, may have been created by local gentry in imitation of the Thornbury parks. A grant of free warren was made at Tortworth in 1304, and there was also a park at Old Sodbury in 1310, held by the Crown during the minority of Gilbert Clare V; this, like those at Thornbury, may have been created by his father (Franklin 1989, 153–4).

The formation of the park at Acton Court, mentioned in 1312, may have been following a local trend. With an area of only 37 acres (15 ha) it was, to use Iles' phrase, 'little more than a venison larder' (Iles 1986, 119), and was tiny in comparison with the estimated 945-acre (382.4 ha) Eastwood Park. It almost certainly contained fallow deer, as did the overwhelming majority of parks (Rackham 1986, 125). It was, however, somewhat unusual in being situated so close to the manor house. Many medieval parks were created on marginal land at some

distance from the houses to which they belonged (Bond 1986, 153). At least part of the land enclosed within the west park at Acton Court had obviously been cultivated, though it may have been rather poor in quality. Certainly the description of it in 1649 as 'coarse wette grounds' hardly implies prime agricultural land.

The majority of deer parks in southern Gloucestershire were, as elsewhere, created in the 13th and early 14th centuries (Iles 1986, 119), although several new parks were formed in the early 16th century. The earlier parks served a variety of functions, providing grazing, pannage, underwood and timber, as well as supplying venison, which never lost its status as a luxury meat (Rackham 1986, 125). The later parks, which tended to occupy land of greater agricultural value than their medieval predecessors, were designed principally as sporting amenities.

Once again, Thornbury may have set the fashion locally, with Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, obtaining a licence to empark 1000 acres (404.6 ha) in 1510, and a second licence in 1517 to empark a further 500 acres (202.3 ha) (Hawkyard 1977, 51). Both actions, involving the enclosure of high-quality arable land, made him extremely unpopular with the local inhabitants (Leland *Itin* v, 100). Licences to empark were also granted at both Little Sodbury and Dyrham in 1511 (Lay and Iles 1979, 11; Iles 1983, 53). The east park at Iron Acton may have been laid out by Sir Robert Poyntz during the same decade, though the possibility cannot be ruled out that it is earlier since the postern door, mentioned in 1468–9, could have been situated in the south boundary wall of the east park, a mere 200 m north of the church, instead of in the south-east corner of the west park. At present this problem remains unresolved.

The east park was probably the one described by Leland as containing red deer. While different species of deer could be kept in the same park, as at Eastwood Park in the early 16th century (Franklin 1989, 156), the segregation of red and fallow deer in separate parks was not unique to Acton Court. A similar arrangement was recorded by Leland at Nether Stowey, Somerset, owned by Lord Audley, where there were also two parks for red and fallow deer (Leland *Itin* i, 164). However, even at Acton Court there was no rigid segregation of deer by species. Analysis of the animal bones from the excavations demonstrated that there were almost as

many bones of roe deer as of fallow deer, and also that red deer bones, much rarer even in the 16th century, were still being deposited in the mid- to late 17th century, long after the east park had been disparked.

In contrast to the west park, which may have been in use for almost four centuries, the east park had a much shorter life. The reason for this is that it occupied land of higher quality, which was worth converting back to purely agricultural use at an earlier date. The disparking in 1582 should not be seen as a sign of poverty, but rather as an indication of sensible land management by Sir Nicholas Poyntz II. John Smyth, writing in the early 17th century about the Hundred of Berkeley, observed: 'Noe Hundred in this county of Gloucs. nor scarce in this kingdome, hath in soe small a tract of ground beene better stored with deere, both redd and fallowe, Till husbandry of late daies turned many of those parkes and chases into better profit' (Smyth, iii, 4). The break-up of the east park seems to have occurred quite rapidly, and in 1600 Sir John Poyntz,

son of Sir Nicholas, granted a lease of the tenement and land called 'the upper parte of the park', 80 acres (32.4 ha) in area, to Robert Hobbs (PRO/C7/178/125, Hobbs vs Hobbs).

Many of the parks existing in the 16th century had disappeared by the early 17th century. Indeed, as early as 1550, Sir Nicholas Poyntz I had disparked Pucklechurch Park, which he had leased from the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Moore 1976, 28). Only a relatively few parks, such as Dyrham and Badminton, lasted long enough to be transformed into ornamental parks. Surprisingly, the west park at Acton Court appears to have contained deer until the late 17th century, and deer bones continued to account for almost 10 per cent of all mammal bones even at this late date (Chapter 9). However, the total number of mammal bones from mid- to late 17th-century deposits was much smaller than from 16th-century layers and it seems likely, given the known history of the Poyntz family, that the consumption of venison was much lower by this time than in the 16th century.



## 4 The Tudor house

### Period 4.1: the construction of the east range

#### Exterior

*Note* The multi-period plans and elevations of the standing buildings (Figs A1–A9) have been grouped together at the end of the report for ease of reference.

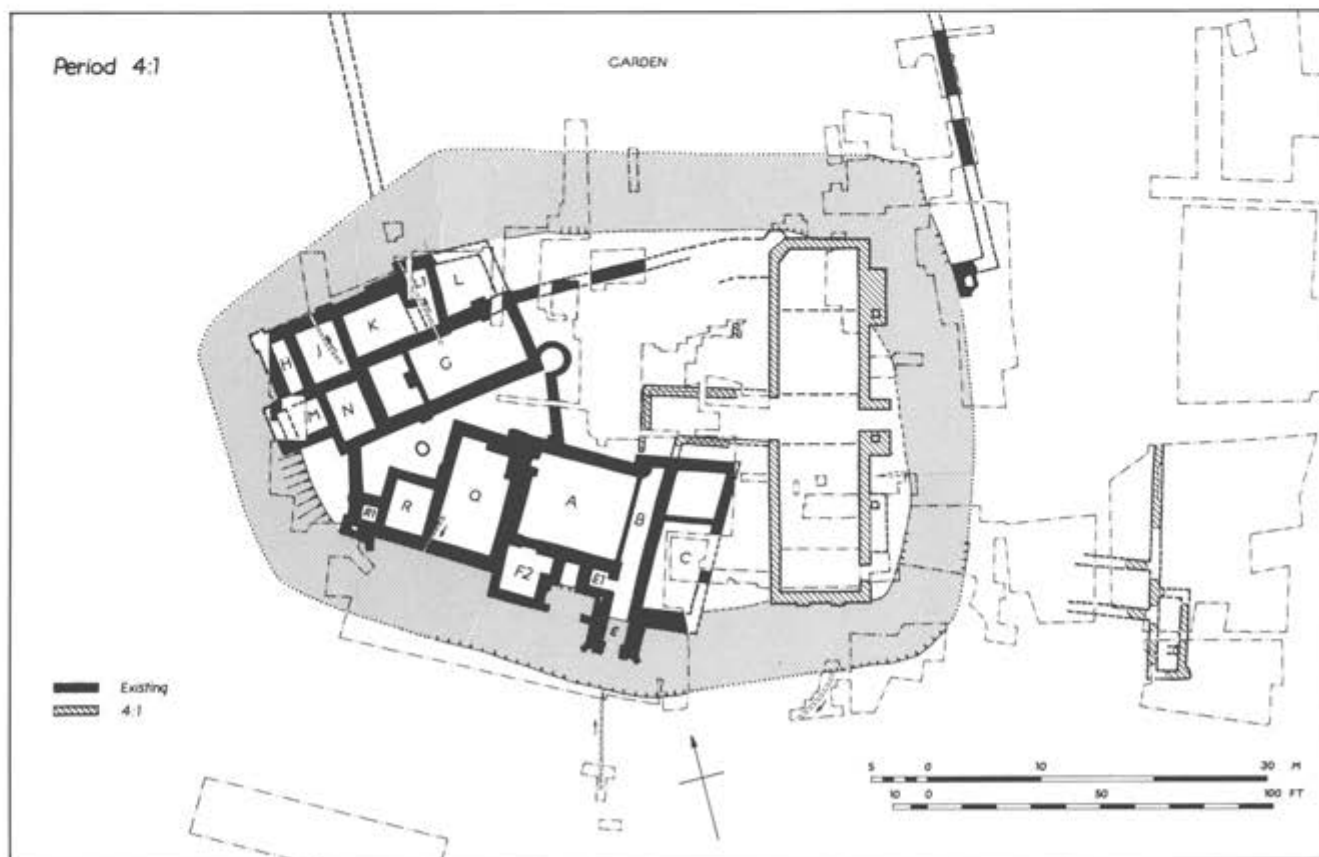
The east range is the oldest part of the house to survive to roof level. It was built as a free-standing addition to the Period 3 house (Fig 4.1), linked by pentices, and occupied the site of former service buildings (Room S). To gain space the extremities were built out into the open moat. The inner edge of the moat was actually located in Area 12, inside

the building, and in Area 15, immediately outside it.

At the opposite end of the range, in Area 17, there was no trace of the moat edge, but trial trenching with a machine in 1985 by the Bristol Visual and Environmental Trust, adjacent to the outer face of the wall, demonstrated that it had foundations at least 1.5 m deep, probably rising from the bottom of the moat. The edge must have been directly underneath the wall, part of which used the south wall of Room S as a foundation.

The external dimensions of the range are 32.3 m by 8.65 m, and the height to eaves level some 9.7 m. All foundations were carried down to bedrock, and the walls are constructed almost entirely of thin Pennant rubble (average 50 mm), tightly jointed and

Figure 4.1 Plan: the house in Period 4.1, scale 1:500.



set in ochre-coloured loam. No mortar is used except in some relieving arches and exposed situations, such as chimney stacks. Limestone is used for dressings and intermittently as quoins. The exterior was originally rendered; patches survive below ground level on the north wall (E6), and on the west wall (E3) in the roof-space of the Period 4.2 north range. The render has a high lime content and a roughcast finish; the inclusion in the aggregate of coal and kiln slag gives it an off-white colour. The gable walls are up to 1.0 m thick and the long walls a maximum of 0.75 m thick, tapering to 0.65 m at wall plate level. Extensive settlement has created considerable local variation in the dimensions of the range.

The principal south elevation (E2) is the only one to display a unified architectural composition. On the ground floor there was a symmetrical arrangement of three windows separated by a pair of shallow pilasters. The single-light outer windows (E2.1; E2.3, now reopened) have rebated hollow-chamfered mouldings and are surmounted by relieving arches of alternating Pennant and limestone. These are carefully executed and were possibly intended to be seen. The central window (E2.2) is more fragmentary, but retains some of its dressings. It is framed by pilasters; the east is complete, but the west was rebuilt in Period 5.1.

A single large window (E2.4; Fig 4.2) filled the elevation at first-floor level. It was set at the back of a deep external splay, formed by the corners of the range, which acted as piers; they are finished with triple-stepped copings at eaves level. The coping blocks also preserve the only traces of the window head moulding, otherwise lost to rebuilding. The deep chamfered sill blocks (E2.9) are not original; repair works revealed the scars of a coped sill of seven stages, detailed in the same way as the pier caps. This window was blocked and the gable above rebuilt in Period 5.1. Incorporated in the blocking are a number of lengths of window mullion, hollow-chamfered externally and channelled internally, which appear to be derived from the window tracery (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

Above the window is a continuous string course, largely reset, but original at either end. The west eaves finial is also *in situ*; it is set on a kneeler with drip mould, and is hexagonal, with a socket for an iron spindle in the top, indicating a lost terminal. The



other finials are original but reset; the copings are replacements of Period 5.1.

The east elevation (E1), now the front of the house, is articulated by two large projecting chimney stacks (Fig 4.3). Both are finished with the stepped coping detail which is used on E2, and surmounted by square diagonally-set shafts. There were two on the central stack (E1.1; one missing, the other rebuilt in Period 5.3), and originally three on the north stack (E1.2). The survivors are original for half their height and offset in plan. The third has been replaced by a buttress (E1.25), but is shown on the Lysons engraving (Fig 2.4), which also depicts another, capped south stack. This was removed in 1888 and the scar (E1.29) is clearly visible.

The central part of this elevation has been extensively rebuilt, but the extremities are original; plain walling with most of the putlog holes visible. Close to the south-east corner is a blocked door E1.3, which was replaced by the window E1.10 in Period 4.3.

Figure 4.2 The south end of the east range (E2) (photograph: © Crown copyright, NMR BB98/00667).

Figure 4.3 The east elevation of the house (E1) after restoration (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).



The north elevation (E6; Fig 4.16) preserves its original nosed coping and finials, and there is an attic light beneath a hood mould with square stops (E6.1). On the first floor there was another large window (E2.6) c 4.6 m high and 5.2 m wide, which had tracery set flush with the wall face, unlike E2.4. However, all but three blocks of the dressed stone surround were removed in Period 5.1 when the window was reduced in size. There is no surviving evidence for

Figure 4.4 A pentice weathering preserved in the north range roof (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).



ground-floor windows. On the north-west corner the uneven junction with the Period 4.2 fabric of the north range (E6.3) is caused by the demolition and facing-up of a projecting stair turret, for which there is fuller internal evidence.

The west elevation (E3) preserves evidence for pentices linking the east range to the Period 3 house. The rendering, which survives in the north range roof space, forms a weathering over a small gabled roof (E3.1), represented by a patch of unrendered wall and a socket for a ridge piece (Fig 4.4). Below, in what is now Room 1, the outline of a blocked doorway can be discerned behind later plaster (E3.2). On the ground floor in Room 14 there was a two-light wooden window (E3.3; blocked in Period 4.2, now reopened), which is still abutted by roughcast render under many coats of limewash. Its position allows a maximum width for the pentice of 3.5 m.

In the middle of the range there was a large square opening (E3.4) spanned by an oak lintel, which was connected by a right-angled pentice to the screens passage (Room B) of the Period 3 house (Fig 4.5). The main part was 4 m wide, narrowing to 2.6 m adjacent to the screens passage. The footings on the west side (1152) butted against the outer face of wall 1221. The footings on the east side, consisting of a short return wall (1382), had been largely

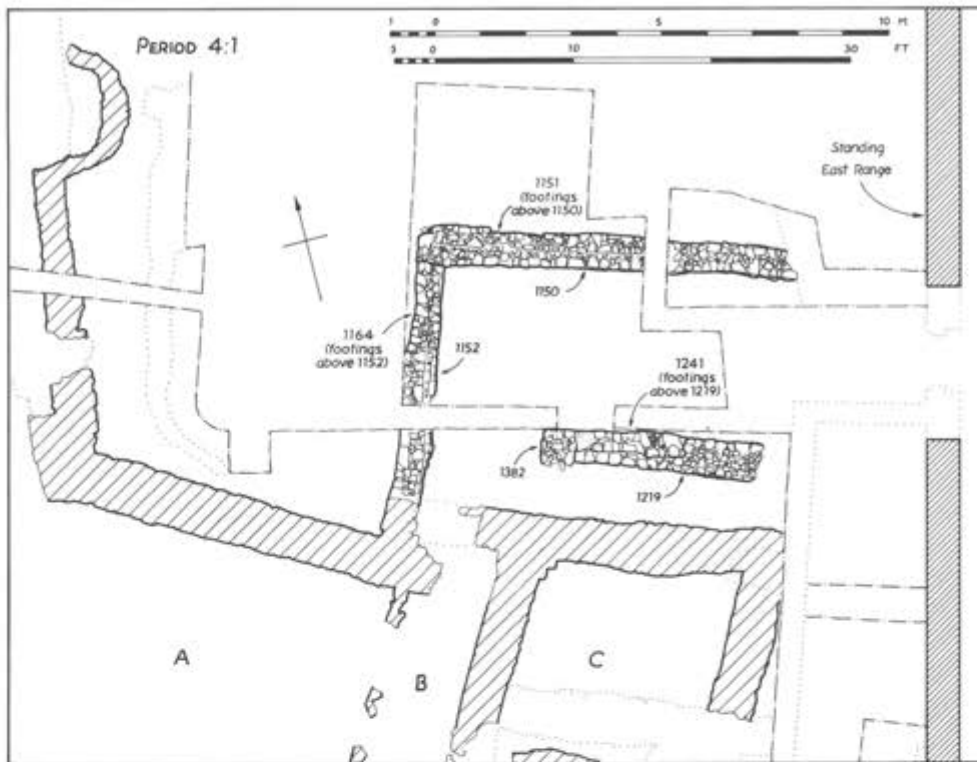


Figure 4.5 Plan: Period 4.1 pentice linking the south and east ranges.

robbed out. The north side of the pentice (1137/1150) was aligned on the north jamb of the opening in the east range, but its eastern end had been destroyed by a modern cesspit. The eastern end of the footings on the south side (1219) had also been robbed. All the footings were 0.75 m wide and generally survived to a height of 0.2 m (four courses). They were overlaid by narrower footings, only 0.45 m wide and three courses high, which probably supported a wooden superstructure. They were constructed entirely of Pennant rubble, apart from a large piece of reused limestone on the east side.

There is no surviving evidence for the roofline, but the pentice must have been single-storeyed as there was a large window directly above (E3.5). This window was replaced in Period 4.3 and only the north jamb survives, represented by dressed stone blocks marking sill, transom, lintel, and the springer for the relieving arch. North of E3.4 there was a small ground-floor window with a stone surround (E3.6) and a blocked first-floor door (E3.7) partly hidden by the Period 4.5 stair tower. This door would have led out to a primary stair tower (possibly timber-framed since the footings of its west wall, found during the excavation and cut through by the foundations of the later tower, were only 0.60 m wide).

South of E3.4 most of the wall is rebuilt (E3.23), or hidden by a Period 4.3 chimney stack. This was butted against the face of the range, sealing another first-floor door (E3.8), which is visible in R11 (E9.8). To bring this door back into use at the head of a new stair, a modern opening has been cut through the Period 4.3 wall, revealing evidence for another pentice on the original external wall face. It takes the form of a trapezoidal patch of plaster over the door head, which defines a small gabled roof, plastered up to the soffit of the former collar.

### Interior

The interior of the range was constructed as an undivided shell and all room divisions are secondary. The only lateral ties below roof level are the fourteen oak girding beams averaging 0.4 m square (three are narrower), which carry the first floor and are integral to the range. These have been dated by dendrochronology to spring 1535 (see Chapter 8). The first-floor joists were 0.15 m–0.2 m wide by 0.12 m deep, and included reused wood (Fig 4.6). They were laid at 0.4 m centres, butt-jointed, lodged and pegged. Oak boards were laid on top of the joists, some of which survive in Room 6. The sides of the beams were morticed for eighteen





Figure 4.6 Room 11 looking south showing the floor joist structure (photograph: English Heritage B870005/1).

joists with central tenons, allowing the construction of a flat ceiling in the room below. All the mortices are closed, indicating that the joists were framed into the beams at the time of construction. Only the terminal joists and two others were pegged (giving unpegged intervals of 5,4,5). Most are still in position, except in Room 19 (E16); in Room 18 they are marked with a sequence of Roman numerals.

#### Ground floor

The ground floor of the east range was extensively remodelled in Period 4.3, to create the present room layout, and evidence for the original plan is fragmentary (Fig 4.7). There are several surviving primary features, but little evidence for internal partitions. Two of the south windows (E2.1, E2.3), once hidden internally by a Period 5.1 wall, have been reopened (E8) to expose plastered reveals with deeply splayed sills. The adjoining door E1.3 is not visible internally. At the rear of the stack in the centre of the east wall is an opening (E7.1), 1.9 m wide with plastered reveals and an oak lintel. It is a counterpart to the large pentice opening in the west wall (E9.4), and probably served the same function, connecting with the service range to the east of the moat. The larger opening also has plastered reveals.

The north stack served two ground-floor fireplaces, both fragmentary; E7.2 is represented by the south jamb and springer for the relieving arch, E7.3 by the lower north jamb and part of the hearth. The two windows in the west wall, E3.3 and E3.6 are visible internally (E9). The former has been reopened and has unplastered reveals. The latter, blocked in Period 4.3, has plastered splays. Otherwise, very little original plaster survives on the ground floor; the largest expanse is on the wall adjoining this window. However, the ceiling is continuous throughout the ground floor, and all the Period 4.3 walls are inserted beneath it.

#### First floor

In contrast to the ground floor, considerable evidence survives for both the layout and decoration of the first floor (Fig 4.7). The principal features of the rooms are described below; fixtures and decoration are considered in Chapter 5.

The first floor was divided into three large rooms (R6, R10, R11) by two timber-framed partitions, one of which is in place. All the rooms were 7.15 m (23 ft 6 in) wide and 5.25 m (17 ft 3 in) high with lengths of 10.86 m (R6; 35 ft 6 in), 7.15 m (R10; 23 ft 6 in), and 11.9 m (R11; 39 ft 0 in). The position of the partition between Rooms 6 and 10 is clearly marked by a break in the frieze plaster (E9.9) (Fig 4.8). There is a socket for the top rail in the wall below the plate, but no other visible means of attachment. Below frieze level the wall has been replastered and evidence for the partition is less clear. The corresponding east wall (E7) was rebuilt in Period 5.1. The partition itself survives with both original doorways (E10.1,2), cut down and reused between Rooms 6/7 and 8.

Room 6 was lit by a large north window (E6.2, E11.2), now divided by an inserted Period 5.1 ceiling. In the room below it is masked by later plaster, which has cracked along the line of the reveals. In the roof space the window head is clear, 5.25 m wide with plastered splays and an oak lintel; it has been infilled with rubble (Fig 5.16). Evidence for a second window in the east wall (E7.4), is more fragmentary; only the north reveal has survived Period 5.1 rebuilding. However, the presence of plaster on the soffit of the wall plate, which acted as a lintel, indicates an internal width of c 3.5 m.

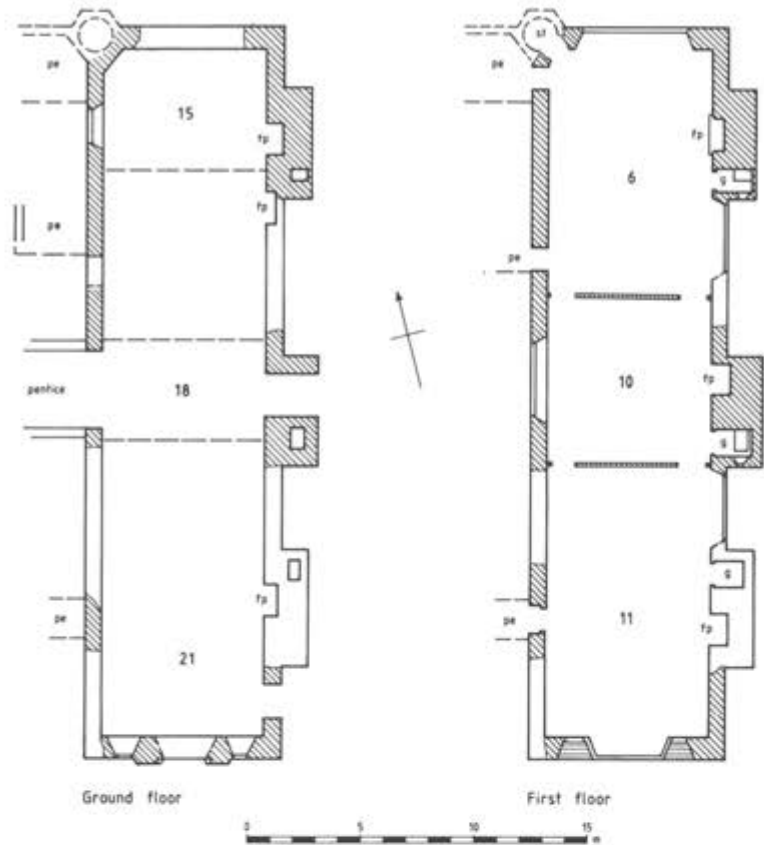
Room 6 had three doors; in addition to E9.2 and E9.7 in the west wall, there is a door with an oak frame set across the north-

west corner (E11.3). The space behind is roofed with oak baulks and plastered, but is truncated by later work at a depth of *c* 0.6 m. This appears to have been the head of a newel stair which projected from the corner of the range.

The room has its original fireplace (E7.5: Fig 7.4), and next to it within the thickness of the stack, a well-preserved garderobe chamber (E7.6: Fig 4.9). It has an oak door frame, plastered walls, and a ceiling of oak baulks; there was a single-light window in the south wall. In the north-east corner is a shaft 0.8 m by 0.5 m, constructed of Penant rubble and void to a depth of 5.8 m below the chamber floor. At this level the head of an arch in the east wall is visible above a waterlogged clay fill. The wooden seat is missing, but the substructure has a slab front, a rubble core and an oak baulk for a footrest. Built into the north wall at the top of the shaft is a flue *c* 0.3 m square, which vents into the adjoining chimney stack. This chamber owes its preservation to subsequent infilling; by Period 5.1 it had become a panelled cupboard.

Room 10 was lit by a single west window, which was wider than its Period 4.3 replacement; the outline of the plastered north reveal and the end of the lintel survive (E9.5). On the opposite wall is an original fireplace (E7.7) and another garderobe chamber (E7.8). This was reduced in Period 5.1 to counteract movement in the structure, but has been restored to its original size of 1.8 m by 1.2 m. It resembles E7.6, but has a better preserved window (E13.3, E1.3), and a surviving boarded floor. The shaft is void for some of its depth, but has been rebuilt at the base, and the seat structure is missing. The partition between Rooms 10 and 11 is original and retains its plaster, paired doors and some panelling (E13, E14.1,2). The outline of the framing can be glimpsed below the plaster.

The principal feature of Room 11 was the large window in the south wall (E2.4, E8.4). Partial removal of later blocking has exposed both jambs, which have complex mouldings that preserve the position of the sill and two transoms (Fig 4.10). On the east jamb the mouldings also survive in outline. Within the room the ashlar surround has dowel holes for a wooden frame. Fragments of window mullion were reused in Period 5.1 as ceiling supports, and other fragments of more complex form were recovered from the blocking. There was a second window in the east wall (E7.9),



rebuilt in Period 5 except for the north reveal and the lintel; it had an internal width of *c* 3.5 m.

This room has no fireplace, as the entire stack was removed in Period 5.3, but its position is indicated by the trimmer beam for the hearth. There was another adjoining garderobe chamber, which can be seen projecting from the north end of the stack in the Lysons engraving (Fig 2.4). It shared a

Figure 4.7 East range: surviving Period 4.1 features (fp – fireplace, pe – pentice, g – garderobe, st – stair).

Figure 4.8 Period 4.1 partition scar in the east range roof space (west wall) (photograph: English Heritage B870019/14).



Figure 4.9 Period 4.1 garderobe, Room 6; plan and section showing constructional details.

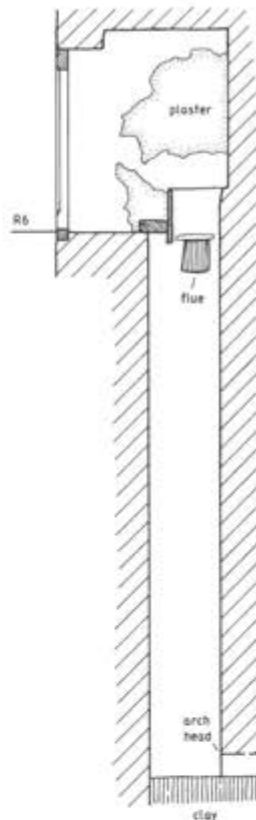
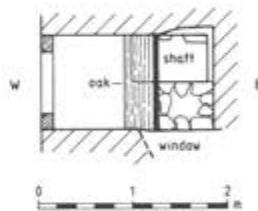


Figure 4.10 The south window in Room 11 after restoration (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).



common outlet to the moat with E7.8, which was found by excavation.

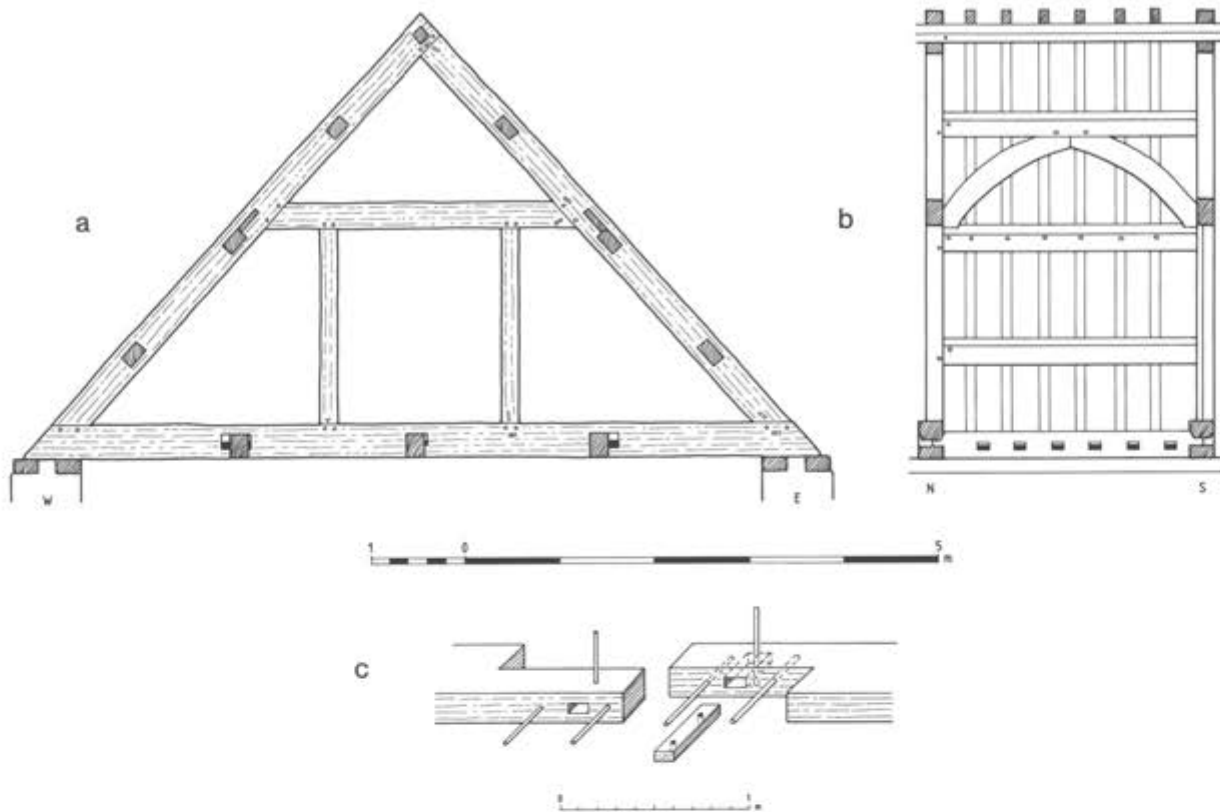
In the west wall was an external door (E9.8) leading to a pentice. When this was unblocked to provide access to a new stair, the outline of the pegged oak frame with the sill still in position was exposed. The reveals were plastered, with a roof of oak baulks and a stone floor slab *in situ*.

### The roof

The east range retains its original oak roof which has undergone very little alteration or repair (Figs 4.11 and 4.12). There are twelve trusses each consisting of principals, tie beam, straight collar and queen posts. These are omitted on the trusses set against the gable walls. There are three purlins tenoned to each principal rafter, a single tier of arched windbraces pegged to the top purlin, and a threaded ridge piece. Each bay has six common rafters, which are pegged to the ridge piece and middle purlin; they are almost all original. The trusses rest on a double wall plate, some are notched over the inner plate, but they are not otherwise secured. Lengths of wall plate are joined with a keyed face-halved scarf. The scantling of the roof timbers varies, with the tie beams being the most substantial, but the south face of each truss is assembled flush and bears carpenter's marks, II–XII in sequence from the south end (the marks on the gable truss are not visible).

Each tie beam supports three longitudinal binders, which are in turn morticed for the common ceiling rafters, six to a bay. These have largely been removed from the north end of the range, over the lowered Period 5.1 ceiling, but still perform their original function in Rooms 10 and 11. The soffits of the joists form a flat surface for a lath and plaster ceiling. The open mortices for the trimmers have been cut too large and there are other signs of careless craftsmanship such as ceiling joist mortices set out too high and reworked. Apart from a few of the queen posts, which have redundant mortices and may be reused, all the timber was new, and samples have produced a felling date of spring 1535.

The present roof covering of double-Roman clay tiles dates from the 1920s, when the original Pennant slates were removed. However, the majority of the roll-moulded limestone ridge pieces were reused. Pennant slates laid directly on masonry were also used for minor roof slopes such as the garderobe to Room 10.



## Period 4.2

Two-thirds of the medieval house was unaffected by the Period 4.1 work. The main alterations to the existing building occurred in Period 4.2, when the north and west ranges were erected (Fig 4.13). This involved the demolition of the pentice linking the east range with Room G, and of Rooms H–N, as well as the realignment of the west arm of the moat. Surprisingly, the whole of the south range and Room G/32 were retained. However, the west part of the south range was refronted, and the internal layout of Room G/32 at ground-floor level was modified. Its east wall was removed and replaced by a new wall which also served as part of the western boundary of the main courtyard.

### The north range: excavated evidence

More than half the north range, including the part still standing to its full height, was built parallel to and *c* 0.5 m back from the edge of the moat. But towards its western end, where the moat turned south-west, the north wall was built up from the bottom of the moat.

There was a continuous offset, 0.1 m wide, along the inner face of the north wall below floor level. The footings beneath the outer face were stepped out 0.2 m to the edge of the moat, but towards the west the face was vertical with no offset footings. A chimney stack (1558) was integral to the north wall, and formed a pair with the extant eastern stack, to which it was identical in size (Fig 4.14). The east half of 1558 was incorporated in the north-west corner of a Period 5 barn. The west half, with traces of rendering adhering to it, was located in a small trench excavated adjacent to the outside of the range. Also integral to the north wall was a garderobe (1602), which had a shaft measuring 2.1 m by 0.8 m. It was not fully excavated, but the top of the round-headed arch of the outlet into the moat was found. It would have been accessible only from the ground floor and projected into the range, in contrast to the garderobes in the west range, which projected out into the moat. Like the main wall, the garderobe was built freestanding, though the back of the south side of the shaft was very rough, since it was constructed against the side of the moat. In order to build the wall and the garderobe, the side of the moat was cut back by 1.5 m

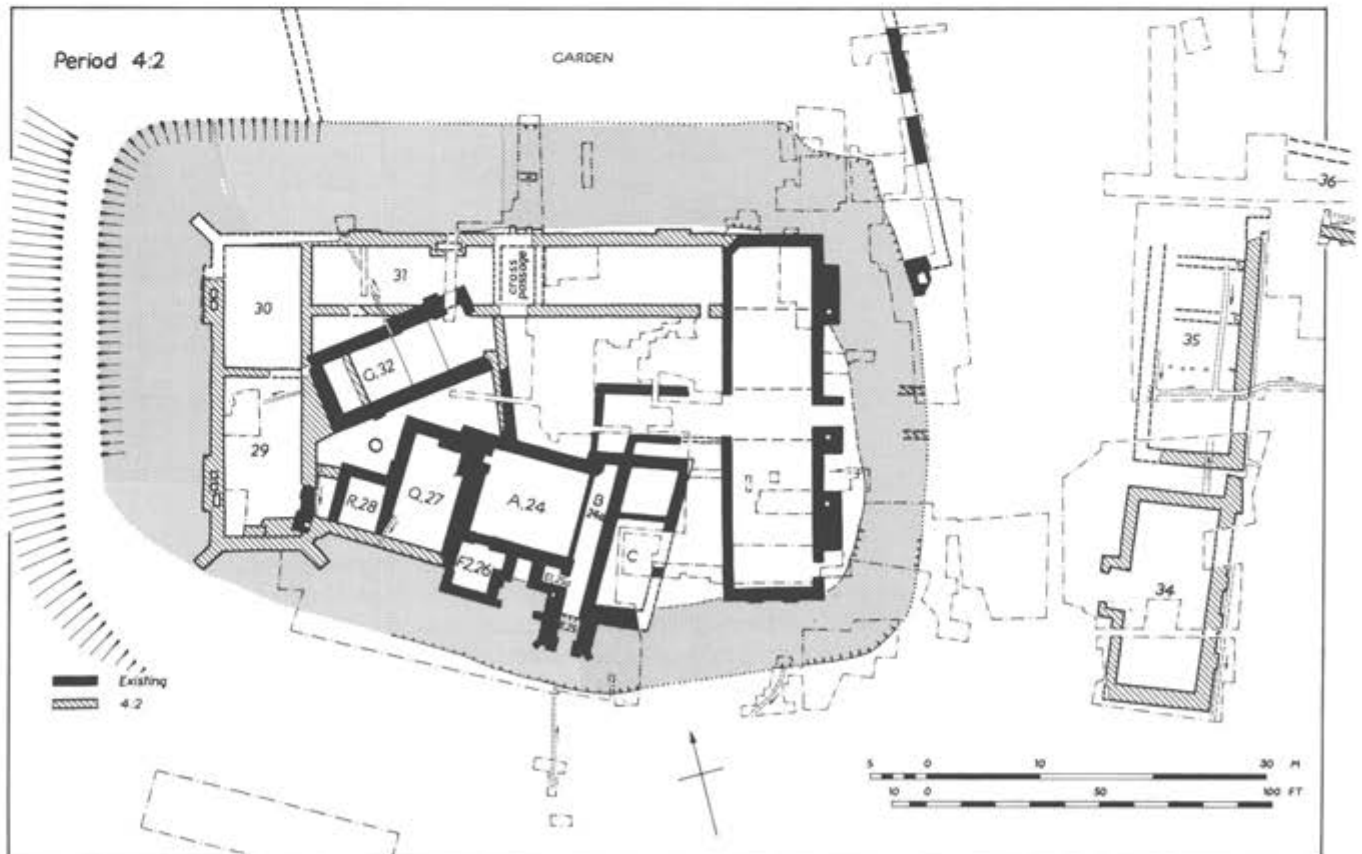
Figure 4.11 East range roof, Period 4.1:  
 a Typical truss (T4);  
 b Typical bay;  
 c Exploded scarf joint, outer wall plate (x2 scale).



Figure 4.12 The east range roof, looking north with Truss 4 in the foreground: the carpenter's marks for the collar are visible (photograph: English Heritage B870019/27).



Figure 4.13 Plan: the house in Period 4.2, scale 1:500.



(Fig 3.33, Section 29). In the process, the north-east part of Room L, which had already been demolished, was totally destroyed. The fill of this large construction trench (1626) consisted principally of orange-brown clay with rubble and lumps of plaster (1630).

The south wall of the range, at ground-floor level, was built in two unconnected lengths, since it respected the north-east corner of Room G (Fig 4.14). The eastern part of the wall (1681) butted against the east wall of Room G (1679), and the western part (74/1569) butted obliquely against the outer face of the north wall (1818). Drain 1688, running north from Room G, remained in use since it was incorporated in the south wall and passed through it, albeit with a reduced width. A coursed Pennant sump (1644) dropped vertically into the old drain just inside the north range, providing a drainage outlet within Room 31. The top course was covered with hard white mortar, which was probably the bedding for the surrounding floor. This was almost exactly at the level of the modern ground surface, and provided the only evidence for Period 4.2 flooring in the north range. The drain outlet



Figure 4.15 (far right)  
A Period 4.1 window  
blocked with linenfold  
panelling, (E9.3 Room 15)  
(photograph: Kirsty  
Rodwell).

into the moat (1564), was found in the outer face of the north wall, immediately west of the chimney stack, and the old drain was possibly slightly realigned to avoid the stack.

Room 31 may well have been subdivided by a partition, but there was no trace of it. This is not surprising given that elsewhere in the Period 4 building the internal partitions butted against the main walls, and had no footings below floor level. However, despite the absence of partitions, there had clearly been a passage through the centre of the range. Related to it were two bridge abutments (908 and 1783), which butted against the outer face of the range and stepped down the side of the moat. They were both made of coursed Pennant with occasional reused worked limestone pieces, bonded in bright reddish-orange loam. The east abutment (908) was intact, and was 0.4 m wide, extending 0.6 m out from the north wall. The primary west abutment (1783) had collapsed down the side of the moat, and had been replaced by 1782, a larger and cruder version of 908. The abutments were 0.85 m apart, and were associated with a bridge across the north arm of the moat.

### The north range: standing building

The north range was originally 36.6 m long, but only 16.8 m of the east end is still roofed; the north wall survives as a ruin up to 2.4 m high for a further 15 m and the remainder of the plan has been recovered by excavation. The range has an external width of 7.2 m and the walls are 0.95 m thick at ground-floor level. Their construction is very similar to the east range, but limestone is used exclusively for dressings and there are no random blocks.

The north range has a height of *c* 8 m to eaves level and was built against the north-west corner of the east range, necessitating the demolition of the pentice E3.1 and the corner stair E11.3. The window E14.3 was blocked by wedging boards, including a length of linenfold panelling (Chapter 8), against the rear of the frame and filling the splay behind with rubble (Fig 4.15). In Room 14 the frame was plastered up to the rebate but its outline remained visible.

The foundations of the north elevation (E6; Fig 4.16) are taken down to bedrock on the lip of the north moat, with an offset just below ground level. There is a continuous ogee-moulded plinth course and a first-floor string course, both of which oversail



the corner of the east range in the vicinity of the demolished stair (E6.3). There are no surviving ground-floor features in the north wall, but excavated evidence points to a door beneath the raking buttress (E6.19). On the first floor there are three identical six-light windows (E6.4–6), one of which is blocked. The mouldings are hollow-chamfered externally and channelled internally; they are rebated for glass and some of the iron stanchions survive. Between windows E6.4 and E6.5 is a chimney stack (E6.7), shouldered below the eaves, with a gabled roof weathering on the reverse. The pair of diagonally set shafts have ogee-moulded bases, but are otherwise rebuilt in Period 5.3 brick. At the west end of the range an identical stack (E6.8) stands to a height of 0.8 m above the plinth course.

The junction of the south elevation (E4) with the east range is hidden by the Period 4.5 stair tower. This wall has no string courses and no original first-floor windows. On the ground floor there was a row of five apparently identical windows, replaced in Period 4.4 and now in fragmentary condition (E4.1–5). There are traces of all the relieving arches, but only E4.4 retains a dressed stone surround. They appear to have been rectangular single lights *c* 1.0 m tall and *c* 0.8 m wide.



Figure 4.16 The north elevation of the house (E6) (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR BB98/00597).

### Interior

The first floor is carried on six girding beams 0.4 m wide by 0.5 m deep with unstopped chamfered soffits. They are connected by a single set of fourteen joists (0.19 m wide by 0.12 m deep), morticed flush with the top of the beams; the joints are closed at the east end and open at the west. There are several indications of reuse, such as superfluous mortices, and a new position for the hearth trimmer between pre-existing joists. There is also an extensive but unsystematic series of carpenter's marks, executed with a chisel, which range from I to XXVIII (Fig 4.17). Some numbers are repeated, but many joists are not numbered. Samples from this floor failed to produce a positive tree-ring date (Chapter 8).

On the ground floor two of the south windows are partially visible behind later plaster; the lintel of E10.5, and a blocked plastered reveal of E10.4. In the south-east corner there is a blocked door E10.6, and in the north wall a fireplace E11.7. There is also a flue within the wall thickness at the west end of the reduced range, which must have served a fireplace in the north wall of R12. There is no evidence to indicate how the ground-floor space was divided at this time.

The first floor was occupied by a single room 5.5 m (18 ft) wide and formerly 36.6 m (120 ft) long. Its height of 3.8 m (12 ft 6 in) is rather less than the rooms in the east range, but like them it was ceiled. The regular

dimensions and spacing of the three surviving north windows (E11.4–6) make it clear that they are part of an original row of seven. The window recesses extended to floor level, and two retain their oak rear sills (although the board on E11.6 has been replaced in pine). Between the pair of windows at either end of the range was a fireplace; the survivor (E11.8; Fig 4.18) is of classical design (Chapter 5). There are no original features in the south wall. Communication with the east range was by a new central door, which has a plain oak frame (E3.20).

### The roof

The surviving north range roof consists of six alternating A-frame (T2, T4, T6) and

Figure 4.17 Carpenters' marks on floor joists in Room 1 (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).





Figure 4.18 The Period 4.2 fireplace, Room 1 (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR BB98/00657).



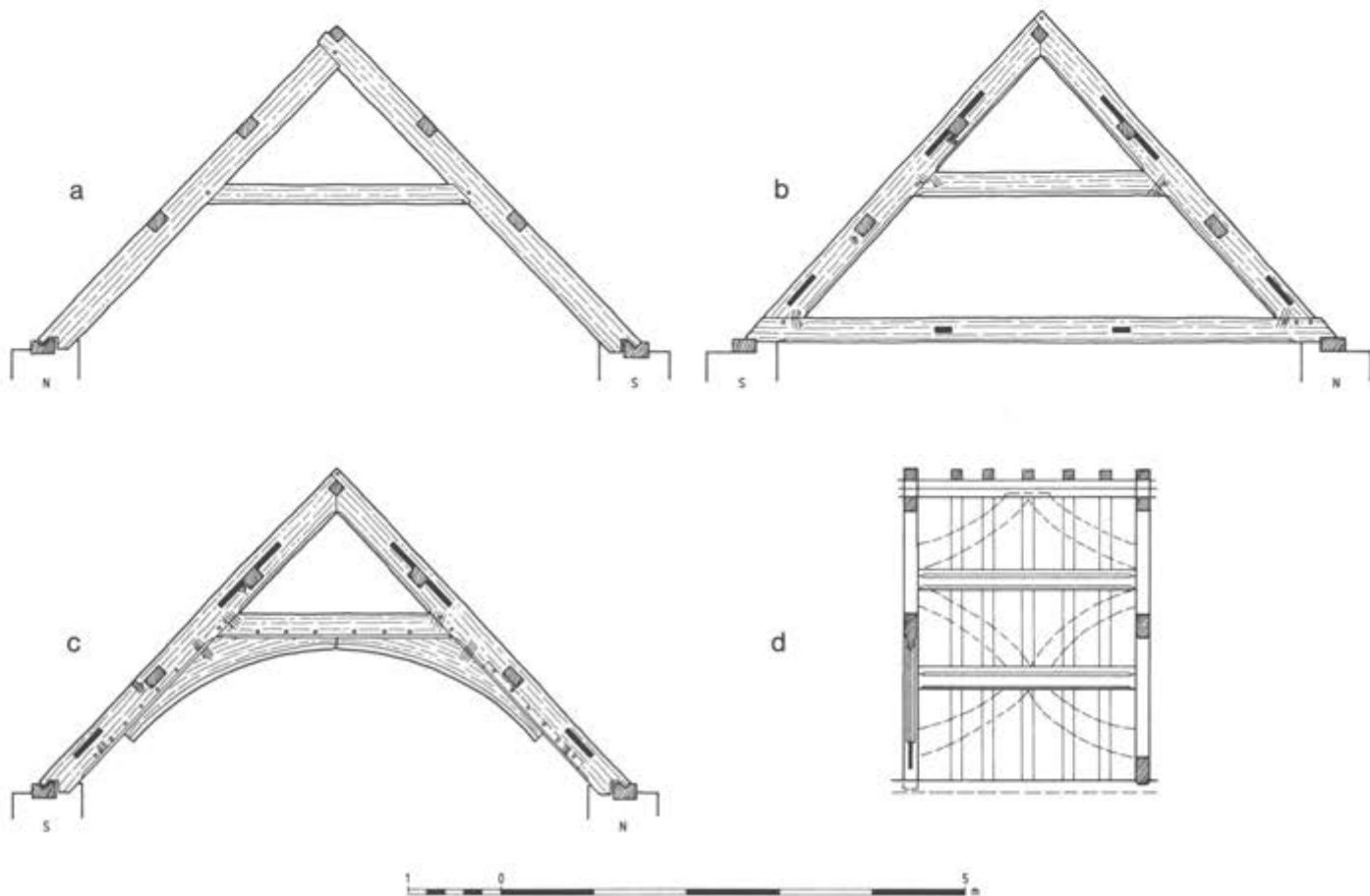
Figure 4.19 North range roof, Period 4.2: a Truss 1, new, against east range; b Truss 4, reused; c Truss 3, reused; d Typical bay (racking removed) showing position of former windbraces.

arch-braced (T3, T5, T7) trusses of the same basic type, and a single plainer truss (T1) set against the face of the east range (Figs 4.19 and 4.20). The A-frame trusses have original tie beams, but the feet of the arch-braced trusses have been altered to fit over a central wall plate and the basal sections of the braces are missing. Principal timbers are chamfered and use a continuous

sequence of carpenter's marks, which distinguishes right from left by a loop added to the numeral. There is a clasped ridge piece, two chamfered tenoned purlins (some with carpenter's marks) to each slope, and formerly three tiers of windbraces; there are mid-point mortices in the lower purlins and the ridge piece. Each bay has five common rafters.

This is an open roof of late 15th-century type, dated by dendrochronology to AD 1486–1531 (at 95 per cent confidence; Chapter 8), and reused on a mid-16th-century range, where it was not intended to be seen. Each tie beam has a pair of secondary mortices (open on T2, closed on T4 and T6) for binders of the type used in the east range, which were morticed in turn for ceiling joists. These have been replaced, but a length of binder was reused as a lintel in the Period 5.2 reduction of the oriel window E4.14. A pair of open sockets for the ends of these beams was cut into the east range wall (E3.21).

The carpenter's marks run in sequence from the truncated end of the range (T7,I; T6,I; T5,II; T4,III; T3,III; T2,V) and are consistent on each truss; either they were



not dismantled or were carefully reassembled. However, the windbraces were omitted from the roof in its present position, with the result that it racked severely ( $c$  1 m vertical displacement) after the demolition of the west end of the range in Period 5.2.

Truss 1 is a simple A-frame, unchamfered except for the reused collar, with a notched ridge piece and trenched purlins. These timbers, unlike the rest of the trusses, are not soot-stained and are 'new' in this context.

### The west range

The range measured internally 26.15 m by 6.9 m (85 ft 9 in by 22 ft 6 in; Figs 4.14, 4.21 and 4.22; Sections 30–4). It was very similar in width to the east range, but was more than 4 m shorter. The west and north ranges were clearly built at the same time, since their walls were bonded together (Fig 4.23) and the north wall of the west range (303) was simply a continuation of the north wall of the north range. Whereas only the north-west corner and part of the northern edge of the north range had encroached on the moat, almost half the west range was within it. Prior to the start of construction work, the garderobe in Room H was filled in with a series of layers of brown clay with plaster, interspersed with a thick layer of charcoal (283). The layers contained a large amount of unconsolidated rubble with



Figure 4.20 The north range roof looking west (photograph: English Heritage B870019/110).

numerous voids. The garderobe in Room M was also presumably filled in.

The whole of the north and south walls (303 and 253), most of the west wall (202), and the northern part of the east wall (60) were free-built in the moat. The central section of 202 was set in a construction trench (463), which cut through the west wall and the fill of Room H and the north-west corner of Room M. The former north wall of Rooms J–K and the dividing wall between Rooms J and K were partly robbed during the building of wall 60, the footings of which were markedly shallower and trench-built further south. The east wall respected the

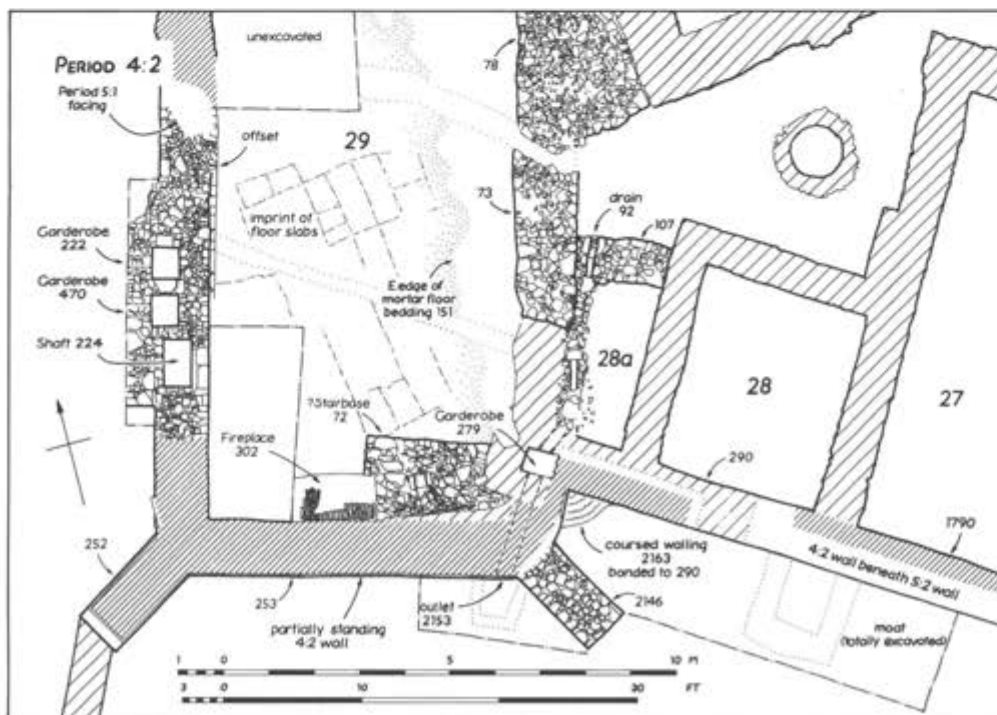


Figure 4.21 The south end of the west range.

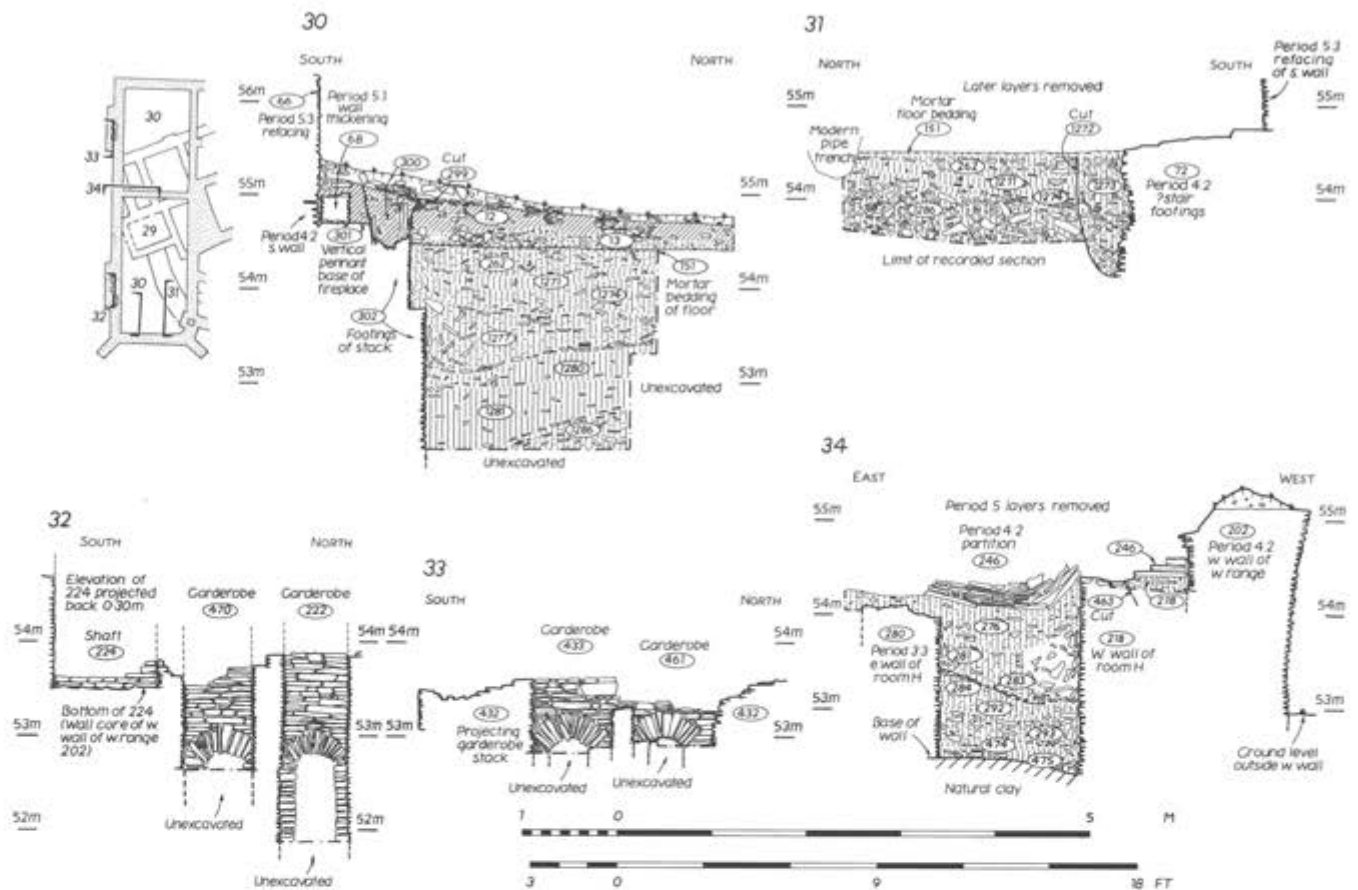


Figure 4.22 Sections 30–34: the Period 4 west range.

Figure 4.23 The junction between the west and north ranges from the south (photograph: Robert Bell).



north-west corner of Room G, widening on its east side (78) to fill the space between it and the west wall of Room G. The southern continuation of the east wall (73) butted against the north-west corner of Room R1.

The parts of the walls which were constructed freestanding from the bottom of the moat were of uniformly high quality. They had no footings, and every course was carefully laid with very narrow gaps between them. The walls were generally *c* 1.25 m wide, though a continuous level offset, 1.8 m above the bottom of the moat, around the inner faces of the outside walls reduced their width to *c* 1.1 m. Two putlog holes were recorded in the inner faces of the north and west walls, set 0.9 m above the bases of the walls. They were of interest because they were both associated with vertical scaffolding poles, the stumps of which survived *in situ* due to waterlogging (Fig 4.24). The poles had been driven 0.15 m into the bottom of the moat 1.2 m away from their respective walls; 1295, which was related to the construction of wall 202, was 60 mm in diameter, but was slightly broader at its lower end.



Figure 4.24 The west wall of the west range in the moat showing a scaffolding pole, from the east (photograph: Robert Bell).

Integral to the south wall (253) were two large diagonal buttresses (252 and 2146), set in a hard cream mortar (in contrast to the main walls, which were all set in yellow loam) and containing occasional reused limestone blocks. A small roughly arched outlet (2153) for the Period 3.4b garderobe (279) was incorporated in the south wall, immediately west of the south-east buttress. The buttresses were both rendered, like the wall itself. The base for a fireplace (302), at the south end of the range, was constructed at the same time as the south wall (see below). It was built up from the bottom of the moat and the offset on the wall continued round it (Fig 4.25).

The south gable wall (E2) stands to a height of *c* 2 m above ground level and has the same ogee-moulded plinth course as the north range (Fig 4.26). This is continued round the south-west corner buttress but dies out at the south end of the west wall, which is less well preserved. Above foundation level a scar faced in brick marks the position of the south-east buttress. It was demolished to create space in OB 7.

Due to alterations in Period 5 the west wall is poorly preserved. Two pairs of garderobe shafts (222/470 and 433/461; Fig 4.22, Sections 32, 33) were contemporary



Figure 4.25 The south end of the west range from the east (photograph: Robert Bell).

with its construction, and were positioned symmetrically, projecting 0.7 m beyond its outer face. They were built as two large shafts, each having two tall narrow round-headed arches in the west side (Fig 4.27). Dividing walls were then inserted, creating four smaller shafts. Only one shaft (222) was almost completely excavated. The northern pair of shafts measured 0.8 m by 0.7 m; the southern shafts were slightly smaller, measuring 0.7 m by 0.6 m. Immediately to the south of 222/470, but still within the thicker part of wall 202, was another rectangular shaft (224). This was much shallower than the garderobes and measured 1.1 m by 0.65 m. Its base, 0.65 m above the crowns of the garderobe outlets, was formed by the wall core of 202. It was definitely built at the same time as the west

Figure 4.26 The standing south wall of the west range from the south-east (photograph: Robert Bell).





Figure 4.27 West range: the north pair of garderobes from the north (photograph: Robert Bell).



wall and the garderobes, but its function is unclear. It may have served as a ventilation shaft. A similar feature may have existed in an equivalent position north of 433/461, but the north-west corner of the range had been very largely rebuilt in Period 5, and there was no trace of it. A diagonal buttress would originally have supported the corner, but there was no sign of this either, though the base of it may survive at a much lower level.

After the walls had been constructed, the parts of the former moat which were

Figure 4.28 Partition wall in the west range, subsiding into Room H, from the north (photograph: Robert Bell).



enclosed by them were filled in. The moat had evidently been cleaned out regularly, because there was virtually no silting at the bottom. The lowest layers (1064 and 1290/91) were waterlogged and contained discarded scaffolding poles. The great majority of the finds, including much domestic rubbish, were in these layers, which were only 0.2 m thick. The remainder of the infill layers, totalling 2.2 m in thickness, consisted principally of orange clay mixed with rubble and plaster fragments. They were better consolidated than the material filling Room H.

The range was divided into two rooms (Rooms 29 and 30) by a stone partition wall (246). It was 0.6 m wide, with footings offset by a further 0.15 m, and had only survived because it had subsided dramatically into the underlying medieval garderobe (Fig 4.28). At its west end, it butted against the inner face of 202, and rested on the west wall of Room H. A modern drain had destroyed its east end. Room 29 was 14.4 m (47 ft 3 in) in length, whereas Room 30 was only 11.15 m (36 ft 6 in) long. No other partitions were found, but, like Room 31 in the north range, it is possible that it was subdivided by a further partition which did not survive.

Cutting through the uppermost layer of dumping, beneath the centre of the range, was a stone-lined capped drain (87), which flowed westwards. It had a stone slab base and coursed sides bonded in pale pink mortar, and was capped with flat stones, including Pennant roofing slates. The outlet through the west wall was not visible because the wall had been refaced externally in Period 5.

At the south end of the range, a foundation trench (1272) was cut through the infill material. It contained the deep footings for a flat base (72), possibly for a newel stair. The footings consisted of crudely-coursed and irregularly-shaped rubble, and rested on the offset round the base of the fireplace (302). They also butted against the west and south sides of the Period 3 garderobe (279). However, they were bonded to the inner face of the south wall (253), and shared the same matrix. While they were patently secondary, they may have been inserted as soon as the moat had been filled in, since they were butted by the pitched Pennant pieces (301) which formed the actual base of the fireplace. The surface of 301 was blackened and butted directly against the inner face of the south wall.

The bedding for the floor (151) in Room 29 survived because it had partially subsided over the former moat. It consisted of hard light pink mortar with rubble fragments, overlain by a thin layer of soft whitish-grey mortar. It sealed the capping stones of drain 87, and also the foundation trench (1272), and actually lapped over the edge of the possible stair-base. No flooring remained, but the impressions of diagonally-laid flagstones, measuring *c* 0.7 m by 0.55 m, were still visible (Fig 4.29).

The floor bedding did not exist to the north of the partition wall, and there is evidence that Room 30 had a wooden floor. Although no flooring or slots for joists were found, a layer of dark grey silt (136) had subsided, where it overlay the fill of Room H. It contained an enormous quantity of finds, which had almost certainly accumulated below the floorboards (*see below*, Period 4.5).

### The west part of the south range

The western end of the south frontage wall (63) was rebuilt (Fig 3.28, Sections 22–4). Wall 290 was constructed directly on top of the earlier wall, though it was narrower. It was bonded to the return wall of the west range, north of the south-east buttress. Lower down, part of the south face of 63 was also rebuilt, and was tied into the west range with a short length of curved masonry (2163), which consisted of large slabs of Pennant up to 0.15 m thick, set in the same mortar as the south-east buttress. This footing (2163) cut through the external south-east corner of garderobe 279. The garderobe itself remained in use, and its east side was relined when 290 was built (Fig 3.28, Section 23).

A wall (107), with shallow trench-built footings, was inserted between the east wall of the west range and the north-west corner of Room R/28. It formed the north wall of a new room (Room 28a), which was an enlargement of Room R1. Contemporary with 107 was a stone-capped drain (92), which flowed through Room 28a, emptying into the garderobe through a rough hole created in its north side. It cut through the north wall of Room R1, which was probably demolished.

Further east, the south frontage wall of Room Q/27 (417) was also rebuilt. Wall 1790 had exactly the same matrix as the other Period 4.2 walls and preserved the same alignment as the earlier frontage (Fig



3.4, Section 3). Apart from these modifications, the ground plan of the south range remained unaltered.

### Room G/32

The sunken 'sub-cellar' at the west end of Room G was filled in (Fig 4.14, Section 35). The surviving fragment of medieval flooring (1821) was sealed by a layer of light orange-brown clay with occasional Pennant rubble and plaster flecks (127/137). Within the layer were several decorated floor tiles and a Pennant roofing slate. A new wall (79), 0.55 m wide, was inserted, butting the original north and south walls. It partially overlaid and was butted by 127/137, indicating that they were contemporary. The wall had offset footings on its west side, and was rendered only on its east side. The area to the west of it was filled in with reddish-brown sticky loam and plaster (124 and 121). The floor surface must have been above 121, and was completely removed in Period 5.

The east wall of Room G/32 (1679) was demolished and replaced by wall 1749, which butted the Period 3.4b pentice wall (1805), and cut through the footings of the stair turret (1800). At its north end, it butted against the south wall of the north range, respecting the west side of the cross-passage. Related to it was 1750, which was inserted in the former south-east corner of the room, and butted the new east wall. Plaster covered the inner faces of both pieces of walling, and also the south face of the north range wall, where it faced-off the stump of 1679.

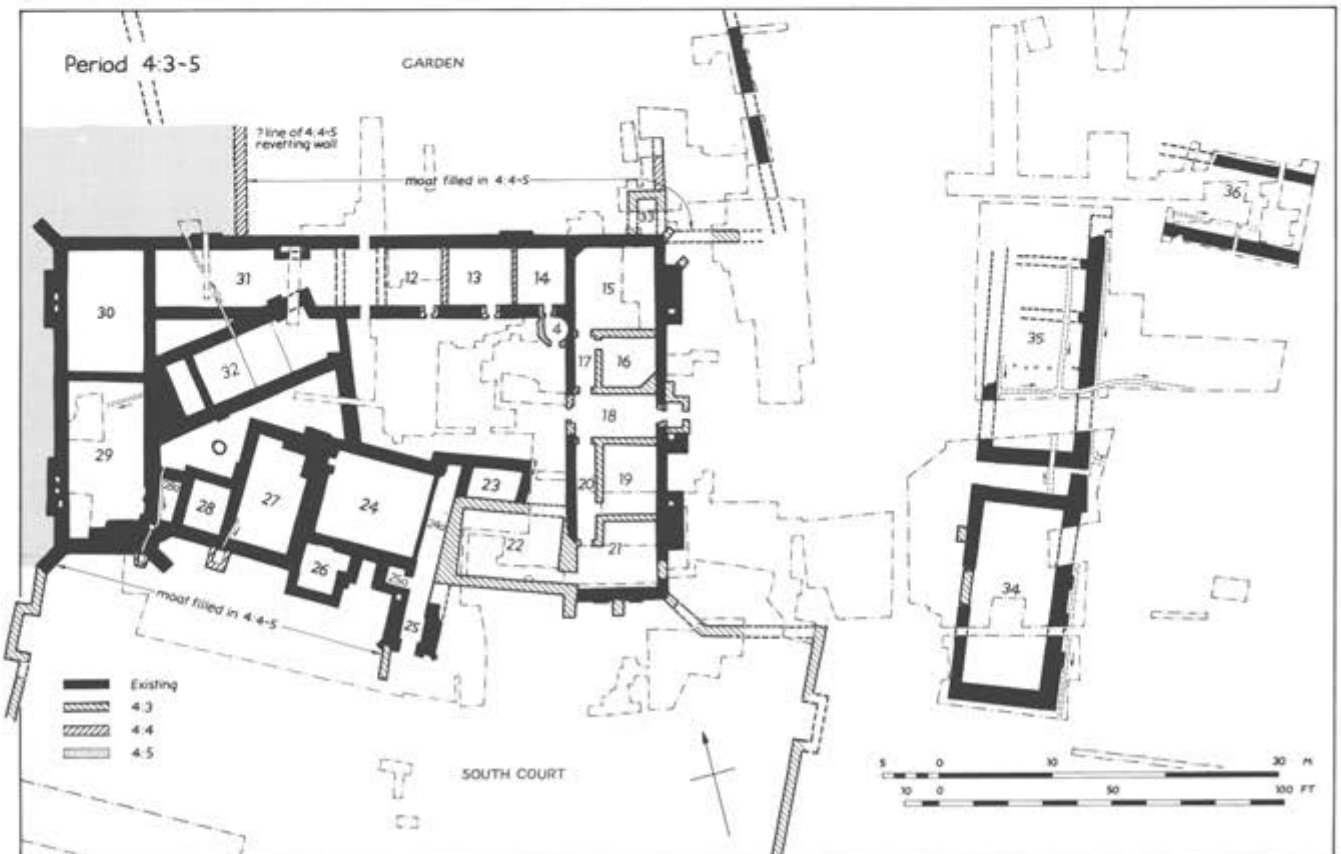
Within Room G/32, the infill layers were directly on top of the bedrock, suggesting

Figure 4.29 Floor slab bedding in the west range (photograph: Robert Bell).

Figure 4.30 Trench across the north arm of the moat with the bridge timber in situ; from the north (photograph: Robert Bell).



Figure 4.31 Plan: the house in Periods 4:3-4.5, scale 1:500.



that the Period 3 floor, east of the 'sub-cellar', had been completely removed and lowered. The bedding for the new floor overlay the infill, and consisted of yellow-brown sandy loam (231), sealed by a spread of irregularly shaped flat Pennant fragments (1714), which were particularly concentrated in the central part of the room. These in turn were overlain by a layer of very hard pinkish-white mortar, similar to the bedding layer in Room 29. The floor itself consisted of sandstone slabs (126), varying in size between 0.55 m by 0.45 m and 0.85 m by 0.75 m. Most of the floor-slabs had been robbed, but surviving examples butted wall 79 and the south wall (75). No flooring or bedding remained in the eastern third of the room, but their position was indicated by the base of the rendering. This floor was *c* 0.7 m below the level of the north range floor (estimated from the height of the sump feeding into drain 1688), and *c* 0.6 m below the level of the floor in the west range. It was also 0.25 m below the base of the fireplace in the north wall (1676: Fig 3.33, Section 29). This was blocked with horizontally laid Pennant bonded in yellow-brown loam (1668). While it is conceivable that the fire-

place was inserted in Period 4.2, and was blocked at a later phase, it is more likely that it was already in existence, and was blocked when the floor level was altered.

Lastly, a length of walling (1751), 0.55 m wide, was built along the west side of the Period 3.4b pentice wall, which now became the west wall of the main courtyard. Wall 1751 butted against the new south-east corner of the room, and its construction trench cut through the Period 3.4 tile and Pennant slab surface.

### The moat

The south and east arms of the moat remained unaltered, though two walls were built across the east arm, respecting the doorway in the central stack of the east range. The south wall was visible only in outline owing to an overlying Period 5 track having subsided on either side of it. However, the northern wall was partially revealed. It must have been constructed across the open moat, because the Period 4.3 moat infill layers butted against its north side. The gap between the two walls, which was 3 m wide, could not be excavated but it may have been filled in prior to the infilling of the rest of the east arm. The walls appear to have been built on either side of a path linking the east range with the ancillary range, and probably replaced a short-lived wooden bridge, constructed in Period 4.1.

In marked contrast to the south and east arms of the moat, the north and west arms were both recut. The western part of the north arm was realigned so that it respected the new ranges and at the same time almost the whole of the arm was widened to 10 m although it was only 7.5 m wide (the same as the south arm) at the north-east corner (Fig 3.7, Section 5).

Exactly in the centre of the north arm, and aligned on the north range, was the well-preserved oak sole plate of a trestle bridge (954; Figs 4.14, 4.30). This was clearly related to the Period 4.2 abutments (see above) and was *in situ*. It was laid in a foundation trench (955) cut in the bedrock, and all the layers within the moat sealed it or lapped up against it, demonstrating that this part of the moat had been thoroughly cleaned out before it was laid. Only part of the beam was within the excavation, but it measured 0.55 m by 0.32 m in section and its east end had been roughly chamfered with an adze. A mortice was cut in its upper face, and a dowel, 30 mm in diameter, had

been driven in from the north side, to secure the vertical timber. When the timber was removed, part of the broken dowel was left in place. The sole plate was at least 1.4 m long, and since the mortice lined up with the eastern abutment, it can be estimated that the whole beam would have been 2.6 m in length. There were no signs of any abutment on the north edge of the moat. The bridge provided access from the north range across the moat to the north court. It presumably replaced the earlier bridge, further west, which would have been removed when Room L1 was demolished and the moat was recut.

The west arm of the moat was realigned at the same time as the north arm, and its retaining bank was parallel to the new west range. Beneath it was an earlier bank, but this was associated with a ditch (E2/14) which predated the primary moat (Fig 3.7, Section 8). It appears that the Period 4.2 bank reverted to an earlier alignment, when the Period 3 retaining bank was removed, though future excavations might possibly establish whether or not this interpretation is correct.

The south-west buttress of the west range effectively blocked the moat, separating the west arm from the south arm.

## Period 4.3

### Alterations to the south and east ranges

During this phase alterations were made to the ground-floor plan and the elevations of the east range, and the south range east of the cross-passage was reconstructed (Fig 4.31). A new south court was built and infilling of the moat began.

### Exterior

Work of this period can be distinguished from Period 4.1 by the use of slightly larger Pennant rubble, sometimes rather redder in colour, and rather more widely jointed. The stones are set in ochre loam.

On the east elevation small diagonal buttresses were added to the corners of the range and to the north stack (E1.2). They were all built in the moat, which was still open.

The depth of the central stack was increased by 0.7 m at ground-floor level to create an ashlar-faced vaulted porch with wall benches (E13.5). The extension has a



Figure 4.32 Reused Period 4.3 features in a porch of c 1890 (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR AA98/01802).



lean-to roof which masks the junction between the two periods of work. The front wall of this porch (E1.4) was rebuilt in Period 5.3, but the Lysons engraving shows that it formerly had a four-centred arch. This can be identified with the arch in the Period 5.3 porch, E4.6 (Fig 4.32), whose mouldings match those used in Room 18 (Chapter 5); the arch has been painted with the sequence of coloured limewashes applied to the central porch interior. These also occur on the small medieval window E1.5 (Fig 8.7.2), and suggest that this was used as a sidelight; it is not shown on the Lysons drawing (otherwise accurate) but may have been hidden by the raking buttress.

In the northern angle of stack E1.1 a new stack (E1.6) 0.7 m deep was added. The exterior is now encased in Period 5 rebuilding, and was visible only through large cracks in the side of the flue to fireplace E7.7. The east face was rendered and inset above two weathering courses, similar to those capping the Period 4.1 stacks. The flue served one of the new ground-floor rooms (R16).

On the south-east corner the door E1.3 was blocked and replaced by a three-light Perpendicular window with cusped cinquefoiled heads (E1.10, Fig 4.33). The mullions have been reduced to fit its present position. This window is a replacement for the three Period 4.1 south windows (E2.1–3), which were blocked at this time. The addition of three buttresses (E2.5–7)

suggests that this was done to add stability to the gable wall.

The south-west buttress (E2.5) forms one end of a new south range, which extended as far as the Period 3 porch (Fig 4.34). The Period 3.4a frontage wall at the south end of Room C was pulled down, and its outer face was progressively robbed out towards the east (Fig 3.11, Section 13). The south wall of Room 22 (1387), 0.9 m wide, was set back 3.4 m from the previous frontage, and cut through the east wall of Room C. The north wall (1226) also probably cut through it, but a Period 5 feature had destroyed the junction. The alignment of the room differed from both the south and the east ranges, so that its west and east walls were wedge-shaped. The west wall (1388), adjacent to the screens passage, utilised the footings of the part of the Period 3 wall which it replaced. The east wall directly overlay the bottom courses of the Period 3.4a stack, demolished in Period 4.1. The wall footings, varying in width from 0.9 m to 1.1 m, consisted mainly of very large grey Pennant slabs set in smooth yellow-brown loam.

The northern end of Room C, converted into Room 23, must have remained standing, because its west wall formed the side of the screens passage, which stayed in use. No floors survived within either Room 22 or 23.



Figure 4.33 (far right) A 15th-century window reused in the Period 4.3 east range (E1.10) (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR AA98/01818).

A sleeper wall (1419) was inserted beneath the entrance to the screens passage, between the east wall of the stair turret (E1) and the south-west corner of Room 22. Its south edge was on exactly the same line as the new frontage wall. It consisted mainly of coursed Pennant, though it included a very large flat limestone slab and a piece of reused window moulding. Postholes, possibly associated with a door, were cut on either side of the opening.

It is uncertain how the space between the east arm of the porch and the new south front, caused by the demolition of the earlier south frontage, was filled. Presumably a length of walling was constructed on top of the footings of the long-since removed primary frontage, but there were no surviving traces of it.

Most of the south wall of Room 22 has been reduced to a height of less than 1 m, but against the east range, where it has been incorporated into OB 6, it stands nearly 7 m high. The jamb of a window 3.9 m high (E2.8) accounts for the abrupt reduction in surviving wall height. The dressed stone surround has been removed, but the rubble splay is visible internally, overbuilt by divisions in OB 6.

The west wall of the east range was altered to create a symmetrical courtyard

elevation by infilling the pentice opening E3.4 with a four-centred arch set between single-light windows (E3.14; Fig 4.35). This was flanked by two new four-light windows (E3.13, 15), and the eight-light first-floor window (E3.16) was repositioned directly over the door. All these windows have sunk-chamfered mouldings and a returned hood mould.

On the north elevation a new pair of ground-floor windows (E6.9) was created. The evidence has been fragmented by Period 5 alterations, but relieving arches with a common central springer were built into the wall below window E6.2. The surviving window frame includes the head of a shared mullion with adjoining lintel fragments, and most of the east window sill, giving a height of 2.7 m and a width of 2.3 m for each unit.

### Interior

The ground-floor plan of this period survives complete in the east range. The stone partition walls are 0.6 m thick, rising from offset foundations just below floor level to the underside of the Period 4.1 ceiling. They retain much of their original plaster. The range is divided by a central cross-passage, Room 18, 3.9 m (12 ft 9 in) wide, linking the eastern porch (E13.5) with the arch

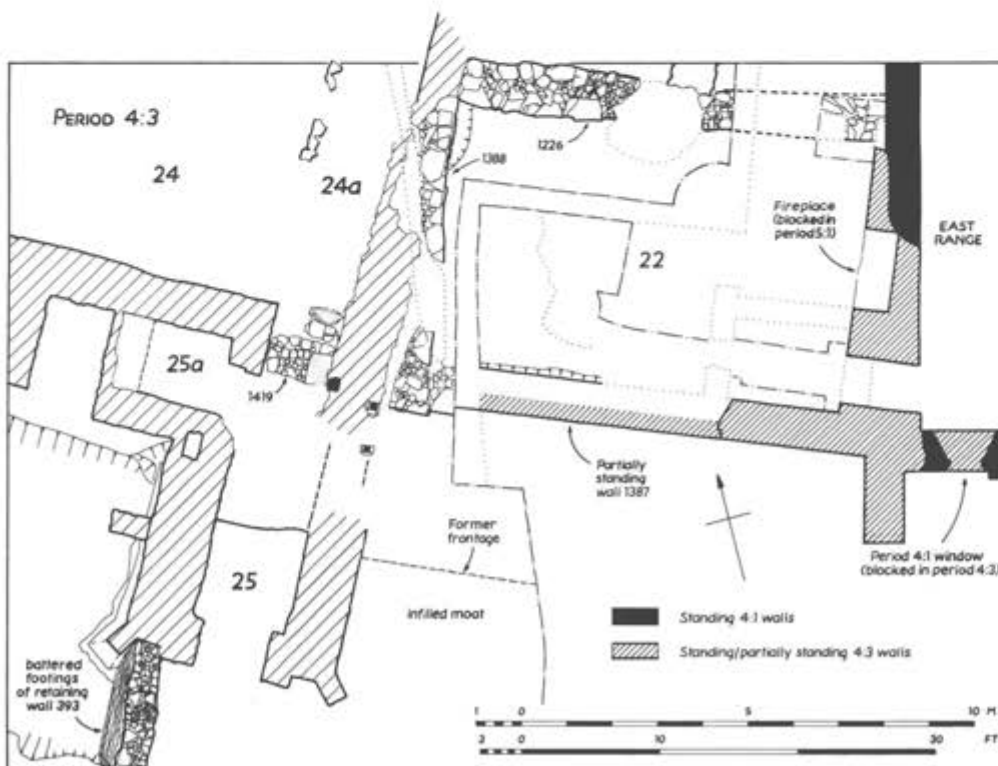


Figure 4.34 The east part of the south range in Period 4:3.

Figure 4.35 The courtyard elevation of the east range (E3) showing the symmetrical Period 4.3 window arrangement (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).



to the central courtyard (E9.14; Fig 4.36). A door with a four-centred head was built inside the Period 4.1 opening in the east wall. Two more arches, both with four-centred heads and floating cornices lead into lateral passages running north and south (E13.6). A stone bench with an oak seat is built against the south and east walls (E13.7), and another formerly existed on the north side (removed in Period 5.1).

The north passage 17 (E9) gives access to Room 15, which retains its oak four-centred door frame (E10.7). This is the only

original entrance; the other five doors were inserted in Period 5. The room measures 7.4 m by 7.15 m (24 ft 3 in by 23 ft 6 in). The reveals and common lintel of the double window are visible in the north wall (E11.9), and there is a fireplace in the east wall (E7.12), replacing the Period 4.1 position. It was enlarged in Period 5.1, back to the roughly finished outer opening spanned by a relieving arch, which framed the ashlar surround. All the Period 4 fireplaces were constructed in this way, which allowed the fireplace proper to be fitted as a secondary operation.

The Period 4.3 door from the passage to Room 16 was blocked in Period 5.1 and the east window wall rebuilt at the same time. This room had a corner fireplace (E7.13) served by the additional stack E1.6, and communicated with the cross-passage (Room 18) via an arched stone hatch, which has dowels for a wooden shutter frame.

Another passage (Room 20; E9) leads to two more rooms, 19 and 21, at the south end of the range. Room 19 became a stable in Period 5.1 (Fig 7.3) and the passage door was blocked (E15.1; now reopened), but the position of the wooden frame is preserved in the plaster (E16.1) below the raised stable floor. The north, south and west walls (E14–16) retain much of their original plaster and decoration, but the east wall was almost completely rebuilt in Period 5, so

Figure 4.36 Cross-passage, Room 18 looking west (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).



that only the north reveal of a window *c* 2.3 m tall and the indent for a lintel survive (E7.14). It was clearly inserted into the Period 4.1 wall. Traces of a hearth in the south-east corner were found by excavation.

Room 21 has also lost its fireplace. The Period 4.1 windows in the south wall (E8) were blocked and plastered over, and a reused Perpendicular window inserted in the east wall (E7.10). The west wall was rebuilt with the new south range, and has a connecting door (E3.12, E9.12) with an original frame, formerly cased in Period 5.1 blocking.

The new room in the south range, Room 22, measured 9.15 m by 6.0 m (30 ft by 19 ft 6 in) and was set obliquely to the east range; the space between was taken up with a wedge-shaped chimney stack. At the north end this is butted against the face of the east range, blocking the door E9.8, but further south the whole wall is rebuilt. This east wall provides a complete elevation of the room, which had a ceiling height of 5.5 m (18 ft). Parallel rows of floor and ceiling joist sockets (E3.10) indicate that it was spanned by girding beams in the manner of the east range. The lower set rests on an oak bearer and below this is a row of wooden blocks (E3.17) at *c* 1 m centres. There is a large central fireplace (E3.11), which has the same mouldings as the doors to Room 18.

No more details of the window in the south wall are visible internally, and the other walls have been demolished. The only surviving feature of the first-floor room (R37) is a small fireplace (E3.9) with chamfered jambs and semi-octagonal stops, which is probably truncated on the line of the lintel, 1.2 m above floor level. The position of the gable is indicated by cut rafters in the east range roof (E9.17), which show that this room was an attic with a ceiling height of no more than 3 m.

Few alterations were carried out to the first floor of the east range; the south-west corner of Room 11 was rebuilt in conjunction with the new stack, and the garderobe in Room 6 was blocked to form a cupboard. For the door created in the corner of the north window (E6.11) see Room 33.

## The moat

The bottom of the north arm of the moat was not cleaned out after Period 4.2. The south and east arms do not appear to have been scoured after Period 4.1. As a result, layers of waterlogged dark brown/black

organic silt accumulated while the moat was still open. They were peaty in texture and varied in thickness between 0.2 and 0.4 m. In the south arm, the material within the porch (1993) was identical to the deposits between the porch and the oriel window (1046–8). Similar layers, containing rather more rubble, were found in the bottom of the east arm (2026–8). In the north arm, layers of dark grey silty clay and rubble, with frequent charcoal flecks and plaster rendering (935/951 and 932), butted against and partially overlay the Period 4.2 bridge timber (Fig 3.7, Sections 5–7 and Fig 3.11, Sections 12 and 14).

The eastern part of the south arm of the moat was infilled with a succession of tip layers. They consisted of brown, yellow and red clay, mixed with Pennant rubble and with frequent small lumps and specks of white plaster rendering, and interspersed with unconsolidated dumps of rubble. The organic deposits at the bottom of the moat contained much discarded domestic rubbish. In contrast, the layers above contained demolition material such as roofing slates, floor tiles and (in 1477) sculpted limestone heads and figures deriving from two separate fireplaces. The uppermost layers contained very few finds. East of the porch, the infill layers butted against the core of the partly robbed former frontage wall, indicating that they were contemporary with the construction of Room 22. The arch beneath the south end of the porch (1458) remained *in situ*, and collapsed onto the top of the moat fill.

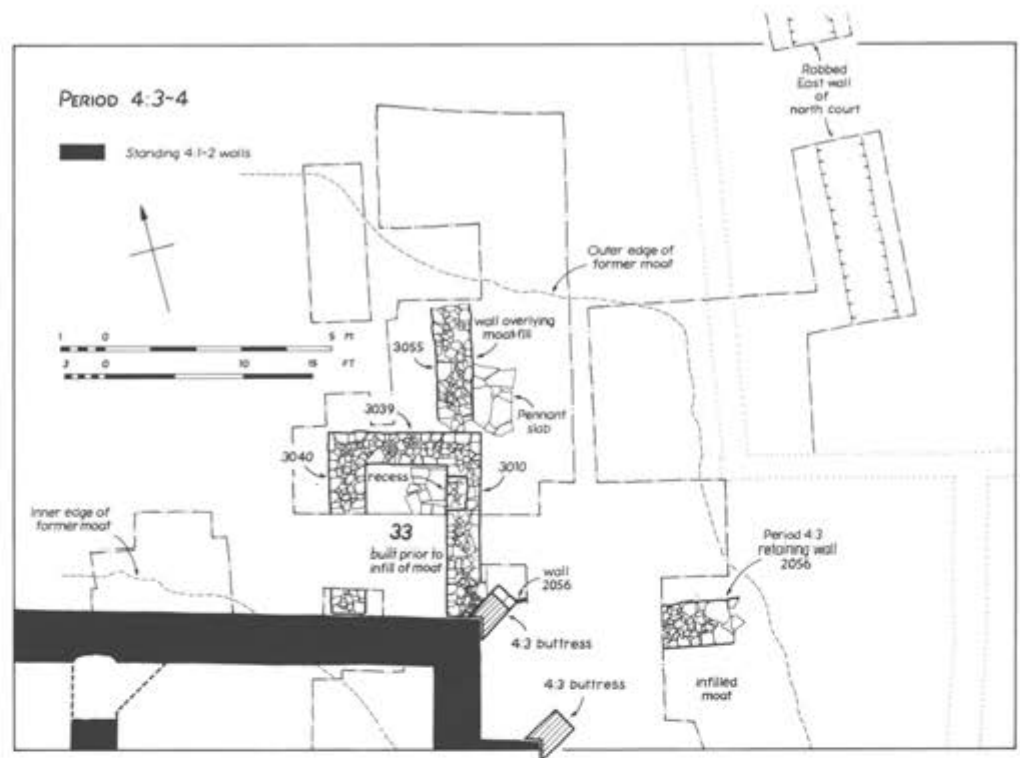
The moat fill was held back by a retaining wall (393), which was constructed between the west arm of the porch and the outer edge of the moat. It was 0.65 m wide and its west face, which was battered out *c* 0.3 m, consisted mainly of coursed Pennant rubble with occasional large pieces of limestone near its base. Its east side, in contrast, was very rough and irregular and was clearly never intended to be seen. The existence of this wall demonstrated that the south arm of the moat was backfilled in two separate phases. Only a limited amount of material (1044–5) was dumped in the moat on the west side of the wall during Period 4.3.

At the south-east corner of the moat, in Area 14, only the highest infill layers were examined, but they were closely comparable with the material further west.

The fill of the east arm was very similar to that of the south arm, and consisted of layers of yellow-brown clay mixed with large



Figure 4.37 The north-east corner of the house (Room 33).



amounts of Pennant rubble. The only major difference was that some of the layers included not just the usual small lumps of rendering but also numerous pieces of moulded stucco (Chapter 8, Figs 8.39, 8.40). They were found in 2020–1 and 2024, and also in 2066, north of the cross-passage. There was no stucco in the fill of the south or north arms, implying that it derived specifically from the east range and was discarded when the rooms were remodelled and redecorated in Period 4.3. One side effect of the infilling of the east arm was that the outlets of the remaining Period 4.1 garderobe shafts in the central and southern stacks would have been blocked. Since the shafts remained in use, but were accessible only at first-floor level, it is difficult to understand how they would have been cleaned out, if at all. The vaulted outlet located during the excavation was shared by the garderobes, and may have decanted into a sump built within the moat. This could have been emptied periodically.

The layers filling the east arm were retained by wall 2056, which butted against the buttress supporting the north-east corner of the east range (Fig 4.37). It was built across the open moat and served the same purpose as the retaining wall in the south arm. However, it was better built, and both faces were carefully constructed. It was also more substantial, at 1 m wide, and, in con-

trast to wall 393, was almost certainly a standing wall which would have continued eastwards beyond the moat, to join the east wall of the north court. However, no trace of the continuation survived.

### Room 33

A rectangular stair tower (Room 33; E6.10; Fig 4.37 and Fig 4.49, Section 42) was built against the north-east corner buttress. Its west wall butted against the north wall of the east range and partly blocked a Period 4.3 ground-floor window (E6.9). It provided access from Room 6 to the garden walk by means of a small door contrived in the corner of the Period 4.1 window. This is visible in outline (E6.11) as an extension of the Period 5.1 window blocking. This alteration was clearly not part of the original Period 4.3 works; it may represent second thoughts or belong to Period 4.4. However, the foundation was built before the moat was filled in. The tower was not fully excavated, but like the buttress, its footings probably rested on the bottom of the moat. Its walls were 0.7 m wide and it measured 3.35 m by 1.8 m. Room 33 appeared to have been built in the same way as the Period 3.5 oriel window on the south front, since the inner faces of its walls were seated on a rubble raft (3053), while the outer faces, which included large pieces of reused limestone,



Figure 4.38 The courtyard elevation of the north range (E4)

(photograph: © Crown copyright, NMR BB98/00588).

continued down to bedrock. Within the structure, the raft was covered by a series of clay and rubble layers, which in turn were sealed by some large flat stone slabs (3047), presumably a floor. A shallow rectangular recess was set in the east wall.

Room 33 and wall 2056 were probably contemporary and are likely to have been related to each other. The wall may have formed the south side of a gallery leading to the garden.

## Period 4.4

### Alterations to the north range

#### Exterior

In this period new doors and windows were inserted into the south wall to create a more symmetrical courtyard elevation, reflecting the Period 4.3 alterations to the adjacent west wall of the east range (Fig 4.38). The north elevation was unaltered. The Pennant rubble is set in a matrix of ochre loam not inherently different from that used in Period 4.2. The limestone is set in hard white mortar.

The present ground-floor windows, (E4.8, E4.9), which match those in the adjoining elevation (E3), were inserted at

this time; there was formerly a third (E4.10), removed in Period 5.1. Alternating with the windows are three identical doorways (E4.11–13) of classical type with returned architraves and floating cornices (Fig 4.39). The stair tower door was reset in Period 4.5 and was initially added to the Period 4.2 door (E10.6) at the east end of the range. All these features are regularly set out at 2.75 m centres, and it is probable that there was a fourth doorcase on the entrance to the demolished north cross-passage.

On the first floor, set directly over door E4.12, is the scar of an oriel window (E4.14) which was removed in Period 5.2. Two vertical joints are visible on either side of the present window, the inner marking the actual width of the oriel, and the outer the junction of the rebuilt wall with the Period 4.2 fabric. This sequence is confirmed inside where the original decorative scheme has been truncated by the addition of the window. The oriel was supported on a timber frame and clad in ashlar (Fig 5.13). It is probable that the eight-light window with sunk-chamfered mouldings now set flush with the wall, and the decorative panel beneath it, are reused elements of the structure. The panel has a coat of arms on a scrolled strapwork cartouche, surmounting a pilaster with a roll-moulded capital.

Figure 4.39 A Period 4.4 doorcase (E4.12) (photograph: © Croton copyright, NMR AA98/01806).



#### Interior

The ground floor was divided into three rooms reflecting the new door and window positions. There is a stone partition wall between Room 13 and Room 12, which has no surviving Period 4.4 features other than its door. A flue within the wall indicates an otherwise unknown fireplace. West of Room 12 was a cross-passage known from excavated evidence. To the east the range was divided by a timber-framed partition, marked by a scar in the plaster (E11.10) adjoining the Period 4.2 fireplace. To accommodate the south end of this partition, the window E10.8 was constructed with a right-angled splay. It is possible that Rooms 13 and 14 interconnected. Room divisions on the first floor were unaltered.

#### The moat: Period 4.4–4.5

About two-thirds of the north arm of the moat and the remainder of the south arm were filled in (Fig 3.7, Sections 5 and 7, and Fig 4.49, Section 42). The work was carried out after Period 4.3, though probably only shortly afterwards. It had certainly been completed before Period 4.6.

After the Period 4.2 timber bridge had been dismantled, the north arm was back-filled with successive layers of firm clay, varying in colour from mottled grey/green to

reddish-yellow and reddish-brown (929–31, 936 and 952–3). In contrast to the Period 4.3 infill layers, there was remarkably little rubble or demolition debris mixed with the clay. The section in Area 8 showed that the material was tipped into the moat from the north side, sealing the waterlogged silt, and the sole plate of the bridge. When it had been filled in, the surface was consolidated with orange clay and large generally flat Pennant rubble (944 and 950).

The western limit of this infill must be between the garderobe outlet and the chimney stack, outside Room 31. A small excavation next to the stack demonstrated that the moat thereabouts was filled in very recently, and contained modern agricultural equipment. No retaining wall was found, but its position was indicated by nettles, which grow in abundance above the modern moat fill but not on the earlier fill.

The east end of the north arm was only partially excavated. Most of the 'fill' layers had in fact accumulated above the moat fill in Period 4.6, but had subsided in Period 5.1. Apart from a deposit of red clay and rubble on the northern edge of the moat, the only recorded infill layer consisted of firm orange clay (3023), identical to the material in Area 8. It contained several floor tiles but no rubble or stucco, and postdated the construction of Room 33.

Overlying it and butting against the north-east corner of Room 33 was a wall (3055), which survived to a maximum height of five courses. It presumably continued northwards, but beyond the outer edge of the moat it had been completely removed. Surprisingly, it had not subsided, though two large Pennant slabs adjacent to its east face had slumped southwards.

The south arm of the moat, west of the Period 4.3 retaining wall 393, was probably filled in at the same time. Certainly the dump layers were very similar in appearance and texture to the material in the north arm and quite different from the layers to the east of the retaining wall. They consisted of layers of yellow and reddish-brown clay (1038, 1041 and 1043 and 1045), containing only small amounts of rubble, though there was a dump of concentrated rubble with voids (1044) against the south edge of the moat. In the vicinity of the oriel window, the moat fill was not levelled up, and most of the sandstone face remained exposed. Excavations further west, alongside the south front and immediately south of the west range, showed that the fill layers were

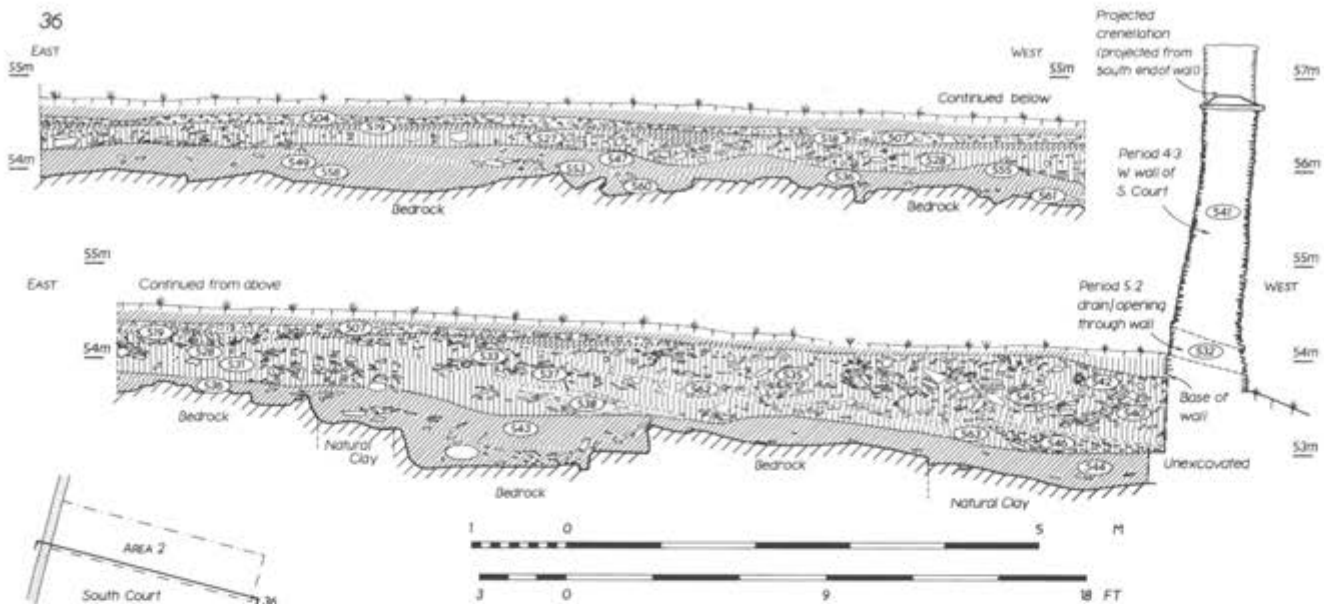


Figure 4.40 Section 36: south court.

almost identical apart from a spread of concentrated crushed yellow mortar or stone chippings (2149).

Just before the south arm was infilled, chambers with crudely coursed Pennant sides were built around the outlets for drain 41 and garderobe 279. The former was much more substantial than the latter, measuring 1.35 m by 1 m with battered sides, suggesting that it may have been related to a feature at first-floor level, as well as to the drain. Both chambers were built freestanding and butted against the existing frontage walls. The clay moat fill layers were then spread up against them.

## The south court

### Period 4.1–4.3

A series of dump layers, containing much demolition material, was spread over the existing ground surface and was tipped down the slope on the western edge of the terrace. The layers were deposited no earlier than Period 4.1 and no later than 4.3 (Fig 4.40, Section 36). They consisted of brown loam with varying quantities of rubble, mixed with white mortar, stone-dust and plaster rendering, interspersed with lenses of charcoal, ash and oyster shells. They also contained fragments of ceramic ridge tiles and Pennant slates. The material covered the whole of Area 2. It was homogeneous and only 0.25–0.3 m thick where the underlying ground surface was relatively level (526–28/531). Further west, however, the tip layers were up to 1 m thick.

The demolition spread appears to have extended as far as the centre of the court, since a layer of brown loam and rubble, 0.1 m thick, was recorded south of the porch. In appearance, it was very similar to the layers in Area 2. On the eastern side of the court, in Area 14, there were no signs of any comparable layers.

The levelling material came from demolished medieval buildings, and is likely to have derived either from the structures beneath the Period 4.1 east range, or from those beneath the Period 4.2 north and west ranges. The ceramic and coin evidence suggests that the material was earlier in date than the layers at the bottom of the moat and may have been deposited in Period 4.1, well before the south court was created. Alternatively, although the material may have derived from buildings demolished in Period 4.1, it may have been redeposited only immediately before the south court was laid out.

### Period 4.3–4.4

The court measured *c* 75 m by 67.5 m (250 ft by 220 ft). The base of its western boundary wall (541) overlaid the highest dump layer, and the wall itself butted against the corner buttress of the west range. The eastern boundary wall, on the other hand, terminated 12 m east of the house. It returned westwards across the top of the Period 4.3 moat fill, to butt against the buttress at the south-east corner of the east range. This indicated that the court could not have been created before Period 4.3. The court was





Figure 4.41 South court: the west wall with surviving crenellations. The demolished corner tower (Fig 4.43) is on the right of the picture (photograph: Photogrammetric Unit, Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York).

wider than the house because it was aligned axially on the porch, which was itself positioned off-centre to the south frontage.

The walls are of Pennant rubble set in red loam, carefully laid and tightly bonded without the inclusion of any limestone. At the base they are 0.8 m wide tapering to 0.6 m, and the maximum height is 3.8 m to the top of the crenellated parapet, which has merlons 0.8 m wide and embrasures 0.45 m wide. Short lengths of both east and west walls survive to their full height at the south

end of the court (Fig 4.41), where the embrasures have been infilled, probably to accommodate lean-to outbuildings, but in general the crenellations have been removed. A number of embrasures on the east side of the court preserve their original detail. This is a Pennant coping of diminishing slabs three to four courses high, rising from a projecting basal course. Both walls have a single row of putlogs at a height of *c* 1.7 m internally (*c* 2.0 m externally), and there is no evidence for original structures built against the walls: alterations and additions date to Period 5.

The west wall survives for its full length and has a projecting rectangular ‘bastion’ at the north end (Fig 4.42 and Fig A.5, West range: west wall). It is 5.0 m wide and 1.6 m deep externally, and survives at the north-west corner to the level of the crenellations: merlons return round both angles, and there are two surviving embrasure slabs. Each face has a slit window with deep internal splays and the back is open. At the south-west corner are the foundations of a circular tower with an external diameter of 3.6 m (Figs 4.42, 4.43). In places the outer face has collapsed altogether and it is not clear whether a projecting spread of rubble on the north-west side is a random collapse or part of a projecting feature such as a newel or chimney stack. The tower has an internal diameter of 2.1 m with a doorway 1 m wide set across the corner. The south-east jamb survives to a height of 2 m and preserves traces of a flight of steps rising to a former suspended floor *c* 1 m above courtyard ground level. In 1913 the tower still stood to

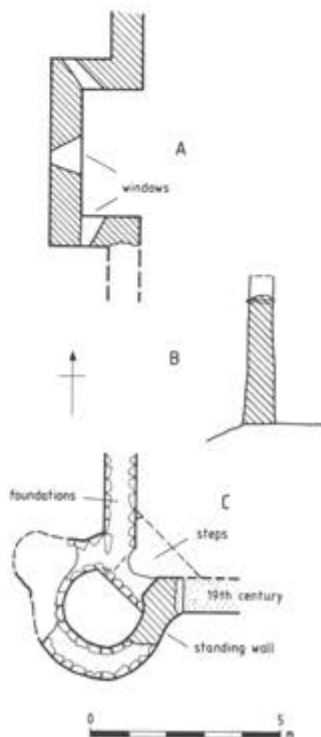


Figure 4.42 Plans of the south court corner turrets.



*Figure 4.43 Excavated tower at the south-west corner of the south court (photograph: Robert Bell).*

its full height and it is illustrated in Robinson (1930, facing 93). It had an open back and stood at least one metre higher than the top of the crenellated wall. It is not clear from the photograph how the top of the tower was finished, but it was probably roofed originally, as Robinson describes a fireplace, of which no trace remains.

The south wall has been reduced to a height of *c.* 1.5 m to form the back wall of a range of open-fronted outbuildings, originating in Period 5.2 but now partly modern. In the south-east corner of the court 20 m of wall and presumably another corner tower have been demolished completely to make way for a barn dated 1849 and a field gate. This opening also appears to have originated in Period 5.2 and is off-centre to the axis of the court. Its environs are denuded to bedrock.

The position of the original gateway has not been located as the central section of the south wall was also rebuilt in Period 5.2, but it is probable that the arch facing the Latteridge Road in the Period 4.6 east court, which is reused, originated here (Figs 1.1, 4.44). It is built of limestone ashlar with a four-centred arch 2.24 m wide below a returned hood. In the spandrels is the Poyntz crest in a strapwork cartouche on a background of oak branches. The panelled entablature is surmounted by a gabled pediment with a lion mask and there are bases for missing finials. The pediment mouldings

show evidence of having been reduced in size. The mouldings of this gate and its hybrid style are related to Period 4.3 work elsewhere in the house.

The east wall was continuous but was breached for farm access in the early 1970s. A straight joint 3.6 m south of OB 13 marks one side of a north-east 'bastion', otherwise removed by OB 16. The wall continues north to the east court and forms the west wall of OB 12 (Fig A.5).

#### Period 4.4–4.6

A soil horizon overlay the rubble layers in Area 2. It consisted of featureless rich brown loam (510/511/518/519/523), with a maximum thickness of 0.1 m, and was largely sealed by a Period 5.1 gravel surface. No Period 4 structures were located in the limited areas which were excavated although they may have existed elsewhere within the court.

### The buildings east of the house

In the area later enclosed by the east court, the Pennant sandstone outcrop is very close to the surface and is actually exposed in some places. There is a strip of ground, *c.* 25 m wide in the north half of the court and *c.* 13 m wide in the south half, in which all pre-Period 5 layers and features have been destroyed. They only survived beyond the

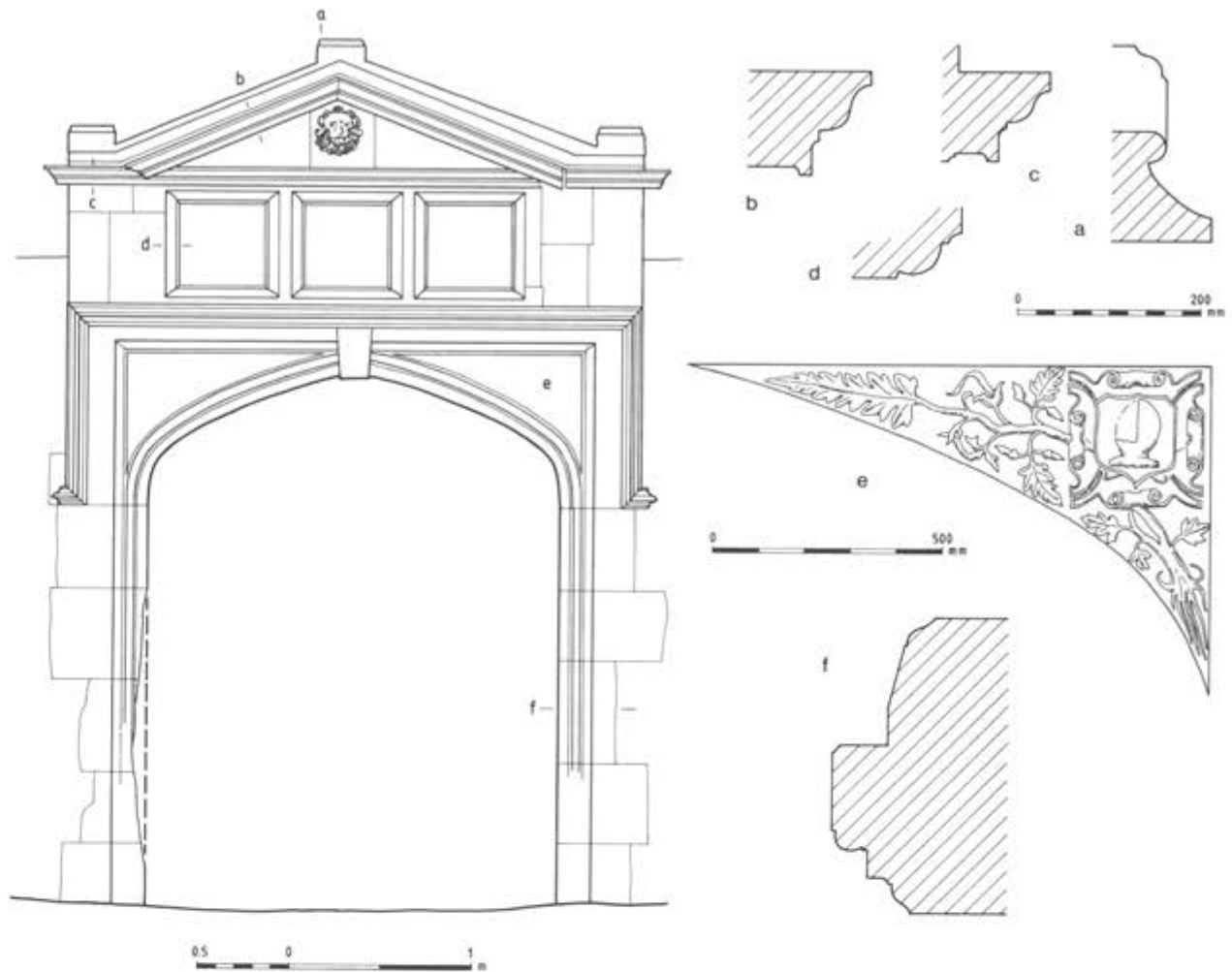


Figure 4.44 Gate to the east court, Period 4 (reset): details  
*a* finial,  
*b* pediment,  
*c* cornice,  
*d* panel,  
*e* spandrel,  
*f* jamb.

point at which the bedrock started to dip down beneath a natural layer of shale and clay. As a result, there were no direct stratigraphic links between the main house and the structures beneath the court (Figs 4.45–4.48 and Fig 4.49, Sections 39–41).

#### Period 4.1

A series of insubstantial footings was found beneath the south half of the east court, continuing beyond the southern boundary wall. The best surviving wall (833/886/2676), 0.7 m wide and at least 19 m long, was aligned parallel to the standing east range. It became progressively more fragmentary towards the north. An annexe, with even less substantial footings, only 0.5 m wide and three courses deep, was attached to its east side at its southern end. Two walls (819 and 820), 3.4 m apart, projected westwards towards the main house, but after a short

distance they had been completely destroyed. They were truncated by the Period 4.2 porch footings, but were evidently contemporary with wall 833.

The foundations leading towards the house respected the Period 4.1 doorway near the south-east corner of the east range and were probably related to it. The alignment of the footings, combined with their lack of depth and width, suggests that they formed part of a temporary timber-framed service range, contemporary with the main east range and linked to it by a pentice and a bridge across the moat.

#### Period 4.2

The Period 4.1 service range was replaced by a new ancillary range, constructed on a much grander scale. It contained at least three buildings (Rooms 35, 34 and 37) and was linear in form. Room 35 was almost

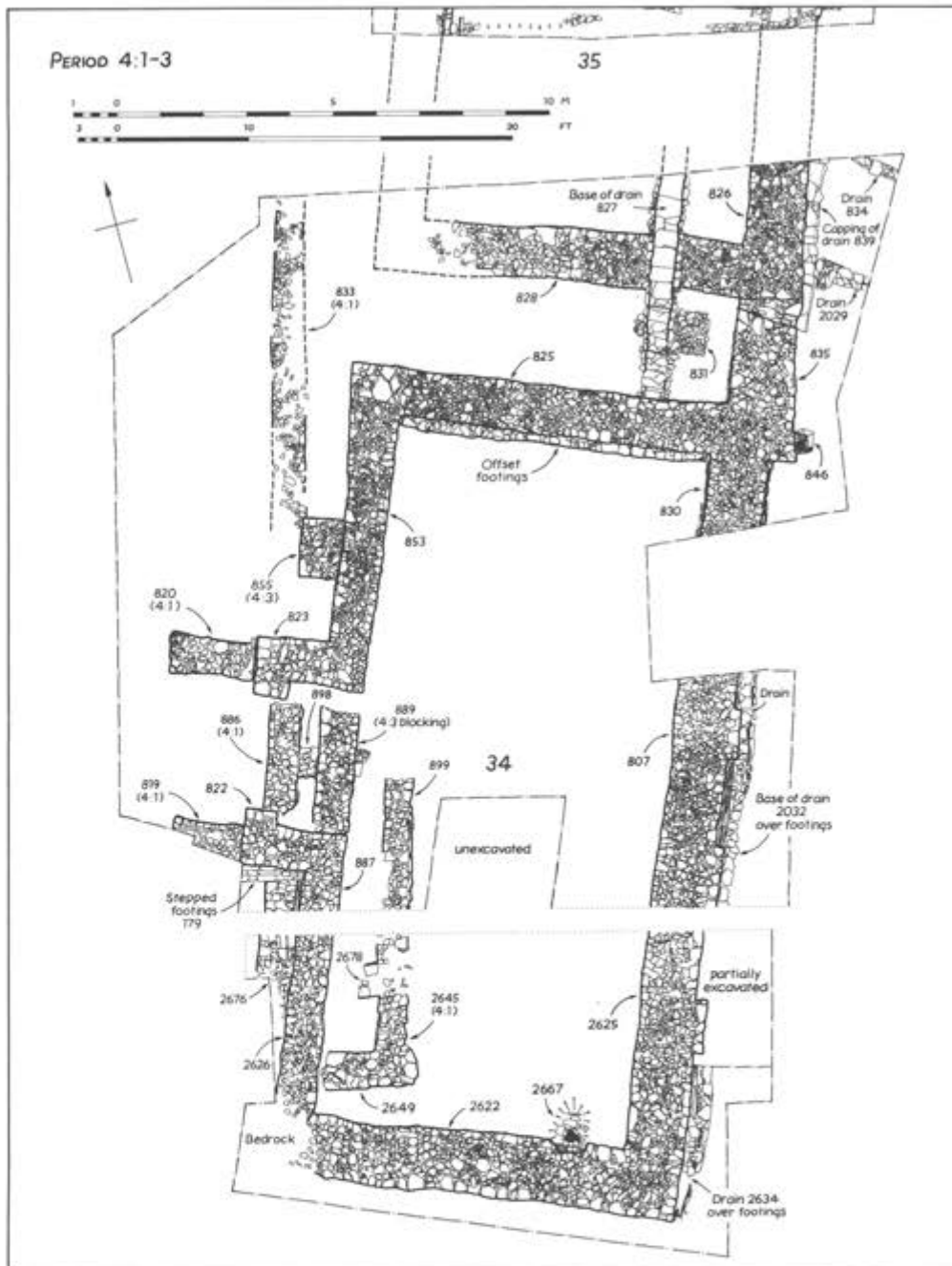


Figure 4.45 Plan, Room 34.

parallel to the east range of the house but the alignment of Room 34 shifted towards the south-west and Room 37 was clearly aligned on the edge of the outer moat. A further building (Room 36) extended south-eastwards from the north end of Room 35 towards Latteridge Road.

#### Room 34

The building was rectangular, and measured internally 16.2 m by 7.2 m (53 ft by 23 ft 6 in, Figs 4.45, 4.46). Its west wall (853/887/2626) rested on the bedrock and

was only 0.9 m wide. The footings of the south and east walls, however, were considerably wider, probably because they were built mostly on shale and clay. The south wall (2622) was 1.5 m wide at foundation level. The east wall (807/2625) was of a similar width, and externally its footings were offset by a further 0.3 m. The offset was partially overlaid by a roughly-built stone land drain (2032/2634). Also resting on these footings were three regularly-spaced buttresses, which were integral to the wall. A fourth buttress must have existed in the



Figure 4.46 East court:  
Room 34 and the south end  
of Room 35, from the west  
(photograph: Robert Bell).



unexcavated area near the north-east corner. Exactly halfway along the west wall, an opening 3.3 m wide was flanked by the arms of a small porch. They were bonded to the main wall and projected 1.6 m westwards. They cut through the Period 4.1 walls, but respected the alignment of the earlier pentice footings. Like the pentice, they were clearly related to the primary doorway in the east wall of the east range.

Within the building, there were no surviving floor layers; nor were there any drains. The only internal feature was a large posthole (2667), cutting through the north edge of the footings of the south wall, but probably contemporary with the wall itself.

#### Room 35

Room 35 was a separate building, on a slightly different alignment from Room 34, and in strict structural sequence was the earlier (Fig 4.47). The gap between them was 2.5 m wide, and may have served as a passageway. It was closed by a wall (835), which butted against the south-east corner of Room 35 and was bonded to the north-east corner of the south building. This was probably a sleeper wall for an arch. There was no corresponding wall at the west end of the gap.

The south-west corner of Room 35 and virtually all its west wall (727) had been

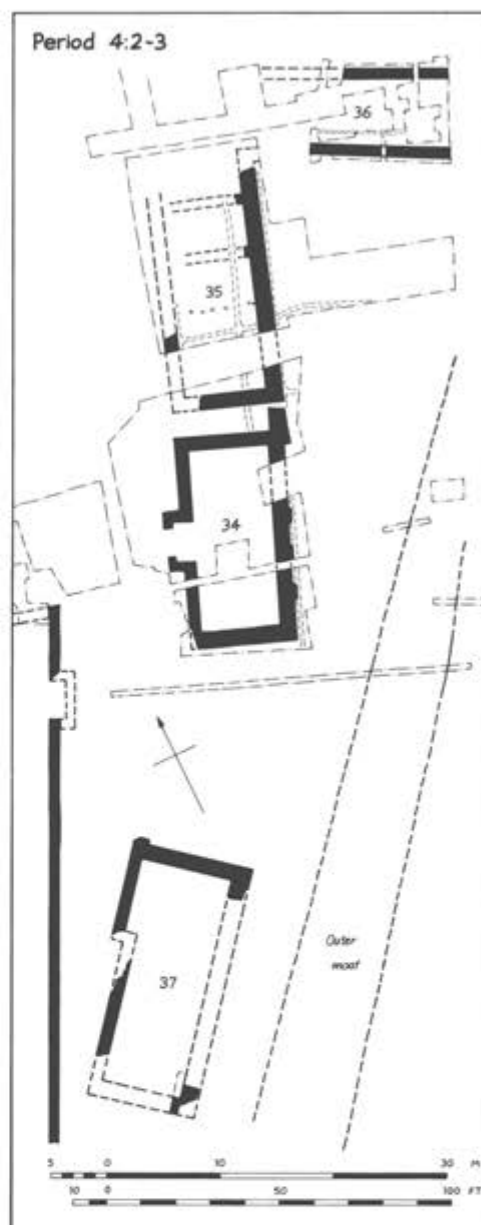
completely removed; nor were there any traces of its north wall. However, the south and east walls (828 and 706/826) survived. The building had the same width as Room 34, but was at least 19.5 m (64 ft) in length. There were slight indications of a wall (718) turning to the east at the north end of 706 (see below, Room 36). The remaining walls were bonded in yellow loam, and were 1.2 m wide at foundation level. The building was subdivided internally by three partitions. Two were made of stone (755 and 756) and butted against the main east wall. They survived only as short stubs, and had been entirely removed further west. To the south of 755 was a row of postholes, probably associated with a wooden partition. These divisions were regularly spaced, 4 m apart, and it is possible that a fourth partition existed beneath the unexcavated Period 5 track.

As in Room 34, no floors survived, but traces of an extensive internal drainage system, albeit largely robbed, remained. The principal drain (720) flowed across the building, south of the wooden partition, and passed through the east wall, with which it was integral. Two drains (728 and 892), adjacent to the inner edge of the west wall, flowed into it from the north and south. Two other drains, parallel to and 1.2 m from wall 706, also fed into it. Drain 732, subse-



Figure 4.47 Plan, Rooms 35 and 36.

Figure 4.48 Plan; Period 4 outbuildings east of the main house, scale 1:500.



quently entirely robbed, ran from north to south. The equivalent drain entering 720 from the south side (827), originated adjacent to Room 34, and flowed northwards, against the natural slope, across the space between the two buildings and through the south wall of Room 35. Its base consisted of flat slabs and included several reused Pennant roofing slates. Drain 720 also had a stone slab base and coursed sides. Most of its capping stones were *in situ*. It followed a curving alignment east of the building, and was traced for a distance of *c* 9 m, before it disappeared under the later track. It presumably flowed into the outer moat just

beyond the present arched gateway. A rough capped land drain (716), its sides consisting of vertical Pennant slabs, was laid along the outside of the east wall. It was contemporary with the main drain, and fed into it. A similar drain (839) started just beyond the south-east corner of Room 35 and flowed northwards, though a couple of land drains (834 and 2029) led eastwards, removing surplus water.

#### Room 36

The plan of the building was only partially recovered since neither its west nor its east walls were found, but it was probably free-standing, with its south-west corner linked to Room 35 by wall 718 (Fig 4.47). Its east wall was either on the line of the eastern boundary wall of the Period 4.6 east court or only a very short distance beyond it. It would have stood end-on to Latteridge Road or to the outer moat, which probably ran along the west side of the road. The structure was 6.2 m (20 ft) wide and at least 12.5 m (41 ft) in length.

The western half of the south wall (776) was heavily disturbed by root action and the western half of the north wall (2808) had been completely removed but the surviving portions of both walls were 0.80 m wide, resting on offset foundations 1–1.10 m wide.

Internally, a strip of pitched Pennant (780), 0.8 m wide, was laid along the south edge of the room. It was heavily worn. On the north side of 780, a flat-bottomed drain with Pennant slab sides (779) ran from west to east. Three successive cobbled surfaces were recorded to the north of the drain. There were no signs of any internal partitions. The building was interpreted as a stable block.

#### Room 37

This building was located in the area to the east of the south court (Fig 4.48). The whole of its north wall and most of its west wall were revealed, but only a very small proportion of its east and south walls was uncovered. The structure generally measured 20 m by 7 m (65 ft 6 in by 23 ft) internally though near the north-west corner the west wall projected out by 1 m. The length of the projection was uncertain owing to the partial robbing of the west wall but it was at least 6.5 m and may have been as much as 9 m. It probably contained a pair of fireplaces or ovens. A buttress supported the north side of the north-west corner.

The footings of the west wall were 1 m wide, whereas the north and south wall foundations were both 1.35 m wide. The east wall footings, which in contrast to the rest of the foundations did not stand directly on the natural bedrock, were 1.65 m wide. The building was on a markedly different alignment from that of the later south court but was parallel to the outer moat, the inner edge of which was 5 m beyond its east wall. A stone-lined drain, 0.25 m wide and decanting into the moat 4 m south of the south-east corner, may have been related to the building.

None of the interior was excavated, but any floor surfaces or partitions will almost certainly have been destroyed since the bottom course of the west wall was 0.50–0.60 m above the highest surviving footings of the east wall. The presence of the large projecting stack suggests that the building was either a brewhouse or a bakehouse.

#### Other buildings east of the house

No further buildings in the ancillary range were found, but it is likely that another structure stood in the gap between Rooms 34 and 37, which was 18–20 m in length. This area, covered by a later cobbled farmyard surface, was not investigated, though traces of a possible linking wall were observed extending eastwards from the buttress at the north-west corner of Room 37. It is possible that Room 37 formed part of a continuous chain of buildings rather than being completely detached from Room 34. Conceivably, yet another building was located beyond the south end of Room 37. However, if it existed it must have had a very short life because it would have been on the line of the east wall of the south court.

#### Period 4.3

A blocking wall (889) was constructed across the opening in the west wall of Room 34, after which the porch was probably demolished. The wall was almost certainly contemporary with the Period 4.3 blocking of the door near the southern end of the main east range, and from this time onwards the principal means of access to the building would have been through a doorway in the north wall facing onto the passageway. Possibly belonging to the same phase was a rectangular feature (855), butting the outer face of the west wall, north of the former porch. It was 1.4 m wide, projected out 1 m and may have been the base of an added buttress.

#### The outer moat

It is unclear precisely when the outer moat was filled in because only a very small proportion of the feature was fully excavated, but it was evidently still open in Period 4.2 when Room 37 was constructed.

The lowest infill layer beneath the south-east corner of the east court consisted of soft grey loam, becoming browner higher up and with a maximum visible thickness of 0.50 m. This was sealed by concentrated Pennant rubble in a reddish-brown loam matrix, which contained early 16th-century ridge tile and pottery fragments. Similar infill material was recorded in the excavation trench south-east of Area 10. Near the south-east corner of Room 37, the earliest infill material was large rubble with voids in a light orange clay matrix. This was overlain by light orange clay mixed with small pieces of rubble and then by large rubble in orange-brown clay. The material had clearly been tipped in from the inner edge of the moat and had a total thickness of only 0.40 m towards the outer edge.

The part of the moat sealed beneath the Period 4.6 east court must have been filled in during Periods 4.3–4.5, at much the same time as the moat surrounding the house. But near its southern end the outer moat must have remained visible as a linear depression until the later twentieth century since the majority of the fill was modern and included plastic sacks.

#### The house in the later 16th and 17th centuries

No major building programmes took place during this period and the structural record is one of piecemeal alteration and repair. The most substantial of these is the construction of a stair tower in Period 4.5 and the creation of the east court, after the demolition of the service range in Period 4.6.

#### Period 4.5

##### The stair tower

The principal feature of this period is the stair tower in the angle between the north and east ranges (Fig 4.38). Structurally this is an addition, as it seals rendering on both elevations and also overrides Period 4.4 alterations to the north range. A felling date of winter 1575/spring 1576 was obtained from the stair treads (Chapter 8). It is built



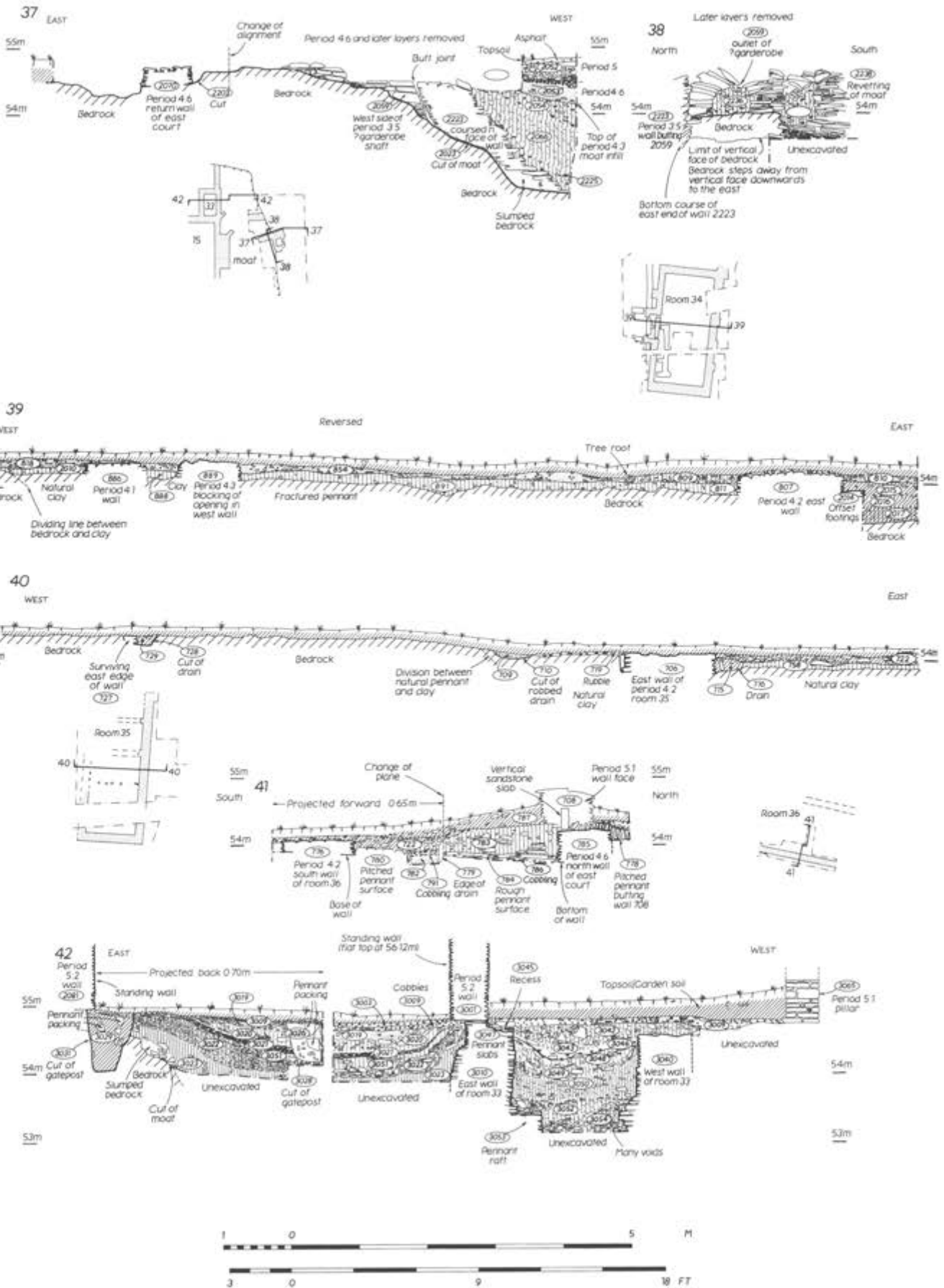


Figure 4.49 Sections 37-42: east court.

of Pennant rubble in ochre loam, but with a greater admixture of limestone than previous phases. The tower is semi-octagonal in plan, corbelling out to form a square attic storey. The south elevation (E4.15) has a door (E4.11) to the courtyard set below four single-light windows with sunk-chamfered mouldings and returned hoods. The gabled roof is coped and has columnar hexagonal finials, now broken, on the eaves and the ridge. The door is of the same pattern as E4.12 and 13 and has been reset. It is oversized for this position, and the corners of the blocks on which the mouldings are worked have been cut obliquely to follow the line of the tower, using a saw rather than a chisel.

The interior of the tower is round and houses an oak newel stair of fifty-three treads (Fig 4.50). Each is formed from a single baulk of wood, triangular in cross-section so that the soffit forms a continuous rising curve. Each step is tenoned into the newel and pegged across the chord. The squared outer ends are built into the wall. The newel is formed of four sections each morticed and pegged. There is a landing of contiguous oak baulks at first-floor level, and another of boards set on narrow joists at the head of the stair. This is finished on its open side with a plain rail jointed to the newel and infilled below with lath and plaster. Most of the plaster is contemporary with the tower. The roof comprises five pairs of common rafters and a ridge piece, intersected at right-angles by a link roof to the east range of similar construction. This is carried on stone dwarf walls built off the upper sides of T9 and T10; the lowest purlin has been removed for access.

Several new doors connected the stairs with adjoining rooms. On the ground floor a small door with a stone sunk-chamfered surround leads to Room 14 (E10.15). It replaces the Period 4.2 door (E10.6), but cuts through the Period 4.4 blocking of the Period 4.2 window E10.5. The surrounding wall was replastered. On the first floor doors were made to Room 1 (E10.16) and Room 6 (E3.18). Both have plain pegged oak frames.

At the head of the stairs a chamfered wooden frame (E3, E9.19) leads to the east range roof, where a room was created north of T10, utilising the pre-existing attic light (E11.1). Another post was added to T10 to form a door frame (E10.17), which has a four-centred head cut from a board; the posts of T11 were replaced by new ones in line with the walls, to form a room 4 m

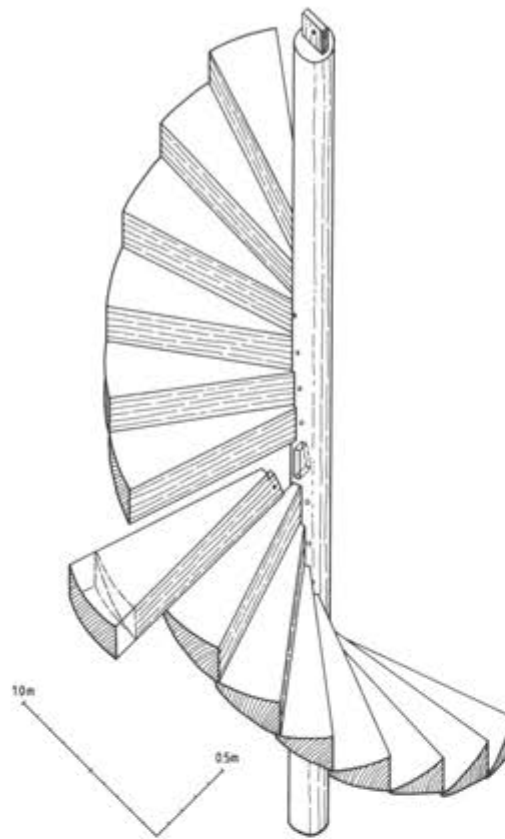


Figure 4.50 Period 4.5 newel stair, axonometric view.

wide. Only traces of the lath and plaster partitions survive, but there are stud sockets for a sloping ceiling in the top face of the middle purlin, and there is plaster on the truss collars, some purlins, and the north gable wall. The ceiling was set at the top of the collars. A door of the same type as E10.17 was added to T9, which suggests the intention to convert more of the roof space, but no other alterations were carried out.

### Period 4.6 and uncertain

A few alterations to the standing building cannot be tied to a single phase. The Period 4.1 door in the south-west corner of Room 6 (E3, E9.7) was replaced by the stair tower in Period 4.5, but may have gone out of use as early as Period 4.2, as it would seem to detract from the symmetry of Periods 4.3 and 4.4.

In Room 19 the reveal of the Period 4.3 window (E7.14) was extended to make a door jamb (E1.9) at some date before Period 5.1. In Room 1 window E11.5 was replaced below transom level with a full-width pegged oak frame, chamfered externally and rebated internally for double doors. There was evidence for hinge-pin sockets in the window frame and a

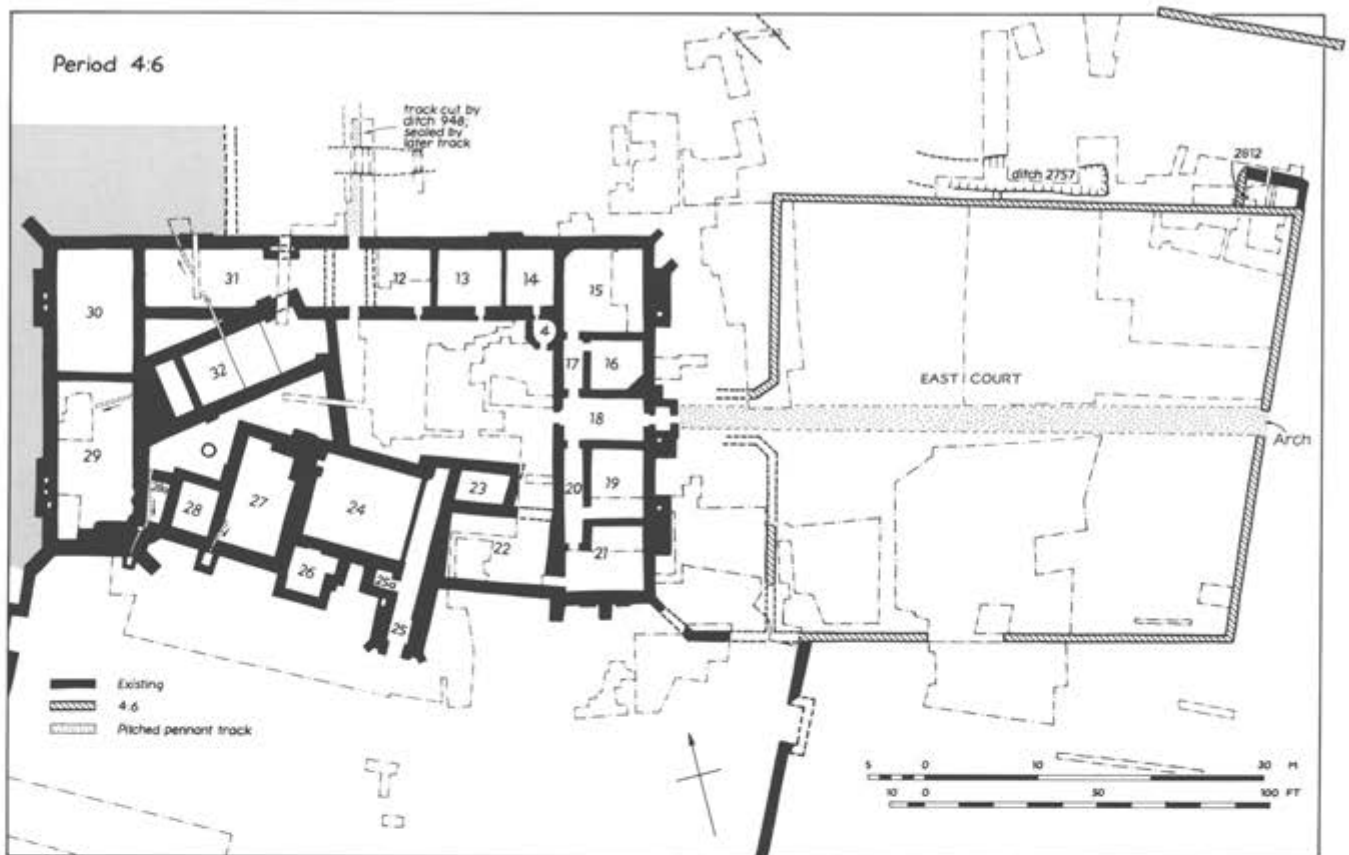


Figure 4.51 Plan: the house in Period 4:6, scale 1:500.

central iron bolt loop. This alteration also antedates Period 5.1 but is of uncertain purpose.

The Period 4.1 south window in Room 11 (E2.4) was modified before it was blocked in Period 5.1. The stepped sill was replaced by a simple full-width coped sill, indicating the removal of the central oriel. New reveals were created internally, reducing the width to *c* 4.5 m, and the tracery reset in a mid-wall position. The redundant oriel mouldings were built into the reveals, and do not occur in the Period 5.1 blocking. The date of this work is uncertain; it probably belongs to Period 4.5 or 4.6.

**Period 4.5–4.6:  
excavated evidence**

**Room 30**

Within the room, a layer of dark grey-brown silty loam (136; Fig 3.20, Section 17) had subsided into the former Period 3 garde-robe, Room H. It contained an immense number of finds, consisting mainly of domestic items which had accumulated beneath a wooden floor while Room 30 was actually in use. Apart from the area of subsi-

dence, the layer did not exist anywhere else in the room.

**Room 32**

The layout of the room at ground-floor level was rearranged. The Period 3 drain (1688), which had remained in use, was abandoned, and the vertical drain (1644) connected to it within the north range silted up. Two partitions, overlying the Period 4.2 floor, were inserted, thereby creating three smaller rooms (Rooms 32a–c). Partition 1720 consisted of a single course of Pennant, rendered on its eastern face; partition 1744 survived only as a linear cut. The former may have been built of stone, or it may simply have had stone footings (Fig 4.14, Section 35).

In Room 32a, the existing floor was retained, but a rectangular sump (1701) was constructed. It measured 0.75 m by 0.4 m, and was 0.25 m deep, with a sandstone slab base and sides formed of vertical slabs. Its top was flush with the floor.

In Room 32b, the floor level was raised by 0.15 m. The earlier floor was sealed by a spread of yellow clay (1723), overlain by varied lenses of multi-coloured clay. Above these was a pink mortar bedding layer

(1707), on which the new floor (1706/15) rested. Only a few of the sandstone slabs, including a row of three square slabs, each 0.30 m<sup>2</sup>, were still *in situ*. On the north side of Room 32b, and contemporary with the higher floor, a pitched Pennant surface (1716) was laid. It appeared to be aligned on the north range. In the eastern room (Room 32c) there were no signs of any changes to the floor, which had, in any case, been entirely robbed.

### Period 4.6

Room 32 was modified internally and both the external north-east stair tower (Room 33) and the east wall of the north court were demolished. A dovecote was erected in the centre of the court. At the same time the ancillary ranges to the east and south-east of the main house (Rooms 34–7) were almost entirely demolished and the east court was laid out. These events occurred in Period 4.6a. Shortly afterwards, in Period 4.6b, two ditches were dug immediately north of the house and the new court (Fig 4.51).

#### Period 4.6a

Contemporary with the demolition of Room 33 and the Period 4.3–4.5 walls to the east and north of it, was a series of layers spread on top of the fill of the former east arm of the moat. The top of the moat fill was overlain by dark brown silty clay with plaster (3022), which also sealed the north–south wall 3055. Above 3022, two successive layers of grey clay (3051) and charcoal (3021) partially sealed the east wall of Room 33 and the paving slabs adjacent to wall 3055. The same deposit also overlay the west–east wall 2056, and was dumped within Room 33, above the internal floor surface. Finally, a layer of yellow clay and rubble, with lumps of plaster rendering (3020/3042) overlay both the charcoal and the west wall of Room 33 (Fig 4.49, Section 42).

In Area 8, immediately north of the cross-passage through the north range, the top fill of the former north arm of the moat was partially overlain by a layer of grey-brown loam (923) which acted as bedding for a pitched Pennant path (913). This sloped away gently from the north range for a distance of 2 m (Fig 3.7, Section 5). To the north and east of it was a rough surface of Pennant rubble, set in orange-brown clay. Although the path undoubtedly continued to the north, there were no further signs of any pitched surface at this level; nor could it

be a subsided portion of the pitched track above it (906), since they were unconnected stratigraphically.

Associated with 913 was a stone-capped drain (1765), which emerged from the north range on the central axis of the cross-passage before turning sharply to the west and flowing alongside the north wall. Most of it had been destroyed by a Period 5.1 drain (910), but it survived rather better to the west of the path. The pitched path was sealed by a layer of dark grey clay with numerous charcoal flecks, lumps of cinder and oyster shells (912/938). This had a maximum thickness of 0.25 m, and overlay the rubble to the north and east of the track across the whole of the former moat. It was identical to the grey clay and charcoal layers near the north-east corner of the house, and may have formed a secondary track surface.

#### The east court

The subsidiary ranges were almost entirely demolished, and the east wall of the north court was pulled down and partially robbed. The east court was then laid out. This was subrectangular in shape, because its east wall was parallel to the road, whereas its other walls were aligned on the house. The court was 38 m wide (124 ft 6 in), north to south, but its length increased from 40 m along the south side to 45 m (131–147 ft 6 in) on the north side. A reused archway was set in the east wall and was linked to the cross-passage in the east range of the house by a pitched Pennant track, 2.25 m wide.

The south wall is largely original and was built over the demolished walls of Room 34. In its primary form, it contained a wide opening, beneath which the bottom courses of the wall continued. The east wall has been entirely rebuilt above ground level, though retaining its original alignment. The offset footings of the primary wall were found, north of the arch, overlying the south wall of Room 36. Near the south-east corner of the court the original wall survived to a depth of 1 m where it cut through the fill of the outer moat. Most of the western half of the north wall is also primary and, like the other Period 4.6a walls, is bonded in yellow loam. The eastern part was rebuilt in Period 5.1. The primary north wall was set in a construction trench. Further east, the wall trench was cut through the highest cobbled surface within Room 36. The area immediately to the south was levelled up with reddish-orange clay and large rubble (783; Fig 4.49, Section 41). The west wall of the



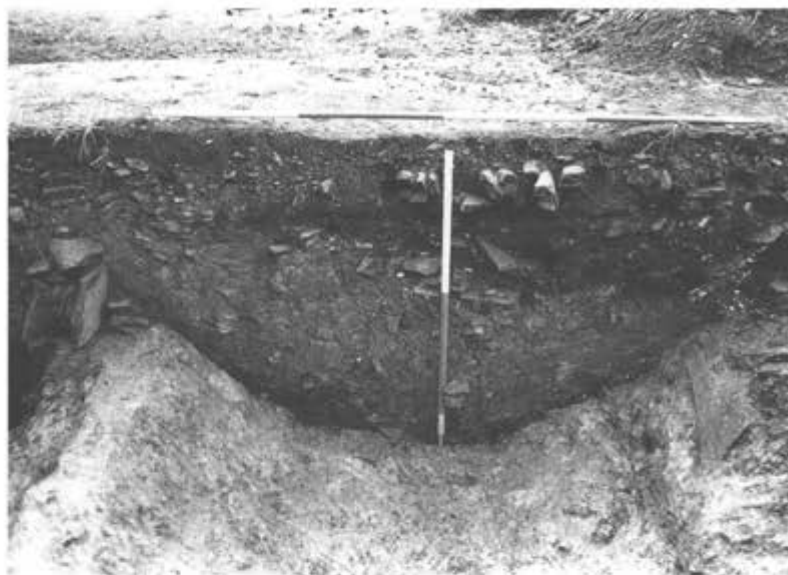


Figure 4.52 Ditch, cut into the fill of the north arm of the moat; from the south (photograph: Robert Bell).

court had been entirely demolished, but its footings were located. It was constructed in two separate parts, running parallel to, and *c.* 8.5 m east of the house. Both parts converged on the central track, turning to the west at an angle of 45 degrees on either side of the central porch, and utilising the foundations of the existing Period 4.3 walls. They appeared to have been positioned intentionally so as to screen off the area above the infilled east arm of the moat.

The only part of the Period 4.2 ancillary complex to be retained was the north-east corner of Room 36. This was converted into an outbuilding by erecting a wall (2812), bonded to both the northern boundary wall of the court and the north wall of Room 36. The newly formed structure was *c.* 5 m long and varied in width from 2.3 m at its west end to 1.8 m at its east end. Probably contemporary with it was a stone drain, which ran through the building from south to north.

#### Period 4.6b

Above the former north arm of the moat, the clay and cinder track surface (938) was cut by a ditch (948), 5.5 m north of the north range, which blocked the access to the cross-passage (Fig 3.7, Section 5). It was 3 m wide, 0.9 m deep, and was flat-bottomed (Fig 4.52). The full extent of the ditch is unknown but it continued at least 5.5 m to the east of the track. The ditch was filled with brown sandy loam (949), orange stony clay (941), and dark brown ashy loam (947). This material probably derived from a slight bank along its inner edge. Layer

947, in particular, contained numerous clay tobacco pipe fragments.

A second ditch (2757) ran along the outside of the north wall of the east court. It was cut into the underlying bedrock, and terminated in a square butt end, 17 m from the north-east corner of the court. It was similar in profile to ditch 948, though it was only *c.* 0.65 m deep, and in places was only 2.4 m wide. The ditch cut through a piece of coursed walling which butted against the outer face of the boundary wall, thereby demonstrating that the east court was already in existence when it was dug. It was filled with brown silty clay with Pennant rubble and small lumps of limestone, overlain by large Pennant slabs, including a roofing slate, set in a pinkish-red silt.

The two ditches were contemporary although it is not known if they were physically linked. Ditch 2757 curved towards the north-west and was recorded immediately south of the point where it cut through the demolished east wall of the north court. It continued at least 50 m into the field north of the house, running parallel to and immediately west of the former boundary wall (Fig 3.39). Although this part of the ditch was not excavated, it appeared indistinctly on the geophysical survey, and was clearly visible in the dry summer of 1989 as a green linear feature. The west wall of the north court was retained, though it was possibly reduced in height. A stone wall, forming a field boundary, was built between the north-west corner of the former north court and Latteridge Road. It was located in Trenches D, H1 and H2, and featured on the geophysical survey plan. The wall is marked on a map, undated but probably late 18th- or early 19th-century, but had been removed by 1840.

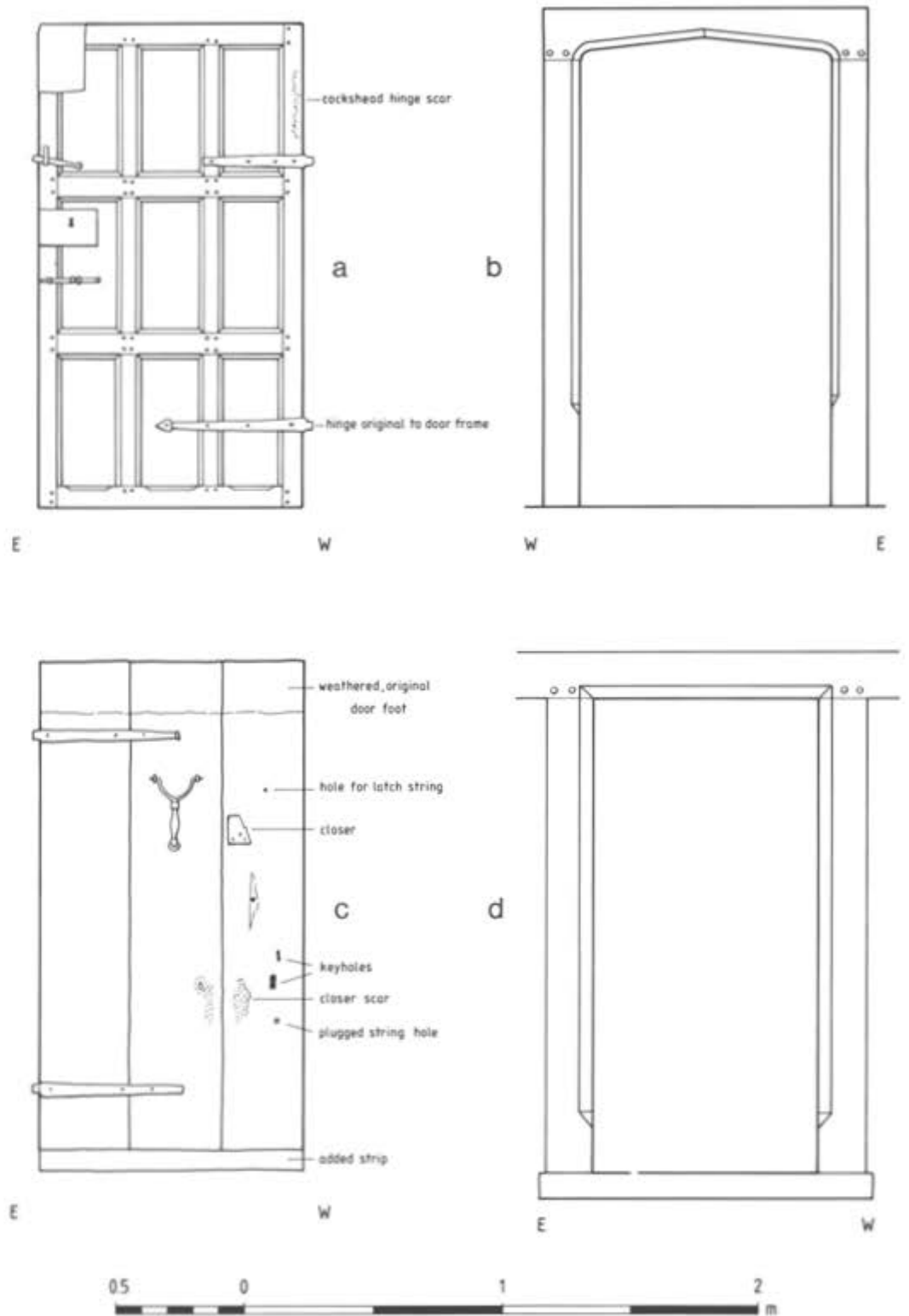
A dovecote was erected precisely in the centre of the north court, possibly utilising the footings of an earlier garden feature. It is not clear if its construction antedated the demolition of the boundary walls. It comprises parallel north and south walls which survive to a height of 2 m and are of well-laid Pennant in yellow loam. The walls are 0.9 m thick and incorporate up to six surviving tiers of pigeon holes in offset courses, with projecting ledges at floor level and between the fourth and fifth tiers. The interior measured 5.8 m by upwards of 7 m but was extensively refaced when the building was extended westwards to make an open-ended shed. These alterations were carried out in pink mortar of Period 5.2 type. The east wall does not survive above ground level.

**Period 4.6c**

A second pitched Pennant track (906/928) was laid above the cinder path on the north side of the north range, sealing the back-filled Period 4.6b ditch (948; Fig 3.7, Sec-

tion 5). It was 1.3 m wide, and extended at least 9 m northwards from the cross-passage. On its west side was a wall, set in yellow loam with white lime inclusions, which overlaid a stone drain (910).

Figure 5.1 Doors:  
*a* Panelled door, Period 4.1-4.2, reused on;  
*b* Frame with four-centred head, north end of passage 17, Period 4.3;  
*c* Boarded door, Period 4, reused upside-down in north wall of Room 15, Period 5.1;  
*d* Frame to door *c*.



## 5

## The interior of the Tudor house

A considerable amount of evidence survives for the fixtures, fittings and decoration of the Period 4 house, due in large measure to the relative decline in the fortunes of the building. Some of this material is in position, some is reused and some derived from excavation. It is considered below both typologically and as overall room schemes, and the information is summarised in Table 4 (p181).

#### Doors and door frames

The house has twenty-two door frames (fifteen wood and seven stone) in their original Period 4 positions, but only four of these retain their original doors. There are a further eight reused doors and nine reused frames.

#### Wooden frames

Wooden frames can be divided into several types but all are of oak and constructed in the same way, with the jambs tenoned and pegged into the sill and the lintel; this projects at either end to tie the frame into the wall. There are five examples of completely plain frames which are only roughly finished, including the garderobe door in Room 10 (E7.8: Period 4.1), the east door to the long gallery (E9.20: Period 4.2), the door between Rooms 21 and 22 (E3.12: Period 4.3), and both the first-floor doors to the stair tower (E3.18, E10.16: Period 4.5). These all occur in positions where there is evidence to indicate that the rooms were panelled, so that the frames would have been hidden.

More elaborate are chamfered frames with straight-cut stops and lintels jointed with a mason's mitre. Examples include two original doors in Room 6 (E7.6, E11.3: Period 4.1), the passage door to Room 21 (E9.10: Period 4.3), the attic door to the stairs (E3.19: Period 4.5), and three reused frames (Fig 5.1d). The door in the west wall of Room 11 (E9.8: Period 4.1) may have been plain or chamfered; only the sill is left.

Similar but with a four-centred head is the passage door to Room 15 (E10.7; Fig

5.1b: Period 4.3). The two doors in the east range roof (E10.17: Period 4.5) also have four-centred heads. These are cut out of a board, rebated into the jambs and nailed into position.

Double hollow-chamfered mouldings are used on the four identical door surrounds which form an integral part of the Period 4.1 partitions between Rooms 6, 10 and 11 (E14.1, 14.2: E10.1, 10.2; Fig 5.6). The mouldings are mitred on the lintel and have step stops.

#### Stone frames

There are nine stone-framed doors, which form two distinct groups. The first is associated with the Period 4.3 passage R18 and consists of five openings; to the inner court (E9.14), the passages 17 and 20 (E13.6; Fig 5.2b), the east porch (E7.11) and the east court (E4.6, reset; Fig 5.2a). These were all open archways, except for E7.11, which retains part of its original door (Fig 5.3). They have four-centred heads and semi-octagonal stops. The moulding used on the external doors is a complex ogee. The north and south doors are simpler, combining *cyma recta* and sunk chamfer, but are crowned by floating classical cornices. A smaller cornice moulding is used in the east porch, at the springing line of the ribbed four-centred vault.

The second group consists of the three Period 4.4 doors in the courtyard elevation of the north range (E4.11, reset; 4.12, 4.13), one of which (E4.12; Fig 5.4) retains its original door. These have classical returned architrave mouldings, finished on the inner edge with a sunk chamfer, and have a bolder floating cornice.

The small door from the stair tower to Room 14 (E10.15) has a plain sunk chamfered moulding and retains its original door.

#### Doors

The twelve surviving doors can be divided into two main types, boarded and panelled. There are five boarded doors including three in their original positions. The boards



Figure 5.2 Stone doorways, cross-passage 18, Period 4.3:  
*a* External arch to east porch, reused on Period 5.3 porch to Room 15  
*b* Arch to passages 17 and 20 (pair)  
*c* Jamb moulding of *a*  
*d* Cornice moulding to *b*  
*e* Jamb moulding to *b*  
*c-e*: upper scale).

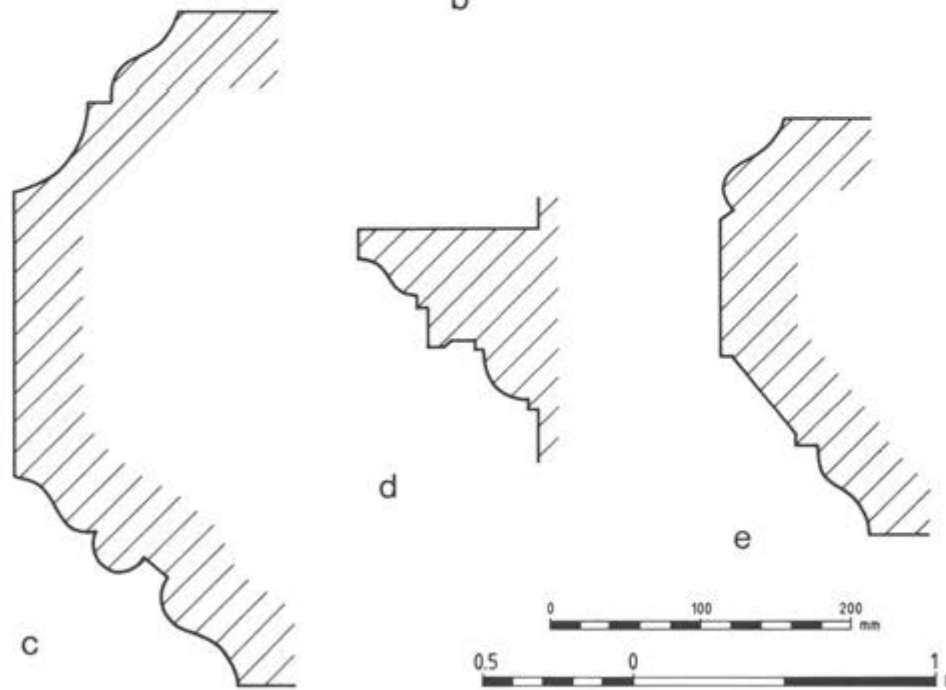
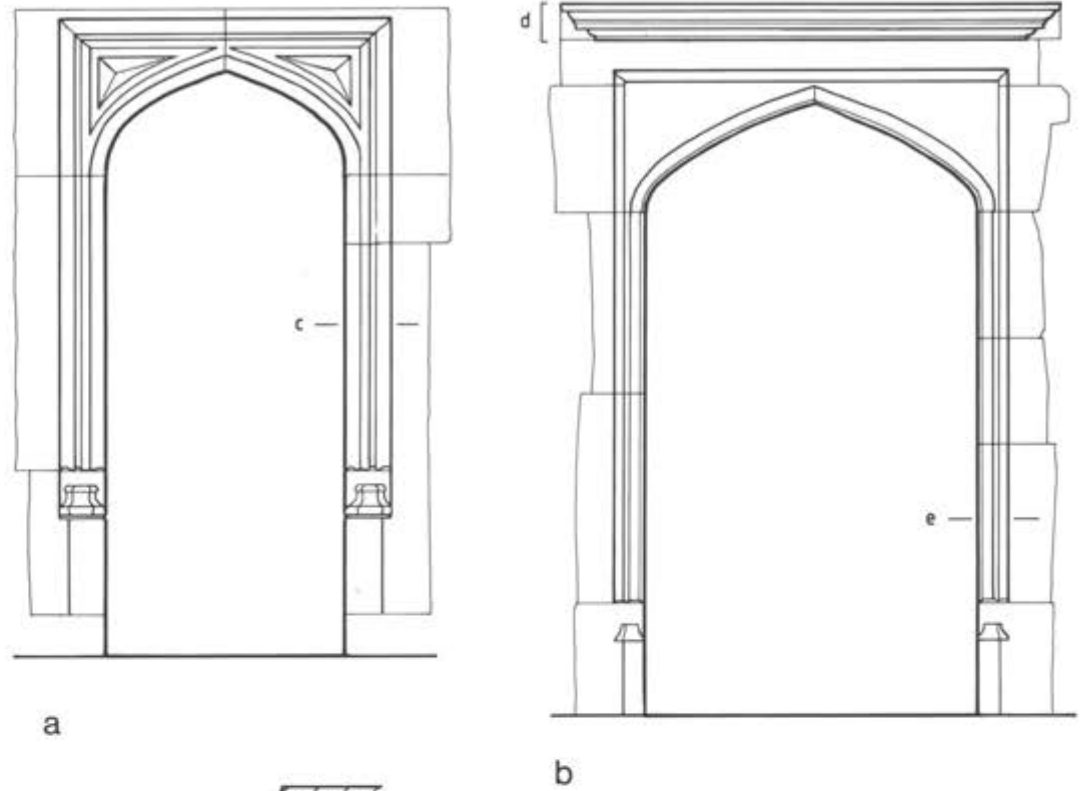
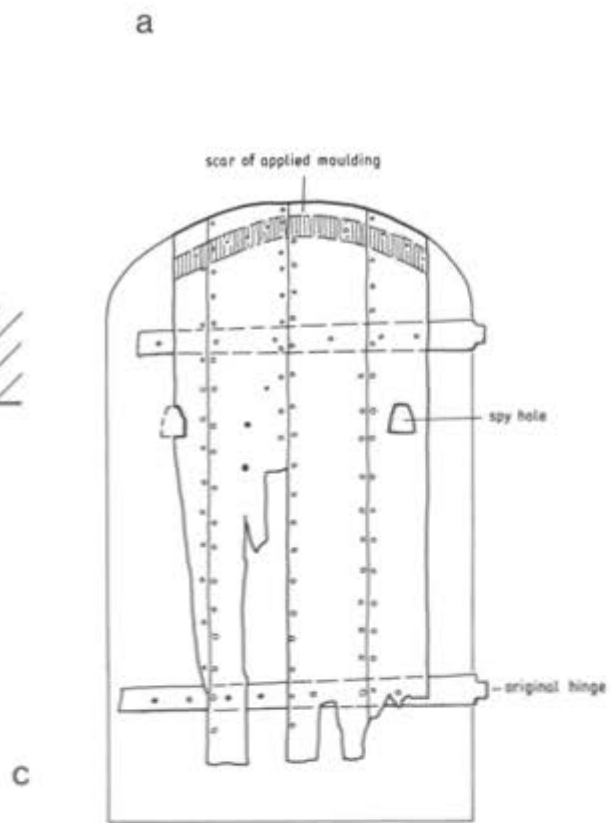
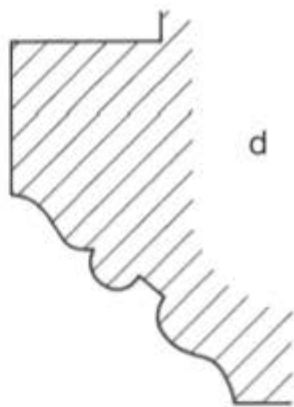
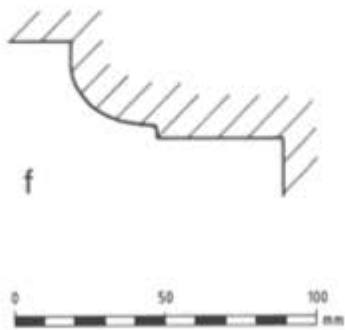
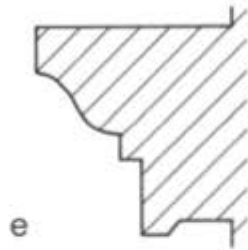
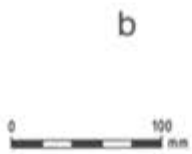
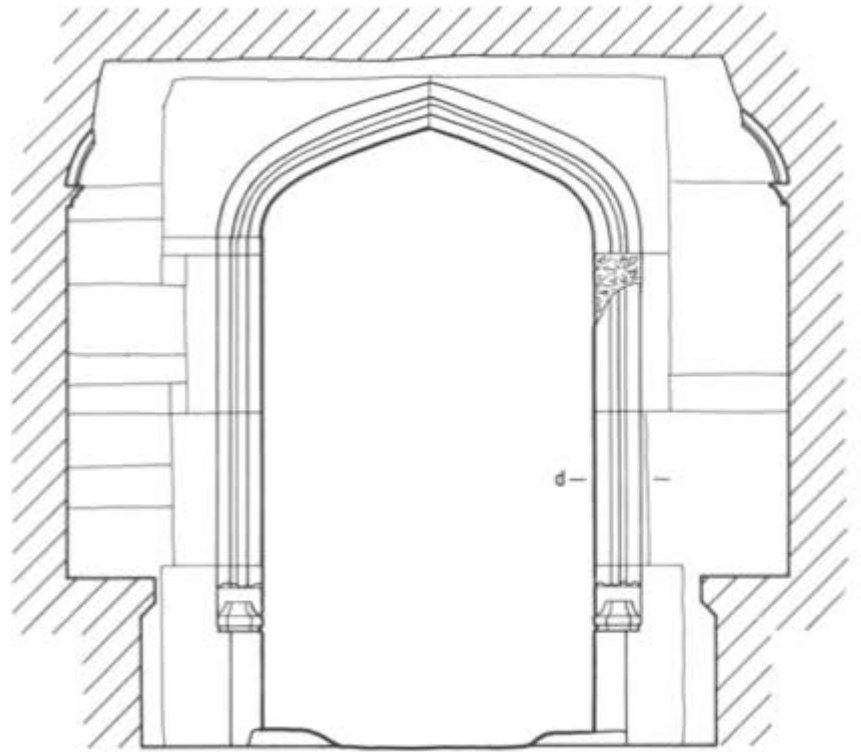
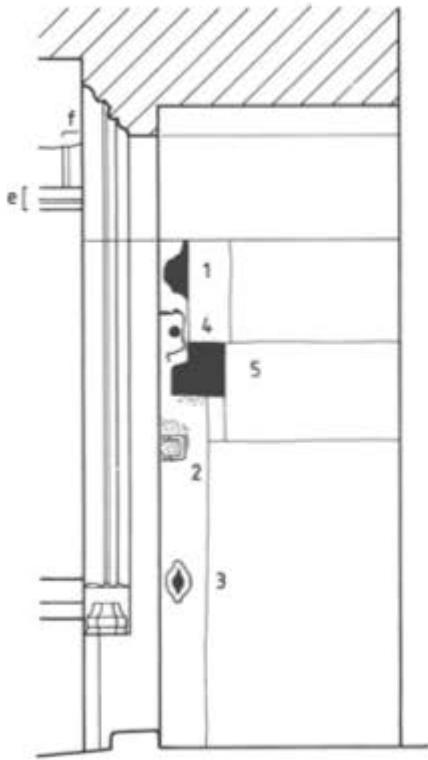
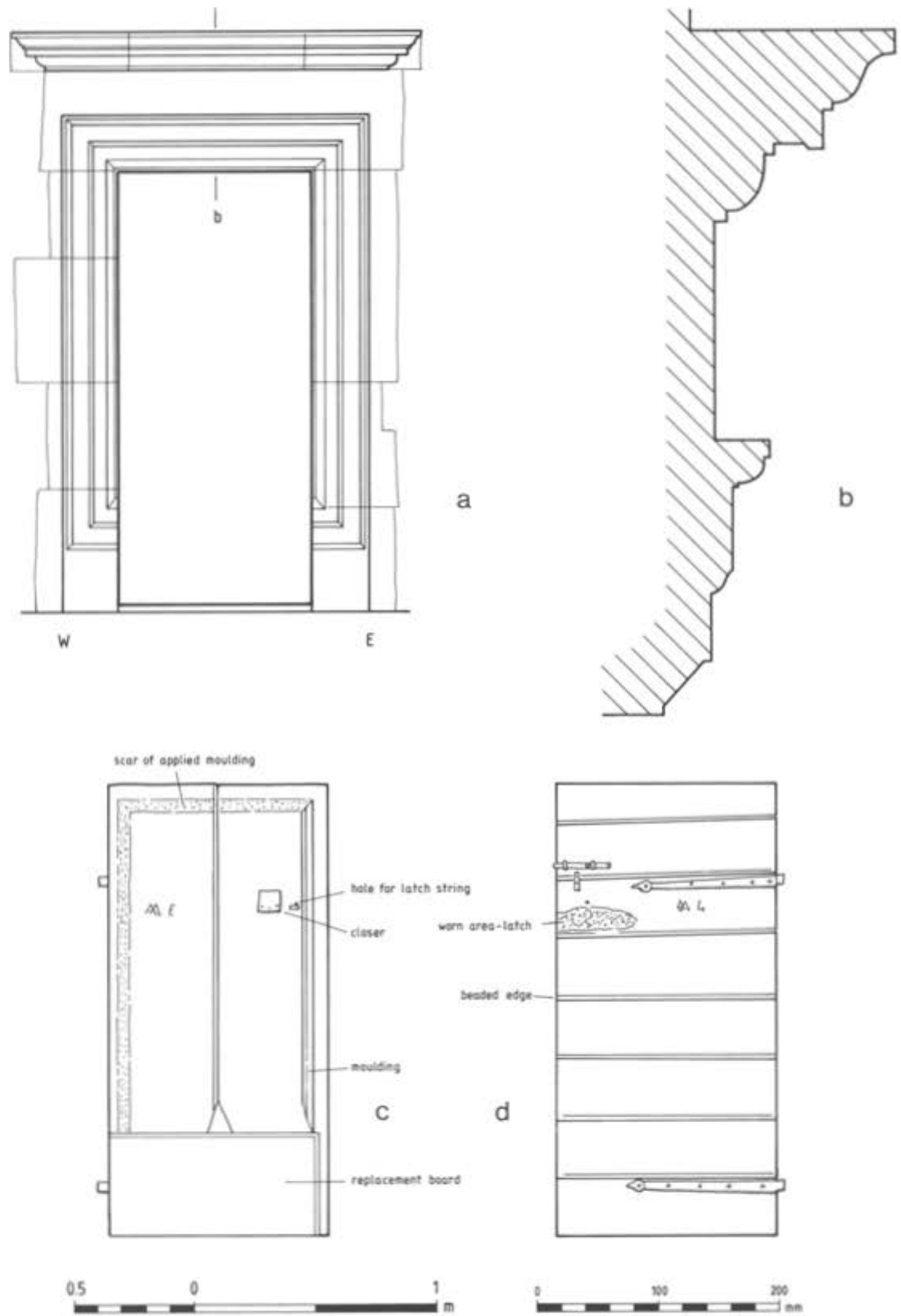


Figure 5.3 (facing page) East door to cross-passage 18, Period 4.3: *a* Stone surround and cross-section of vaulted porch; *b* South jamb showing traces of fastenings, Primary: 1 Bolt-hole socket, 2 Iron lock staple, 3 Bolt-hole with iron rim, 80 mm deep; Secondary: 4 Bolt-hole and iron catch, 5 Drato-bar socket, 170 mm deep; *c* Door, showing survival of original boards and hinges; *d* Door jamb moulding; *e* Porch, cornice moulding; *f* Vault, rib moulding; (*d*: upper scale; *e* and *f*: lower scale, left).



ACTON COURT

Figure 5.4 Door: south wall of North range, Period 4.4; a Stone frame, restored detail based on door to Room 13  
 b Cornice and frame moulding  
 c Oak door, Room 13, Period 4.4, exterior  
 d Interior  
 (b: scale at lower right).



of door E4.12 (Fig 5.4c,d) have beaded edges; the door retains one side of an applied moulding which fitted within the stone frame. The foot of the door is repaired. A similar moulding occurs on door E10.15, which retains its original foot board. The rear of this door is battened rather than close-boarded.

Door E7.11, an outer door to the service court, has been replaced piecemeal so that only its massive iron strap hinges and parts of four external boards survive (Fig 5.3c). They were secured at the edges with paired nails, which may have been ornamental, and there is the scar of an applied moulding which follows the curve of the door head. There are two wedge-shaped cut-outs, probably spy-holes, of uncertain age. The two reused doors did not have applied mouldings; E11.17 is boarded on the back and has been reused upside-down (Fig 5.1c); E9.25 is battened.

One of the panelled doors (E9.20: Period 4.2) appears to be in its original position, although it has been extensively repaired. It comprises four panels from a type better represented by two doors reused in Period 5.3 partitions. These have six panels with a plain chamfer worked on all four edges. One retains its original cockshead hinges, and the other, which has been rehung on the opposite edge, has both hinge and latch scars (Fig 5.5g). All three retain traces of early paint. A larger example of the same type, with nine panels, has been remounted on the original strap hinges of door E10.7 (Fig 5.1a).

A pair of more elaborate eight-panelled doors was reused in Room 8 (Fig 5.5a). Different mouldings are employed on rails, muntin and stiles, and the illustrated example has its original cockshead hinges and latch, although these have been remounted on the opposite edges. This door has a panelling frame which includes an over-door panel and cornice.

#### Hinges, latches and locks

The surviving evidence indicates that boarded and battened doors were mounted on long iron strap hinges, usually with leaf-shaped terminals, which were fixed to the back of the door. These hung on iron hinge-pins set in the rear of the door frame. All the panelled doors have evidence for cockshead hinges, which were fixed direct to the surrounding frame or panelling.

The boarded doors had moulded wooden closers on one face and a latch

worked by a string on the other. Some doors have evidence for more than one set, but E4.12 (Fig 5.4c), which has not been moved and has no other means of closure makes it clear that these can be original. The panelled doors had latches which could be opened from both sides; one survives (Fig 5.5a) and the positions of others are indicated by scars.

The evidence for locks is ambiguous; doors like E4.12 appear to have had none, for there is no external keyhole or internal indications of a lock box; likewise some of the panelled doors. However, the external door E7.11 has an iron staple set in the reveal to retain the lock bar, together with a pair of iron-mounted bolt-holes (Fig 5.3b). The staple detail occurs on other stone frames, including E4.12, and some wooden frames have been rebated for a lock (eg E14.2; Fig 5.6a). The locks themselves were set within a wooden box mounted on the door with iron straps. One example (Fig 5.5h) survives attached to a Period 5.2 door; it has a moulded casing with an applied iron fleur-de-lis. There are also a number of plain oak boxes, attached by corner bolts, two of which may belong to Period 4, but which are mainly new in Period 5.1.

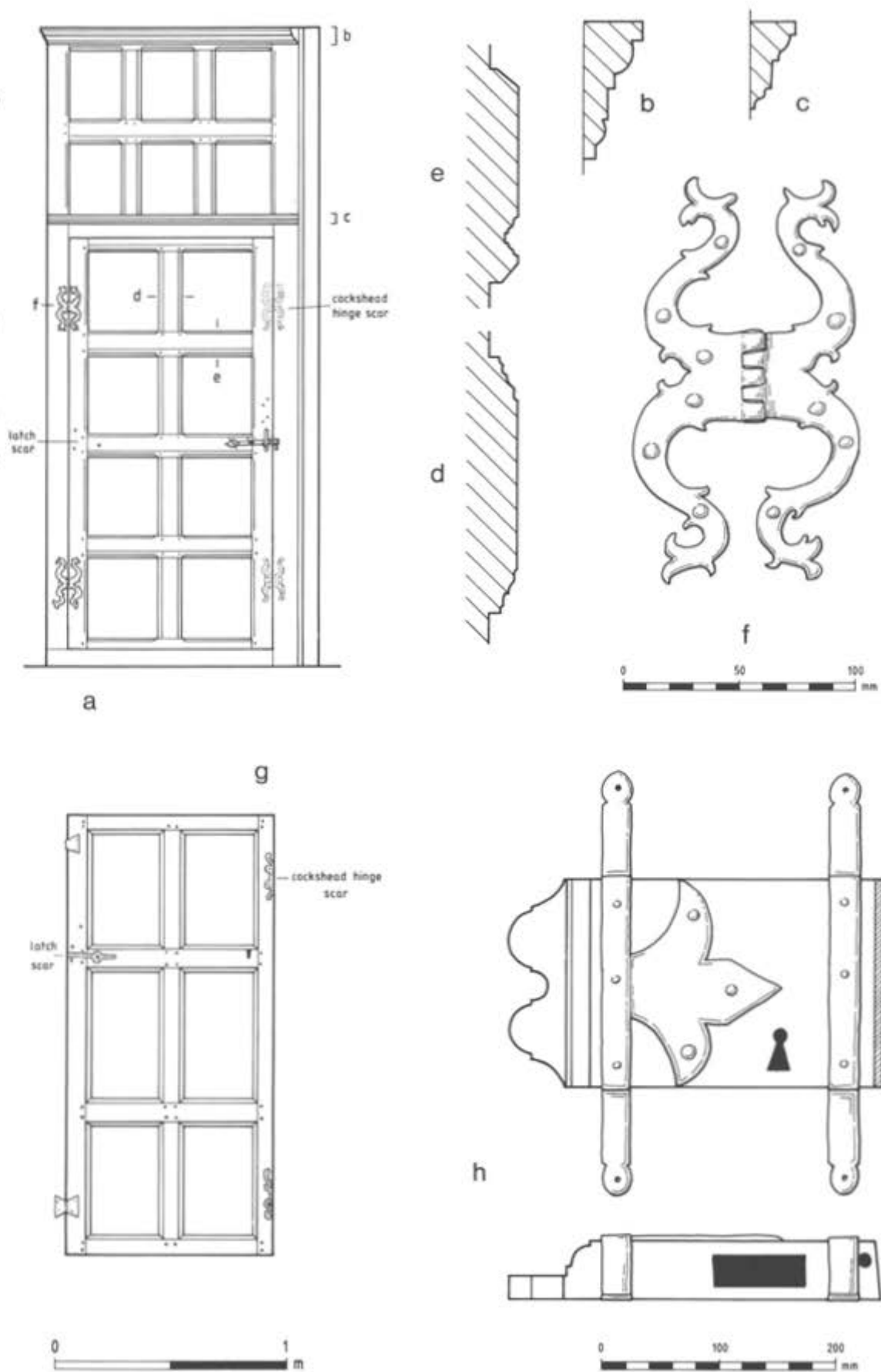
#### Panelling

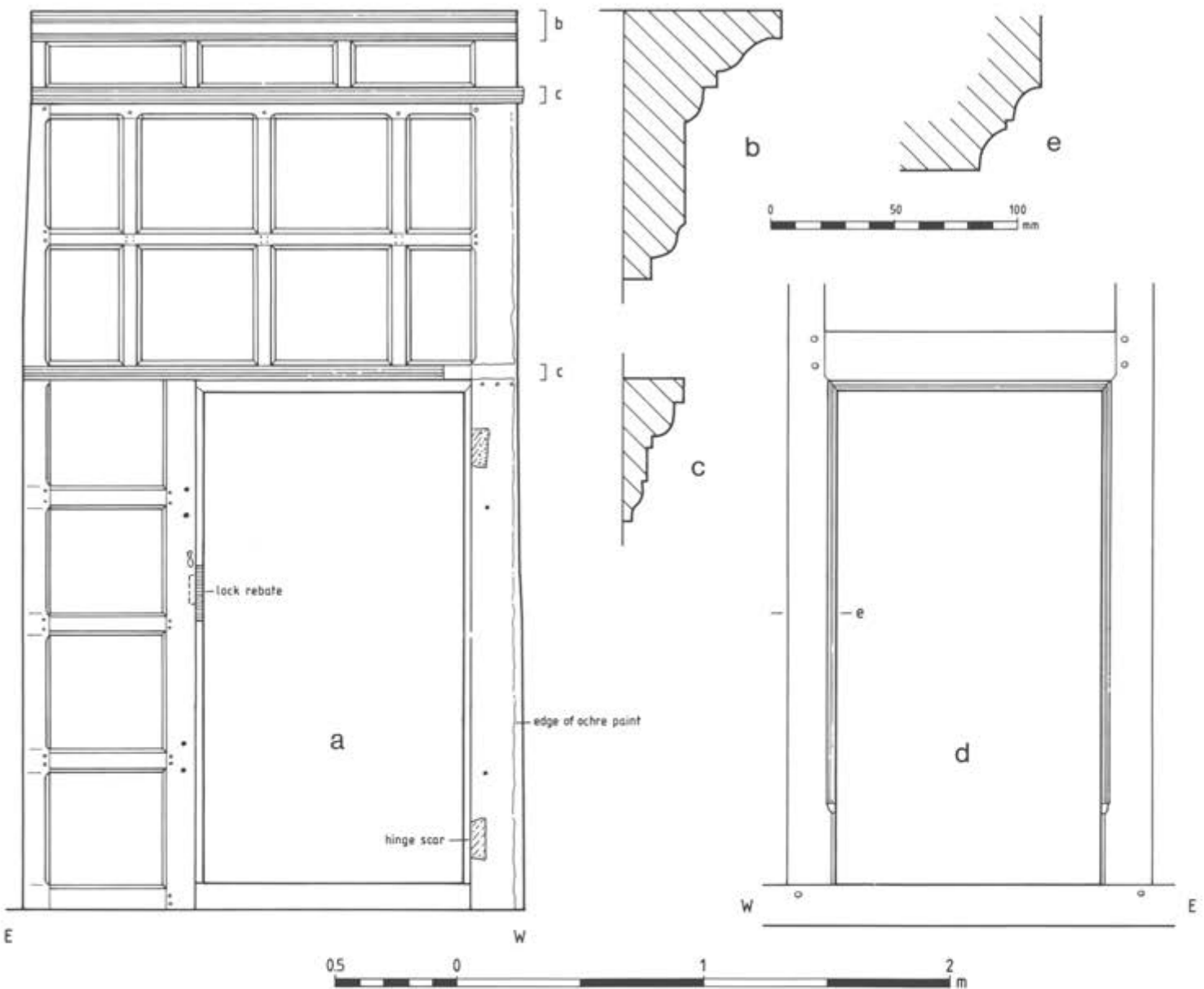
Structural evidence indicates that panelling formed a major component of the internal fitting-out of the house. However, only a small quantity remains, and much of this has been reset. Four main types are represented.

- 1 A single section of linenfold panelling was used to block the Period 4.1 window E9.3. It probably derived from the Period 3 house and is described in Chapter 8 (Fig 8.28).
- 2 In Room 10 there is a panelled surround to the doorway E13.2, which is moulded on the reverse (Fig 5.6a). The panelling is inset from the frame to form a closing rebate for the door, whose position is indicated by hinge and lock scars. Applied mouldings divide the panelling into three zones, a narrow frieze below a cornice, an eight-panelled section above the door head, and four single panels alongside the door. The panels have plain chamfered mouldings, run-out on the stiles. There are no mortices for the



Figure 5.5 Doors and fittings:  
*a* Panelled door and surround, Period 4.3–4.6, reused Room 8  
*b* Cornice moulding  
*c* Frieze moulding  
*d* Muntin moulding  
*e* Rail moulding  
*f* Cockshead hinge, originally set on opposite side of door  
*g* Panelled door, Period 4.1–4.2, reused in Period 5.2 partition Room 1  
*h* Lock box with iron fittings, probably Period 4.3, reused on Period 5.2 door to Room 21  
 (b–f: upper scale; h: lower right scale).





attachment of the next section of panelling, which must have been butted against the east stile. The panel bears considerable traces of a yellow ochre paint, applied to the whole surface and absent where areas of applied moulding have been lost. It occupies its original position and is in register with the painted frieze above. Both form part of the Period 4.1 decorative scheme for this room (see below).

5.19a) and in reused contexts elsewhere. Full-height sections consist of five panels of diminishing size, separated from a narrow frieze by an applied moulding; the cornice is missing. The panels have ogee mouldings on three sides and a splayed lower edge. Sections are separated by applied stiles with a similar rebated moulding. The exact height of the panels and the moulding of the frieze differ slightly between the two main areas.

Figure 5.6 Doors, Period 4.1:  
 a Panelled door surround, south wall, Room 10  
 b Cornice moulding  
 c Frieze moulding  
 d Timber-framed door (reverse of a), north wall, Room 11  
 e Door-jamb moulding (b, c and e: upper scale).

- 3 The commonest type of panelling occurs on the east wall of Rooms 6 and 10 (E7.15, 16; Fig 7.4 and Fig

The panel adjoining the fireplace in Room 10 was erected before Period 5.1, when a

Figure 5.7 (facing page)

*Fireplaces:*

- a* Period 4.1, Room 6  
(the fireplace in Room 10 is almost identical)  
*b* Plan showing raised kerb and secondary fireback  
*c* Moulding profile  
*d* Period 4.2 fireplace, Room 13, damaged by Period 5.3 fireplace and Period 5.1 door  
*e* Plan  
*f* Period 4.3 fireplace, Room 22  
*g* Moulding profile  
(*c* and *g*: upper scale).

partition marking the limit of the inhabited house (Chapter 7) was built against it, sealing a mitred joint for the framing round the fireplace. In Room 6 the fireplace is treated in the same manner but here the panelling was reset in Period 5.1. Structural evidence does not provide a closer date for its introduction, although the most probable context is the Period 4.3 alterations.

- 3a A variant of this type occurs in small sections reused in Period 5.3 partitions to Rooms 8 and 9. The panels have the same moulding but are not as tall and have been derived from a room with a lower ceiling. A double-sided section, cut down from a door, was rehung in the stair tower at the foot of the upper flight.
- 4 This type of panelling is represented only by the two doors, with their surrounds, reused in Room 8 (Fig 5.5a–f). They come from a room with a much lower ceiling and there appears to be no suitable context in the standing house. Stylistically they appear later in date than the other panelling.

### Fireplaces

There are six surviving Period 4 fireplaces; two belong to each of Phases 1–3. The Period 4.1 fireplaces (E7.5, E7.7; Figs 5.7a–c, 152) are Perpendicular in style, having four-centred arches set within a rectangular frame and semi-octagonal stops. Both are alike apart from the spandrel detail, which is plain on E7.7. The fireplace in Room 6 has retained its raised kerb to the hearth, which has been lost from the other examples. Both were designed to be surrounded by panelling, and the original finish of E7.5 appears to have been an off-white stone-coloured paint.

Four-centred arches and semi-octagonal stops also occur on three of the other fireplaces. Two are very simple, with a plain chamfered surround (E11.7, Period 4.2; Fig 5.7d: E3.9, Period 4.3). More elaborate is the Period 4.3 fireplace (E3.11; Fig 5.7f) in Room 22, which has the same moulding as the passage doors in Room 18, confirming that these alterations are contemporary.

The long gallery fireplace (E11.8; Figs 4.18, 5.8) differs from the rest in being wholly classical in style. Above an ovolo-moulded surround is an entablature sup-

ported on console brackets carved in low relief with strapwork and floral ornament. The stonework was washed with a blue-grey paint also used elsewhere in the room.

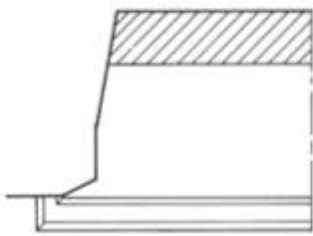
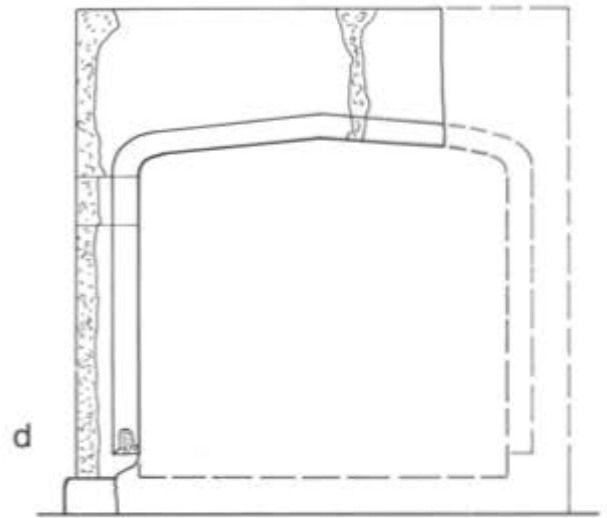
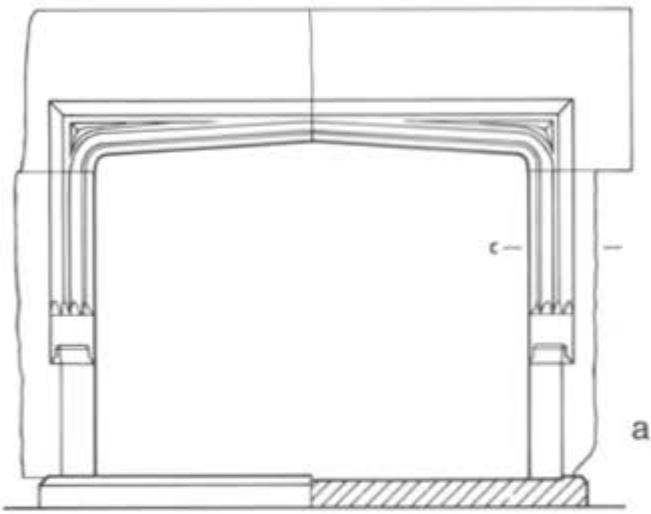
### Windows

Period 3 windows reused in the Period 4 house are discussed in Chapter 8. The 16th-century windows divide into two main groups; those of Periods 4.1 and 4.2, and those which are Period 4.3 or later. There are several Period 4.1 windows of one or two lights, including E2.1 and E2.3, E3.6, the attic light E6.1, and the only wooden window E3.3 (Fig 5.9). These all have symmetrical hollow-chamfered mouldings, which are jointed on E3.3 with a scribed mitre. The attic light was originally unglazed; the stone windows, where visible, have glazing rebates cut onto the back of the moulding, and the wooden window had glazing tacked to the exterior with nails. Only the attic light has a hood mould, which is returned with square terminals.

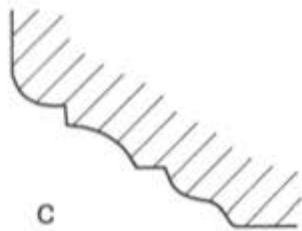
Evidence for the form of the large Period 4.1 windows is fragmentary. The most complete and also the most unusual is E2.4 in the south wall of Room 11, which includes the following elements:

- 1 External splayed reveals at an angle of 112 degrees
- 2 A sloping external sill coped in seven stages
- 3 Coped pilaster caps flanking the window head
- 4 Moulded jambs set on the inner face of the wall
- 5 Sill, transom and lintel positions
- 6 Sill, transom and jamb moulding profiles in situ (Fig 5.11e, f, i)
- 7 Moulded jamb fragments with two glazed faces at an angle of 112 degrees
- 8 Mullion fragments with a glazing rebate and channelled back.

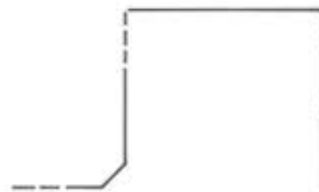
The key to a reconstruction is provided by 7 (Fig 5.11g), which indicates that the window was not flat, but incorporated an oriel within the thickness of the wall. Its exact dimensions cannot be known as the centre of the window has been rebuilt, but overall proportions sug-



b



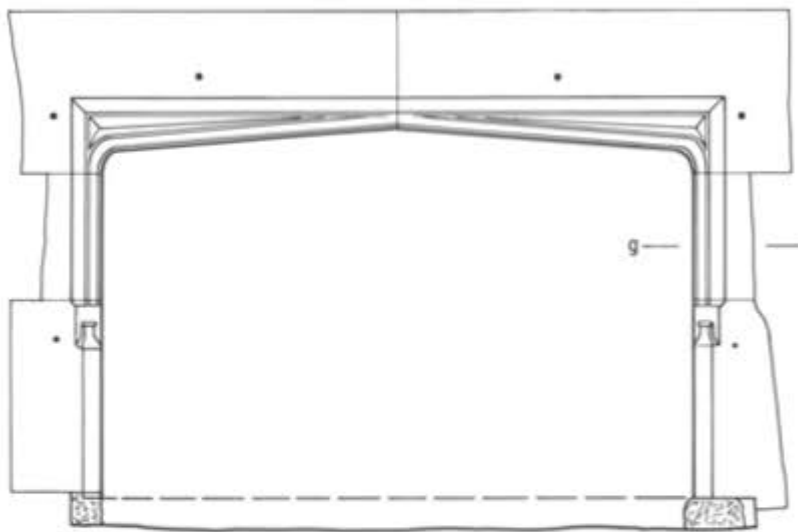
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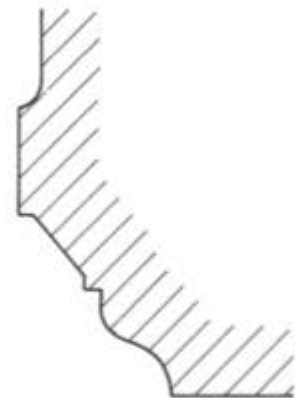
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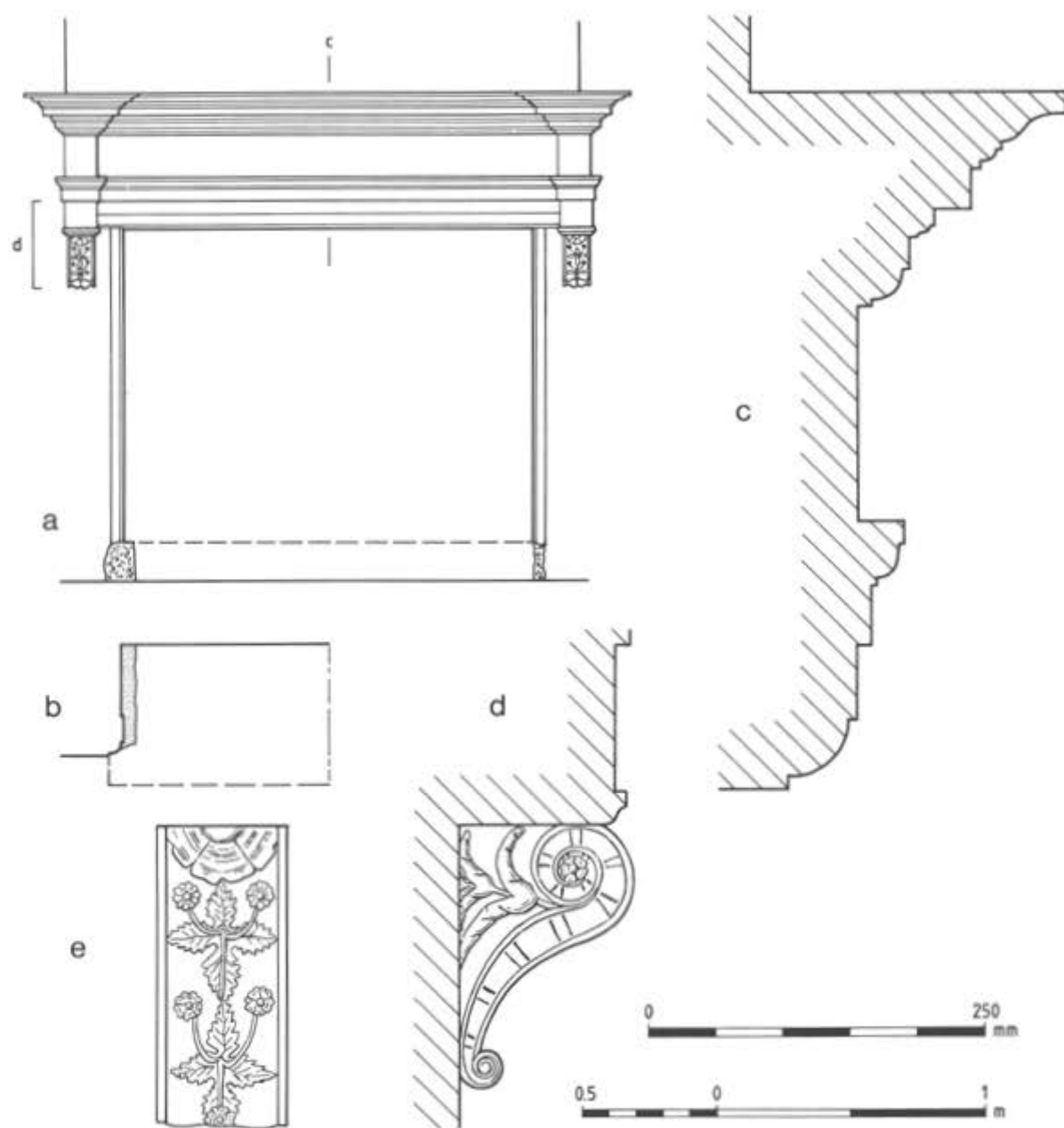


Figure 5.8 Period 4.2, Room 1;  
 a Fireplace  
 b Plan, showing survival of hearth slab  
 c Overmantel moulding profile  
 d Console bracket, side view  
 e Console bracket, expanded face view (c-e: upper scale).

gest a total of seven lights, with five  $\approx 0.76$  m wide in the plane of the wall. Contemporary practice (Chapter 6) suggests a configuration of 1:1:3:1:1 rather than 2:1:1:1:2, and this is shown in the reconstruction Fig 5.10. The height of the window and of individual lights is known; it was spanned by a wooden lintel and the oriel was probably capped in the same manner as the adjoining piers. It is possible that the stepped sill detail was repeated in reverse inside the oriel.

The only moulding not certainly associated is the mullion 8 (Fig 5.11h). However, no other type has been found in the vicinity,

and this pattern occurs in some quantity in reused contexts associated with the other large Period 4.1 windows. There is some independent evidence for transom positions in these windows, and a distance between mullions of  $\approx 0.76$  m would produce a grid of 5 by 3 lights in the north window E6.2, 3 by 3 in the east windows E7.4 and E7.9, and 4 by 2 in the west window E3.5.

A very similar moulding is used in the extant Period 4.2 windows to Room 1 (Fig 5.12). These also have lights  $\approx 0.8$  m wide; greater than their Period 4.3 and later counterparts, which are uniformly 0.45–0.5 m wide.

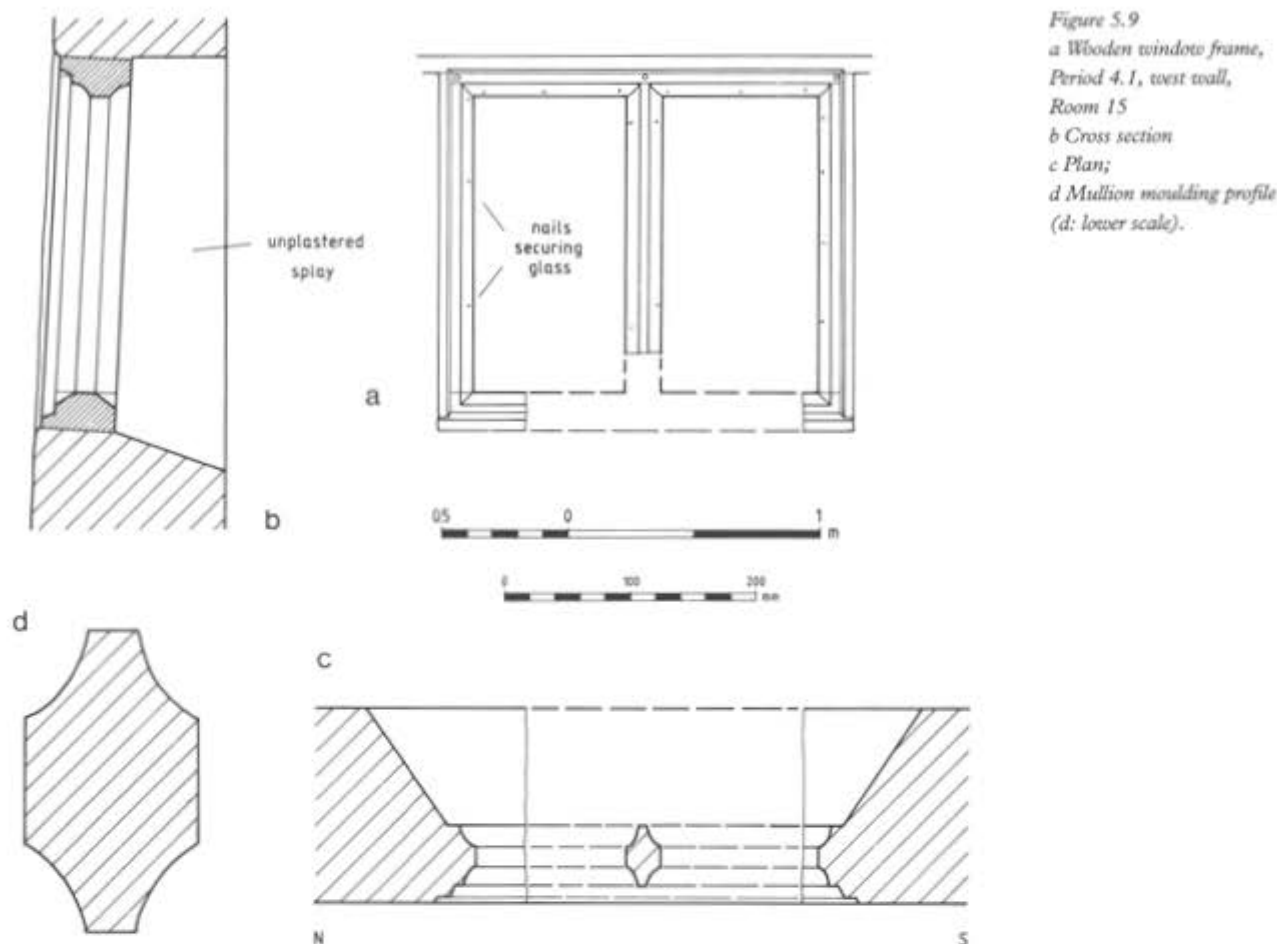


Figure 5.9  
 a Wooden window frame,  
 Period 4.1, west wall,  
 Room 15  
 b Cross section  
 c Plan;  
 d Mullion moulding profile  
 (d: lower scale).

There is no variation between the windows of Period 4.3 (E3.13–16), Period 4.4 (E4.8, E4.9), and Period 4.5 (E4.15), all of which have symmetrical sunk-chamfered mouldings with glazing grooves, and are set beneath returned hood moulds (Fig 5.13). They have one, four or eight lights of uniform size, with thickened transoms and central mullions on the largest windows. The windows reused in Period 5.1 (eg E1.20–22) are of the same type, and point to extensive refenestration of demolished parts of the house.

The only exception is the former oriel E4.14, which has a slightly more delicate sunk-chamfered moulding (Fig 5.13d). Although reset, this is probably original, as the window was not reduced until Period 5.2. The oriel is built around an oak frame, comprising a pair of posts on the inner wall face, jointed at the foot into truncated horizontal bearers. The east side has been adjusted with a wooden wedge. The frame was clad in ashlar, and a few blocks remain embedded in the wall, including the corbel moulding.

No surviving window glass is earlier than Period 5.1, although the Period 4 windows were universally designed for glazing, and many retain iron stanchions to which the leaded lights were tied. Analysis of the glass from excavated contexts (Chapter 8) makes it clear that most windows were filled with diamond-shaped quarries. Some windows contained a more complex chevron pattern, combining small near-square diamonds with parallelograms, and some must have had elaborate glazing, hinted at by a few fancy shapes and fragments of coloured glass. However it is not possible to ascribe specific types of glazing to individual windows, although Lysons (Chapter 2, Appendix A) refers to the remains of painted glass in the reused Perpendicular window E1.10. There is no evidence for Period 4 opening casements or other window furniture.

#### Floors

The upper rooms in the house had wooden floors, which survive only in Room 6. The oak boards are 0.35 m wide, butt-jointed and nailed to the joists. The void beneath

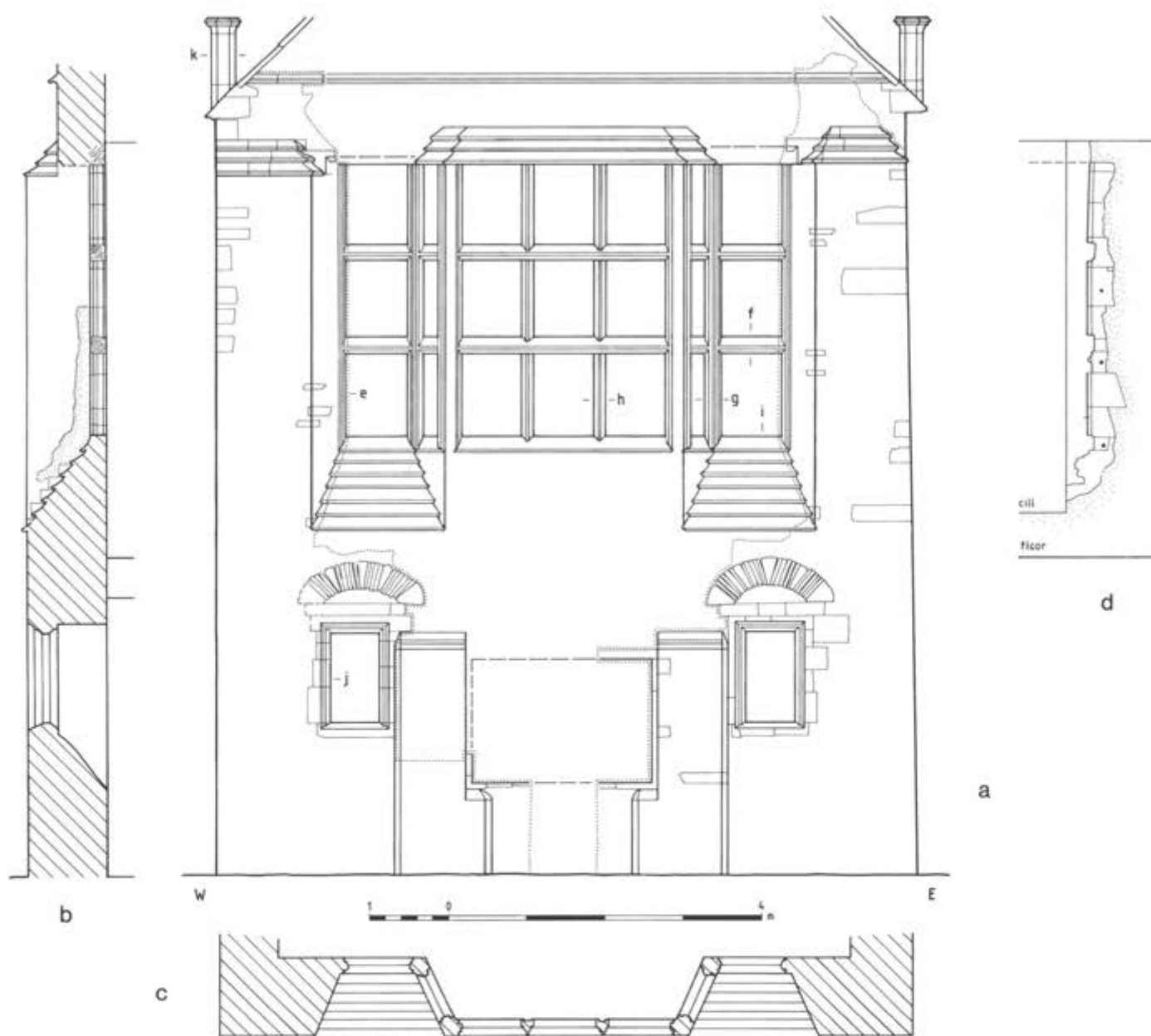


Figure 5.10 East range, south wall (E2), Period 4.1: a Reconstruction (within dotted line) of the original elevation, showing the probable form of the window to Room 11; b Cross section, showing the evidence for a stepped cill and traces of original rendering; c Plan of first-floor windows, showing probable treatment of centre; d Internal elevation of west jamb, showing transom and cill positions. For mouldings e-k see Figure 5.11.

was the only place within the standing building where Period 4.1 construction deposits survived. They consisted of shavings and wooden offcuts, including ornamental leaves and sections of cornice moulding (Fig 5.14; Chapter 8). Planks were also laid on joists over masonry in the garderobe E7.8, but outside the west door to Room 11 (E9.8), limestone paving was used.

The ground-floor rooms were more varied. There is no evidence for Period 4.1 finishes, but in Period 4.3 Rooms 15 and 19 had wooden floors; excavation has revealed floor joists set directly on the ground. Room 16, which has a wooden floor that has not

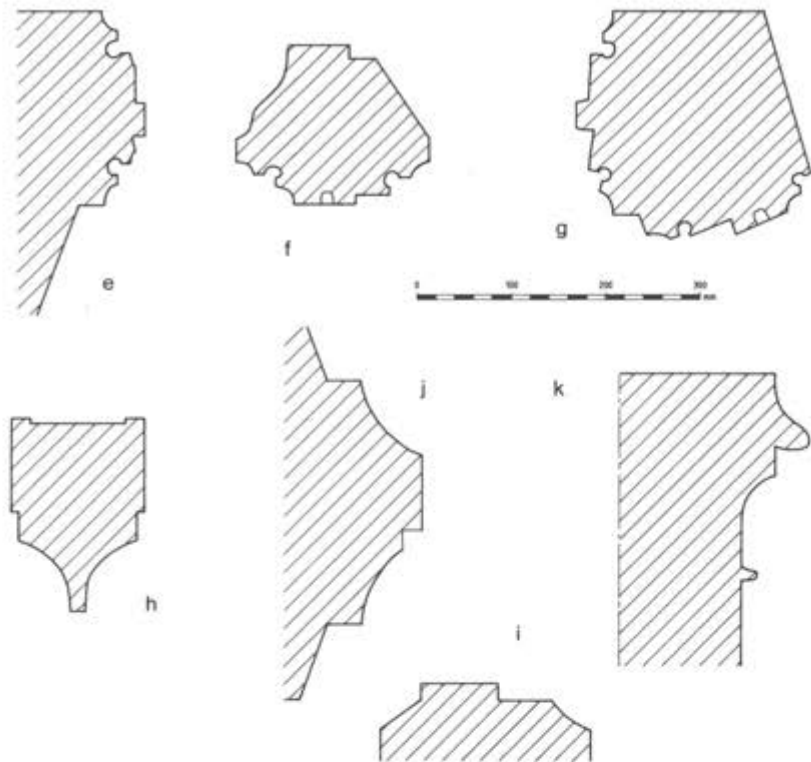
been lifted, may have been the same. The cross-passage, Room 18, had a tiled floor which survives around the walls although it is worn away in the centre. The tiles are of two sizes, 0.19 m and 0.23 m square, which suggests reuse or partial relaying, and have traces of a plain black or yellow glaze. A hard surface is also probable in the lateral passages, Rooms 17 and 20, although the existing Pennant floors belong to Period 5.2. They may have been tiled, or floored with limestone paviers. These survive in the north-west corner of Room 21, and also occur in the east porch to Room 18. They are oblong, 0.32 m wide and of variable length (c 0.6 m).

The Period 4 north range floors did not survive in the excavated part of the building, and have been replaced by Period 5.2 Pennant paving in the standing house. Preservation was better in the west range, where Room 30 had a wooden floor, beneath which small late 16th- and early 17th-century objects accumulated (Chapter 4, Period 4.5–4.6). Room 29 had a floor of limestone pavements, represented by mortar bedding preserving the outlines of diagonally-laid slabs. There is little evidence in the south range, but it is probable that Room 22 had a wooden floor set 0.3 m above the present stone outbuilding floor. The removal of boards and joists may account for the drop in level.

### Decoration

A description of the decorative schemes used in individual rooms and their attribution to a specific phase of the building's history, is underlaid by a stratigraphy of plaster types built up from their relationship to each other and to the development of the fabric. Although some chemical analysis has been undertaken (Chapter 8), the distinction is primarily a visual one, and the Period 4 plaster can be divided into three types, which are distinct from the plasters of Period 5.

- a Pale pink, fairly hard, with a high sand content and very little hair. This has caused it to craze on walls where there has been structural movement. Up to 20 mm thick with a slightly uneven surface. Period 4.1
- b Light grey base coat with black inclusions, very hard, cement-like with no hair. Up to 40 mm thick with a fine white finish coat up to 5 mm thick. Period 4.1, used exclusively for friezes and ceilings. Analysis has shown that this is gypsum plaster (Chapter 8, ACP3).
- c Pale pink, fairly hard, with white inclusions and a high chopped hair content, which has caused the plaster to cohere even when detached from the wall. Up to 20 mm thick with a smooth surface. Periods 4.2–4.5: unlike Period 4.1 these phases cannot be distinguished solely on plaster type, although joints between two periods of work are clear.



### Period 4.1

#### East range: ground floor

Evidence for Period 4.1 finishes is fragmentary, but the ground floor appears to have been plastered (type a) except at the north end. The splay of the blocked window E9.3 is bare rubble, which suggests a room panelled directly over masonry. A ceiling of type b was applied throughout and was retained in Period 4.3. Where sealed by later alterations there is no indication that either the ceiling or the plaster was painted.

#### East range: first floor

The decoration of the three first-floor rooms can be reconstructed in some detail (Fig 5.19).

#### Room 6

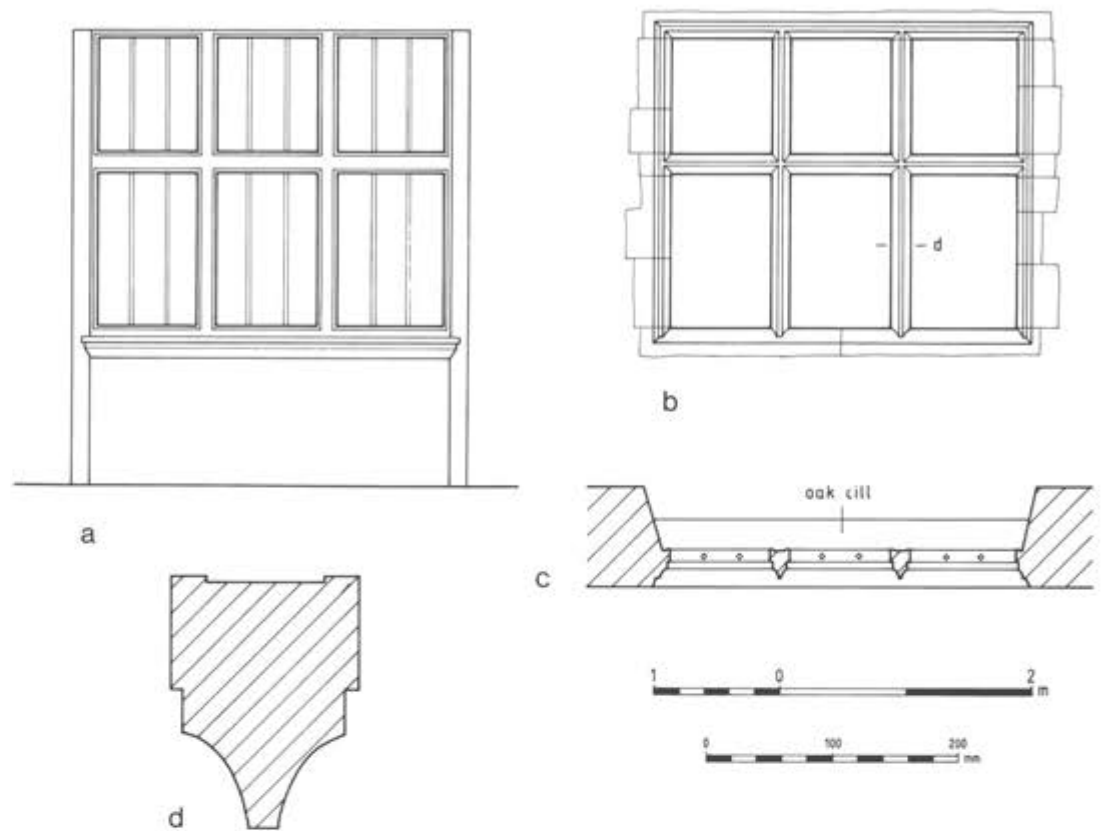
The plaster is divided into two zones; type b is used for a frieze 1.4 m deep, and type a for the lower 3.9 m of the wall. The junction is visible west of window E11.2 but is otherwise hidden by a Period 5.1 ceiling. The type a plaster is unpainted and splashed by brown drips from the wall above. It was not designed to be visible and was probably covered with panelling. This is also suggested by the crisp mouldings and lack of paint on the garderobe door frame (E7.6) and the

Figure 5.11 East range, south wall (E2), Period 4.1, moulding profiles: First-floor window  
e Jamb  
f Transom  
g Angled mullion  
h Mullion  
i Cill  
j Jamb, ground-floor window  
k Finial (half-section).



Figure 5.12 North range, north wall (E6), Period 4.2, typical long gallery window:

- a Interior
- b Exterior
- c Plan
- d Mullion moulding profile (d: lower scale).



doors in the original partition to Room 10 (E10.1, E10.2).

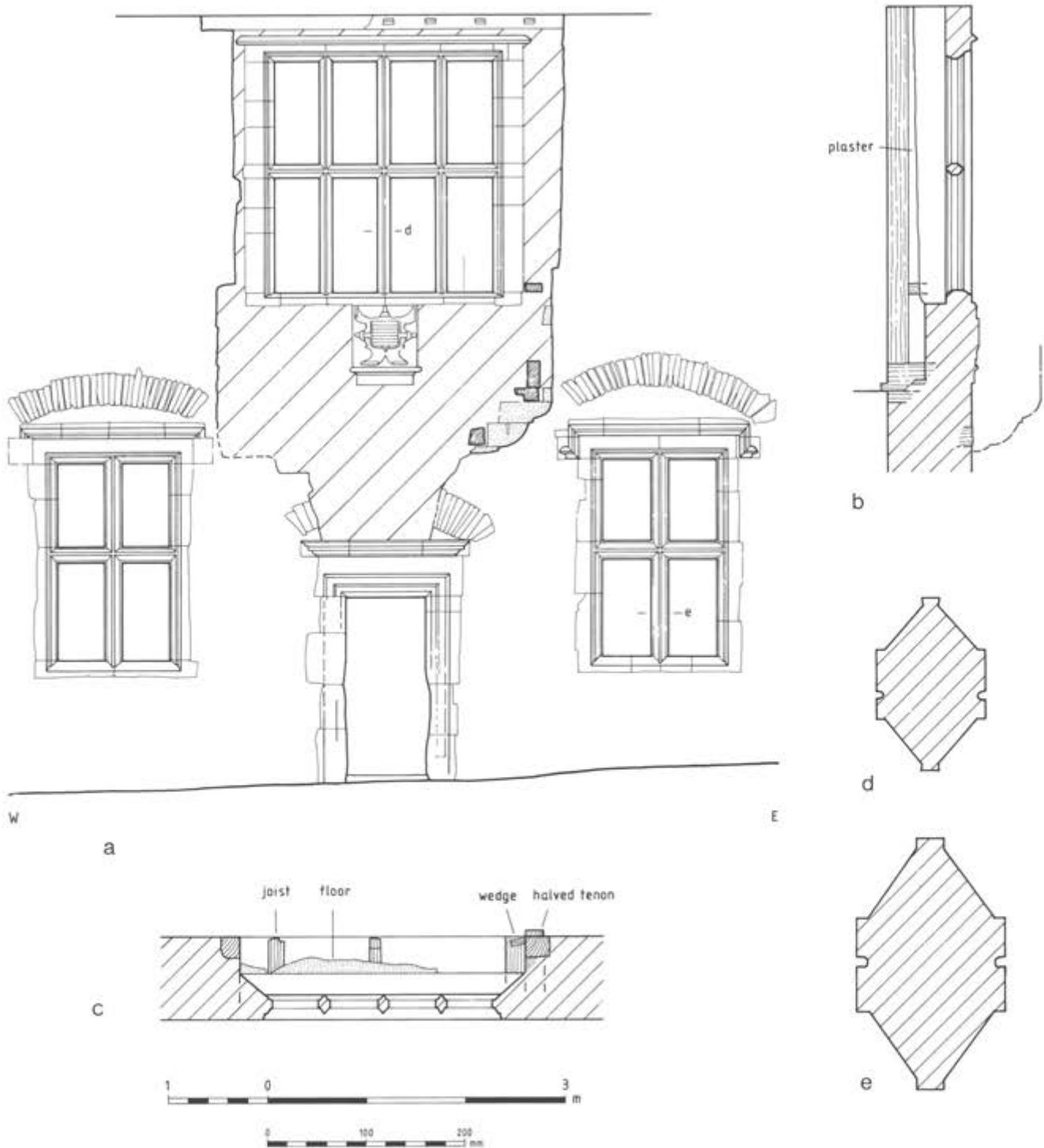
The style of the fireplace also indicates a panelled surround, although the treatment of the wall above was more elaborate. Built into the original fabric and spanned by a wooden lintel is a recess 1.5 m high, 1.2 m wide and 0.2 m deep (E7.17), which is framed by the painted frieze. It probably housed a separate relief panel in stone, wood or plaster (Chapter 6). There are two stages to its infill: the larger, lower part dates to Period 5.1, but plaster of type b was used at the top, which suggests making good above a panel smaller than the recess intended for it.

**Frieze**

Lysons describes the frieze in this room as being ‘above the ceilings of the present apartments’ and ‘richly painted in fresco’. Although much of the plaster ground survives, the painted decoration is now in very poor condition as a result of damp and damage by graffitists. However, the outlines of the design are still visible, even where the paint has perished. Two factors are responsible: pigments staining the plaster, and the use of scribed setting-out lines (Fig 5.15).

Paint survival is most extensive in the north-east corner by the window E11.2 but is mainly very dark in tone. The space is filled by a roundel 0.75 m in diameter with a double border; it is framed by dark vertical stripes, with traces of scrolled foliage in grey and light green above and below (Fig 5.16). There are two narrow red stripes at the base of the cornice, otherwise missing here. Elsewhere it survives as a zone of banded staining 0.3 m deep, the remnant of a *trompe-l’oeil* classical moulding similar to that in Room 10. There is a corresponding roundel on the other side of the window, discernible only by scribed setting-out lines, and three more on the west wall. These are equidistant but asymmetric, and the key to the overall design scheme is provided by a narrow band of well-preserved decoration at the base of the frieze, which had been covered by debris. This depicts the foot of a fluted column, a foliate scroll and what is probably the hind leg of an animal, in grisaille on a black ground. Faint outlines suggest that the column had a mid-shaft moulding and an Ionic capital supporting the cornice. The distance between column and roundel centres is 0.85 m, which articulates the west wall into six panels, alternately 1.7 m and 1.9 m wide; the smaller panels

Figure 5.13 (facing page) North range, south wall (E4), Period 4.4: a Elevation showing evidence for oriel and contemporary ground-floor features (for door see Figure 5.4) b Cross section c Plan d Oriel moulding profile e Ground-floor window moulding profile (d and e: lower scale).



contained roundels, and the larger foliate scrollwork, now very fragmentary. The missing south wall would accommodate four panels in the same order.

The east frieze has a roundel in the north-east corner and, over the fireplace, a semicircular arc of banded brownish paint with a serrated inner edge composed of two

tiers of compass-drawn semicircles, framing a ribbon which bears the word *SEMPER*. There is an upright knobbed terminal with small scribed circles above, and traces of small scrolls on the outer edge of the arc. This painted decoration framed the wall recess E7.17 (for an interpretation of the design see Chapter 6).



Figure 5.14 Wooden offcuts from beneath the floor in Room 6 (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).

### Ceiling

Plaster of type b was used for the ceiling and was applied before the frieze. A few patches remain in position but a larger quantity had fallen onto the inserted Period 5.1 ceiling (Fig 5.16). This provides some 12 sq m, out of a total area of 78 sq m, from which to reconstruct the design. The pattern was composed of *trompe-l'oeil* ribs radiating from tripartite or sextapartite centres. The ribs are 50 mm wide and divided into three bands of equal width, the outer painted orange-brown, and the centre a light ochre yellow. The background is white.

It was clear from the lath impressions that all the ribs ran either down the length of the ceiling or at an angle of *c* 60 degrees to this axis. The relative spacing of the centres could be worked out from the sections surviving in position (Fig 5.17a, b), and from large conjoined fragments (Fig 5.17d). Another large displaced piece (Fig 5.17e) indicated the treatment of the ribs at the ceiling edge. From this information only one reconstruction is possible, a hexagonal grid of interlocking diamonds set out from the centreline of the room. The points of intersection were marked before the ribs were painted with scribed circles 50 mm in diameter. Clusters of three or six copper alloy pin shafts or pin holes indicate that applied bosses or 'bullions' were nailed over each intersection.

### Room 10

The plaster in Room 10 is also divided into two zones, the lower 3.6 m high of type a,

and the upper 1.6 m high, of type b. Survival of type a plaster on the external walls is patchy, due to structural movement, but is complete on the timber-framed south wall (E13). The uneven junction between the two types of plaster is clearly visible; the frieze plaster b was applied first, and the lower wall was unpainted.

The panelling around door E13.2 appears to be original, and more of the same type survived until Period 5.1, for a piece of cornice moulding was used as a batten in the gap at the east end of the partition. The panelling bears extensive traces of yellow ochre paint, which was a common finish of the period, described in documentary sources (Chapter 6). It is possible that the door (Fig 5.5g), which has traces of the same finish and is of a suitable size, belonged to the garderobe in this room.

### Frieze

The survival of the frieze plaster is variable; it has been lost through movement on the east wall, survives in two patches with fragmentary paint on the west wall, but is well preserved on the timber-framed south wall. Here an extremely accomplished scheme of 'antike' work has been revealed beneath limewash (Pls I–V) by Hirst Conservation (Hirst Conservation 1996). Difficulties were encountered during the uncovering of the frieze because of loss of adhesion between the pigment layer and the backing plaster: it was found to be more strongly attached to the limewash overpainting. Tests established that the paint medium was proteinaceous, possibly egg or glue, and that the black ground was pure carbon. After uncovering, further cleaning, consolidation and toning were carried out.

The frieze is painted in shades of ochre and grey, with touches of red and green, on a black ground, and the design is divided into three panels separated by balusters below a cornice. Each panel is 1.27 m high by 2.14 m wide; the dividing strips are 0.23 m wide; the cornice 0.17 m deep; the plain basal band 0.20 m deep; and the total height of the frieze zone 1.64 m. The cornice is continuous across the width of the room and is lined-out to simulate a classical moulding; bands of ochre indicate vertical planes and bands of graduated brown and black the hollow mouldings. The cornice is supported by two waisted foliate balusters with basal masks, painted in grisaille on a light orange-brown ground and shaded to indicate an eastern light source (Pls IV, V).

Figure 5.15 (facing page) Period 4.1 frieze, Room 6: the west wall shows the probable spacing of the painted columns. The east wall shows the evidence for the fireplace overmantel with enlarged detail A (A: lower scale).





Figure 5.16 East range: above the lowered ceiling, showing the blocked north window, Period 4.1 frieze and remnants of the original ceiling (photograph: English Heritage B870019/11).



The ground colour continues in a plain band at the base of the frieze, edged by a thin olive-green line. This is painted over the junction between the frieze plaster and that of the lower wall.

All the panels have narrow *trompe-l'oeil* frames, with olive-green shading to the top and east edges, and light ochre elsewhere. Each has a black ground but is decorated differently. In the east panel creatures with female torsos, beaked heads and acanthus-scroll tails support a rectangular cartouche with a strapwork frame (Pl I). This is blank except for a crudely inscribed graffito 'God save the true King 1740'. Above and below is further scrollwork ornament peopled with masks; the top of the panel is in poor condition, but the masks in the basal scrolls are exceptionally well preserved. These, like the cartouche, are painted in ochre, but the bulk of the panel is in grisaille, with a little green on some foliate terminals.

The centre panel contains a roundel framed by a wreath in green, with gadrooned bindings in ochre (Pl II). Within, on a red ground, is a female head in three-quarter profile, facing east with shadow falling to the west. She has finely detailed fair hair, looped in a braid and falling in loose curls over her left shoulder, which appears to be bare and is outlined against drapery. Facial detail is not preserved and the right shoulder is indistinct; it may be covered by knotted drapery. Above, outlined against the ground, is a sinuous ochre 'ribbon'. The roundel is flanked by outward-facing grisaille dolphins with acanthus-scroll

tails incorporating ochre masks and bindings, and fruits with touches of green and red. Further well-preserved fruits hang as pendants from the centre of the roundel.

At the centre of the west panel is a gadrooned urn on a large pedestal with a horned mask at the base (Pl III). There are flames emitting from the bowl and pendent swags of red and green fruit hanging from the handles. On either side are confronted cockatrices largely in grisaille with beaked heads, long necks, hooved feet and red wings. From their tails spring complex acanthus scrolls incorporating cornucopias of fruit and foliage. Stylistic comparisons for this frieze are discussed in Chapter 6.

As this room was originally square there would have been twelve panels in the complete scheme, and the room would have presented a symmetrical appearance, with four opposed doors and a central fireplace and window. The ceiling was replastered in Period 5.2 and there is no direct evidence for its original decoration. It is probable, given the *trompe-l'oeil* cornice, that it resembled the ceiling in Room 6.

### Room 11

The Period 4.1 scheme survives best on the timber-framed partition wall (E14; Fig 5.18); the external walls have been extensively replastered. A lower zone of type a plaster, c 3.9 m high, laps unevenly over an upper zone of type b plaster. Only the top 0.7 m of this is finished, and the roughly-keyed grey base coat has been left exposed on the remainder. At the top of the wall

*Figure 5.17 East range: reconstruction of Period 4.1 ceiling, Room 6.*

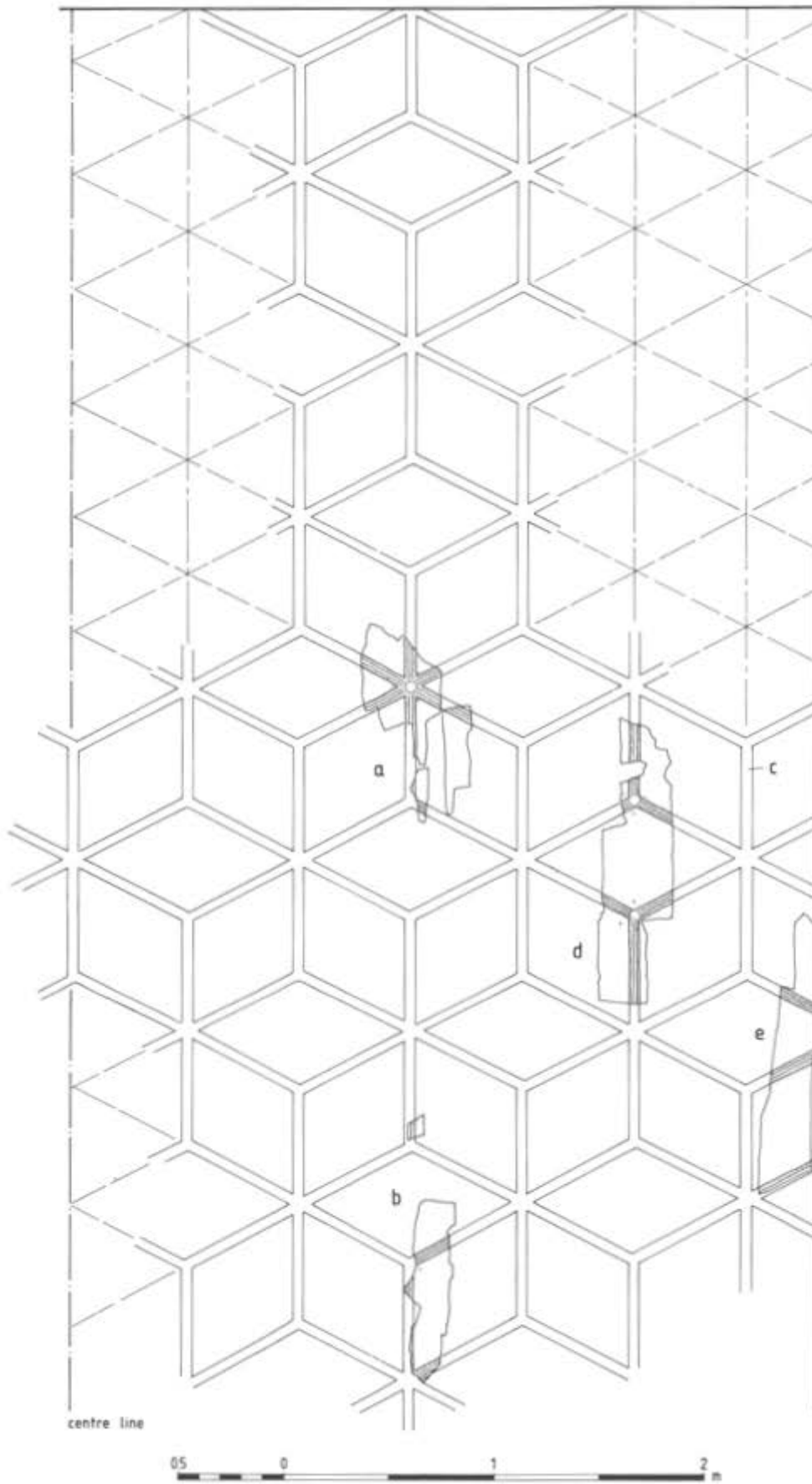


Figure 5.18 Room 11,  
Period 4.1 partition wall  
(photograph: © Crown  
copyright. NMR  
BB98/00623).



there is a 0.2 m deep band of Period 5.1 plaster, which marks the position of the cornice. This appears to have been wooden; there are fixing blocks built into the walls at regular intervals, and the frieze plaster finishes in a lip, where it has squeezed under a board. This was fixed after the application of the base coat. There is another row of blocks at the base of the finished frieze, where there is a less pronounced lip.

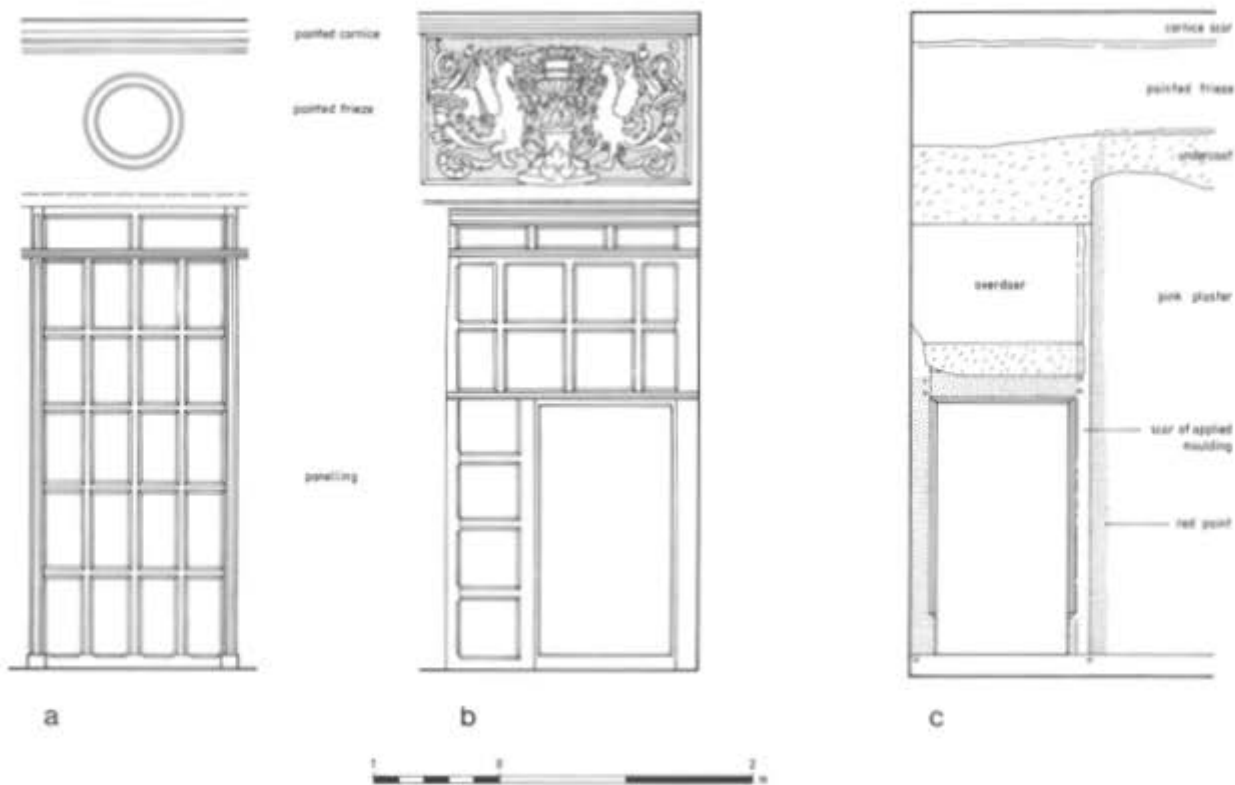
The painted decoration is very poorly preserved, for reasons that are not wholly explicable. Redecoration in Period 4.3 (see below) may have been partly responsible, and also probably later scrubbing or scraping of the surface, which may have been a consequence of its Period 5.1 use (Chapter 7). This is suggested by numerous small round pit-marks on the north wall. Here the frieze has been reduced to patchy washes of flat colour, consisting of an ochre base coat, overlaid by areas of black, extensive enough to suggest that they formed a background, as in Room 10. This was overlaid in turn by a very fragmentary light grey layer which can be ascribed to Period 4.3. This sequence is repeated elsewhere in the room; on the east wall there are hints of overpainting in the same style and tonality as the

frieze in Room 10, but no indication of the overall design. There is also a concentration of ochre with a reddish tinge around the lip of the cornice, which suggests that this may have been its original colour.

The walls below the frieze were unpainted and not intended to be seen; the east wall is splashed with pink, red and yellow ochre paint and has a vertical stripe 40 mm wide, shaded in tones of pink and yellow, near to the floor in the south east corner. This is not in a position where it could have any ornamental function and it appears to be a painter's test piece.

Original paintwork does survive on the moulded doorcases to Room 10, which were both dark red. The treatment of the east door E14.1 is otherwise simple, but the west door E14.2 was more elaborate (Fig 5.19c). The red-painted surround is 0.3 m wide, run-out onto the plaster and carried up to the bottom of the frieze over the type b undercoat. It bears the negative of a planted moulding, also taken up to frieze level, and returned round an over-door panel of type a plaster, which is framed above and below by rectangles of type b undercoat.

The sequence of decoration in this room consisted first of applying the type b frieze



undercoat to the standard height for the range, plastering the lower walls (type a), fixing a wooden cornice and possibly a lower moulding, and then finishing the frieze to its required size. This variation in frieze height and the painting of the doorcases, which were evidently visible, suggest that the walls in this room were covered by hangings rather than panelling. These could have been secured, whether or not a moulding was also used, from the wooden blocks at the base of the frieze.

This room lacks a fireplace, for the entire chimney stack was removed in Period 5.3. However, fragments of stucco, found in the Period 4.3 infilling of the east moat (Chapter 8) may be derived from an original chimneypiece. They consist of a classical console bracket, flattened ribs, and other mouldings, all of which have been applied to a Pennant rubble wall and bear traces of yellow ochre paint (Fig 5.20). They were found together with moulded ribs, also painted, from a geometric ceiling which must have been similar in design to that in Room 6. There is no other context for these fragments within the Period 4.1 east range and they do not appear to be derived from the south range.

## Period 4.2

### Room 1

This room retains most of its original painted frieze (Fig 5.21). The plaster was not specially applied, but is of type c, which was in general use throughout Periods 4.2 to 4.5. The frieze is up to 1.26 m deep and finishes in a straight edge 0.16 m below the ceiling. In places this edge bears the impressions of an applied wooden cornice moulding, which was secured to blocks set c 1.7 m apart in the wall head. A length of cornice moulding was found reused as a batten in the ceiling, which is a replacement of Period 5.2. The lower edge of the frieze plaster is more uneven, but the former presence of another wooden moulding is indicated by a narrow band of unpainted plaster up to 50 mm deep, and by small wooden blocks set in the wall below.

The frieze comprises a series of Latin texts in an elegant black script on a pale blue-grey ground (Figs 5.22, 8.32, 8.33; for a translation see Chapter 8). They were set between each of the windows on the north wall, where water penetration has removed all but traces of the lettering, and centrally on the east wall. On the south wall parts of four texts survive, one of which is truncated by Period 5.3 replastering, and another by

Figure 5.19 East range:  
Period 4.1 room schemes:  
a Room 6 east wall  
(panelling Period 4.3)  
b Room 10 south wall  
c Room 11 north wall.



*Figure 5.20 Stucco console from the east moat (Figure 8.40) (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).*



*Figure 5.21 Room 1, long gallery, looking east (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).*



the insertion of the oriel, indicating that this window was not an original feature of the room. Probably as a consequence of its introduction three adjacent texts have been overpainted in a slightly different script.

A line of black pigment at the top of the frieze suggests that this was the colour of the cornice; the surviving moulding retains no paint. The stone fireplace surround was painted the same blue-grey as the frieze.

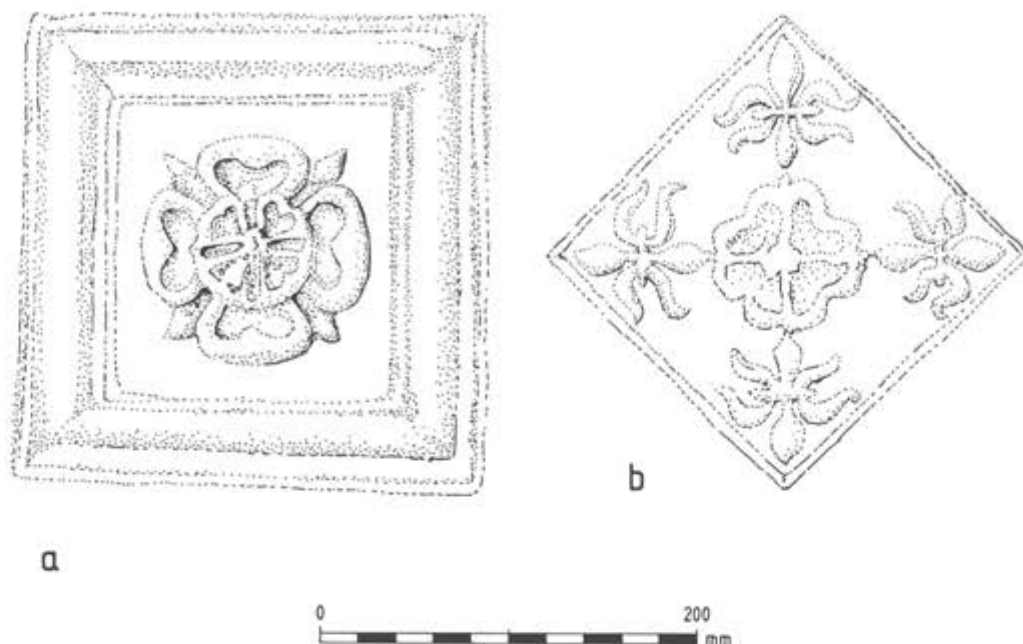
Plaster of Period 5.1 covers the lower walls, and its completeness suggests that the walls were not previously plastered, but panelled directly over the stonework. Panelling is also indicated by the roughly finished door frames to Room 6 and to the stair tower. None of the surviving panelling is of suitable dimensions, and it is probable that it was all dispersed in Period 5.1. A short length of an upright moulding suitable for a top rail was reused as a batten in the Period 5.2 ceiling.

#### Other rooms

The ground-floor rooms in the north range appear to have been very plainly finished.



Figure 5.23 East range:  
Period 4.3 plaster, Room  
19:  
a north and south walls,  
b west wall.



The other passage, Room 20, was finished in the same way, although much less original plaster survives and there are few graffiti. However, the death of Nicholas Poyntz the younger on 1 September 1585 is recorded on the sill of window E9.15 (Fig 8.35C).

Room 19 has the only moulded plaster to survive in situ, a frieze of small decorative panels set 0.7 m below the ceiling (E14–16; Figs 5.23, 7.3). The north and south walls each have three four-petalled Tudor roses within a square raised border, spaced *c* 1.4 m apart. A single mould-block has been used to make each impression. In Period 5 this room was used as a stable and the position of the hay rack along the west wall has resulted in much more damage to the three surviving impressions there. Two are diagonally set and consist of a small rose surrounded by fleurs-de-lis without a border. The intermediate panel is larger (0.25 m square) and of a third design too damaged to be intelligible; it might be heraldic. The spacing suggests that there was originally a fourth panel of the same design over the door, where the plaster is missing. Any design on the east wall has also been lost in the Period 5 rebuilding. The remainder of the wall plaster in this room, which is all Period 4.3, is plain; there is no cornice.

Room 21 is plainly plastered with no special decorative features; the plaster on the south wall was sealed behind a Period 5.1 wall-thickening.

The single surviving elevation of Room 22 (E3) provides information about its fitting-out. Dowel holes in the fireplace-surround and the treatment of the door to Room 21 indicate that the room was panelled. Its great height (5.5 m; taller than Room 11) suggests that there was a frieze, although no Period 4.3 plaster survives, and the row of fixing blocks (E3.17) below the ceiling indicates a wooden cornice.

#### First floor

Alterations were also made to the Period 4.1 rooms on the first floor, most obviously in Room 11, where they were consequent upon the reconstruction of the south-west corner. Type c plaster was applied to the rebuilt wall (E9) respecting the line of the finished frieze, but replacing the unfinished backing plaster of type b. The base of the frieze is defined by a band of Period 5.1 plaster (E9.21) filling the gap where a wooden moulding has been removed. The frieze itself was also replaced in type c plaster, which has traces of grey-blue paint and a line of black at the base of the cornice, suggesting that this was repainted. Traces of these colours overlie the earlier scheme elsewhere in the room, where the plaster has not been replaced, indicating a general redecoration. No detail survives, but the similarity of the background colour to the frieze in Room 1 suggests that there may have been another series of texts.

If the stucco in the east moat is derived from this room it also implies alterations to the ceiling and the fireplace surround at this period. Some of this work may have been made necessary by settlement in the structure. This cannot be dated precisely, but in Room 10 was clearly advanced by the start of Period 5.1, so that it is doubtful how long the Period 4.1 painted frieze survived on the east wall. On the opposite wall the reduction of the window E9.16 would also have involved replastering. However, elements of the original design were retained throughout Period 4. The type 3 panelling in these rooms was probably introduced in Period 4.3.

### Periods 4.4 and 4.5

No major schemes belong to these phases; the ground-floor Rooms 12, 13 and 14 were plainly plastered with no evidence for panelling. In Room 1 the oriel was inserted, the surrounding decoration made good and at least three new texts substituted for the originals. The Period 4.5 stair tower and attic room are functional additions; the tower retains most, and the attic a little of its original plaster (E11). The otherwise unknown decoration of the hall in the south range is represented by fragments of a stone screen, in Renaissance style with strapwork cresting (Chapter 8).

**Table 4 Room dimensions and evidence for Period 4 finishes in the standing building**

Room	Phase	Length	Width	Height	Floor	Panelling	Plaster	Cornice	Ceiling	Function
1	4.2	36.60m* 120ft	5.50m 18ft	3.80m 12ft 6in	boards not orig	yes removed	W/P frieze texts	wooden moulding	plaster prob ribs	Long gallery
6	4.1	10.86m 35ft 6in	7.20m 23ft 6in	5.30m 17ft 4in	boards some orig	yes 4.3 type	W/P frieze 'antike'	<i>tr l'oeil</i> moulding	<i>tr l'oeil</i> ribs	Bedchamber
10	4.1	7.15m 23ft 6in	7.15m 23ft 6in	5.25m 17ft 3in	boards not orig	yes 4.1 type	W/P frieze 'antike'	<i>tr l'oeil</i> moulding	<i>tr l'oeil</i> ribs?	Privy chamber
11	4.1	11.90m 39ft	7.15m 23ft 6in	5.25m 17ft 3in	boards not orig	no – prob hangings	W/P frieze 'antike'	wooden moulding	ribbed plaster?	Great chamber
12	4.4	5.00m* 16ft 4in	5.20m 17ft	3.75m 12ft 4in	no evidence	no	plain	no	beam exposed	Lodging
13	4.4	5.88m 19ft 3in	5.25m 17ft 2in	3.75m 12ft 4in	no evidence	no	plain	no	beam exposed	Lodging
14	4.4	4.50m 14ft 9in	5.30m 17ft 4in	3.75m 12ft 4in	no evidence	no	plain	no	beam exposed	Lodging
15	4.3	7.40m 24ft 3in	7.15m 23ft 6in	3.50m 11ft 6in	boards (joists)	yes removed	not exposed	?part of panelling	plain	Lodging
16	4.3	4.60m 15ft	4.80m 15ft 9in	3.50m 11ft 6in	prob boards	no evidence	plain	no evidence	plain	Lodging
17	4.3	4.60m 15ft	1.80m 6ft	3.60m 11ft 9in	prob paving	no	plain – graffiti	no	plain	Passage
18	4.3	7.18m 23ft 6in	3.90m 12ft 9in	3.70m 12ft	paving tiles	no	plain – graffiti	no	plain	Cross-passage
19	4.3	6.25m 20ft 6in	4.80m 15ft 9in	3.80m 12ft 6in	boards (joists)	no	moulded roses	no	plain	Lodging
20	4.3	8.70m 28ft 6in	1.80m 6ft	3.80m 12ft 6in	prob paving	no	plain	no	plain	Passage
21	4.3	5.85m 19ft	7.15m 23ft 6in	3.70m 12ft	paving limestone	no	plain	no	plain	Lodging/service
22	4.3	8.80m* 28ft 9in	5.80m* 19ft	5.50m 18ft	prob boards	yes removed	prob frieze	wooden moulding	no evidence	Parlour ?dining

\*Restored dimensions W/P = wall painting



## 6

# The Tudor house: discussion

### Period 4.1

#### The form and function of the east range

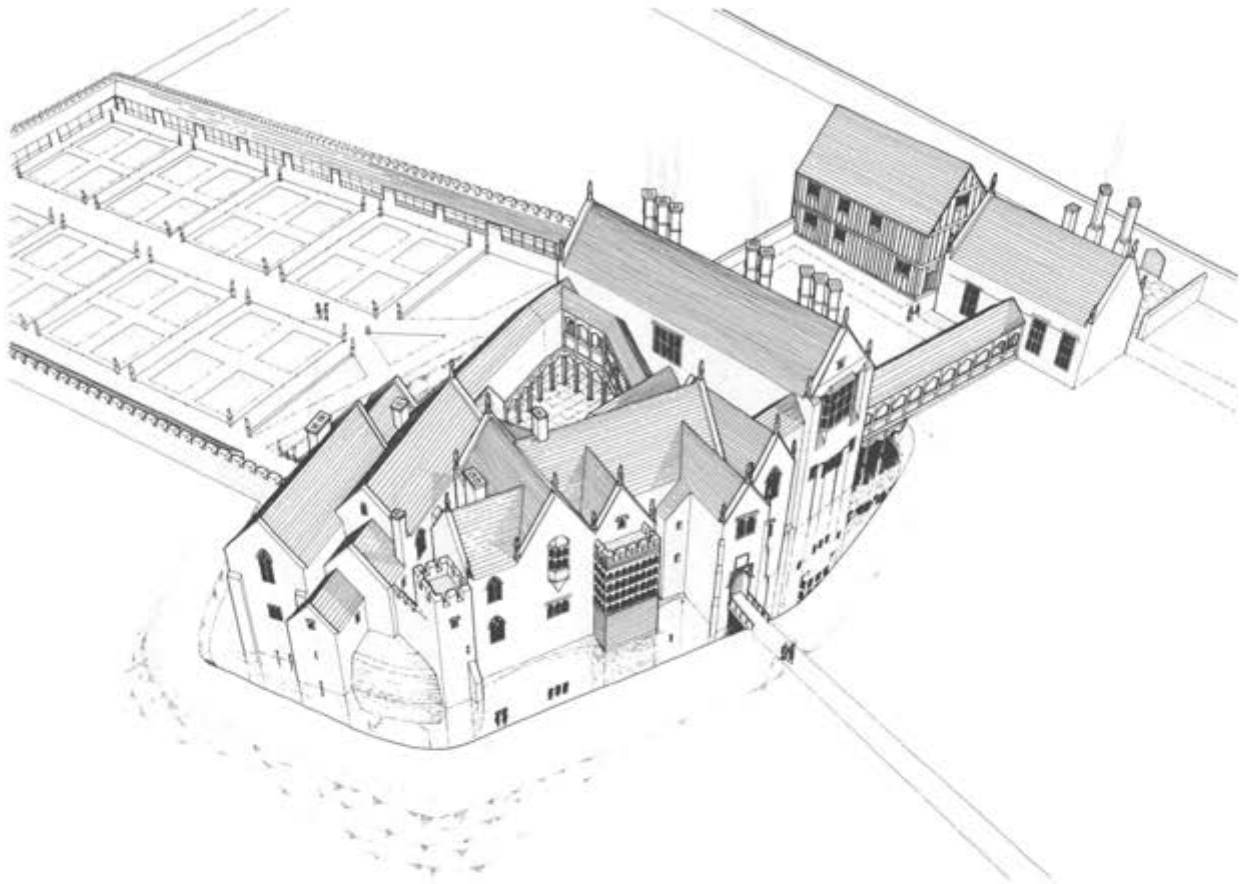
In 1532 Nicholas, grandson of Sir Robert Poyntz, inherited Acton Court upon the death of his father Sir Anthony. During the remainder of his life he rebuilt the house in several stages, to create the building which survives today. This programme is almost entirely undocumented, and has been defined by the physical and stratigraphical evidence outlined elsewhere in the report.

Dendrochronology provides a very exact date of spring 1535 for the earliest phase of this work, the building of the east range. Given the nature of the accommodation it provided, coupled with the known visit of the King and Anne Boleyn to Acton Court in August 1535 during a royal progress, there is very strong evidence to suggest that it was built specifically as a royal lodging.

The range consists of a dry-stone box over 30 m long and 8.5 m wide (100 ft by 28 ft), 9.75 m (32 ft) high at the eaves and 14.3 m (47 ft) at the gable. The only ties are provided by the first-floor joists and the roof structure; all other partitions were inserted as part of the fitting-out. The external appearance of the range was largely dictated by the functional needs of the interior; the boldly projecting stacks on what is now the principal elevation housed fireplaces and garderobes (cf Chenies, Bucks; Howard 1987, fig 60; Oatlands, Surrey; Thurley 1993, figs 88, 89), and fronted on to a new service range, to which it was linked, across the moat, by pentices (Fig 6.1). Further pentices or storeyed galleries linked the west elevation to the Period 3 house, and the only elevation designed for external show was the south gable, with its remarkable window (Fig 5.10). This has no exact parallels, but remains within the Perpendicular tradition, although it has dispensed with arched window heads. The possibilities for display offered by faceted walls of glass could be

appreciated locally at Thornbury Castle, on the Duke of Buckingham's lodging range, built some twenty years earlier (Tipping 1924, figs 92, 96). However, gatehouse architecture appears to have provided more immediate inspiration, as at Coughton Court, Warwickshire (Howard 1987, fig 25), where a window twelve lights wide is wrapped around a central oriel, two flanking turrets and the intervening wall space. Part of the oriel projects and part is inset above a sloped plinth at storey level. There are uncertainties as to dating and sequence, but it appears to have been constructed in the years *c* 1518–35. Also comparable is the 'Holbein' gate of 1532, formerly at Whitehall (Colvin 1982, pl 24; Summerson 1983, 32), which had an oriel above the gate arch entirely contained on a deep, sloped offset between the lower and upper storeys. The flanking walls were blind, but the turrets were windowed, and there was also a pair of short pilaster buttresses, flanking the arch at ground level, which recall those framing the central ground floor window at Acton Court. Both gatehouses have a coat of arms below the oriel window, a detail probably repeated on the east range.

The distribution of architectural fragments indicates that all the windows to the principal rooms had innovative channelled tracery, of a type not otherwise known until mid-century (R K Morris 1989, 131). They were of impressive size; the north gable window had an estimated fifteen lights, the east windows nine, and the west window, eight: this differed from the rest in having only two tiers of lights. The development of large rectangular windows such as these can possibly be traced back to their use in temporary buildings, such as the English palace at the Field of Cloth of Gold, where there was much contemporary comment about the quantity of light they admitted and the clarity of the glass; *c* 5000 feet was used (Anglo 1966, 291). They can also be seen in illustrations of the royal lodgings evolving at Hampton Court during the 1530s, or Princess Mary's river-front lodgings at



Whitehall, completed in 1543 (Thurley 1993, figs 59, 71–3, 83, 178). The design for an unexecuted house at Waltham-in-the-Forest (Thurley 1993, fig 164) also makes liberal use of large flat windows, combined with oriels in all the major rooms.

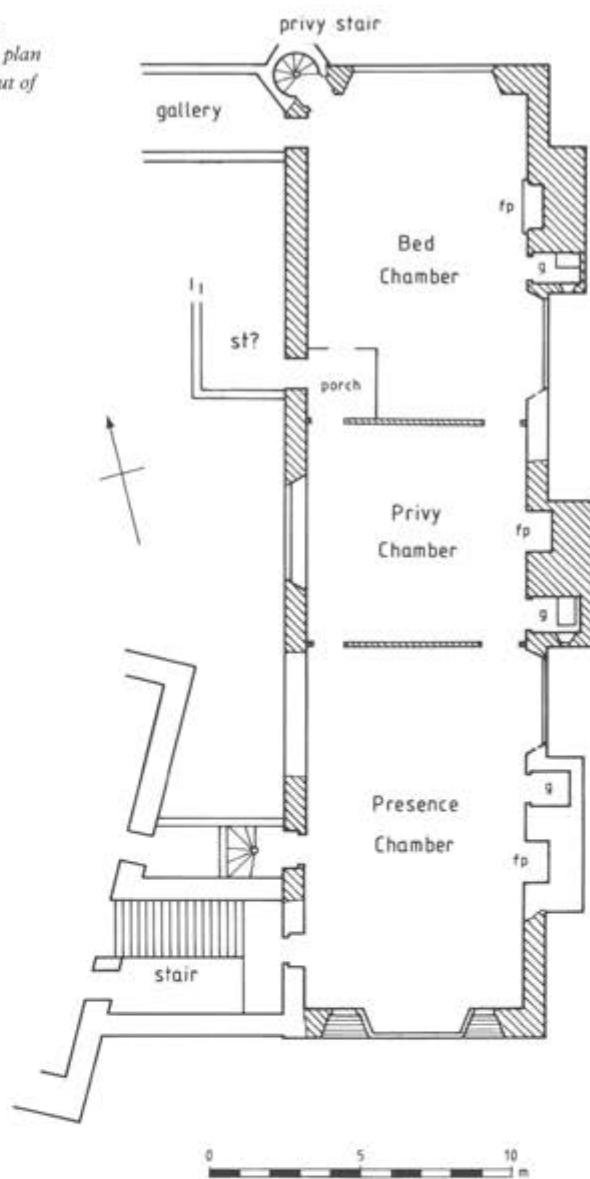
The original arrangement of the ground floor has to be reconstructed from fragmentary evidence, owing to the extent of later alteration (see Fig 4.7). The range appears to have been divided by a central cross-passage (perpetuated in Period 4.3; Room 18), linked by pentices to the screens passage of the Period 3 hall, and to a service range across the moat. Two original fireplaces indicate that the space to the north was subdivided to form a paired lodging, along a line corresponding to the south wall of Room 15. Both rooms have an original west window, with scope for others in the north and east walls. There is no trace of elaborate decoration, but the unplastered walls of the north room suggest that it was fully panelled. Possibly the other room had hangings; the patches of surviving plaster are quite plain. The ceiling, which was installed before the ground floor was partitioned, was also plain white plaster.

It is less clear how the southern end of the range was treated: known features include a row of windows in the south wall, a door in the south-east corner, and one fireplace. While two heated rooms are here also possible, the door, which connects with the service range, suggests either a passage or a room with through access. However, the concentration of windows in the south wall may indicate a large, undivided space, which could have acted as a secondary hall for the large numbers who would have sat down to dine (see below). Such a hall was constructed at Elvetham, Hampshire in 1591 for 'knights, ladies and gentlemen of chief account' (Girouard 1978, 111).

In contrast the arrangement of the first floor is certain, and one original partition survives unaltered. The space was divided into three large interconnecting rooms, each with fireplace and garderobe, which retain substantial traces of their original decoration (Fig 6.2). Access was gained through a series of doors in the west wall; there was no internal connection between the ground and first floors. These rooms appear to provide the essential elements of a royal lodging as it had evolved by the 1530s. This comprised,

*Figure 6.1 Reconstructed view of the Period 4.1 house (1535) (drawing: Chris Jones-Jenkins).*

Figure 6.2 East range, reconstructed first-floor plan showing suggested layout of the Period 4.1 royal lodging.



in increasing order of privacy, a presence or great chamber, which was a public room, a privy chamber, and a bedchamber (Colvin 1982, 11). In the royal palaces this sequence was expanded by an outer watching chamber, closets and withdrawing chambers beyond the privy chamber, and secret lodgings beyond the bedchamber (Thurley 1993, 120–43). Lodging ranges of this type hardly survive, and then only in much altered form, but the sequence is illustrated in several early plans, such as the Exchequer at Calais (probably 1534; Colvin 1975, 350, fig 13; 1982, 14), Hull Manor (1539), Dunstable Priory (c 1540), and an unexecuted scheme for a house at Waltham-in-the-Forest, Essex (Thurley 1993, figs 155, 157, 164). They can also be reconstructed from

accounts of the King's Works, for example the queen's new lodgings at Hampton Court (Thurley 1988, 13–16); St Augustine's, Canterbury, where new lodgings were built for Anne of Cleves in 1539 (Colvin 1982, 60); and Dartford, Kent, another monastic conversion of 1541 (Colvin 1982, 70).

All these examples provided separate suites for the king and queen at first-floor level, an innovation begun at Hampton Court in 1533 (Thurley 1993, 52). Prior to this the stacked lodging, derived from 15th-century Burgundian models, had been the norm (Thurley 1993, 15), and can be seen locally at Thornbury Castle (Hawkyard 1977, 54). At Acton Court the lodgings on the first floor appear to have been built specifically for the King, but the much more modest rooms below were not intended to house the Queen, who was probably given the best rooms in the Period 3 house, which were also at first-floor level. Possibly the medieval hall served as a presence chamber, and the great chamber, with its suite of rooms beyond, as privy chamber and bed-chamber.

In the east range the sequence of lodgings began with Room 11 (Fig 6.8). One external door survives giving access to a small lobby in a pentice with its own roof, but this seems too restricted for a principal entrance, and is probably purely a service door; it lines up with the Period 3 kitchen passage, to which it may have been linked by stairs. The principal entrance probably lay to the south, in an area completely rebuilt in Period 4.3 and altered again in Period 5.1, so that its original form remains conjectural. However, the obvious site for a principal stair is in the space between the Period 3 buttery and the new east range. Such an arrangement would provide direct access from the main south entrance, and would allow the former buttery to serve as an outer chamber. This type of stair was known as a halpace, after the landing or vestibule which it incorporated (e.g. Dartford; Colvin 1982, 70), and its increasing importance in palace planning is discussed by Thurley (1993, 119). There was a notable example at Bridewell Palace, London, T-shaped in plan and set in an external porch; a similar stair is shown on the plan of Hull Manor. A different type, rising round a square well or pier, is shown at Dunstable Priory. The available space at Acton Court would allow for a straight flight in the order of 5 m long and up to 3.5 m wide, with a landing of c 1.5 m deep. In practice the stairs, almost certainly wooden, were probably nar-

rower to allow direct ground-floor access from the east range.

This arrangement would identify Room 11, the largest of the three, as the presence or great chamber, a public room also used for dining. A further pointer to the direction of the sequence is provided by the doors in the north wall of this room, which are moulded on the south side and open inwards into Room 10. This middle room, which had no independent external access, can be identified as the privy chamber, and Room 6, at the north end of the range, as the bedchamber. This room had three doors in the west wall; that in the south-west corner was probably a service door, but the others appear to reinforce its identification as the most private room in the sequence. One led to the gallery overlooking the garden, created by Robert Poyntz (Chapter 3), but conveniently placed to be incorporated as a privy gallery, a feature of many royal lodgings in the 1530s (Thurley 1993, 141–3). The other led to a newel stair in the corner of the room, which would have provided direct access to the garden. The construction of such ‘vices’ from privy lodgings to privy gardens is recorded at Dartford (Colvin 1982, 70), Hampton Court (Thurley 1988, 17, 21), and other royal lodgings.

## Decoration

One of the most remarkable aspects of Acton Court is the extent to which the original decorative schemes survive, in particular the frieze on the south wall of Room 10 (Fig 6.3). It comprises panels of classical ornament, divided by balusters and set below a *trompe-l'oeil* cornice, and is executed largely in grisaille, enlivened by ochres, with touches of green and red, on a black background. Contemporary documents refer to decoration of this type as ‘antique’ work, which was described in a late 16th-century treatise on drawing as ‘an unnaturall or unorderedly composition for delight sake, of men, beasts, birds, fishes, flowers etc, without ... rime or reason, for the greater variety you shew in your invention, the more you please’ (Howard 1987, 121). As a style of decoration it carried overtones of magnificence and a desire to impress, but it was employed at this period as an addition to a wider vocabulary of ornament, without an underlying understanding of the principles of classical architecture from which it was derived (Howard 1987, 121–2; Thurley 1993, 86). It formed a widespread decorative component in the royal palaces; examples include antique work in the galleries at



Figure 6.3 Room 10, restored Period 4.1 frieze and panelling (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).



Whitehall, and borders of mermaids and naked children, amongst much else, at Hampton Court (Colvin 1982, 25, 311, and 133). Several of the queen's rooms at The More, Hertfordshire were decorated in 1534 with scutcheons of arms, 'antike' heads and borders (Colvin 1982, 167), and at Greenwich, antique work formed part of the redecoration scheme for the conduit house repaired in 1533 (Colvin 1982, 103). It was also employed there in the elaborate temporary decorations of the banqueting house built for the French embassy of 1527, of which detailed descriptions survive (Anglo 1969, 212–19).

This work was the responsibility of the Revels department, and it is in their accounts that the word 'antique' describing ornament first appears (in 1516; Thurley 1993, 269 note 14). The many essentially transient commissions of this department were probably responsible for disseminating the new style in ways which cannot now be fully appreciated, for it is clear that there was not then the same perception of the difference between permanent and temporary schemes of decoration. An interesting possible survival of such work is the chapel ceiling at Ightham Mote, Kent, which may have been commissioned for a tournament at Westminster (Starkey 1982, 153–63). The court was itinerant, and even permanent rooms were dressed differently according to occasion, mainly with tapestries and other hangings (Thurley 1993, 222). It is against this background that the decoration of the lodgings at Acton Court must be viewed, and it may be of significance that Sir Henry Guildford, who organised the Greenwich revels of 1527, was related to the Poyntz family by marriage, in that his sister was the first wife of Nicholas' uncle John (J Roberts 1993, 36, 70). Another Master of the Revels, Thomas Cawarden, is known to have employed the Italian Bartolommeo Penni to decorate his house at Whitefriars (Howard 1987, 126).

Although English craftsmen were employed upon the design and construction of the royal works, the specialist decorative finishing trades were dominated at this period by foreign craftsmen, including a number of Italians, but the majority Flemish, German, or French (Colvin 1982, 22–5; Thurley 1993, 102–11). At Acton Court such works would appear to have included not only the paintings themselves, but the grounds on which they were executed, and also the decorative stucco work.

Despite the frequency with which antique work is referred to in documentary sources, no English painted decoration survives of comparable quality to the Acton Court frieze (Croft-Murray 1962, 13–25, 153–77). Leland's description of black and white antique work at Chenies, Buckinghamshire (Howard 1987, 121), and accounts from Wolfhall, Wiltshire for 'certeyn fretts and antiques on canves', commissioned expressly for a royal visit in 1539 (Jackson 1875, 145), indicate that other courtiers' houses were decorated in this manner. There is an extant fragment, incorporating shields at Firlie Place, Sussex, home of Sir John Gage (Tipping 1924, fig lxxv). The only known fragment from the palaces is an excavated panel from Whitehall, in poor condition, which is similar to the external decoration that can be glimpsed in the background of the painting *The Family of Henry VIII* (Thurley 1993, 212). Further mid-16th-century white-on-black work, covering the whole wall surface, was found sealed behind Jacobean panelling at Westminster in 1882 (Middleton 1883, 471–2, 489–90, pls 26, 27; RCHM 1924, pl 175). The design incorporates balusters, arabesques and grotesque figures, with pedimented royal arms over the fireplaces, but although vigorous, the draughtsmanship is unsophisticated. Other domestic examples of mid- to late 16th-century date and variable quality are described by Reader (1935, 243–86; 1936, 220–62), including panels from Mildenhall manor house, Suffolk, which come closest in style and execution to the work at Acton Court (Reader 1935, fig 5, pls 12, 13). There is also a competent frieze on boards from Winchester College, related to the ceiling described below (Tipping 1924, fig lvii). Designs such as these probably derived from prints or pattern sheets, which appear to have played an important part in the dissemination of the style, and the Acton Court panels have several features in common with Italian originals illustrated by Thurley (1993, 88, figs 114, 116), such as fleshy acanthus scrolls, cornucopias and gadrooned urns with scrolled handles. However, no precise parallels are known (information from Anthony Wells-Cole).

The quality of the Acton Court frieze can bear comparison with surviving French examples, such as the chapel of La Verrerie, Cher (Babelon 1989, 130–2), executed between 1508 and 1543. At La Verrerie the lower register of the walls has antique deco-

ration with a foliate frieze and *trompe-l'oeil* mouldings in grisaille on a red ground, and there are roundels with busts in the roof vault. Antique decoration on a blue ground also serves as a foil to the figurative scheme on the vaults and in the chapels of the cathedral at Albi. This work bears dates between 1509 and 1514 and was carried out by Italian artists for Louis d'Amboise, nephew of Cardinal d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen and builder of Gaillon (Laran 1927, 83–101; Blunt 1980, 18).

Three-dimensional antique work has had a slightly better survival rate, and includes a number of examples of panelling, most of it reset. Until 1921, when it was removed to America, there was a fine panelled room at Boughton Malherbe, Kent, incorporating *putti*, arabesques and busts in roundels (Tipping 1924, 213–29; Newman 1976, 174). The house was built in the 1520s by Sir Edward Wotton, a courtier of similar standing to Nicholas Poyntz. Similar panels, one dated 1534, survive in the hall at Great Fulford, and occur in other Devon houses (Tipping 1924, 339–50).

One of the best and most complete interiors in the antique style is Abbot King's parlour at Thame Park, Oxfordshire, decorated between 1530 and 1539 (Tipping 1924, 253–60; Godfrey 1929, 59–68; Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 811). The lower walls are panelled with linenfold, which frames a plain stone fireplace surround, and there is an internal porch. The frieze and ceiling beams are embellished in wooden filigree, with panels of arabesques, framing medallions or shields (Godfrey 1929, fig 2), below a running scroll with mermaids and urns. There were traces of original colour: a blue ground with gilded relief decoration. The same technique and quality of workmanship can be seen in the spandrels of the roof to the great hall at Hampton Court (1532–4; Thurley 1993, fig 149), which incorporate grotesque beasts, foliage, cornucopias and tablets bearing mottoes, comparable to those at Acton Court.

A good deal of terracotta ornament also survives (Howard 1987, 130–5), including the roundels containing busts of Roman emperors commissioned by Wolsey from Giovanni di Maiano (Thurley 1993, figs 143, 145). Such medallions became a popular device, and were also used on the 'Holbein' gate, Whitehall (Colvin 1982, pl 24), and in the loggia dating from the 1520s at Horton Court, Gloucestershire, where their execution is considerably less accom-

plished (Kingsley 1989, 109–11). A roundel forms the centrepiece to the frieze in Room 10, and given that the room was square, was probably one of four. It depicts a young woman in three-quarter profile, with fair hair braided in an Italianate manner (Pl II). Her left shoulder is bare and there are traces of drapery. This has a number of similarities with the cameo bust depicted on Holbein's designs for a cup for Jane Seymour (Starkey 1991, 127), which is flanked by two male busts. The Acton Court busts may be deities or personifications, possibly the seasons. The roundels in Room 6 are too badly preserved for their contents to be identified with certainty, but a fragment of painted wooden ceiling from Winchester College illustrates the possibilities. One roundel contains the initials of John White who became headmaster in 1535, and the other a bearded male head in profile; both are encircled by foliate ornament enclosed by concentric bands, which correspond to the scribed lines on the Acton Court frieze (Reader 1935, 277 pl 14; Croft-Murray 1962, 177.14; Lewis 1995). The design as a whole imitates moulded and battened ceilings of the type found in Wolsey's closet at Hampton Court (Thurley 1993, fig 127).

In Room 6 the columns that articulate the frieze appear to be related to those in the painting *The Family of Henry VIII* (Thurley 1993, fig 282); both have a fluted lower shaft, a median rib and Ionic capitals carrying an entablature. The semicircular structure over the fireplace can be interpreted as a shell hood, similar to that over the entrance to the English palace in the painting of *The Field of Cloth of Gold* (Thurley 1993, fig 66). At Acton Court the rounded ends of the flutes are delineated by the scribed setting-out lines. Both have a semicircular outer rim edged with scrollwork, and in the painting a coat of arms forms the centrepiece. This is probably what occupied the central niche in Room 6: the depth of the recess suggests that it was three-dimensional, and contemporary examples of heraldic panels are illustrated in Thurley (1993, 102).

A miniature painted scheme in a similar range of colours, with royal arms, shell hoods, roundels and other antique ornament, can be seen on a writing desk made for Henry VIII before 1527 (Thurley 1993, fig 130). The sophistication of these friezes can also be gauged by comparison with the series of Brussels tapestries in the grotesque style woven for Whitehall in the early 1540s,

particularly the upper register of the *Triumph of Hercules*, which has a black background (Thurley 1993, fig 300; Campbell 1991, fig 2).

The ceilings in Room 6 and probably in Room 10 were scribed and painted to simulate a pattern of geometric ribs. Ceilings of this type, with wooden battens, survive at Hampton Court (eg the great watching chamber; Thurley 1993, fig 160) and in the chapel at the Vyne, Hampshire (Howard 1987, fig 66). They are also mentioned in building accounts: at the More in 1536 the joiners were paid for 'drawing the compass of the fret in the roof' (Thurley 1993, 167). At Greenwich the king's privy chamber had a fret ceiling, embellished in 1533 with sixty-seven 'bullions' and 218 'buds'; these were formalised flowers with wooden centres and leaves of gilded lead, in two sizes (Thurley 1993, 104). Fixing pins at the rib intersections indicate that such bullions were applied to the ceiling in Room 6, although it is not clear what materials were used. The scribed circles marking the rib intersections are 50 mm in diameter. Negatives of roundels, which may have formed the centres, on a board from the floor-space in Room 6 are 60 mm in diameter (Fig 8.30), and the pin positions indicate a total diameter of more than 100 mm for the bullions. Lead leaves have been found in the excavations (Fig 9.40), but are probably derived from the Period 3 house, and there are none from the east range. Another possible material, not represented on the site, is leather-mâché, which was used for roundels applied to the ceiling of the watching chamber at Hampton Court (Thurley 1993, fig 313). One of the rooms, probably 11, had stucco ceiling ribs, an unusually early application of this material (Fig 8.39), which appears also to have been used for a classical-style overmantel.

Panelling contemporary with the frieze survives in Room 10; it is quite plain and bears traces of yellow-ochre colouring. Such wainscot was a common component of contemporary interiors and could be imported from the Low Countries (eg Dartford; Colvin 1982, 71). It was fitted by joiners, rather than carpenters, who were responsible for structural woodwork, a distinction which can be seen at Acton Court in the differential construction of the boarded ground- and wainscot first-floor doors. It was common practice to colour woodwork; 'sprusse yellow oker' was applied to all the woodwork in a chamber at Bridewell palace,

to lodgings at Eltham, and to 'all the timber worke of all offices and lodgings in the myddyll court' at Greenwich in 1533 (Colvin 1982, 55, 82, and 103). Room 11 was not panelled, but has fixing blocks for hangings. The 1532 inventory lists several pieces of 'arris', depicting scenes of the Passion and jousting.

Other wooden decorative components are represented by constructional offcuts from Room 6. They include cornice moulding of a size to fit Room 11, and leaves from a cresting perhaps intended for an internal porch (Fig 8.29). The most probable position for such a feature would be within Room 6, possibly serving as a baffle between the privy and bedchambers, in default of an intermediate room (Thurley 1993, 139). A 'portall of weynscotte' is recorded in the dining room at Westhorpe, Suffolk in an inventory of 1538 (Gunn and Lindley 1988, 286), and an internal porch survives in the parlour at Thame Park, Oxfordshire (Tipping 1924, fig 265).

### The progress of 1535

Royal progresses, which took place in the summer months of most years, served two main purposes; pleasure, in the pursuit of good hunting, and politics, in meeting and gaining the support of the king's subjects. While Acton Court with its two parks could certainly have provided the hunting, the progress of 1535 was more overtly political, comprising for the most part visits to towns such as Bristol (in fact prevented by plague), and local gentry who were strong supporters of the reformed church (Starkey 1991, 118). Nicholas Poyntz appears to have been one of their number; in 1533 he welcomed a travelling preacher, who addressed an audience of prominent Bristol citizens in the churchyard at Iron Acton (Powell 1971, 151). His uncle by marriage, Sir John Walshe, employed William Tyndale as chaplain and tutor to his children at Little Sodbury.

Progresses followed a fixed itinerary planned some months in advance and issued as a list known as the 'giests' (Thurley 1993, 67-73). Even with this notice, and possibly with an element of anticipation, the time available for all building and finishing works would be less than a year. The building programme at Acton Court is undocumented, but accounts of the King's Works make it clear that tight deadlines were the norm, and the key to progress appears to have been good organisation. The most extreme exam-



ple is provided by the campaign to build lodgings for Anne of Cleves at St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury (Colvin 1982, 59–61), which lasted just eleven weeks, from 5 October to 21 December 1539. It involved the construction of a new range, of brick and timber-framing, with three chambers on the first floor, and the conversion of existing buildings to provide further rooms. Up to 350 men were employed at any one time, work was carried on after dark, and braziers were used to dry the rooms out after plastering, in time for the queen's arrival. Fortunately bad weather delayed her at Calais for two weeks.

Very detailed accounts also survive for Dartford Priory, which was converted into a sizeable royal house after the Dissolution (Colvin 1982, 68–74). By the king's command the work was 'spedely to be carried out' and demolition work started in June 1541. By July eighty-one bricklayers were engaged in constructing the walls of the royal lodgings and eighty-four carpenters were framing five roofs ranging from 21 m to 41 m (70 ft to 134 ft) in length. Joiners responsible for internal fitting-out appear in the accounts in February, by April mats were being laid throughout, and in May the king paid a visit. The queen's lodgings were unfinished and work on them continued in the summer of 1542. In 1543 the principal scene of activity was the great court which contained offices, lodgings and the gatehouse. A corner of this still survives; the courtyard elevation has wooden windows and shows signs of hasty construction (Colvin 1982, 73; Clapham 1926, 80).

Although Dartford was constructed with all the resources of the royal works, it provides a useful example of what could be achieved in less than a year. To judge from the roof dimensions the lodgings there were approximately five times the size of those at Acton Court and were built of similar materials, being a mixture of brick, rubble and reused freestone, although laid by bricklayers. It also gives an indication of the numbers of workmen employed on individual parts of the contract, which suggests that the east range would have required in the order of twenty carpenters, and the same number of masons. Other accounts indicate that only the most ambitious private projects had more than sixty men on the weekly payroll (Airs 1975, 59). The building programme involved the demolition of Period 3 service buildings, the setting-out and digging of foundations, not onerous given the

proximity of the bedrock to the surface, and the construction of the shell. This is in effect a dry-stone wall and must have been built by local labour conversant with the techniques of laying Pennant rubble. Freemasons were needed for the first-floor windows, copings and finials, but it is possible that the majority of ground-floor windows were wooden, like the surviving window in Room 15. Also part of the basic structure was the first floor and the roof, finished with Pennant slates. All but a few minor pieces of the timber required was new; a possible source would have been the Forest of Dean. Fitting-out involved the insertion of partitions, doors, panelling and fireplace surrounds, called 'parells' at Dartford. The interior was ceiled, plastered and painted, and the exterior was rendered. With the exception of the specialist plaster and paint finishes, all the work could have been carried out by local craftsmen, and as at Dartford there are signs of hasty workmanship, particularly in the carpentry of the roof, and the fixing of glass to the wooden window.

Only one building account survives, for the sum of £5 17s 11d paid to various workmen in the year 1537–8, and this gives no real insight into the cost of the building. For comparison the work at Canterbury cost *c.* £650, and the 1541–2 campaign at Dartford over £3,000 (Colvin 1982, 60, 73). This is comparable with the cost of Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, built for a wealthy London merchant between 1525 and 1538. Two lesser East Anglian houses, Little Saxham Hall and Redgrave Hall cost £1,425 and £1,253 respectively (Airs 1975, 86). Taking the variable size of these projects into account, it is unlikely that expenditure on the east range at Acton Court was less than *c.* £500, or at least twice the annual value of the estate.

The numbers involved in a visit of this sort are difficult to estimate (Thurley 1993, 70), nor is the size of the Poyntz household known, but some insight is provided by the account books of Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, which detail expenses of the king's visit to Wolfhall, Wiltshire in August 1539 (Jackson 1875, 140–207). For the duration of the visit, from Saturday till Tuesday, the earl, his family and household of about fifty vacated the house and occupied a barn converted into lodgings for the occasion, and other accommodation. The cost of preparation work was £68 10s 10d, and specially commissioned decorations cost a further 31s 8d. Detailed accounts of the provisions



for meals indicate that the two households dined separately. A wide variety of fish, both fresh and saltwater, was served at supper on Saturday to seventy of the earl's household at a cost of £8. A similar meal was provided for the king's household at a cost of £37 15s 8d, and 200 messes were provided. Messes normally served four people, but here the quantities involved and a comparison of the unit cost of a meal suggests that this represents the actual number of people; a visit of eight hundred to a house of this type seems improbably large, particularly as the king was single at the time and this would not include the queen's household (Thurley 1993, 73). The accounts also make it clear that the king's officers supplied many of the provisions, such as fine flour, wine, wax candles, six hundred pears, eight pike, nine lobsters, seven swans and thirty-eight quails. There were also presents of venison and wild fowl from neighbours. One hundred and fifty 'ashen cupps' were supplied to the buttery, but there is no mention of the fine imported glass and tableware, which appears to have been procured especially for the visit to Acton Court (Chapter 9). The expenses for the whole week of the king's visit were £288 19s 10d, which included payments to musicians and extra kitchen staff.

Lodging and catering arrangements for a party of at least two hundred, even for a few days, involved considerable domestic upheaval. As well as the east range itself, farm buildings may have been made habitable for the duration, and other temporary buildings constructed. This included a new kitchen range in what is now the east court. Only traces of it survive below its Period 4.3 replacement, but it is probable that apart from fireplaces and ovens the superstructure was timber-framed. Augmenting kitchen facilities for special occasions was common practice, particularly at lesser royal houses (Thurley 1993, 157), and these could be accommodated in tents, as depicted in *The Field of Cloth of Gold*, which shows a great kitchen, boiling house and bake-oven (Thurley 1993, fig 206). For a royal visit it would also be necessary to provide a privy kitchen, which catered for the king and his immediate associates. Such kitchens are listed in the Westhorpe and Thornbury inventories (Gunn and Lindley 1988, 286; Hawkyard 1977, 56–7), and the latter survives (Rodwell, unpublished survey). Both surveys indicate the range of kitchen facilities provided at a great house, including wet

and dry larders, scullery, scalding house, pastry and saucery in addition to the rooms mentioned above.

The progress of 1535 lasted from 5 July to 23 October, starting at Windsor and visiting twenty-five houses for between one and ten days (Table 5: in fact the stay at Thornbury was prolonged to twelve). The actual programme differed from the geste in that plague prevented a visit to Bristol, and the king prolonged his stay in Hampshire by a month, visiting several additional houses and omitting Farnham. Of these properties eight (32 per cent) belonged to the church, nine (36 per cent) to the king, and eight (32 per cent) were courtiers' houses, so that the proportion of non-royal houses visited was much higher than the norm of barely 10 per cent for the second half of Henry's reign (Thurley 1993, 73). This may be a reflection of the political nature of this particular progress (Starkey 1991, 118).

The list shows the large part still played by the church in the provision of accommodation, either at major monasteries or the houses of the Bishop of Winchester. In this same summer Cromwell's commissioners were active in the west country (Betty 1989, 43), and one of the houses visited, Hurstbourne Priors, was appropriated by the king from the monks of Winchester (*LP H8*, IX, 438). Royal houses included Ewelme, a large courtyard house with a full complement of royal apartments, appropriated from the de la Pole family; and two hunting seats, Langley in Wychwood, and Easthampstead in Windsor Forest, where glass repairs were carried out in 1534–5. Except for a fragment of Langley these houses do not survive, but the three royal houses in Gloucestershire have fared rather better. All were Crown property for less than a century: Thornbury from 1521 till 1554, Sudeley from 1469 till 1547, and Berkeley, which was bequeathed to Henry VII and his male heirs in exchange for a marquise, from the late 15th century till 1553. Berkeley remains a roofed medieval castle of essentially 14th-century date (Verey 1976, 101), and at Sudeley there are substantial remains of a royal lodging range probably built by Richard III when Duke of Gloucester (Verey 1979, 438; Thurley 1993, 23). Thornbury is a castellated courtier's house rebuilt on the grandest possible scale from 1507–8 by Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham and unfinished at the time of his execution in 1521. The New Building which contained the ducal lodgings with its

Table 5

The Progress of 1535 in order of visit (*LP* 8, 989; Starkey 1991, 118, with map). A is the intended itinerary and B the actual progress in Hampshire. Full details are not given for church property.

House	Date	Days	Distance in miles	Owner	Survival	Reference
<b>A Proposed progress</b>						
Reading	5 July	3	12	Church	–	–
Ewelme	8 July	2	10	King	demolished	Colvin 1982, 90
Abingdon	10 July	3	8	Church	–	–
Langley	13 July	4	12	King	fragments	Colvin 1982, 160
Sudeley	17 July	6	14	King	Major ruin, late 15th cent lodgings	Kingsley 1989, 183
Tewkesbury	23 July	4	7	Church	–	–
Gloucester	27 July	6	7	Church	–	–
Berkeley	2 August	7	15	King <sup>1</sup>	14th–15th century castle	Kingsley 1989, 57
Thornbury	9 August	8	5	King <sup>2</sup>	1511–21 unfinished, part roofed	Kingsley 1989, 186
Bristol	17 August	4	10	<sup>3</sup>	–	–
Iron Acton	21 August	2	7	Nicholas Poyntz	East range purpose-built	–
Little Sodbury	23 August	3	6	Sir John Walshe	15th-century house, early 16th-century wing	Kingsley 1989, 123
Bromham	26 August	7	12	Sir Edward Baynton	Demolished,	?purpose-built <i>VCH Wilts</i> 7, 1953, 179
Wolfhall	2 Sept	5	8	Sir John Seymour	Demolished, accounts for 1539 visit	Jackson 1875
Thruton	7 Sept	3	12	Lisle family	Demolished	<i>VCH Hants</i> 4, 1911, 387
Hurstbourne Priors	10 Sept	1	8	Church	–	<i>VCH Hants</i> 4, 1911, 287
Winchester	11 Sept	5	10	Church	–	–
Bishop's Waltham <sup>4</sup>	16 Sept	6	7	Church	–	<i>VCH Hants</i> 3, 1908, 276
Old Alresford	22 Sept	1	7	Church	–	<i>VCH Hants</i> 3, 1908, 304
Farnham	23 Sept	4	14	Church	–	<i>VCH Surrey</i> 2, 1905, 599
Easthampstead	27 Sept	4	12	King	Demolished, glass repairs for visit	Colvin 1982, 76
Windsor	1 Oct	–	6	King	–	–
<b>B Actual progress</b>						
Bishop's Waltham	16 Sept	10	–	Church	–	–
Winchester	26 Sept	2	–	Church	–	<i>LP</i> 9, 460
Southampton	28 Sept	6	–	King	Castle: ruinous	<i>LP</i> 9, 460; Pevsner & Lloyd 1967, 537
Portchester	4 Oct	2	–	King	Castle: substantial ruin	<i>LP</i> 9, 467, 525; Pevsner & Lloyd 1967, 377
Southampton <sup>5</sup>	6 Oct	*	–	King	–	–
Salisbury (Clarendon) <sup>6</sup>	* Oct	4	–	King	Demolished; medieval palace	<i>LP</i> 9, 467, 571
Southampton	* Oct	*	–	King	–	–
Bishop's Waltham	* Oct	*	–	Church	–	–
Old Alresford	* Oct	*	–	Church	–	–
The Vyne	15 Oct	4	–	Lord Sandys	Built 1528–27, altered in 18th century	<i>VCH Hants</i> 4, 1911, 160; <i>LP</i> 9, 663
Basing House	19 Oct	2	–	Sir William Paulet	Rebuilt from 1531, demolished 1645	<i>VCH Hants</i> 4, 1911, 115; <i>LP</i> 9, 619 <sup>7</sup>
Elvetham	21 Oct	1	–	Sir John Seymour	Demolished	<i>VCH Hants</i> 4, 1911, 74; <i>LP</i> 9, 619
Easthampstead	22 Oct	1	–	King	–	–
Windsor	23 Oct	–	–	King	–	–

<sup>1</sup> Bequeathed to Henry VII and his male heirs by William Lord Berkeley

<sup>2</sup> Appropriated by the Crown after the execution of the Duke of Buckingham

<sup>3</sup> Visit cancelled due to plague: the King remained at Thornbury.

<sup>4</sup> The progress was extended from this point.

<sup>5</sup> Dates marked \* are not known exactly: four nights were spent at Salisbury so two nights must have been spent at one of the other houses.

<sup>6</sup> The reference to 'Claryngton' in *LP* 9 467 indicates a visit by Henry VIII (Colvin 1982, 66).

<sup>7</sup> *LP* 9, 620 describes a variant itinerary reaching Windsor on 25th October; it is not clear which was followed. Farnham was not visited because of reported deaths from sickness.

famous geometric oriels overlooking the privy garden was almost completed, as was the south-west tower of the inner court. The hall range was retained from the earlier house, and the kitchen range carried up to first-floor level: the base court was incomplete. All this was put in a sufficient state of repair for the 1535 visit. It is a purely Perpendicular building with no trace of Renaissance influence in its decoration (Hawkyard 1977, 57).

Of the eight courtiers' houses on the progress only three are still standing, which makes it difficult to assess how representative Acton Court may have been. However, it is clear that lesser buildings could also be extended: at Painswick, near Gloucester, a large hall was added to a lodge in the park for the reception of the king, who presumably visited whilst hunting (*VCH Gloucs* 1976, 67). The surviving fabric of Little Sodbury (Tipping 1937, 106, fig 154) does not suggest that any building work was specifically undertaken. The core of the house is mid-15th century, and the range running south from the hall, early 16th century, of a modest domestic type. However, some parts of the house have been demolished, and others, like the solar range north of the hall, rebuilt in the 18th century, so that it is difficult now to gauge its size in 1535.

All that survives of Bromham is a displaced and altered gatehouse (Howard 1987, fig 7). However Leland records that Sir Edward Baynton 'Yn Quene Anns dayes pullid down by licens a peace of this house (an old maner place at Corsham) sumwhat to help his buildings at Bromham' (Leland *Itin* 1, 133), which indicates that he was building in the years 1533–6. He also removed stone from the ruins of Devizes castle (Leland *Itin*, 1 5, 82), and in June 1537 bought the Cistercian house at Stanley four miles distant, which was rapidly demolished for its building materials (Betty 1989, 135). Baynton was Vice-Chamberlain to Anne Boleyn and subsequent queens, and these references indicate a substantial new house.

Sir John Seymour's house at Wolfhall has also all but vanished (Pevsner and Cherry 1975, 152), but the accounts of the 1539 visit indicate that no major building work was undertaken in preparation, and a barn pressed into service on that occasion seems also to have served for the marriage of Jane Seymour in 1536. It seems probable therefore that Sir John, unlike his son, did not see

fit to engage in extensive building programmes. Nothing at all is known about Thrupton, although it was also visited on the same 1539 progress as Wolfhall (*LP H8*, v, 1475).

The three Hampshire houses differ from the rest in being additions to the geste, which must suppose that they were already sufficiently large, and could be put in order at relatively short notice. Little is known of Elvetham, another Seymour property. It was the scene of a famously lavish entertainment for Elizabeth in 1591, which involved the construction of a host of temporary buildings including a sham castle (Girouard 1978, 111). Sir William Paulet received licence to crenellate the medieval castle at Basing in 1531. He built extensively before his death in 1572, at the age of 97, both within the old earthwork enclosure (the Old House) and outside to the east (the New House). This house received several royal visits, was besieged during the Civil War, and demolished in 1645. It was excavated c 1875–1909 by the owner Lord Bolton, which has resulted in an overall plan (*VCH Hants* 1911, iv, 118) and a large collection of unstratified finds (Moorhouse 1971). Unfortunately the structural sequence and its dating are less than clear, so that it is difficult to know what work had been carried out by 1535.

The Vyne is the only one of the courtiers' houses to have remained a gentry house throughout its history, and consequently was considerably altered in the 17th and 18th centuries. What remains is the northern half of an inner court built c 1518–27 in which the least altered rooms are the chapel and the long gallery (Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 634). Henry visited the house in 1510 and 1531 as well as 1535, and the inventory of 1541 taken after the death of Lord Sandys refers to rooms such as the queen's great chamber (Howard 1987, 36). However, there are difficulties in reconciling the inventory with the surviving house. Recent work (Wilson 1998, 21) has revealed large parts of the demolished ground plan and provided felling dates between 1526 and 1528 for the earliest surviving timber elements, suggesting that the house was extensively rebuilt at the time Sandys became Lord Chamberlain.

Nicholas Poyntz was by no means alone in providing purpose-built lodgings for the king; the most notable instance was probably Wolsey's lodgings at Hampton Court (Thurley 1993, 73; Howard 1987, 36).



However, the group of houses visited in 1535 is representative of the problems of survival and interpretation presented by buildings of this period. Many important houses have disappeared altogether, rendering comparison difficult and perhaps giving undue prominence to those which have survived (Howard 1987, 21).

## Periods 4.2–4.4

### The mid-16th-century house

These phases can be considered together, for although they are distinct architecturally they must all have been built in the decade before the death of Sir Nicholas in 1556. They mark a continuous evolution away from a house whose form was determined primarily by functional considerations and constraints, towards a building in which architectural symmetry was a determining factor.

The same building materials were used as in Period 4.1; Pennant rubble set in loam and rendered externally, with limestone dressings, but the quality of construction is better. Walls are wider in relation to their height, buttresses are integral, and there are plinth and string-course details. As a result there do not seem to have been the same problems with movement as were encountered in the east range, and which some works of Period 4.3 seem designed to correct. As before there is evidence for reuse of limestone, but in addition both the floor joists and the roof of the north range were recycled wholesale. They are late 15th-century and there is little doubt that they come from Kingswood Abbey, where they were probably derived from one of the claustral ranges. The north range at Acton Court was over 36 m long and its size may have been determined by the materials available. Sir Nicholas acquired Kingswood, not without difficulty (Chapter 2), at the Dissolution, but patently had no interest in using any of the buildings as they stood, and no qualms about their systematic demolition for building materials to be reused elsewhere (Airs 1995, 135). With the exception of the gatehouse and a few other buildings in the outer court nothing survives above ground at Kingswood and the plan is little known (Verey 1976, 282; Lindley 1954, 115). Similar dispatch was shown by Sir Edward Baynton in demolishing Stanley Abbey near Chippenham, Wiltshire, to provide stone for rebuilding his house at nearby Bromham

(Betty 1989, 124). According to tradition Nicholas Poyntz was also reputed to have used stone from Kingswood to build his new house at Ozleworth (Newark Park) and this has now been demonstrated archaeologically (see below).

The new ranges swept away most but not all the medieval buildings in the north-west quarter of the moated area. The oblique building interpreted as a chapel (Chapter 3) was retained at some detriment to the convenience of the overall planning, and so was the core of the medieval house; the porch, the hall and the chamber block to the west. A new link was provided to the south end of the east range and the ground floor reordered. A large base court was constructed to the south, and extensive detached service ranges built to the east, replacing the Period 4.1 kitchens in the same position (Fig 6.4).

### External elevations

Although less than half this house survives as a roofed building, the fabric and plan evidence allows the reconstruction of the external elevations at this period in some detail (Figs 6.5 and 6.6). The only part of the principal south elevation (E2) standing to its full height is the Period 4.1 east range; its reconstruction is discussed above (Chapter 5). In Period 4.3 the ground-floor windows were blocked and replaced by buttresses and the adjoining part of the south range rebuilt as far as the screens passage. Known dimensions such as the size of the ground-floor window, the position of the first floor and the height of the ridge indicate that here the principal room was on the ground floor with a garret above. The distribution of architectural fragments on the site suggests that the porch and the adjoining hall oriel were retained as late medieval structures until the end of the 17th century; their form is discussed in Chapter 3. However, the chamber block to the west was rebuilt and is shown with windows of standard Period 4.3 or 4.4 type. The south gable of the Period 4.2 west range survives to above the level of the plinth course and the remaining detail can be extrapolated from the contemporary north range. The whole elevation at this period was balanced rather than symmetrical, but the new south court was set out so as to place the porch at the centre, by positioning the eastern boundary some 14 m beyond the east range. The retention of the oldest part of the house in an otherwise general rebuilding suggests that other than



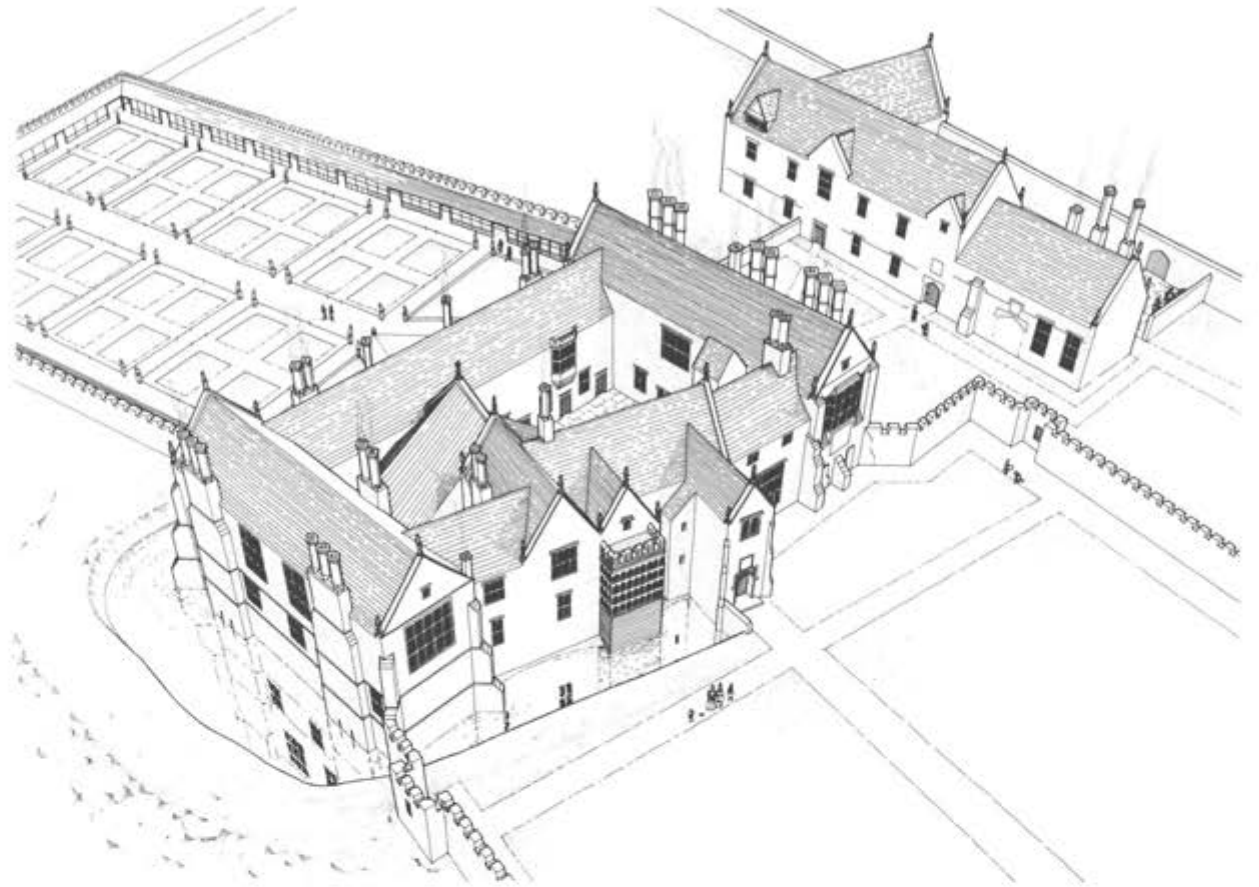


Figure 6.4 Reconstructed view of the Period 4.3–4.4 house (1550s) (drawing: Chris Jones-Jenkins).

purely architectural considerations were at work, and the possible desire to emphasise the pedigree of the Poyntzes as a gentry family.

In contrast to the south elevation the north elevation of the house (E6) is essentially symmetrical and largely a single build of the mid-16th century. The large first-floor window in the north gable of the Period 4.1 east range was retained and the ground floor rewindowed in Period 4.3. Both were partly obscured by a stair or gallery added to provide access from the first floor direct to the garden. This was a successor to the privy stair removed by the Period 4.2 rebuilding. A reconstruction of the north range, based on the surviving stack and window spacings, gives a completely regular first-floor elevation with seven windows. There is known to have been a ground-floor cross-passage, which lies beneath the central window and may have been lit by sidelights like the east range. There were no ground-floor windows east of the cross-passage, but unless the

rooms to the west were used only as cellars, the plan dictates that they must have had windows on this elevation. The gable of the west range presumably contained another large first-floor window and continued the plinth and string course details.

The east wall (E1; Fig 6.6) which has been the front of the house since the mid-17th century was at this period a subsidiary elevation facing a service range. It originated in Period 4.1 and its appearance was dictated by the functional massing of stacks and garderobes. In Period 4.3 the central stack was augmented with a new flue and a new porch. The first-floor windows were retained and new lights added on the ground floor, one of which was reused; they are not spaced symmetrically. The west elevation of the house (Fig 6.4), which does not survive above plinth course level, also had two projecting stacks with garderobes, and the rooms in this range must have been lit from this side, as buildings abut the east wall for most of its length.

Both surviving courtyard elevations (E3, E4) show evidence of alteration to increase their architectural impact. The west elevation survives complete in its Period 4.3 form (Fig A.4), and the first-floor window was reduced in size expressly to fit the new symmetrical arrangement; in Period 4.1 it was positioned centrally to the interior space. The south elevation (Fig 6.6) progresses from a functional arrangement of small ground-floor windows with a blank upper storey to a regular façade of alternating doors and windows, emphasised in the bay opposite the screens passage, the axis of the house, by a first-floor oriel. This elevation has much in common architecturally with work at Newark Park, both in overall design and in the use of details like returned architraves. However, at Newark Park, in a building on a new site and constructed of a more malleable limestone ashlar the symmetrical design is more fully worked out. Little can be said about the north and east courtyard elevations which are reduced to footings. The latter was purely a screen wall masking the irregular medieval ranges to the west.

#### Plan and room function

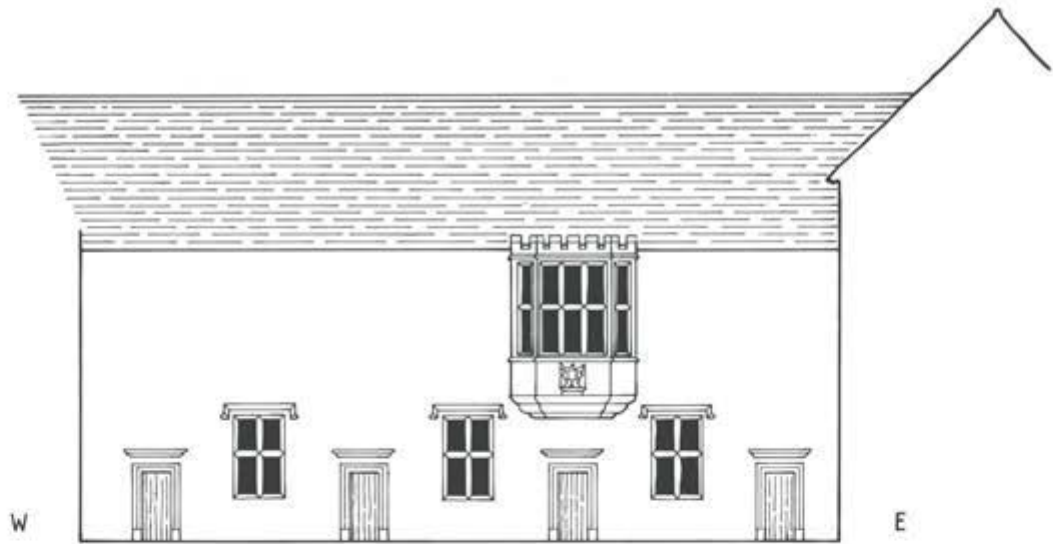
There are unfortunately no inventories relating to this period of the house's history, and the only room to which there is direct reference in the 16th century is a parlour mentioned in the will of Nicholas Poyntz the younger (1585; Chapter 2, Appendix B). However, the surviving physical evidence and inventories from comparable houses together provide evidence for the overall disposition of the house and the identification of individual rooms within it. Particularly apposite to Acton Court at this period are the Yate Court inventory of 1548/9 (Fox 1898, 22–4) and the Lacock Abbey inventory of 1575 (Vernon 1968, 72–82). The former gives room dimensions, including details of the windows and reasonably clear directions, but the house is now a ruin. The latter is an extant monastic conversion with much architectural detail in common with Acton Court (see below), but in the present state of knowledge it is tantalisingly difficult to equate the physical with the inventory evidence, a common situation in houses of this period (Howard 1987, 73). This inventory names rooms and lists contents but gives little indication of their sequence within the building.

At Acton Court it is clear that the ground floor of the standing ranges was

divided into lodgings (Fig 6.7). The east range survives complete, with a central cross-passage (Room 18) linking service and inner courtyards, and lateral passages providing individual access to four rooms (Rooms 15, 16, 19, 21; Fig 6.8). A hatch connecting the cross-passage with Room 16 suggests its use by a household official regulating movements through the range. The passage was provided with benches and the large number of graffiti testify to time spent waiting. These rooms were heated and finished to a good standard of decoration with plaster or panelling, with the possible exception of Room 21 which may have been used as a service room.

The north range was also bisected by a cross-passage giving access to the garden (Fig 6.9). To the east were three lodgings (Rooms 12–14) opening directly off the courtyard. Only two of these were heated and they are very plainly finished. West of the passage a corner of the chapel undercroft projects into the range and it is not clear how the room planning resolved this, as floor levels and internal partitions do not generally survive in this part of the house. There is a ground-floor garderobe shaft built into the wall opposite, and it is possible that the constricted space was used for one or more garderobe closets opening off adjoining rooms. There is space for a small chamber to the east, next to the cross-passage, and for two chambers at the west end of the range (Room 31). At least one of these was heated and they must have been lit from the north. Access may have been from the west range or alternatively from the small triangular court to the south, via a new covered passage under the west end of the chapel. In the room adjoining (Room 32) the floor level was lowered and the fireplace went out of use, suggesting a change from living accommodation to storage.

Within the west range only one partition has survived in an area of subsidence. The space to the south had flagged floors and is too large (Room 29; 14.4 m, 47 ft 3 in) to have been a single room. It was probably divided into two chambers *c* 6 m (20 ft) square (cf Room 15), both with fireplaces. There is an extant hearth against the south gable, and in the central room a fireplace could have been incorporated into the wedge of masonry between the east wall and the chapel range (cf Room 22). The south room appears to have been provided with a garderobe in the western stack and there was a staircase in the south-east corner.



Courtyard South Elevation



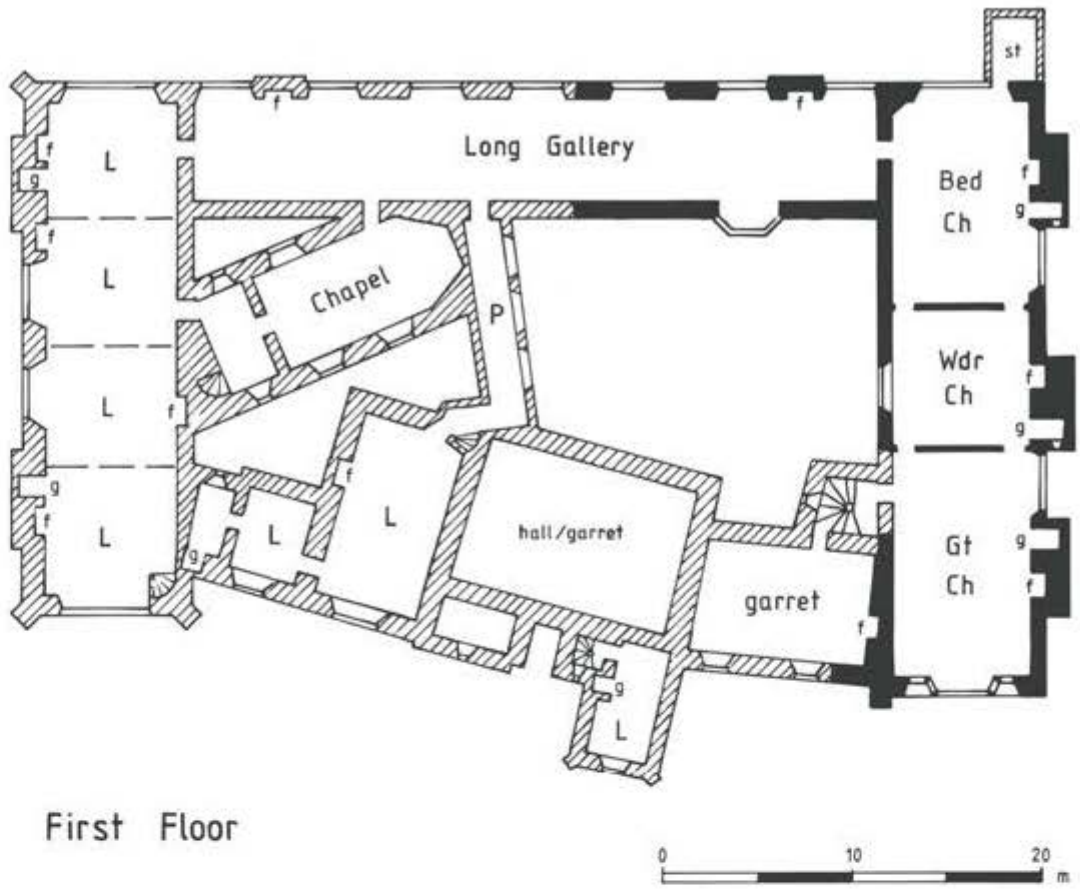
East Elevation



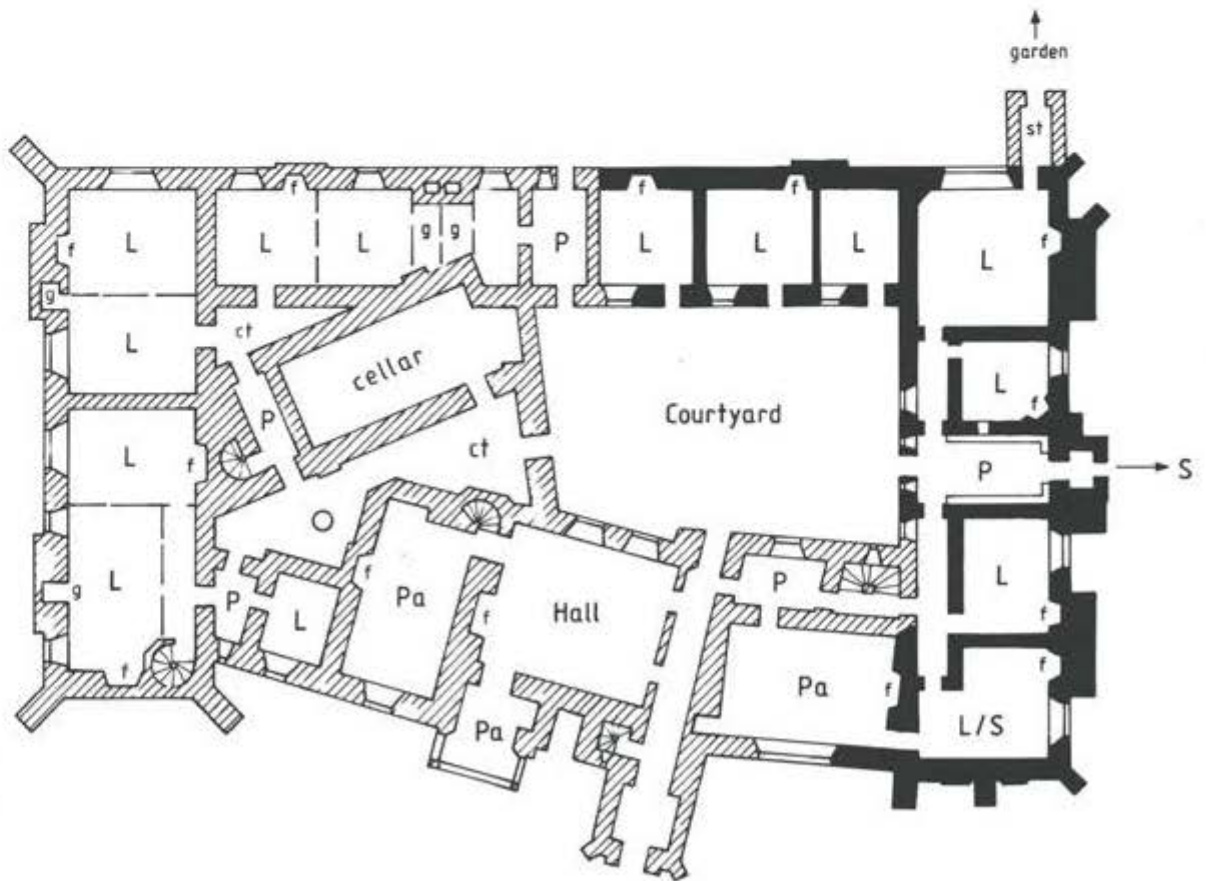
A single room north of the partition (Room 30) would have been 11 m (36 ft) long, as large as the state rooms in the east range (Rooms 6, 11), and the probability is that this space was also subdivided. Fireplaces and a garderobe could be accommodated in the western stack. These rooms had

suspended wooden floors, and the large collection of artefacts from beneath them (Chapter 9) give a glimpse of daily life within the house. Sewing implements and articles of dress are strongly represented, together with recreational items such as dice and gaming pieces.

Figure 6.7 Reconstructed plans of the Period 4.3/4 house showing possible room use:  
*Ch* – chamber,  
*f* – fireplace,  
*g* – garderobe,  
*L* – lodging,  
*P* – passage,  
*Pa* – parlour,  
*S* – service,  
*st* – stair.



First Floor

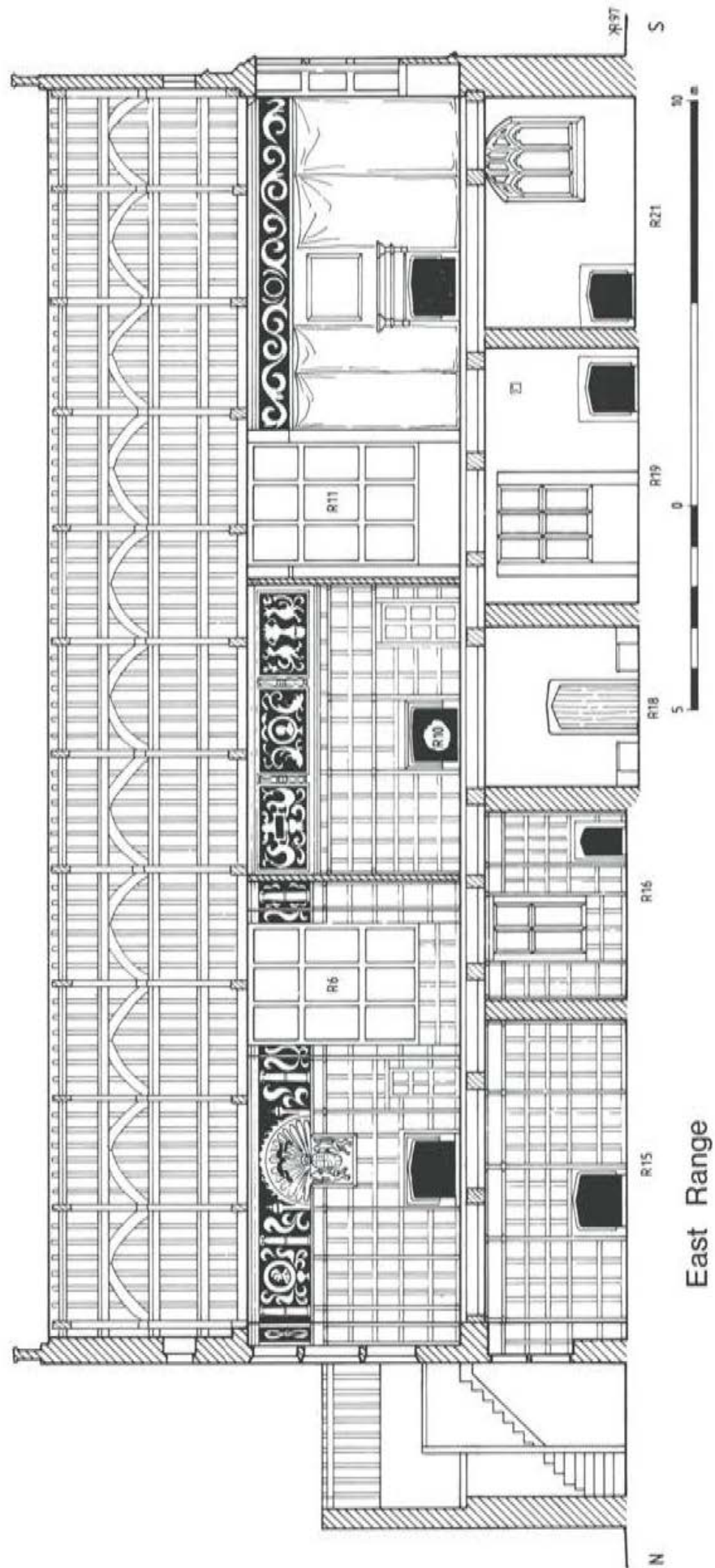


Ground Floor

Figure 6.6 (facing page)  
 Reconstructed elevations of  
 the Period 4.3/4 house;  
 Courtyard elevation of  
 north range (E4), showing  
 regular planning of ground-  
 floor lodgings and oriel to  
 long gallery: East Elevation  
 (E1), at this period facing  
 a service range.



Figure 6.8 Reconstructed interior of the Period 4.3/4 house, east range.



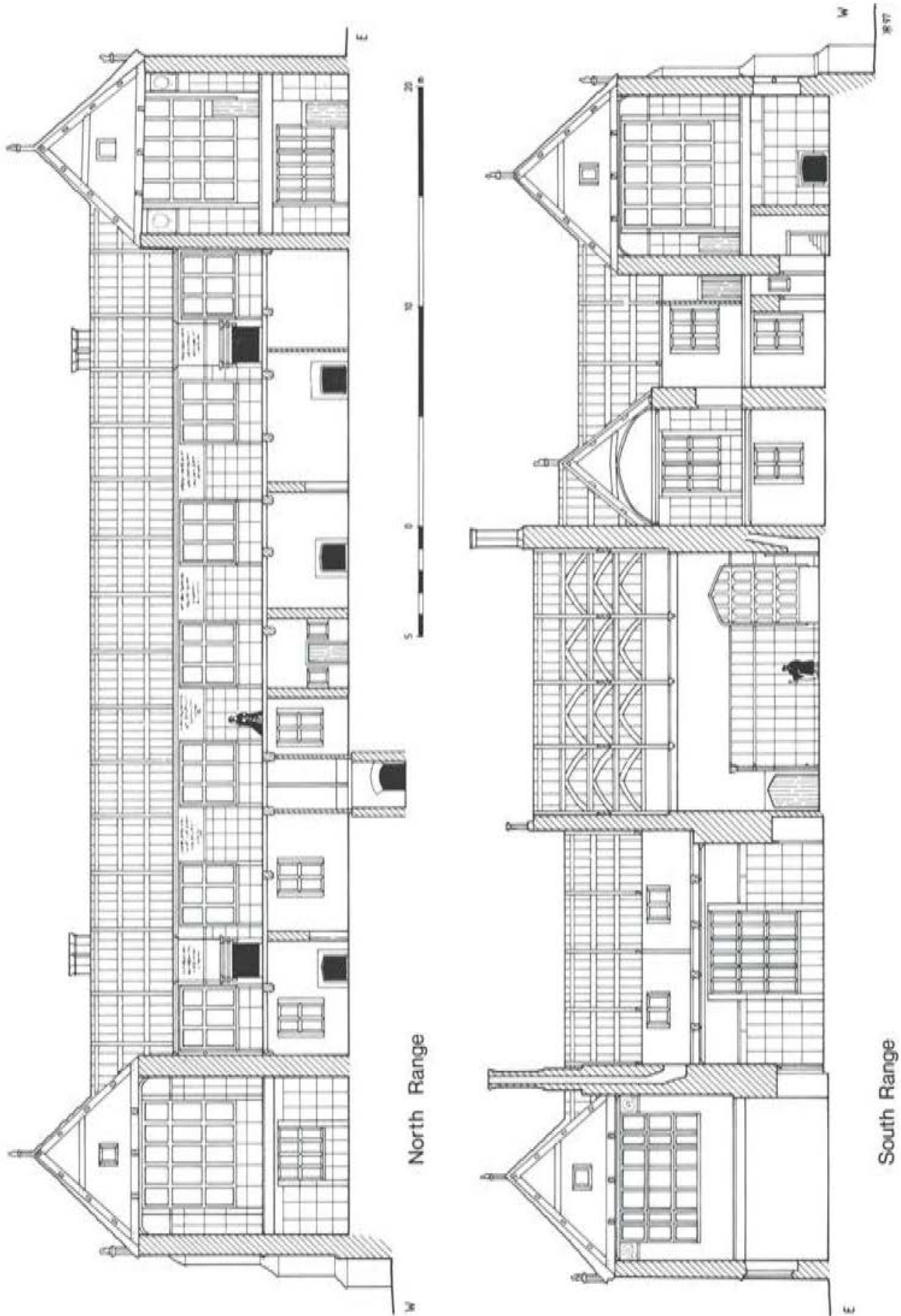


Figure 6.9 Reconstructed interiors of the Period 4, 3/4 house, north and south ranges.



The function of the rooms within the west range is open to more than one interpretation. It is possible that they continued the ground-floor sequence of lodgings, in which case they may have formed two suites of two rooms, a common arrangement at Lacock (Vernon 1968, 77). Direct external access could have been provided from the two triangular courts, or they may have been approached from the south range via Room 28, although this would make a lodging in its own right. Internal passages like those in the east range are also a possibility, and this is the option shown in the reconstruction (Fig 6.7), with access from Room 28a. Alternatively one or more of these rooms may have been used as parlours for informal sitting or dining (Girouard 1978, 103). Room 27, opening off the high end of the hall, has been interpreted as the parlour within the medieval house and it may have retained this function. However, it could have been augmented with one or more additional parlours beyond, occupying Room 28/28a or the south end of Room 29. Longleat had a string of three parlours in this position (Girouard 1978, 103), and there were two at Siston Court, Gloucestershire, which has a very detailed inventory of 1625 (Kingsley 1989, 16, 162). At Yate Court in 1548/9 a parlour had recently been constructed at the opposite end of the hall to the great chamber as part of a block of six new rooms, of two storeys with a garret. This parlour measured 11 m by 6 m (36 ft by 20 ft) and was 4.25 m (14 ft) high with an unfinished ceiling. It was lit by a transomed freestone window of ten lights (Fox 1898, 23).

The most probable function of Room 22 was also as a parlour, perhaps specifically for dining. It was created in Period 4.3 east of the screens passage in an area previously occupied by the access to the 1535 state rooms (*see above*), and is unusual in being a principal room on the ground floor; it has a ceiling height of 5.5 m (18 ft) and there is only a garret above (Fig 6.9). The use of parlours for dining is well attested in the 16th century (Howard 1987, 112; Girouard 1978, 104). At Westhorpe, Suffolk in 1538 there was a dining chamber distinct from both the hall and the great chamber (Gunn and Lindley 1988, 286), and at Lacock in 1575 the contents of the hall, the parlour, and the dining chamber indicate that they could all be used for eating; there was also a great chamber, part of a suite of three state rooms unfurnished apart from hangings at the time the inventory was taken (Vernon 1968, 77).

The siting of this room may hold the key to an understanding of the first-floor layout at this period. The three rooms forming the royal lodging in the east range were essentially unaltered and probably continued as state rooms (Fig 6.8), respectively great chamber (Room 11), withdrawing chamber (Room 10) and best bedchamber (Room 6). A new parlour east of the hall would then complete the relocation of the principal rooms from their medieval position at the high end of the hall. The problem of a principal staircase, otherwise conspicuous by its absence, can be resolved by siting it in the angle between Rooms 20, 22, and 23. This was unexcavated, but the adjoining wall of the east range (E3) was completely rebuilt in Period 5.1, suggesting that a feature has been lost. The space enclosed is *c* 3 m square, sufficient for a substantial stone newel, a type that was current in such a situation until the end of the century (Howard 1987, 83; Girouard 1978, 93); for comparison the east stair at Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire, of *c* 1550 measures 4 m square internally and rises round a square central newel with corner landings (Gordon Slade 1978, 162). There was probably access to the foot of the stair from the passage Room 20, and either directly from Room 22, or indirectly via Room 23 which may have served as a corridor to the screens passage.

This rearrangement would suggest that the old medieval great chamber (over Room 27) became part of a suite of lodgings, and that lodgings also occupied the first floor of the west range, probably two suites of two rooms with a garderobe apiece. This was the common arrangement at Lacock, where all the principal residents had a chamber with elaborate beds and other furniture, and a more simply furnished inner chamber (Vernon 1968, 77). These west range lodgings would have been the second best in the house with ribbed plaster ceilings, large windows giving views of the park, and direct access to the long gallery. Each suite of rooms appears to have had a separate access stair, one of which also served the chapel.

In the north range the whole of the first floor was given over to a gallery 36.6 m (120 ft) long (Fig 6.9). It had seven regularly-spaced windows overlooking the garden and two fireplaces of classical design. It is a fully fledged 'recreative gallery' (Coope 1986, 50) and replaced a late medieval corridor gallery in the same position, mirroring the evolution which can be seen in the royal palaces (Colvin 1982, 17–20). By the 1540s



a number of royal houses, including Non-such, had long galleries, and they also existed in courtiers' houses such as The Vyne, Hampshire, supposedly the earliest surviving example (Coope 1986, 49). Probably more directly influential for Acton Court was the great gallery which formed part of Somerset House, built for Edward Seymour between 1547 and 1552 under the stewardship of John Thynne, who contracted for a new long gallery at Longleat in 1559 (Girouard 1961, 206). Nicholas Poyntz was part of this circle (see below), which also included William Sharrington, whose galleries at Lacock survive. Some of these (eg the Brown gallery) are of corridor type, but the Stone gallery is comparable on a number of points to Acton Court. It has four regularly-spaced windows with related mouldings, framing a central classical fireplace (see below) and is 28.6 m (94 ft) long by 3 m (10 ft) wide.

The Acton Court gallery, being a new range rather than an adaptation of a monastic dormitory, is more fully developed, but it is not known which was built first. It is positioned within the house to be *en suite* with the principal lodgings in both the east and west ranges and commands a view of the walled garden to the north. There was probably direct access to the chapel over Room 32, as there had been before from the corridor gallery; the conjunction of chapel and gallery is known from other country houses of the period (Coope 1986, 60). It is the retention of this awkwardly placed medieval range within the rebuilt house which suggests it had a function of some significance. The re-entrant angle between the two rooms cannot have existed at first-floor level, and could have been resolved by a canted east end to the chapel. A notable Tudor domestic chapel with just such an east end, albeit on the ground floor, survives at The Vyne, Hampshire (Howard 1987, 114). More general access to the long gallery (than through the lodgings at either end) could be provided if the screen wall forming the west side of the courtyard supported a corridor gallery. This would link the north range with the head of the staircase at the high end of the hall and there is evidence that this perpetuated a medieval arrangement (Chapter 3).

The long gallery was quite soberly decorated with wainscot, which does not survive but is likely to have been composed of plain rebated panels, as elsewhere in the Period 4 house. This was surmounted by a series of

painted texts which give very direct expression to Nicholas Poyntz's political reversals in the early 1550s (Chapter 8). There was a wooden cornice and a flat plaster ceiling, which probably had geometric ribbed decoration like the contemporary west range. Of other surviving early galleries The Vyne is fully panelled with elaborate linenfold, which may be reset (Coope 1986, 50), and the Stone Gallery at Lacock has a plain canted ceiling above a wooden cornice (Tipping 1924, pl 398): in 1575 the walls were hung with '4 peeces of hangings of water flowers bordered with Antyke' (Vernon 1968, 75).

Although the fabric of the medieval hall was retained, it is probable that its appearance was updated to match the rest of the house. Architectural fragments indicate that a new stone screen was erected, windows were replaced, and fireplaces of *c* 1500, one of which may have come from the hall, were broken up and thrown in the moat. A ceiling was probably inserted, as they are ubiquitous elsewhere in the house, creating a garget over the hall like that over Room 22 (Fig 6.9). Similar refurbishments, including a new chimneypiece, panelling, floor and screen were commissioned at Longleat in the mid-1550s (Girouard 1961, 205).

Service rooms at Acton Court were housed in separate ranges, demolished in the mid-17th century to make way for the east court. These directly replaced the temporary offices of 1535, and were probably rebuilt for functional reasons at a date earlier than the rest of the house, perhaps in the late 1530s, when the only known 16th-century building account records the expenditure of £5 17s 11d. Poor preservation makes this range difficult to interpret; there are traces of partitions and a drainage system in Room 35, and an open drain associated with a pitched Pennant surface in Room 36, which on later analogy may have been a stable. Large kitchen fireplaces are not much in evidence, although the east wall of the entire range is 1.5 m thick, perhaps to house a series of hearths. At Yate Court the kitchen and a dry larder were at 'thende of thalle'. It had two hearths and measured 8.3 m by 4.3 m (27 ft by 14 ft). On the south side of the base court there was also a stable with a hayloft, a bakehouse and a brewhouse. At Lacock the service court built by Sharrington survives to the north of the claustral buildings, and the north range, which accommodates the brewhouse and the bakehouse, has a series of large projecting stacks. The sta-



bles were in the adjoining east range and the monastic kitchen north of the hall appears to have been retained (National Trust 1986b, 21). The contents of all these rooms together with a malt loft and a dairy are listed in the inventory (Vernon 1968, 78).

The hearth tax assessment of 1672 states that Acton Court had thirty-two hearths. By this date the house was smaller than its mid-16th-century optimum as the service ranges had been demolished. A minimum of twenty-three hearths are known to exist or can be inferred from the plan of the main house, and another four or five may have existed in smaller rooms. The remainder were presumably in detached buildings, such as the fireplace in the tower on the south-west corner of the outer court. At its maximum extent the total room count, including outbuildings, appears to have been between forty and fifty, which compares closely with the fifty-two rooms itemised at Lacock. At Yate Court there were thirty rooms in the main part of the house and at least ten more in the base court. All three buildings are rather larger than the first phase of Longleat, where an inventory of 1552 lists some twenty-seven rooms, which Thynne's steward, in 1546, considered a very handsome property, although this was small in comparison with what Longleat would become (Girouard 1961, 202).

### Stylistic comparisons

As has been touched on above in relation to the long gallery, Nicholas Poyntz was part of the circle of Protector Somerset, related by marriage and with sufficiently close political connections to be arrested at his fall in 1551 and detained for several months. This group shared the same classicising tastes in architecture, although it is not clear why an Italianate style should have prevailed amongst such enthusiastic Protestants (Howard 1987, 187). There is a geographical bias towards west Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, Somerset's home territory, clearly evident in the surviving buildings.

Somerset's building works in the period from 1547 to 1552 were prodigious (Howard 1987, 188) and included his highly influential house in the Strand, which had the first fully classical elevation in England (Summerson 1983, 45). None of these houses survives but their style was disseminated by the likes of John Thynne, who superintended works at Somerset House

and by the craftsmen who worked on them. Thynne was also involved with Bedwyn Brail in Wiltshire, a house which never advanced beyond foundation level. French masons sent down to work on it drank immoderately and subsequently absconded (Girouard 1961, 210), but others were probably employed on Somerset House, which has close French parallels. The interchange of English masons within the group is also documented by the well-known letter from Sharrington to Thynne dated 25 June 1553 about the employment of John Chapman, who had been working at Lacock and was about to depart to Dudley Castle with a chimneypiece (Girouard 1961, 205). In another instance in 1547 Sir Andrew Baynton attempted to entice Thynne's principal mason away from Longleat to work on his own house at Bromham (Airs 1995, 75), where a building campaign using materials from Stanley Abbey was underway (*see above*). This appears to have been another lost house of the Somerset group.

Work which may be attributed to Chapman survives at Lacock Abbey, where the distinctively classical detail includes the two tower rooms with their stone tables, the tower balustrade, the transomed windows, some doorcases, the lavish use of little console brackets, and the fireplace in the Stone Gallery. Many of these features recur at Acton Court in closely related form. The Stone Gallery fireplace (Gotch 1901, pl LVII) is outwardly more highly decorated than that in Room 1 but the underlying form of the entablature is the same. It is supported by pilasters at Lacock, and at Acton Court by consoles, whose form can be paralleled in the windows of the lower tower room at Lacock. The console detailing is sufficiently close to suggest the same mason worked on both. The combination of a moulded sill supported on consoles is derived from Somerset House and can also be seen at Dudley Castle (Clark-Maxwell 1913-14, fig 9) and at Broughton Castle in Queen Anne's room (Gordon Slade 1978, 163; R K Morris 1989, pl 7). It is not clear how work in this style came to be carried out at Broughton as the Fiennes family had only tenuous connections with Somerset's circle.

The windows at Lacock are remarkable for their use of tramline mouldings with raised circles at the intersections, and for the introduction of the sunk chamfer (R K Morris 1989, 130-8). The circles are unique in an English context, but the tramline mouldings can be seen at Dudley and

Sudeley Castles, and are used at Acton Court in the long gallery windows, where they occur on the internal rather than the external elevation. The distribution of reused fragments suggests that the major windows of the Period 4.1 east range also had tramline mouldings, which would push back their introduction to the mid-1530s. This moulding became very widespread in great houses of the later 16th century.

The sunk-chamfered moulding does not occur in Period 4.2 work at Acton Court, but is universally used for windows in Periods 4.3 and 4.4, and also appears in Period 4.3 door and fireplace mouldings (Chapter 5). These features are hybrids, combining Perpendicular four-centred arches, hood moulds and semi-octagonal stops with floating classical cornices. The four-centred gate arch now in the east court has a pediment with a lion mask and crisply executed strapwork cartouches in the spandrels of the arch, which both echo details on the monument of 1551 to Gregory Cromwell, Somerset's brother-in-law, in Launde Abbey, Leicestershire (Pevsner and Williamson 1984, pl 28). The doorways in the service court at Lacock combine sunk chamfers with classical pilasters and entablatures, and at Acton Court in Period 4.4 a sunk chamfer forms the innermost order of a returned architrave on the doorcases of the north range. This classical detail is repeated on a fireplace at Newark Park (Fig 6.13) and can be seen on doors to the long gallery at Broughton Castle. These buildings are also linked by their external use of slightly underscaled classical columns: Ionic at Lacock, perhaps part of an arcade, Ionic and Corinthian at Broughton, forming the mullions of a oriel window, and a pedimented Tuscan doorcase at Newark Park (Howard 1987, figs 121, 122, pl 11).

#### Newark Park

Both Broughton Castle and Acton Court are buildings where an attempt has been made to introduce symmetry into an older structure. The same is true to a more limited extent at Lacock, where the mid-16th-century service court has elements of regularity, although it is now difficult to judge how the rest of the house might have looked. Newark is different, and a rare survival; a new building where the opportunity has been taken to design fully-integrated symmetrical elevations.

The house occupies a dramatic position on the edge of the Cotswold scarp and was

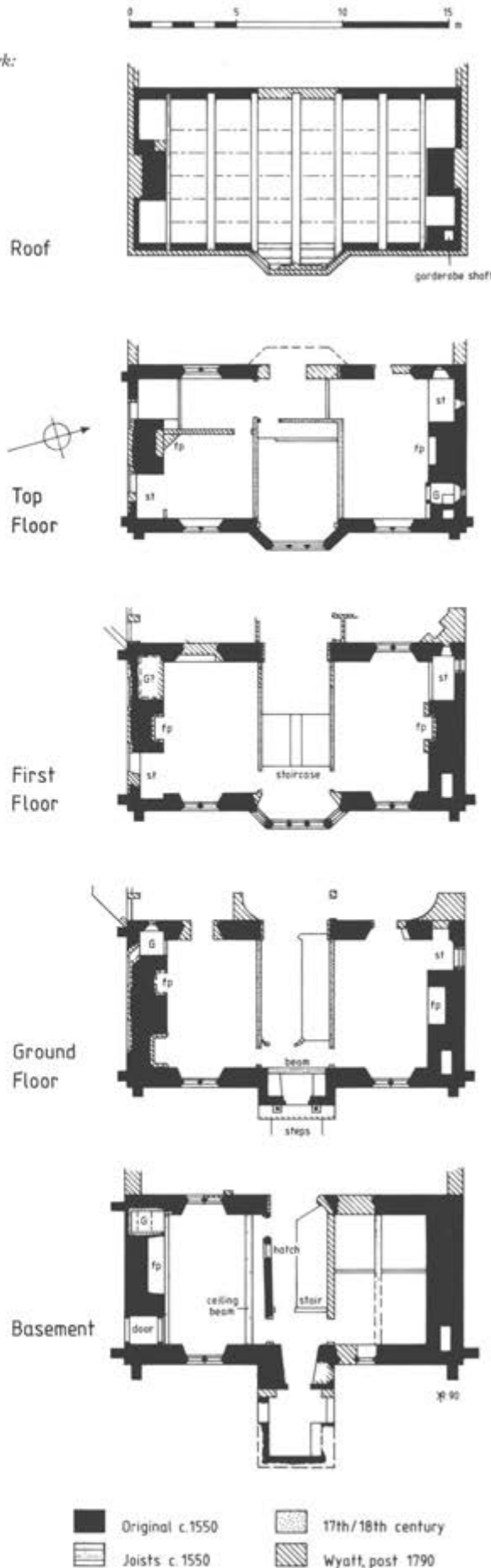
built as a lodge by Sir Nicholas Poyntz *c* 1550 (Kingsley 1989, pl 78). He bequeathed the house to his wife Joan, and it was sold to the Low family in 1565, after her death. The history of the building is summarised in Haslam 1985 (945–6), Kingsley 1989 (138–40) and Kingsley 1992 (183–5). It achieved its present appearance during the 1790s when it was remodelled and extended by James Wyatt for the Revd Lewis Clutterbuck (Haslam 1985, pl 3).

The original building was rectangular in plan (15.9 m by 8 m; 52 ft by 26 ft 3 in), one room deep and four storeys high with a flat roof (Fig 6.10). It was constructed of limestone rubble set in loam, faced externally with mortared ashlar. The east (garden) elevation has been very little altered; it is symmetrical, with stepped, set-back buttresses at the corners, and string courses defining the storeys (Fig 6.11). The windows are all of the same pattern with stepped hollow-chamfered mouldings, and most are unaltered; those on the ground floor originally matched the top storey. The principal feature is a central oriel which rises through the two upper storeys. The canted sides die away into the lowest stage, which incorporates a classical doorcase of Tuscan columns on high plinths supporting a pedimented entablature containing a roundel. On the soffit is a central foliate console (Cooper and Majerus 1990, 126). In front of the door was a deep projecting platform, now altered and reduced in size. It is hollow and incorporates a porch to an original basement door with access from the north.

Wyatt's principal alteration to this elevation was the crenellated parapet, which runs right round the building and replaces an original of unknown form: a balustrade with small domed corner turrets, like Sharlington's tower at Lacock, is a possibility (Tipping 1924, pl 388).

The west elevation was originally very similar but is now an internal wall (Fig 6.12). Some features are exposed including the outline of the central oriel, which appears to have been confined to the top storey: there is evidence of corbelling. However, the wall below was almost completely removed by Wyatt to create a staircase hall, leaving no evidence of its original form. The narrow end elevations were originally plain but were extended and refaced by Wyatt. Fabric repairs to the south wall in 1991 revealed that the parapet moulding incorporates reused blocks from an arcade of *c* 1400, which must have come from Kingswood Abbey.

Figure 6.10 Newark park: plans at five levels.



The interior of the house is predominantly 18th-century and only a few 16th-century features are exposed (Fig 6.12). Others have been seen during repair work. In the unrestored basement the north wall of the former kitchen is the only internal partition known to be original. It is built of rubble with a four-centred stone doorway and adjoining serving hatch. In the thick (1.9 m) south wall is a wide fireplace with a plain four-centred surround. Adjoining it to the east is a door which gave access to the exterior via a sloping vaulted passage through the thickness of the wall, and to the west a secondary cupboard formed by opening out a garderobe shaft. The other basement room is unheated and terraced into the bedrock. In both rooms the ground-floor joist structure is exposed.

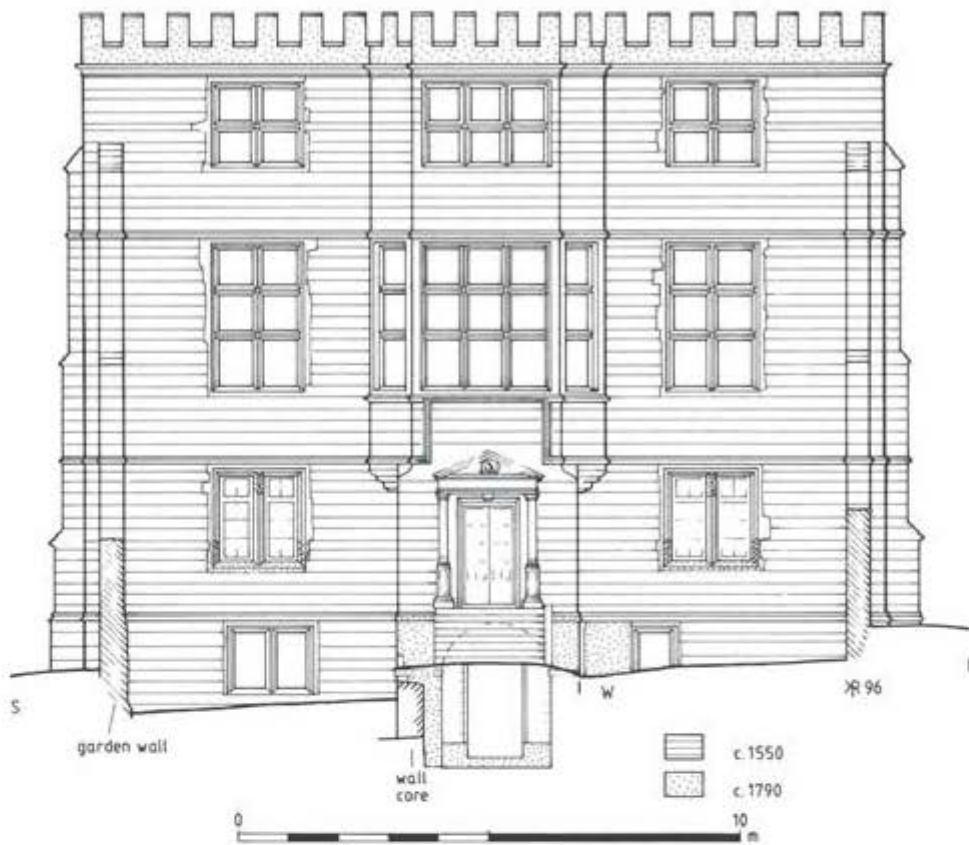
The ground floor is now divided into three rooms, with Wyatt's staircase hall occupying the centre of the range. It utilises pre-existing partitions which are probably 17th-century. At the rear of the classical east door was a shallow porch, now boxed in, spanned by an original lintel. All trace of a corresponding west entrance has been removed by Wyatt's remodelling. In the room to the north the west window has been turned into a doorway, and there is a complete original fireplace (Fig 6.13). The arch is four-centred but is framed by a returned classical moulding very similar to Period 4.4 work at Acton Court. A relieving arch rises directly off the lintel, which has dowels for the attachment of panelling. Garderobe shafts occupy the north-east corner of the building; in the north-west corner is a deep recess with a blocked external door, which appears to have housed a stair.

On the first floor 16th-century features are largely hidden behind Wyatt's remodelling. The oriel window lights a half landing, and the top lights in the adjoining rooms are plastered over internally. In the north room the west window is exposed, and in the adjoining closet, originally a stair, there is a window with a quatrefoil light, which is probably reused. There was another stair on the south-east corner: when plaster was stripped for repairs, two single-light windows were revealed in the south wall. Both were blocked at the time of Wyatt's refacing.

On the top floor the north room has an original fireplace, simpler than that on the ground floor. To the east is a garderobe chamber with an original window, pegged oak door-frame, and open double shaft; half extends upwards to serve a chamber at roof level.



Figure 6.11 Newark Park:  
external east elevation.



The original flat lead roof was carried on seven oak tie beams spaced at 2 m centres; the narrow (0.2 m) end beams are butted against the stacks and the central beam bisects the bay. The beams are cambered, up to 0.5 m deep by 0.4 m wide, and the top edges are morticed for roof joists, open on the north side and closed on the south. The lower edges have mortices for ceiling joists. The beam ends are rebated, probably for the parapet gutter, and the bay is roofed with baulks of timber. Other original parapet details were lost in Wyatt's rebuilding, and the 16th-century stacks were truncated at wall-plate level, together with a garderobe shaft in the north-east corner (c 11.2 m deep) which served a roof-level chamber.

Another roof feature which appears to be original is the gilded weather vane in the form of a dragon. It is certainly 16th-century; an almost identical beast, representing the Hydra, appears in an illustration to the *Pneumatics* of Hero of Alexandria in a translation of 1589 (Strong 1979, 77, fig 37).

The only room whose original function can be clearly identified is the basement kitchen. The hatch suggests a central service passage with access to the upper floors via a

missing west staircase; the corner stairs do not interconnect with the basement and the extant basement doors are both external. Such a stair may have been housed in a three-storey west porch set below the top-floor west oriel.

Storey height indicates that the first was the principal floor. It may have been used as a single space, or as there are two fireplaces, may have been divided into a greater and a lesser chamber. On the ground floor the surviving arrangement of two heated chambers divided by a cross-passage may be original. The basic division on the top floor was into three. The central room was unheated and could have been divided laterally into two closets, each with an oriel, opening from the larger rooms.

As well as the missing principal stair there were newels in the north-west and south-east corners. The former extended from ground level, where there was an external door, to roof level; the latter may have started on the first floor (ground-floor evidence is lacking). They provided the only means of access to the top floor and the roof. In the opposing corners were paired garderobe shafts, the north-east serving the



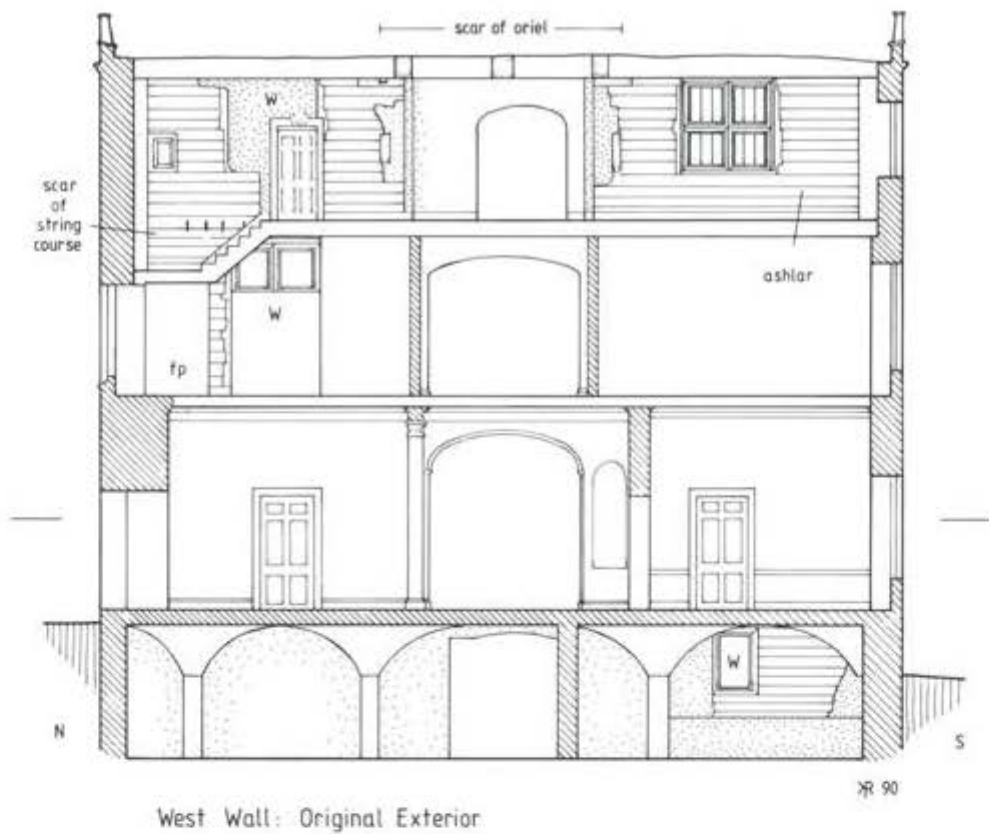


Figure 6.12 Newark Park: west wall, originally external, and sections.

roof and top floor, and the south-west the ground and presumably first floor (not visible). This may have discharged over the cliff face; the other had an external sump. At roof level the ends of the building must have been built up around the stacks to house the staircase heads and the garderobe; the fourth chamber may have been used as a banqueting house.

Newark was built as a lodge and is a compact building which probably owes its origins to gatehouse architecture. There are resemblances with the east range at Wilton, also built in the 1550s, where the central section had a three-storey oriel above an archway, flanked by pairs of six-light windows and articulated by string courses, although the flat roof is later (RCHME 1988, 320). More striking is the way Newark prefigures the high compact houses of the Smythson school, such as Wootton Lodge, Staffordshire (Girouard 1983, 199), which developed from lodge architecture in the late 16th century.

It is remarkable that two mid-16th-century buildings of the Somerset school, built for the same owner, should survive in such relatively unaltered form. Nicholas Poyntz, like the other enthusiastic builders of his generation, must have had a strong personal involvement in their design. It is interesting to speculate whether, had he lived longer, he would have continued to remodel Acton Court into another Longleat, where the finished product of the 1570s now masks the evolution of the earlier phases of the house (Girouard 1983, 54).

## The Period 4.5 and 4.6 house

After the death of Sir Nicholas Poyntz in 1556 no more major building programmes were carried out at Acton Court. The money expended on these projects may have been a contributory factor in the relative decline in the family fortunes: Nicholas Poyntz the younger left the court in 1559, pleading extreme want, and his son Sir John was permanently in debt. The fabric of the house reflects a history of minor repairs and alterations; strapwork ornament was added to the screen in the hall, but the most substantial surviving Period 4.5 addition is the stair tower in the angle of the north and east ranges, dated by the treads between winter 1575 and spring 1576. This provides access to the east range roof, where a start was made in fitting-out garret rooms, but the work was not completed. Similar polygonal



*Figure 6.13 Newark Park: mid-16th-century fireplace (photograph: Kirsty Rodwell).*

stair turrets can be seen on other late 16th-century houses in the area, such as Hanham Court, Siston Court, and Thornbury Grange (Kingsley 1989, 100, 163; Hall 1983, 27), indicating that architecturally this new work reverted to the regional norm.

A more radical reordering took place in the years before the Civil War when the axis of the house shifted from the south to the east elevation and service ranges were pulled down to create a new east court. This must have entailed internal reorganisation, not least in the provision of a new kitchen, but these new arrangements are not reflected in the surviving fabric. By the late 17th century, as well as being encumbered financially, the house was distinctly old fashioned in its plan and probably in a poor state of repair.

## Civil War defences

During the Civil War a series of ditches was dug to protect the north side of the house from attack (Fig 3.39). One of them, partially excavated and clearly visible as an earthwork, originated alongside the north wall of the east court and curved north-westwards, running parallel to and inside the line of the former east wall of the garden, which had been demolished. It then returned at right angles across the abandoned garden as far as the west wall, which was still standing. A second ditch, forming a second line of defence, was dug parallel to and 6 m north of the north range of the house, along the line of the infilled north arm of the moat. It was designed to block



the approach to the side entrance through the northern cross-passage in the north range. The ditch to the north-east of the house was cut into the underlying bedrock and was only *c* 0.6 m deep and 2.4–2.8 m wide, whereas the ditch immediately north of the house, which was easier to dig, was 0.9 m deep and 3 m wide. Both features would in fact have appeared more substantial, because there would have been banks, made of upcast soil and rubble, along their inner edges. These were slighted when the ditches were abandoned. They can be attributed to the Civil War period because they both contained groups of clay tobacco pipes datable to 1630–60, and the ditch adjacent to the house also contained three musket balls.

The documentary evidence provides an explanation for these defences. After the Civil War, Sir Robert Poyntz, a royalist, was accused of deserting his house and living in Bristol during some or all of the period between July 1643 and September 1645, when the city was under the control of the King's forces. In his absence a royalist garrison was installed at Acton Court to protect the house. It was specifically mentioned in a Chancery Court case in November 1648 (*Hobbs vs Hobbs*, PRO/C7/178/125). During the Civil War Thomas Hobbs, the father of one of the parties involved in a long-running property dispute at Iron Acton, was said to have recruited soldiers from the garrison to intimidate his half-brother, William Hobbs, the other protagonist in the dispute, who was a supporter of the Parliamentary cause (PRO/C22/640/39 4748).

Sir Robert Poyntz had good reason to be concerned about the security of his family mansion. The royalists failed to capture Gloucester during the siege of August–September 1643, and the region to the north-east of Bristol subsequently became the target of military probes by Parliamentary forces based on Gloucester. In the autumn of 1644 the moated house at Yate Court (5 km north-east of Acton Court) was occupied, in the absence of its royalist owner, by a Parliamentary garrison. It was very isolated, in a part of Gloucestershire which was full of the King's forces, and a troop of 300

cavalry and dragoons was sent out from Gloucester to assist in withdrawing it before winter set in. This feat was successfully accomplished after a surprise attack was carried out against a royalist regiment of horse in Chipping Sodbury, which was preparing to advance against the garrison (Corbet 1645, 129–30). While in the process of abandoning Yate Court, the Parliamentary troops set fire to the house and destroyed most of it (Excursion 1898, 9).

Sir Robert Poyntz evidently took measures to prevent Acton Court from suffering a similar fate. The defences were fairly limited in scale, and would not have deterred a large group of attackers, but when manned, would have discouraged a small force. The ditch 'system', consisting of a first and second line of defences, seems to have been confined to the area to the north of the house, which was especially vulnerable after the removal of the north court. The house was already protected on its other three sides by the east and south courts and the west arm of the moat, which was still open at this date. It is slightly ironic that the house should have come under threat of attack almost a century after most of the surrounding moat had been filled in. The ditches were probably in existence only between 1643 and 1645, and may have had an even shorter life if they were dug as a response to the occupation of Yate Court.

Ironically, the walled garden may have been abandoned only shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. In the late 19th century it was noted that a stone bearing the date 1642 was set in the west wall of the truncated north range (Chapter 2, Appendix A). The date stone has now disappeared (though a stone carrying the inscription 'Ano Reg. C', a clear indication of Sir Robert's royalist sympathies, still survives, reset in the gable end). The original location of the date stone and the inscription is unknown, but in the absence of any other identifiable early- to mid-17th-century structural alterations, it is possible that they were associated with the removal of the ancillary ranges and the creation of the east court, which was laid out after the east wall of the garden had been demolished.

## Period 5: The later history of the building

Period 5.1 is divided into two sub-phases (Fig 7.1). In Phase 1a, the house was reduced in size. The south and west ranges, and the west half of the north range ceased to be used for domestic purposes, and parts of the former mansion were demolished. It is unclear whether the demolition work was carried out in a single operation or whether it occurred in several stages, but it had taken place by 1709 when the inventory of James Manning, the first tenant farmer, describes the house in essentially its present form. The precise sequence is unknown, because most of the Period 4 wall footings were sealed beneath Period 5.2 farmyard surfaces, and virtually no Period 5.1 occupation horizons survived. Nor is it clear which portions of the building were completely

removed. Some of the Period 4 walls may have remained standing to their full height throughout Period 5.1. Others were only partially demolished, and were incorporated into outbuildings. Period 5.1b encompasses miscellaneous alterations of mid- to late 18th-century date.

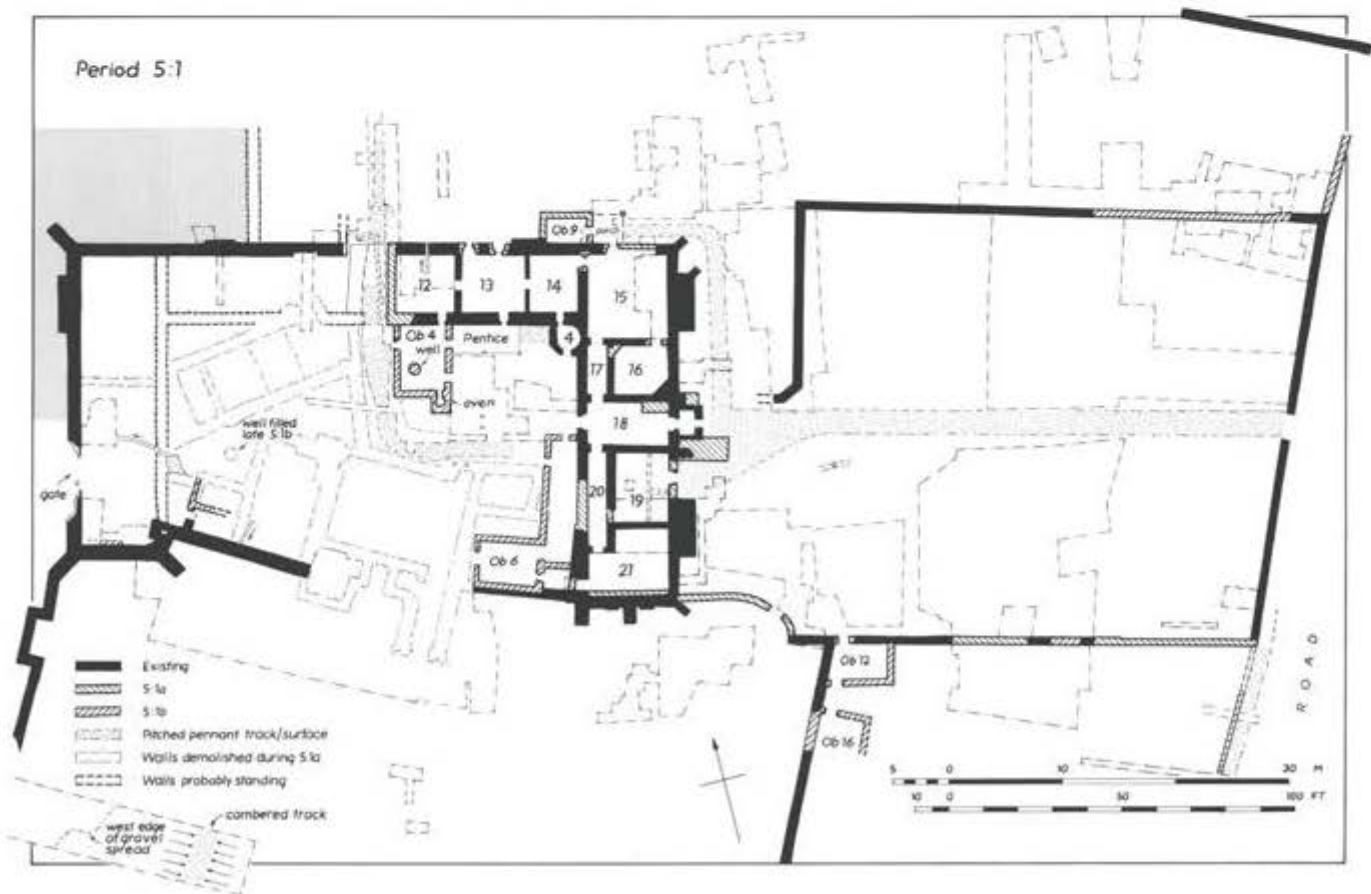
### Period 5.1a

#### Excavated evidence

##### The north range

The range was divided by a new wall on the east side of the former cross-passage, but the walls to the west do not appear to have been demolished. There is structural evi-

Figure 7.1 Plan: the house in Period 5.1.





dence to suggest that the roof was intact and there were no traces of any internal Period 5.1a structures or features, apart from the infilling of the garderobe in the north wall. Alongside the west wall of the inner court, a pitched Pennant track was laid which curved round to the east, closely respecting the north wall of the south range. Both walls were clearly still standing when it was constructed. The track formed a continuation of the Period 4.6c external path, and passed through the former north range cross-passage. A stone-capped drain 910 ran northwards along the centre of the track before turning sharply to the west immediately outside the building and flowing into the residual north arm of the moat.

#### The west range

It is uncertain how much of the west range was actually pulled down in Period 5.1. An opening, 2.3 m wide, was made in the west wall by demolishing the southern garderobe stack. Set in the opening were the postholes for two gateposts. At the same time, the south half of the west arm of the moat was backfilled and overlaid by a cobbled track which sealed the infilled garderobe shafts. With the exception of this opening, which could have been cut through the wall while it was standing, there is no evidence that any of the walls of the range was totally demolished.

#### The south range

In contrast, most of the south range was probably greatly reduced in height, even if it was not totally levelled. There were no Period 5.1 horizons overlying the walls, but the layers above the Period 4 moat-fill, to the south of the range, provided plenty of evidence for demolition.

A layer of smooth light brown loam with numerous flecks of plaster and charcoal (1316) was spread across the whole of the interior of the porch (Fig 3.11, Section 14). Contemporary with it was the fill of garderobe 1003, in the north-west angle of the porch. The bottom 0.5 m of fill material (469) consisted of dark grey-brown loam with numerous finds, and may have been deposited while the garderobe was still in use. But the layers above (466–8) were the product of deliberate infilling. They consisted of firm yellow-brown loam with plaster, very similar to the soil horizon 1316. The garderobe was sealed by a layer of cobbled metalling, which predated the main Period 5.2 metalled surfaces.

To the west of the former porch, the Period 4 infill of the moat was levelled up with layers 1014–15 and 419 (Fig 3.7, Section 7). Layer 419 was evidently a demolition layer associated with the destruction of the south frontage, since it contained large quantities of limestone fragments, window debris, and crushed plaster and rendering, and became progressively thinner towards the south. It was partially overlain by the metalling which sealed the garderobe. Above the metalling, dark grey-brown loam (413) was spread flush with the top of the demolished oriel window.

Near the west end of the south range, the Period 4.5 sump was infilled with 2141, and sealed by 2128, which was the principal make-up layer (Fig 3.28, Section 26). In appearance and in terms of finds, both layers were identical to the other demolition deposits to the south of the range.

Since the Period 5.1a track respected the north wall of the hall (Room 24), part of the central part of the range may have survived, at least in outline. A double posthole, packed with fragments of worked limestone and probably containing gateposts, was cut through the sleeper wall beneath the north door of the screens passage. This suggests that the passage may have been converted into a path.

#### Room 32

Room 32 was infilled, and was almost certainly completely demolished (Fig 4.14, Section 35). The floors (or where the floor slabs had been removed, the floor bedding) within Rooms 32a and 32b were overlaid by a thick crushed white plaster layer 125/1706/1742. In the easternmost room (Room 32c), there was no trace even of the floor bedding, and the plaster layer sealed a lens of reddish-brown silt (1743). The main demolition layer (122/1728) consisted of reddish-brown clay with much large Pennant rubble and frequent plaster lumps, which also overlay the dark grey loam fill of the sump (1701). Towards the east end of the building, there were numerous pieces of worked limestone, including a roof finial.

### The farmhouse

#### Exterior

Alterations to the surviving east and north ranges were bedded in a matrix of loam stiffened with lime, yellowish-buff in colour with white flecks. Pennant rubble remained



the predominant building material, but in some areas there were concentrations of reused dressed limestone from the Period 4 house.

On the east elevation, now the front of the house, the wall between stacks E1.1 and E1.2 was rebuilt incorporating three reused windows of Period 4.3–4.4 type, with sunk-chamfered mullions. They have returned hood moulds under roughly formed relieving arches (E1.20–22). The Period 4.3 stack E1.6 was reduced, buttressed, and roofed below eaves level. Internally the flue from the fireplace in Room 16 was diverted into the Period 4.1 stack. A large raking buttress (E1.17, E14.17) was added to the south-east corner of this stack to counteract substantial movement in the adjoining garderobe. The rebuilding extended into the chamber (E13), which was reduced in size; the window (E14.3) was blocked, and much of the wall below refaced, sealing the bottom of the garderobe shaft. Large quantities of reused dressed limestone were used in this work, including two lion-headed spouts set ornamentally either side of the stack.

The wall south of the garderobe was rebuilt as far as the missing stack E1.29. This was reduced to roof level and had a raking buttress added to one corner, but was not actually demolished until Period 5.3. The rebuilt wall incorporates a six-light window (E1.19) formed from mouldings of differing section, with peg holes for a louvred wooden frame that was mounted on the face of the stone. This can be seen in the Lysons engraving (Fig 2.4). Below are a door and a small two-light window with pegged oak frames (E1.18). The rebuild contains a high proportion of reused limestone, including lengths of Period 4.1 window mullion.

On the south elevation the large first-floor window E2.4 was removed and the entire gable rebuilt (E2.10), retaining a string course and coping, but reusing blocks from other mouldings. The surviving render is probably contemporary; it is off-white, containing lumps of lime, kiln ash and some hair, and has a much smoother surface than the Period 4 render. A new smaller window (E2.11) was set into the secondary sill (E2.9). It has six lights formed from reused mouldings of variable section and like E1.19, peg holes for applied louvres over the upper lights. The mullions of the lower lights are channelled to receive individual louvre slats.

Part of the wall below this window was also rebuilt, incorporating four vents  $c$  0.2 m

square, which slope upwards through the thickness of the wall and are plastered internally. In Room 11 (E8.12) the openings are faced with limestone blocks, set slightly proud of the wall and grooved for vertical sliding closers. The function of these vents is discussed below.

The south range was almost completely demolished, with only the wall east of the window E2.8 left standing to any height. The dressed stone of the window was removed for reuse, and the remains of the south wall incorporated into OB 6. The chimney stack forming the east wall of the range was reduced and capped with a lean-to roof, the door and fireplaces were filled in, and the wall rendered. The north wall was removed altogether and a quoin (E3.22) formed in its place. A large section of the adjoining east range wall was totally rebuilt, incorporating a weathering for the roof of OB 6 and joist sockets for a raised floor (E3.23, E3.24; Fig 7.2).

The north range was divided at a point east of its centre line by a new cross wall E5, containing much reused limestone, and incorporating a ground-floor window. A Period 4.4 window in the south wall was replaced by a single small light with a pegged oak frame (E4.18), and a new transomed oak window (E6.12) was inserted into the north wall. Two new doors were created on this elevation; E6.13 is external, but E6.14 faced the interior and opened into an outbuilding replaced by OB 10. Both have chamfered and pegged oak frames with boarded and braced doors; E6.13 has a wooden closer.

The large north window in the east range (E6.2) was replaced by a smaller eight-light window with a returned hood mould (E6.16). It has sunk-chamfered mouldings and the central members are thickened. The secondary door E6.11 and the stair tower E6.10 were demolished at the same time. On the ground floor the paired windows E6.9 were replaced by a large square opening (E6.15), spanned by an oak lintel. It is not clear what purpose this was intended to serve, but it was replaced after a short period by the present door and window (E6.17, E6.18).

These two features are set in a deep pink mortar flecked with white, and are part of a series of localised alterations to Room 15, which had taken place by 1709 (see below). The reused door (E6.17) has a stirrup-shaped knocker and a pegged and chamfered oak frame; the six-light window



Figure 7.2 The house from the west with outbuildings 4 and 6 (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR BB98/00590).



(E6.18) has sunk-chamfered mouldings, and has been packed with reused architectural fragments. The same mortar was used to insert another window (E1.24) into the east elevation, next to the north stack. Formerly of four lights, it is set lower than the adjoining window E1.20, and has no hood mould.

Figure 7.3 Room 19: a Period 4.3 lodging converted into a stable (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR BB98/00628).



#### Interior

Only part of the reduced house was put to domestic use in this period, the remainder serving a variety of farming purposes. The

Period 4 room divisions on the ground floor were retained, but several new connecting doors were created; between Rooms 12/13 (E11.19), 14/15 (E3, E9.25), and 15/16 (E10.19). The Period 4 doors to Rooms 16 and 19 (E15.1) were blocked.

In Room 12 a fireplace must have been removed by the creation of the new north window (E11.12). In Period 5.1b a shallow drain was constructed, associated with a fragmentary pitched Pennant floor surface set in hard pink mortar. The drain decanted through the north wall (E11.20) and flowed westwards, cutting through the Period 4.6 track. On the west side of the room, beneath the Period 5.2 fireplace, was a row of stones, three courses high, and also bonded in pink mortar. It formed part of a base, and was related to two slots set at right angles to each other near the north wall.

The position of the new door E11.14 in Room 13 suggests that the adjacent fireplace also went out of use. This door has ventilation slots and gave access to an outbuilding which has been rebuilt. Lintels visible through the plaster above both this door and E11.13 indicate over-door lights, now blocked.

Room 15 gained three new doors (E9.25, E10.19, E11.17) and two new windows (E7.24, E11.18), while retaining the Period 4.3 door E10.7. The fireplace was altered by removing the surround and creating a new opening on the line of the Period 4.3 relieving arch. Stone-slabbed seats, one with two small shelf-ledges, were con-



structed either side of the hearth within the flue and given a plastered finish. In the plaster over the fireplace are the outlines of vertical battens for an overmantel (E7.23), preserved as unpainted negatives on a frequently limewashed wall. They were 0.6 m high and 0.09 m wide, rising from a mantelshelf impression, and were nailed to the wall. The top of the overmantel was secured by two wooden blocks and an iron hook. Adjoining the fireplace is a wall cupboard (E7.26) of two shelves, backed with reused panelling. Between the doors on the south wall the outline of a set of shelves is also preserved in the plaster (E10.20).

In Room 16 a corner cupboard was constructed in the former doorway. It has a semicircular back, two plain lower shelves and three moulded upper shelves. The original cupboard front is missing. The new window E7.20 has a window seat, and the fireplace opening was altered to incorporate blocks for a wooden surround.

The remainder of the ground floor was used as outbuildings. In the cross-passage Room 18, a wooden stair to Room 10 replaced a wall bench, and a door was made for the open arch E9.14. Room 19 was given an external door (E7.18) and fitted out as a stable, with a sloping floor of pitched Penant (Fig 7.3). A hay rack was fixed in front of the west wall (E15, E16.3); the top and bottom rails have beaded edges and are morticed for diagonally-set square slats. The original stalls have been replaced. In Room 21 the door to the south range was blocked (E9.12), and the south wall (E8.13) thickened by 0.5 m to support the first-floor joists.

On the first floor alterations were more radical, and only Room 11 retained its original dimensions. The northern half of the east range was given a lowered ceiling (E7.25), and two new rooms (8, 9) were created from parts of Rooms 6 and 10. In the north range Room 1 was truncated but not subdivided. The principal staircase was in the Period 4.5 tower, and it is clear from replastering that the attic room was refurbished (E11).

In Room 1 the panelling was removed, presumably for sale, and the lower walls totally replastered beneath a wooden moulding at the base of the frieze. The exposed door frame E10.16 was faced-up with boards and lengths of moulding. Above a black skirting, the walls were initially painted dark purplish-red. This was replaced later in the period by a mid-green,

and there are areas of replastering around the oriel (not removed until Period 5.2) where this green is the original colour (E10.21). The painted frieze was retained, although some areas of text were painted out (eg Fig 8.32), and plaster repairs were coloured to match the background.

In the east range the lowered ceiling was inserted at the base of the Period 4.1 frieze, and extended from the north gable wall (E11) to a new lath and plaster partition by the fireplace in Room 10. The Period 4.1 partition between Rooms 6 and 10 was cut down and reused between a reduced Room 6 and the new Room 8 (E10), and a new partition was built between Rooms 8 and 9. All these rooms were rewindowed (E7.21, E7.22, E11.16), and occupied the full width of the range, communicating directly without passages; the large reused doorway E10.1 was filled with a smaller door. Room 6 retained its Period 4.1 fireplace (Rooms 8 and 9 were unheated), and the garderobe (E7.6) was reduced further to create a small panelled cupboard (E10.22; Fig 7.4). All three rooms were fitted with reused panelling, but only the east walls (E7) of Rooms 6 and 9 and the doorcases in Room 8 remain. Panelling was reputedly sold from the house in the 20th century, and the partition walls in Rooms 8 and 9, which have no build-up of paint, bear this out.

What remained of Room 10 and Room 11 was used for agricultural purposes, and was reached by the new stair from Room 18.

*Figure 7.4 Room 6: the lowered ceiling is set at the base of the Period 4.1 frieze and the Period 4 panelling is reset (photograph: © Crown copyright. NMR BB98/00609).*





Alterations to Room 11 have been described with the exterior; in Room 10 the fireplace was blocked, the garderobe reduced in depth, but retained as a cupboard, and the door E13.1 filled with lath and plaster. It is clear from the type of plaster used for repairs that most of the structural movement in the south-east corner of this room had taken place by this date.

#### Fixtures and fittings

Extensive use was made of material from the earlier house; all the stone-framed windows are of Period 4.3 or 4.4 type, sometimes pieced together, and new windows, such as E7.18 or E11.12 have pegged wooden frames. Most of the doors are also reused; some have been rehung on the opposite edge (eg Fig 5.5a) and others turned upside down (eg E11.17). A few (eg E11.13, E11.14, E9.14, E7.18) are new; they are boarded and braced, sometimes with beaded edges, and E11.14 has ventilation slots. They have plain pegged frames and a mixture of oak and elm is used. Fittings include closers of unchanged pattern, wooden latches and latch loops, plain wooden boxes encasing iron locks, the cupboard hinges on the panelling in Room 6, and the stirrup-shaped iron knocker on door E6.17.

Plaster of Period 5.1 can be isolated on work new at this phase, such as the partitions in Room 8, although it is also used extensively on older walls. It is distinguished from Period 4 plaster by a higher hair content, chopped less finely, a pinkish-buff colour and a rather uneven surface (type d).

Most of the rooms, including Room 15, were simply limewashed. Reused panelling, which appears to have been polished rather than coloured, was used in Rooms 6, 8 and 9. The corner cupboard and wooden fireplace surround in Room 16 suggest that it was also panelled, at least to dado level, and was probably in contemporary style. The most elaborate scheme occurred in Room 1, where the Period 4.2 frieze was retained above red-painted walls. The identification of room functions with the inventory of 1709 in the light of this evidence is discussed below.

#### Outbuildings (OBs)

Several new outbuildings were constructed against the reduced house or the courtyard walls. Against the north wall is a lean-to, OB 9 (E6), which shares a hipped porch with

the external door to Room 15 (E6.17). The angle of the roof is supported on a stone pier. There was a window in the west wall, which is incorporated into OB 10 (E9.23), and another in the collapsed north wall. It had a flagged floor, which has sunk over the backfilled moat, and a hiatus in the render on E6 may mark a shelf position. There was another lean-to further west, with access from Room 13, which has been replaced by OB 10.

Outbuilding 4 on the south-west corner of the north range originated at this phase (Fig 7.2), although it was later modified and extended. There is an original window splay in the west wall and a door jamb in the east. At the south-east corner was an oven, housed in a small lean-to extension with a monopitch roof. This has been demolished but the firing chamber is preserved in outline in the floor of a later extension. Two superimposed openings survive in the south wall; the upper is rebuilt and has a cast iron door. There are three further flue openings in this wall (two are secondary), which served a bank of coppers, indicated by negatives in the floor and the wall plaster. This building also contained a well, which remained in use until the 1970s. The roof was gabled, but the structure is modern. To the east is a hipped two-bay pentice with oak posts on stone bases.

The largest addition is OB 6 which is L-shaped and built against the east range and the remanent south range. The ruinous northern arm was a two-storey lean-to, with a roof weathering and a row of floor joist sockets which are integral to the rebuilt west wall (E3.23, E3.24). The ground floor was of restricted height (1.8 m) and had two external doors. An internal door connected with the western arm, which was also two-storeyed and gabled. It has a door in the west wall and three windows; one retains its pegged oak frame (E13.11). In the angle is a tower-like structure without doors at ground-floor level; there is a small square opening rebated for a shutter in the north wall (E13.8), and a narrow arch of reused limestone in the west wall, later opened out to form a door. There are sockets for a first-floor structure (E8.14), and a tall upper chamber, still partly plastered, with hatches to the wings (E13.9). A small south window (E8.15) has a pegged oak frame and a sill paved with perforated clay kiln-floor tiles. At the top of the wall, truncated by a later roof line are two narrow open vents (E8.16; E13.10). This structure can be interpreted as a maltings (see below).



A stable, OB 12, was constructed in the angle between the east and south courts, utilising the older walls (Fig A.5). It is a rectangular gabled building of two storeys, with two original windows and opposed doors. The joinery is pegged oak. There is a pitched Pennant floor with a central drain and the rails of a manger, like that in Room 19, at the east end. There are also the back boards of a feeding trough. The upper floor was void over the manger. Outbuilding 16 originated at this phase, but has been rebuilt apart from the north gable, which has a door and a first-floor window.

### The south court

Much of Area 2 was covered with bluish-grey shaley gravel, which formed a firm surface above the Period 4.4–4.6 brown loam horizon (Fig 4.40, Section 36), and incorporated a slightly raised and cambered track. Near the north-east corner of the court, the return wall to the east range was taken down and replaced by a new wall, slightly to the north.

### The east court

The wide opening in the south boundary wall was blocked, and the eastern end of the wall was rebuilt. The southern part of the west boundary wall of the court was removed. It was sealed by a pitched Pennant track which butted obliquely against the Period 4.6 central track and led to the door in the outer wall of Room 19. Another pitched track, most of which was concealed beneath a modern tarmac path, led to the new porch on the north side of the east range.

## Period 5.1b: The west and south ranges

There was evidence for Period 5.1b structures within the west range and on the site of the west part of the south range. A length of walling (68), 0.3 m wide and bonded in deep reddish-pink mortar, overlay the former fireplace (301) and was set alongside the inner face of the south wall of Room 29 (Fig 4.22, Section 30). The flagstone floor of Room 29 appears to have remained in use, though it is less clear whether Room 30, which had a wooden floor, was retained. The bedding for the stone floor was overlain by a layer of orange-brown clay with numerous fragments of moulded ceiling plaster

(13/183–5). This is likely to have been deposited when the range was eventually demolished at the end of Period 5.1b. An identical layer (207) survived in Room 30 only where it had subsided into the underlying Period 3 garderobe. It also contained pieces of moulded plaster, which probably derived from the ceilings of the first-floor rather than the ground-floor rooms.

A small area of pitched Pennant overlay the offset footings of the east wall of the range. It respected the line of the wall itself, which again suggests that the wall remained standing. It served as the threshold to a structure built on the site of Rooms 28 and 28a, and possibly extending further east. This seems to have been an insubstantial lean-to, constructed against the south frontage, since its footings were only 0.35 m wide. The garderobe in the south-west corner of Room 28a stayed in use, and was only filled in during the course of this phase. Two drains were contemporary with the building. One flowed north-westwards across the west range from the threshold. The other was a rebuild of an earlier drain which had originally flowed into the south moat. Both drains were stone-lined and, like the Period 5.1b footings, were bonded in hard deep reddish-pink mortar. The well (80) in the former triangular courtyard co-existed with the new well within OB 4, and appears to have remained in use until the end of Period 5.1b, when it was filled in. It was subsequently sealed beneath the Period 5.2 farmyard.

### The east court

The eastern half of the north boundary wall was rebuilt on a slightly different alignment from its predecessor. A new wall was built alongside Latteridge Road, extending northwards from the north-east corner of the court. Outside the property, a pitched Pennant track, 1.2 m wide, was laid along the west side of Latteridge Road. It commenced adjacent to the south-east corner of the east court and was traced for a distance of 110 m towards the village. Immediately south of the corner of the court it was bounded on its west side by a narrow wall, 0.40 m wide, which was bonded with a reddish-orange loam matrix. This predated OB 17 (built in Period 5.2) but respected the eastern edge of the outer moat, suggesting that long after the moat was filled in, it survived as a property boundary at this point. Traces of

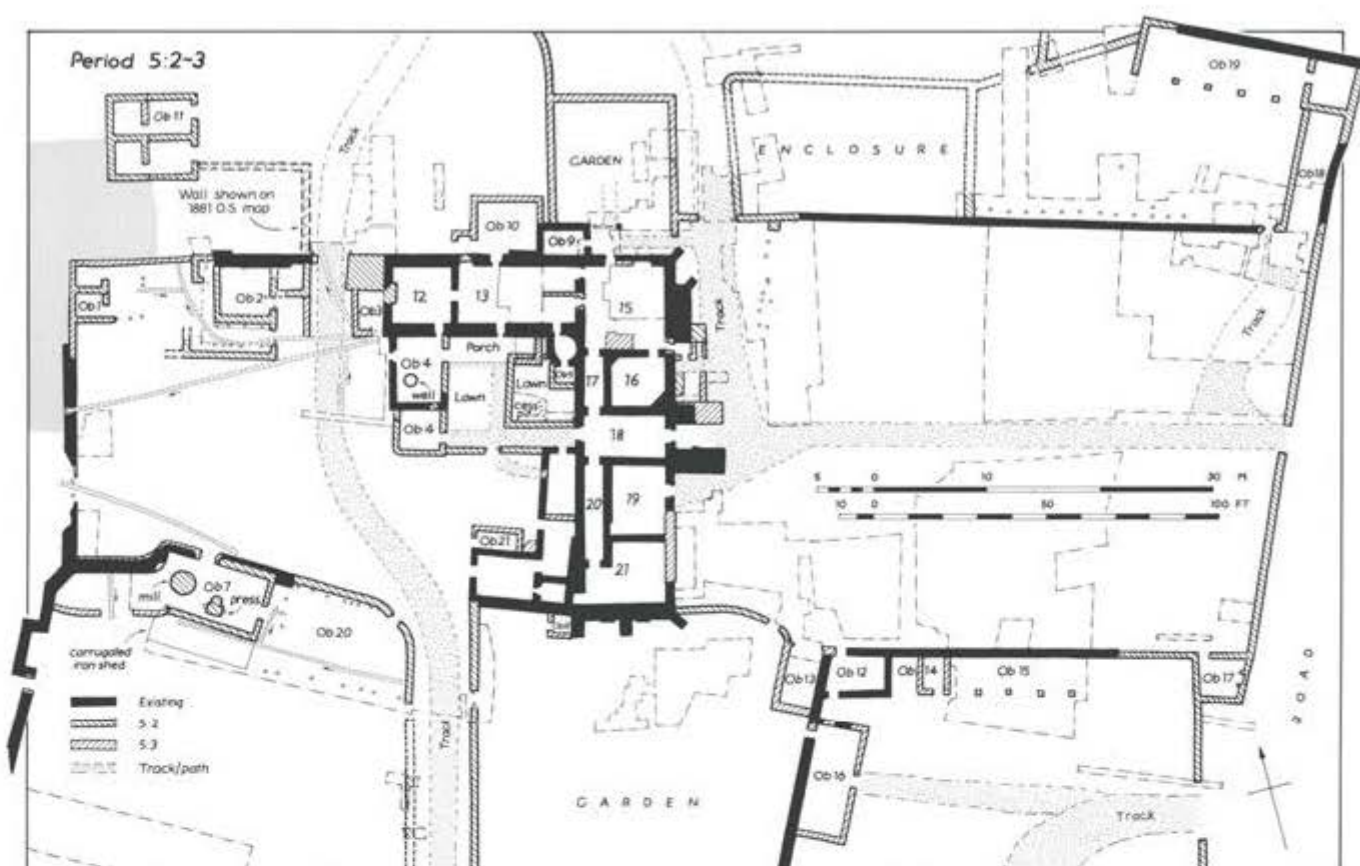


Figure 7.5 Plan: the house in Period 5.2-5.3.

another pitched Pennant track, largely removed by a later farm track, led off westwards from it towards the outbuildings constructed against the east wall of the south court.

### Subsidence over the former moat

The Period 4 moat-fill to the east and north of the east range subsided during Period 5.1. The pitched Pennant track leading to the stable (Room 19) slumped at least 0.2 m. Similarly on the north side of the house the porch and the north wall of OB 9, which were built directly on top of the moat-fill, also sank. Both of these events occurred during Period 5.1b. The subsidence near the north-east corner of the house (Fig 4.49, Section 42) may have taken place slightly earlier, as the Period 4.6 layers were levelled up before the Period 5.1 cobbled surface and pitched track were laid. The areas above the south arm and most of the north arm of the infilled moat appear to have been unaffected. The only other place where there was significant subsidence was in the west range, though only above the backfilled

Period 3 garderobe (Room H). Here, the partition wall between Rooms 29 and 30 sank by as much as 0.35 m in Period 5.1b.

### Period 5.2

Some alterations were made to the house, and a second generation of farm buildings was erected, generally distinguished by their use of a hard pink mortar matrix (Fig 7.5). A farmyard, covering the area formerly occupied by the south range and Room 32 was also created. This involved the lowering of the existing ground surface and the formation of an extensive cobbled surface. Further outbuildings were added on the south side of the old south frontage, and also to the north and south of the east court. The south court was subdivided by boundary walls, and a track, approaching from the south, was laid above the already demolished porch, passing through the farmyard and continuing northwards along a route slightly to the west of the Period 5.1 track. These alterations took place in the early 19th century.



## The farmhouse

### Exterior

Few alterations were made to the east range; the vents E2.12 were blocked, and a corner of the stack E1.2 was rebuilt as a raking buttress (E1.25).

The western half of the north range, hitherto standing to its full height, was reduced to a single-storey outbuilding (OB 2), and a large raking buttress was added to the gable wall of the reduced house (E4.19). This incorporated four tiers of pigeonholes, the topmost formed from reused Gothic tracery. The oriel window was taken down and rebuilt flush with the wall face (E4.20), and the secondary opening created from E6.5 was filled in.

### Interior

Plaster of this phase comprised a smooth white finish coat over a base containing finely chopped hair. The principal alterations took place in the north range, where new Pennant slabs were laid throughout the ground floor. A chimney breast replaced the west window (E5.1) in Room 12, which was fitted with new panelled shutters, cupboards

and doors. Rooms 13 and 14 were combined and the north-east corner partitioned-off around the door to Room 15 to form a cupboard with a lowered ceiling. It appears to have been used as a larder; there are ceiling hooks and the outlines of shelves. A new door to Room 15 (E3.26) cut through the Period 4.1 window E3.3.

On the first floor Room 1 was divided by a partition, which damaged the Period 4.2 fireplace moulding, and window seats were constructed using 16th-century building debris which had been stored outside, resulting in lichen growth (Chapter 8). The east range was unaltered.

The removal of support at the west end of the north range caused the roof structure, which lacks windbraces, to rack, although it is not clear how rapidly this took place. A brace was also constructed in the east range roof (E7.27) to counteract the outward thrust of the north gable (Fig 7.6). It consists of a horizontal tie, mounted on T11 and bolted to a tailpiece secured to T10, which projects through the gable light. Externally there is a weathered mortice for a vertical member set against the face of the north wall. There is also a pair of smaller



*Figure 7.6* Brace in the east range roof  
(photograph: English Heritage B870019/41).



ties through the wall to the collar of T12. The east end of T9, which had decayed due to water penetration, was supported on a post rising from a wooden bracket (E9.24).

## The environs of the house

### The north range west of the track

Any Period 5.1 structures which may have existed at the north end of the west range and in the west half of the north range were swept away. Outbuilding 1 was constructed in the north-west corner of the former house, utilising its external walls. It was a gabled single-storey structure of two compartments with a floor of large rough lias slabs. All earlier occupation and floor layers had been obliterated, and the slabs rested on make-up directly overlying the Period 4.2 infill of the moat. On the east side of the outbuilding was an extension supported by wooden posts.

Further east, OB 2 was erected. It was divided into two rooms, with a lean-to privy adjacent to its north-west corner. The main rooms were built against a surviving part of the Period 4 north wall, whereas the north wall of the privy was new in Period 5.2 and overlay the west half of the demolished Period 4 chimney stack. The floor of the larger room consisted mainly of pitched Pennant; the smaller room and the privy had lias slab floors. The eastern room also had a higher roof level than the rest of the building.

A stone-lined and capped drain was laid from the standing north range along the south side of OB 2, and flowed into the remaining part of the north arm of the moat. It cut obliquely through the north wall of Room 32 and the south wall of the north range. The former had already been demolished in the previous phase; the latter may only have been pulled down immediately prior to the construction of OB 2. A subsidiary drain ran from OB 1 to the main drain.

The main drain was overlaid by a path leading from the house to the privy. This was roofed over and formed a latter-day pentice. On either side of it, flower beds were created. The southern bed was bounded by a wall set in hard whitish-grey mortar, which defined the north edge of the farmyard.

A raking buttress (E4.19) was built on top of the Period 5.1 track, and a new track,

respected by the east wall of OB 2, was laid. The old track was also virtually obliterated further south, when OB 4 was extended southwards. During this phase the drain beneath the pentice was truncated by a new stone-lined drain, which flowed northwards. It cut the track, which was reinstated above it.

### The inner courtyard

Outbuilding 4 was repaired and rewindowed, and a new room added at the south end, with east and west doors and a window in the south gable. Low walls extended east from this to the north end of OB 6 to form an inner court. Another lean-to privy (OB 5) was built in the angle of the Period 4.5 stair tower and the east range, utilising the doorway E4.11. A large cesspit was dug, and was enclosed by a low boundary wall. The existing soil horizon sealing the Period 4.1 pentice walls was overlaid by a compact rubble spread, contemporary with the cobbled surface in the farmyard. The rubble spread was covered with paving slabs, which were removed in Period 5.3.

### The farmyard

The farmyard consisted of a series of very hard, worn and smooth surfaces of Pennant gravel. These covered the central part of the demolished portion of the house, but above the former west range they were much more uneven and unworn. They also petered out towards the east, and did not exist above the north-east part of the former south range. In order to create the yard, the ground level was lowered, and the footings of several demolished walls were incorporated in the surface. In one case, a Period 2 wall, sealed beneath the floor of the former Room A, was again exposed, and was visible as soon as the surface was cleaned up.

### The west range

The Period 5.1 gateway through the west wall of the range was reduced in width. One of the postholes was filled in and sealed by a short piece of rough walling which respected the new gate. The cut for a drain ran across the former range and passed through the gate, though there were no traces of the drain itself. A very uneven rubble layer (12/35) was spread over the former west range, sealing the Period 5.1b demolition horizon, and levelling up the subsidence above the medieval garderobe. By this stage, the inner walls of the Period 4 range had been removed. The Period 5.1 lean-to struc-

tures above the west end of the south range may have continued in use during this phase.

#### South of the south range

Outbuilding 7 was erected adjacent to the former frontage, part of which served as its north wall (Fig 3.28, Section 26). Internally, a thin construction layer (2127) was cut by a foundation trench, which contained a rectangular base (2116), made of Pennant slabs set in hard whitish-grey mortar. At either end of the base was a deep posthole. The soil from the foundation trench (2105) was redeposited on top of 2127. A shallow semi-circular base (2117) butted against the north side of 2116. The south-east buttress of the west range was demolished to just below ground level, and on top of it a circular base, 2.2 m in diameter and four courses high, was built. A dark grey circular track surrounded it. The scar left by the removal of the buttress was faced with rubble and brick, bonded in the same mortar as the main walls of the outbuilding.

The building was clearly a cider-house, since the circular and rectangular bases were designed to support a cider-mill and a cider-press. The press which rested on the rectangular base was found in a corner of the building, lying upside down and incorporated in the Period 5.3 floor make-up. The mill was located in the south-east corner of the south court.

A doorway in the east wall led to a demolished timber structure (OB 20). It consisted of four bays, and measured  $c$  11 m by 7.5 m, with postholes along its north and south sides. Those on the north side were cut into the demolished frontage wall. The east end of the building cut through the Period 5.1 cobbling (448), as did a narrow rubble-filled soakaway which flowed from east to west. The soakaway had subsequently been partially replaced with earthenware drainpipes, which continued along the outside of OB 7. The drain was sealed by a hard cobbled surface (308), which was contemporary with the metalling in the main part of the farmyard.

#### The south court

The approach to the house from the south was reinstated, after being abandoned in Period 5.1. However, the track was on a different line to the Period 3-4 track, and its central axis overlay the eastern arm of the porch. By Period 5.2 the position of the former porch was evidently unknown. A series

of metallised surfaces, generally very thin and worn, accumulated above the Period 5.1 brown loam horizon (1316), and more surfaces were added during Period 5.3 (Fig 3.11, Section 14).

Low boundary walls, similar in size to the walls enclosing the inner courtyard, were built on either side of the track. The east wall butted against the south-west corner of OB 6, cutting through layer 1316. It incorporated a gate into the vegetable garden in the north-east quadrant of the south court. The west wall, overlying the former frontage wall, was probably constructed later than OB 20. It curved round and continued southwards parallel to the east wall. On the curve, there was another small gate, leading into the timber structure at its north-east corner. All of the south court to the west of the track was converted into an apple orchard. The Period 4.3 south wall of this court west of the track was reduced in height to serve as the back of an open-fronted, south-facing shed. It had a gabled elm roof of eight bays with alternate trusses carried on posts. At the east end was a closed room of three bays with a communicating door.

#### The east court

The eastern half of the court was covered with a rubble spread (Fig 4.49, Sections 39-41), some of which may have been laid in the previous phase. The whole of the eastern boundary wall, on either side of the arch, was rebuilt. It consisted of alternate bands of drystone rubble, and of rubble bonded with pink mortar. The east end of the south wall, incorporating OB 17, was rebuilt at the same time, but without the banding. In the north-east corner of the court, part of the north wall was demolished, and OB 18 was erected. It was a wagon shed, open on its south side, and linked to the main central roadway by a cambered cobbled track running alongside the east wall. A narrow gateway was cut through the north boundary wall, immediately west of the wagon shed.

At the south-west corner of the court, the Period 5.1 wall adjoining the east range was rebuilt with the same banding technique as the east wall of the court. The north boundary wall was extended 5.75 m west of the original north-west corner of the court. The extension butted against the existing north wall. It overlay the Period 4.6 west wall, which was demolished and replaced by a line of fence posts 2.5 m further west.

### North of the east court

Outbuilding 19 was constructed at the same time as the wagon shed. Its south side was open and was supported by four square pillars. Its north side incorporated an existing Period 5.1 wall. The west wall of the building was butted by the outer wall of a subrectangular enclosure, to which was bonded a field boundary. Like the enclosure walls, this had been demolished, but it clearly continued out into the north field.

Alongside the north wall of the court, within the enclosure, a timber building was constructed. It was 18.5 m long, and was supported by a row of thirteen posts. Its north side was not excavated, though two postholes were located in slit-trenches, suggesting that it had a width of *c* 4 m. West of the enclosure and contemporary with it was a second, rectangular enclosure, the west wall of which butted against the extension of the north boundary wall of the court.

### South of the east court

Outbuilding 15, with an open south front supported by at least five square pillars, was erected against the south side of the south wall of the court. It was similar to, and probably contemporary with OB 19, to the north of the court. Only one of the pillars was still standing at the start of the excavation, while two others had evidently been pushed over or had collapsed. The south-east corner of the court was rebuilt to incorporate OB 17, which fronts on to the road and has an original window in the south wall. In the gabled east wall there is a fireplace, flanked by round-backed, shelved recesses, one of which was modified to make a window in Period 5.3. There is a door from the east court in the north wall and a small attic light in the west gable. The slab floor incorporates the reused base from a cider-press. According to local tradition, this building was used as a taproom for the sale of cider. The present boundary wall, extending south from the south-west corner of the building, was erected in this phase. It replaced the Period 5.1 wall further east which had stood alongside the pitched Penant track.

### North of the house

A kitchen garden was created to the north of the east range. Its west wall, which butted against OB 9, had the usual Period 5.2 pink mortar matrix. However, its north and east walls were bonded with whitish-grey mortar.

The west wall was probably constructed first as the boundary of a separate enclosure, and was later adapted as a garden wall. The east wall respected a farm track which ran northwards into the field and partially overlay the Period 5.1 pitched path. In the field to the north the Period 4.6 dovecote was partially rebuilt to make a cart shed, open to the west. North of the still-open moat at the west end of the north range a two-cell pig house was constructed, each cell with an open pen in front.

## Period 5.3

### The farmhouse

#### Exterior

Grey ash mortar was used in work of this period. The mix is variable as alterations were carried out piecemeal and date to the mid- to late 19th century. Wall faces were not rendered. On the front of the house the third stack was demolished and the wall rebuilt to incorporate three wooden-framed windows (E1.29). There is a date stone which reads IN TN DN SN 1888; the Nichols family owned the farm at this time. Movement in the central stack was counteracted with a new raking buttress on the north-east corner (E1.27), and the front of the vaulted porch was rebuilt with a segmental brick arch (E1.26). Much of the vault was dismantled and replaced by wooden baulks. Architectural elements from this porch were reused in a new porch built in the angle of the north stack (E1.28), where the lower lights of window E1.24 were cut down to make a door. The three surviving chimneys were rebuilt in hard bright red brick. To tone down the colour the outer faces were stippled with green, yellow and pink paint. When the south stack was removed, the Perpendicular window E1.10 was blocked, and one of the Period 4.1 windows in the south elevation (E2.1) reopened. The chimneys on the north range were also rebuilt in brick, and the gable E5.2 reconstructed, probably as a consequence of movement in the roof.

#### Interior

The interior was reordered to accommodate a new staircase and connecting passages; a hard white plaster was used for repairs. Room 15 was subdivided with tongue-and-groove boarding to create a smaller fully panelled room with a new cast-iron fire-





Figure 7.7 The house from the north c 1900  
(photograph: Mr Bigwood, Wotton-under-Edge).

place, a front hall and stair (E10.23), and a rear passage connecting the older doors and the north range. Room 13/14 was also divided into three with boarded partitions and a fireplace reinstated in the middle room.

A stairwell and landing (Room 7) were created from the west end of Room 8, and the door to the stair tower blocked. The Period 5.1 partition to Room 6 was partially removed to create a passage to the north range and a new opening cut through the wall (E9.27). The rest of Room 6 was subdivided across the line of the window. A passage to Room 10 was cut out of Room 9; as in Room 8 this was made of reused panelling. A boarded enclosure was created in the north-west corner of Room 10, which latterly contained an unplumbed cast-iron bath. In the north range two rooms and a passage were created from Room 2; the eastern room (Room 3) had a lowered ceiling.

### Outbuildings

A third generation of farm buildings was constructed. The majority were conversions of existing buildings or else lean-to structures against the sides of buildings of earlier phases. During this phase, brick was used for the first time, though Pennant rubble was still being used for virtually all building work.

### The north range

The west and north walls of OB 1, which had probably survived from the Period 4 house, were demolished. They were replaced by narrow walls set in a light grey ash mortar. Some of the floor slabs were lifted and relaid. They were then overlaid by a floor of wooden blocks.

Several of the internal walls within OB 2 were also demolished, and its east wall was extended southwards to create a new barn. The lean-to privy was unaltered. The covered path and the flower beds were abandoned, and were sealed by a dump of ash, clinker and domestic rubbish. This also overlay the boundary wall, which was demolished to the level of the cobbled yard surface. Above the ash and clinker layer, there was a spread of pink speckled mortar, which was either demolition debris or the bedding for a floor.

A new wall linking OB 1 and the privy was built. It was set in a construction trench, cut through the Period 5.2 rubble surface and stone-capped drain. It rested directly on the Period 4 north wall, though it was much narrower and was on a slightly different alignment.

A new dairy (OB 10) was built against the north range, utilising the west wall of OB 9 (E9; Fig 7.7) and the pre-existing door to Room 13 (E6.14). The adjoining



door E6.13 was blocked and an external porch constructed. The dairy has a lean-to roof of two trusses, one secured through the blocking of window E11.5. There is a flagged floor, original boarded window shutters, and a wooden cheese vat *in situ*.

### The farmyard and inner courtyard

A trench, containing a ceramic drain with a lining of coursed rubble bonded in grey ash mortar, was dug across the northern part of the farmyard from the standing north range. It cut through the west wall of the west range, and destroyed all the archaeological layers along its route except near its west end, where there was a greater depth of stratification. Contemporary with it was a smaller, much shallower ceramic drain, which fed into it from the south, close to OB 4.

The inner courtyard was grassed over, and flagstone paths were laid down, one of which led from the east range cross-passage to a newly created door in the east wall of the extension to OB 4.

Outbuilding 6 was no longer used for its original purpose; a cross wall was inserted and the building reroofed. A narrow lean-to shed was built against its north side; the walls overlay a Period 5.2 path, and were bonded with a hard creamy-white mortar. Within OB 6, a large oval-shaped pit, presumably a sump, was dug into the bedrock, and lined with coursed rubble. It had a maximum depth of 0.9 m, and measured 1.3 m by 0.7 m. A vertical stone drain decanted into it from the north side. The pit could have been dug in Period 5.2, but the drain belonged to Period 5.3.

### The area south of the farmyard

A door was cut through the north wall of OB 7. West of the door, the north side of the wall was refaced, as was the partially standing south wall of the west range. Outbuilding 7 ceased to be used for cider making. Its presses were lifted and their bases were sealed beneath an earth floor. On its west side, which had formerly been open, a poorly built lean-to was constructed. A corrugated iron cattle shed was added to its south side. To the east, the Period 5.2 timber building (OB 20) was dismantled. Track surfaces continued to accumulate above the former south porch and within the farmyard itself. The later layers contained a mixture of brick and rubble.

### The east and south courts

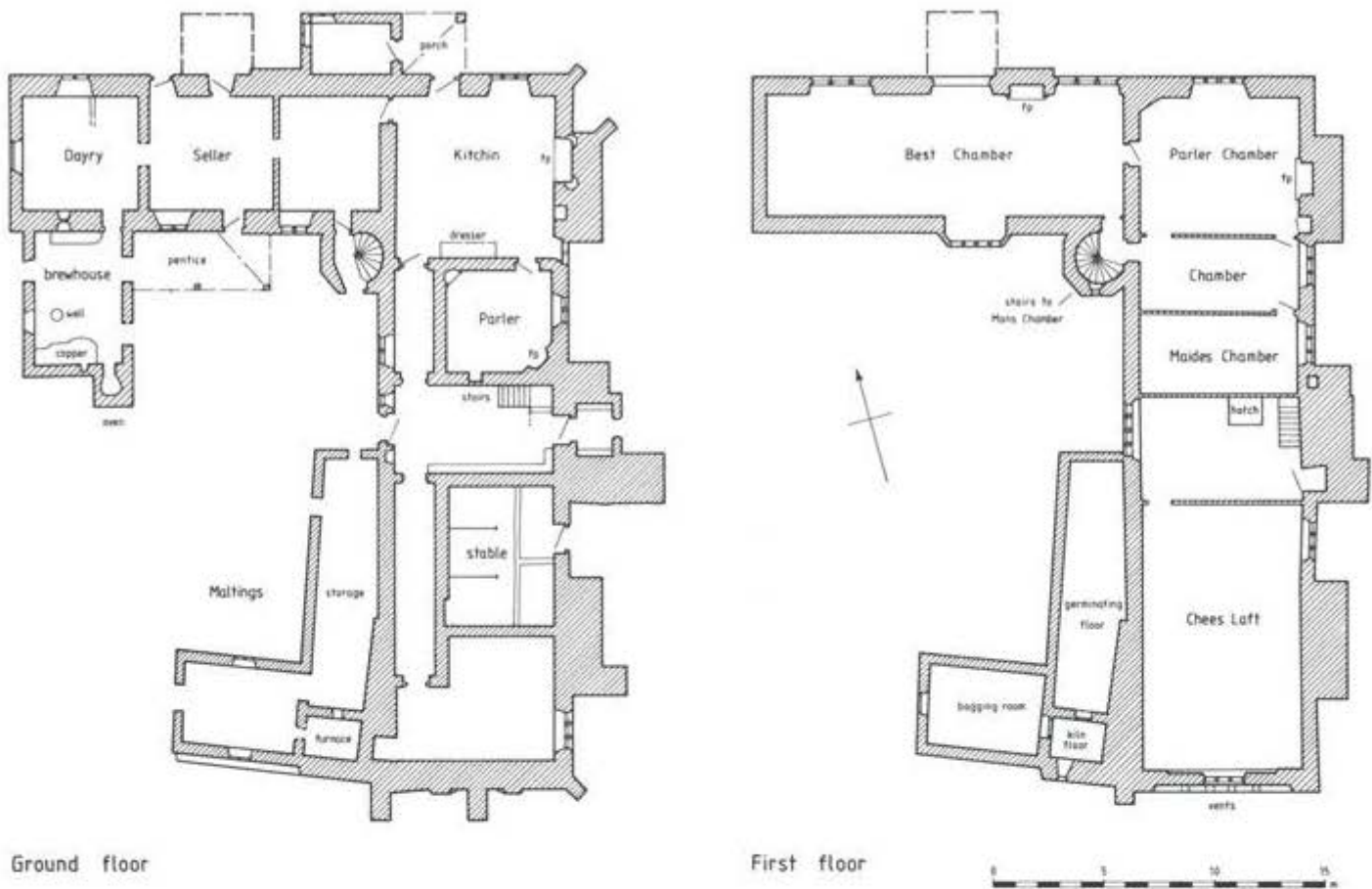
The only new farm building opening on to the east court was OB 13, in the south-west corner. It was constructed against the west wall of OB 12. Immediately south of the entrance to the stable in the east range was a midden. This contained domestic rubbish very similar to the material above the abandoned covered path in the north part of the farmyard. Outbuilding 16 was also rebuilt, and to the south-east of it, another structure or enclosure was added on the same alignment. A new barn replaced the south wall of the south court at its east end. It has a date stone of 1849.

### Period 5.4

The site was notable for its lack of modern intrusions or modern structures. The only exceptions were the shallow trenches for metal pipes, dug when the house ceased to rely on the well for its water supply. Although several pipe trenches ran across the farmyard, they in fact caused minimal damage to the underlying stratification. Rather more damage was caused by machine-excavated holes in various parts of the site, which were intended to test the depth of the bedrock, and were dug immediately before English Heritage became involved in the Acton Court project. They included one very deep hole in the farmyard, which cut through and largely destroyed the south-west corner of Room A/24.

### The form of the Period 5.1 house

The conversion of Acton Court from mansion to farmhouse appears to have taken place rapidly after the sale in 1683 and was well established by 1709, when an inventory was taken on the death of James Manning, the first tenant farmer. This details rooms and their contents and can be compared directly with the surviving standing building; an identification of probable room use is shown on Figure 7.8. Room 15 can be equated with the kitchen; it had a large open cooking hearth with a wooden overmantel, which could have incorporated a spit rack (compare Hall 1983, pl 34), and there was a dresser to house the pewter and other items listed in the inventory. It occupied a central position in the house plan with access to all adjoining rooms and the exterior. Room 16 with a modernised fireplace and new corner



cupboard became the parlour. The dairy was certainly Room 12; it was given a pitched Pennant floor with a central drain, and the principal window was moved to the north wall for coolness. This suggests that the 'seller' occupied the unheated intervening space; it is not certain whether Rooms 13 and 14 were thrown together or were still separate.

On the first floor the best chamber was probably the reduced long gallery, Room 1. This was certainly the largest room, newly replastered and painted red, and with a working fireplace indicated by andirons in the inventory. In the east range three rooms, 6, 8 and 9, were in domestic use: the first was twice the size of the other two and had a fireplace. A comparison of the quantity of contents listed for each suggests that the room names have been transposed, so that, although over the kitchen, Room 6 with two beds and four other pieces of furniture was the 'parler chamber', and Rooms 8 and 9 with one bed apiece, the 'maides chamber' and the 'chamber over the kitching'. The 'mans chamber' would then be the refurbished room in the east range attic.

The only other room explicitly mentioned in the inventory is the 'chees laft', where five tons of cheese worth £100 was stored. The making of Double Gloucester cheese was a major farmhouse industry in the Severn Vale from the mid-17th century, and there was an important cheese market at Chipping Sodbury (Tily 1994, 142). Many farmhouses had purpose-built lofts, where the cheese was stored for several months while it matured (Nielsen 1968, 162–70). It was necessary to provide ventilation during this process, and the construction of ventilating flues just above floor level, together with the louvres on the window openings, indicate that Room 11 was adapted as a cheese loft. This also explains why the wall in the room below (Room 21) was thickened to support the joist ends, as the floor would be carrying a considerable weight. Such lofts were plastered and lime-washed (repeated cleaning may account for the damage to the wall paintings in this room) and the cheeses were stored on the racks and boards itemised in the inventory (compare Slocombe 1988, 55). Access was from Room 10, which had a new stair to the

Figure 7.8 Plans of the Period 5.1 house: room identifications from the 1709 inventory and other sources.

passage below. There was also a hatchway through which cheeses, that could weigh up to 25 lb each, could be hoisted (Nielsen 1968, 167).

Other rooms and outbuildings can be identified from physical evidence. Outbuilding 4 to the south of the dairy was a bake- or brewhouse, with a roofed external oven (compare Slocombe 1988, 45, 56), a well and a bank of coppers, necessary to the start of the cheese-making process. It was linked to other rooms in the north range by a lean-to pentice, a common feature of farmhouses of this date (*ibid.*, 50). To the north of the house was a larder (OB 9), sharing a porch with the kitchen door, and another extension, replaced by OB 10, which may have been a second staircase to Room 1. Room 19 became a stable, with external access only, and Room 21, which has no specific features, may have been used as a cellar. An L-shaped maltings (OB 6; Figs 7.1 and 7.8), which is mentioned in a conveyance of 1709 (Chapter 2 Appendix A), was built against the west wall of the range. It was two-storeyed with the kiln in the angle. There were hatches to a germinating floor on the north and a bagging room on the west; the ground floor was used for storage and stoking the kiln. Farm maltings are relatively rare survivals, as they were superseded in the 19th century by fully industrial buildings (Brunskill 1987, 100–1).

Surviving outbuildings detached from the house include another stable (OB 12) and a dovecote in the north field, but there is no obvious provision for the grain, hay, cattle and pigs valued in the inventory. The west range and the adjoining north range were not demolished until the late 18th century, and they were probably adapted, like the east range, to serve as barns and cowsheds by the removal of internal floors and partitions. Housing for cattle was common in Wiltshire from the 17th century (Slocombe 1989, 62), and from the early 18th century took the form of open-fronted sheds, with the roof carried on a row of pillars. Examples of this type of building survive at Acton Court from the end of the 18th century (OB 15, 19), but one at Frampton Court, Frampton Cotterell may be 16th-century (Hall 1983, 83). Although the two halves of the north range were separated by a track on the line of the former cross-passage, the 16th-century roof appears to have been retained to form a covered cartway (compare Slocombe 1989, 26). The mansion was thus altered into a

substantial courtyard farm. A similar building complex retaining a covered cartway and dating to the late 17th century can be seen at Ashwicke Home Farm, Marshfield, Gloucestershire (Brunskill 1987, fig 11).

Although the internal planning of the farmhouse is determined by the form of the earlier building, and hence is not typical, the scope of the accommodation provided is repeated in other more modest houses in the area, where the combination of parlour, hall/kitchen and buttery/dairy is a standard arrangement (Hall 1983, 93–4). A great many houses in the region were rebuilt in the second half of the 17th century, including a number elsewhere in Iron Acton parish (Hall 1983, 87–92, 179–92). Muddedown Farm on the Acton Court estate is one of these, although thought by Hall to predate the sale of 1683.

New architectural details are also within the local vernacular tradition. These include the transomed four-light wooden window frame in the dairy (compare Morton Grange, Thornbury; *ibid.*, pl LXII), and small two-light frames in the maltings and stables, together with the detailing of the mangers. Many doors were reused and their furniture is mainly plain and conservative in style, but there are H-hinges on a door in Room 1 and cockshead hinges on a cupboard in Room 6 (Alcock and Hall 1994, 25). The external door to the kitchen has a stirrup knocker (Alcock and Hall 1994, 27) and the dairy doors have rows of oval ventilation slots (Slocombe 1988, 33).

The relative status of Acton Court as a working farm at this time can be judged from the evidence of inventories. Over four hundred of these covering Iron Acton and four surrounding parishes have been published (Moore 1976), spanning the years 1539–1790, but most numerous in the period 1660–1730, when there are forty-two for Iron Acton alone (Moore 1976, 8). These provide an invaluable source of information on the content and use of rooms, and farming practice, which would benefit from further analysis. Their value is enhanced by the high survival rate of the buildings to which they refer, although there are difficulties in correlating houses with owners (Hall 1983, 93–8).

James Manning emerges as the most substantial farmer in Iron Acton parish and one of the most prosperous in the area, with goods valued at a total of £575 15s 0d. For comparison the goods of William Paine (Moore 1976 233, d 1702) at Acton Ilger,



the other medieval manor, were valued at £63 18s 4d, John Ridley (*ibid* 236, d 1703) £138 15s 0d, William Cotterell (*ibid* 247, d 1705) £330 14s 0d, and William Short (*ibid* 293, d 1713/4) £319 10s 0d. All these were yeomen of Iron Acton, and the differences in valuation arise from the much greater scale of agricultural production at Acton Court. A herd of fifty-two cows was more than twice the norm of *c* 15–25 and the resultant cheese production perhaps four or five times the average. For comparison the inventories cited have respectively 7, 15, 26 and 21 cows, with 8, 12, 26, and 30 cwt of cheese in store compared with 100 cwt at Acton Court. Corn and hay production was also on a larger scale.

Such detailed information is not readily available for the later phases of farming at Acton Court, so that it is not clear if the balance of production altered. New farm buildings were constructed and alterations to the house made *c* 1800, probably at the start of the tenancy of the Nichols family, which lasted until *c* 1907. This period saw the reduction of the house to its present size, with unfortunate consequences for the north range roof, which racked severely when support was removed from its west end. A raking buttress was built to support the truncated range. Within the house the dairy (Room 12) was fitted-out as a kitchen with a new range and woodwork in contemporary style. The adjoining bakehouse was extended and a larder built in the north range (Room 14a). There were two new privies. It is not clear where the dairy was sited; perhaps in Room 13 or possibly in OB 2. Later in the 19th century a new dairy, OB

10, was built on the north side of the house, which retains its lead-lined wooden cheese vats (compare Slocombe 1988, 53, fig 79) and other equipment. On the first floor the long gallery was subdivided and the west end used for storage.

Externally a series of new enclosures and a new generation of outbuildings were constructed at a greater distance from the house. Some of these can be identified as open-sided cowsheds (OB 15, 19, 22), pigsties (OB 1, 11; Slocombe 1989, 68–71) and a cider-house (OB 7), which retains the foundations for both the mill and the press (Quinion 1982, 11–19). It is not clear whether this replaced an earlier cider-house or whether it marks a change in the relative importance of cider versus beer as a drink.

Piecemeal alterations and repairs to the house and its farm buildings took place throughout the 19th century; for example a barn at the south end of the south court is dated 1849. The latest alterations to the house took place *c* 1890, when the present front door in the east court was created, with its porch of reused architectural elements. This led to a new hall and staircase, with a farm office to the north and a service passage to the rear, all carved out of Room 15. The first floor was also subdivided into a number of small rooms connected by passages. Photographs of *c* 1900 (eg Fig 7.7), when an antiquarian interest was taken in the house, show that it remained in good repair during the Nichols tenancy. Subsequently almost no building repairs apart from the retiling of the roof were carried out until its sale in 1984.



## 8

# Building materials: finds and specialist reports

## Roman tiles

by Kirsty Rodwell and Robert Bell

A total of sixty-five pieces of Roman tile, weighing 5.6 kg and consisting entirely of fairly small worn fragments, was found during the excavations. They included seventeen fragments of box-flue tiles (ten of which had combed decoration), sixteen pieces of building tile, and two fragments of imbrices; thirty fragments were unidentifiable. They all had the same soft fabric, consisting of micaceous clay with vegetable inclusions, suggesting a possible estuarine source; they were prone to lamination and dull buff-red in colour.

The great majority of the fragments came from early ground surfaces or from Period 2 contexts, indicating that they were not brought on to the site with later hardcore. Two pieces of building tile were built into the core of Period 3:1b south bridge abutment 1482. Several fragments were also found within the demolition material overlying the west side of the south court.

The virtual absence of roofing tiles is not surprising, given that Pennant slates were probably the standard roofing material used in this area during the Roman period, as in the medieval period. The presence of combed box-flue tiles, however, implies the existence nearby of a Roman building of some pretension, which possessed a heating system.

## Medieval floor tiles

by Bruce Williams

The site produced 1475 tiles and fragments, mostly the latter since they came largely from demolition and make-up layers and hardcore spreads. A number show little or no surface wear, suggesting that they were originally located in little-used areas of floor, but most are worn, some badly. A few were found *in situ*; in the east range cross-passage (Room 18), in the south range (Room 28),

and in the triangular courtyard between Room G/32 and Room Q/27 (see below).

Five groups of tiles were identified and classified according to fabric (groups 1–5). They form an important addition to 327 tiles which were discovered at Acton Court in 1974 (B Williams 1979, 61–76) adjacent to the east wall of the south court, about 50 m south of the house. They were relaid in a path, but were almost certainly taken from an unlocated part of the main house. Two of the groups identified equate with Groups 2 and 4 here.

The tiles in Group 4 form part of the Canynge/Bristol Group, so called because of their proliferation on sites in and around the Bristol area (Eames 1980, 236–54). They can be dated with reasonable accuracy to the latter part of the 15th century. The other groups are more difficult to date however, either because the numbers of tiles are small and do not compare with other known groups, or because they were only loosely stratified in the excavation. Where possible, a *terminus ante quem* for their manufacture may be provided by their discard date at Acton Court (Tables 6 and 7).

The catalogue includes many of the tile designs found in 1974. These are illustrated again and have been revised where necessary; cross-references to the 1979 catalogue are prefixed by *Poyntz*. It should be noted that six of the designs found in 1974 were not found in the excavations and have not been republished.

### Group 1

Tile originally 135 mm square, 13 mm thick in a fairly hard fabric containing a light scatter of small quartz grains up to 1 mm across, fragments of angular rock up to 3 mm across, and some ferruginous material up to 4 mm across; dark grey with orange-brown sides and base. Undercut edges (13 degrees), smooth base with four circular scooped-out keys.

A single example with a very worn surface; decorative technique uncertain but probably inlaid (survives 0.5 mm deep); traces of olive green glaze survive on edges.

- 1 (Fig 8.1) A four-tile repeating design showing swans(?) within a double quatrefoil. FT4/511.  
 Date: probably first half of the 14th century. Similar examples are known locally from Keynsham Abbey and from the Lord Mayor's Chapel in Bristol, BRSMG Acc No. Q1811 (Lowndes, design 38, 69). Its association here with tiles in Group 4 indicates that it is residual. It was found in a layer of soil above the Period 4.1–4.3 spread of demolition material in the south court (Area 2) which derived from medieval structures, possibly the ranges pulled down in order to accommodate the present east range.

**Group 2**

Tiles up to 235 mm square, and 26–39 mm thick in a light grey fabric, similar to Vince's Gloucester Type 52 which contains inclusions of quartz, feldspar and mica up to 25 mm across (Poyntz Group 2). Undercut edges (up to 15 degrees), smooth bases. Designs inlaid to a depth of about 1 mm; glaze chiefly light to dark green, sometimes speckled, though on four tiles black.

Twenty of the tiles are decorated and 465 are plain, including 101 yellow (ie

glazed over a white slip). Nine of these are triangular half tiles, formed by scoring before firing and snapping them afterwards, as a further five scored but unbroken tiles demonstrate. Another was scored again across both diagonals, and another (FT264/2141) was scored twice into three rectangles.

- 2 (Fig 8.1) Heraldic – crossed keys and sword of SS Peter and Paul. Found in Area 9 beneath the Period 5.2 stone slab floor in the Period 4.3 south passage (Room 20) in the present east range. A more complete example than Poyntz 19. FT126/2507.  
 3 (Fig 8.1) Heraldic – griffon passant dexter. From the Period 4.3 fill of the south arm of the moat, east of the porch. FT602 and FT609/1948, FT620/1983. A very similar example from Malmesbury Abbey, Wiltshire, but only c 127 mm square (Eames 1980, des 1474; cat 1039), suggests that the initials are G (or possibly from the Acton Court example, T) B, but the bearer of these arms is unknown.  
 Date: Two examples were found *in situ* in Room R/28, which was built in Period 3.4b; worn, undecorated Group 2 tiles were built into the inserted

**Table 6: Summary of decorated tiles present**

Phase	1	2	2.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	U/S	Totals
Group 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Group 2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	-	-	-	2	6	1	-	18	36
Group 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Group 4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	49	23	3	20	14	13	28	11	17	4	187
Group 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	3	53	29	3	20	14	15	34	12	17	22	225

**Table 7: Summary of plain tiles present**

Phase	1	2	2.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	U/S	Totals
Group 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Group 2	1	1	13	-	-	1	4	53	-	90	37	1	19	48	54	84	38	40	2	486
Group 3	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	33	1	34	229*	-	10	24	41	32	6	14	-	429
Group 4	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	3	86	26	-	23	39	18	46	80	63	5	399
Group 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	5
Totals	3	8	13	-	1	5	4	87	4	211	294	1	53	112	113	162	126	117	7	1320

\* Includes tiles *in situ* in Room 18

Period 3.5 footings on the south and west sides of Room A. Table 7 indicates that they were being discarded in large numbers from Period 3.4. Their presence in Period 2 is probably due to their intrusion from the courtyard pavement above.

Previously dated by the writer to the latter part of the 15th century on the basis of size and decoration alone (Williams 1979). The group is not otherwise dated. However, the already worn plain Group 2 tiles being thrown away in Period 3.5 may suggest a manufacture date between the second and third quarters of the 15th century.

The group does not appear to be a local product. The clay used in the manufacture of this group does contain Malvernian grits however, suggesting that they were probably made somewhere in the Severn Valley, but they are not so far known from other sites.

### Group 3

Tiles 173–86 mm square and 23–33 mm thick (one 46 mm) in a hard orange/brown or mauve to dark grey fabric, containing many rounded grains of quartz up to 1 mm across, large rock fragments up to 20 mm across, and angular fragments of quartz up to 9 mm across. Undercut edges (up to 15 degrees), smooth bases. Glazes are chiefly green or rich dark brown/black, though a few are clear, glazed over a cream slip.

The group contains 237 tiles excluding the *in situ* tiles in the cross-passage. Two of the tiles were decorated, one of them (4) by the slip-over-impression method. Six of the plain tiles were scored diagonally, but only three were broken into triangles.

- 4 (Fig 8.1) Part of a nine-tile panel. Geometric/floral. FT296 and FT297/1286.

*Date:* Save for three intrusive fragments in Period 2 contexts, it is not until Period 3.4 that significant numbers of Group 3 tiles are discarded, accompanied by a substantial number of tiles in Group 2. The almost total absence of Group 4 tiles in this period, except one piece which may be residual, could suggest a pre-Group 4 date for manufacture, say mid- to late 15th century.

### Group 4

Tiles 120–8 mm square, 24–32 mm thick in an orange/brown fabric, sometimes with a

light grey core towards their upper surface. They contain a scatter of small quartz grains up to 0.5 mm across, with occasional grains of what may be sandstone, and small, rounded clay pellets. The clay was sometimes poorly mixed, as shown by its variegated structure. Undercut edges (up to 17 degrees); bases retain quartz sand (0.5 mm grains).

Altogether 556 tiles were found, of which 364 are plain. They equate with *Poyntz* Group 1 (Williams 1979). Although chiefly glazed black, there are some probably unintentional brown/black and green examples. There were also forty-three tiles with transparent glaze over a white slip.

In one case a plain, black-glazed Group 4 tile, found thrown into the fill of the primary west arm of the moat in Period 4.2, was mortared on to the surface of a Group 2 tile, suggesting that Group 4 tiles were being laid over discarded, presumably earlier, Group 2 tiles.

The catalogue below includes important additions to the series of tiles discovered at Acton Court in 1974 (Williams 1979). Included in outline only are the drawings of tiles found in 1974 but not found during the subsequent excavations (eg nos 5–12, 16, 23–5).

The tiles are chiefly from four- or sixteen-tile panels (see Fig 8.4 for arrangement) and are comparable to a large group discovered beneath the floorboards of a house in Redcliff Street, Bristol, early in the 19th century. Traditionally thought to have been the home of William Canynges the younger, a well-known merchant of Bristol in the 15th century, the tiles were removed from the floor in 1913, and were later the subject of a comprehensive report by Elizabeth Eames (Eames 1951, 32–51). Where parallel designs to those from Canynges' pavement occur at Acton Court, the relevant design number is prefixed with Canynges.

In addition to Canynges' tiles numerous other close parallels may be noted. The most important perhaps are those from St David's Cathedral (Dyfed), and a group from Abbot Sebroke's Pavement before the High Altar in Gloucester Cathedral (Kellock 1989, 171–88).

## Catalogue of designs

### Fig 8.1

- 5 *Poyntz* 1a–1c. Three tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. Very similar to two

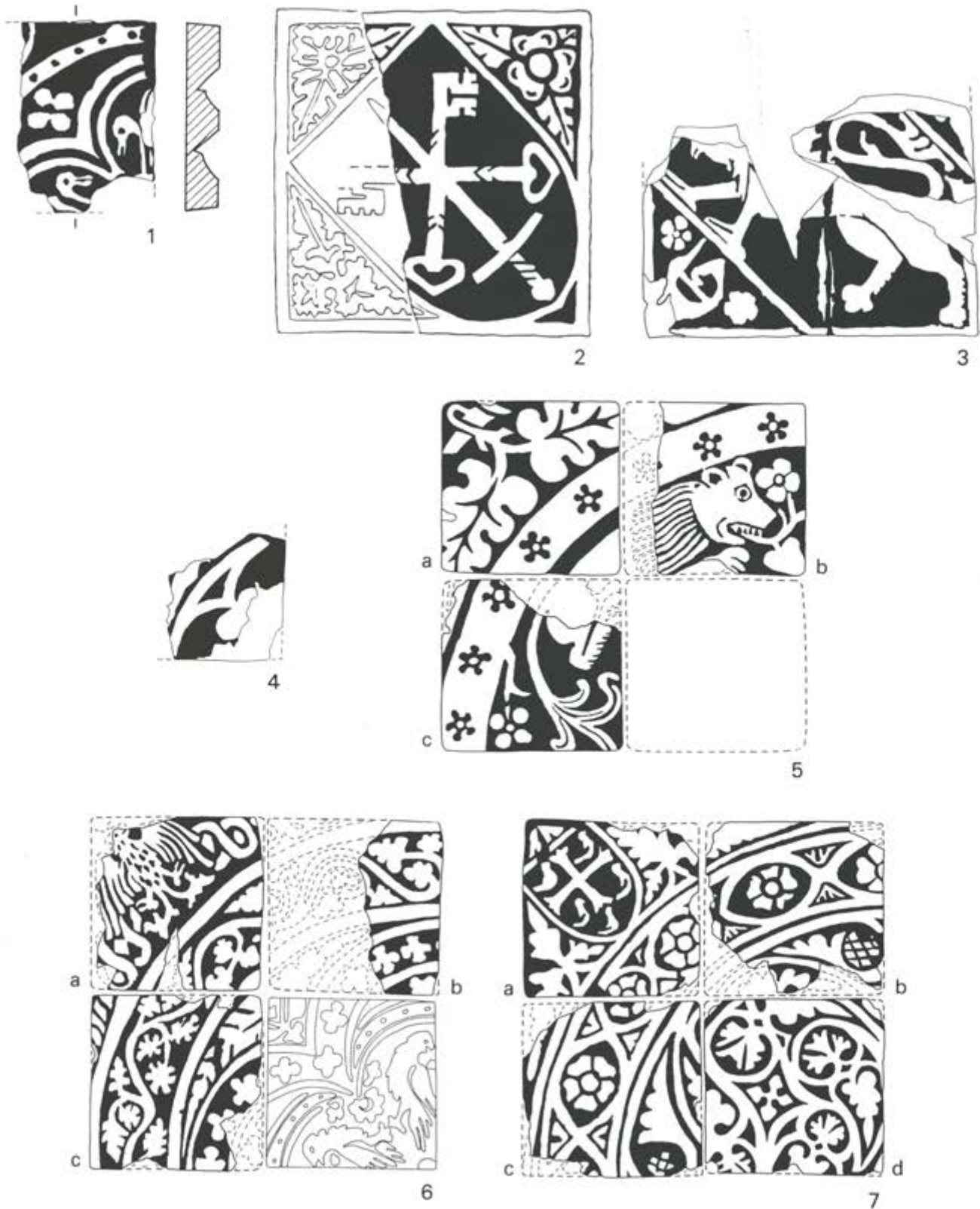


Figure 8.1 Medieval floor tile, scale 1:4.



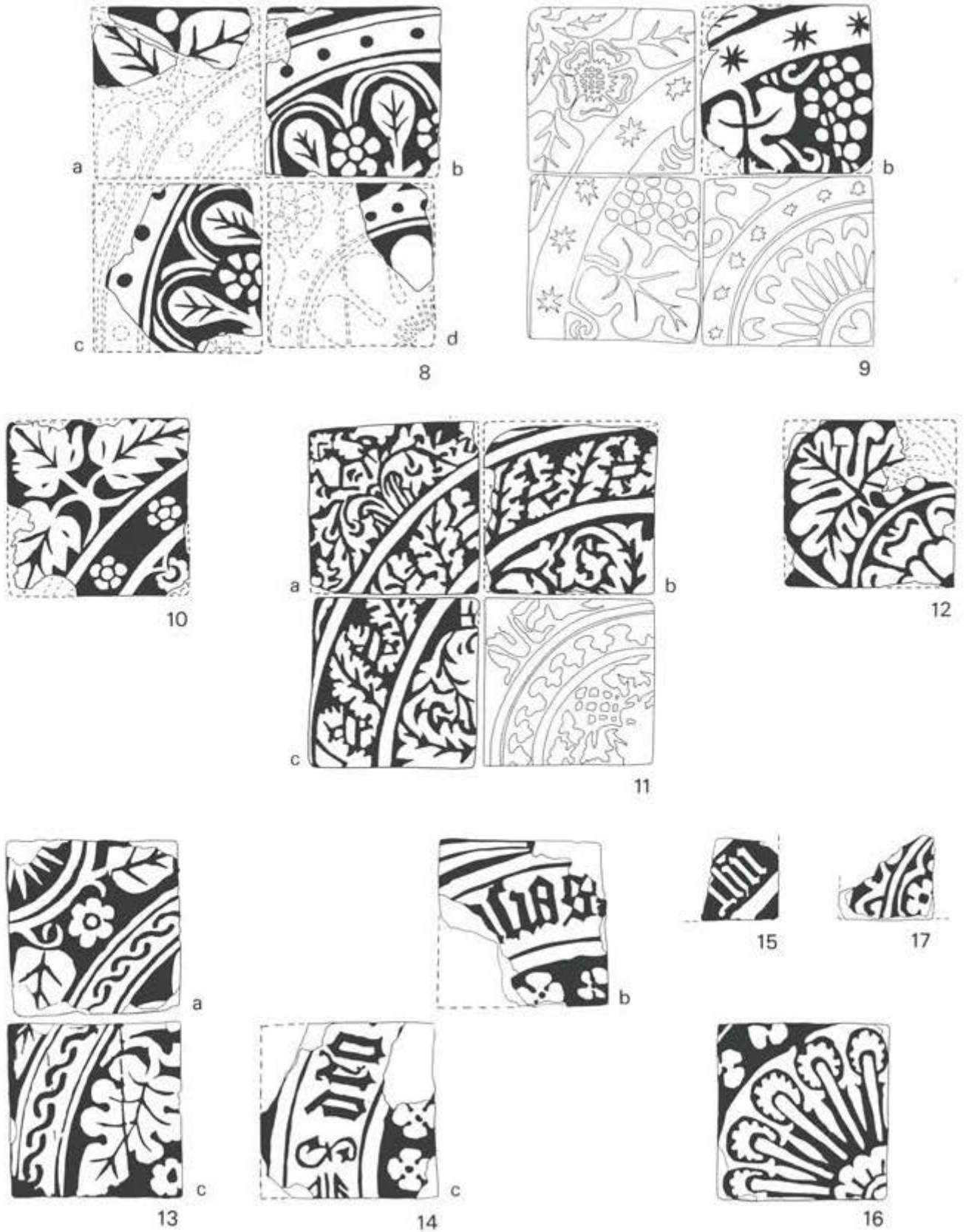


Figure 8.2 Medieval floor tile, scale 1:4.

tiles from the outer border of Canynges iii, but reversed (Eames 1951, pl XXIII(d)).

- 6 *Poyntz* 2a–2c. Three tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. Similar to, but not identical with, Canynges v. The eagles and running foliage are quite different on the two sets, showing that the same stamps could not have been used in their manufacture.
- 7 *Poyntz* 3a–3d. Four tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. The same as Canynges ix and also present at St David's Cathedral. Examples of *Poyntz* 3a are also recorded from Stratford-on-Avon and Holy Trinity Church, Warwick (Chatwin 1936, 40).

Fig 8.2

- 8 *Poyntz* 4a–4d. Four tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. Similar to Canynges vii though 4a differs in having three pairs of veins to each leaf rather than two. Two examples of *Poyntz* 4d tiles were found in topsoil at nearby Olveston Court in 1979 and in 1988. Olveston Court's golden period was in the late 15th century, when it was held by John Walshe (d 1498), controller of customs at Bristol in 1481, 1483 and again in 1493.
- 9 *Poyntz* 5b. One tile from a sixteen-tile panel. Similar to Canynges vi.
- 10 *Poyntz* 6a. Corner tile from a sixteen-tile panel not present in Canynges' pavement, but similar to a tile from Winchcombe Abbey, Gloucestershire (Williams, pers observation).
- 11 *Poyntz* 7a–7c. Three tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. The central design may be *Poyntz* 14.
- 12 *Poyntz* 8. Centre tile from a four-tile panel.
- 13 Two tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. Canynges i. FT87/901 and FT143/283.
- 14 Two tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. Inscription reads DEO GRATIAS. FT244/84 and FT45/127.
- 15 Tile from a sixteen-tile panel. Inscription indecipherable. FT295/1048.
- 16 *Poyntz* 15. Tile from a sixteen-tile panel.
- 17 Part of centre tile from a sixteen-tile panel, foliate. Canynges vi. FT328/US.

Fig 8.3

- 18 Outer tile from a sixteen-tile panel. The roundels and crosses are slightly larger

than in 19. FT183/284.

- 19 Two tiles from a sixteen-tile panel. FT467/1848 and 113/735.
- 20 Probably a corner tile from a sixteen-tile panel, foliate. FT306/1044.
- 21 Tile from a four-tile panel. Eames (1951) shows this as the centre component of Canynges iii, as does Williams: *Poyntz* 1d (Williams 1979).
- 22 Four-tile panel, the same as *Poyntz* 3d and Canynges xvi, showing the Beauchamp arms.
- 23 *Poyntz* 11. Tile from a four-tile panel. Centre of Canynges i.
- 24 *Poyntz* 12. Tile from a four-tile panel. Canynges xvii.
- 25 *Poyntz* 13. Tile from a four-tile panel, cut in half diagonally for use as a border tile when pavement tiles are laid diagonally in a room.
- 26 Tile from a four-tile panel. Inscription almost indecipherable but may read 'Domine Jesu Miserere' (Eames 1980, 244). Canynges xi. FT85/284.
- 27 Tile from a four-tile panel with Latin inscription. FT104/35.
- 28 Tile probably from a four-tile panel. The design is unclear but it may show a bird's wing. There is a rosette to one side and pierced band above. FT689/1284.
- 29 Tile from a four-tile panel, stylised fleur-de-lis. Canynges xx. FT169/282.
- 30 Tile from a four-tile panel, foliate. FT467/1848.
- 31 Tile showing the hub of Buckingham flanked by the knot of Stafford. FT690/1286. The same design is present on a tile from the Carmelite Friary, Bristol, in the collection of Bristol City Museums and Art Gallery (BRSMG Reg No G394).
- 32 (Not illustrated). Tile with a crowned 'M' in the centre. No slip was applied to the tile, but it was glazed. FT435/1822.

#### Date

The tiles are known as the Canynges/Bristol Group on account of their proliferation on sites in and around the Bristol area (Eames 1980, 236–54). Eames has reassessed her original dating of the Canynges Pavement in view of a four-tile panel in the pavement which bears the initials RE in the outer corners (Canynges xxix). These initials probably stand for Robert Elyot, Abbot of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol between 1515 and 1525. Further, his initials are present



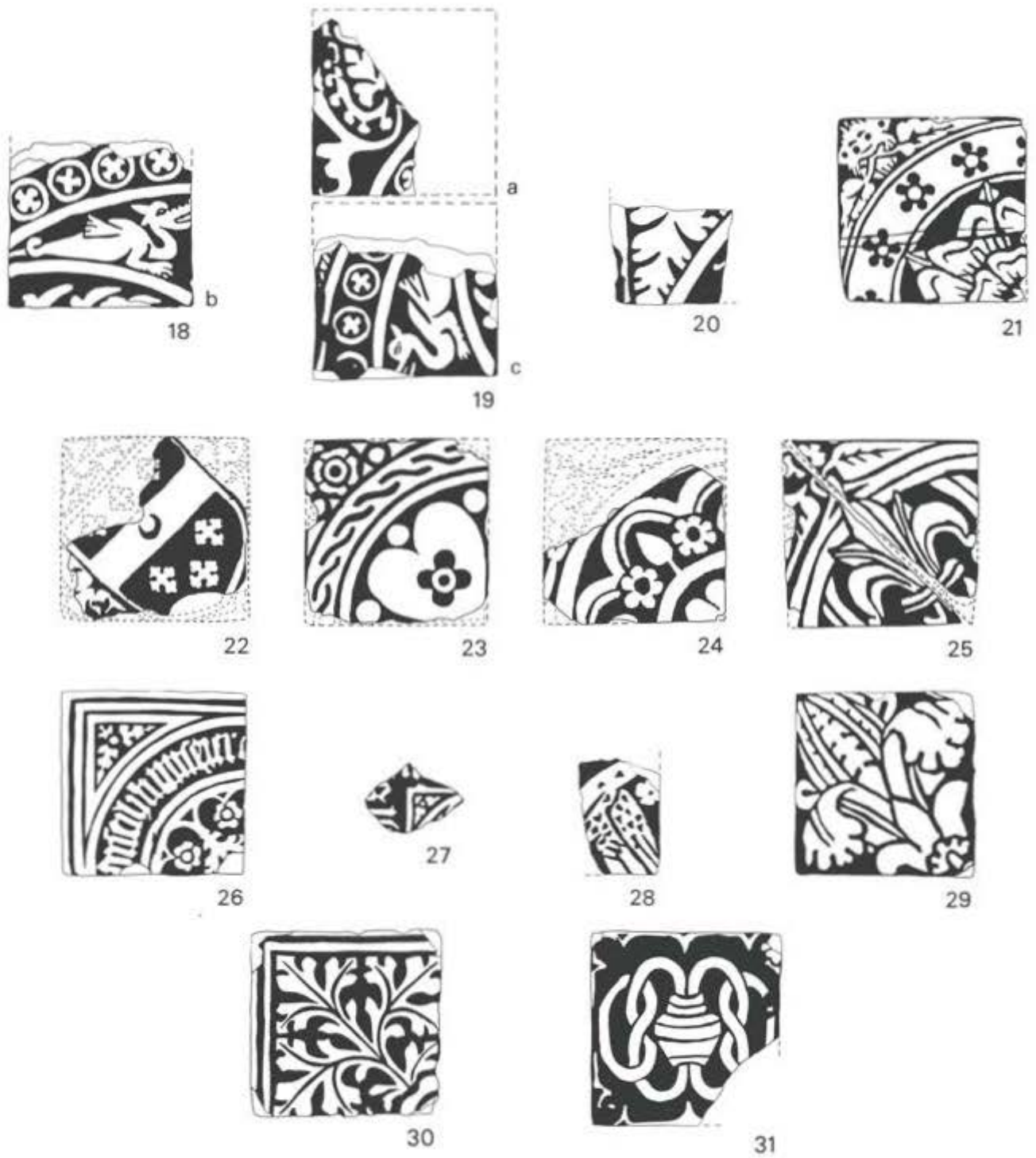


Figure 8.3 Medieval floor tile, scale 1:4.

on a four-tile panel from Gloucester Cathedral (ibid, designs 1499–1502) which include the initial JN for John Newland, Abbot of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol from 1481 to 1515, and on two tiles from the same panel from St Augustine's Abbey, and from Anchor Road, in Bristol, in the collections of Bristol City Museums and Art Gallery (BRSMG Reg No. G2185, G398). Since the arms of Robert Elyot over the Dean's stall in the Abbey include a mitre and crozier which are not present on the tiles, Eames rightly suggests that the tiles in the pavement must have been made before he became abbot, and probably between 1481 and 1515. As the fabric of Canynges xxix is the same as the others in the pavement, then the whole pavement must be of the same date. No tiles bearing the initials RE were found at Acton Court, possibly because they were considered unsuitable, although twelve of the patterns from the Canynges Pavement are present.

The date at which they were introduced to Acton Court is unclear. They are prevalent in Periods 4.2 and 4.3 contexts, and were evidently being discarded in large numbers in the late 1540s and 1550s, by which time some of them were in a very worn state. They were almost certainly laid during the ownership of Sir Robert Poyntz, who came of age in 1471, and died in 1520. It is conceivable that they might have been laid in advance of Henry VII's visit to Acton Court in 1486.

#### Group 5

Tile 19 mm thick in a hard buff fabric containing small voids. Inclusions: mica, quartz, and small, rounded red/brown lumps. The single fragment (FT218/947) has a rich green glaze, and is Spanish in origin.

The close trade links between Bristol and the Iberian Peninsula are reflected in the large numbers of tiles from Spain found in the city. Of particular note are the Spanish tiles in the floor in the Lord Mayor's Chapel, probably laid by Sir Francis Poyntz to decorate the chapel of his father, Sir Robert, who died in 1520 (Williams 1995). The edge of the tread on the step to the altar is paved with a row of plain green tiles, rectangular in shape, and it may not be too fanciful to suggest that some were brought to the family home at Iron Acton.

#### Other fabrics

Two fragments, 32–40mm thick, in a buff fabric containing many rounded lumps of

unhomogenised clay up to 1.5 mm across are similar to Williams' Bristol Roof Tile Fabric Type 1 from Temple Street, Bristol, and almost certainly of local origin (Williams 1988, 145). Waste pottery in a similar fabric was found on Redcliffe Hill in Bristol (Dawson and Ponsford, forthcoming). They are probably 14th- or early 15th-century in date (Ponsford, pers comm).

Three worn fragments are probably from large tiles, given their distinctive thickness, 45–50 mm, and square edges. The fabric is soft, orange to orange/brown in colour, greying towards the upper surface, and pitted throughout. It contains lumps of what may be limestone up to 14 mm across and is fairly micaceous. The upper surface of the tiles is smooth and there is no evidence of either slip or glaze. Probably 15th-century in date; one example (FT 451/1822) came from the Period 4.2 infill at the west end of Room G/32. Another (FT 470/255) came from the fill of the construction trench of the Period 3.4b north wall of Room Q but might be intrusive.

#### Tile arrangements

Tiles were found *in situ* in two areas of the demolished house: in the triangular courtyard between Room G/32 and Room Q (?Period 3.4b), and in Room R/28 (Period 3.4b). In addition tiles still survive in the floor of the Period 4.3 cross-passage in the present east range.

#### Triangular courtyard

An amorphous area containing fifteen complete and partially complete tiles adjacent to the north-west corner of Room D. All were smashed and/or abraded as they lay directly under a modern farm track, but they probably belong to the later room, Q/27.

The tiles were laid diagonally to the north-west corner of Room D, and were set into a bed of mortar (1669) which overlay the construction trench of the north wall of Room D. There were a mixture of Group 2 and Group 3 tiles. Five had plain, yellow, glazed surfaces, and one was decorated (design 2). To the east of the tiles, at the same angle, were several very fractured paving slabs. Possibly the tiles were laid as a repair to the stone floor.

#### Room R/28

Three fragments of tiles on the east edge of the room, and white mortar in the north half of the room. There was no evidence, such as



impressions in the mortar bed, to indicate how the tiles were arranged in the floor.

None of the tiles was decorated. Two of them belong in Group 2 – one of these has a plain yellow surface. The third tile also has a plain yellow surface, and belongs in Group 4. The room dates from Period 3.4b, and the tiles may also have been reused.

#### Cross-passage

Eight rows of tiles, *c.* 105 in total, are arranged alongside the north wall, with eighty-four tiles down the south wall. There were presumably once tiles across the whole of the passage, but those in the central part, subject to the greatest wear, appear to have been replaced by Pennant slabs. The tiles are considerably crushed and worn, and no patterns are visible. All belong in Group 3, and were clearly reused in the cross-passage, which was not created until Period 4.3.

How many of the rooms at Acton Court were paved with floor tiles has to remain a matter of speculation because of the damage to the floors at ground level caused by later farm activity. Apart from the floor in Room R/28, the only one known in the Period 3 house was in Room J. It was clearly wooden rather than tiled. All the other floors were either destroyed or, as in the case of Room G/32, were relaid at a lower level using *lias* slabs. It is possible, however, to suggest the disposition of some tiles from where they were discarded.

Room H, the double-arched garderobe north-west of the chapel, was filled in during Period 4.2, while the medieval range was still standing, immediately prior to the construction of the new west range. The tiles in the fill must have come specifically from the medieval chapel range, possibly from Room L, built in Period 3.5 and demolished when the new north range was built; or else from the first floor of Room G/32, interpreted as the chapel. They consist almost exclusively of Group 4 tiles, with equal numbers of decorated and plain tiles. Among the decorated tiles, thirteen designs were represented (Cat nos 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 25, Canynges design i, viii, xi, xx, and a former *Pyntz* 3d).

A second area where tiles were firmly stratified was the Period 4.2 infill of the original west arm of the moat, beneath the new west range. The tiles were discarded after the medieval buildings adjacent to the chapel had been demolished. Again they were predominantly Group 4, though the great majority were plain. There were rather

more Group 2 and Group 3 tiles, and only four Group 4 designs were represented (Cat nos 5, 8, 10, and former *Pyntz* 3d). They also probably came from the chapel range.

A third group of tiles was within the Period 4.2 infill sealed beneath the floor of Room 29 in the new west range. Here, although the number of Group 2 tiles is increasing, mainly plain Group 4 tiles still predominate. Four designs are represented (Cat nos 5–7 and Canynges ii), copying those from the rest of the chapel range.

Another assemblage came from the Period 4.3–4.4 infill of the south arm of the moat, and is markedly different from the Period 4.2 sample areas. This is likely to have come specifically from the refurbishment and partial rebuilding of the south hall range. The majority were Group 2 and Group 3 tiles, suggesting that there were tiled floors in this part of the house (such as the one surviving in Room R/28) which predated the Period 3.5 retiling evident in the chapel range. The decorated Group 4 tiles include nine different designs (Cat nos 6–8, 11, 24–5, former *Pyntz* 1d and 3d, and Canynges viii), which match the designs from the chapel range. It is clearly not possible, on the distribution of designs within the excavation, to attribute specific Group 4 designs to particular parts of the house.

It is worth noting that hardly any tiles were found in Area 2 amongst the Period 4.1–4.3 demolition rubble, thought to derive mainly from the medieval buildings beneath the present east range. Only two tiles (a Group 2 and a Group 4 plain tile) were definitely within the dumped material, suggesting either that the range they came from had no tiled floors, or else that any tiles were dumped in a different part of the south court.

The final group of tiles came from the Period 4.6–5.1 make-up and demolition layers above the infilled south arm of the moat, and almost certainly derive from the demolished south range. The majority belong to Groups 2 and 3, suggesting that they survived *in situ* throughout the life of the Period 4 house. Three Group 4 designs were found (Cat nos 6–7, and 11). The tiles discovered in 1974, relaid in a path to a Period 4.6/5.1 cottage to the east of the south court, may also have been salvaged from the south range.

There is no evidence for new tiles having been laid in the Period 4 house, though the

Period 4.3 east range cross-passage indicates that some tiles were reused in a new location. Floors in the new house consisted either of boards or stone slabs (Chapter 5).

Recent observations at Thornbury Castle, Gloucestershire, have revealed a section of tile paving in what must have been the floor of the cloister walk on the north side of the Privy Garden. There was a gallery above the cloister, which, according to an Elizabethan survey, was tiled with 'bricks' (Hawkyard 1977, 51–8). Most of the tiles known from the castle bear the arms and armorial badges of Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, who was beheaded in 1521. Though incomplete, the laying of this tile pavement is likely to have been one of the last works carried out at the castle, and must antedate Edward's death. It is pure speculation, but not entirely improbable, that the first-floor gallery overlooking the garden at Acton Court (demolished in Period 4.2), may also have been tiled.

A sufficient number of tiles was found in Groups 2 and 4 to allow tentative remarks to be made about their possible arrangement in the floors at Acton Court. Together with the tiles discovered on the site in 1974, there were *c* 292 decorated tiles in Group 4 compared with 580 plain. The high percentage of decorated tiles is not surprising for this particular group however, as they make up four- or sixteen-tile panels (Fig 8.4) which require fewer contrasting plain tiles than single tile designs covering the same area. The group also produced several cut triangular tiles, necessary if the tiles were set diagonally to the walls.

Their possible arrangement in a floor may be compared with the pavement from William Canynges' house in Bristol. An illustration of the pavement was published by Henry Shaw in 1858 (Shaw, pl XLI). This shows the tiles laid diagonally to the walls within a border of plain tiles, which were parallel to the walls. Decorated panels of four and sixteen tiles were arranged throughout the pavement; each panel separated from the others by plain black tiles. Early repairs to the floor are represented by areas of plain yellow tiles.

The tiles in Group 2 would have been arranged quite differently. The designs are all of the single tile variety and numbered 20 decorated to 465 plain. The relatively small number of decorated tiles most likely reflects their uncomplicated arrangement in the floor.

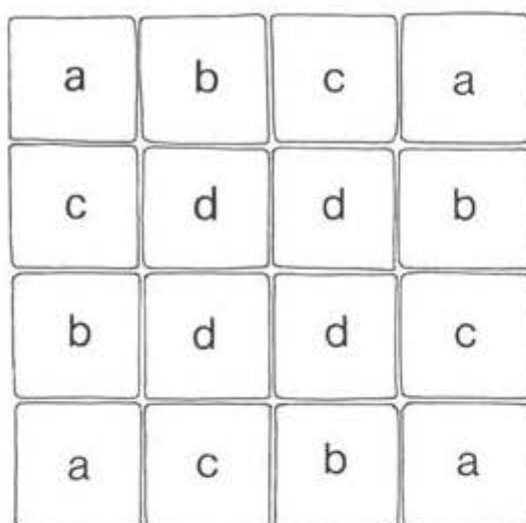


Figure 8.4 Medieval floor tile, layout diagram.

## Medieval and post-medieval ridge and roof tiles

by Suzannah England and Alan Vince

A total of 3145 ceramic roof tile fragments from the Acton Court excavations was examined and divided into groups based on fabric type. Details of manufacturing methods and decorative techniques were recorded and the spatial and chronological distribution of tile fragments across the site was examined.

Medieval ceramic ridge tiles were first used on the site in Period 3, following the construction of the manorial complex. There was no evidence for the use of flat ceramic roofing tiles until the early modern period, probably because of the proximity of Pennant sandstone outcrops. Initially the majority of tiles came from the Nash Hill, Lacock, kilns 28 km to the south-east of Acton Court and from the Bristol industry. Later in the medieval and Tudor periods Minety and Malvern Chase were used in preference, a trend marked also in the sources of pottery used on the site. The largest collection of ridge tiles comes from deposits of Period 4, associated with the destruction of much of the medieval manor house and the construction of the north and west ranges of the Tudor mansion. The sparsity of ridge tiles from the site of the eastern court reflects the fact that the Period 4 house had stone ridges, which survive on the standing ranges, although the tile fragments found there in Period 4 deposits may be evidence for the reuse of medieval ridge tiles on the Tudor ancillary buildings.

Table 8 Medieval roof tile: incidence and date of fabrics

<i>Fragments</i>		<i>Contexts</i>		<i>Code</i>	<i>Date Range</i>
752	24.60%	210	27.96%	BR	Late 13th–15th century
177	5.79%	79	10.52%	MISC	Late 13th century and later
533	17.44%	84	11.19%	NH	Late 13th–15th century
719	23.52%	142	18.91%	MALV	Late 14th–16th century
48	1.57%	19	2.53%	MINETY	Late 14th–16th century
1	0.03%	1	0.13%	AK	16th century or later
33	1.08%	7	0.93%	SSOM	16th–17th century
2	0.07%	2	0.27%	STROAT	16th–17th century
11	0.36%	1	0.13%	NDGT	17th–18th century
781	25.55%	169	22.50%	MOD	19th–20th century
3057	100.00%	714	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

It is unlikely that any of the ridge tile fragments found in Period 4 or later deposits were actually brought on to the site as part of the construction of the Tudor mansion. Pottery from Stroath, South Somerset and Malvern Chase was in use at that time and tiles in these fabrics have been found, but not in primary deposits. Their distribution on site, in layers relating to the demolition of the Tudor south range and from the south court (Area 2), suggests that they may have been used as patching on the south range or on the first generation of farm buildings which replaced it. Another innovation during the later 17th century was the introduction of pantiles, although these were only ever present in small quantities.

### Fabrics, glaze, decoration

The majority of the ridge tile fragments from Acton Court could be readily identified as products of the Nash Hill, Minety, Malvern Chase or Bristol pottery industries. Smaller quantities of Stroath, South Somerset and North Devon tiles were also present. All of these groups are well known from medieval and later sites in the lower Severn valley. In addition there was a small number of fragments of tile of previously unrecorded fabrics, classed here as Miscellaneous A to G (with subdivisions of D into D1 and D2 and E into E1 and E2) (Table 8).

Most of the medieval and post-medieval tiles had a grey to dark grey core with an oxidised surface ranging from reddish yellow to light yellowish brown (5YR 6/6–10YR 6/4). Nearly all were copper

glazed on their top surfaces. The exceptions were the Miscellaneous C (with a red slip and copper glaze on its upper surface) and Miscellaneous G fabrics (with a red slip outer surface only). Malvern Chase and Stroath tiles were lead glazed.

With only one sherd of each, it was impossible to determine whether or not the Miscellaneous F and G fabrics were ridge tiles. All other tiles had knife-cut ridges excluding the Malvern variety and modern examples. There were remarkably few hand-moulded ridges on Malvern tiles and all four have been illustrated in the catalogue. Decoration was limited to applied strips on Bristol tiles, possibly one similar example of this on a Nash Hill tile (Fig 8.5.7), and wavy incised lines on a number of Miscellaneous B and a few Miscellaneous E sherds.

### Distribution on site

Six assemblages of tile have been isolated as being of particular relevance for establishing the chronology of tile use on the site or for establishing on which buildings particular types of tile were used.

#### *Group a*

134 fragments of tile found to the south-east of Room G (Period 3.2–3.3, Context 1802). This is interpreted as construction debris related to the extension of Room G and is dominated by Bristol tiles, many of which were decorated with applied strips and knife-cut crests. There were also six Nash Hill tiles and one Misc E1 tile with wavy combed decoration.



126	94.03%	BR
1	0.75%	MISC E1
1	0.75%	MOD
6	4.48%	NH

134 100.00% *Total*

#### Group b

268 fragments from Period 4.1–4.3 dump layers in Area 2, beneath the west side of the south court. This is interpreted as demolition material, probably originating in medieval buildings (including Room S) beneath the Period 4.1 east range. Bristol tiles are the most common type in this assemblage, followed by Nash Hill, Misc (fabrics A, B, C, D1, D2, E1 and E2), Malvern Chase, Minety and a single fragment of Stroast tile. The wide variety of fabrics represented may suggest that a number of buildings, erected and repaired at different times, were once present.

1	0.37%	AK
133	49.63%	BR
19	7.09%	MALV
5	1.87%	MINETY
4	1.49%	MISC A
11	4.10%	MISC B
4	1.49%	MISC C
3	1.12%	MISC D1
1	0.37%	MISC D2
2	0.75%	MISC E1
1	0.37%	MISC E2
84	31.34%	NH

268 100.00% *Total*

#### Group c

118 fragments were found in demolition material probably deriving from Rooms H, J, K, L, M and N, thrown into the primary west arm of the moat and into Room H, beneath the Tudor west range.

34	28.81%	BR
46	38.98%	MALV
1	0.85%	MINETY
1	0.85%	MISCA
3	2.54%	MISCB
2	1.69%	MISCC
1	0.85%	MISCE1
9	7.63%	MOD
21	17.80%	NH

118 100.00% *Total*

#### Group d

377 fragments from demolition material,

probably from the refitting and partial rebuilding of the south range, thrown into the south, east and northern arms of the moat (Period 4.3–4.5).

62	16.45%	BR
226	59.95%	MALV
14	3.71%	MINETY
16	4.24%	MISC A
1	0.27%	MISC B
2	0.53%	MISC C
3	0.80%	MISC D1
1	0.27%	MISC D2
16	4.24%	MISC E2
1	0.27%	MISC F
5	1.33%	MOD
30	7.96%	NH
377	100.00%	<i>Total</i>

#### Group e

357 fragments from the Period 4.6–5.2 rubble spread in the east court and deriving in part from the demolition of Rooms 34, 35 and 36.

124	34.73%	BR
16	4.48%	MALV
11	3.08%	MINETY
7	1.96%	MISC E1
29	8.12%	MOD
170	47.62%	NH
357	100.00%	<i>Total</i>

#### Group f

Ninety-two fragments of tile from the demolition spread above the infilled south arm of the moat. This material is presumably derived from the central/west part of the Tudor south range and west range.

11	11.96%	BR
38	41.30%	MALV
5	5.43%	MINETY
3	3.26%	MISC A
1	1.09%	MISC B
1	1.09%	MISC D2
4	4.35%	MISC E1
13	14.13%	MISC POST MED
10	10.87%	MOD
4	4.35%	NH
1	1.09%	SSOM
1	1.09%	STROAT
92	100.00%	<i>Total</i>

## Discussion

Ceramic ridge tiles first occur in the west of



England in the later 12th century. At that time, however, they were uncommon and may have been limited to buildings of high status. It is highly unlikely that any of the Acton Court tiles are of this date and the quite extensive deposits of Periods 2 and 3.1 contain no contemporary tile, and only a very few fragments of obvious intrusive tile. Ceramic ridge tiles became much more common during the second half of the 13th century and indeed, became a staple product of the large regional pottery production centres such as those at Bristol, Minety, South Glamorgan and Herefordshire. An interesting feature of the ridge tiles of this period is that they are widely distributed, and can be found as far from their source as the contemporary pottery made in the same centres. Given this pattern, it is not surprising to find ridge tiles from several local pottery production centres at Acton Court. In the later medieval and Tudor periods, from the second half of the 14th century into the 16th century, the Minety and Malvern Chase centres increased their output at the expense of the other industries, such as Bristol and Nash Hill, both of which may have ceased production of both pot and tile before the end of the 15th century. The tiles in groups *b* and *c*, thrown away in the 16th century, probably represent material from a variety of buildings, some perhaps being original 13th-century structures, others perhaps later buildings on which earlier tiles were relaid whilst others still must have come from subsequent rebuilding or repair work. Group *d*, deposited in the mid-16th century, is also likely to contain a range of medieval ridge tiles which were still in use up till that time, some of which were partially reconstructable (see Fig 8.5.1, for example). The higher proportion of Malvern Chase tiles in this deposit, *c* 61 per cent, as opposed to *c* 46 per cent in group *c* may have been a consequence of the later 15th- or 16th-century refurbishment of the south range of the manor house.

Malvern Chase ridge tiles were certainly still in use in the mid-16th century, for example in Hereford and Gloucester, and are included among the products of the Stroat and Welsh Borderland kilns. It is therefore conceivable that some of the Malvern Chase tiles found at Acton Court were brought on to the site at the time of construction of the Tudor mansion. The scarcity of definitely late tiles, only 1.9 per cent of the total assemblage, and the presence of stone crest fragments suggests how-

ever that few tiles were actually used in the construction of the mansion and that the few potential Tudor period ridge tiles were actually later purchases, brought on to the site to repair the mansion's roofs or to cover the first generation of farm buildings.

Flat roof tiles were used sporadically in the west of England in the 12th century. The abundance of good stone for roofing inhibited the development of the roof tile industry in the region, however, and ceramic roof tiles only came into general use during the 16th century, at the same time and in the same fabrics as bricks. It may be, therefore, that the Tudor mansion at Acton Court was both built too early and with too ready access to Pennant stone for such roof tiles to have been extensively used on the site. The only use of ceramic tiles before the 1920s, when double-Roman tiles were introduced, was in the 17th and 18th centuries, when a few pantiles were used (nineteen fragments have been recovered from 17th- or 18th-century deposits).

### Fabric analysis

About forty fragments of the Miscellaneous groups were thin-sectioned. The major features of the petrology are given below:

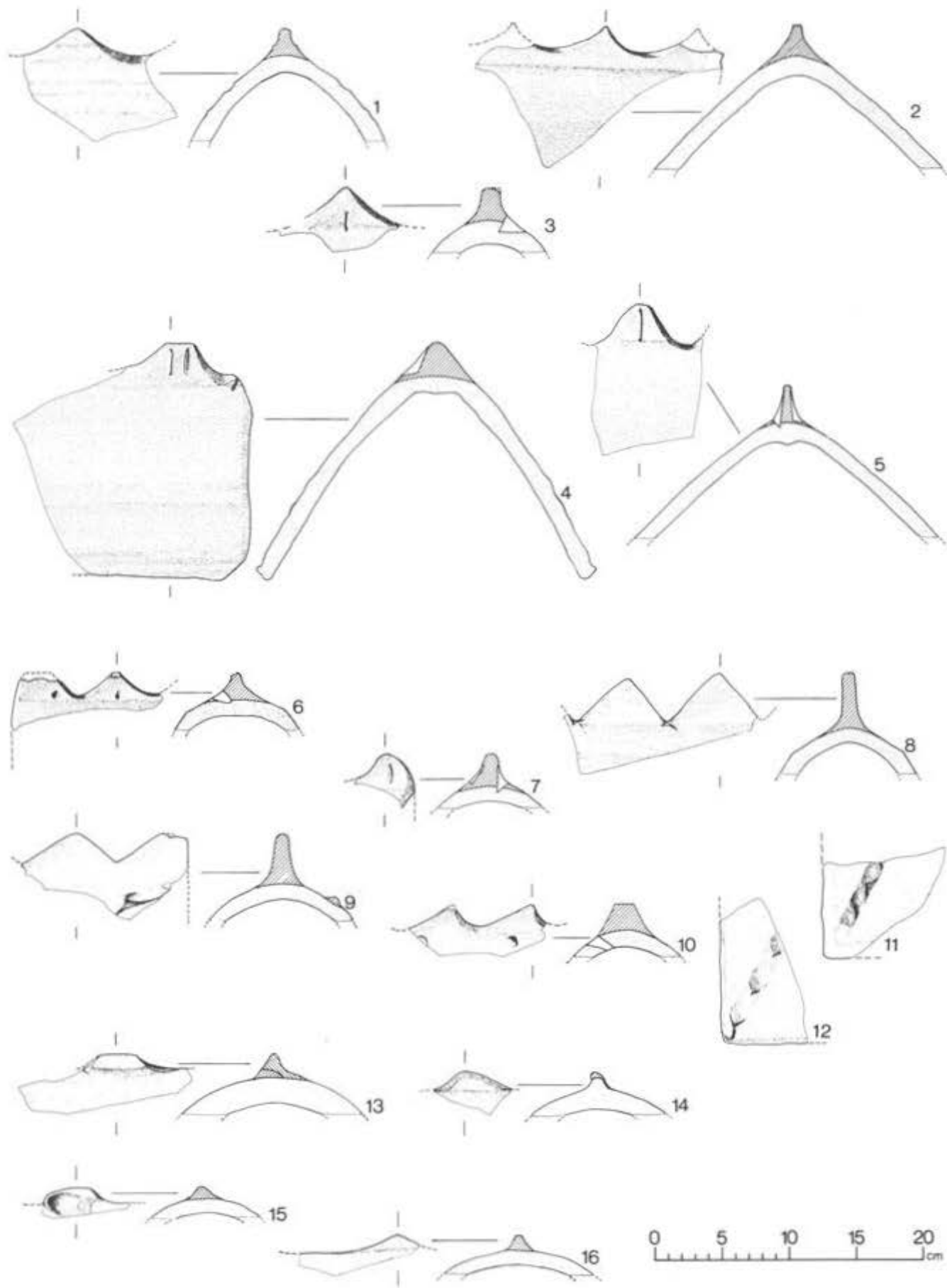
- A* contained large iron ore and sandstone inclusions (up to 0.6 mm across). It also had an isotropic clay matrix with plagioclase feldspar, sandstone, chert and muscovite. There was some polycrystalline stretched quartz, characteristic of quartz from a metamorphic source.
- B* similar to the Miscellaneous A fabric but for the absence of metamorphic quartz, large iron ore and sandstone inclusions, to be replaced by shell (some gastropod voids were seen with the naked eye).
- C* had a pink core, birefringent matrix, quartz, plagioclase feldspar, sandstone, muscovite, red and black iron ore.
- D* similar to C in inclusion types but with a larger grain size, an isotropic clay matrix and grey core.
- E* the only fabric to contain biotite as well as muscovite.
- F* contained abundant quartz and moderate chert.
- G* contained sparse siltstone, quartz and chert.

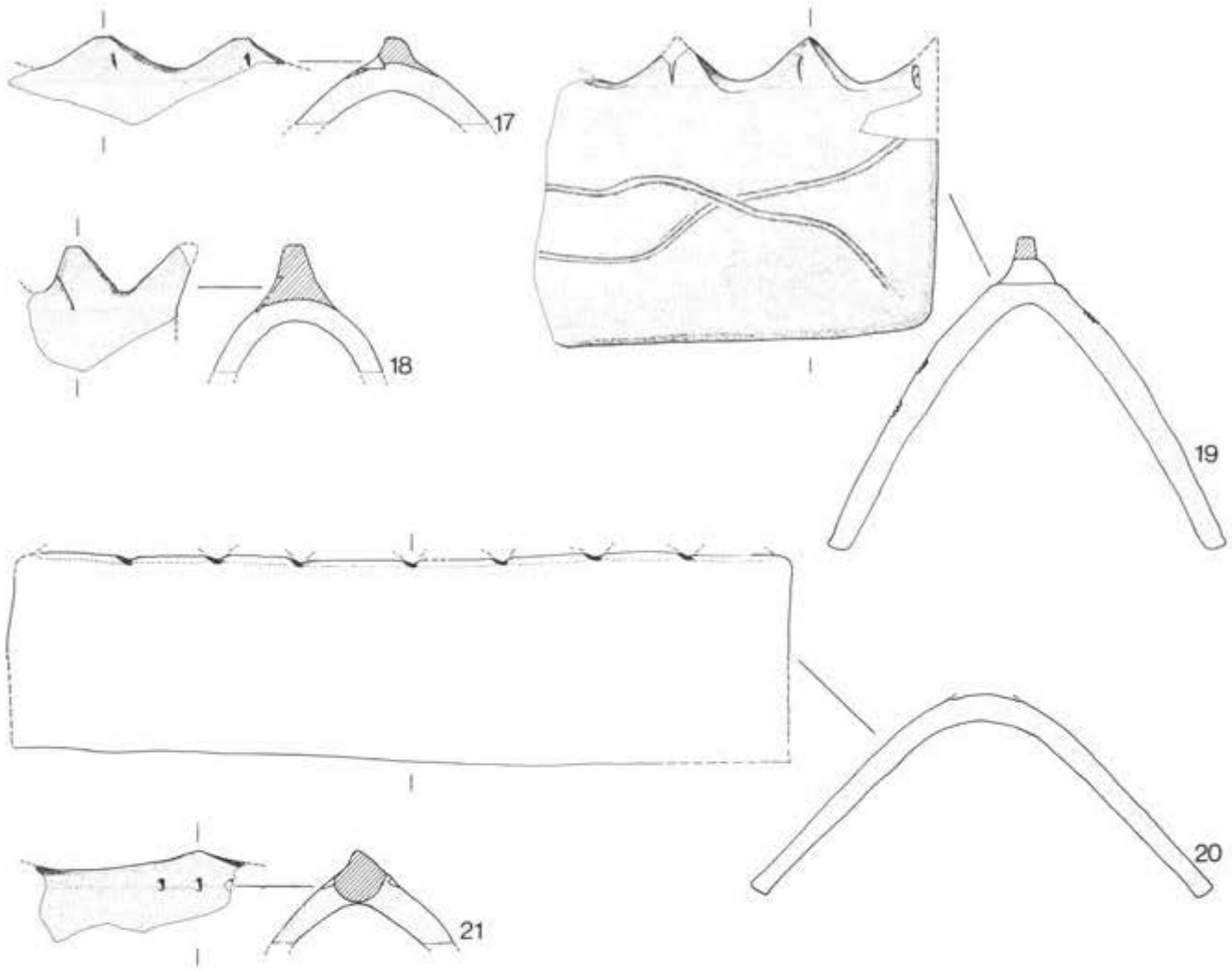
## Catalogue

Fig 8.5

- 1 Nash Hill fabric. A copper-glazed knife-cut ridge tile with hollows where a finger smoothed the tile. *Dimensions:* hbc 66 mm; hp 86 mm; wt 12 mm av, 14 mm at base; iw 114 mm. Period 4.3 (1931)
- 2 Nash Hill fabric. There are striations on the copper-glazed tile running parallel to the ridge where the knife has pulled grit along the surface. There may be a missing applied strip parallel to the tile edge. *Dimensions:* hbc 87 mm; hp 110 mm; wt 12 mm; iw 180 mm. Period 4.2 (1064)
- 3 Nash Hill fabric. A copper-glazed tile. *Dimensions:* hbc 24 mm; hp 48 mm; wt 15 mm; iw 43 mm. Periods 4.6–5.2 (722)
- 4 Minety fabric. There is a faint bump below the crest which has been pinched. The tile is narrower in middle height and the edge smoothed by pressing in the edges leaving excess clay remains below the tile in low mounds. *Dimensions:* hbc 153 mm; hp 179 mm; wt 11 mm (mid) 13 mm (nr base); wb 238 mm; dsp 26–4 mm. Period 4.4 (2150)
- 5 Minety fabric. The copper glaze appears yellow in places; this may have resulted from a reaction between the fabric limestone and the glaze. The tile has been well finished with walls of an even thickness except for the internal bump below the crest. *Dimensions:* hbc 87 mm; hp 115 mm; wt 12 mm; iw 198 mm; dsp 26–4 mm. Period 4.3 (1993)
- 6 Bristol fabric. The copper glaze is opaque in some areas, maybe because of some impurity in it, or because the copper was not thoroughly mixed into the lead glaze before application. There is a shoulder where the ridge has been joined to the tile making the wall above the shoulder thicker. The crest tips are pressed to one side to flatten their tops parallel to the ridge line. The tile interior is unevenly smoothed. The tile edge has been smoothed and pressed into the tile forming a slight bulge making it thicker than other parts of the wall. *Dimensions:* hbc 23 mm; hp 43 mm; dsp 29 mm; wt 13 mm (above shoulder) 10 mm (below shoulder); iw 72 mm; dhp 20–15 mm. Period 5.3 (84)
- 7 Bristol fabric. The copper-glazed tile appears to have been smoothed by a pinching of thumb and forefinger, then rubbed along the tile edge with no smoothing of the excess clay pushed up either side of the tile. *Dimensions:* hbc 17 mm; hp 42 mm; wt 11 mm; iw 50 mm; dsp 21–9 mm. Period 5.3 (2712)
- 8 Bristol fabric. There is a shoulder to the copper-glazed tile where the ridge has been joined to the tile making the region above the shoulder slightly thinner. *Dimensions:* hbc 34 mm; hp 76 mm; dsp 60 mm; wt 11 mm (above shoulder); 14 mm (below shoulder); iw 74 mm. Period 4.2 (1067)
- 9 Bristol 2 fabric. A copper glaze. The decorative strip is applied using finger pressure parallel to the line of the strip. *Dimensions:* hbc 28 mm; hp 66 mm; wt 12 mm; iw 82 mm; has 5 mm. Period 4.1–4.3(538)
- 10 Bristol fabric. A copper glaze. There are faint intermittent lines running parallel along the ridge surface where grit has been dragged along when finishing the crests and troughs. *Dimensions:* hbc 20 mm; hp 40 mm; wt 11 mm; iw 49 mm; dhp (outer surface) 31–24 mm; (inner surface) 36–34 mm. Period 4.4–4.6 (518)
- 11 Bristol fabric. A copper glaze with a tightly 'twisted' applied strip possibly made with the small finger. The deeper centre to the indent suggests that the finger was used at a 90 degree angle to press the strip to the tile. The tile edge has been finished by hand pressing the edge at a slight angle off 90 degrees with low clay mounds running along the top edge. *Dimensions:* wt 10 mm. Period 4.4–4.5 (3070)
- 12 Bristol fabric. The loose twisted applied strip on the copper-glazed tile was probably made using the side of a finger. *Dimensions:* wt 10 mm. Period 4.1–4.3 (528)
- 13 Malvern fabric. This Malvern tile is higher fired and has a thicker wall. The crest is made of two applied additions. The previous tile could have been similarly made, with the tell-tale signs of production being lost from a more thorough finish. The interior has been finished with a straight-sided tool. *Dimensions:* hbc 27 mm; hp 45 mm; wt 21 mm; iw 68 mm. Period 4.3 (1991)
- 14 Malvern fabric. The lead-glazed hand-moulded crest is made from a pinched

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mound of the tile body covered by an applied strip, forming a 'skewed curve' shape. *Dimensions:* hbc 27 mm; hp 32 mm; wt 13 mm; iw 48 mm. Period 4.3 (2065)

- 15 Malvern fabric. The lead-glazed hand-moulded crest is secured to the tile by pressing with the thumb fingertip, then bending the thumb to the right, creating a 'mound' where the first phalange joins the second. The crest-tile join is reinforced by pressing the right edge of the crest to the body. *Dimensions:* hbc 13 mm; hp 23 mm; wt 11 mm; iw 44 mm. Period 5.2 (1386)
- 16 Malvern fabric. The lead-glazed hand-moulded crest is quite simply made compared to the other Malvern crests

with the crest pressed to the body forming a triangular shape. *Dimensions:* hbc 19 mm; hp 630 mm; wt 11 mm; iw 74 mm. Period 4.1–4.3 (529)

**Fig 8.6**

- 17 Miscellaneous D1 fabric. A copper glaze. *Dimensions:* hbc 36 mm; hp 51 mm; wt 15 mm; iw 73 mm; dhp 19–12 mm. Period 4.3 (1991)
- 18 Miscellaneous E1 fabric. A copper glaze with an asymmetrically cut ridge. *Dimensions:* hbc 42 mm; hp 73 mm; wt 14 mm; iw 70 mm; dhp 37–18 mm. Period 4.4–4.6 (518)
- 19 Miscellaneous B fabric. There is wavy combed decoration on the copper glazed tile. At every marked change in

*Figure 8.6 Medieval ridge tile (drawing: Suzannah England).*

*Figure 8.5 (facing page) Medieval ridge tile (drawing: Suzannah England).*



the decoration there is a third faint line on the outer edge of the curve. Each knife cut crest is cut through the centre perpendicularly to the ridge forming a 'lens' knife cut 13 mm tall and 3 mm across. This reduces the strength of the tile as can be seen on the 'left' crest which, in reality, has cracked along both the tile and ridge. Similarly the break to the far 'right' is at a point where one of these holes was made. The 'right' crest is intact because the knife cut lens, initiated from the unseen side of the tile, failed to come through to the other side of the crest.

*Dimensions:* hbc 152 mm; hp 180 mm; wt 15 mm (on average); wb 214 mm; dshp 27–13 mm. Period 4.1–4.3 (531)

- 20 Miscellaneous E2 fabric. A red slip under a pale copper glaze with yellow patches may be due to the limestone in the fabric. This is the most complete of any of the tiles, except for the missing ridge which lay along the region of hollows. These hollows (some glaze-filled) occur where the ridge troughs joined the tile and were pressed to the tile by dragging a finger transversely across the ridge. *Dimensions:* hbc 118 mm; wt 13 mm (near top) 11 mm (near base); wb 250 mm. Period 4.3 (869/875/883)
- 21 North Devon gravel tempered fabric. The gravel temper provides a minutely pitted surface which makes darker green 'hollows' and paler green 'peaks'. The tile may have been formed from three pieces of clay, two flat slabs of different thickness joined by a clay sausage. The interior is crudely smoothed. *Dimensions:* hbc 24 mm; hp 54 mm; wt 14–19 mm; iw 72 mm; dhp 22–16 mm. Period 5.1 (185)

## Architectural fragments

by Kirsty Rodwell

There are *c* 400 catalogued pieces of structural stone, derived from three main contexts: loose surface fragments, including items like the sundial (see below); reused pieces built into the standing house and out-buildings, many of which were exposed only during repairs; and excavated fragments, principally from the infilling of the moat. The stone is invariably Cotswold limestone, which was extensively reused; a number of pieces have two different mouldings, and

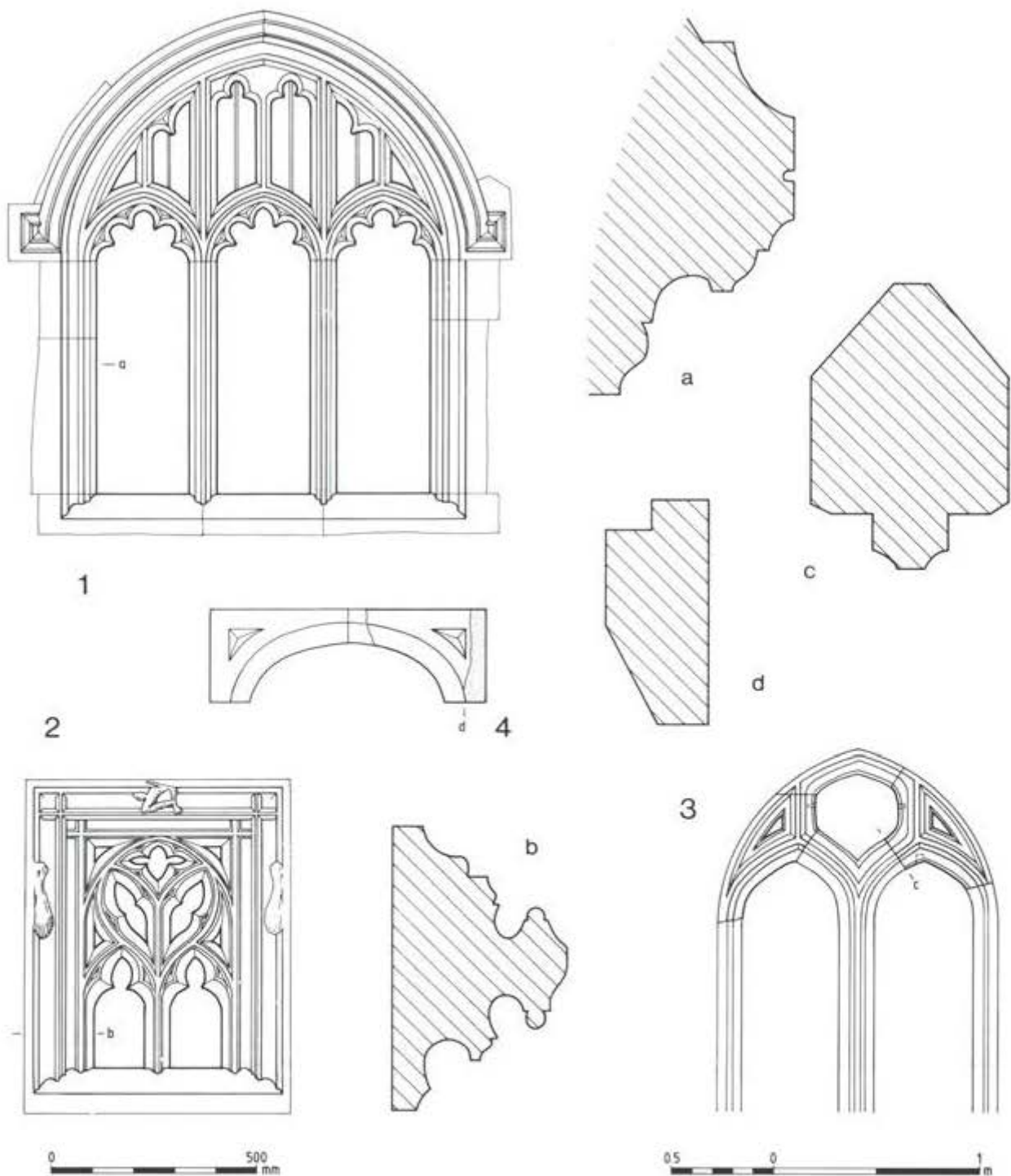
not all of it was originally intended for Acton Court. Nicholas Poyntz reputedly took stone from Kingswood Abbey, near Wotton-under-Edge for his rebuilding work, and at Newark Park, a new house, this reuse can be demonstrated (Chapter 6). The following catalogue is therefore selective, placing the greatest emphasis on pieces which can be linked to the site either by stratification or association. Many stones reused in Period 5 repeat detailing of the Period 4 house, which is illustrated in more complete form elsewhere, and have therefore been omitted.

## Catalogue

### Windows

Fig 8.7

- 1 Complete window; three cinquefoiled lights, Perpendicular tracery with four foiled lights, arched head and label with square stops, glazing groove and stanchions to upper lights. Reset in Period 4.3, E1.10; the mullions have been reduced in length. There are very similar windows in the oriel chamber at South Wraxall, Wiltshire (Wood 1965, pl LV.H; *c* 1435), and in the church of St Leonard at Farleigh Hungerford, Somerset (Harvey 1978, fig 12.8, 186; by 1443). For related windows in domestic chapels, including Woodlands Manor, Mere, Wiltshire, see Wood 1965, 242.
- 2 Complete monolithic window, flamboyant tracery with five cusped lights framed externally by two orders of intersecting ribs; the outer bears eroded emblems in relief. Deeply cut complex moulding. Reset as a porch light, E1.5 in Period 5.3. The sequence of paint layers on the internal face indicates that this window was moved from the Period 4.3 porch, E1.4 added to the central stack, together with the arch (Fig 5.2). For a discussion of its original position see Chapter 3, Period 3.5; another possibility is that it originated as a squint, cf Wanswell Court, Gloucestershire (Oswald 1954, 896; Wood 1965, pl 31B). This window is of French type, cf Howard 1987, pl 110, part of a larger group from the site discussed below. The mouldings and intersecting rib detail are related to examples in the Poyntz chantry, St Mark's chapel, Bristol.

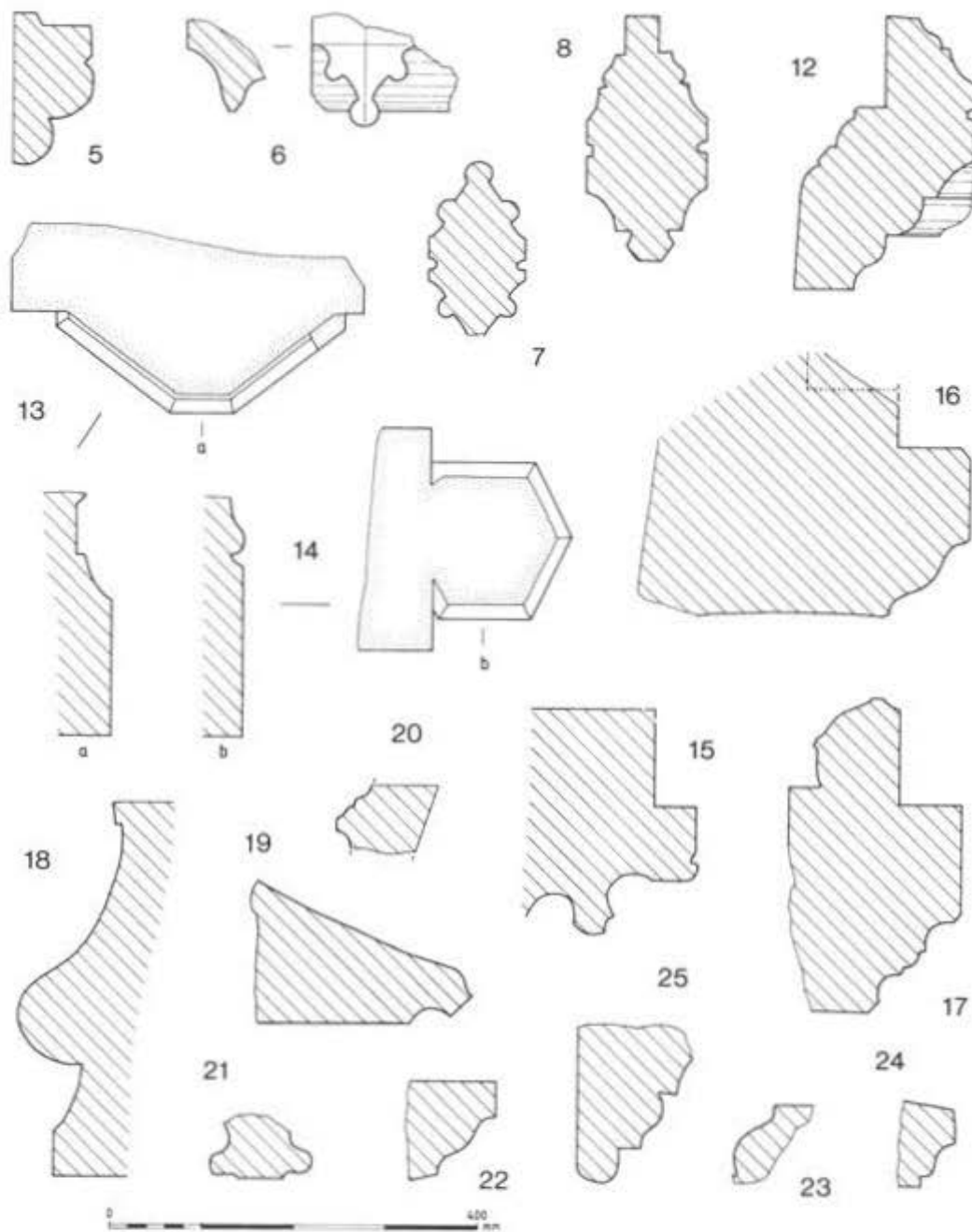


3 Composite reconstruction, showing the largest of at least seven fragments from more than one window; two four-centred lights, hexagonal tracery light, chamfered external moulding, raised internal rib with traces of limewash. Sockets for stanchions and saddle bars, no glazing groove, but secondary dressing of stone indicates the presence of glass. Period 4.3

(1048), south moat; Period 5.1, raking buttress E1.17. The hall windows at Ashleworth Court, Gloucestershire, are similar in form but have cusped lights (Wood 1965, pl XIX.B). At Great Chalfield, Wiltshire the hall windows are uncusped, but have diamond-shaped tracery lights (National Trust 1986a). Closest in form are the heads of the oriel

Figure 8.7 Period 3 windows; 1-4 (2 and 4, scale at right; mouldings, scale at left).

Figure 8.8 Architectural fragments: mouldings 5–8, 12–25 (plan of 13 1:5 scale).



- windows at Athelhampton, Dorset (RCHME 1970, pl 94).
- 4 Four-centred window head, chamfered externally, rebated internally for shutter. Type related to 3, Period 4.2 (1284), west moat.
- Fig 8.8**
- 5 Arched surround, roll-moulded externally, rebated internally, glazing groove. Coarse-grained shelly limestone which has been subjected to heat.
  - 6 Incomplete ribbed mullion with terminal roll bisecting a hollow-moulded transom with fillet. The upper face has setting-out lines. Period 4.3 (1048), south moat.
  - 7 Mullion of very similar profile, 0.18 m long with saddle-bar socket and glazing
  - 8 Period 3.1–3.2 (1863), reused as part of a stone-lined drain. One of the very few architectural fragments from a Period 3 context. Others are Fig 8.8.13 and two fragments of roll moulding built into the Period 3.4 porch.



groove. Dovecote, north field. There was a third variant of this type, also from context 1048: 15th century, cf Harvey 1978, 263 fig 30.

- 8 Mullion 0.32 m long, broken through saddle-bar sockets, hollow-chamfered ogee moulding with angular ribs, asymmetrically cut, glazing groove, traces of limewash. Period 4.4–4.5 (2144): 15th century, cf Harvey 1978, 250 fig 17; 256 fig 23; King's College Chapel, Cambridge (RCHME 1959, 107).

Fig 8.9

- 9 Arched surround, hollow-chamfered moulding with glazing groove and trace of cusp. Leaf decoration in spandrel. Reused, there are traces of another moulding on the top of the block. Dovecote, north field: c 1500, cf very similar cusped windows in the east oriel at Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire (Tipping 1937, 108 pl 158).
- 10 Four-centred arch, rectangular surround, hollow-chamfered moulding finishing in a roll, glazing groove. One face has been roughly dressed back. Built into Period 5.1 raking buttress E1.17. This moulding pattern is common in domestic buildings c 1500, cf the north front of Great Chalfield, Wiltshire (Tipping 1921, 319 pl 357), and the west front of Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire (Sykes 1988, 45).

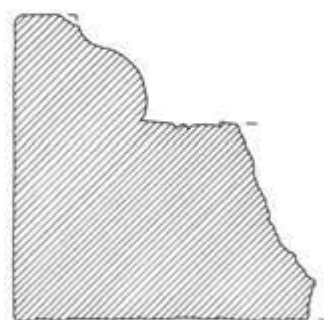
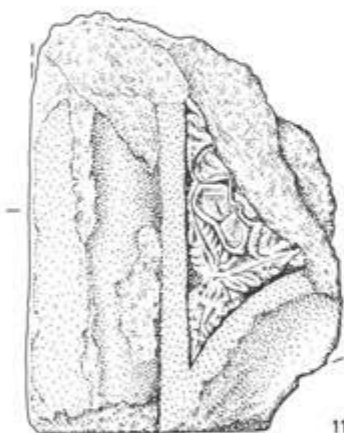
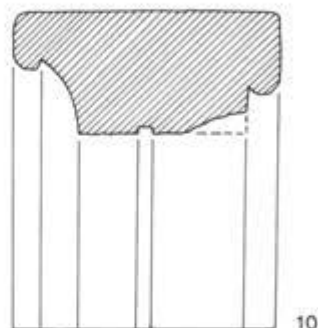
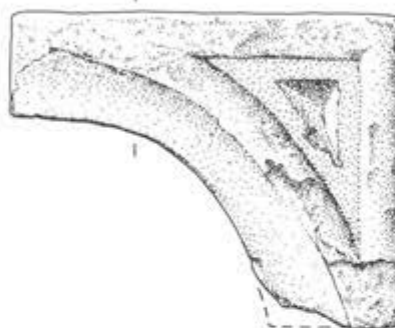
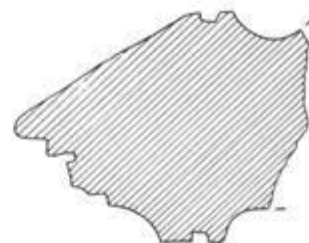
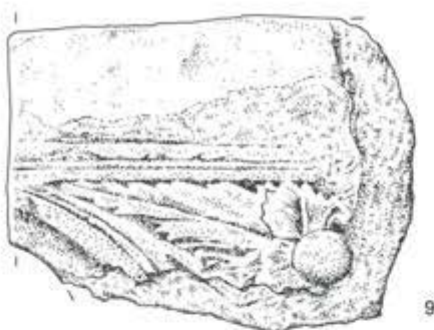
*Not illustrated:* south moat, points from cusped tracery (205, 1042); channelled mullions as Figs 5.11h/5.12, Period 4.2 (1478, 1991).

#### Doors and arches

- 11 Four-centred arch with flat back, hollow-chamfered ogee moulding, Tudor rose and leaves in spandrel. Built into Period 5.1 raking buttress E1.17: c 1500, there are very similar arched doorways at Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire (Tipping 1937, 111, pl 163).

Fig 8.8

- 12 Jamb 0.26 m long, with fragment of return, hollow-chamfered ogee moulding related to 10, glazing groove. On the reverse a rebated ribbed moulding probably from a doorcase cf Fig 8.8.17. Built into Period 5.1 raking buttress E1.17: c 1500–50, probably first used as a window moulding.



0 5 10 cm

- 13 Angled respond base with hollow-chamfered moulding, top of block broken through a second moulding. A secondary socket for a door jamb 0.15 m deep has been cut into one face. Period 3.1 (2407), west arm of south porch. Reused as a foundation in Period 4, fractured by compression and not lifted: probably from the outer arch of the Period 3.4 porch, cf Great Chalfield, Wiltshire (Tipping 1921, 322 pl 360).
- 14 Engaged asymmetric hexagonal base with ogee moulding. Built into Period 5.1 raking buttress E1.17: 15th century, at Great Chalfield, Wiltshire, the arch to the north oriel has similar bases, with round shafts (Tipping 1921, 324, pl 362).

Figure 8.9 Architectural fragments: windows and door 9–11.



- 15 Jamb 0.35 m long, curvilinear moulding with raised rib, rebated internally. Period 5.1 (1306). This moulding is related to the French-style window Fig 8.7.3; for discussion see below.
- 16 Wave-moulded jamb 0.41 m long, rebate for door and socket for drawbar. Reused plinth or buttress coping, the face is slightly concave and has been dressed back. Surface, central courtyard: from the Period 4 house.
- 17 Jamb, three pieces, maximum length 0.28 m, ribbed and hollow-chamfered moulding, rebate for door. The illustrated block is reused, with a wave-moulded rib on the reverse. Built into Period 5.1 thickening of the south wall, Room 21; also Period 5.2 (1163). From the Period 4 house, possibly Room 22.
- 22 Wave moulding, 0.26 m long, with traces of white mortar and limewash. Period 4.3 (1402), south moat: cf Fig 8.8.16.
- 23 Ogee, 0.08 m long, traces of limewash. Period 4.3 (1948), south moat.
- 24 *Cyma recta*, 0.11 m long, a construction offcut, one end sawn through and snapped off. Period 4.3 (1402), south moat: from the Period 4 house.
- 25 Hollow-chamfered ogee, an offcut 0.05 m long. Period 4.3 (1992), south moat: cf Fig 8.8.8.

### Finials

#### Fig 8.10

### Roof fittings

Ridge pieces (not illustrated); a number of fragments were found, mostly of the type that survives on the east and north ranges. There is one heavier example, with a side 150 mm deep and 38 mm thick, terminating in a roll 65 mm in diameter. Period 5.1 (2643), demolition of south range. From the Period 3 house, where clay ridge tiles were also used (see above).

- 18 Ogee-moulded chimney stack base, two pieces. West wall, east range (E3), Period 5.1 rebuilding. The moulding is similar to the Period 4.2 stacks on the north range. Probably from the demolished stack between the south and east ranges, Period 4.3.

### Mouldings

Only pieces stratified in the moat deposits have been included. *Not illustrated*: plain ashlar blocks, stone working debris, chamfered, hollow-chamfered and roll-moulded fragments.

- 19 Coping with drip groove, 0.35 m long. Period 4.3 (1455), south moat: one of three similar fragments, probably from a buttress, Period 3.
- 20 Double ogee and fillet, 0.16 m long, weathered. Period 4.3 (1477), south moat: probably from the Period 3 house.
- 21 Double-sided roll moulding, 0.14 m long. Eleven fragments from various contexts including Period 4.3 (1402), south moat; and Period 5.1 demolition layers.

- 26 Knobbed finial, tapered square section, very weathered. Period 4.3 (1477) south moat. From the Period 3 house.
- 27 Waisted finial, octagonal section below collar, ribbed above, detail obscured by weathering and fractures. Period 5.1 (1307), demolition of south range. Probably a gable finial from the Period 3 house.
- 28 Engaged ribbed pinnacle, from the apex of an ogee-arched hood. Period 5.1 (419); from the Period 3 house, cf monument in Iron Acton church (Verey 1976, 277).

*Not illustrated*: sections of at least six more octagonal finials (one cap, five bases) of the same type as those on the east range (Period 4.1, cf Fig 5.11k), from Period 5.1 contexts, also a fragment from the west moat (1277; Period 4.2).

### Drain

- 29 Recessed square drain cover with at least ten holes. Fractured, the upper surfaces are water-worn, the lower have lime solution deposits. Period 4.2 (10/262), west moat.

### Paving slabs

*Not illustrated*: fragments of rectangular paving slabs 0.19–0.22 m wide and 0.7 m thick. Period 4.3 (1931, 1992), south moat. Similar to the paving in Room 21.

### Sculptural fragments

*Not illustrated*: two gargoyles of similar type, from the Period 3 house, reused in Period 5.1 buttresses on the east elevation (E1.6, E1.17). Both have gaping mouths with latticed ribs below the chin, and hollowed

eyes. The southern, which is slightly larger, has more pronounced pointed ears and a curly mane. Both are weathered; 15th century.

- 30 Trefoil cusped arch in shallow relief, the moulding on the edge of the block may be unrelated. A lamp niche, the underside of the arch became soot-blackened before it was broken. Period 4.2 (127), west moat.

Fig 8.11

- 31 Four adjoining pieces from a flat-backed panel with two finished edges, battered and weathered with secondary dressing-back of the engaged column; dovecote, north field. The engaged column is patterned with imbricated leaves, bound with a spiral moulding and has a ribbed capital. From it spring two converging traceried arches, the lower cusped with a foliate terminal. This is a French flamboyant-style door surround; similar engaged columns formed part of a window surround on a timber-framed house near Chateaudun (Pugin 1837, pl 12), and doorcases of this type, with columns or buttresses flanking elaborate blind-traceried overdoors can be seen at Thouars, Deux-Sèvres, and Chateau d'O, Orne (Babelon 1989, 69–70, 76–8), both *c* 1500. There are also links with the canopied tomb mentioned below (discussion to nos 49 and 50), which has imbricated scales as a background on the canopy, and a related moulding on the canopy arches.

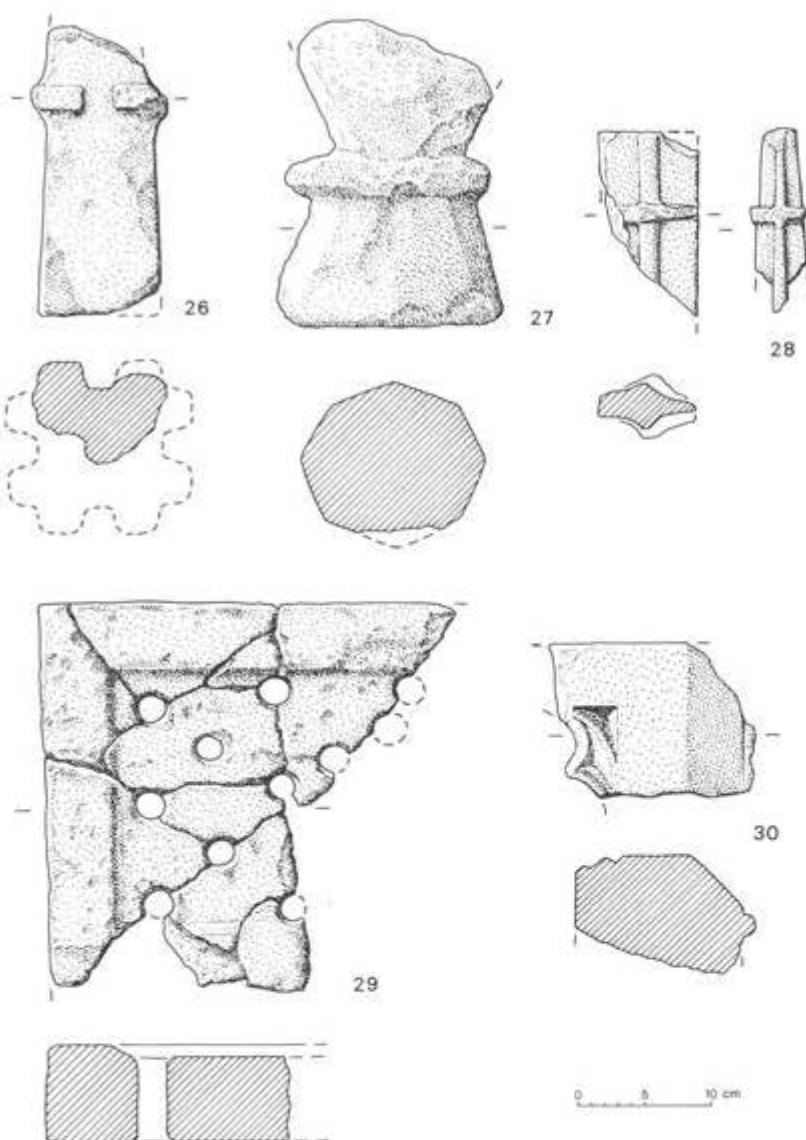


Figure 8.10 Architectural fragments: finials etc 26–30.

The following fragments were all deposited in the south moat.

Fig 8.12

- 32 The edge of a recessed panel with flowing blind tracery (1477).  
 33 Tracery fragments related to 32 (1480); several other smaller pieces were found. Their small scale suggests that they are internal, and from a door or window surround, or canopied niche. They are related to the French-style stonework discussed below.  
 34 Angular moulding with ribs in the form of fleurs-de-lis (1983). Probably from a crocketed finial, cf monument in Iron Acton church (Verey 1976, 277).  
 35–7 Twining leaf decoration in very high relief, four related fragments:

- 35 Pair of leaves attached by their tips to a sliver of roughly finished background. The veins are represented by finely scratched parallel lines (1983).  
 36 Leaf in the same style, attached to a plain rod-shaped mount, broken through the stem (935).  
 37 Two fragments of intersecting leaf stems with curled terminals. They are carved in the round; the backs are roughly finished, and the faces ribbed in the manner of the hair on Fig 8.12.38 (935). This stylistic connection indicates a date of *c* 1500 for all these fragments (see below).

This style of decoration is not typical of English Perpendicular leaf ornament, which tends to be formalised and rectilinear, eg the

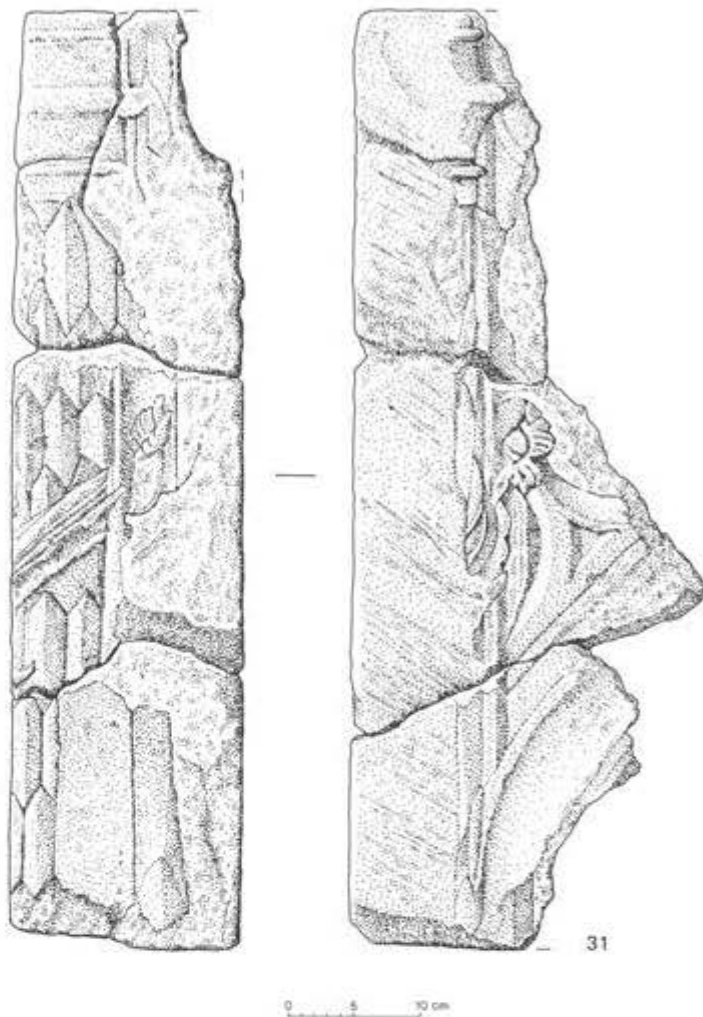


Figure 8.11 Architectural fragments: 31.

hood mould on the hall oriel at Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire (Sykes 1988, 106). It is much closer to the windows in the south front of Wolfeton House, Dorset, added before 1534, which have labels with exuberant foliage carving and figurative stops (RCHME 1970, 64–6; Oswald 1959, 60–5, pl 52; Sykes 1988, 171). The French character of this detailing has been noticed (Howard 1987, 178–9), and is sufficiently close to examples in Normandy, eg at Chateau d'O, Orne (Babelon 1989, 76–8) to indicate an immigrant craftsman (suggested by Oswald 1959, 62 note 1). Similar bands of heavily undercut leaf ornament can be seen on the very elaborate late Gothic oriel from the Grande Maison des Andelys, Normandy, now incorporated into Highcliffe Castle, Dorset (Hussey 1942, 855, fig 3; Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 291–3, pl 44; personal observation). They also occur on the canopied niches and reredos in the Poyntz chapel, Bristol (Roper 1913, 12).

Other French examples include La Chapelle du St Esprit, Rue, Somme (personal observation).

- 38 Part of a small head; the left eye has a drilled pupil and a bushy eyebrow, the brow is furrowed, the hair fringed and long at the side. The nose is broken; striations on the cheek suggest a beard (1987). Unweathered, probably an internal label stop. The carving of the eye and the treatment of the hair relate it to the heads on the fireplace (49, 50), Figs 8.16, 8.17.
- 39 Crown, three adjoining fragments, the stone is soft and abraded. Above a band of alternating rosettes and pellets representing jewels, is a frieze of emblems in relief, broken except for a fleur-de-lis and a small rosette; behind these is a fluted cap. The basal rim is grooved and the interior is hollow, 0.19 m in diameter (935). A closed crown of England, probably from a royal arms, cf numerous examples in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, carved in relief for more than half their circumference, eg antechapel screen 1508–15 (RCHME 1959, pl 161), including a detail showing the basal rim of a crown carved with a running scroll and the hollow interior (ibid, pl 160). A very similar crown occurs in the royal arms of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon set in the ceiling of the Poyntz chapel, Bristol (Gomme *et al* 1979, 71). For a domestic example above an entrance porch, cf Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire (Henry VIII; Sykes 1988, 102). This is formed from blocks carved with individual elements of the arms and has a brick background. For an example in a classical surround c 1535 cf Cowdray House, West Sussex (Howard 1987, 186 pl 116).

Fig 8.13

- 40 Cavetto-moulded ground with the corner of a shield in relief. This has a raised rim and part of a chequer. The back of the block is flat and has traces of white mortar. Period 5.1 (419) demolition layer. From a panel, cf the paired shields in the upper stage of Iron Acton churchyard cross (Verey 1976, 277, pl 50); the spandrels of the gate to the east court (Fig 4.44), and the reset panel in the south wall of the north range (E4.14): both of these have



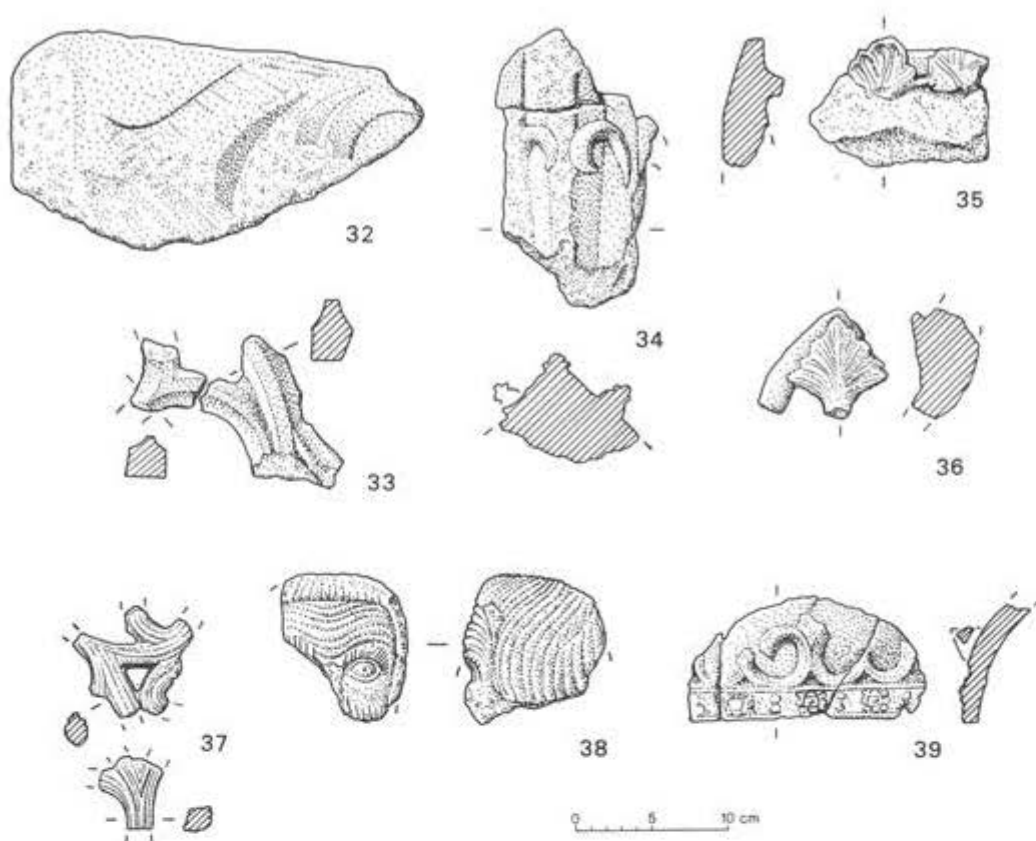
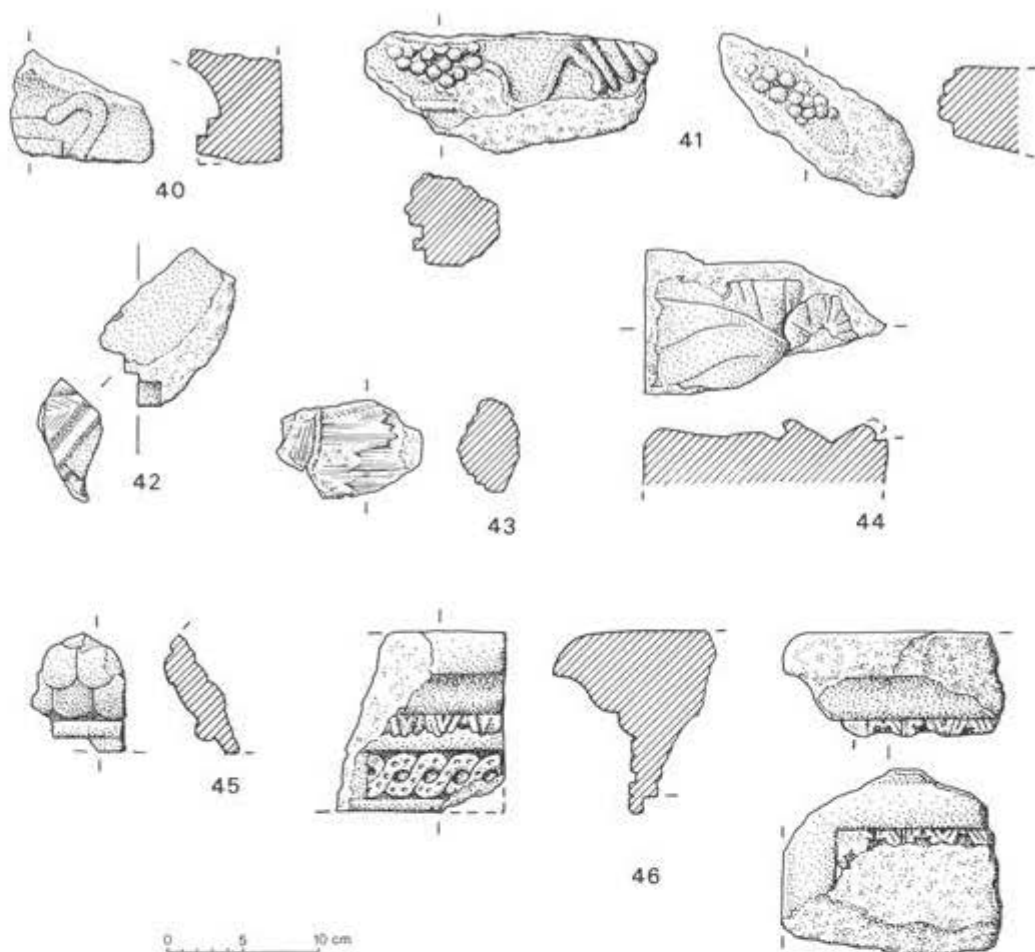


Figure 8.12 Architectural fragments: sculptural fragments 32-9.

- scrolled surrounds and raised borders. For the shield shape of Montacute, Somerset; Clifton Maybank front (Dunning 1991, 101).
- 41 Two fragments of vine scroll, with bunches of grapes and a twisted tendril (1477). Probably related to Fig 8.14.47. Vine scrolls are widespread in both French and English decoration of the period, cf label mouldings at Wolfeton House (op cit above), La Chapelle du St Esprit; Compton Wynyates door surrounds (Sykes 1988, 98), Muchelney Abbey, Somerset fireplace surround (Cook 1968, 55).
- 42 Chip from pulvinated frieze with leaf ornament, fragmentary dentils below the fillet. One edge of the block is finished and has traces of white mortar; there are also traces of limewash on the mouldings (1991). Probably from an overdoor, cf Lacock, Wiltshire (Howard 1987, 193, fig 123), For a dentilled cornice cf King's College, Cambridge, chapel screen (RCHME 1959, pl 185); for frieze cf Blunt 1980, 81, pl 55, Louvre, Paris 1550-1. From the Period 4.1-4.2 house.
- 43 Fragment of frieze with bound acanthus leaves, probably the same as 42. Residual in a Period 5.2 layer (2085).
- 44 Pair of leaves in low relief, the veins indicated by incised lines. The block is 0.22 m deep with one finished edge (1948). The shallow, linear style of the ornament is reminiscent of the slate carvings from Nonsuch (Biddle 1984, figs 23, 25; Nick Griffiths personal comment).
- 45 Moulding with overlapping scale decoration, the detail is crisp and setting-out lines are visible, probably unused (1948). A classical moulding, possibly intended for an overdoor in the Period 4.3 house; scale ornament simulating shingles is used on the roof-level banqueting houses at Longleat, Wiltshire c 1570 (Girouard 1983, 46-9). However, scale ornament on a flat ground is also used on the Poyntz monument in Iron Acton church, and occurs on early 16th-century ceramic stove tiles from St Mary Graces, London (Gaimster *et al* 1990, 21).
- 46 Two cornice fragments, one a corner, with traces of limewash; *cyma recta*



Figure 8.13 Architectural fragments: sculptural fragments 40-6.



moulding above bands of leaf and guilloche ornament, the latter stopped (1408, 1477). From a Period 4 classical entablature, possibly associated with 47 and 48; cf Oxborough church, Norfolk, Bedingfield chapel *c* 1525 (Lloyd 1925, 354); screen, St Cross, Winchester (Gotch 1901, pl VII); great stair Azay-le-Rideau, Indre-et-Loire, 1518-27 (Melot 1997, 119).

Fig 8.14

47 Pilaster, nine fragments, three adjoining, condition variable; the front is progressively eroded, the sides are crisp with traces of limewash, (1477). Each face has a band of classical ornament set within a rebated panel; on the front a delicately carved vine scroll; on the sides rather coarser stems linking tightly coiled tendrils and a tasselled knot. There are roll mouldings at the angles; two small fragments are from returns at the end of the panels. The parallels cited for the cornice 46 all

include pilasters with ornament of this kind, and the English examples are of comparable dimensions. To these can be added the screen of King's College, Cambridge, of 1533-6 (RCHME 1959, pls 182-6), and more locally the classical doorcase at Horton Court, Gloucestershire, thought to date to the 1520s (Howard 1987, fig 82). Each jamb is formed of two canted panels with a miscellany of motifs and the quality of the carving is comparable to the Acton Court work.

Fig 8.15

48 Ogee-moulded pilaster cap (1477). The moulding is asymmetric; one side dies into the back of the block, the other is returned. There are traces of dentils on the broken top edge, the mortared lower face has scribed setting-out lines, indicating roll mouldings at the angles, whose dimensions match the pilaster 47. Together with 47 and probably 46 this is derived from an otherwise

Figure 8.14 Architectural fragments: 47.

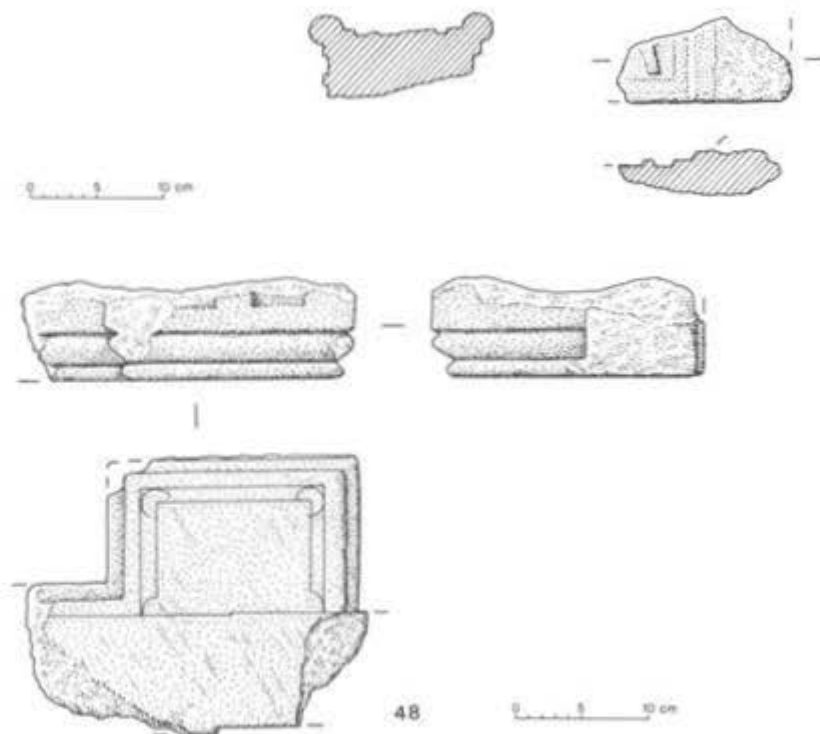
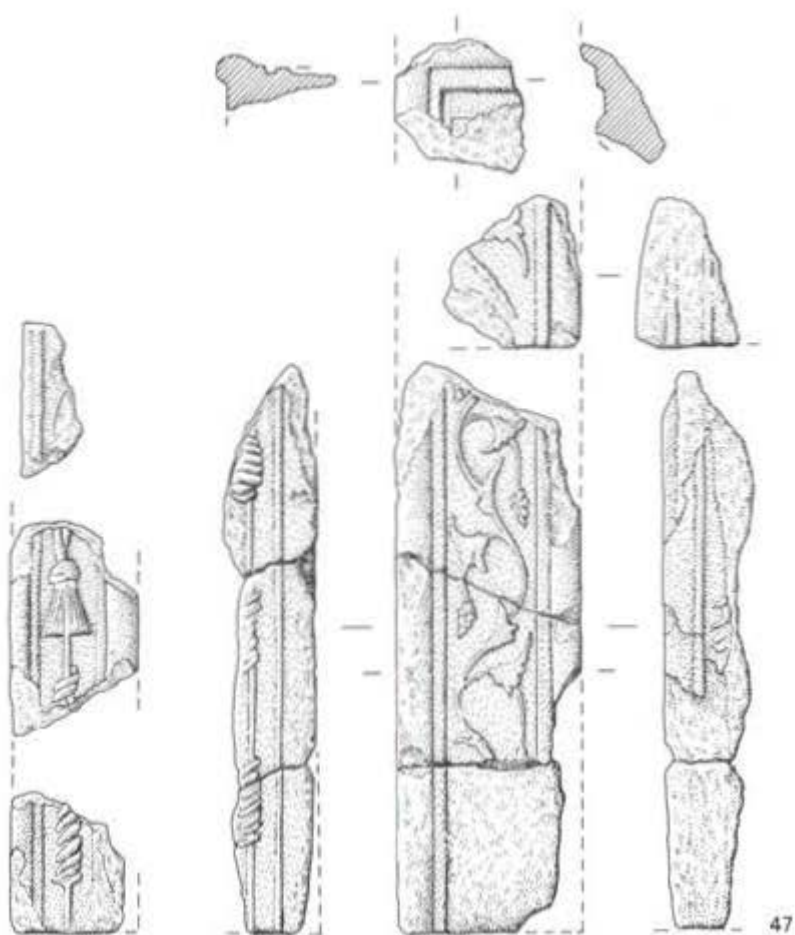


Figure 8.15 Architectural fragments: 48.

unknown classical feature in the Period 4.1 house. It is not certain what this was; most probable is a doorcase, a fireplace is a possibility, least likely in the context of the house as a whole is a window surround.

### Fireplaces

Fragments of the following two fireplace surrounds were recovered from a number of layers in the south moat. They are related stylistically and are discussed together.

Figs 8.16, 8.17

- 49 Lintel in two blocks, total length 1.9 m, height 0.38 m, thickness of slab 0.17 m, thirteen adjoining pieces. Under a four-centred arch, with a hollow-chamfered moulding that dies into the reveals, is a tympanum bearing a pair of confronted animals in high relief; the lower edge is rounded. The creature on the right is missing part of its tail, a front leg and the upper jaw. It has a scaly or woolly coat and a bat-like head and ear; the eye is treated in the same way as the human heads on no 50. The animal on the left is less complete, missing part of the tail, a front leg and the whole of the head. It has heavy shoulders and a smooth coat. Sufficient survives of the central tympanum to indicate that it was not carved. There are traces of limewash but no colour.
- 50 Lintel in two blocks, total length 1.64 m, height 0.40 m, thickness of slab 0.15 m, eight pieces, some adjoining; the left side is fragmentary. Of the same type as no 49, but with confronted male and female heads in profile on the tympanum, which has a square lower edge. The heads are carved in three-quarters relief; the man wears a hat with an upright brim, has straight hair cut just below ear level, and a frilled collar. The woman wears a pleated bonnet, which fastens under the chin covering all her hair, and has a folded collar. Part of the central tympanum, a plain block with two finished edges survives. There are traces of limewash but no other colour; the female head is soot-stained.

The style of this figure carving, particularly in the treatment of the eyes and hair is distinctive, and indicates that the same sculptor was responsible for both pieces, and also for some other fragments, notably the small

head (38) and the foliage fragments (35–7). A date is provided by the distinctive hat and hairstyle of the male figure of c 1490–1510 (we are grateful to Janet Arnold† for her comments on the costume). He is wearing a *cramignolle*, a soft cap with a turned-up brim, whose depth varied according to the status of the wearer; a French style current from the 1460s (Evans 1952, 62) and illustrated in a variety of French and English sources, eg the Archdeacon of Angers offering his ‘Commentary on the Creed’ to Charles VIII, c 1485 (ibid, pl 63, also pl 62); or ‘Amoras sells his wife to the devil’, Eton College Chapel c 1500 (Davenport 1962, 358, no 939; also 348, nos 907–8). Parallels for the woman’s headgear are difficult to find.

These fireplaces are not typical of English designs c 1500, where the decoration is usually set in the frieze above a rectangular or four-centred arched opening (Wood 1965, 268–72, pls XLII, XLIII). Quatrefoil tracery and heraldic devices of variable complexity are the dominant motifs, eg at Thornbury Castle (Tipping 1924, 84, pl 95; c 1510–20). Animals are unusual; the most notable examples are the crouching lions which serve as terminals to the roll-moulded overmantel in the abbot’s lodging at Muchelney Abbey, Somerset (Cook 1968, 55; Wood 1965, 269). These are set above an elaborate quatrefoil frieze with vine scrolls.

Life-size heads are unknown in England but do appear in a number of French contexts; several examples of paired confronted heads in high relief are illustrated by Pugin (1837, pls 7, 8, 16, 17) from timber-framed town houses in Abbeville and Beauvais, where they served as ornamental brackets for jettied upper storeys. They are of similar size to the Acton Court examples, but all are male and sport a variety of headgear. One example has large frontal bats serving the same function (ibid, pl 9). Large confronted male and female heads in rather provincial Renaissance style can be seen on an overdoor at Chateau Arnoux, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, built c 1510–15 (Babelon 1989, 95). Another overdoor at Vailly, Cher carries the arms of François de Breuil, archbishop of Bourges 1520–5, flanked by large kneeling animals, whose form and textured coats resemble those at Acton Court more closely than contemporary English heraldic beasts. The closest parallel for the scaly animal, related both in size and coat treatment, occurs on the tympanum over the north por-

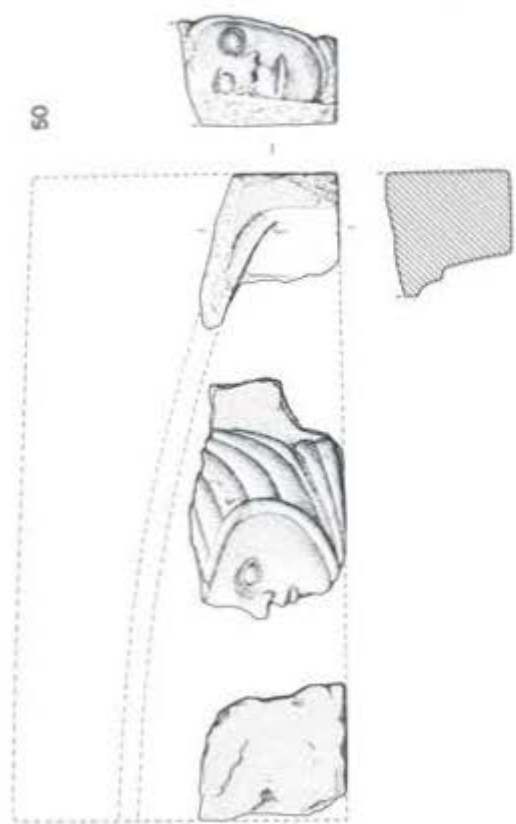
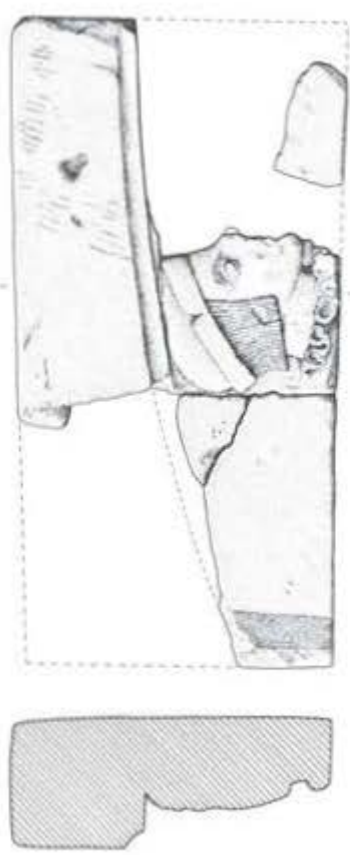
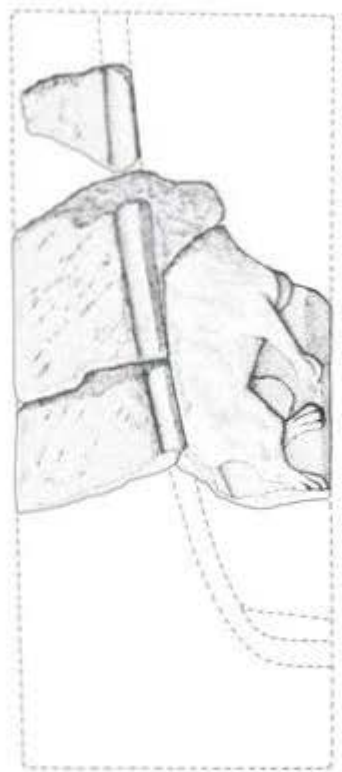
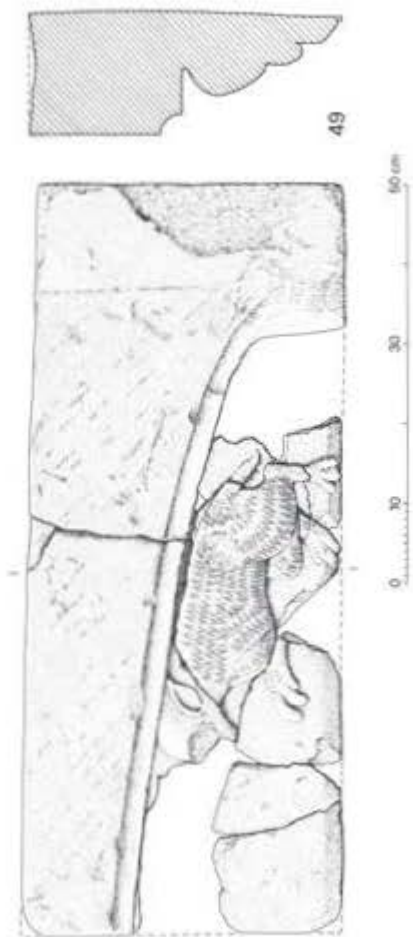
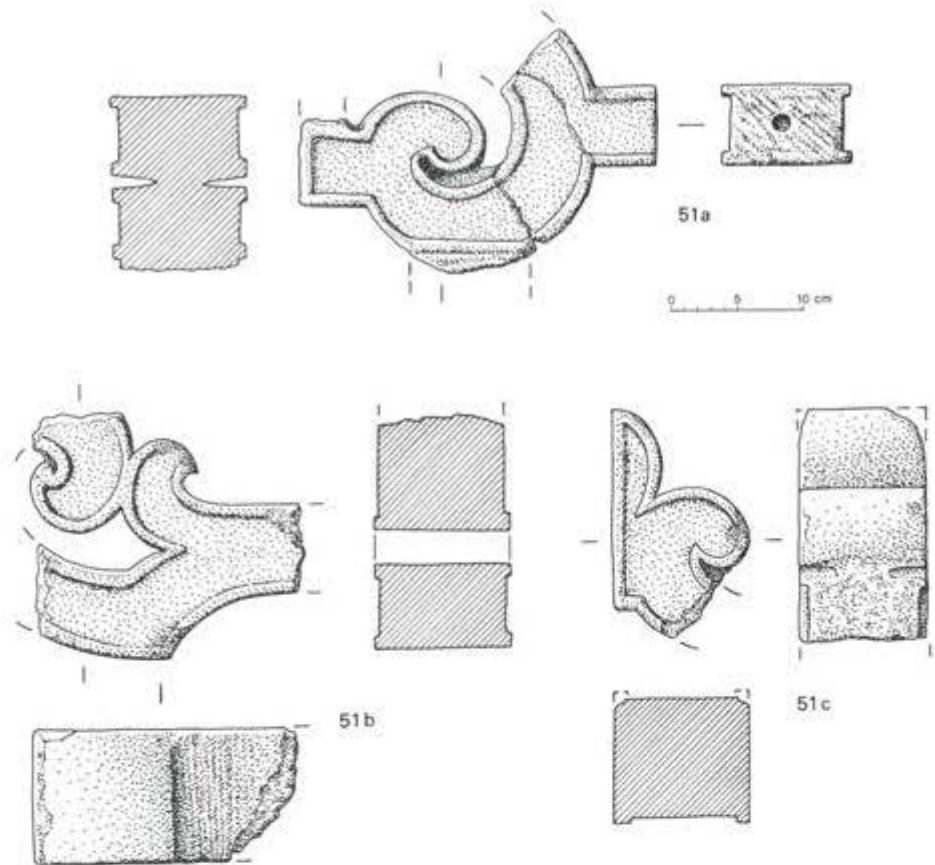


Figure 8.16 Architectural fragments: fireplaces, scale as Fig 8.17.

Figure 8.17 Architectural fragments: fireplaces.



Figure 8.18 Architectural fragments: 51a–c.



tal of St Eustace, Abbeville, where it is identified as a wolf devouring one of the saint's children. The carving is early 16th century and can be attributed to a local workshop (Zanettacci 1936, 341, 350; personal observation).

In Iron Acton church is an elaborate canopied tomb chest of *c* 1500 for an unknown member of the Poyntz family (Verey 1976, 277), which has at the rear of the canopy three shields with heraldic animal supporters. These appear to be long-eared dogs, and the treatment of the ears, eyes and paws indicates that they were carved by the same sculptor as the fireplace. This tomb also has French affinities, eg the lozenge panels of roses and acanthus leaves on the tomb chest, which occur on a screen at Fécamp Abbey, Seine Maritime (Blunt 1980, 19, pl 2); details of the canopy are related to the niches on the façade of the Hôtel-de-Ville at Orléans (Verdier and Cattois 1857, facing 63).

#### Screen

51 Thirty-seven pieces from two locations: twelve are built into the Period 5.1 north range gable wall (E5), with only

one visible face; twenty-five were used as rubble in a Period 5.2 window seat, Room 1 (E11.6). Several different elements are represented; all but one of the visible pieces are double-sided and were joined by white mortar and cramps in the top face, for which the sockets are visible. They come from an internal feature; there is no primary weathering and the upper surfaces of exposed stones have been stained by soot and dirt.

Figs 8.18, 8.19

*a–e* Scrolled strapwork, rectangular in section with raised edges, the direction of the pieces is indicated by soot-staining; undersides are relatively clean. Pieces *a* and *b* have secondary lichen growth on some faces (including edges) indicating a period outside, probably as demolition rubble. The horizontal member of *a* has a dowel hole for the attachment of the next section; *c* abutted a wall, *e* is a pointed finial. All from Room 1.

*f* Strapwork, two adjoining fragments from an upright element with a splayed

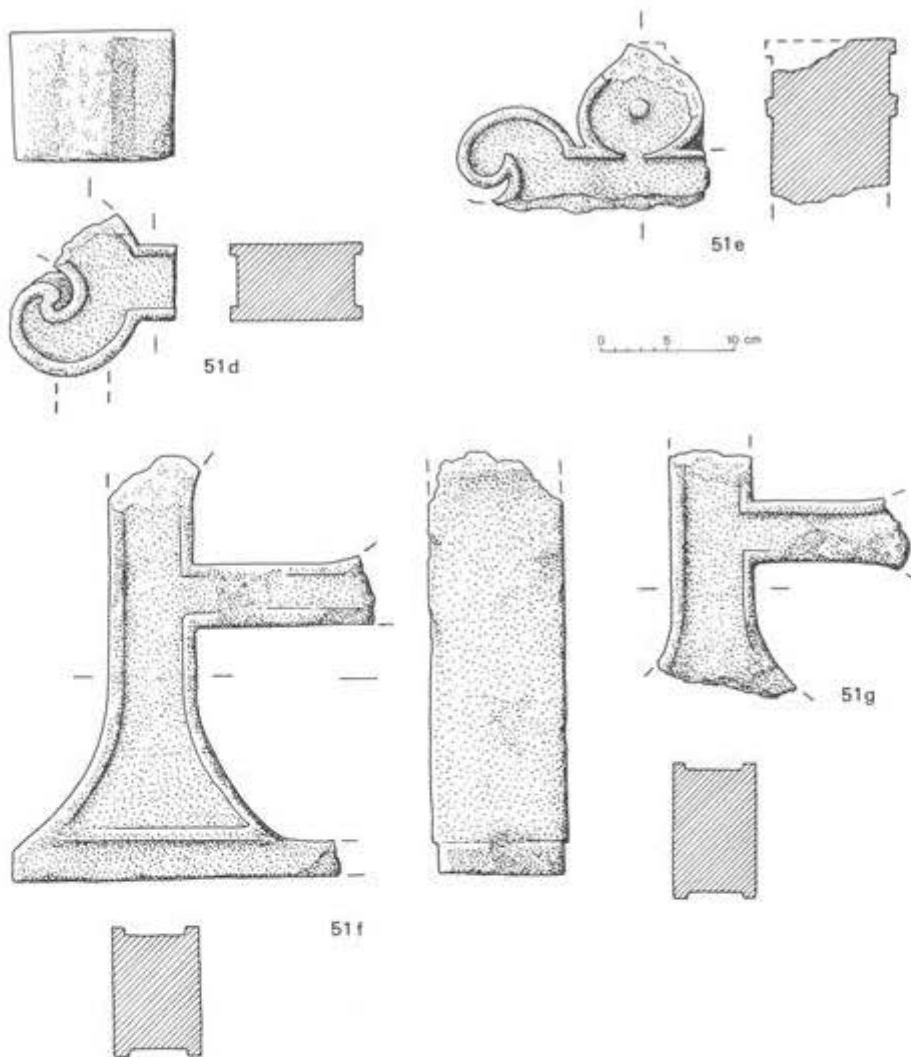


Figure 8.19 Architectural fragments: 51d-g.

- base, possibly a capital letter P. Secondary weathering, Room 1.  
*g* Strapwork, T-junction similar to *f*, Room 1.

Fig 8.20

- h* Strapwork, possibly the diagonal bar from a capital N. Secondary weathering, Room 1.  
*i* Double-sided cornice moulding, cramp sockets on the top face, which is soot-stained. Room 1.

Fig 8.21

- j* Double-sided cornice moulding with pilasters, cramp socket on the top face, setting-out lines on the base. Room 1.  
*k* Frieze with pilaster, Tudor rose ornament; on the reverse the mouldings have been dressed back. Room 1.

Fig 8.22

- l* Frieze, moulding as *k*, with lozenges in relief. Room 1.  
*m* Complete double-sided block with three rebated panels containing rosettes flanked by lozenges; the carved detail is more elaborate on one face than the other. Room 1. A two-panelled block of the same type is built into the north range gable (E5).

Fig 8.23

- n* Two part panels as *m*, only one end of the lozenge has been carved; there are setting-out lines for the rest of the design. E5.

Fig 8.24

- p* Block with one raised edge and four-petalled flowers (each face different) at intervals. One end is mitred and halved, with cross-hatched grooves to key mortar. No cramps, Room 1.

Figure 8.21 Architectural fragments: 51j, k.

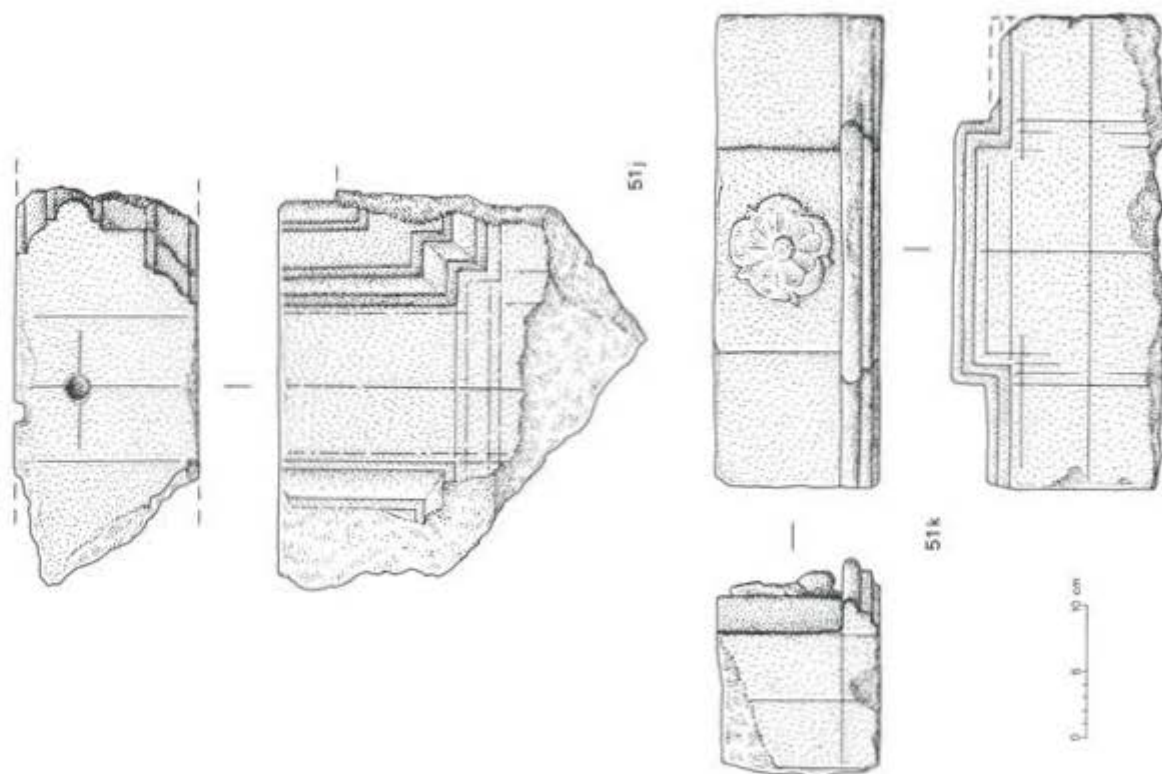


Figure 8.20 Architectural fragments: 51h, i.

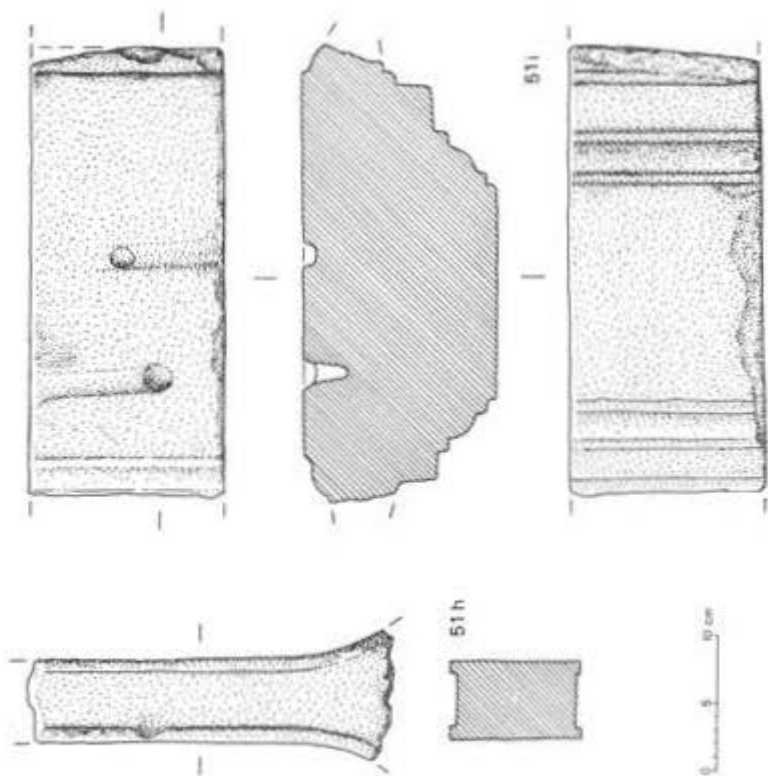
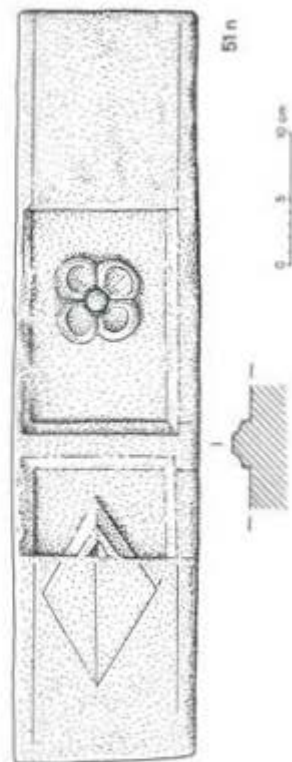


Figure 8.23 (NB not of strict numerical order - Ed)  
Architectural fragments: 51n.





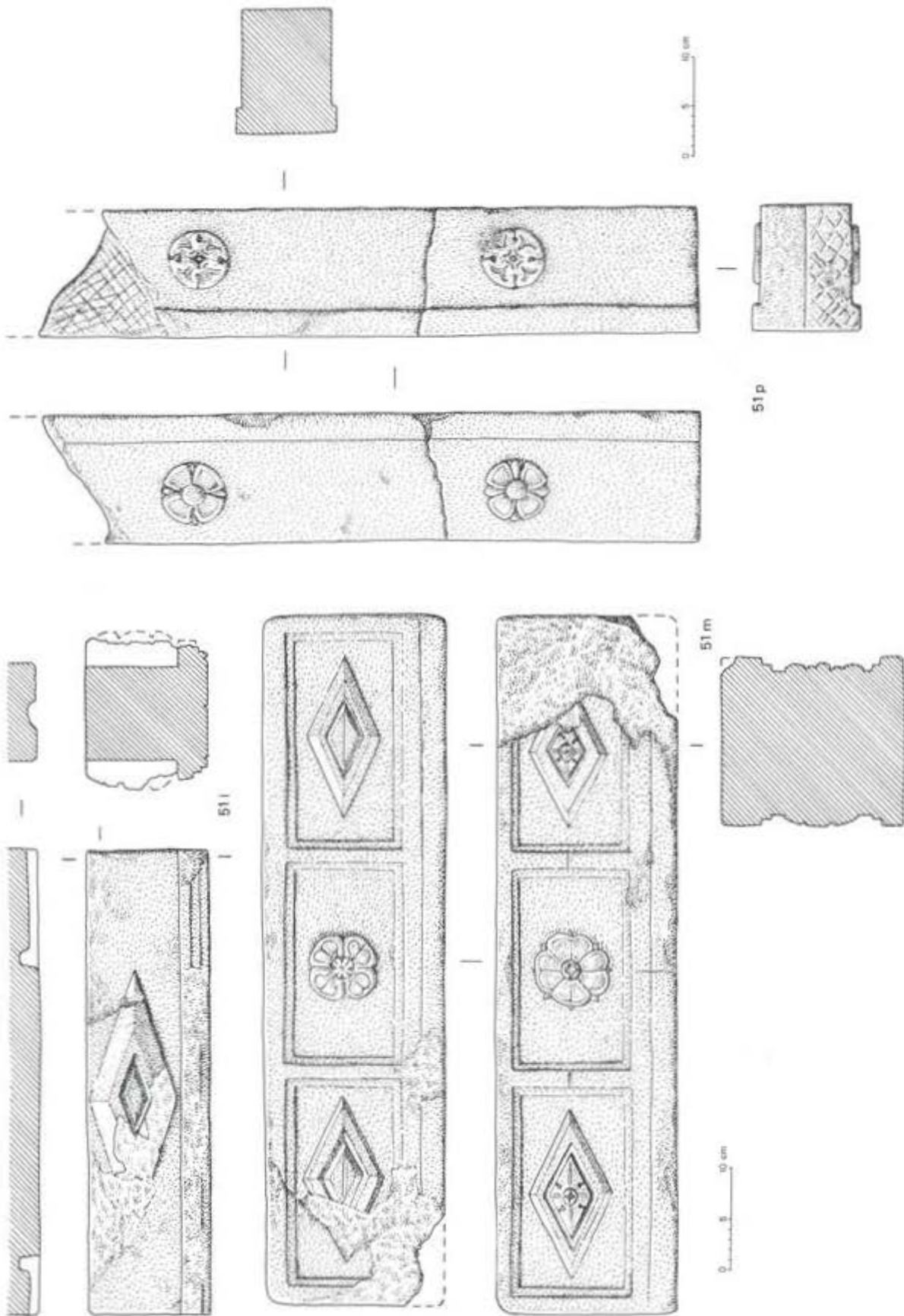


Figure 8.24 Architectural fragments: 51p

Figure 8.22 Architectural fragments: 51i, m.



Fig 8.25

- q* Rebated panel, closed end, two pieces, with inscription *Ano: Dm[*, E5 interior (roof space).
- r* Rebated panel, open end, with inscription in the same style as *q*; *Po[yntz]?* on one face, *js* on reverse. The top edge has cramp sockets. Room 1. There is another fragment in the same style built into the base of E5; three badly weathered lower case letters, possibly ligatured *ad*,<sup>?</sup>
- s* End of rebated panel with *o* or stop in the corner of one face, one edge has cramp sockets. Room 1.
- t* Rebated panel with inscription in a different lettering style *Ao: Reg: C[*, E5.

These fragments come from a double-sided ornamental, internal feature demolished c 1700, and their obvious source is the hall screen in the south range. It is not absolutely clear what form this took; however there was a cornice (51i, j), surmounting a frieze with pilasters (51k), which probably framed a pair of doorways. The design incorporated other bands of ornament (51m, n) including vertical members (51p), which may be an architrave. The fragment 51c suggests that the strapwork cresting was probably divided into three sections, two of which abutted the wall, cf Montacute, Somerset (Tipping 1922, 215), and which alternated with pairs of initials (51f–h).

The dating of the screen is contradictory; stylistically the strapwork is close to the influential designs of Vredeman de Vries published in Antwerp during the 1560s (Summerson 1983, 56–7). These served as patterns for the strapwork details at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire, which was built during the 1580s (Girouard 1983, 81–96), and also influenced the Montacute screen of c 1600 (Dodd 1977, 33). If the fragments 51f–h are indeed the initials NP, for the younger Nicholas Poyntz, then the screen was possibly erected in the years before his death in 1585. However, there are also two broken date stones (51q, t), which employ different styles of lettering: the stone reading *Ao: Reg: C ...*, presumably for Charles I, and possibly associated with the date of 1642 (which was visible before 1890; Chapter 2), must be secondary. The other may be original to the screen, along with the panel in the same style reading *Po ...* presumably for Poyntz.

It is possible that later additions were made to commemorate specific events and that the body of the screen dates to c 1550 and the time of the elder Nicholas. The cornice, frieze and pilasters are classical in style with restrained detailing, which can be paralleled on Bishop Knight's pulpit at Wells cathedral, an early essay in pure Renaissance style constructed before his death in 1547 (Pevsner 1958b, 309). Lozenges in combination with small rosettes can be seen on the Horsey monument of 1546 in Sherborne Abbey, Dorset (RCHME 1952, pl 167), but also occur, alternating with triglyphs, on the frieze of the stone screen at Coker Court, Somerset (Dunning 1991, 29). This resembles the screen at Montacute and dates to the early 17th century.

## Discussion

The architectural fragments can be divided into five distinct groups, none of which antedates the 15th century. The earliest group (1, 3–8, 13–14) is of relatively plain window and arch mouldings, of normal mid-15th-century domestic type, which probably belong to the Period 3.4 house; the arch (13) is almost certainly from the porch, and the original position of the windows is discussed in Chapter 3. A number of pieces which cannot be closely dated (26, 27, 29, 30), may also belong to this phase.

Mouldings of c 1500, but with good local parallels include the windows (9, 10) and the doorcase (11), which are probably derived from the Period 3.5 house. Contemporary with these pieces but rather more exotic is the group comprising the two fireplaces (49, 50), the doorcase (31), window (2), and related smaller fragments (15, 28, 32–8), which show a French influence. Stylistic similarities suggest that they can all be attributed to the same mason, who was also responsible for a monument in Iron Acton church. This combines animals similar to 49 with mouldings employed on 31, and crocketed pinnacles related to 34, which reinforces the connection of unstratified pieces, (2, 31) with Acton Court. There are also links with the elaborate chantry chapel attached to St Mark's Hospital, Bristol, which was endowed by Sir Robert Poyntz (see Chapter 3; Period 3.5 for a discussion of this group and its parallels).

Another group of fragments enlarges the range of classical ornament used in the Period 4.1–4.2 house (42–8), and is proba-

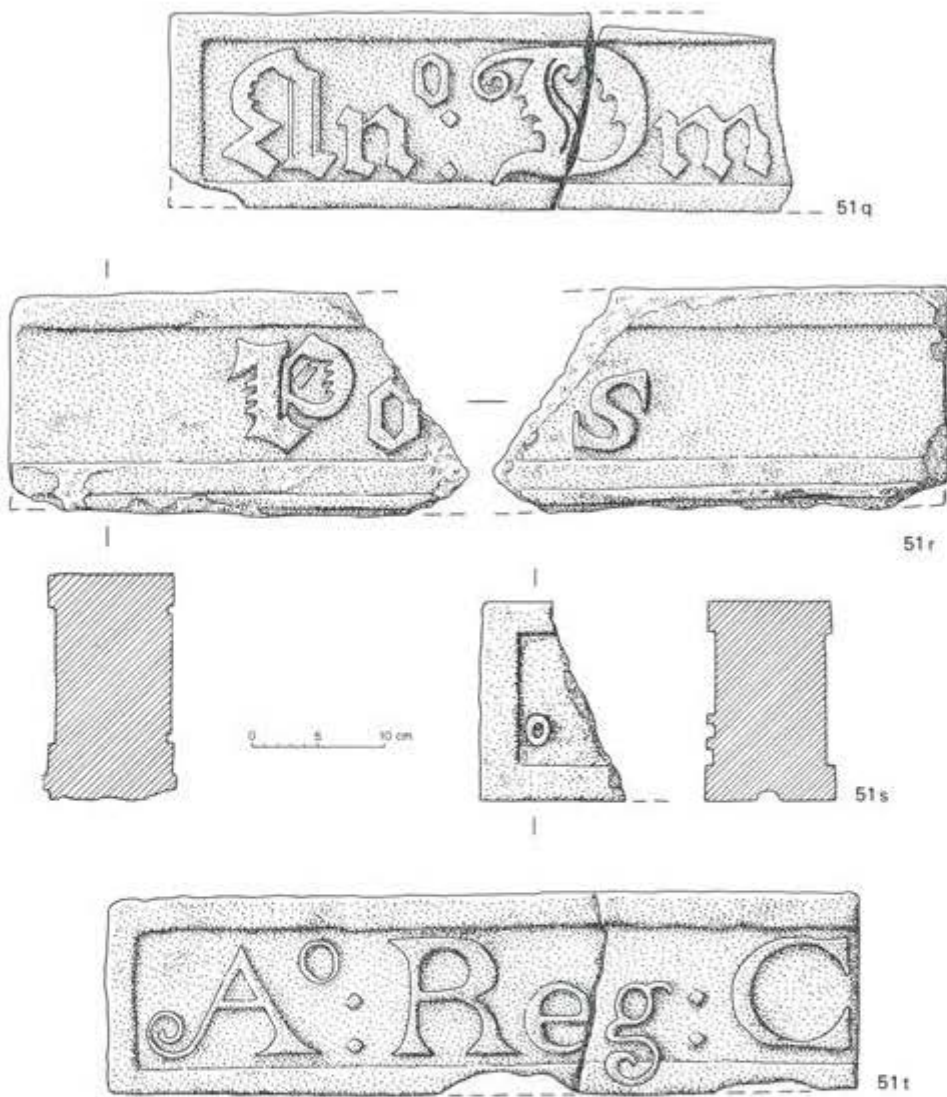
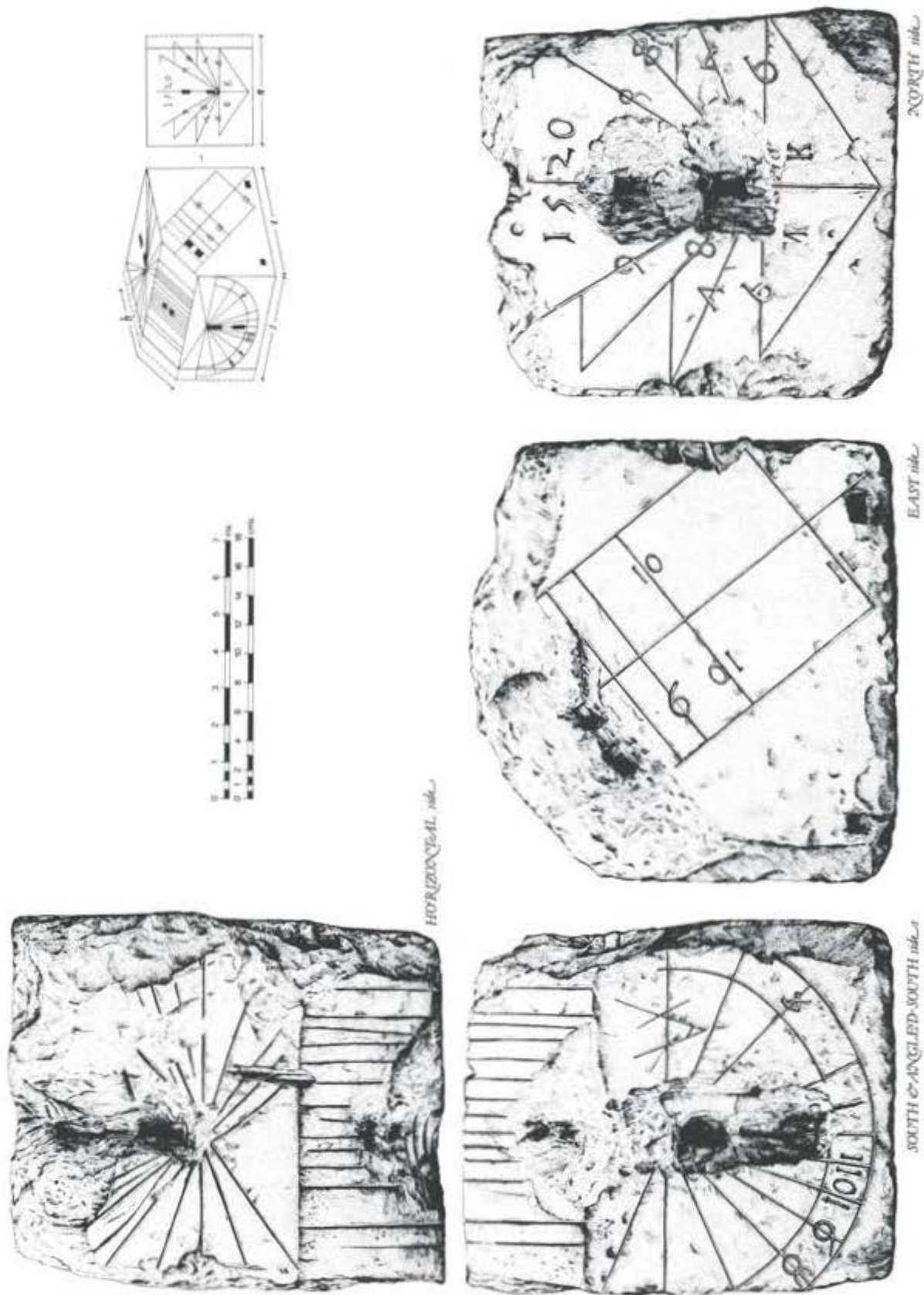


Figure 8.25 Architectural fragments: 51q-t.

bly derived from one or more door-surrounds. On the other hand fragments from the Period 4.3 house provide only a few variants on detail preserved in the standing building (16, 17, 18). The stone screen

from the hall represents the only substantial new ornamental feature; it may originate in the mid-16th century, but also includes later elements.

Figure 8.26 The sundial (drawing: English Heritage).





## The sundial

by *George White*

The sundial (Fig 8.26) was discovered in 1985, one year before the excavations began, by a Youth Opportunity team, while they were removing undergrowth in the vicinity of the house. It was unstratified and was lying on the ground in a nettle bed adjacent to the south wall of the east range. It is made from a 350 mm cube of oolitic Cotswold limestone and has four vertical dials (on its north, south, east and west faces), a horizontal dial and a reclining dial facing south. All the dials are still visible except on the west face, which has been crudely hacked away. The sockets for the six gnomons survive, although the gnomons themselves are missing and appear to have been chiselled or wrenched out.

The north face bears the date 1520 and the initials NK. The initials are almost certainly those of Nicholas Kratzer (1487–*c* 1550), a Bavarian astronomer who is believed to have come to England *c* 1518 and entered Henry VIII's service by 1519 as 'deviser of the King's horologes'. He was living in Oxford between *c* 1521 and 1524; during this time he designed the polyhedral sundials located in the churchyard of St Mary and the orchard of Corpus Christi College. Before the discovery at Acton Court none of Kratzer's stone sundials was known to have survived, though a small brass sundial, thought to have been commissioned from him by Cardinal Wolsey, is now in the Oxford Museum of the History of Science. A copy of a portrait of Kratzer by Holbein, in which he is shown surrounded by mathematical instruments and holding a metal sundial, hangs in the National Portrait Gallery (North 1978; Hackmann 1991).

The marking-out of the sundial is of considerable interest. The south, north and horizontal dials are calculated for the latitude of Iron Acton (51.55 degrees), whereas the east and reclining dials (and also, presumably the west dial) are set out for the complement of the latitude. This meant that three of the dials would have read correctly but the other three would have read incorrectly. A possible explanation for this curious anomaly is that the mason who executed Kratzer's design made a mistake. If the stone block had been turned through 90 degrees and the north face had been used as the base, the reclining dial would have been a standard polar dial and correct angles for

the east and west faces would have followed. When the error was noticed the sundial was probably rejected, and after the gnomons were removed the block was used as building stone.

The sundial must have been commissioned either by Sir Robert Poyntz (d 1520) or by his son and heir Sir Anthony. As courtiers, both men would probably have known Kratzer, and were present in 1520 at the Field of Cloth of Gold. The intended location of the sundial is conjectural. However, one possible site might be the centre of the walled north garden, shown by excavations to have been created before 1535, and sufficiently far away from the house to be out of its shadow.

The sundial has already been published separately (White 1986; 1987), but it merits republishing in the broader context of the Acton Court monograph. As an artefact it is of national interest since it is the earliest dated polyhedral sundial to have been recorded anywhere in England.

## Window glass

by *Kirsty Rodwell*

Three separate classes of evidence have a bearing on the window glazing at Acton Court: glass fragments from excavated contexts, lead comes from excavated contexts, and physical and documentary evidence from the standing building.

### Excavated glass

There are *c* 1500 glass fragments from excavated contexts, which can be divided into three main groups: Period 4.2 from under the west range, Period 4.3–4.5 moat infill, and Period 5.1 demolition layers. The fragments, which are mostly rather small, conform to a single type series (Fig 8.27), although there are observable differences in the thickness and composition of the glass.

#### Period 4.2 (283, 284, 292), west range Room H

These layers produced *c* 110 fragments of glass 4–5 mm thick, all in poor, pitted and laminated condition. There were fragments of Types 1, 2, 7 and 8, including seven pieces with traces of curvilinear red-painted decoration. There were also *c* 320 fragments of glass 2–3 mm thick, originally clear with a greenish cast, but now weathered, although in a better condition than the first group.



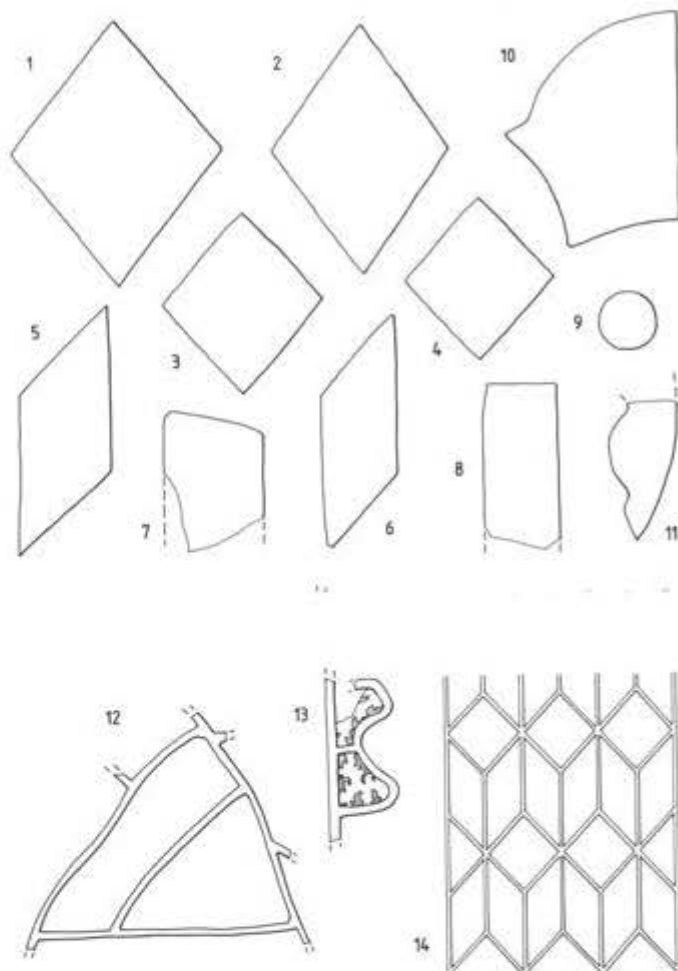


Figure 8.27 Window glass: 1-11 type series of quarries; 1, 3, 5, 7 and 2, 4, 6, 8 form sets; 12 lead comes (restored); 13 painted glass, scale 1:4; 14 glazing pattern using types 4 and 6, scale 1:8.

The incidence of types, which includes the only example of a small round quarry (9), is shown in Table 9. Also of note are the two small rounded quarries, painted with red squiggles, which are still set in their lead comes (Fig 8.27.13).

**Period 4.3-4.5 (largest groups from 1993, 1048, 2149), north and south moat**

There were c 270 fragments of clear glass 2-3 mm thick. The incidence of types is shown in Table 9. A few quarries were coloured; bottle green and mid-blue.

**Table 9 Incidence of quarry types by period**

Type → Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
4.2	10	7	1	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-
4.3-4.5	12	15	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.1	55	45	11	6	25	21	9	4	-	3	1

**Period 5.1 (419) demolition layers**

These contexts produced c 1000 fragments, half of which came from 419. Some of the glass was 2-3 mm thick but much was under 2 mm, and had been cut by scoring and snapping. Thicker pieces were then shaped by grozing. The metal was clear with a greenish tinge and has frequently weathered to show the outline of the comes.

Fig 8.27

The following quarry types were represented:

- 1 Diamond, side of 90 mm.
- 2 Diamond, side of 80 mm.
- 3 Diamond, side of 63 mm.
- 4 Diamond, side of 58 mm.
- 5 Parallelogram, width of 48 mm.
- 6 Parallelogram, width of 40 mm.
- 7 Border strip, width of 50 mm.
- 8 Border strip, width of 38 mm.
- 9 Roundel, 30 mm in diameter.
- 10 Asymmetric, curvilinear, straight edge of 109 mm, complete quarry.
- 11 Curvilinear, broken quarry.

Types 1 and 2 were frequently cut into fractions, both horizontally and vertically. Type 6 was also cut longitudinally.

**Lead comes from excavated contexts**

Quantities of lead came fragments were found in the infill of the moat (1284, 1286, 1291, 1562) and the Period 5.1 context, 233. This was all of H-section, 5 mm square, milled or plain internally, and much of it had been deliberately folded into small bundles. There were also twisted lead ties cut from stanchions. With the exception of Fig 8.27.12, the only recognisable glazing patterns were a diamond lattice with sides of 90 mm, six-way junctions from the design show in Fig 8.27.14, and borders. Glass from a Period 5.3 demolition layer (865) in the east court, was set in thin comes 10 mm wide and 3 mm deep. The diamond quarries have sides of 70 mm, and probably date to Period 5.1.

**Physical and documentary evidence**

Window glass was universal in the Period 4 house; the only window not to have an original glazing groove or rebate is the attic light in the east range (E6.1), but no contempo-

rary glass survives *in situ*. Each light had a pair of iron stanchions (a number survive) to which the glass was secured by lead ties soldered to the comes.

Lysons mentions the remains of painted glass in the window of the 'chapel' (E1.10; Chapter 2), and depicts diamond lattice in the other windows of the east elevation, which were all inserted in Period 5.1. This may have been of the type found in context 865. Illustrations from *c* 1890 onwards (eg Fig 2.6) show the existing rectangular leaded lights with iron opening casements, which were fitted to all the windows in the inhabited part of the house.

## Discussion

Considered in relation to the total fenestration of the Period 4.3–4.4 house, which had (excluding service ranges), between fifty and sixty windows consisting of *c* 360 lights, the percentage of excavated glass is very small, and would barely fill three lights. Together with the incidence of cut lead ties, this argues for extensive removal and reuse, both in other windows at Acton Court, and in Period 5, elsewhere.

There is limited evidence for painted and coloured glass, some of which survived until the late 18th century. The excavated fragments are derived from the Period 3.5 house, but it is probable, given the rich nature of the other decoration, that extensive use was made of heraldic glass in windows of late 15th- and 16th-century date (Wayment 1991, 28–32).

The plain quarries divide into two sets, each of large diamond, small diamond, parallelogram and border strip (1, 3, 5, 7; 2, 4, 6, 8), which differ only in their overall dimensions. Type 3 will combine with 5, and 4 with 6 to form the hexagonal pattern shown in Fig 8.27.14, but they cannot be combined across groups, or with 1 and 2. The incidence of quarries and comes suggests that plain diamond lattice with border strips predominated, but that the hexagonal chevron pattern was used in a limited number of lights. Interestingly it is an elongated version of the Period 4.1 painted ceiling pattern in Room 6. That there were links between glazing and plastering designs is clear from Walter Gedde's pattern book of 1615 entitled 'A booke of Sundry Draughtes: principally serving for glasiars and not impertinent for plasterers and gardeners besides sundry other professions' (Shaw 1848; Wells-Cole 1990, 185), where

this design is illustrated (pl 5), together with a three-dimensional variant (pl 46). Glazing of this pattern survives at Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire in the west window of Queen Anne's Room, which dates, on the evidence of the fireplace, to the early 1550s (personal observation: Gordon Slade 1978, 163). It also occurs in a hall window at Beckley Park, Oxfordshire, a lodge built *c* 1540 (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 448; Sykes 1988, 136).

There are no examples of late 16th-century lozenge and rectangle designs, such as can be seen locally at Morton Grange, Thornbury (1594; Hall 1983, 59, pl XXII), or more elaborately at Collacombe Manor, Devon (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 277; Sykes 1988, 145). However, the asymmetric curvilinear quarries, types 10 and 11 resemble background pieces in some of Gedde's complex knot patterns (eg pls 14, 55, 87), and suggest that a few windows were reglazed in the late 16th century.

## Architectural woodwork fragments

by Kirsty Rodwell

All fragments but 6 are oak.

Fig 8.28

- 1 Linenfold panelling, from the blocking of the Period 4.1 window E3.3. Five panels, each of two narrow boards, have moulded borders on three edges. The muntins are joined to the top rail with a scribed mitre. The two terminals are

Figure 8.28 Linenfold panelling from blocking of Period 4.1 window E3.3 (moulding: scale at left).

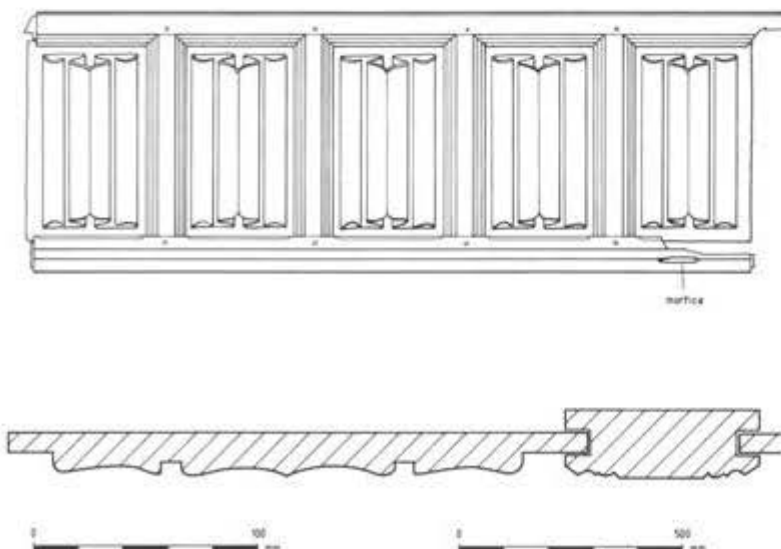
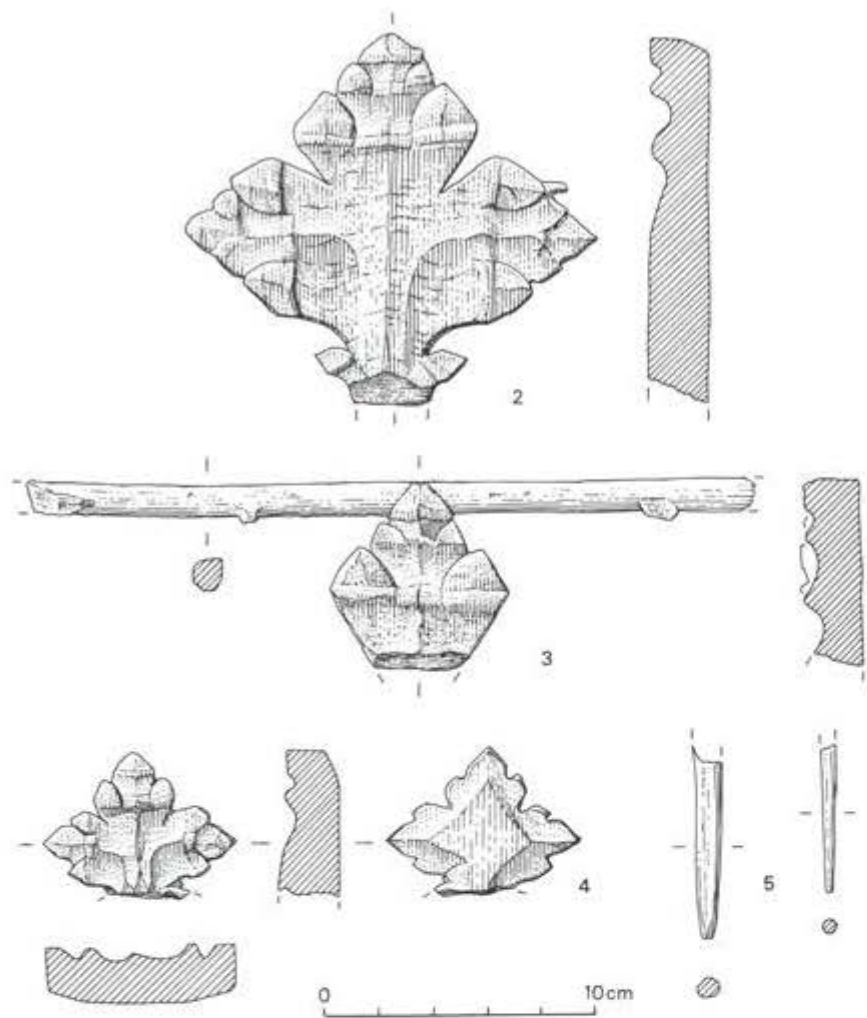


Figure 8.29 Architectural  
woodwork, scale 1:2.



missing and there are no mortices in either rail to indicate another tier of panels. The bottom rail is unchamfered and has a central square-cut channel above a single horizontal mortice.

There are no traces of paint or other finishes, but the top edge of the upper rail, which is bevelled, has traces of ingrained dirt. The back of the panel has death-watch beetle infestation which increases towards the lower edge and appears to be a consequence of its primary use.

There is no obvious context for a panel of this kind in the Period 4.1 east range, unless it formed part of an internal porch, and it is probably derived from the Period 3 house, where it may have been used below a window. The infestation on the back of the panel suggests that it was set against a wall, rather than part of a piece of furniture. Benches with the same linenfold moulding

can be seen in Iron Acton church, but there the panels are separated by narrow pilasters and have a moulded top rail; *c* 1500 (Verey 1976, 276; drawing *c* 1887, Paul Collection, Society of Antiquaries Library, London).

The following pieces were all found in the space below the floorboards in the south-west corner of Room 6, adjacent to the Period 5.3 stairwell. This deposit also included packing-blocks up to 100 mm square, offcuts of variable dimensions, and shavings from cutting mortices and drilling peg-holes.

Fig 8.29

- 2 Trefoil leaf cut from board 20 mm thick, flat back with bevelled edges, front freshly carved with sharp edges, unpainted. Broken through stem, and traces of broken ties on the top edge of each leaf division.
- 3 Top section of trefoil leaf as 2, attached to half-round tie bar 270 mm long with



scars of two subsidiary ties. Freshly carved and unpainted.

- 4 Small trefoil leaf, a miniature version of 2, cut from board 20 mm thick, broken through stem, no traces of ties. Freshly carved and unpainted.

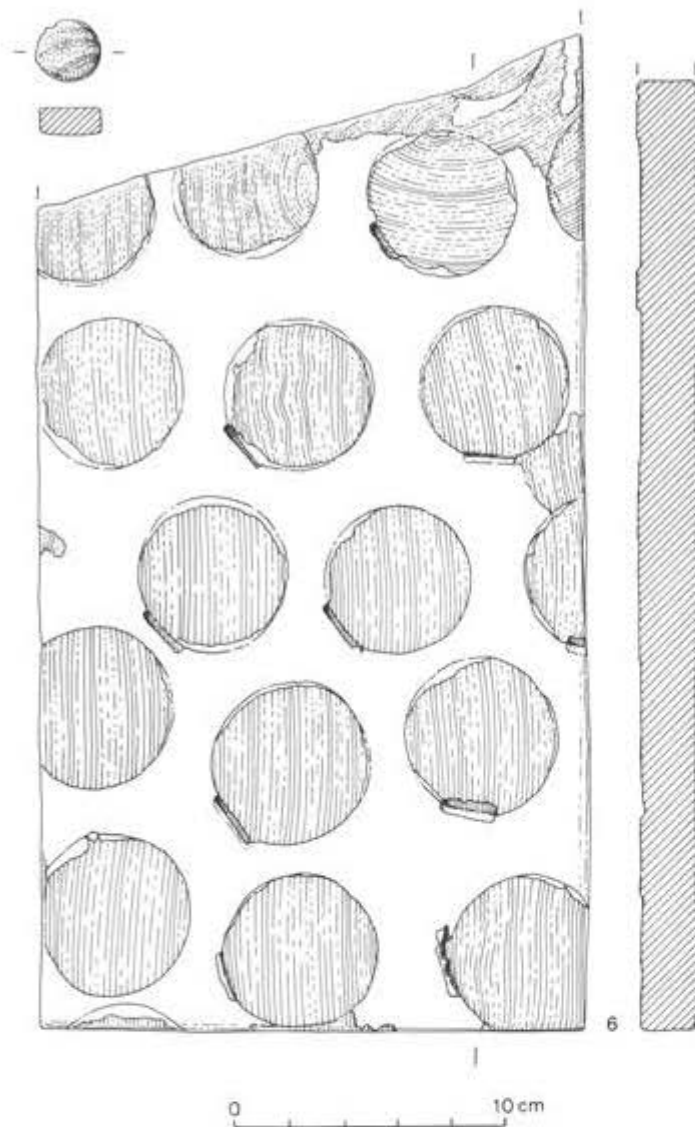
These are fragments from cresting, which probably comprised alternating large and small leaves linked by a tracery of tie bars and a top rail. A very similar example can be seen on the rood screen of c 1500 in Long Ashton church, Somerset (Pevsner 1958b, 219). Examples in domestic contexts occur on the hall screen and a door-head at Old Rufford, Lancashire (Tipping 1937, pls 349, 352), and in the background of the Holbein cartoon *The Family of Sir Thomas More* (Thurley 1993, fig 298). This depicts cresting on both a hooded buffet and an internal wooden porch, and the latter seems the most probable context for its use in the east range (Chapter 6).

- 5 Panel pegs in two sizes, 69 mm and 55 mm long; 9 mm and 5 mm in diameter. Both have a faceted profile and are tapered to a point. Used to secure mortice and tenon joints in panelling and cut to size *in situ*.

Fig 8.30

- 6 Elm board 380 mm long, 210 mm wide, 20 mm deep; one face is covered with a thin coat of white plaster, up to 2 mm thick, bearing the negative impressions of sixteen circles 55–60 mm in diameter. A sample was analysed by X-ray diffraction (ACP4; see below). The centres have been removed by scoring round the circle and levering up with a chisel blade, which has left gouge-marks 20 mm wide in the wood. The circles on the edges of the board are incomplete, indicating that the surface was originally larger; two edges are smooth, suggesting that they were butted against adjoining boards, and two are sawn, indicating subsequent reuse.

This board was clearly used in the production of quantities of small, uniform decorative elements for the east range. It is possibly connected with the manufacture of the 'bullions' used on the ceiling of Room 6, although their composition remains unclear (Chapter 6). The ceiling design indicates two sizes of bullion, and the smaller setting-out circles on the ceiling correspond with



the diameter of the negatives on the board: Room 6 would have required c 180 small and c 65 large bullions.

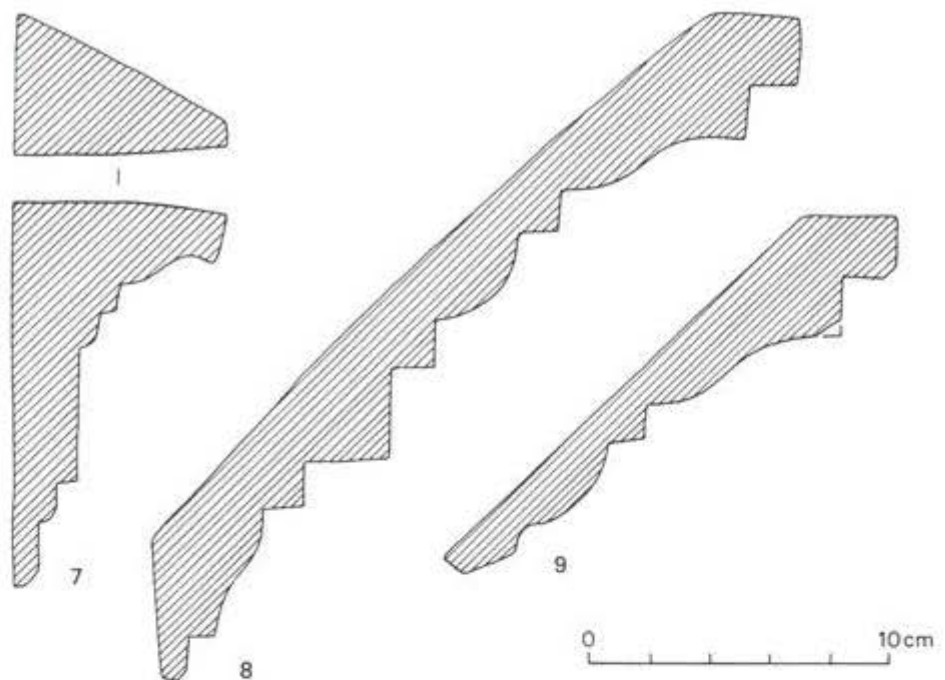
Figure 8.30 Architectural woodwork.

Fig 8.31

- 7 Offcut from cornice moulding; one edge is sawn at an angle of 65 degrees, the other has rows of angular 'tooth' marks and faintly scribed setting-out lines defining the moulding profile. The face of the moulding is slightly rough in places and has not been finished. The solid profile indicates a cornice intended for panelling, similar to that in Room 10 (Fig 5.6b). A piece 1.9 m long of almost identical profile was reused as a ceiling batten in Room 1; it has one mitred corner and has been painted dark brown.



Figure 8.31 Architectural  
woodwork.



- 8 Offcut from cornice moulding, from a board at least 300 mm wide and 40 mm deep. One edge is sawn, the other has rows of angular 'tooth' marks and scribed setting-out lines. From a ceiling cornice of dimensions suitable for Room 11; it was attached to wooden blocks set in the wall (Chapter 5).
- 9 Cornice moulding 2.46 m long, cut down and reused as a ceiling batten in Room 1, one mitred corner, traces of dark brown paint. This room has the outline of an original wooden cornice above the frieze (Fig 8.32) and the ceiling dates only to Period 5.2, so that the moulding is probably original to the room.

### The painted texts in the long gallery

by Jerome Bertram

The fragmentary painted texts on the walls of the long gallery (Room 1) were written on two occasions, one set of lines superimposed on the other, before and after the insertion of the oriel window (Figs 8.32, 8.33). The lettering is very similar, although distinguishable, and the same craftsman may well have been employed on both occasions. The content of the inscriptions changes between the two phases, presumably reflecting a change in the fortunes or affiliations of the owner.

### The verses

The earlier series of texts are Latin verses of a rather commonplace moralising tendency. Such verses were widely circulated, memorised or copied out in school, or found in anthologies of improving texts. Unfortunately the actual sourcebook used by Sir Nicholas Poyntz or his designer has not been located. It was evidently unknown to Hans Walther, whose monumental compilation *Carmina Medii Aevi Posterioris Latina* (1963–86), is the standard reference book. Six lines of those found at Acton Court can be positively identified in Walther, but the sources he quotes for them do not coincide. The verses in question are identified either through the successful conjecture of the missing first words, or through Walther's verbal index, but where no complete words survive, or those that do survive are too common for the index to operate, no identifications could be made. There are a couple of lines where there is a virtually complete reading of the text, but they have not been found in Walther, which must not be regarded as an infallible and complete compendium. Such lines could have been original compositions, drawing together or elaborating on the stock lines or phrases cited perhaps from memory.

### The north wall: A–E

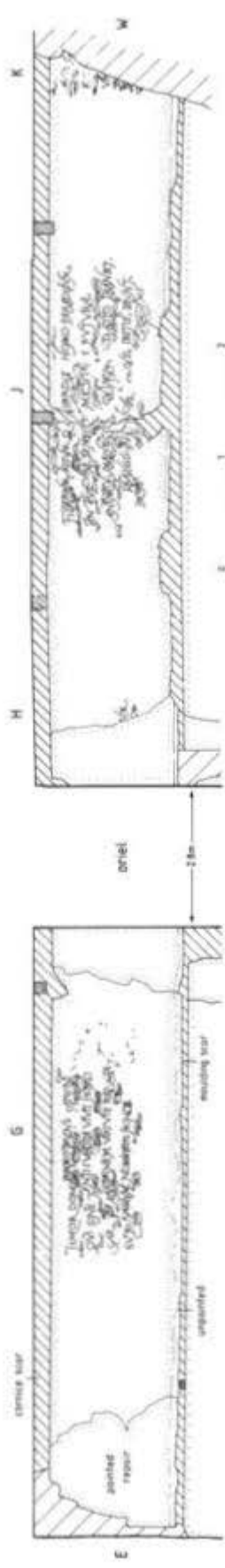
These are really too fragmentary to reconstruct, consisting of hardly more than single

Figure 8.32 (facing page)  
Painted frieze, Room 1,  
showing texts G, H and J,  
and their location on the  
south wall (overpainted  
texts shown in red).

TIMOR DOMINI A DEO MENSA PATI NI  
 QUI SINE JENI SVBDITA VIVIT HOMO  
 CAK. P. 40. Q. D. NE M. VIRTUTE. RE. V. O. S. I. A. J.  
 SVB EXILII NOBILITATIS HONOR.

VM.  
 300  
 H

G



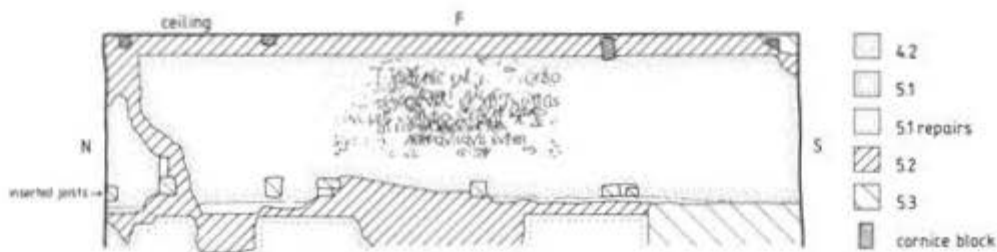
FILSERVARIUM, QUI  
 PERDIT E. FVTVRA.  
 IN FV CVRA, SENE. F. MEDITATI. E. P. D. SITO. TRANSIT.  
 ANIMAM ANSIT. CIVITATE. LIBITIS, IBVNT.  
 TRANSIANT. NOS.

J



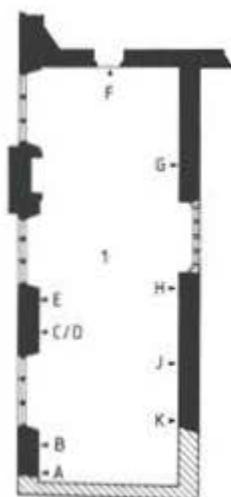
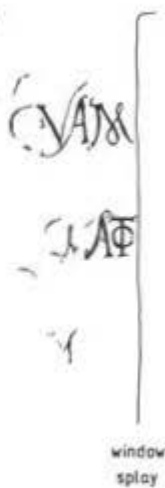
TAM BI EM I BO  
 DOMINA VM ET AB INVICIS  
 MEIS SALVS ERG  
 ADI QVIS VIS SVPER

F



Handwritten notes and sketches, including a circled 'X' and some illegible scribbles.

E



Handwritten notes and sketches, including a circled 'C' and some illegible scribbles.

K



letters or flourishes, although the three line-ends at E (Fig 8.33) might have been fitted into a pattern, had any pattern emerged in the other areas. The first of these is probably {INNO}CUAM, 'innocent' which could easily find a context with the other verses, though I can find no line in Walther ending with this word.

#### The east wall

##### F (Fig 8.33)

....V. ....TAM DI.....  
 ..... MOLLIS {IN}ANI..... {SE}VI  
 {V}INCERE QUANDO {N}EQUIT  
 SA{PIENS PRO TEMPORE CEDIT}  
 SÆPIVS ..A.. ADIT QVISQVIS SVPER ...

The third line, Vincere ... is no 33,429 in Walther, and can be rendered 'The wise man, when he cannot overcome, gives way for the time being'. It is a normal hexameter verse, possibly with an intended internal rhyme in nequit ... cedit. In the previous line mollis is 'weak' or 'soft', and the next word looks like inani, 'empty', typically coupled with gloria, so that it could be something to the effect that the weak man indulges in empty display. The last line seems to begin with sæpius, 'more often', though none of the lines in Walther with this beginning fit the remaining fragmentary words, 'whoever goes above'.

#### The south wall

##### G (Fig 5.32)

..... A DEO MENSIS}, {N}ATIONI  
 ... {SERVI}ENTI, SVBDITA VIVIT HOMO  
 {NOBILITAT V}IRTUS} HOMINEM,  
 VIRTUTE REMOTA  
 {MIGRAT IN} EXILIVM NOBILITATIS  
 HONOR.

The last two lines are found together in Walther, no 33,682, and are clearly the second of a pair of elegiac couplets, alternate hexameters and pentameters, reflecting on the situation of one whose country is oppressed and whose title of worldly honour has been lost. 'A man lives ... at tables (supplied) by God, while his nation is in servitude .... Virtue may ennoble a man, but when his virtue is lost the honour of nobility goes into exile.'

##### J (Fig 5.32)

{O MI}SERVM RISVM, QVO PERDIT  
 HOMO PARADISVM.

{EVITAT IL}L{E} CVRA, SEMPER  
 MEDITARE FVTVRA.  
 {NEMO} DIV MANSIT I{N} CVLMINE,  
 S{E}D CITO TRANSIT.  
 {OMNIA} TRANSI{B}VNT, NOS  
 {IBI}MVS, IBITIS, IBVNT.

Here we have four complete hexameter verses, with internal rhymes, the form known as 'Leonine' verse. The first, third and fourth lines are found separately in Walther; *O miserum* is no. 19,503, *Nemo diu* is no. 16,335 while *omnia transibunt* is no. 20,091. This is cited from the same 15th-century MS in the Vatican as *vincere quando*, a source most unlikely to have been known to Sir Nicholas Poyntz! (Vatican MS Pal Lat 719, fols 150<sup>rb</sup>; 154<sup>va</sup>).

The second line has not been found, granted that the conjectural first words may be mistaken. 'Man may avoid that wretched jest by which he lost paradise through care always to consider the future. No one remains for long on the peak, but swiftly passes on. All things will pass on; we will pass, you will pass, they will pass.' Again the theme is one of a member of a defeated party reflecting on the chances of a change in his circumstances.

##### K (Fig 8.33)

AVD{A}C{ES FORTVNA IUVAT, NON  
 OMNIBUS HORIS.}  
 ES{T BONA RES HERBA, MELIOR  
 LAPIS, OPTIMA VERBA:}  
 VIM {GEMMIS, VERBIS, DOMINUS  
 CONCESSIT ET HERBIS.}  
 IR{A FACIT LITEM, LIS PRELIA, PRE-  
 LIA MORTEM}

Here are four more hexameter verses, three of them Leonine: 'Fortune favours the bold, but not on every occasion. Grass is a good thing, stone is better, but words are best; it is the Lord who gives strength to gems and words and even to grass. Wrath leads to the law, the law to strife, and strife to death.'

Paradoxically, the most damaged set of verses are the easiest to locate, since here we have the beginnings of each line. It must be noted that there are several lines in Walther beginning with each of the surviving letters, but the verses here do seem to fit with the general theme: *Audaces* is no 1687; *Est bona* and *Vim Patiens* go together, as no 7310; while *Ira facit* is no 12,872a.

In general, therefore, the Latin verses all reflect an owner who is conscious that his

Figure 8.33 (facing page)  
 Painted frieze, Room 1,  
 showing texts E, F and K  
 and their location  
 (overpainted texts shown in red).



star is on the decline, his party out of favour, and exile, whether literal or metaphorical, his fate. He is determined to keep out of trouble, and can only console himself with the thought that circumstances may change. The most likely historical context is that of the fall of the Protector Somerset in 1551.

### The scripture texts

When the long gallery was redecorated after the insertion of the oriel window, a new scheme of texts appears. (There are slight traces on the south wall, area (G) of a repainting of the first set of verses, but this was evidently abandoned and Scriptural verses substituted). These are naturally easier to identify:

#### The east wall

*F (Fig 8.33)*

LAVDABILEM {IN}V{O}CABO / DOM-  
INVUM ET AB INIMICIS / MEIS SALVVS  
ERO

'I will call on the Lord who is worthy to be praised, and I shall be saved from my foes.' This is from 2 Kings (2 Samuel in the Hebrew) 22, verse 4. It is almost identical with Psalm 17 (Psalm 18 in the Hebrew) verse 4, save for the passive participle *laudabilem* rather than the active *laudans* (the difference in the original Hebrew is simply a matter of vowel pointing). The ancient Latin and Greek versions both took it to be active, 'Praising, I will call on the Lord' in the psalm, and passive, 'The Lord who is to be praised' or 'praiseworthy', in the history. More modern versions, both in Latin and modern languages, make it passive in the Psalm as well, (the Geneva Bible reads 'I will call upon the Lord, which is worthy to be praised: so shall I be safe from mine enemies') so that the passive reading might be taken as a quotation from the new Protestant version of the psalms, or of the old Catholic version of the much less familiar passage in Kings.

#### The south wall

*(G; Fig 8.32)*

TIMOR DOMINI E{XPELLIT  
P}E{CC}A{TVM NAM} / QVI SINE  
TI{MORE EST NON POTERIT IVS-  
TIFI}/CARI; IRACV{NDIA ENIM  
ANI}MOS{I}T{ATIS ILLIVS} / SVBVER-  
SIO {ILLIVS EST.}

'The fear of the Lord drives away sin, for he who is without fear cannot be justified; indeed the wrath of His anger is his overthrow.' This is from Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Ben Sirach) chapter 1, verses 27-8, in the normal Latin Vulgate translation. Fragmentary letters at the end of the quotation may be the reference, {EC}CLE

...

*J (Fig 8.32)*

FIL{I ACCEDENS AD  
S}ER{VIT}V{TEM DEL, STA} / IN  
IVS{TITIA ET} TI{MORE, ET  
PRAEPARA} / ANIMA{M TVAM A}D  
{TEN}TA{T}IO{NEM}

'My son, while aspiring to serve God, stand fast in justice and reverence, and prepare your soul for a trial.' Again this is from Ecclesiasticus, chapter 2, verse 1, and again there is a fragmentary reference at the end, {EC}CL ... 2.

The choice of Scripture texts is intriguing: two are from a book rejected by the Protestant party as 'apocrypha', the third one familiar in the active form as a line from a Psalm. The message is more subtle than that of the verses, but still dwells on the same theme.

The dispossessed supporter of the old Protestant party hopes by remaining faithful to be delivered from his enemies; he still intends to keep out of trouble by not letting his anger show, but he is prepared for a difficult time ahead. The context, presumably, is the work of Queen Mary in the restoration of the Church, something Sir Nicholas Poyntz cannot have been expected to favour.

The earlier set of verses might have been considered rather aggressively defiant of the present regime, while these Biblical texts are more cryptic. Choosing an 'apocryphal' book and what looks like a Psalm text would look superficially like conformity, whereas the message remains delicately defiant, for the 'apocryphal' texts appear to speak of the favourite Protestant doctrine of justification, and the Psalm text looks like the Protestant revised reading.

Taken together therefore, the choice of texts fits perfectly with what we know of Sir Nicholas Poyntz' opinions, and the likely date for the first series is 1551, for the second between 1553 and Sir Nicholas' death in 1556.

## Graffiti in the east range

by Kirsty Rodwell

### Room 17

The graffiti in Room 17 occur on the east wall, opposite the window. They were completely obscured by multiple coats of lime-wash and were exposed as part of the wall painting conservation project, after test areas revealed their potential. They cover the whole wall south of the Period 4.3 blocked door to a height of 2.25 m (Fig 8.34). This space is subdivided by a series of horizontal lines an average of 0.16 m apart and bisected by a vertical, which probably continued to the floor. From near the base spring diagonals at angles of 33 degrees and 40 degrees. These lines have been used as a framework for setting-out two variants of a *cyma reversa* moulding 0.6 m deep. At the base of the moulding is a band of alternating double lozenges and roundels at 0.33 m centres with visible compass marks. They are set within a double border bounded by the 40-degree diagonals.

To the north, in the triangle between the diagonal and the blocked door, the grid of lines continues with a superimposed circle 0.63 m in diameter. Next to the door is a mass of small intersecting circles probably scribed to form a complex profile similar to Fig 8.36.G. At the south end of the wall a series of heavily scribed concentric circles overlap the *cyma reversa* moulding. Below are parallel lines 64 mm apart set at 45 degrees to the vertical and turning through an angle of 86 degrees. One end is closed and the apex is surmounted by a circle and enclosed within a box. The angle appears to have been calculated from this construction which has been interpreted by Malcolm Airs (1995, 91) as the setting-out of the pitch of a roof.

More random graffiti include two small clusters of interlocking circles, amorphous curvilinear lines in a grey wash, a hanged man, and initials TD 1706 set within a deeply scribed box. All except the circles are stratigraphically later than the setting-out graffiti.

The major graffiti on this wall are constructional and can be interpreted as the full-size setting-out for the base of an oriel window, which may have served as the pattern for the Period 4.4 oriel on the adjoining courtyard elevation (E4). Comparative dimensions are close but do not correspond

exactly: the oriel as built had an estimated width of 3.36 m, or 1.68 m to the centre line; the setting-out lines, which experiment with alternative dimensions and angles would give a width of 2.58 m (1.29 m; north) or a close 3.48 m (1.74 m; south). This is at an angle of 40 degrees to the vertical as opposed to a built angle of *c* 48 degrees, although there is a divergent scribed line at 44 degrees in the region of the moulding. The mouldings themselves are not identical and have a depth of *c* 0.5 m (built) and 0.6 m (scribed). As the window has been removed it is not clear whether it incorporated the band of ornament indicated by the scribed circles and lozenges, however these resemble extant decoration on fragments from the hall screen (Fig 8.22), and have similar dimensions.

Large-scale constructional graffiti such as these appear to be uncommon survivals in a domestic context, but are rather more numerous in churches, ranging from the tracing floors at Wells and York, through large-scale window details, to individual moulding profiles (Jones Baker 1993, 9–11).

### Room 18

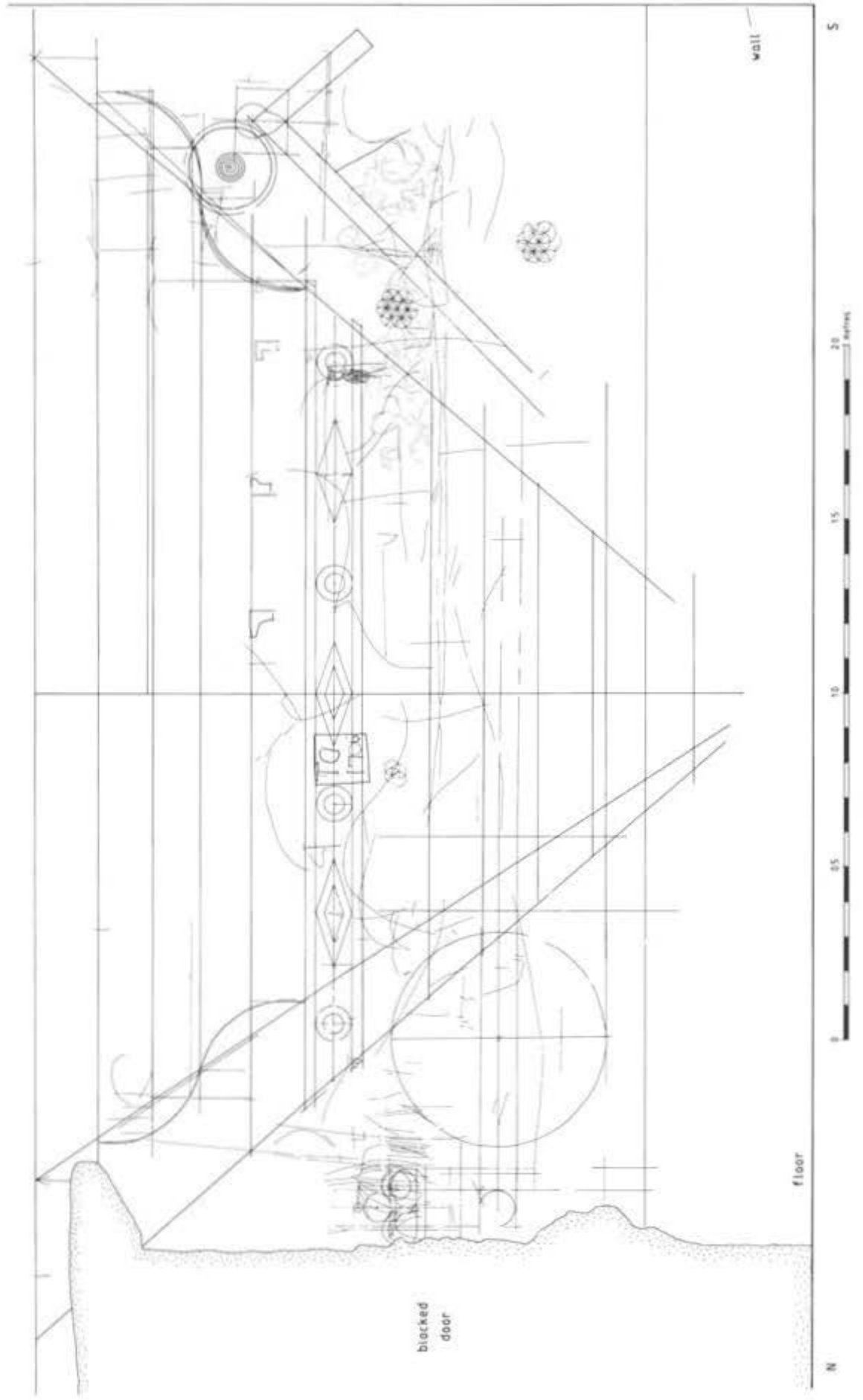
There are graffiti on the north, east and south walls in a zone over the wall benches, *c* 0.9 m to *c* 2 m above floor level. The plaster was in poorer condition, affected by damp and later alterations and missing towards floor level. Damp had also affected the later limewash coats, so that a number of graffiti were visible prior to conservation.

Unlike Room 17 the graffiti in this room are a palimpsest of small-scale elements and only selected areas are reproduced. The greatest concentration is on the north wall (Fig 8.35.A, B), and there are relatively few on the south wall; the most notable is the constructional graffiti Figure 8.36.G. On the east wall only limited areas of original plaster survive, but there are ship graffiti north and south of the door (Fig 8.36.D, E), and graffiti continue onto the ashlar of the east porch (Fig 8.36.F).

Four types of graffiti are present:

- 1 Ship graffiti: these are the subject of a separate report by Ian Friel (*see below*).
- 2 Constructional graffiti: on the north wall there are faint traces of simple lozenges and circles, which are not set out horizontally (Fig 8.35.A). On the south wall is the well-defined outline of a bulbous baluster on a stepped base

Figure 8.34 Graffiti, east wall Room 17 (red paint shown stippled).



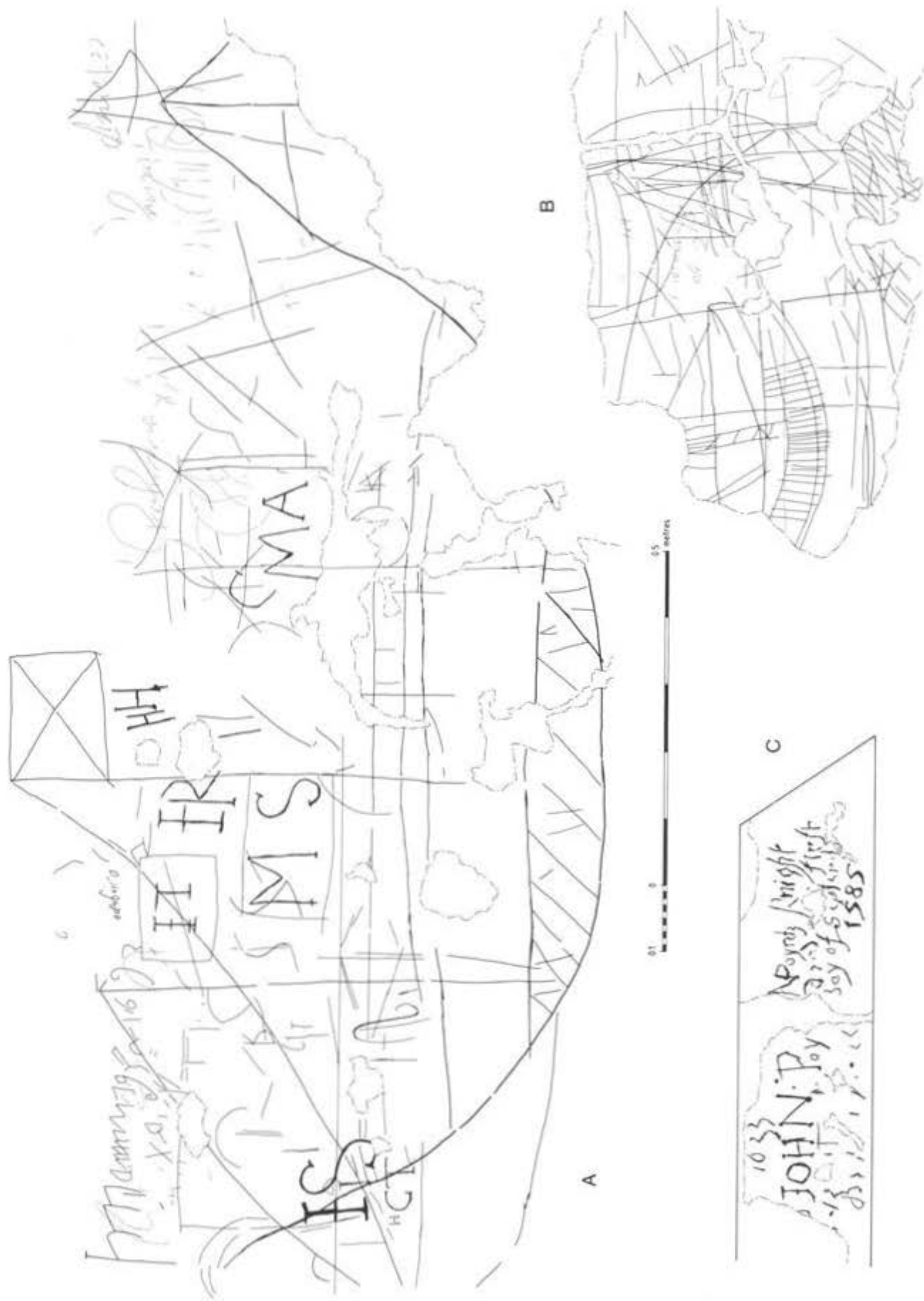


Figure 8.35 Graffiti: A and B ships, north wall room 18; C inscriptions, window sill room 20 (red paint shown stippled).



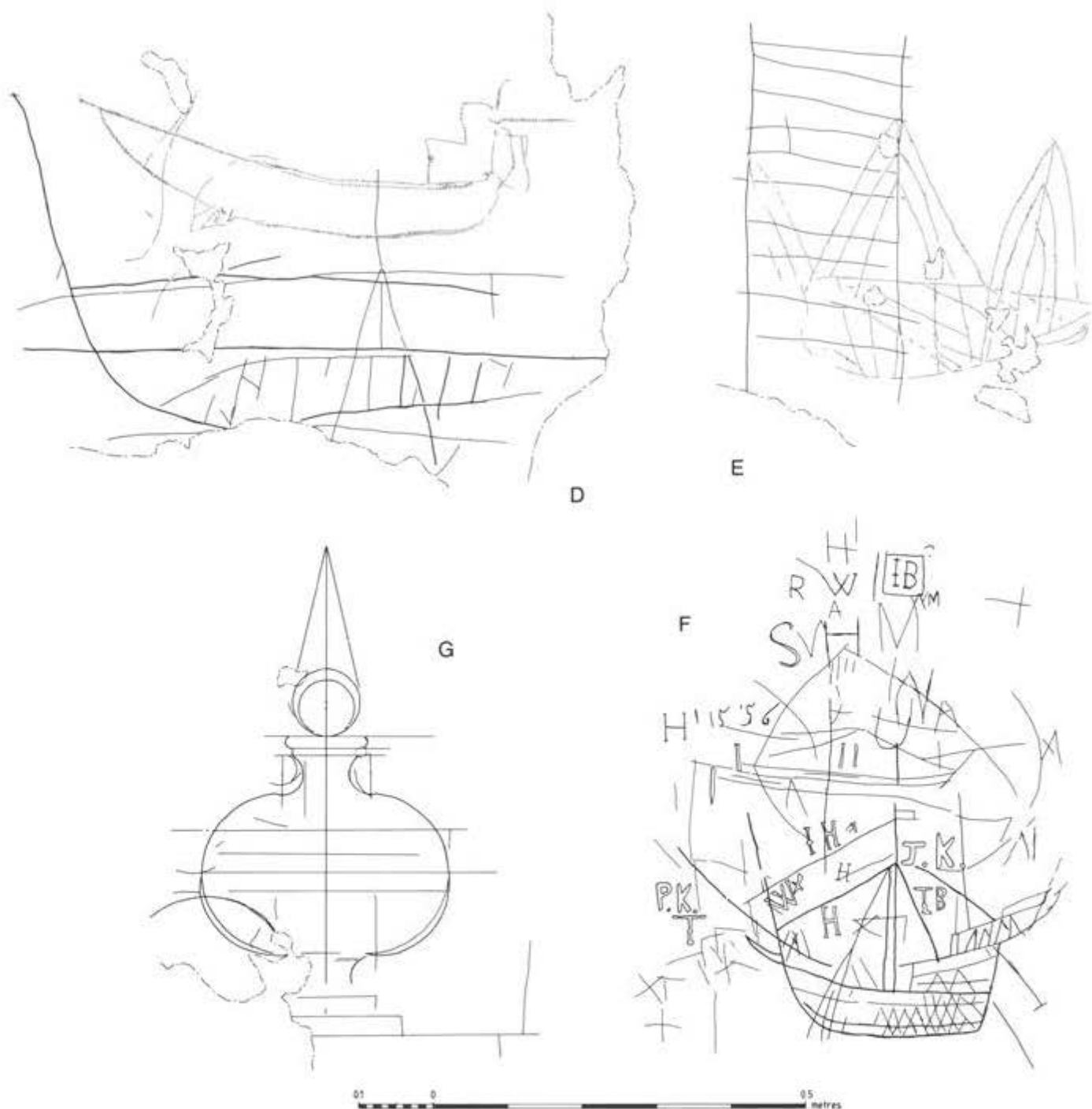


Figure 8.36 Graffiti: *D* ships, north wall room 18; *E* ship, east wall room 18; *F* ship, south wall of porch; *G* baluster, south wall room 18 (red paint shown stippled).

(Fig 8.36.G). It has a total height of 330 mm, a width of 165 mm, and is built up in the same way as the graffiti in Room 17, from a grid of lines and scribed circles. It bears no relation to any extant feature in the house.

3 Inscriptions in red chalk: these occur on all three walls but are poorly preserved and no longer legible (Fig 8.35.A.B). They appear to be written in script with flowing capitals, figures

indicate that they include dates, and in one place a month (october [*sic*]; actually in black) is clearly visible. This suggests that they are probably related to the window sill inscriptions in Room 20 (Fig 8.35.C), and are principally names and dates with perhaps some further commemorative information. Stylistic similarities suggest that they also date to the later 16th or first half of the 17th centuries.

- 4 Incised inscriptions: these are the commonest type and consist principally of pairs of initials. Of particular note is the date 1556 in the east porch (Fig 8.36.F), which provides a *terminus ante quem* for the Period 4.3 alterations, and the name of the first tenant farmer, James Manning, dated 1693 (Fig 8.35.A), on the north wall of Room 18. They also span the widest date range; the smaller, neater initials fall within the same range as the chalk inscriptions; heavily incised initials, often in boxes, appear to be late 17th or early 18th century, and some of those in the east porch are relatively recent.

### Room 20

Much of this passage was replastered at a later date, but the limited area of Period 4.3 plaster on the east wall has no significant graffiti. However, both sills of the window E9.15 bear inscriptions (Fig 8.35.C). The north light has two lines of illegible text below the date, 1586. That on the south light reads: NPoyntz Knight / died [the] first / day of September / 1585, and next to it: 1633 / JOHN Poy[ntz] / died [day and month illegible]. Both of these inscriptions commemorate known events (Chapter 2).

### Graffiti elsewhere in the house

In the east panel of the painted frieze in Room 10 is a graffito 'God save the true King 1740' (Pl I). This is set within the cartouche, suggesting that its outline at least must still have been visible.

The other concentration of graffiti can be found at the head of the stairs in the Period 4.5 tower and in the adjoining attic room at the north end of the east range. The earliest appears to be WA 1637 on the jamb of the topmost stair window, but the majority are 19th- or 20th-century, names or initials and dates, often executed in pencil.

### The ship graffiti

by Ian Friel

Graffiti are relatively common in certain types of medieval and later buildings, particularly churches, where there were areas of soft stone or plaster in which people could scratch some design. It is often very difficult to date a graffito with any precision unless it is found in a specific sealed context. Such contexts are relatively rare, so pictorial graffiti are generally dated by their style, or by

the shape of whatever item they happen to depict.

Graffiti are a kind of folk art, generally the work of people without any artistic training. The reasons for making these inscriptions or drawings can seldom be more than guessed at. In the case of some church graffiti there may have been a votive intent, but it is also probable that many graffiti were created merely as a way of passing the time.

The Acton Court ship graffiti occur in Room 18, a cross-passage created in Period 4.3, and hence cannot antedate c 1550. However, it does not automatically follow that they were produced in the Tudor period, for the house remained a mansion until the late 17th century.

Acton Court is by no means the only large house in England to contain several ship graffiti. For example there are three in the late medieval west range of lodgings at Dartington Hall, Devon, the largest of which is some 3.05 m (10 ft) long, and depicts a great three-masted merchant ship or carrack of 15th- or 16th-century date (Friel 1992, 73).

Five areas within Room 18 and the adjoining porch have complete or partial images of ships, which are discussed in turn.

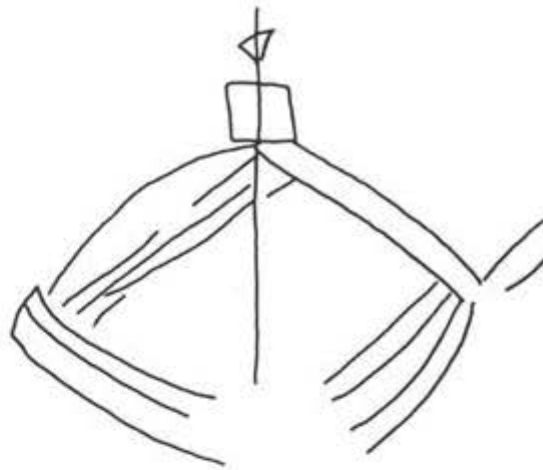
### Area A (Fig 8.35)

This has the largest ship graffito, a picture c 1.9 m (6 ft 2 in) in length. The vessel has a pointed, seemingly double-ended hull, although part of one end has been lost. The lower part of the hull has been marked with diagonals and some cross-hatching, a method that is also used to 'fill in' the hulls of some of the other ship graffiti in the room. The upper part is clear of these markings, suggesting that the lower part was meant to represent the underwater section of the hull. Some horizontal lines above the hull may have been an attempt to show superstructure, but they are not very coherent.

Three vertical lines represent masts of varying heights, the central one, the mainmast, being the highest, as would have been the case on a real ship. The left-hand mast is slightly higher than the right-hand mast, suggesting that the former is the foremast, and the latter is the mizzenmast. Both this mast and the mainmast have lines running to a leftward extension of the hull, indicating the forestay ropes which were used to help support them, and suggesting that the bow of the ship is on the left. An incomplete line runs from the top of the mizzenmast



Figure 8.37 A ship graffito from the late medieval west range of Dartington Hall, Devon (Drawing: Ian Friel, after Emery 1970, 208).



towards the stern, but in this part of the ship there is something of a problem.

A strong, sharply angled line runs up from the end of the hull at the right-hand 'stern' end, much in the manner of a bowsprit. The problem here is that the bowsprit was fixed at the bow of a ship, not the stern. Some ships did have a spar at the stern called an outligger, to carry the sheet of the mizzen sail, but the outligger did not usually have a sharp rake. The suspicion that this line was intended to represent a bowsprit is increased by the presence of a cross-like feature, close to the top of the line, resembling a mast. A new mast was introduced in the late 16th century, called the sprit topmast, mounted on the bowsprit (McGowan 1981, 40, 43), and this feature seems to be an attempt to represent one of these masts. Unfortunately if this is so, it also creates a ship with two bows and no stern: the most likely explanation is that the original graffito was altered by later additions at some time from the late 16th century onwards, and that the original bow was to the left.

There is a flag bearing St Andrew's cross at the mainmast head. It is worth noting that Sir Nicholas Poyntz, who built this part of the house, had been involved in the English seaborne attack on Edinburgh in 1544, and would undoubtedly have seen Scottish vessels flying this flag. The graffito may therefore contain a reference to the Scottish campaign, but unfortunately this is impossible to prove. A similar flag-like shape is shown lower down the mainmast with the initials 'MS', but whether this was original to the graffito, or a later addition is unknown.

In summary the original graffito may well be of mid-16th-century date, with additions in the late 16th or 17th centuries.

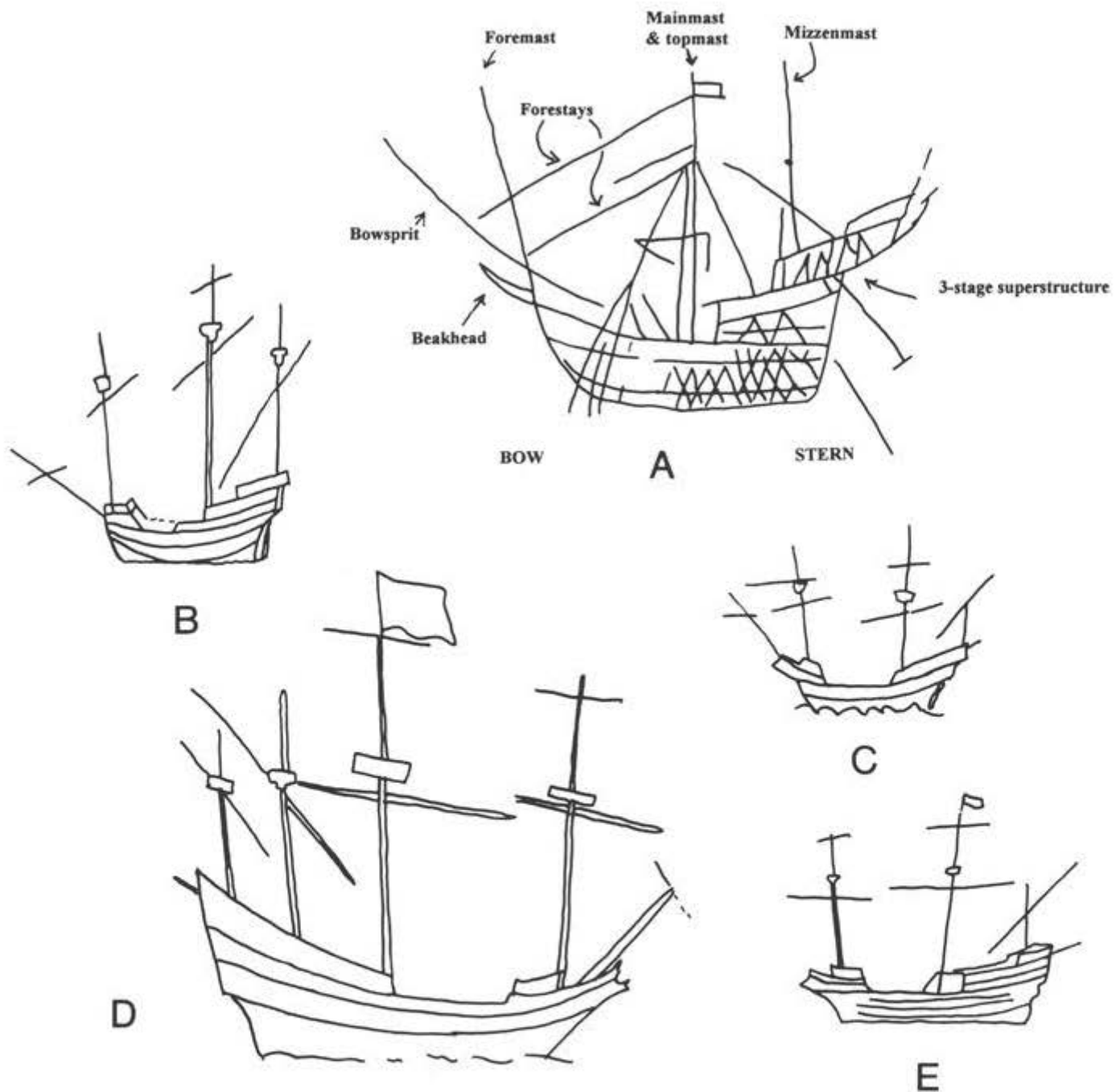
#### Area B (Fig 8.35)

The remains of two ship graffiti are visible here, both seemingly of the same type of 'vessel'. That on the left is better preserved and shows a one-masted ship with a strongly curved keel and stem, and a horizontal sheerline (the sheerline is the top line of the hull). Two curved lines represent plank runs or strakes, crossed with short verticals or diagonals. The strakes do not quite reach the stem, but if produced they would terminate at the very end point of the hull. The other end of the vessel is missing, but what is left suggests a hull that resembled a banana in shape and structure. Most 16th-century ships and boats had stem and stern posts at either end, to which the plank runs were attached. The vessel depicted here is different in that the plank runs rise up at either end of the vessel, where they were fixed together in some manner without the use of stem and stern posts. This type of construction has been found in some medieval wreck finds, and is commonplace in medieval ship iconography. It is known to scholars as 'hulk' construction (Greenhill 1976, 283–5).

The right-hand graffito, although much less complete, appears to have had rather similar features. Both vessels seem to be one-masted (something uncommon on all but the smallest craft by the 16th century), and the left-hand one has indications of a sail yard and rigging.

It is very doubtful that vessels of this early medieval type were still to be seen in the British Isles in the 16th century, but these craft cannot have been drawn earlier than c 1550. Graffiti found in other parts of the country showing similar types of vessel suggest that this was in fact a conventional way of depicting a ship rather than an attempt to illustrate an existing type. For example a similar anachronistic 'hulk' graffito exists in one of the rooms of the late medieval west range of Dartington Hall, Devon (Emery 1970, 208; see also Fig 8.37). If a modern child is asked to draw a house, the result will often be in the form of a building with a central doorway, symmetrical ground- and first-floor windows and a central chimney: in other words, a stylised representation of a single type, rather than an observational drawing of a modern dwelling. The 'hulk' graffiti may have been part of a similar phenomenon, a kind of 15th- and 16th-century pictorial shorthand for a ship or boat.

Figure 8.38 (facing page)  
A An interpretative drawing of ship graffito 8.36.F; B An English drawing of a ship from a chart of c 1530 (after Howard 1987, 44); C A French drawing of a mid-sixteenth-century ship (after Howard 1987, 60); D An English drawing of a four-masted warship, 1570s (after Howard 1987, 58); E An English drawing of a warship, c 1580 (after McGowan 1981, 24), (drawing: Ian Friel).



**Area D (Fig 8.36)**

Two or possibly three incomplete hulls are represented here. The upper one is in red chalk, and has a stair-like feature at one end, perhaps intended to represent superstructure, but otherwise there is little that can be said about them.

**Area E (Fig 8.36)**

This is a crude, red chalk graffito with an unrealistic hull, and three masts with a series of diagonal lines running to them to

represent standing rigging. The image has no features that allow it to be closely dated.

**Area F (Fig 8.36)**

From the point of view of maritime history this is the most interesting graffito, for it appears to have been drawn by someone who both knew ships and had the skill to depict them.

The graffito is just over 0.5 m in length, and despite a multiplicity of other lines both surrounding and overlaying it, the vessel



stands out quite distinctly. The hull has a flat keel line, a curved stem and a sharply raked stern. Two lines run from stem to stern, representing strakes. The sheerline of the hull curves upwards slightly at the stem, and a tall superstructure is shown at the stern, with three very distinct deck levels. The mainmast is shown with two strong vertical lines, a mizzenmast is perched on the second superstructure deck, and forward-raked foremast is shown at the bow. A less sharply angled line at the bow represents the bowsprit, and below this is a curved, pointed feature which appears to have been a beakhead, a structure that protruded out from the stem. Above the main mast is a single vertical line for a top mast, bearing a flag. Forestays go from the top of the mainmast to the foremast, and from the top of the main topmast to the bowsprit, with some form of backstay going from the mainmast to the first deck of the superstructure. Another supporting rope is indicated, although less surely than some of the others. Parallels for all of these features can be found in 16th-century ship illustrations, and the positioning of the forestays in particular would be known only to someone who had sailed aboard a real ship, or had at least studied one very closely (cf Fig 8.38.B–E).

Figure 8.38.A is an interpretation drawing of this graffito, and comparative examples (Fig 8.38.B–E) have been redrawn from illustrations of the period c 1530–80. Raked foremasts were common on 16th-century ships, as were beakheads and multi-level superstructures (F Howard 1987, 78–9, 84). While the first two features were to be found in vessels of the 17th century, high superstructures were by then far less common.

Ship superstructures originated in the Middle Ages as platforms for soldiers fighting boarding actions, and in English and other European warships of the first half of the 16th century they could attain prodigious size. However, by the 1580s, if not earlier, English naval tactics had changed, with a much greater emphasis on using heavy guns to batter an enemy ship from a distance rather than closing with it in the traditional manner. This meant that high superstructures were of less use from a military point of view, and they also became a technical problem, for their weight and wind resistance could adversely affect a ship's performance. English warship builders were producing much lower-built vessels by the 1580s, the so-called 'race-built' galleons.

Ships with three-level superstructures, like the one depicted in this graffito, would have begun to look decidedly old-fashioned (F Howard 1987, 45, 52).

The person who drew this graffito must have had personal knowledge of ships, for it is unlikely that a layman would have thought to draw particular details such as the raked foremast, the realistic forestays and the beakhead. The fact that he also included a three-stage superstructure suggests that he drew the picture at some point between the 1550s and the 1580s.

## Decorative plasterwork from excavated contexts

by Kirsty Rodwell

There are two large and distinct groups of excavated decorative plasterwork; from the Period 4.3 infilling of the east moat, and from Period 5 demolition layers over the west range.

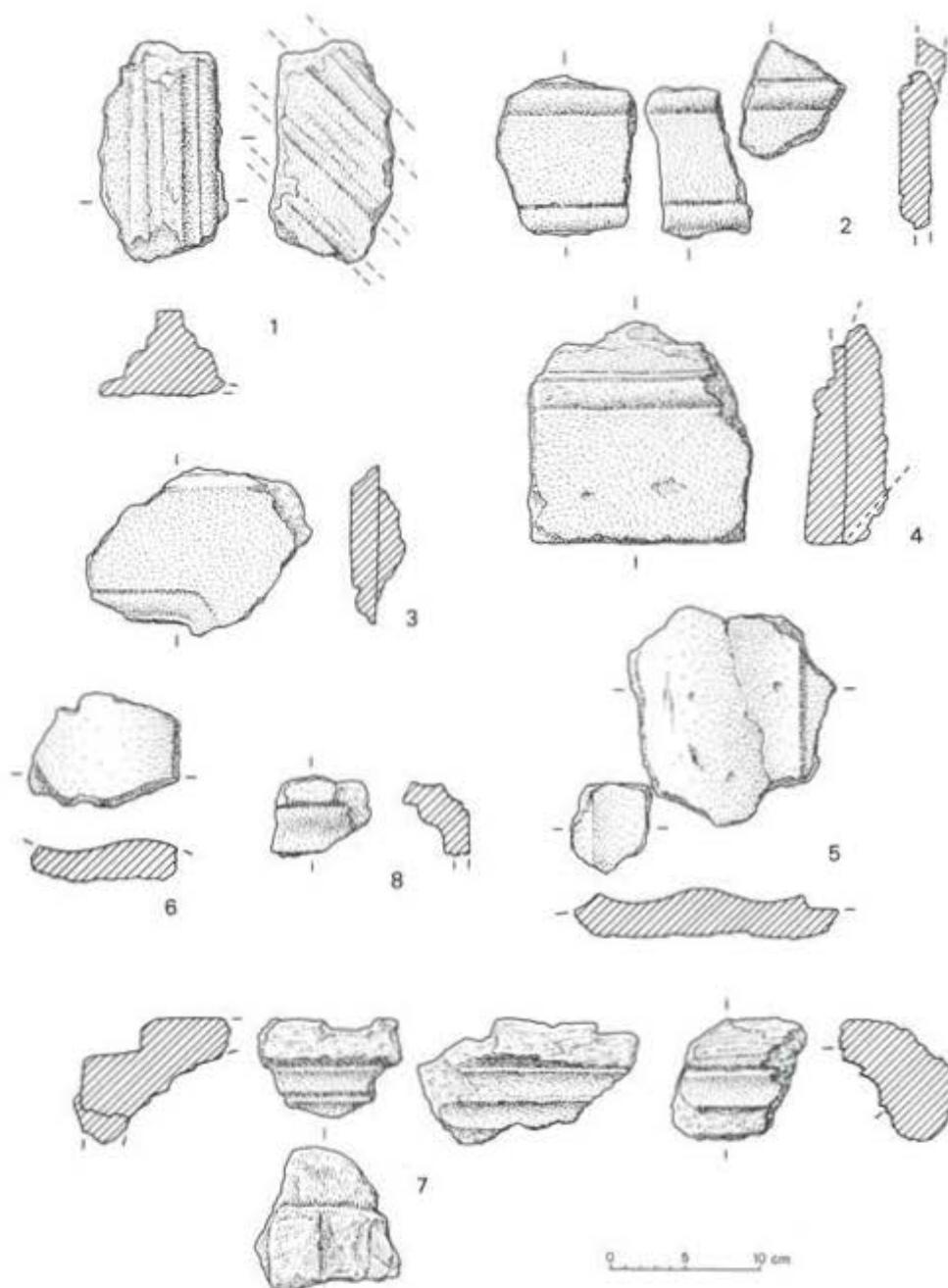
### East moat; contexts 2020 and 2066

All fragments are off-white, of a hard friable composition, containing small nodules of lime and a finely laminated vegetable filler, but without sand or hair. A sample was analysed by X-ray diffraction (ACP1; see below). The plaster has been applied in two distinct layers, and the mouldings run *in situ*, creating slight variations in the profile. The back of the plaster shows lath impressions on some examples, and Pennant rubble, with traces of the loam matrix, on others. The faces of all mouldings preserve variable traces of a reddish golden-brown paint. The material can be divided into the following different types.

Fig 8.39

- 1 Ceiling ribs of symmetrical profile, thirty-six fragments, all straight, broken off at the junction with the ceiling, maximum surviving length 0.18 m. On about half the fragments the ribs run parallel to the laths, on a few pieces they run at right angles, and on the remainder they run obliquely (as illustrated). There are no rib junctions.
- 2 Raised flat rib with roll-moulded edges, forty-four fragments, length unknown. Impressions of Pennant rubble on the rear of the larger pieces indicate that these ribs could run horizontally or vertically.

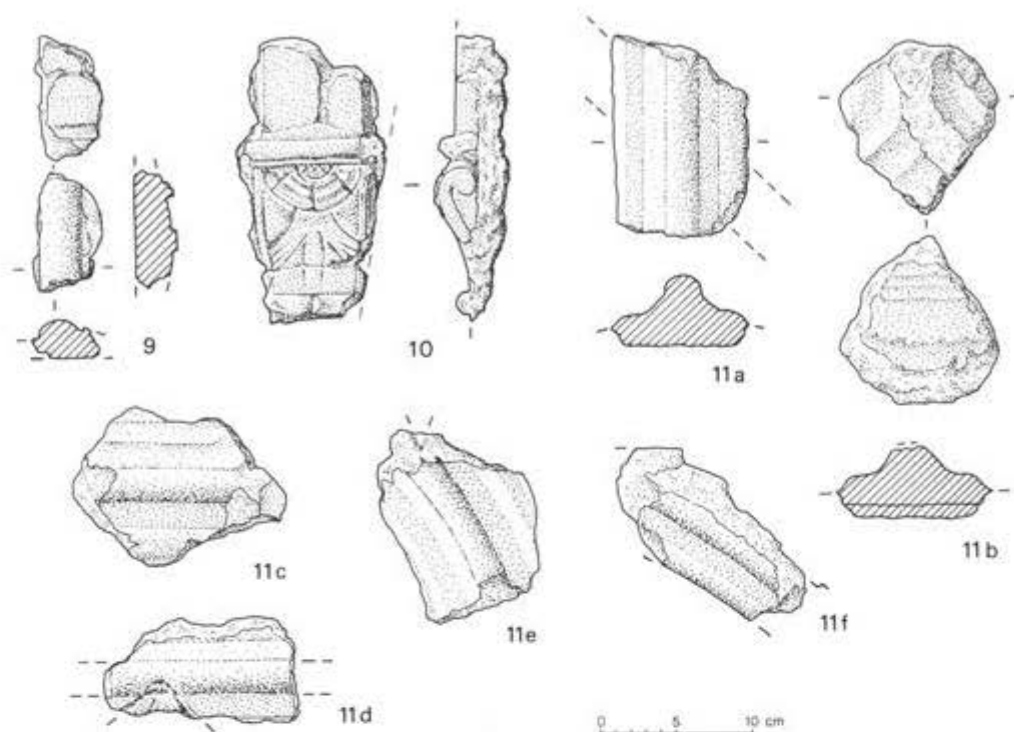
Figure 8.39 Plaster fragments from the east moat.



- 3 Raised flat rib, single fragment, one edge roll-moulded at an angle of 125 degrees, the other edge roughly finished. Pennant rubble impressions on the back.
- 4 Rebated roll-moulded panel with flat border terminating in a finished edge (there is a second edge fragment). Up to 50 mm thick in two distinct layers, small nodules of faced stucco and grey backing plaster (as ACP3) embedded in rear. Possibly a plinth or skirting.
- 5 Raised wave moulding, eleven

- fragments, producing a composite cross-section, length unknown, set vertically on a Pennant rubble wall.
- 6 Related fragments (seven examples) have the same moulding profile, but curved edges. Attached to Pennant rubble, but too small to indicate direction.
- 7 Cavetto moulding, unevenly run, six fragments. On the reverse a batten imprint marks the junction between a vertical face with stone impressions and a horizontal face with lath impressions.

Figure 8.40 Plaster fragments from the east moat and west range.



- 8 *Cyma reversa* moulding, single fragment, right-angled on reverse with lath impressions, upper edge finished.

Fig 8.40

- 9 Torus moulding, two fragments, lath impressions on the reverse run at right angles to the moulding.
- 10 Console bracket, single example, leaf and Tudor rose decoration in low relief. One side of the bracket is scrolled, the other is plain. Stone impressions on the reverse, which has a finished lower edge.

The context of these fragments, in the Period 4.3 infilling of the east moat, makes it clear that they formed part of a decorative scheme antedating *c* 1550. Their concentration in the east moat and virtual absence (six fragments from the east end) from the south moat, together with their classical style, suggest that they formed part of the Period 4.1 decoration of the east range. It is unlikely that the fragments were derived from the subsidiary rooms on the ground floor, and on the first floor the preservation of the original decorative schemes is sufficiently complete (Chapter 5) to discount Rooms 6 and 10. The most probable location is Room 11, where neither the original ceiling nor fireplace wall survives.

The fragments are derived from two distinct features, one of which was a ribbed ceiling. The dimensions and colouring of the ribs closely resemble the contemporary painted ceiling in Room 6 (Fig 5.17), and the direction of the laths would be consistent with the reconstruction of a very similar design. The only variant is the evidence for a small number of ribs running across the width of the room. This ceiling is an early plaster example of a type of decoration frequently carried out at this period in wood. There are references to gilded ceiling battens in the Hampton Court and Greenwich building accounts (Thurley 1988, 6, 7; 1991, 21), and the chapel of the Vyne, Hampshire, *c* 1525 retains a ribbed wooden ceiling (Howard 1987, fig 66).

The remaining fragments are derived from a feature attached to a stone wall, and are probably part of a chimneypiece. Mouldings such as Figure 8.39.7, which have impressions of battens and laths, were probably applied to a wooden substructure built into the wall (cf the overmantel rebate in Room 6, E7.17). They are too small to be derived from a ceiling cornice, which in Room 11 can be shown to have been wooden.

This group of fragments cannot be exactly reconstructed, but the similarity of the console bracket (Fig 8.40.10) to the larger Period 4.2 stone bracket in Room 1,



suggests that it may have formed part of a fireplace surround of related type, supporting a projecting classical shelf, from which the mouldings 7–9 could be derived. The raised rib mouldings 2–4 could have formed part of a panelled overmantel.

These fragments appear to be the earliest surviving classical plasterwork in England, antedating the stucco from Nonsuch, the only comparable material, by some five years (Biddle 1966, 113). The Nonsuch stucco is, however, much more elaborate, comprising some six thousand fragments from a complex scheme of external decoration, depicting personifications and scenes from classical mythology (Biddle 1984, 411–17; Colvin 1982, 193–6). The style of the work there shows the influence of the Gallery of Francis I at Fontainebleau, and it was probably designed by Nicholas Bellin of Modena (Biddle 1966, 118–21). Both English and foreign craftsmen were actually engaged in the production of the reliefs (Colvin 1982, 194–5).

A stucco fireplace of unknown form was being constructed in the privy chamber at Whitehall in the 1530s (undated, *ibid.*, 312), and a cargo of 'stone plaster' from Calais, intended for this or similar work was captured at sea in 1532 (*ibid.*, 312 note 1). A drawing of an elaborate fireplace, intended for one of Henry's palaces, is attributed to Holbein, although the design has French influences (Biddle 1966, 112–13; Thurley 1993, fig 308), but one of the few surviving stucco overmantels of this type and date (c 1554), is in the Star Chamber at Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 496). It is also in the Fontainebleau style, and depicts a scene from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Biddle 1970, 9–12).

These examples are considerably more elaborate than the Acton Court fragments, which would appear to have more in common with the restrained classical detailing of the 'Sharlington' school (Chapter 6). The decoration of the console in particular is repeated on some of the shelf brackets in the lower tower room at Lacock. However, classical designs of related type were being produced in stone before 1536, as is shown by the Easter sepulchre at Tarrant Hinton, Dorset (RCHME 1972, 98, pls 76, 77). This design consists of an arched recess with a four-centred head, flanked by composite half-columns carrying an entablature, which could be used without modification as a fireplace surround. The detailing is restrained and it bears the monograms of Thomas

Weaver, rector 1514–36. The relatively small scale of the stucco details may also reflect the influence of contemporary Italianate terracotta work, such as the Bedingfield tomb at Oxborough, Norfolk (Lloyd 1925, 349–55; Baggs 1968, 296–301).

At Acton Court the decorative plasterwork of Period 4.1, like the frieze paintings, is an example of specialist craftsmen producing specific classical features for an otherwise traditional scheme. Plaster would have had the advantage over stone at this period in speed of execution. Unlike the architectural fragments from the moat infill, this work was not old-fashioned by Period 4.3, and was probably discarded for purely structural reasons. The buttressing and replastering which took place in Room 11 at this time suggest that considerable settlement and cracking had taken place shortly after construction, which probably had the effect of damaging the decoration.

#### West range, demolition layers; (principal contexts 183,185)

A large quantity of ceiling rib fragments was found in Period 5 demolition layers along the length of the range. The lime plaster mix is coarser than that used for the Period 4.1 fragments and also without hair. A sample was analysed by X-ray diffraction (ACP2 see below). The rib mouldings are now unpainted and there are lath impressions on the reverse.

#### Fig 8.40

- 11a Symmetrical roll-moulded rib, representative of the majority of fragments, none longer than 0.15 m. Laths run obliquely (as illustrated), at right angles to, and parallel with the ribs. There are a few variants including:
- 11b Tripartite junction, one rib is at right angles to the laths, the others are oblique.
- 11c Tripartite junction, one rib is parallel to the laths, one at right angles and one oblique.
- 11d Junction, rib parallel to laths with single-right angled scar.
- 11e Curved rib on flat bed, with scar of adjoining rib.
- 11f Curved rib from coving with stepped lath impressions on reverse.

The surviving fragments are derived from a coved, ribbed ceiling, which included curved elements. The variation in the direction of the ribs indicates a less repetitive



design than the ceilings in the east range, but not enough survives to reconstruct the pattern. There is no evidence for other decorative motifs, but these could have been lost if only sparingly used. A ceiling of this type, dating to the second half of the 16th century survives at Codrington Court, Dodington (Gloucestershire; Hall 1982, pl XLII); it is coved, the ribs form star patterns, with rose bullions at the principal intersections and fleurs-de-lis at intervals on the ground. At Llanmihangel Place, Glamorgan (RCAHMW 1981, 99, pls 11, 58) the canted hall ceiling has a repeating pattern solely of raised ribs, forming squares within circles pierced by diamonds (cf Fig 8.40.11e). In a chamber opening off the hall there is a coved ceiling of simpler geometric design (cf Fig 8.40.11b, c, f). Both are of mid- to late 16th-century date. There are mid-16th-century examples incorporating coats of arms at Lytes Carey and Orchard Wyndham, both in Somerset (Penoyre and Penoyre 1994, 13).

The distribution of the fragments indicates that the suite of rooms in the west range had ceilings of similar or identical design, and it is probable that they are derived from the more important first-floor rooms. This is borne out by the Period 5.1 use of the range as a barn, and the late 18th-century date of the layers containing the fragments, which suggests that the upper ceilings were left in place when the ground floor ceilings were removed to provide headroom c 1700.

### X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis of plaster samples

by *Malcolm Ward*

Four plaster samples were submitted for analysis:

- ACP1 From fragments of moulded wall and ceiling plaster in the east moat, which were probably derived from the Period 4.1 east range (see above).
- ACP2 Ribbed ceiling plaster derived from the Period 4.2 west range (see above).
- ACP3 Ground for the painted friezes and ceiling to Room 6 in the Period 4.1 east range. There are two distinct layers, a grey base coat and a white top coat, and its composition

differs from the plaster used on the lower walls (Chapter 5).

- ACP4 Skim of plaster coating a board found under the floor in Room 6 (Fig 8.30.6), probably construction debris from the Period 4.1 house.

### Analysis

The four samples provided five XRD traces as one sample, ACP3, was divided into two portions, the base coat being a different colour (grey) from the top coat (white). This analysis showed there were two compositional groups present, one being lime plaster (ie containing calcite  $\text{CaCO}_3$  as the main crystalline component) and one containing gypsum ( $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) as the main crystalline component (Fig 8.41).

Minor amounts of quartz ( $\text{SiO}_2$ ) were detected in all samples and there was some calcite in the gypsum samples as well as traces of bassanite ( $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot \frac{1}{2}\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), which is unreacted plaster of Paris (Figs 8.42, 8.43).

### Comments

The moulded fragments ACP 1 and 2 may have been made from lime plaster because it shrinks on setting, so would separate more easily from a mould. Gypsum plasters set more rapidly than lime plasters and expand on setting. They are a preferred ground for some painting techniques and the light top coat may indicate selection on this basis, although the other properties may have influenced their choice for ACP3.

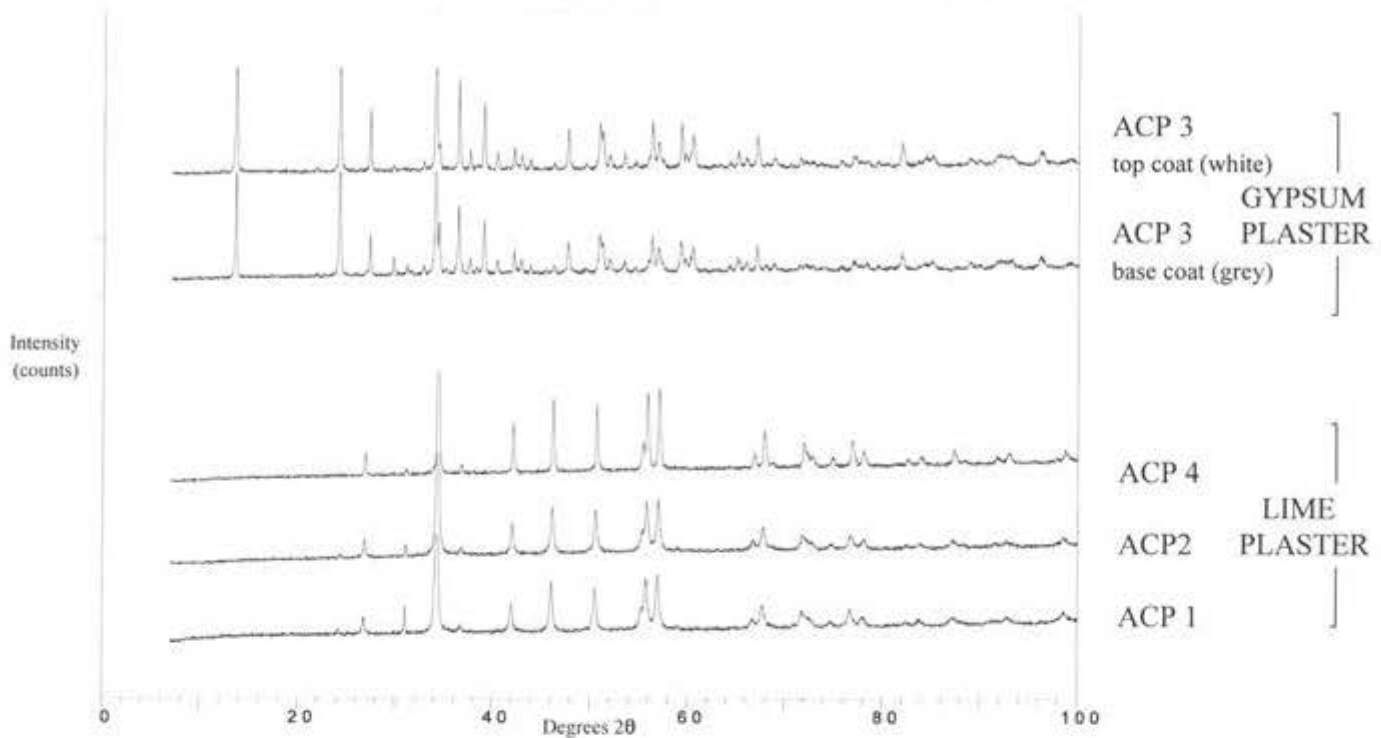
### A shell containing pigment

by *Helen Hughes and Sharon Strong*

An oyster shell, containing a red pigment, was found in the mid- to late 16th-century fill of the south arm of the moat, west of the porch (Period 4.4–4.5, context 2149), and was examined with a view to identifying the pigment.

Qualitative X-ray fluorescence was performed on a small sample, and showed the presence of mercury, iron and sulphur, with some silica and calcium. Therefore the pigment was initially identified as either natural cinnabar ( $\text{HgS}$ ) or vermilion ( $\text{HgS}$ ), possibly with a small amount of an iron pigment present, although the presence of the iron could be due to contamination from the soil.

A small amount of the pigment was examined under a polarising light microscope. In plane polarised light, the pigment was observed to be finely ground, but there



was a variety of particle size, and larger particles appeared to be fibrous with stub-shaped ends. The particles were orange/red in colour, and under cross polars looked a fiery red. The pigment was anisotropic and had a high refractive index.

These characteristics suggest that the pigment is dry process vermilion, which is produced by forming black amorphous mercuric sulphide and then, by a process of sublimation and condensation, converting it to the red crystalline form. Wet process vermilion, which was first produced at the end of the 18th century, is made by grinding the

mercury and sulphur together in the presence of water, before a warm solution of caustic potash is added (Gettens and Stout 1966, 170-3). It is usually very fine and even in size, and does not contain fibrous particles.

It is often difficult to distinguish between dry process vermilion and cinnabar. Cinnabar is a naturally occurring ore which has been ground. Samples of pure cinnabar which have been finely ground display the same characteristics as dry process vermilion, but generally cinnabar tends to be coarser and contains fragments of mineral

Figure 8.41 X-ray diffraction patterns from four plaster samples (Malcolm Ward).

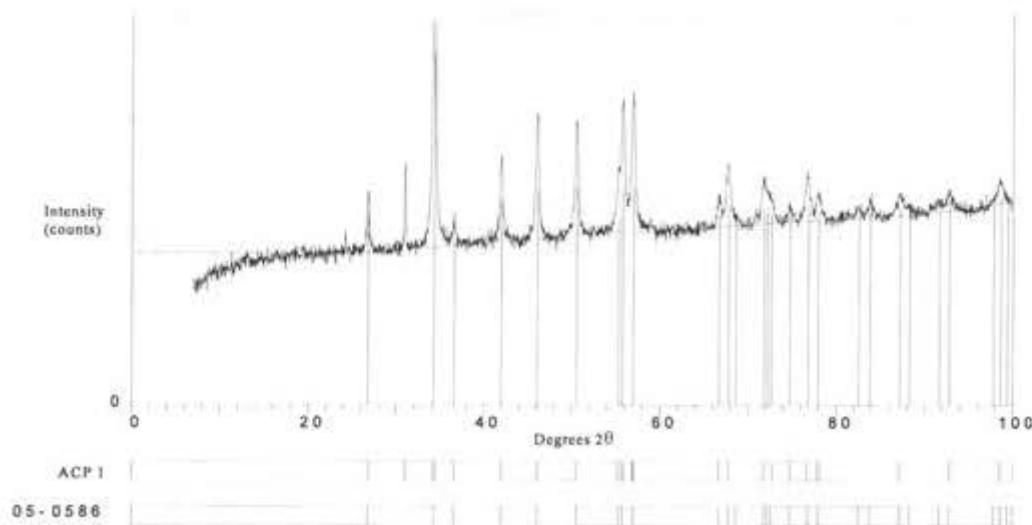


Fig. 2 X-ray diffraction pattern of Acton Court plaster ACP 1  
The main crystalline component is calcite,  $\text{CaCO}_3$ , standard pattern 5-586  
There is also a small amount of quartz,  $\text{SiO}_2$

Figure 8.42 X-ray diffraction pattern from plaster sample ACP1 (Malcolm Ward)

Figure 8.43 X-ray diffraction pattern from plaster sample ACP3 (Malcolm Ward).

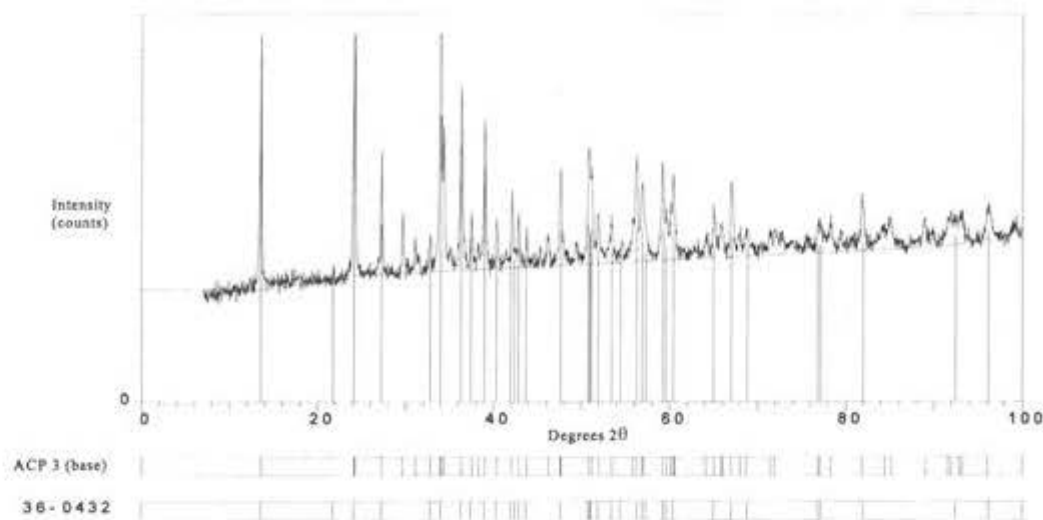


Fig. 3

**X-ray diffraction pattern of Acton Court plaster ACP 3 (base coat)**

The main crystalline component is gypsum,  $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , standard pattern 36-432  
There is a small amount of calcite,  $\text{CaCO}_3$ , and bassanite,  $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot \frac{1}{2}\text{H}_2\text{O}$   
and a trace of quartz,  $\text{SiO}_2$

impurities. The sample from the shell found at Acton Court had few impurities.

Although it may be possible that the shell contains a very pure fine cinnabar, it is more likely that the pigment is an artificially produced dry process vermilion. Comparisons with known samples of cinnabar and vermilion seem to support this view. The pigment has been produced using this method since the 8th/9th century.

A small sample of the pigment was mixed with potassium bromide and analysed using a Perkin-Elmer 197 infrared spectrophotometer in order to determine if any medium was present. This proved inconclusive, as there was nothing distinguishable in the sample.

The shell was identified as the left (lower) valve of the Common European, Flat or Native oyster, *Ostrea edulis* Linnaeus. It is probable that the shell was used as a container for the pigment while it was being applied, perhaps as a fine decoration to a wall.

## The tree-ring dating

by David Haddon-Reece and Daniel W H Miles

### Summary

Tree-ring dates are reported here for 24 of the 40 timbers sampled at Acton Court, Gloucestershire (ST 676842) from 1987 to 1990. The 16th-century building work there is shown to be circumscribed by the felling

of the east range timber in the spring of ad 1535 and the cutting of timbers for the stair turret treads in the spring of ad 1576. The north range timbers have felling date ranges (95 per cent confidence) spanning ad 1519–64, but by including information from detached sapwood pieces from two timbers, this could be narrowed to about 1530 to 1545. The felling date range of the 15th-century arch-braced roof re-erected on the north range at the same time is ad 1486–1531.

### Introduction

The main purpose of the tree-ring dating was to produce dates for the separate building phases. It was hoped that if no absolute dates could be obtained, then the dendrochronology would at least provide a chronological framework for the relative dating of the separate building phases.

The elements regarded as separate phases for which tree-ring dating was possible were, in chronological order:

- 1 The (reused) arch-braced north range roof (reused in Period 4.2).
- 2 The east range (Period 4.1).
- 3 The north range including two roof timbers contemporary with the joining of the arch-braced roof to the east range roof (Period 4.2).
- 4 The stair turret (Period 4.5).

Tree-ring dates for the east range and the stair turret have been reported in Haddon-



Reece *et al* 1990, and dates for the north range in Haddon-Reece and Miles 1992. This report is an edited version of AML report 11/94 (Haddon-Reece and Miles 1994).

### Methods of sample collection

A summary of the timbers sampled and their eventual dating is shown in Table 10. Cores and slices were collected between 1987 and 1990. As coring involves the inevitable risk that a core will not run at right angles to the ring boundaries, or that it will meet a hidden area of distortion, most timbers were sampled with more than one core. All timbers sampled were of oak, *Quercus* sp.

### Timbers sampled and particular problems

The Acton Court tree-ring samples are designated as a01, a02 etc. The locations of timbers sampled *in situ* are shown on Figure A3. Some samples were cut or sampled *ex situ*: these are drawn in Figures 8.44 and 8.45.

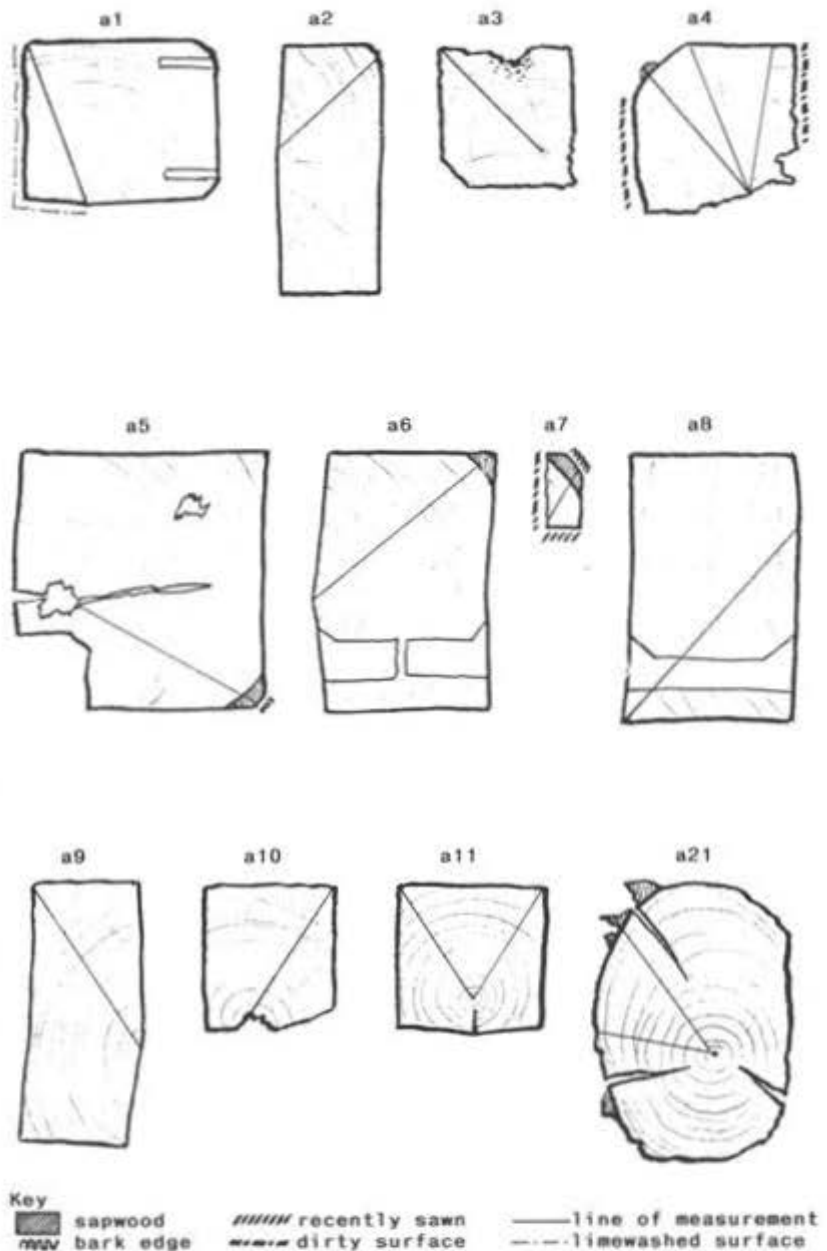
#### North range roof (a33–a48)

Cores were drilled from this roof with a 16 mm auger. The timbers themselves were of slender scantling compared with the transverse timbers in both east and north ranges; although many had sapwood complete to the bark edge, it was everywhere too badly worm-eaten for collection or measurement. Despite an outward appearance of solidity to the sapwood, the insect larvae had been so prolifically active in the innermost rings of sapwood against the heartwood that only a compacted mass of frass (droppings) remained.

#### East range (a01a–a14)

The samples from the east range were taken both as 7/8 in (22 mm) diameter cores drilled from timbers *in situ* and as slices cut by chain-saw from timber ends which had been removed during restoration work and stored in the works area. It should be noted that not all of these loose timbers can be ascribed a provenance with absolute certainty.

Some of the cores showed a tendency to snap during drilling, which was later found to be due to a band of very narrow, and consequently weak, tree rings. A few of these cores were clearly unusable, but wherever possible, the pieces were carefully laid in



order and secured by glue and splints for eventual comparison with the slices.

#### North range (a15–a19; a27–a33)

The samples from the north range were taken mostly as cores drilled from timbers *in situ* with a 16 mm auger. One sample (a27) was a section taken from a block of timber found on the window sill in Room 1 presumably removed or found during demolition works, although its original location could not be precisely identified. In addition, several sapwood slices were cut from the timbers adjacent to the coring positions.

Figure 8.44 Tree-ring dating: cross-section of slices cut (Dan Miles).



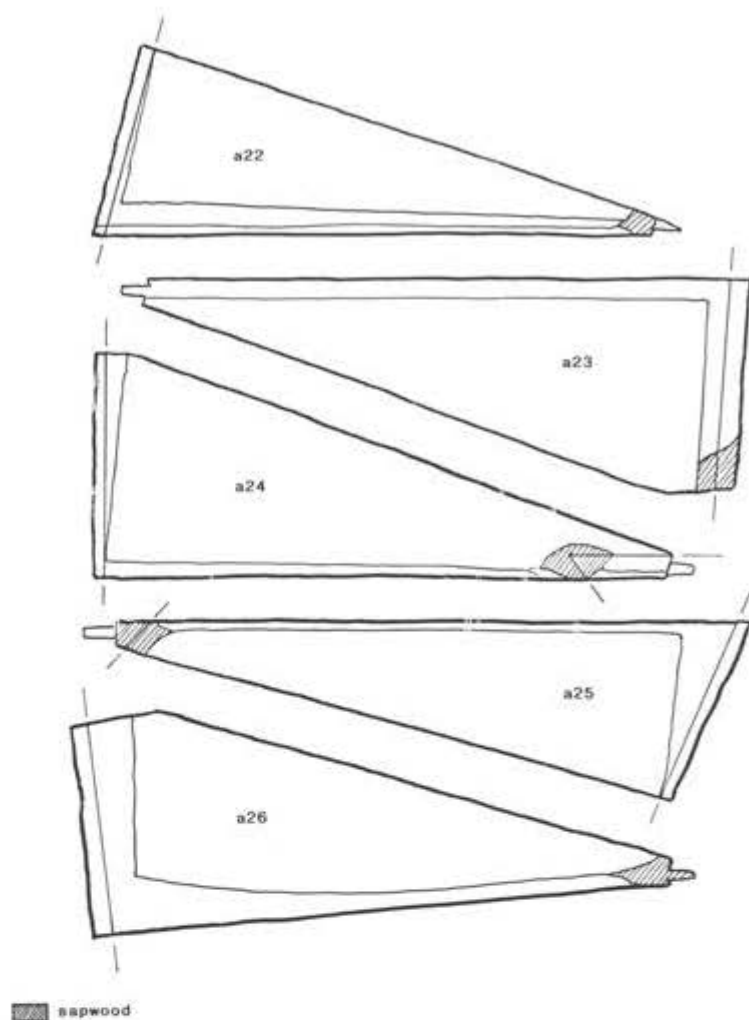


Figure 8.45 Tree-ring dating: stair treads sampled (Dan Miles).

A slice was cut by Robert Bell from a large waterlogged timber, the sole plate of a bridge (954, Fig 4.14) found in the excavation of the north moat.

Very few of the timbers had sapwood, which emphasised the importance for dating of those that did. Of particular relevance were a primary lintel in the south wall (a31) and the purlin (a33) added to connect the re-erected arch-braced roof to the east range roof. The sapwood of these timbers was also crumbly, though not quite so impossible as that in the arch-braced section. Despite extensive larval depredation in the sapwood of both timbers, it was still possible to take samples: the sapwood on the lintel was first consolidated by injections of dilute PVA (Resin W wood glue) through a 0.5 mm syringe and by painting its outer surface several times with Ronseal Wood Hardener resin. In the case of the purlin, the larvae had eaten much of the spring and summer components of the axial elements in the

wood, but had avoided the thick medullary rays (oak contains both thick and thin-type rays) to such an extent that the sapwood sample taken was seen to consist very largely of rays bound in a matrix of frass. Fortunately, the ring boundaries are repeated in the rays and could be discerned as bands in the laminae remaining there (ie in the radial longitudinal section).

#### Stair treads (a22–a26)

Slices were cut from several of the stair treads while they were awaiting repair at the Gloucester Blackfriars English Heritage works depot. By glueing a stiffening sheet of hardboard to each tread end with masonry epoxy glue, it was possible to cut from it a very thin slice on a bandsaw. In addition, sections were cut from the newel end of some treads whose ends would in any case be removed for repair. The work was done with the guidance and assistance of the works depot staff.

#### Sample preparation and measurement

All timbers except the moat timber were dry, and were therefore sanded on a linisher through several grades of abrasive paper ranging from 60 grit to 1200 grit. This prepared a sufficiently clean view of the transverse section of the wood for the ring boundaries to be distinguished and the ring-widths to be measured. The moat timber was air-dried and then treated in the same manner as the other timbers.

Once polished, all samples were measured under a x10/x30 microscope using a travelling stage electronically displaying displacement to a precision of 0.001 mm. Some ring patterns were found to contain bands of exceptionally narrow rings, which made measurement very difficult – and sometimes impossible. In most instances each sample was measured at least twice, and in the case of the sapwood pieces a31sap and a33sap from the north range, five and nine times respectively in order to obtain a representative average. Where they contained breaks, cores were measured in sections for eventual alignment against other samples.

The moat timber sample was blackened through waterlogging, which had also obscured the wood vessels. After 'clearing' the wood with a hypochlorite bleach, the ring pattern up to ring 50 could be measured, but this was followed by a series of rings so distorted, narrow and lacking in late (ie summer) wood that their boundaries

could not be distinguished with certainty. Beyond that, measurements could be read to about ring 91. This 91-ring series was recorded in the hope that at least the first 50-ring sequence could be dated and then have an approximate number added to it in order to provide an approximate felling date.

### Cross-matching procedure

After measurement, the ring-width series for each sample was drawn out in the usual fashion as a graph of width against year on log-linear graph paper. This paper is translucent so that graphs ('curves') can be visually compared by overlay. All ring-width series were also recorded on a computer for statistical cross-matching using a variant of the Baillie and Pilcher (1973) CROS program.

### Dating results and analysis

Table 10 gives a summary of dating results for individual timbers as well as for the sub-master curves assembled for each phase/building element. See below for an extended discussion of the sapwood estimation at Acton Court.

#### East range

After measurement (and remeasurement to avoid possible error from the band of narrow rings) samples a01a, a02a, and a04 to a08 were melded into a preliminary mean curve (site sub-master). This initial sub-master curve produced a date of AD 1534 when matched against master curves (see Table 17); since the outermost timbers had complete sapwood ending in a complete ring, this indicated felling in the spring of AD 1535. Although sample a14 matched very highly with a01a, a05 and to a lesser extent with a06, its inclusion in the initial sub-master curve actually lowered the matching of that mean curve with reference curves; it was therefore regarded as securely dated but was omitted from the sub-master curve.

Samples a03 and a09 to a13 from this phase did not date at first, and samples a12 and a13 were dated only after the site curve had been reinforced with samples from other phases. Sample number a11 was unsuitable for measurement.

#### North range (16th-century elements)

The timber from the moat (954) failed to produce any convincing date.

The main transverse timbers from Room 1 failed to date unambiguously (since they offered so many possible dates). Most curves showed a repeated heavy stress on the timber which had caused the tree's growth to falter badly for a few years before gradually regaining normal behaviour. These regular and repeated bands of narrow rings are often taken as a sign of pollarding (Ruth Morgan, Oliver Rackham, pers comm): deprived of so many of its branches and leaves, the tree takes several years to restore its photosynthetic resources. In this instance, however, the timbers were of a length far greater than would be expected for a pollard tree, and a more convincing explanation is that of snedding (lopping) the side branches, possibly to encourage tall and straight growth.

After an extensive search, only three timbers with complete sapwood had been found in the north range: transverse beam 4 (a18); a lintel (a31 = s10f) in the south wall of the room (Room 13/14) beneath the long gallery, and the short purlin (a33) connecting Truss 1 and the western slope of the east range roof. The transverse beam sample (a18) failed to match conclusively at any date.

As related above, cores could not be taken from a31 and a33 with sapwood attached owing to its crumbly nature. As these timbers were built into a wall, it was not possible to measure the sapwood in situ. Pieces of sapwood were therefore removed separately in the hope of measurement and subsequent alignment with other curves, given some clue from the dating of the parent cores to which the sapwood belonged. These pieces, which had been measured in replicate several times, were compared with as many sub-masters and reference chronologies as possible in the hope that, despite their short extent, they might provide the vital *terminus post quem* for the erection of the north range. They were cross-matched individually and in several combinations, visually and by statistics, but without success.

Sample a31 had five sapwood rings attached that showed no striking visual correlation with the inner rings of its separate sapwood piece, although there may be an overlap of one or two rings. The best that can be said is that by adding the known sapwood of five rings (attached) + twenty-six rings (detached) to the actual latest heartwood date of AD 1506, the timber must have been felled later than about AD 1536. Architectural evidence also precludes any date

Table 10: Acton Court: summary of tree-ring dating

<i>Sample</i>	<i>timber &amp; position</i>	<i>dates AD spanning</i>	<i>H/S bdry</i>	<i>sap-wood</i>	<i>no of rings</i>	<i>mean width</i> mm	<i>std devn</i> mm	<i>mean number sens</i>
<b>East Range</b>								
* a01a s	bridging beam	1364-1511			148	1.79	0.59	0.186
* a02a s	trimmer T6-7	1328-1472			145	1.16	0.80	0.289
a03 s	lintel				80	2.53	1.56	0.252
* a04 s	wall pad	1376-1530	1504	27	155	1.46	1.13	0.209
* a05 s	transverse beam	1345-1534	1512	22%	190	1.93	1.58	0.225
* a06 s	transverse beam	1348-1528	1503	25	181	1.93	1.02	0.186
* a07 s	joist?	1469-1534	1514	20%	66	1.28	0.30	0.180
* a08 s	transverse beam	1367-1508			142	2.45	1.19	0.209
a09 s	beam				68	3.62	2.10	0.323
a10 s	bridg. beam T4-5				66	3.60	1.37	0.233
a11 s	bridg. beam T2-3				63	3.18	1.15	0.150
* a12 c	transverse beam	1354-1511	1504	7	158	1.37	0.39	0.166
* a13 c	transverse beam	1350-1463			114	2.02	0.89	0.121
a14 c	transverse beam	1365-1446			82	1.81	0.59	0.153
<b>* = "East" sub-master</b>		<b>1328-1534</b>			<b>207</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.153</b>
<b>North Range</b>								
a15 c	transverse beam				72	2.78	0.97	0.204
a16 c	transverse beam				56	3.47	2.20	0.298
a17 c	transverse beam				70	3.50	2.04	0.349
a18 c/s	transverse beam			20%	92	2.59	0.88	0.209
a19 c	transverse beam				59	2.90	1.34	0.279
* a20 c	first floor joist	1409-1523			115	0.86	0.33	0.171
a21 s	timber from moat				91	2.15	1.34	0.262
* a27 s	unprov. block	1393-1510	1510	H/S	118	1.36	0.41	0.217
a28 c/s	first floor joist			13C	62	2.63	1.45	0.271
* a31 c/s	lintel S10f	1413-1511	1506	5	99	1.48	0.38	0.229
a32 c	lintel S10d				12	5.11	1.88	0.349
* a33 c/s	S upper purlin T1	1417-1510	1510	H/S	94	1.72	0.78	0.225
a34 c	S princ rafter T1			3	55	1.59	0.71	0.220
<b>* = "N16th" sub-master</b>		<b>1393-1523</b>			<b>131</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>0.175</b>
<b>North Range Roof</b>								
* a36 c	N lwr purlin T4-5	1430-1468			39	2.39	0.67	0.197
a37 c	tiebeam T2				45	2.38	0.81	0.256
* a39 c	N princ rafter T7	1432-1482			51	1.75	0.68	0.212
a41 c	S princ rafter T7				90	0.89	0.53	0.277
a42 c	N princ rafter T5				50	2.43	1.24	0.255
* a44 c	S princ rafter T6	1417-1479	1476	3	63	3.12	1.08	0.195
* a46 c	tiebeam T6	1417-1477			61	2.14	0.84	0.229
a48 c	tiebeam T4				48	3.51	1.28	0.218
<b>* = "N15th" sub-master</b>		<b>1417-1482</b>			<b>66</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>0.163</b>
<b>Stair Turret</b>								
* a22 s	stair tread 30	1376-1549	1544	5	174	1.54	0.49	0.175
* a23 s	stair tread 33	1387-1575	1561	14%	189	1.43	0.66	0.261
* a24 s	stair tread 34	1422-1575	1561	14C	154	1.61	0.76	0.259
* a25 s	stair tread 48	1455-1575	1560	15%	121	1.48	0.75	0.283
* a26 s	stair tread 49	1387-1540			154	1.38	0.66	0.246
<b>* = "Stairs" sub-master</b>		<b>1376-1575</b>			<b>200</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.205</b>
<b>"Acton" site master</b>		<b>1328-1575</b>			<b>248</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.163</b>

\* = sample inc. in sub-master; c,s = core, slice;

%,C = spring, winter felling (bark edge present: partial or complete ring)

H/S = heartwood/sapwood boundary; **mean sens** = mean sensitivity



Table 11: East range: matrix of t-values and overlaps

	a02a	a04	a05	a06	a07	a08	a09	a10	a12	a13	a14
	1472	1530	1534	1528	1534	1508	1502	1535	1511	1463	1446
a01a	5.35	4.18	7.52	7.05	4.20	10.29	2.02	1.52	3.20	3.31	5.90
	109	136	148	148	43	142	68	42	148	100	82
a02a		4.16	3.74	3.32	0.00	2.76	0.00	0.00	2.05	2.62	2.24
		97	128	125	125	106	38	0	119	114	82
a04			3.08	2.78	1.42	2.00	1.72	2.84	3.56	4.49	2.94
			155	153	62	133	68	61	136	88	71
a05				6.79	4.88	7.07	1.38	2.43	4.17	4.20	6.25
				181	66	142	68	65	158	114	82
a06					2.42	5.67	0.75	0.48	3.41	6.50	9.67
					60	142	68	59	158	114	82
a07						2.47	1.73	2.38	4.05	0.00	0.00
						40	34	65	43	0	0
a08							1.86	0.55	2.68	1.66	3.95
							68	39	142	97	80
a09								1.90	2.20	0.00	1.73
								33	68	29	12
a10									0.91	0.00	0.00
									42	0	0
a12										2.87	3.36
										110	82
a13											3.88
											82

Table 12 North range (16th century): t-values and overlaps

	a27	a31	a33
	1510	1511	1510
a20	3.87	1.77	3.30
	102	99	94
a27		3.25	4.23
		98	94
a31			3.54
			94

prior to AD 1535, simply because the north range postdates the east range, unless its timbers are reused. The H/S boundary of a33 lies at AD 1510, and since its 21-ring sapwood is at least one ring short of the bark edge, its felling date must be after AD 1531.

Most of the north range samples were particularly troublesome. It was necessary to test each sample against each other, against the site sub-masters and against external reference chronologies, and then again in combination, before any acceptable positions could be found. As with all the other samples, visual matching was essential. Wherever a match could be seen, its strength was tested statistically and vice

versa; the sample was combined with other samples, or with a sub-master, and the resultant mean curve was then tested for improvement in matching. Statistics alone would have failed to date several of the samples.

#### Stair treads

With the exception of sample a22 (tread 30), the five stair treads showed a strong inter-correlation. The t-values were so high (Table 13) that it would seem probable that, with the exception of a22, all the treads sampled derive from only one or two trees.

Also, the outer ring of samples a23 and a25 revealed that they were felled in the spring or early summer, that is, after the formation of the spring vessels but before a complete ring had formed. Sample a24 had a complete outer ring which indicated a felling in the winter months. This would then suggest that the group consists of at least two and possibly three trees; no sapwood remained on a26 for this to be explored further.

All the tread curves are highly similar in ring pattern, however, and their strong correlation also is due in part to their length. All five curves were therefore averaged, and the mean curve (including complete sap-



wood) produced a latest felling date of AD 1576 (spring felling).

**Table 13: Stairs: t-values and overlaps**

	a23	a24	a25	a26
	1575	1575	1575	1540
a22	5.76 163	6.53 128	5.11 95	5.27 154
a23		12.16 154	14.22 121	10.01 154
a24			12.79 121	7.91 119
a25				13.27 86

As earliest and latest phases respectively, the east range and stair tower therefore circumscribe the 16th-century building work as AD 1535 to AD 1576.

**North range (15th-century roof)**

The samples here again proved very difficult and ambiguous, offering several alternative positions. Only four samples of the eight collected could be dated positively, and one of those (a37, principal rafter) had to be omitted from the north range roof sub-master curve as it badly reduced the match of that curve with reference curves. None of the dates in Table 14 is a felling date. Only sample a44 has (incomplete) sapwood, and then only three rings.

**Table 14: North range (15th century): t-values and overlaps**

	a39	a44	a46
	1482	1479	1477
a36	2.49 37	1.80 39	3.76 39
a39		3.21 48	1.99 46
a44			4.30 61

**North range (15th century and 16th century)**

The entire matrix of cross-matchings for all the north range elements is shown in Table 15.

**Table 15: North range (15th century and 16th century): t-values and overlaps**

	a27	a31	a33	a36	a39	a44	a46
	1510	1511	1510	1468	1482	1479	1477
a20	3.87 102	1.77 99	3.30 94	0.98 39	1.85 51	3.49 63	1.43 61
a27		3.25 98	4.23 94	0.21 39	1.36 51	4.32 63	2.11 61
a31			3.54 94	1.05 39	0.88 51	1.62 63	1.20 61
a33				3.24 39	2.50 51	2.56 63	3.27 61
a36					2.49 37	1.80 39	3.76 39
a39						3.21 48	1.99 46
a44							4.30 61

**Unprovenanced block from the north range**

The unprovenanced block a27 has a H/S boundary of AD 1510, which endorses the dating of the lintel a31 and the purlin a33 but adds little to the understanding of either the transverse beams or the joist. Block a27 may in fact have been removed from the east range, which it matches well statistically and with a consistent H/S boundary.

**Inter-comparison of all phases**

**Assembly and dating of site sub-masters and master curve**

The inter-comparison of the site masters has been presented in Table 16. The sample

**Table 16: Comparison of site sub-master curves: t-values and overlaps**

	N15th	N16th	North	Stairs
	1482	1523	1523	1575
East	3.48 66	8.08 131	7.60 131	6.79 159
N15th		5.01 66	–	4.27 66
N16th			–	4.35 131
North				4.57 131

curves were aligned according to these results (Fig 8.46), and melded into a site master curve ('Acton'). This was matched with a large number of reference curves and the highest results are shown in Table 17.

As well as the two sapwood pieces a31sap and a33sap, sapwood was recorded in fourteen instances, giving the following numbers of sapwood rings:

	complete	incomplete
East range:	23(a05), 21(a07)	27(a04), 25(a06), 7(a12)
North range:	21(a18), 13(a28)	5+?+26(a31), 3+21(a31), 3(a44)
Stairs:	15(a23), 14(a24), 15(a25) [a23 may = a25]	5(a22)

If the known felling dates of the east range timbers apply to a04, a06 and a12, then these would all have a full complement of 31, 32 and 31 sapwood rings respectively. Likewise, the stairs timber a22 would have a full complement of 31. Without logarithmic transformation to correct for skewness, this would offer a mean value of  $21.5 \pm 7.50$ , or in round terms, a 95 per cent confidence interval of 7 to 36 rings. For the six known values of sapwood (if a23 is taken to be the same timber as a25), this would be  $17.5 \pm$

Table 17: Cross-matching of Acton Court building phases: t-values and overlaps

	east	n15th	n16th	north	treads	ACTON
	1534	1482	1523	1523	1575	1575
Alton, Hampshire (Hillam 1983)	7.45	3.17	5.36	5.25	3.25	7.44
Wales-England (Siebenlist-Kerner 1978)	157	66	112	112	129	157
Cowfold barn, Sussex (Tyers 1990)	6.09	5.20	6.40	7.24	5.04	7.40
Oxford mean (Haddon-Reece and Miles pers comm)	7.53	4.92	4.23	4.26	4.74	6.98
Yorkshire 2: (Hillam pers comm)	158	66	131	131	159	159
England (Baillie and Pilcher pers comm)	6.56	2.26	6.03	5.30	4.10	6.97
Martin tower, London (Bridge 1983)	192	66	131	131	200	233
East midlands (Laxton and Litton 1988)	4.73	4.71	4.64	5.43	4.27	6.49
Scotland (Baillie 1977)	207	66	131	131	200	248
Procester barn, Glos (Fletcher pers comm)	5.65	4.77	4.18	5.54	3.16	6.45
Exeter medieval (Mills 1988)	176	66	111	111	128	176
Kent 88 (Laxton and Litton 1989)	4.31	4.43	3.78	4.11	4.34	5.75
Hollstein (Hollstein 1980)	156	66	131	131	156	156
	5.32	3.35	4.92	5.41	3.56	5.64
	173	66	108	108	125	173
	3.00	1.99	3.15	3.35	4.75	5.63
	134	66	123	123	175	175
	4.06	5.07	6.77	7.50	2.73	5.49
	134	66	121	121	134	134
	4.64	6.76	5.36	6.06	4.64	5.44
	168	66	131	131	200	209
	4.47	4.38	3.83	4.41	4.22	5.28
	207	66	131	131	165	213
	3.53	3.37	2.12	1.54	2.79	3.91
	207	66	131	131	200	248

STAIR TURRET



NORTH RANGE (C16th)



EAST RANGE



NORTH RANGE ROOF (C15th)



KEY: ■ = HEARTWOOD ■ = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SPRING FELLED ■ = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - SUMMER FELLED ■ = COMPLETE SAPWOOD - WINTER FELLED ■ = HEARTWOOD/SAPWOOD TRANSITION ■ = SAPWOOD (INCOMPLETE) ■ = VISUALLY MATCHED SAPWOOD

Figure 8.46 Tree-ring dating: samples in chronological position (Dan Miles).

4.10, or 9 to 26 rings. It is obviously impossible to infer any real difference between the two phases.

As a statistical sample, these figures are more comparable with the Oxfordshire estimate of 10 to 30 rings recorded by the authors (Haddon-Reece *et al* 1989, 1990) than with overall 'national' figures of 10 to 55 quoted by other researchers (eg Hillam *et al* 1987).

In fact, there is a significant difference both in variance and mean, but the numbers are clearly too few for extended statistical analysis. A lower sapwood estimate for the south of England has been reported by other workers also (eg J M Fletcher, 15 to 35 rings; and A C Barefoot, 13 to 33 rings, both pers comm).

In practice, research to estimate sapwood from observations of a large number of samples (eg Hughes *et al* 1981) usually indicates that the distribution of sapwood numbers is skewed, with a long 'tail' towards the higher numbers of sapwood rings, and that the process of logarithmic transformation to remove skewness has the effect of raising both the lower and the upper 95 per cent points, more so for the upper one. It therefore seems safest to apply a 95 per cent confidence range of H/S+10 to H/S+55 to the north range timbers.

#### East range

For the two timbers with bark edges the felling dates are:

- a05: AD 1535, spring felling  
a07: AD 1535, spring felling

Also, some timbers here have no bark edge but have H/S boundary dates consistent with a05 and a07. Using the confidence range indicated by the other east range timbers and including that sapwood which does exist, felling date ranges may be quoted (for completeness) as:

- a04: AD 1530-40 (95 per cent confidence)  
a06: AD 1528-39 (95 per cent confidence)  
a12: AD 1511-40 (95 per cent confidence)

#### North range (16th-century elements)

Only felling date ranges can be quoted (with

95 per cent confidence), and then combined using the method used by the Nottingham University group (see footnote to Howard *et al* 1990) by taking the average of the H/S boundaries and adding to it the confidence limits. The combined value can be further refined by including the known information from the sapwood from a31 and a33, although it must be noted that both sapwood pieces had a bark edge, which implies felling certainly after 1531 (purlin a33) and about 1536 (lintel a31) but probably before 1545. (No numerical probability can be applied to this narrowed range):

- a27: AD 1520-65 (95 per cent confidence)  
a31: AD 1516-61 (95 per cent confidence)  
a33: AD 1520-65 (95 per cent confidence)  
AD 1531-64 (combined)  
a31,33 AD 1531-45 (including sapwood information)

#### Stairs

Of the five samples, four had sapwood and three had bark edges. Felling dates are:

- a23: AD 1576, spring felling  
a24: AD 1575/6, winter felling  
a25: AD 1576, spring felling  
a22: AD 1554-80 (95 per cent confidence).

#### North range (15th-century roof)

In the north range roof, only sample a44 had (incomplete) sapwood, and then only three rings. There is therefore no real evidence on which to choose a sapwood estimate for the arch-braced roof. As it would be improper to apply the sapwood figures from the east range, a felling date range for the arch-braced roof may be estimated from sample a44 using the 10 to 55 figure of Hillam *et al*:

- a44: AD 1486-1531 (95 per cent confidence)

Although crumbly sapwood was present on many of the timbers but could not be sampled, it is quite reasonable to expect that the outer ring of each core would lie at, or very close to, the H/S boundary. Making that assumption and applying the 10 to 55 sapwood ring estimate to the mean of the outer measured rings produces a range identical with that of a44 alone.

### Summary of results and conclusion

As will be seen from Table 10 and Figure 8.46, it has been possible to date with confidence 24 of the 40 timbers sampled for tree-ring dating at Acton Court. From the tree-ring record, building activity at Acton Court in the 16th century is circumscribed by the felling of the east range timbers in spring ad 1535 and the felling of the timber for the turret stair treads in winter ad 1575/spring 1576.

No exact felling date could be found for any timber in the 16th-century north range work. The estimated felling date for a ground-floor lintel is about AD 1536, and the lintel connecting the arch-braced roof to the east range was felled soon after AD 1531. The felling date range for the reused arch-braced roof on the north range is (with 95 per cent confidence) AD 1486 to 1531.



# Life at Acton Court: finds and specialist reports

## Medieval and later pottery

by Alan Vince with Suzannah England

Pottery was collected by hand from all contexts at Acton Court. Modern pottery was ubiquitous over the site and although much was collected, recovery was not systematic and late 18th-century and later pottery is dealt with only briefly in this report. A large collection of early medieval pottery was found, probably mainly of early 13th-century date, but only a small proportion of this pottery was stratified in early medieval levels. A smaller quantity of later medieval pottery, dating from the middle of the 13th century to the 15th century, was present and this too was mainly found either in later deposits or in isolated contexts which cannot be related stratigraphically. The main reason for the lack of pottery associated with the moated medieval and early Tudor manor is a lack of stratification over this area. Except in Room G, the west range and the west part of the south range there are no surviving medieval or Tudor floors (the remaining fragments of Tudor flooring within the east range were left *in situ*). In the north range, the courtyard and the central and eastern parts of the south range, 18th- to 19th-century levels sit directly on top of Period 2 (pre-moated manor) layers and surfaces.

The most important pottery from the site is undoubtedly that from deposits associated with the Tudor building phases, Period 4. The date of these deposits must lie somewhere between 1535 and *c* 1555 and they provide a large, well-preserved collection which can be related to the period of use of the Tudor east range and the latest use of the medieval buildings below the north and west ranges (Vince and Bell 1992).

Smaller groups were recovered from the deliberate backfill of the moat in front of the south range, a mid-17th-century ditch on the line of the filled-in moat north of the north range and from the demolition of rooms in the west range. Much of the mater-

ial related to the demolition of the Tudor ranges and the erection and use of later buildings is only shallowly stratified and can be dated only with considerable uncertainty. Groups of mid-18th-century pottery were recovered from the garderobes of the west and south ranges and a large group of late 18th-century pottery was recovered from the backfill of well 80. Late 16th-, late 17th- and early 18th-century pottery was found in later deposits but because contemporary stratified deposits are scarce on the site it is not possible to reconstruct many details of pottery use for these periods.

A large late 19th-century refuse deposit was excavated in Area 6 (context 866) and this produced a range of pottery including stoneware flagons stamped with the names of Chipping Sodbury and Wotton-under-Edge wine and spirit merchants. The remaining 19th- and 20th-century material was present in topsoil and modern features over the whole excavated area.

## Roman pottery

Only three sherds of Romano-British pottery were found. Two were very abraded sherds of greyware from context 1048 (Period 4) and the third was an unabraded fragment of an Oxfordshire mortarium from the fill of the Period 2 quarry, context 1846. Such a low frequency suggests that the site lay at some distance from Romano-British settlement.

## Early medieval pottery (Period 2)

Acton Court lies in an area where the details of early medieval pottery use are unknown (Vince 1983a; 1984). The nearest stratified 11th- to 13th-century sequences come from Bristol (Ponsford 1974), Bath (Vince 1979b, 1985), and Gloucester (Vince 1978, 1979a, 1983b, 1986). It is to be expected that the supply of pottery to this part of south Gloucestershire would have utilised different sources and perhaps even different forms (for example, the area lies at the edge of the

known distribution of types such as the 'bee-hive bases', also known as 'west country vessels'). Nevertheless, there is a hint that the earliest pottery found is of a type well known from Bath, and classed there as Bath Fabric A. Several of the contexts at Acton Court produced sherds of Bath Fabric A cooking pots which had lost their surfaces and were generally more heavily weathered than other early medieval sherds. This may be partly due to the relative strength of vessels made in Bath Fabric A and those made in other wares but it is also likely that some of these sherds derive from a phase of occupation or other site use not otherwise represented in the excavations.

The fact that two of these sherds come from spouted pitchers is also suggestive of late 11th- or early 12th-century activity on the site (Fig 9.1.36). This vessel form first appears in the London pottery sequence in the middle of the 11th century, a similar date to that surmised elsewhere but in this case based on a dendrochronological date with a *terminus post quem* of 1055 (Vince and Jenner 1991). Spouted pitchers were generally superseded by tripod pitchers during the 12th century and a moderately large assemblage of 12th-century date from Bath has been found which does not contain spouted pitchers (although this could just indicate that it was the result of a different activity; Vince 1979b, 145–8; Vince 1991, 72, fill of culvert 391).

Table 18: Percentage of pottery in Quarry 1861

<i>Roman</i>			
1	0.09%	OXMO, MORT	
<i>Sand-tempered</i>			
78	6.95%	BATHA, CP	Fig 9.1.28–9
91	8.11%	HG, CP	Fig 9.2.40–4, 46, 48–50
10	0.89%	HG, JUG	Fig 9.2.67
31	2.76%	HG?, CP	
1	0.09%	HG?, LAMP	Fig 9.2.47
45	4.01%	MISC SKW, JUG	
1	0.09%	MISC SKY, JUG	
99	8.82%	MISC SY, CP	
27	2.41%	MALV, CP	Fig 9.2.52–3, 55–6, 58–9
<i>Limestone-tempered</i>			
272	24.24%	MINETY, CP	Fig 9.3.76–7
1	0.09%	MINETY, CP/BOWL	
4	0.36%	MISC LSY, CP	
461	41.09%	MISC LY, CP	Fig 9.1.2
1122	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

### Period 2.1

The earliest stratified pottery comes from Period 2.1 deposits; the natural clay and Pennant subsoil (context 1971) and the fill of cut 1966 (context 1969). Both deposits are sealed by the cobbled surface of the Period 2.2 building and produced single sherds of ?Ham Green and limestone-tempered (MISC LY) cooking pots.

### Period 2.2

Only one sherd of pottery was found in a Period 2.2 deposit, a MISC LY cooking pot from the fill of cut 1939.

### Period 2.3

The filling of the quarry in Period 2.3 (Table 18) produced over one thousand sherds of pottery. The majority of the sherds were either MISC LY cooking pots or were Minety-type ware cooking pots. The presence of fresh-looking and joining sherds of both types suggests that they were thrown into the quarry as refuse rather than being redeposited with earth. Sherds of Ham Green ware jugs were found throughout the quarry fill, although they amount to less than 2 per cent of the sherds found. Some cooking pot sherds were definitely of Ham Green ware, and were decorated in the same manner as those found at the kiln site (Barton 1963), whilst others were most likely also Ham Green vessels (these are coded HG? in Table 18 and in the pottery archive). A small number of other sand-tempered cooking-pot sherds were found. They probably came from another, unknown, source (coded MISC SY). Sherds of wheelthrown, sand-tempered jugs with a plain lead glaze were found, but mostly come from a single deposit, (1828).

Sherds of cooking pots were by far the most common form represented, 94 per cent of the total, while jugs formed just under 6 per cent. A single lamp (probably in Ham Green ware) was the only other vessel type found.

The pottery sources represented in the fill of the quarry vary in frequency to some extent in proportion to their distance from Acton Court. It is presumed that the limestone-tempered ware was produced somewhere in the south of historic Gloucestershire, north of the Bristol Avon and west of the Cotswold ridge. This source accounts for almost 42 per cent of the sherds found. What is of some interest is that Minety, in north Wiltshire (c 40 km east of Acton Court), is the next most prolific

source, 24 per cent, whereas even if all the putative sherds of Ham Green ware came from the kiln site (only c 18 km south-west of the site) they would still only raise the Ham Green total from 9 per cent to 12 per cent. The Bath Fabric A sherds probably come from several sources in central Wiltshire and account for just under 7 per cent of the pottery found. Seventy-eight sherds (7 per cent) come from unknown sources and, finally, twenty-seven sherds, from several vessels, came from the Malvern Chase potteries centred on Hanley Castle in Hereford and Worcester (2.42 per cent). These figures suggest that the inhabitants of Iron Acton in the early 13th century had access to a variety of pottery sources, presumably through the local markets. The only feature to warrant comment is the presence of Malvern Chase wares. These presumably reached the site as a by-product of riverine trade probably via a market close to the Severn, such as Thornbury or Oldbury on Severn.

In comparison to other West Country late 12th- or early 13th-century assemblages the Acton Court quarry group is interesting mainly for the absence of tripod pitchers and the low quantity of glazed jugs. Since pottery from relatively remote sources such as Malvern Chase and Minety was being used this absence cannot be due to the isolation of the community at Iron Acton. The three possibilities which remain are, first, that the pottery assemblage represents specialised activity (i.e. cooking) and that tripod pitchers or glazed jugs would have been used and discarded elsewhere on the site; second, that the community was too poor to purchase these vessels; or, third, that a suitable substitute (of wood, leather or metal) was available to the inhabitants of Iron Acton.

#### Period 2.4

The quarry group is very similar to most of the other stratified assemblages from Period 2 at Acton Court (*see* Table 19) nor is there any obvious difference in the character of the quarry group assemblage from that of the 12th- to early 13th-century pottery found as residual sherds in later deposits. The only types of contemporary date not found in the quarry group are a sherd of a south-east Wiltshire tripod pitcher (SEW) from 1868 (Period 2.4), a sherd of a cooking pot with rounded oolitic iron ore inclusions (BOXB) from 1857 (Period 2.4) and various unidentified coarsewares, each rep-

Table 19: Pottery from Period 2.4

104	12.35%	BATHA, CP	Fig 9.1.32-5
2	0.24%	BOXB, CP	
6	0.71%	BR, CP	
9	1.07%	BR, JUG	
1	0.12%	BR?, CP/BOWL	
20	2.38%	HG, JUG	Fig 9.2.68
136	16.15%	HG?, CP	Fig 9.2.45
22	2.61%	MALV, CP	
71	8.43%	MINETY, CP	Fig 9.3.79
18	2.14%	MINETY, TP	
1	0.12%	MISC KY, CP	
2	0.24%	MISC LKY, TP	
7	0.83%	MISC LSKY, CP	
1	0.12%	MISC LSKY, TP	Fig 9.2.66
49	5.82%	MISC LSY, CP	Fig 9.1.7
1	0.12%	MISC LSY, JUG	Fig 9.1.23
362	42.99%	MISC LY, CP	Fig 9.1.5-6
1	0.12%	MISC SKW, JUG	
7	0.83%	MISC SKY, CP	Fig 9.2.64
1	0.12%	MISC SKY, JUG	
18	2.14%	MISC SY, CP	
1	0.12%	SEW, TP	
1	0.12%	SNTG, VASE	
1	0.12%	STROAT, BOWL	
842	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

resented by a single sherd (MISC ILKW, MISC ILSKY and MISC ISY).

#### Period 2.5

The latest stratified pottery in Period 2 comes from rubble and clay infill over the site prior to the construction of the moated house (Period 2.5). In comparison with that from the quarry and the Period 2.4 deposits there is a much higher proportion of Ham Green cooking pots (Table 20). Overall, however, the assemblages are remarkably similar and there is no evidence for an increase in the use of glazed wares.

Table 20: Pottery from Period 2.5

44	14.15%	BATHA, CP	(Fig 9.1.34-5)
129	41.48%	HG, CP	
2	0.64%	HG, JUG	
13	4.18%	MALV, CP	
9	2.89%	MINETY, CP	
1	0.32%	MISC ILSKY, TP	
1	0.32%	MISC ISY, SJ	
1	0.32%	MISC LSY,-	
9	2.89%	MISC LSY, CP	(Fig 9.1.24-5)
98	31.51%	MISC LY, CP	
4	1.29%	MISC SY, CP	
311	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

There are two sherds which are undoubtedly intrusive in Period 2 deposits; both are typical of the 16th century (contexts: stake-hole 1496 and red silty clay 1609).

### Later medieval pottery (Period 3)

Unlike Periods 2 or 4 there are no large closed assemblages of pottery associated with the various phases of construction of the manorial complex in Period 3. Seventeen contexts assigned to Period 3.1 produced pottery, of which the majority contain assemblages indistinguishable in the range and frequency of pottery from that found in Period 2. There are two definite intrusive late 18th-century sherds in context 1404 and one 16th-century or later sherd recorded as coming from the original south wall of Room G, context 75, but probably either on top of or adjacent to the wall, which is undoubtedly of Period 3.1. Context 1433 (clay to north of Room A north wall) produced an assemblage of fourteen sherds of which one was definitely of late medieval date, a Minety-type wheelthrown jug. Two other sherds in this group were from plain Bristol Redcliffe type jugs, which must therefore also be regarded as suspect and the remaining eleven sherds were typical of Period 2. Although the context is undoubtedly correctly phased, it was cut by the construction trench of the rebuilt Period 3.4a north wall, from where the later sherds may have come. A sherd of a Cistercian ware cup is intrusive in the Period 3.1b abutment, predating the porch (1482). This must have come from the partial robbing, not the construction of the abutment. An unidentified wheelthrown lid is also likely to be intrusive (Fig 9.2.71).

Five contexts in Period 3.1 contained sherds of Bristol Redcliffe type jugs and other probably contemporary wares. In total these contexts produced only thirteen sherds of pottery, of which five were of types found in Period 2. New at this stage were Brill/Boarstall type jugs (one sherd, code OXAM, Fig 9.3.88) and unidentified wheelthrown sand-tempered wares (MISC MSKW, Fig 9.3.98, and MISC SW, Fig 9.2.71). These contexts: 1450 (fill of cut 1445); 1830, 232 and 248 (primary make-up layers at the west end of Room G) are probably the only ones assigned to Period 3.1 to contain contemporary pottery and show that Bristol Redcliffe jugs first appear on the site around the time when the Period 3.1 manor house was being constructed.

**Table 21: Pottery from Period 3.1 deposits containing Bristol Redcliffe type jug sherds**

1	7.69%	BATHA, CP
5	38.46%	BR, JUG
4	30.77%	HG?, CP
1	7.69%	MISC MSKW, LID
1	7.69%	MISC SW, CP
1	7.69%	OXAM, JUG
13	100.00%	<i>Total</i>

Only one context assigned to Period 3.2, 1730 (rubble and red loam cut by Period 3.3 drain 1683), produced pottery, a small assemblage similar to those from Periods 2 and 3.1. Seven deposits were assigned to Period 3.2–3.3, of which three produced only small collections of early 13th-century type pottery, almost certainly residual by this period. Three of the remaining four contexts also contained only small collections, but these included Bristol Redcliffe type jugs. In each case the sherds had features, for example a bridge spout or iron-rich applied strips, which would suggest a mid-13th- to mid-14th-century date rather than any later. These sherds too may be residual and some were only small scraps. Context 1802 (brown loam cut by Period 3.3 drain 1683), however, produced an assemblage of 124 sherds. Even in this group, however, a sizeable minority of the sherds present were of types found from Period 2 onwards and most likely residual in this context. The remaining sherds consisted of Bristol Redcliffe type jugs (including the sherds with iron-rich decoration, the arm from an anthropomorphic jug and a fragment of costrel), unidentified sand-tempered wheelthrown wares (including a jug decorated with criss-crossed white lines and a cooking pot, Fig 9.2.70) and sherds of Nash Hill jugs. Even this assemblage can be dated only to some time between the middle of the 13th and the middle of the 14th century.

### Period 3.3

Thirteen contexts containing pottery have been assigned to Period 3.3. Of these, four only contain small groups of early 13th-century pottery which must by this time be residual (context 77, south wall of Room H/J, Fig 9.1.10; 182, fill of construction trench of widened south wall of Room G; 1729, make-up layer within Room K, Fig 9.1.4; 1839, fill of construction trench of



drain 1683). A further four contain in addition Bristol Redcliffe type and Nash Hill jugs, usually with features datable to the mid-13th to mid-14th centuries (context 429, robbing of curtain wall beneath Room J floor; context 1616, fill of construction trench of north wall of Rooms H, J and K, Fig 9.2.61; contexts 3818 and 3819, layers within Room S). Only four contexts contain new types (context 1186, fill of drain 1182; contexts 1746, 1747, 1748, layers beneath Room K).

The pottery from the robbing of the curtain wall includes Bristol Redcliffe ware jug sherds decorated with plain applied strips and a wide slashed strap handle. Other sherds of note include what may be a Nash Hill cooking pot (Fig 9.3.89) and two unsourced cooking pots (Fig 9.2.61 and Fig 9.3.95). These sherds could all be of later 13th- or 14th-century date. In other contexts the new types include Bristol Redcliffe jugs with horizontal bands of combing applied on the wheel, often fired to a high temperature and with plain strap handles while there are no sherds with applied decoration. Another new type is the wheelthrown Minety type ware cooking pot (Fig 9.3.78 and 80). At Gloucester, it was thought that the first use of these wheelthrown Minety vessels took place in the late 14th century and a similar date is likely for the appearance of the later styles of Bristol Redcliffe jugs.

Nine contexts containing small assemblages of pottery were assigned to Period 3.4. One (context 259, fill of construction trench of west wall of Room Q) contained residual early 13th-century pottery; five, all of which were associated with the construction and floor make-up within Rooms Q, R and R1) contained mid-13th- to mid-14th-century pottery (context 91, Fig 9.2.57; contexts 109, 148, 163; context 255 Fig 9.1.14, Fig 9.3.90), one, context 1475 (fill of the robbing of the former south bridge abutment), contained a sherd from a large wheelthrown Minety type bowl (Fig 9.1.16) as well as earlier types. One context contained a sherd of Minety type wheelthrown jug together with earlier types (context 149, layer beneath Room R1, Fig 9.2.73). Context 1228, fill of construction trench of rebuilt north wall of Room C, contained three sherds, two of which are probably of 16th-century date and the third from a Bristol Redcliffe type jug. Definite intrusive pottery came from contexts 91 and 163, bedding for tiled floor in Room R and

floor bedding in north-west corner of Room Q.

Only five contexts assigned to Period 3.5 produced pottery and of those two contained only early 13th-century types (1807, fill of construction trench of west wall thickening Room A; fill of construction trench of blocking wall, south side of Room A 1811). One context (1011, rebuilt south-west buttress of south porch) contained a sherd of Bristol Redcliffe type jug, whilst the remaining two contexts contained types which are common in deposits of Period 4 together with earlier types (context 440, construction make-up within oriel window Room F2; context 1664, fill of construction trench of fireplace in north wall of Room G, Fig 9.3.92). These new types, South Netherlands Tin-glazed ware (SNTG), Malvern Chase pink ware (MALVP), Raeren Stoneware (RAER) and South Somerset ware (SSOM), found in context 440, could mostly have been present at Acton Court by the later 15th century, but the Malvern Chase pink ware found in context 1664 is absent from late 15th- to early 16th-century deposits at Gloucester (78–88 Northgate Street, Hurst 1974, 34–8) and it is more likely that this context, the fill of the construction trench for the fireplace stack added to the north wall of the chapel, was contaminated by Period 4 deposits or that the fireplace was constructed at a later date than the excavator suggests.

## 16th- and 17th-century pottery (Period 4)

### Period 4.1

There was little pottery associated with the construction of the east range of the Tudor mansion in Period 4.1. Rubble spreads in Area 6 (2005, 2012, 2016) produced in total four sherds of medieval pottery. The south wall of a possible pentice in Area 6 produced a sherd of 19th-century stoneware. Finally, a spread of Pennant slabs and overlying orange clay associated with a pentice linking the south and east ranges (1149, 1148 Fig 9.3.94, Fig 9.10.262) contained 16th-century pottery and five modern sherds.

Very little contemporary pottery can be associated with Period 4.1 deposits. There are thirty-three sherds either definitely or possibly of Tudor date (Table 22). The only sherds for which a date in the 1530s would be difficult to accept come from a Frechen

stoneware *schnelle* (no 262). Sherds of this vessel, which should date to the mid-16th century, were found in three deposits: the orange clay 1148, the overlying soil 1134 and the fill of a late intrusive feature 1117. However, given the presence of modern sherds in both 1148 and 1149 it is possible that this *schnelle* is also intrusive. The deposits from which this pottery came are definitely earlier than Period 4.3 (i.e. the mid-1550s) and it is possible that they are

**Table 22: Wares present in Period 4.1 deposits, Area 6**

1	3.03%	AK	
4	12.12%	CSTN	
3	39.39%	FREC	Fig 9.10.262
1	3.03%	KOLN	
2	6.06%	MINETY	
3	9.09%	RAER	
1	3.03%	SPAM	
1	3.03%	SSOM	
7	21.21%	STROAT	
33	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

related to the use or abandonment of the pentice rather than its construction.

#### Period 4.1–4.3

In Area 2, 350 sherds were recovered from dumped deposits and 168 sherds from the old ground surface and features below it. Much of this pottery was of late 15th- or early 16th-century date. This dump must have been deposited no later than Period 4.3–4.4, because it represented levelling-up material overlain by the west wall of the south court, but was probably no earlier than Period 4.1. The finds are likely to have been redeposited at some date between the mid-1530s and the mid-1550s. The presence of building debris (such as Pennant slates and ceramic tiles) within these deposits suggests that they are associated with the demolition of parts of the medieval manor house buildings beneath the north and west ranges or, more likely, the buildings demolished in 1534–5 to accommodate the new east range.

Only fifty-four sherds in the old ground surface are of Tudor date, including Cistercian ware (CSTN) and South Netherlands Tin-glazed ware (SNTG) both of which probably first came into use *c* 1500 (Table 23). The remainder were a range of medieval wares (112 sherds) including two sherds of probable late 11th- or early 12th-century

**Table 23: 16th-century pottery in the pre-Period 4 old ground surface, Area 2**

3	5.56%	CSTN	
1	1.85%	FP	
8	14.81%	MALV	
28	51.85%	MINETY	
1	1.85%	SNTG	
3	5.56%	SPAM	Fig 9.11.299
10	18.52%	TUDG	
54	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

date, a Bath A spouted pitcher handle and a sherd of Gloucester TF41B cooking pot. A single intrusive modern sherd was present.

The pottery from the dumped deposits was very similar. Almost half of the assemblage, 147 sherds, was of medieval date (Fig 9.3.82) and included the only sherds of medieval Saintonge ware and Andalusian lustreware (Fig 9.11.271) from the excavation. The remaining sherds include one sherd of Cologne stoneware, sixteen sherds of Cistercian ware but no sherds of Malvern Chase pink ware (Table 24). The assemblage therefore contains pottery made in the first quarter of the 16th century but no later types. Despite being redeposited this assemblage is of great interest. First, it demonstrates which local coarsewares were in use at this time at Acton Court (FP Fig 9.4.116–18, MALV, and MINETY Fig 9.5.135 and 143). There is only one possible sherd of South Somerset ware. Secondly, it demonstrates that a sizeable proportion of the pottery in use at that time was imported, either from the Rhineland or Spain (KOLN, MERC Fig 9.11.302, RAER, SEVW, SNTG Fig 9.9.226, 231, SPAM Fig 9.11.289, 291–3, 295–8, 301, 303–4, SPOW Fig 9.11.307 and VALE Fig 9.11.273, 275). Thirdly, Tudor Green ware (TUDG Fig 9.8.193) is present in this group but absent from deposits which definitely belong to Period 4.2 (although it could be of late medieval date, like the Saintonge ware). Fourthly, a single sherd of North Devon Calcareous ware (NDCW Fig 9.8.186) was found, probably the earliest vessel of North Devon manufacture to have been found in the Bristol region.

Several large groups of pottery were associated with deposits of Period 4.2. The main pottery assemblages came from levels associated with the destruction of the Period 3 buildings and the construction of the north and west ranges of the Tudor man-

**Table 24: 16th-century pottery from the Period 4.1–4.3 dumped deposits in Area 2**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
19	9.50%	FP	Fig 9.4.116–18
27	13.50%	MALV	
40	20.00%	MINETY	Fig 9.5.135, 143
1	0.50%	MISC	
1	0.50%	MISC SKNW	
1	0.50%	MISC SKW	
1	0.50%	SSOM?	
1	0.50%	NDCW	Fig 9.8.186
<i>English finewares</i>			
15	7.50%	CSTN	
1	0.50%	CSTN?	
2	1.00%	TUDG	Fig 9.8.193
6	3.00%	TUDG?	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
1	0.50%	KOLN	
30	15.00%	RAER	
9	4.50%	SNTG	Fig 9.9.226, 231
1	0.50%	TGW	
<i>Spanish/Iberian wares</i>			
1	0.50%	MERC	Fig 9.11.302
2	1.00%	SEVW	
38	19.00%	SPAM	Fig 9.11.289, 291–3, 295–8, 301, 303–4
1	0.50%	SPOW	Fig 9.11.307
2	1.00%	VALE	Fig 9.11.273, 275
200	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

sion. Stratigraphically, the earliest material should be that from the fill of the medieval moat beneath these two ranges. Of the 244 sherds from these deposits 67 were definitely of medieval date (Fig 9.1.3, Fig 9.1.31, Fig 9.3.81). The remainder, however, were indistinguishable from sherds found in the overlying construction levels, confirming the stratigraphic evidence that the moat was open at the time of construction of the north and west ranges. A comparison of the contemporary wares in the moat fill with the redeposited assemblage from Area 2 shows many differences. Malvern Chase pink ware and South Somerset ware which were virtually absent in Area 2, are common, whereas Fine Pink and Minety type wares are rare. A sherd of Staffordshire or Bristol slipware must be intrusive (STSL). The Rhenish stonewares include less Raeren and more Cologne and Frechen sherds while Spanish or Iberian

**Table 25: 16th-century pottery from the Period 4.2 fill of the medieval moat beneath the north and west ranges**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
30	17.34%	MALV	Fig 9.4.124
1	0.58%	MALV?	
17	9.83%	MALVP	
1	0.58%	MINETY	
3	1.73%	MISC	
50	28.90%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.156
1	0.58%	SSOM?	
<i>English finewares</i>			
3	1.73%	CSTN	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
1	0.58%	DUTR?	
18	10.40%	FREC	Fig 9.10.258
18	10.40%	KOLN	Fig 9.10.249, 251–2, 254
126	94.00%	RAER	Fig 9.10.239
5	2.89%	SNTG	Fig 9.9.232
<i>Italian wares</i>			
13	7.51%	LIGU	Fig 9.9.223
173	100.00%	<i>Total</i>	

vessels are absent. Ligurian tin-glazed ware is present, represented by fragments of two vessels (LIGU).

Pottery from the overlying infill levels within the Tudor north and west ranges is very similar to that from the moat fill. There are sixteen definite intrusive sherds, however, most of which are of late 18th- and 19th-century date and ten definite residual medieval sherds (Fig 9.2.62, 65). The remaining 285 sherds include several types not present in the moat fill, but this is perhaps to be expected considering the assemblage is twice the size (Table 26). Ashton Keynes ware (AK) appears for the first time in these deposits, as does Surrey-Hampshire Border ware (BORD) and vessels of Guy's Hospital ware from the London area (GUYS). Spanish/Iberian wares, absent from the moat fill, are present in quantity in the infill levels, as are various French wares: Beauvais ware (BEAU), Martincamp type stoneware (MART) and Saintonge ware (SAIN).

The remaining pottery assigned to Period 4.2 comes from floor make-ups and walls and similar deposits. These were only shallowly stratified and therefore contain much more definite intrusive material. Of a

**Table 26: 16th-century pottery from infill levels in the north and west ranges of the Tudor mansion**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
2	0.68%	AK	
1	0.34%	AK?	
1	0.34%	GUYS	Fig 9.8.184
1	0.34%	GUYS?	
27	9.15%	MALV	Fig 9.4.130
24	8.14%	MALVP	Fig 9.4.126
6	2.03%	MINETY	Fig 9.5.142
3	1.02%	MISC SKW	
2	0.68%	MISC SW	Fig 9.2.74
24	8.14%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.166
<i>English finewares</i>			
4	1.36%	BORD	Fig 9.8.191
30	10.17%	CSTN	Fig 9.4.114
2	0.68%	CSTN?	
1	0.34%	STRE	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
7	2.37%	FREC	Fig 9.10.258, 266, 268
38	12.88%	KOLN	Fig 9.10.246, 251-2
1	0.34%	KOLN?	
26	8.81%	RAER	
4	1.36%	SNTG	Fig 9.9.229
<i>Spanish/Iberian wares</i>			
1	0.34%	ANDA?	
4	1.36%	SPAM	
3	1.02%	SPTG	
16	5.42%	VALE	
2	0.68%	VALE?	
<i>French wares</i>			
23	7.80%	BEAU?	Fig 9.10.235
3	1.02%	MART I	
12	4.07%	MART II	
1	0.34%	SAIN	
<i>Italian wares</i>			
25	8.47%	LIGU	Fig 9.9.223
1	0.34%	MLTG	
295	100.00%	Total	

total of 335 sherds, 40 were intrusive and 151 residual medieval (Fig 9.1.11, 17, Fig 9.3.83, 87, 93). The remaining 16th-century pottery is similar to that from the infill and moat deposits (Table 27). It includes the first examples of Stroata ware from the north and west ranges but otherwise has a similar range of wares to the infill deposits.

**Table 27: 16th-century pottery from floor make-ups and similar deposits**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
9	6.29%	MALV	
4	2.80%	MALVP	
7	4.90%	MINETY	
2	1.40%	MISC ISKW	
1	0.70%	MISC SGW	
1	0.70%	MISC SKW	
15	10.49%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.168
2	1.40%	STROAT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
1	0.70%	BORDG	
28	19.58%	CSTN	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
14	9.79%	FREC	Fig 9.10.269
3	2.10%	KOLN	
2	1.40%	KOLN?	
1	0.70%	KOLN?/FREC?	
25	17.48%	RAER	
5	3.50%	SNTG	
<i>Spanish/Iberian wares</i>			
6	4.20%	SPAM	
1	0.70%	TGW	
12	8.39%	VALE	
<i>French wares</i>			
1	0.70%	BEAU	
1	0.70%	MART II	
<i>Italian wares</i>			
2	1.40%	LIGU	Fig 9.9.222
143	100.00%	Total	

All of the pottery assigned to Period 4.2 within the area of the north and west ranges must have been discarded before or at an early stage in the construction of these buildings in the late 1540s or early 1550s. Despite the differences between the moat, infill and make-up deposits, they can probably be considered as a group. The sharp contrast between the wares found in Area 2 (Period 4.1-4.3) and those from the north and west ranges suggests that the former group may have been derived from refuse from the latest use of the Period 3 buildings whereas the latter is more likely to be in the main refuse from the occupation of the east range. The similarity of the pottery from the dump in Area 2 to that in the earlier ground surface also suggests that the dump consisted of nearby material. Given the docu-



**Table 28: 16th-century pottery from the silting and backfill of the moat.**

A = Area 6, B = Area 13, C = South and east of Porch, D = Area 7, E = Area 8

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	Fabric	Illustration					
<i>English coarsewares</i>											
			2	8.00%	FP	Fig 9.4.119					
1	1.00%	17	3.35%	15	20.27%	AK	Fig 9.3.102; Fig 9.4.106-8				
		14	2.76%			AK?					
1	1.00%	1	3.85%			MALV	Fig 9.4.121, 123, 128				
1	1.00%	4	15.38%		1	1.35%	MALVP	Fig 9.4.131			
		8	30.77%				MINETY	Fig 9.5.137, 140-1, 144			
			4	0.79%	1	4.00%	MISC SGW				
			1	0.20%			MISC SKW				
			3	0.59%			MISC SW?	Fig 9.2.72			
43	43.00%	1	3.85%			3	4.05%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.148, 154-5, 157, 160-2, 164,		
		2	7.69%			26	35.14%	SSOM?	Fig 9.7.169		
			5	0.98%				STROAT	Fig 9.7.173		
3	3.00%				3	12.00%	2	2.70%	STROAT?		
					12	48.00%			TUDB		
			4	0.79%							
<i>English finewares</i>											
		4	0.79%						BORDY/TUDG		
9	9.00%	4	15.38%	27	5.31%	2	8.00%	6	8.11%	CSTN	Fig 9.4.111-13, 115
3	3.00%								TGW		
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>											
12	12.00%	1	3.85%	21	4.13%			21	28.38%	FREC	Fig 9.10.257, 261, 267
				12	2.36%					KOLN	Fig 9.10.250, 253
1	1.00%	2	7.69%	38	7.48%	5	20.00%			RAER	Fig 9.10.237, 238, 242
				1	0.20%					SIEG	
				9	1.77%					SNTG	Fig 9.9.228, 234
				5	0.98%					SNTG?	
<i>Spanish/Iberian wares</i>											
2	2.00%	1	3.85%	11	2.17%					SPAM	Fig 9.11.294
		1	3.85%	8	1.57%					SPOW	
				79	15.55%					SPTG	Fig 9.11.277-8, 281-4
				4	0.79%					SPTG?	
				2	0.39%					VALE	
<i>French wares</i>											
			6	1.18%						BEAU	
15	15.00%	1	3.85%	6	1.18%					MART I	Fig 9.10.236
				6	1.18%					MART II	
<i>Italian wares</i>											
			3	0.59%						CITG?	
1	1.00%		1	0.20%						LIGU	
1	1.00%									LIGU?	
			4	0.79%						MLTG	Fig 9.9.217
93	100.00%	26	100.00%	508	100.00%	25	100.00%	74	100.00%	Total	

mentary evidence for the visit of Henry VIII to Acton Court in 1535 and the interpretation of the east range as being constructed specifically for that visit, it is quite likely that the more exotic wares present were also acquired for the king's visit. The Ligurian tin-glazed dishes and the Spanish blue tin-glazed albarelli, for example, were obviously purchased as sets. To judge by the excava-

tor's suggested chronology, it is probable that these vessels were in use for no more than *c* fifteen years.

**Period 4.3**

The south moat, from the south porch eastwards, was backfilled, and the infill material was retained by a north-south wall extending across the moat from the west arm of the

porch. The layer at the bottom of the moat (1993) contains sherds which link both with sherds in this backfill and with sherds from the Period 4.2 construction levels. It is therefore likely that this deposit accumulated during Period 4.2 but includes material from the backfill as well. Sherds of a distinctive green-glazed Spanish *albarello* connect this backfill with that excavated in Area 13, although they are interpreted as separate (if closely following) events. Of a total of 601 sherds 93 (15 per cent) were residual medieval (Fig 9.1.12, 19, 20) and there were no obvious intrusive sherds (Table 28). Smaller collections of pottery were recovered from the backfill of the moat in Areas 6, 7, 8 and 13. That from Area 6 includes at least three definite intrusive sherds and that from Area 13 at least one and probably two together with five residual medieval.

Three contexts overlying the moat fill in Area 8 and assigned to Period 4.5 contain 17th-century pottery and therefore must represent a later make-up over the filled moat (938, 946 and 1781). The tin-glazed ware includes a sherd of an undecorated salt, a typically 17th-century form. Two of

**Table 29: Pottery from make-up over north moat**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
1	1.52%	AK	
5	7.58%	MISC SW	Fig 9.7.178
4	6.06%	SSOM	
1	1.52%	STROAT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
1	1.52%	BORDG	
2	3.03%	TGW	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
43	65.15%	FREC	Fig 9.10.260
6	9.09%	RAER	Fig 9.10.238
<i>North French wares</i>			
3	4.55%	MART II	
66	100.00%	Total	

these contexts are cut by the mid-17th-century (Civil War) ditch but the presence of an 18th-century coin in one, 938, indicates that there might be intrusive pottery as well.

#### Period 4.4–4.5

The pottery from deposits assigned to Period 4.4–4.5 can be examined in two

**Table 30: Pottery from south moat fill, west of and later than retaining wall**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
11	1.75%	AK	
6	0.96%	MALV	
1	0.16%	MALV?	
95	15.15%	MALVP	
86	13.72%	MINETY	
55	8.77%	SSOM	
2	0.32%	SSOM?	
18	2.87%	STROAT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
2	0.32%	BORD/TUDG	
25	3.99%	CSTN	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
1	0.16%	DUTR	
61	9.73%	FREC	
41	6.54%	KOLN	
1	0.16%	KOLN?	
97	15.47%	RAER	
18	2.87%	SNTG	
4	0.64%	SNTG?	
<i>French wares</i>			
1	0.16%	BEAU	
9	1.44%	MART I	
6	0.96%	MART II	
<i>Italian wares</i>			
2	0.32%	CITG? N ITALIAN?	Fig 9.9.225
1	0.16%	MLTG	
<i>Spanish wares</i>			
33	5.26%	SPAM	
1	0.16%	SPOW	
24	3.83%	SPTG	
1	0.16%	VALE	
<i>Unknown origin</i>			
5	0.80%	MISC	
6	0.96%	MISC IMPORT	
14	2.23%	MISC MSKW	
627	100.00%	Total	

groups: that from the south moat fill, to the west of the Period 4.3 retaining wall; and that from Area 2 and contemporary with the formal south court (Period 4.3–4.6). There are no obvious intrusive sherds in the south moat fill, two sherds of Roman pottery and two medieval. The remainder is remarkably similar to that from the earlier moat fills, suggesting that there was little difference in date between the filling of the moat on

either side of the retaining wall, or that the majority of the pottery was derived from the same, earlier deposit as that found in Period 4.3. The latter explanation is more likely since there are sherd links between the pottery in this group and that in the deposits earlier than the retaining wall to the east, in the filling of the moat in Area 13 and in the construction deposits of the north and west ranges. The majority of sherd links, however, occur between different contexts within this moat fill.

The 182 sherds of pottery from Area 2 form a mixed collection, containing a large proportion of late medieval/early Tudor material as well as sherds dating to the later 17th or 18th centuries. The earlier pottery is probably derived from the underlying dump deposits of Period 4.1–4.3 (Fig 9.5.139). The high proportion of Tudor imports (Fig 9.11.306) and the few sherd links show that the majority of sherds in these deposits have a similar origin to that in the other stratified assemblages of Period 4 (Fig 9.7.181).

#### Period 4.5–4.6

Context 136 contains material which had accumulated under the floorboards of Room 30 and thirteen intrusive modern sherds (Table 31). The forty contemporary sherds appear to date to the later 16th and earlier 17th centuries and include two early 17th-century Chinese porcelain vessels (Fig 9.9.214–15). The dating of this pottery coincides with that of the numerous coins from the same deposit while the presence of modern intrusive pottery must be due to the large number of tree-roots in the area.

#### Period 4.6

In two Areas, 8 and 11, ditches filled in the

**Table 31: Pottery from context 136 in Room 30**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
3	7.50%	SSOM	
<i>English finewares</i>			
7	17.50%	BORDY	
19	47.50%	TGW	
<i>Spanish wares</i>			
1	2.50%	VALE?	Fig 9.11.276
<i>Chinese wares</i>			
10	25.00%	CHPO	Fig 9.9.214–15
40	100.00%	Total	

**Table 32: Pottery from ditch fill in Area 8**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
1	2.08%	AK	
3	6.25%	GUYS	
1	2.08%	MALV	Fig 9.4.125
24	50.00%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.163
2	4.17%	STROAT	Fig 9.7.175
<i>English finewares</i>			
4	8.33%	BORD	Fig 9.8.192
4	8.33%	TGW	Fig 9.9.206–7
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
6	12.50%	FREC	
<i>Italian wares</i>			
2	4.17%	MLTG	
<i>Spanish wares</i>			
1	2.08%	SPAM?	
48	100.00%	Total	

mid-17th century were excavated. In Area 8, of the forty-eight sherds recovered one was probably intrusive. The remainder were probably contemporary, although some are of types which were current in the Tudor period (Table 32).

The contemporary ditch in Area 11 contains one intrusive sherd and seven residual medieval or Tudor sherds (Fig 9.5.138).

**Table 33: Pottery from ditch fill, Area 11**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
19	26.76%	MALV	
28	39.44%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.167
1	1.41%	SSOM?	
3	4.23%	STROAT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
3	4.23%	BORDB	
1	1.41%	CSTN	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
8	11.27%	FREC	
3	4.23%	RAER	
<i>French wares</i>			
4	5.63%	MART II	
<i>Spanish wares</i>			
1	1.41%	SPAM	
71	100.00%	Total	

**Table 34: Pottery from make-up deposits over south moat fill**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
116	18.68%	AK	Fig 9.3.103
1	0.16%	AK?	
9	1.45%	GUYS	Fig 9.8.185
5	0.81%	MALV	Fig 9.4.122
51	8.21%	MALVP	Fig 9.4.132, Fig 9.11.274
6	0.97%	MINETY	
13	2.09%	MISC	Fig 9.7.177, 182
1	0.16%	MISC KY	
1	0.16%	MISC SKW	
1	0.16%	MISC SW	
5	0.81%	NDGT	
207	33.33%	SSOM	Fig 9.6.149, 151
12	1.93%	SSOM?	
35	5.64%	STROAT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
4	0.64%	BORD	
4	0.64%	BORDY	
12	1.93%	CSTN	Fig 9.4.110
1	0.16%	NOTS	
1	0.16%	STBRS	
1	0.16%	STMO	
9	1.45%	STSL	
48	7.73%	TGW	Fig 9.9.209, 212
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
6	0.97%	DUTR?	
19	3.06%	FREC	
7	1.13%	RAER	
31	4.99%	WEST	Fig 9.10.256
<i>French wares</i>			
1	0.16%	SAIP	
<i>Spanish wares</i>			
11	1.77%	OLIV	Fig 9.11.287
2	0.32%	SPOW?	
1	0.16%	SPAM	
621	100.00%	Total	

The remaining seventy-one sherds are of similar character to those from Area 8 (Table 33).

Over six hundred sherds were recovered from make-up levels overlying the Period 4.4–4.5 south moat fill. This deposit predates the construction of the cider house (OB 7) in the late 18th or early 19th century but contains eight definite modern intrusive sherds. In the main, however, the assemblage appears to be relatively undisturbed and contains only two sherds of residual medieval pottery. There is a sizeable quantity of pottery in the assemblage of types

which are found in the earlier Period 4 deposits and it is likely that later 16th- and early 17th-century pottery is present within the deposit. There are, however, virtually no sherd links with other Tudor deposits, nor is there a large proportion of Tudor imports. The earlier pottery within the deposit may therefore have been derived from occupation postdating the use of these wares, in the later 16th and early 17th centuries. The date of deposition, however, is given by a variety of English finewares, including stonewares, which were current in the later 17th and early 18th centuries. The absence of white saltglazed stoneware vessels suggests that the latest pottery is no later than *c* 1720 (Table 34).

#### Period 4.6–5.1 and later

A large quantity of pottery was associated with rubble spreads and other features assigned to Period 4.6 and later. This pottery has been identified and recorded and for each group a *terminus post quem* for the deposition of the layer has been calculated. These dates have been used in the site report (Chapter 7). The pottery has in most cases no intrinsic interest as assemblages, although about sixty sherds were worthy of illustration.

**Table 35: Pottery from north moat fill (contexts 1561 and 1562)**

<i>English coarsewares</i>		
45	54.22%	NDGT
25	30.12%	SSOM
<i>English finewares</i>		
1	1.20%	MY?
5	6.02%	STSL
5	6.02%	TGW
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>		
2	2.41%	FREC
83	100.00%	Total

An exception is pottery from the filling of the western portion of the north moat, contexts 1561 and 1562. This fill contained eighty-three sherds, all likely to be of late 17th- or early 18th-century date (Table 35). The sherds were recovered from or close to the bottom of the moat, which must have been separated by a retaining wall from the rest of the north moat, which in Area 8 can be seen to have been backfilled at an earlier date.



Demolition rubble and plaster within Room 32 (contexts 125, 1706, 1725, 1728 and 1742) produced a small assemblage of late 17th- or early 18th-century pottery (Table 36) which included a notable quantity of Frechen stoneware bellarmine bottles. Later demolition rubble, 122, produced an assemblage of late 18th- or early 19th-century pottery, perhaps suggesting that Room 32 stood as a ruin for perhaps a century.

**Table 36: Pottery from initial demolition of Room 32**

<i>Residual medieval</i>		
1	0.97%	BR
<i>English coarsewares</i>		
33	32.04%	SSOM
1	0.97%	STROAT
5	4.85%	MISC SW
<i>English finewares</i>		
1	0.97%	BORDB
1	0.97%	BORDG
5	4.85%	STSL
5	4.85%	TGW
1	0.97%	TPW
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>		
45	43.69%	FREC
2	1.94%	RAER?
<i>French wares</i>		
3	2.91%	MART II
103	100.00%	Total

Other exceptions are the early 18th-century fillings of garderobe 222, on the west side of Room 29, which contained substantial parts of a South Somerset bowl (Fig 9.7.170) and two tin-glazed vessels (Fig 9.9.208, 211), the late 17th-century filling of garderobe 1003, on the west side of the former south porch, which contained a complete clay pipe dated c 1650–80 (Table 37) and that of garderobe 279 (at the west end of the former south range), which contained an assemblage of mid-18th-century date (Table 38) with one sherd of 19th- or 20th-century whiteware and four probably intrusive sherds of transfer-printed ware. It is likely that some of the pottery in this assemblage is residual from 16th- or 17th-century deposits but the assemblage is nevertheless of interest in showing that North Devon Gravel Tempered ware was by that

**Table 37: Pottery from fill of garderobe 1003**

<i>English coarsewares</i>		
4	6.06%	AK
1	1.52%	MALVP
2	3.03%	NDGT
48	72.73%	SSOM
<i>English finewares</i>		
2	3.03%	STMO
8	12.12%	TGW
<i>Spanish wares</i>		
1	1.52%	SPAM
66	100.00%	Total

Fig 9.6.158

Fig 9.9.205

**Table 38: Pottery from fill of garderobe 279**

<i>English coarsewares</i>		
6	1.82%	AK
133	40.30%	NDGT
23	6.97%	SSOM
2	0.61%	SSOM?
<i>English finewares</i>		
10	3.03%	CSTN
9	2.73%	NOTS
1	0.30%	STAFFS SGR
11	3.33%	STBRS
21	6.36%	STCO
107	32.42%	STSL
3	0.91%	SWSG
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>		
4	1.21%	FREC
330	100.00%	Total

Fig 9.8.187–9

Fig 9.9.202

Fig 9.8.200

time the most common coarseware whilst most of the finewares were English and, most probably, from the Bristol potteries.

The filling of well 80 produced an assemblage which can be dated to the late 18th or early 19th century by the creamware and pearlware found in it (Table 39). Six of the 926 sherds found were residual medieval and the group has the appearance of being deposited at one time. The creamware teapot has a sprigged medallion commemorating an admiral but unfortunately it is too fragmentary to identify. As in the preceding groups the majority of the assemblage was probably either made in Bristol or, like the North Devon wares, obtained through the port. The low quantity of imported wares

**Table 39: Pottery from filling of well 80**

<i>English coarsewares</i>			
64	7.00%	AK	Fig 9.3.100-1
70	7.66%	MISC RED	
76	8.32%	NDGT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
85	9.30%	BRS?	Fig 9.8.194
368	40.26%	CREA	
2	0.22%	NOTS	Fig 9.8.195
53	5.80%	PEAR	
60	6.56%	STCO	
11	1.20%	STMO	
110	12.04%	STSL	
12	1.31%	SWSG	
1	0.11%	TGW	
<i>Rhenish and Low Countries wares</i>			
2	0.22%	WEST	
914	100.00%	Total	

and the absence of Chinese porcelain are notable features in comparison with other late 18th-century groups (Gloucester, Vince 1983b; Crosswall, City of London, Vince and Egan 1981).

Pottery from the demolition layers above the west range (contexts 183-5 and 207) forms a small group of late 18th- or, more likely, 19th-century date but includes sherds of 16th-century date.

#### Pottery from Trenches A to J (north and west fields)

A very small quantity of medieval pottery was found in Trenches B, C, D and E2. That from Trench B, an ungrouped sand-tempered cooking-pot sherd, came from context 15, soil from the ridges found in the ridge and furrow ploughing. This sherd is probably of similar date to those in Period 2 in the main excavation.

In Trench C, early 13th-century pottery was recovered from the fills of quarries C/7 (Fig 9.1.7 and 18) and C/11.

## Key to codes used in pottery and roof-tile tables and catalogues

### Fabrics

AGATE = Refined ware made from two or more different coloured clays, 18th-century and later. Four sherds from one teapot lid and three fragments of modern wall tile.

AK = Ashton Keynes ware, mid-16th to 18th-century sandy red earthenware produced at Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire (Gloucester TF80). Most sherds come from

**Table 40: Pottery from demolition layers above the west range**

<i>Residual wares</i>			
1	1.32%	MALVP	
1	1.32%	SSOM	
1	1.32%	FREC	
<i>English coarsewares</i>			
6	7.89%	AK	
14	18.42%	MISC RED	
1	1.32%	NDGT	
<i>English finewares</i>			
17	22.37%	CREA	
1	1.32%	CSTN	
1	1.32%	NBW	
1	1.32%	RBAS	
1	1.32%	STCO	
1	1.32%	STMO	
1	1.32%	STSL	
17	22.37%	TPW	
10	13.16%	WHITE	
<i>Imported wares</i>			
1	1.32%	CHPO	
1	1.32%	CONP	
76	100.00%	Total	

Three sherds of ungrouped, sandy hand-made cooking pot were found in the rubble at the east end of Trench D, context D/5.

In Trench E, three sherds from context E/23, the fill of a depression at the west end of the trench, were probably also of early 13th-century date. Pottery from two layers in the bank retaining the east arm of the moat, contexts E2/5 and E2/6, was similar to that in the main excavation Period 3, including a Minety-type bowl sherd which would equate with 3.3 or later.

internally glazed vessels of which the more vertical sided have been coded as jars and the remainder as bowls or plates. The latter form can be distinctive, having a wide, decorated flange. The earliest sherds are usually from large conical bowls, also known as pancheons. Jugs were also made in this ware but were much less common. Finally, single examples of unglazed flower pots, pipkins and skillets were found.

ANDA = Andalusian lustreware. Distinguishable from Valencian lustreware by its inclusions of Malagan Schist. First produced in the later 13th century, this ware seems to have continued production alongside Valencian lustreware into the 15th or 16th centuries. Three sherds have been identified, only one positively. Two were from albarelli and the third from a jug.

BATHA = Bath Fabric A (Vince 1979b).

BBAS = Black Basalt ware. Black-bodied stoneware, sometimes with an internal glaze made in the late 18th and 19th centuries, ultimately derived from imitations of oriental red stoneware teapots (cf RBAS).

BEAU = Beauvais ware. Only one vessel found, a drinking jug with cut-glass decoration. Beauvais sgrafitto ware is not uncommon in early 16th-century deposits in southern England and the rarity of the ware at Acton Court is of interest.

BLUE = 19th- or 20th-century refined earthenware with a light blue coloured body.

BORD = Surrey/Hampshire border whiteware. Three glazes were used, often, it appears, in the same firing. Brown glaze, coloured with manganese or iron. (BORDB), Green glaze coloured with copper (BORDG) and Yellow glaze, probably not deliberately coloured (BORDY). Late 16th to 18th centuries. Most of the sherds from Acton Court were from pipkins, followed by thin-walled jugs, of the type known from the Inns of Court in London. Other forms include an *albarello*, bowls, cups, pipkins and money boxes.

BOXB = Box Fabric B.

BR = Bristol Redcliffe ware.

BRS = Bristol Stoneware.

CHPO = Chinese Porcelain.

CITG = Trefoil-spouted jugs and a plate with a female bust in a central medallion, of central Italian origin. The source of these vessels is uncertain. In shape and general appearance they are similar to South Netherlands maiolica, but the presence of a clear lead glaze over the tin glaze and painting, and their whiter colour suggests that they may actually be the Italian prototypes of the Netherlandish vessels.

CONP = 'Continental Porcelain'.

CREA = Creamware.

CSTN = 'Cistercian ware'.

DENBY = Brown-glazed refined earthenware. 19th or 20th century. Most of the Acton Court fragments are from teapots or teapot lids together with one jar.

DERBS = Derbyshire stoneware.

DOUL = Doulton stoneware. Includes a small stoneware bottle dating to the 1860s, identified by Richard Kemp, CLAU.

DUTR = Dutch Red Earthenware. Probably all of 16th-century date. Identifiable sherds include parts of pipkins with pulled lips and two-handled, three-footed cauldrons.

DUTS = Dutch slipware. A fragment of a jug was found with slip decoration. Probably 16th century.

ENGS = English stoneware. 18th or 19th century and of unknown source. Examined by Richard Kemp, CLAU.

ENPO = 'English Porcelain'. 18th century.

FP = Fine Pink ware. Probably of later medieval or early Tudor date.

FREC = Frechen stoneware.

GLOS41B = Gloucester TF41B. Later 11th to early 13th century in date.

GUYS = Guy's Hospital ware. 16th or 17th century.

HG = Ham Green ware. Two fabrics are present, a light-firing glazed ware and a red-firing unglazed ware. At least two phases of production are represented at Acton Court. Ham Green 'A' ware includes jugs decorated with roller stamping. The only definite example of this phase was a sherd from context 1807 (Period 3.5). The use of the comb is also an early trait and one sherd had vertical combing on the body and horizontal combing on the neck. However, this too was residual, in a Period 3.4 deposit. Horizontal grooves, on the other hand, are typical of Ham Green 'B' and sherds with this decoration were found in a Period 3.2 deposit, 1872.

KOLN = Cologne stoneware. The definition used here is that the fabric has no quartz sand temper and the vessels have been turned after throwing, in contrast to Raeren stoneware. Early to mid-16th century.

LIGU = Ligurian tin-glazed ware. Forty-five sherds of plates with a blue-tinged tin-glaze, decorated in blue were found. All come from plates with a similar profile and design. At most, eleven vessels are represented. Analysis of one sherd indicates that it derives from Genoa rather than from Albisola or Savona. It has a low chromium content of 168ppm range, whereas Savona and Albisola ceramics are in the range 300–500ppm (M Hughes *in lit*).

LONS = London Stoneware. Grey stoneware containing quartz sand and sparse iron-rich inclusions (both usually partially vitrified). Stonewares of identical appearance were produced at Fulham from the late 17th century and subsequently at Lambeth, Vauxhall and probably other centres on the outskirts of London. Where sherds had a recognisable form they were mainly late examples. However, scraps of a bottle from context 1154, a bellarmine bottle from context 1300 and a bottle from context 1535 could all be of late 17th-century date. Two further sherds could be of early 18th-century date and the remainder dated to the later 18th and 19th centuries. At least nineteen of these thirty-two sherds were from bottles, three were from wide-mouthed jars and one was the lid of a container for Singleton's eye ointment, produced between c 1890 and 1910.

LUST = 19th- and 20th-century lustrewares. Four sherds of refined earthenware decorated with overglaze lustre were found. Two were from tankards, one from a cup and one probably from a jug.

MALV = Malvern Chase wares. No distinction is made in these records between the coarse, usually reduced, cooking pot fabric of the 13th century and the finer, usually oxidised, fabric used for jugs and other vessels from the later 13th century to the middle



of the 16th century. One hundred and four sherds of the early cooking pots were found. The majority of the glazed ware sherds were from jugs but other vessels include a mug, pipkins, a dish, jars, skillets, bowls and a lid.

**MALVP** = Malvern Chase 'pink' ware. This fabric is noticeably lighter in colour than the earlier glazed ware and has fewer inclusions. It is often covered with a partial brown slip under a plain lead glaze. In contrast to the earlier glazed ware jars are the most common form (76 per cent of the 320 sherds found). Dishes, pipkins, jugs, bowls and a lid were also found. In contrast to 16th- or early 17th-century groups from Hereford and Gloucester there are very few large conical bowls or other open vessels.

**MART** = Martincamp stoneware. Unglazed earthenware and stoneware flasks have been discussed by Hurst. **MERC** = 'Mercury jar'. Small, thick-walled jars usually with an internal lead glaze have been recognised in museum collections as a type for many years but it is rare to find them in an archaeological context. That from Acton Court comes from the dump in Area 2 which contained mainly later 15th- to early 16th-century material. Thin-section analysis of a London find was inconclusive and the origin of the type is unknown (Vince 1982).

**MINETY** = Minety ware is characterised by its limestone sand temper and thin, lead glaze. It is found first in the early 12th century and until the second half of the 13th century the majority of vessels found are usually large tripod pitchers. However, at Acton Court in the early medieval phases this is not the case. Tripod pitcher sherds are found but are greatly outnumbered by sherds of cooking pot with an internal glaze on the inside of the rim and base. This is probably due to the relative proximity of Acton Court to Minety. Similar high quantities of cooking pots to tripod pitchers occur at Selsley Common, Stroud (Dunning 1949) and on other sites on the Cotswolds. Later medieval Minety wares are usually wheelthrown cooking pots, bowls and jugs, as in Period 3.3 at Acton Court. Period 3.4 at Acton Court has produced a range of the latest produced of this industry. They are dominated by large conical bowls with flanged rims but bung-hole jugs or jars (cisterns), jugs and a dripping pan were also found. **MISC** = Unidentified wares. These are described in the archive and in the catalogue and some of the tables using the shorthand notation developed at the Museum of London (Orton 1978). G = Green-glazed, I = Iron compound, K = Plain glaze, L = Limestone, M = Mica, N = No visible inclusions, S = quartz sand, W = wheelthrown, Y = Handmade.

**MLTG** = Montelupo tin-glazed ware. Sherds of a single *tazza* of Montelupo tin-glazed ware were found. The earliest was stratified in a Period 4.2 deposit.

**NBW** = 19th-century buff ware. A term used to describe light brown refined earthenware usually with a plain glaze, sometimes with a thick white glaze. Mixing bowls and dishes are the most common forms.

**NDCW** = North Devon Calcareous ware. A distinctive early fabric produced in the North Devon potteries. Also found at Exeter and described there by Allan.

**NDGT** = North Devon Gravel Tempered ware.

**NH** = Nash Hill ware.

**NIMS** = North Italian Marbled slipware. Two sherds of a bowl. Most English finds of this ware are found in later 16th- or 17th-century deposits and it is likely that this vessel reached Acton Court later than the majority of imports.

**NOTS** = Nottingham stoneware.

**OLIV** = Seville Olive Jars.

**OXAM** = Oxford Fabric AM. Brill/Boarstall ware.

**OXMO** = Romano-British Oxfordshire mortarium.

**PEAR** = Pearlware.

**PMR** = Post-medieval Redware.

**RAER** = Raeren stoneware.

**RBAS** = Red Basalt ware.

**REFR** = Refined Red Earthenware.

**RPOT** = Romano-British pottery (unspecified fabric or form).

**SAIG** = Saintonge all-over green glaze.

**SAIN** = Saintonge ware, type unknown.

**SAIP** = Saintonge polychrome.

**SEVW** = Seville whiteware.

**SEW** = South-East Wiltshire ware.

**SIEG** = Siegburg Stoneware.

**SNTG** = South Netherlands Tin-glazed ware.

**SPAM** = Spanish Red Micaceous ware.

**SPOW** = Spanish ware, type unspecified.

**SPTG** = Spanish tin-glazed ware. The *albarelli* may be Caparra Blue type (Hurst 1995, 51).

**SSOM** = South Somerset ware.

**STAFFS COARSE** = Staffordshire coarseware.

**STAFFS SGR** = Staffordshire sgraffito ware.

**STBRS** = Staffordshire (or Bristol) brown stoneware.

**STCO** = Staffordshire (or Bristol) press-moulded combed ware.

**STEM** = Staffordshire (or Bristol) press-moulded and embossed ware.

**STMO** = Staffordshire (or Bristol) mottled glazed ware.

**STRE** = Staffordshire redware.

**STROAT** = Stroath ware.

**STSL** = Staffordshire slipware.

**SWSG** = English white salt-glazed stoneware.

**TGW** = Dutch or English tin-glazed ware.

**TPW** = Transfer-printed refined white earthenware.

**TUDB** = London Tudor Brown ware.

**TUDG** = Tudor Green ware, from the Surrey/Hampshire border.

**VALE** = Valencian lustreware.

**WEST** = Westerwald stoneware.

**WHIEL** = Whieldon ware. Refined white earthenware decorated with polychrome glazes.

**WHITE** = White earthenware. A refined white earthenware whose glaze lacks the blue tinge of Pearlware. Probably mainly later 19th and 20th century and par-



ticularly common in Period 5.4. Sherds in earlier contexts are probably a sign of modern contamination. WORCS = Sand-tempered ware, probably from the Worcester area. A single residual sherd of a cooking pot of possible Worcester origin was found. At Gloucester sherds of these vessels are found from the later eleventh century through to the middle of the 13th century. However, by the end of the 12th century they are much less common than Malvern Chase cooking pots. A similar decline is noted at Hereford. The high proportion of Malvern Chase to Worcester cooking pots is as likely to be a function of the late date of the Acton Court material, with little before the middle of the 12th century, as it is to be a function of the distance of Worcester from Acton Court since in all probability the same vessels would have carried both types and the sources are only about ten kilometres apart.

### Forms

- ALB = *Albarello*
- AMPH = Amphora or oil jar
- CHAF = Chafing dish
- CHP = Chamber pot
- CIST = Cistern
- CLOS = Closed ware
- CP = Cooking pot
- CURF = Curfew
- DJ = Drinking jug
- FIG = Figure
- MBOX = Money box
- PIP = Pipkin
- POSS = Posset pot
- SPP = Spouted pitcher
- TANK = Tankard
- TP = Tripod pitcher
- TPOT = Teapot
- WCP = Wheelthrown cooking pot
- WJUG = Wheelthrown jug

### Catalogue of illustrated vessels

Context numbers are in brackets, followed by fabric and form codes.

Fig 9.1

#### Medieval handmade coarsewares

- 1 [249] MISC LY CP
- 2 [1448] MISC LY CP
- 3 [1064] MISC LY CP
- 4 [1729] MISC LY CP
- 5 [1246] MISC LY CP
- 6 [1978] MISC LY CP
- 7 [C6] MISC LY CP
- 8 [1650] MISC LY CP

- 9 [1479] MISC LY CP
- 10 [77] MISC LY CP
- 11 [1625] MISC LY CP
- 12 [1474] MISC LY CP
- 13 [1243] MISC LY CP
- 14 [255] MISC LY CP
- 15 [486] MISC LY CP
- 16 [1475] MISC LY CP
- 17 [1628] MISC LY CP
- 18 [C6] MISC LY CP
- 19 [1477] MISC LY CP
- 20 [1474] MISC LY CP
- 21 [1886] MISC LY CP
- 22 [1259] MISC LY CP
- 23 [1687] MISC LSY CP
- 24 [675] MISC LSY CP
- 25 [675] MISC LSY CP
- 26 [1978] MISC LY CP
- 27 [1243] MISC LY CP
- 28 [1448] BATH A CP
- 29 [1797] BATH A CP
- 30 [161] BATH A CP
- 31 [215] BATH A CP
- 32 [216] BATH A CP
- 33 [1978] BATH A CP
- 34 [1447] BATH A CP
- 35 [1447] BATH A CP
- 36 [1886] BATH A SPP
- 37 [1886] BATH A CP

Fig 9.2

- 38 [1978] BATH A CP
- 39 [1978] BATH A CP
- 40 [1828] HG CP
- 41 [1797] HG CP
- 42 [1797] HG CP
- 43 [1448] HG CP
- 44 [1448] HG CP
- 45 [1978] HG? CP
- 46 [1448] HG CP
- 47 [1829] HG LAMP
- 48 [1448] HG CP
- 49 [1797] HG CP
- 50 [1448] HG CP
- 51 [1978] HG CP
- 52 [1448] MALV CP
- 53 [1828] MALV CP
- 54 [141] MALV CP
- 55 [1448] MALV CP
- 56 [1797] MALV CP
- 57 [91] MALV CP
- 58 [1796] MALV CP
- 59 [1846] MALV CP

#### Medieval handmade glazed wares

- 60 [930] MISC SY CP
- 61 [1616] MISC SY CP

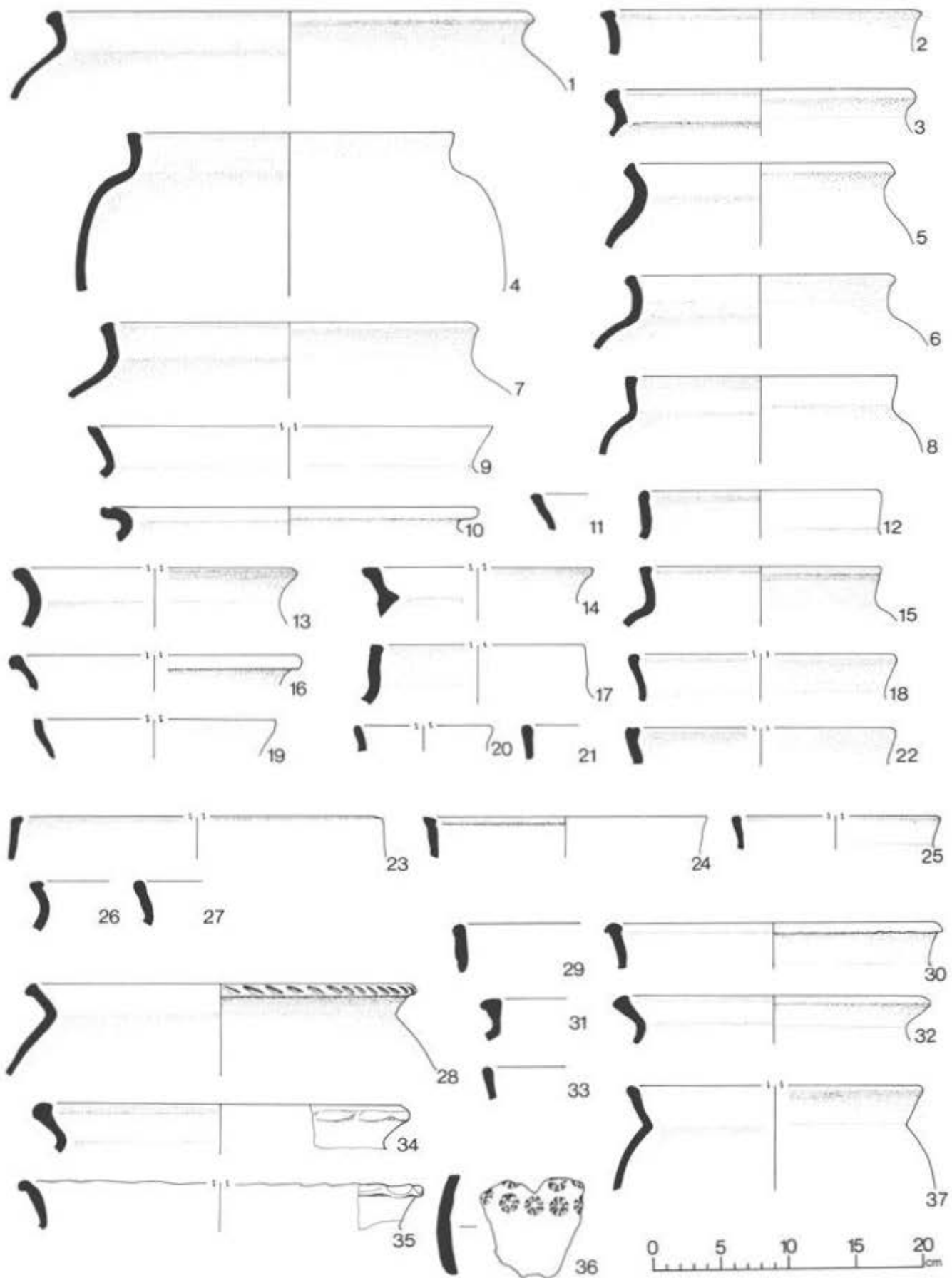


Figure 9.1 Medieval handmade coarsetwores, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Siwanah England)

62	[1646] MISC SY CP
63	[1652] MISC SKY CP
64	[1687] MISC SKY CP
65	[293] MISC LKY CP
66	[1868] MISC LSKY CP
67	[1448] HG Jug and handle
68	[1438] HG Jug
69	[486] WORCS CP
70	[1802] MISC SW CP
71	[1482] MISC SW CP
72	[3070] MISC SW CP
73	[149] MISC SW CP
74	[475] MISC SW CP
75	[951] MISC SW CP

**Fig 9.3**

76	[1448] MINETY CP
77	[1448] MINETY CP

**Medieval wheelthrown glazed wares**

78	[1186] MINETY WCP
79	[449] MINETY WCP
80	[1740] MINETY WCP
81	[1282] BR PIP
82	[527] BR CP
83	[2665] BR Jug
84	[854] BR Jug
85	[292+293] BR Jug
86	[1478] BR Jug
87	[1063] BR Jug
88	[232] OXAM Jug
89	[1596] NH? CP
90	[255] MISC SKW CP
91	[293] MISC SKW Bowl
92	[1664] MISC SKW Jug
93	[2666] MISC SKW CP
94	[1148] MISC SKW
95	[1596] MISC ILKW CP
96	[3021] MISC RED PIP
97	[161] MISC MSKW
98	[248] MISC MSKW Lid

**Tudor wares stratified in Period 3 contexts**

99	[1647] SPAM Dish
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**Tudor and later pottery in contexts of Period 4 or later**

**a) Tudor and later coarsewares**

100	[249] AK Bowl
101	[249] AK Bowl
102	[1993] AK Jug
103	[1015] AK Bowl
104	[1048] AK Jug

**Fig 9.4**

105	[1316] AK? DJ
106	[1993] AK Bowl
107	[931+932] AK Bowl
108	[1993] AK Jug
109	[10] AK Bowl
110	[1015] CSTN Cup
111	[935] CSTN Cup
112	[1993] CSTN Cup/Jug
113	[2066] CSTN Cup
114	[127] CSTN Cup
115	[3070] CSTN Jug
116	[539] FP Jug
117	[539] FP Jug
118	[539] FP Jug
119	[2065] FP Jug
120	[283] MALV PIP
121	[1477] MALV PIP
122	[1015] MALV Jug
123	[1993] MALV Jug
124	[1290] MALV Mug
125	[947] MALV -
126	[293] MALV PIP
127	[283] MALV Jug
128	[1993] MALV Jug
129	[84] MALVP Dish
130	[127] MALVP Lid
131	[1993] MALVP Jar
132	[1038] MALVP Jar

**Fig 9.5**

133	[141] MINETY CP
134	[1044+1048] MINETY Bowl
135	[527] MINETY WJUG
136	[1782] MINETY? CP
137	[3070] MINETY Bowl
138	[2760] MINETY Bowl
139	[519] MINETY CIST
140	[2065] MINETY Bowl
141	[3070] MINETY Bowl
142	[137] MINETY CIST
143	[528] MINETY CIST
144	[1993] MINETY Bowl
145	[1044+1048] MINETY Bowl

**Fig 9.6**

146	[468] SSOM CHP
147	[1037] SSOM CURF
148	[2027] SSOM PIP
149	[1038] SSOM Jug
150	[1742] SSOM CHP
151	[1015] SSOM PIP
152	[1637] SSOM Mug
153	[468] SSOM Jar
154	[2026+2027] SSOM PIP
155	[1993] SSOM Jug
156	[1282] SSOM PIP

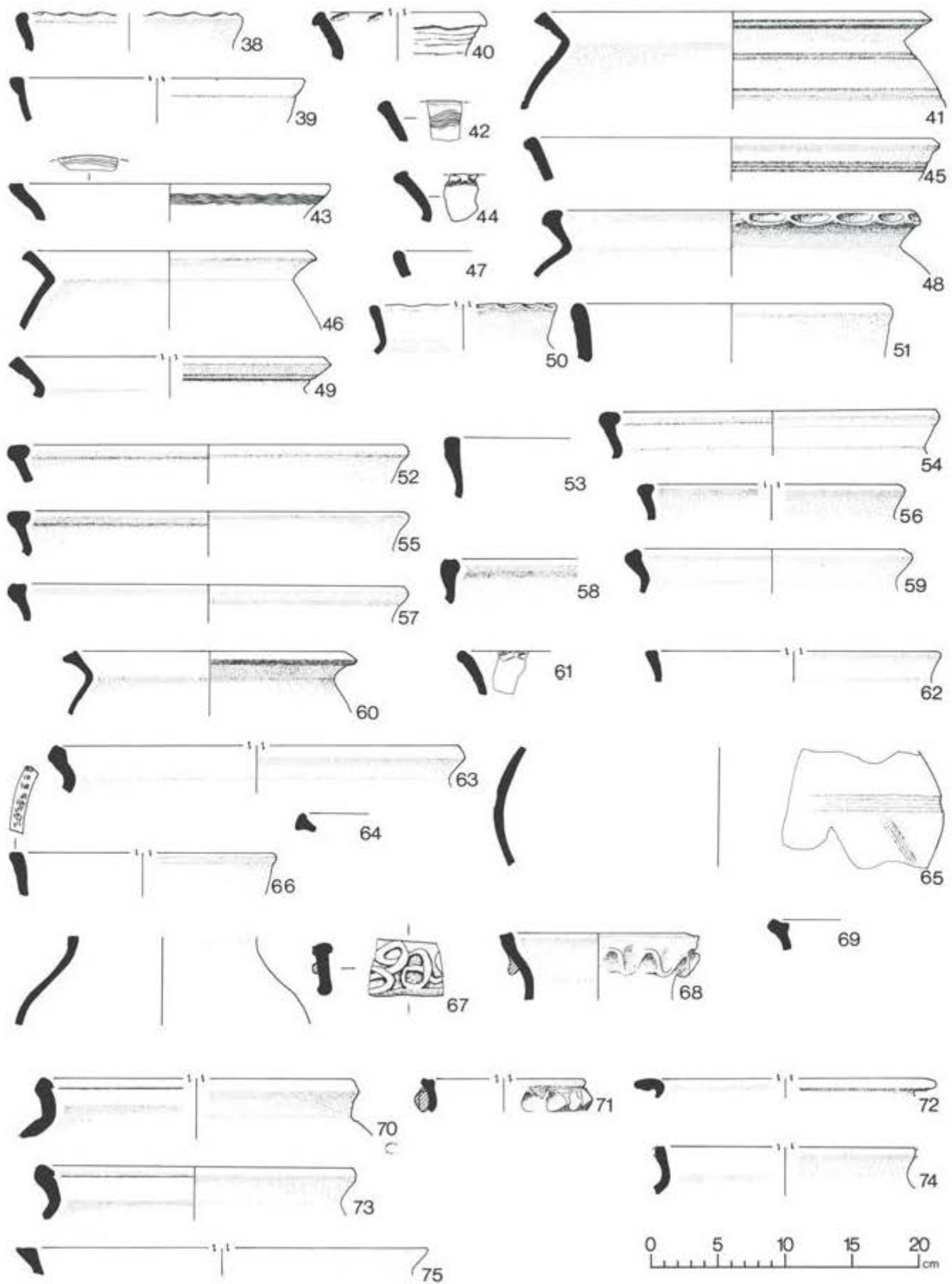


Figure 9.2 Medieval handmade coarsetwares and glazed wares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)



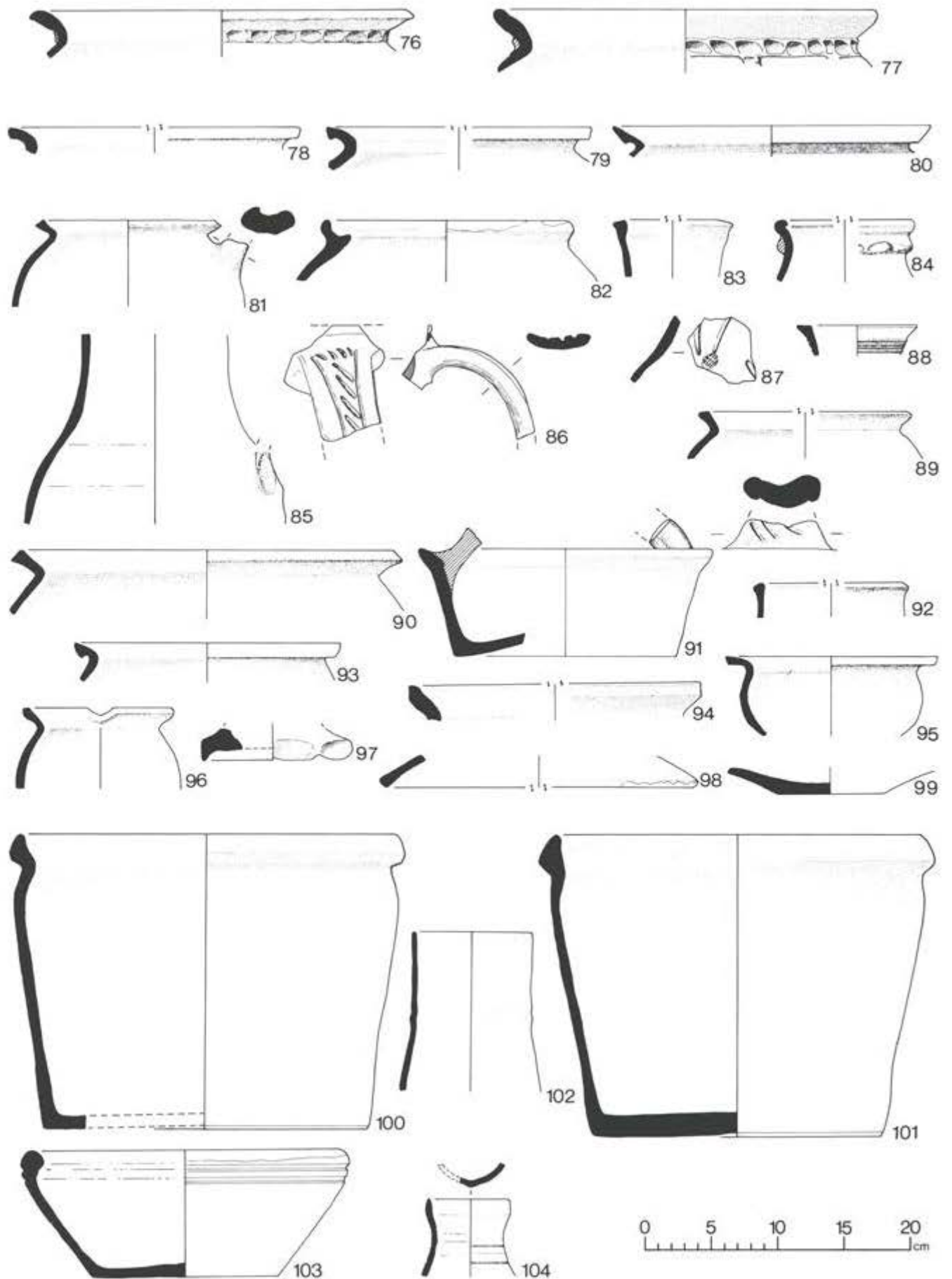


Figure 9.3 Medieval handmade and wheelthrown glazed wares; Tudor and later coarsewares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)

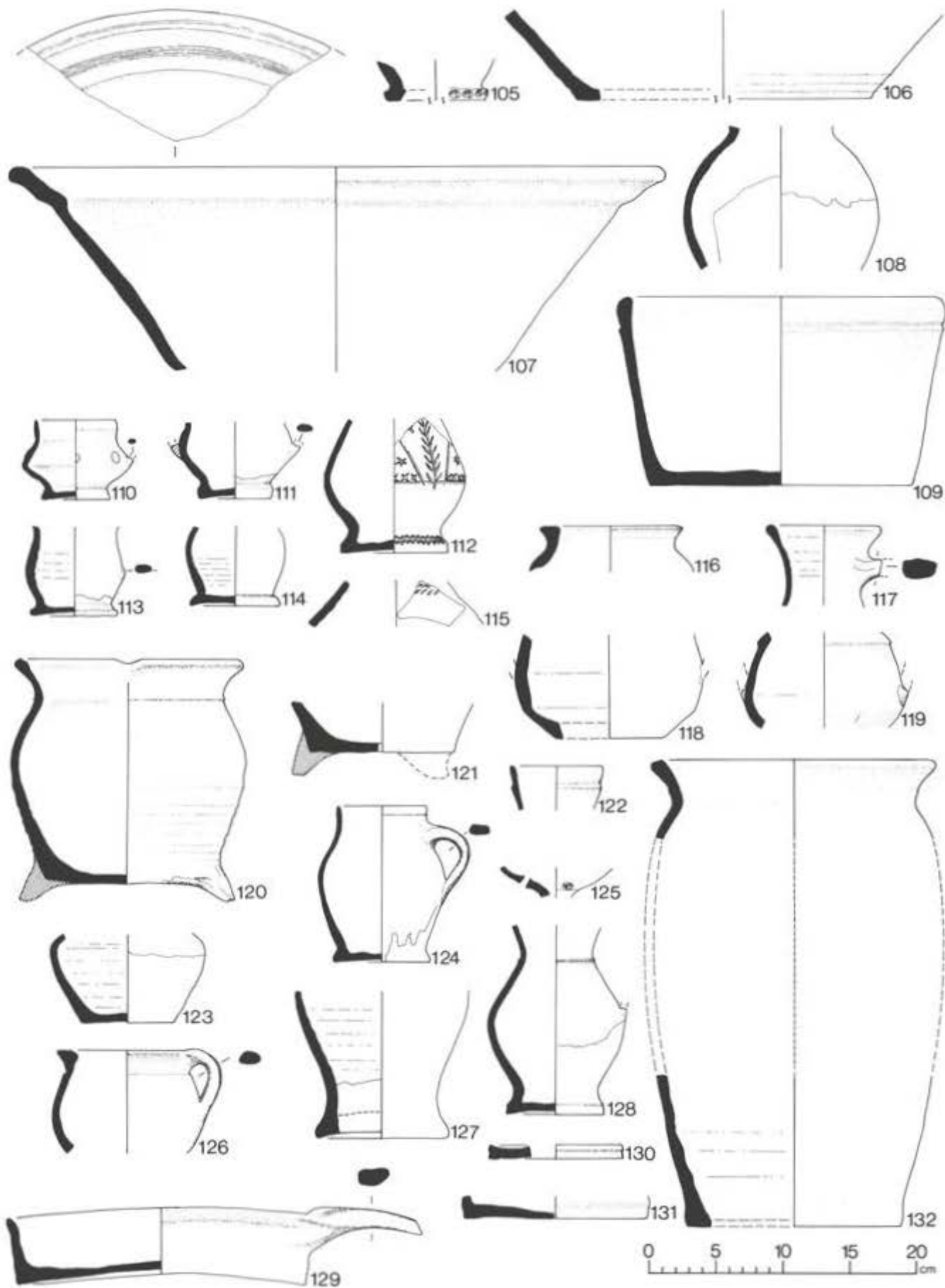


Figure 9.4 Tudor and later coarsewares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)

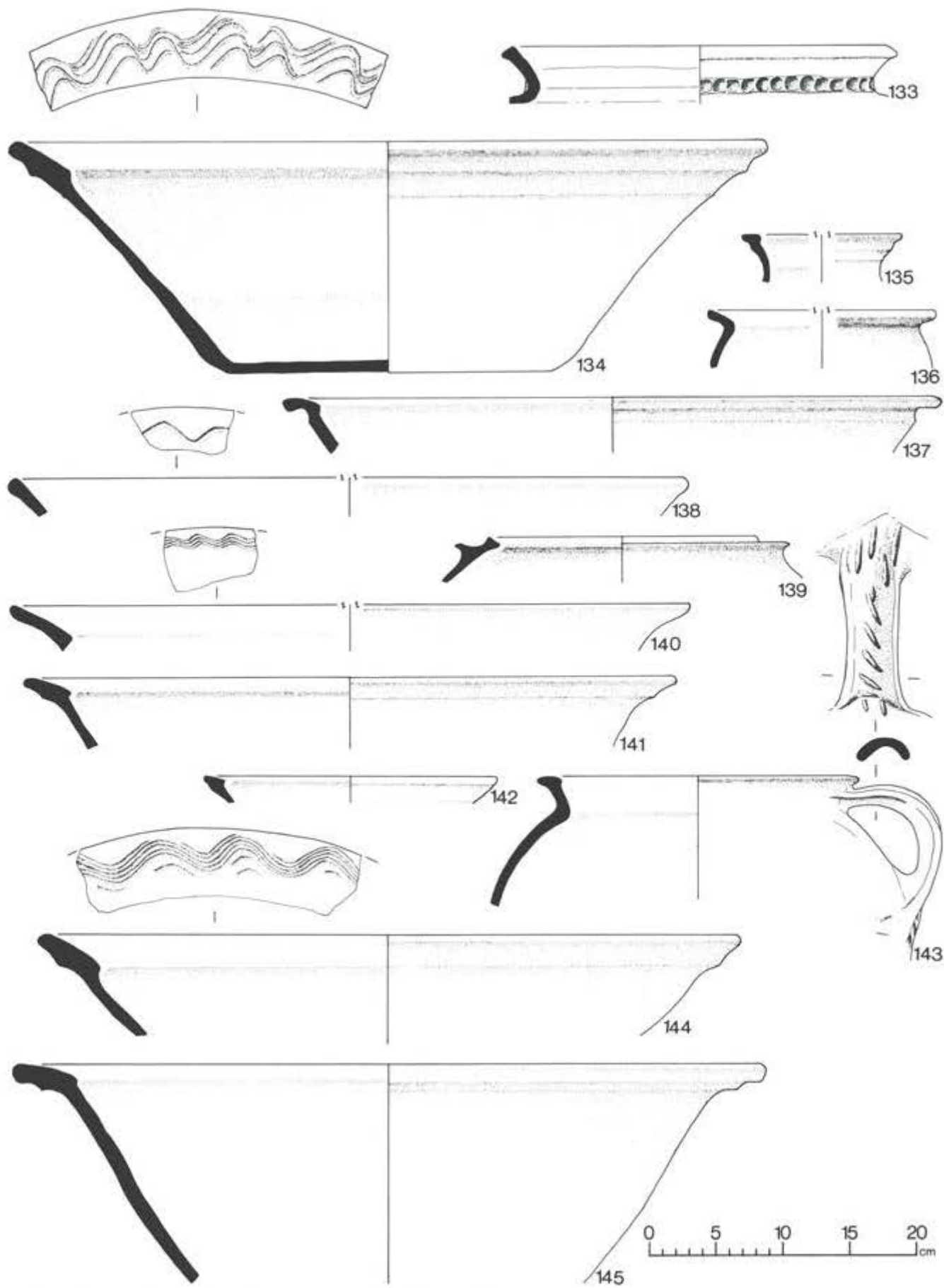


Figure 9.5 Tudor and later coarsewares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)

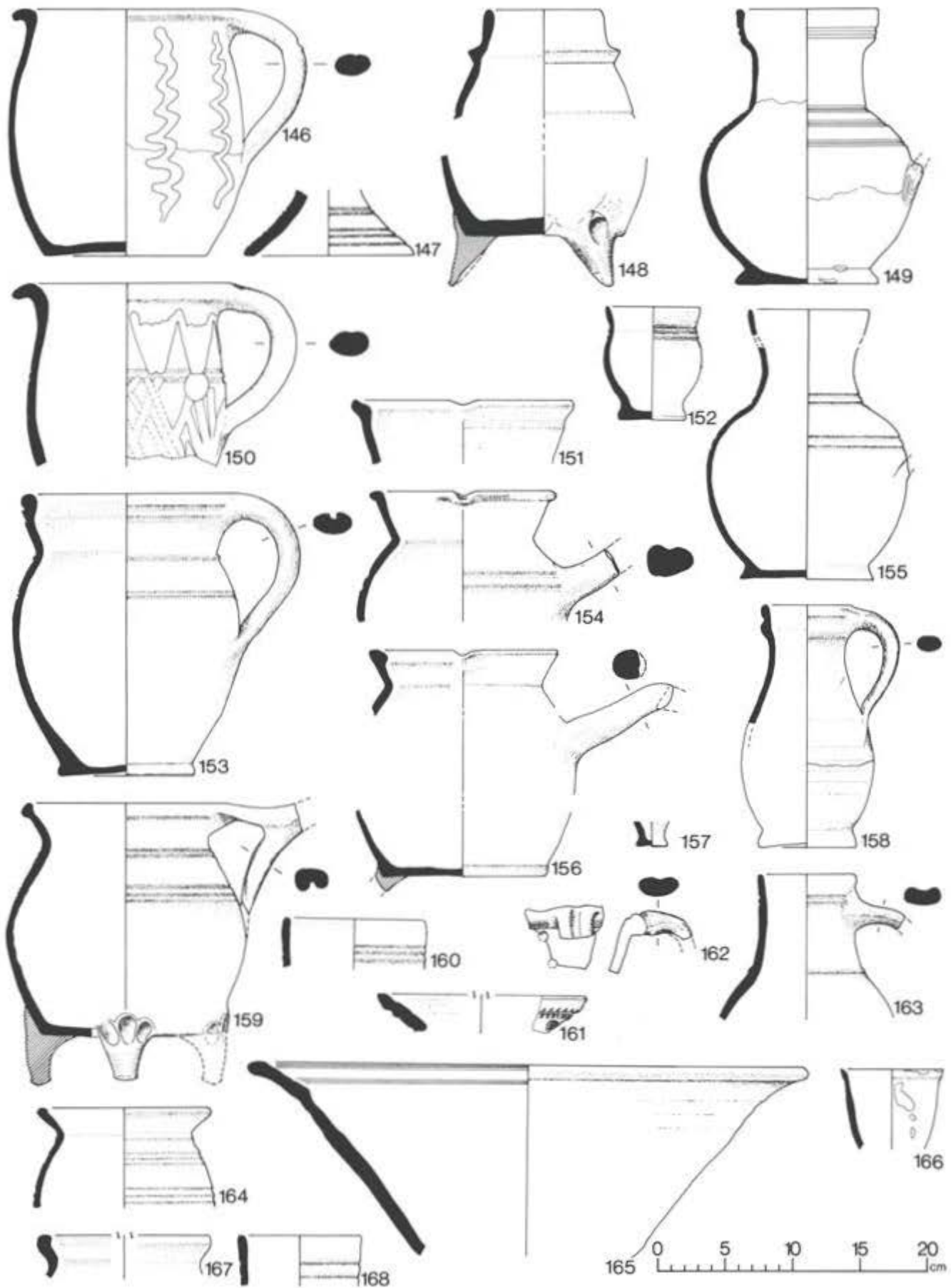


Figure 9.6 Tudor and later coarsewares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)



157	[1993] SSOM MBOX
158	[468] SSOM Jar
159	[2136] SSOM PIP
160	[1472] SSOM DJ?
161	[2027] SSOM CHAF
162	[2026] SSOM CHAF
163	[947] SSOM DJ
164	[2027] SSOM PIP
165	[1037] SSOM Bowl
166	[283] SSOM Bowl
167	[2764] SSOM Jar
168	[1658] SSOM TANK

**Fig 9.7**

169	[1993] SSOM Bowl
170	[233] SSOM Bowl
171	[1037] STROAT Bowl
172	[2141] STROAT Bowl
173	[2065] STROAT? Cup
174	[2640] STROAT Jar
175	[947] STROAT CHAF
176	[1049] MISC Bowl
177	[419] MISC Jar
178	[1781] MISC SW Jar
179	[901] MISC SW Jar
180	[935] MISC SW -
181	[511] MISC SW DJ?
182	[1015] MISC CLOS
183	[1049] MISC Bowl

**b) Tudor and later coarsewares from the London area****Fig 9.8**

184	[1646] GUYS Double dish
185	[419] GUYS Bowl

**c) North Devon**

186	[533] NDCW Jug?
187	[61] NDGT Handled bowl
188	[61] NDGT Jug
189	[61] NDGT Bowl

**d) Surrey/Hampshire border wares**

190	[2763+2756] BORD B PIP
191	[284] BORD MBOX
192	[947] BORD Skillet
193	[528] TUDG ALB?

**e) Post-medieval finewares**

194	[249] CREA TPOT
195	[249] PEAR TANK
196	[2640] SWSG TANK
197	[2085] STRE Cup
198	[61] STBRS POSS
199	[61] STCO POSS
200	[61] STCO Dish

**f) English Stonewares****Fig 9.9**

201	[249] BRS Jar
202	[61] NOTS Mug

**Imported wares****g) Continental Europe**

203	[1045] MISC Jar
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**h) Tin-glazed wares (local? or Dutch?)**

204	[468+469] TGW ALB
205	[469] TGW Cup
206	[947] TGW Salt
207	[947] TGW Jar
208	[233] TGW ALB
209	[1015] TGW ALB
210	[460] TGW Plate
211	[233] TGW Bowl
212	[419] TGW ALB
213	[1637] TGW Mug

**i) China**

214	[136] CHPO Lid
215	[136] CHPO Dish

**j) Italy**

216	[1034] CITG Jug, Pl VI
217	[1993] MLTG <i>Tazza</i> , Pl VII
218	[1048] ITALS Dish
219	[1048] CITG Plate
220	[2213] CITG Jug
221	[137] LIGU Plate, Pls VIII, IX
222	[262] LIGU Dish
223	[1067] LIGU Dish
224	[1067] LIGU Dish, Pls X, XI
225	[1155+1993] CITG Dish, Pls XII, XIII

**k) Low Countries**

226	[535] SNTG Vase
227	[2640] SNTG Vase
228	[1477] SNTG Jug
229	[1639] SNTG Vase
230	[957] SNTG ALB
231	[529] SNTG Vase
232	[1271] SNTG DJ
233	[1284] SNTG DJ
234	[1993] SNTG DJ

**l) Northern France****Fig 9.10**

235	[1822] N French DJ
236	[2027] MART I Flask

**m) Rhineland**

237	[1993] RAER FIG
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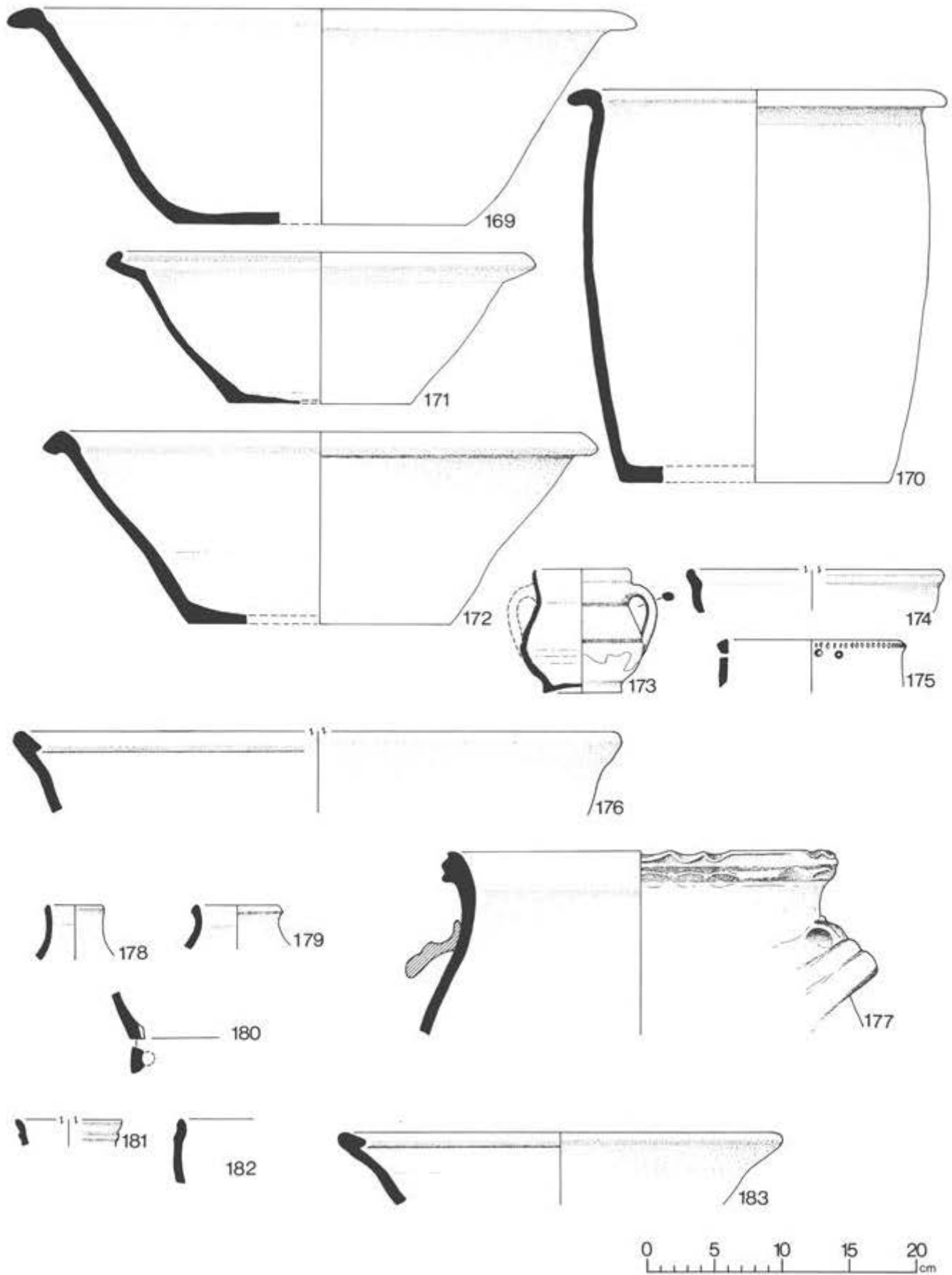


Figure 9.7 Tudor and later coarsewares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)

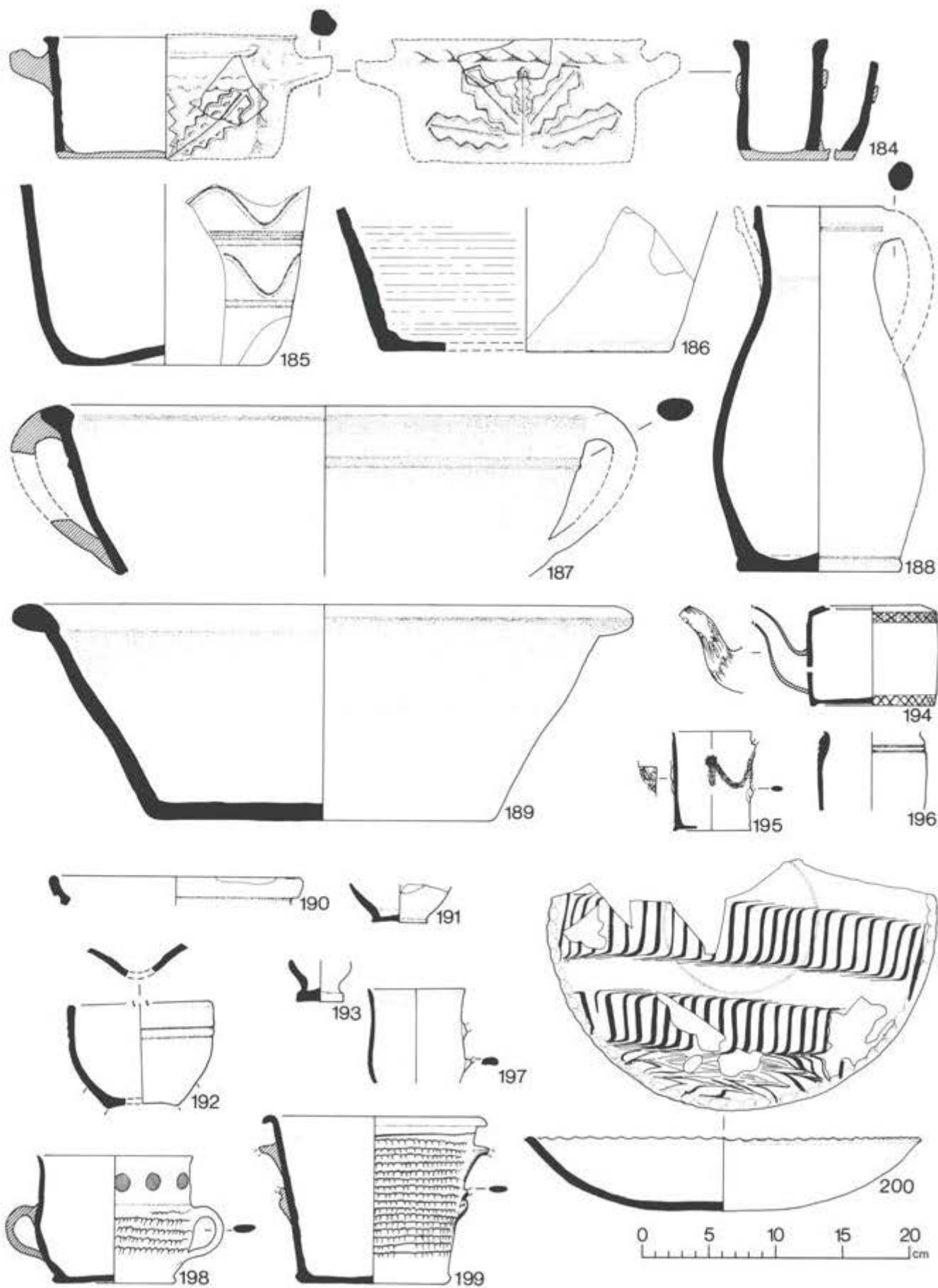


Figure 9.8 Tudor and later coarsewares; post-medieval finewares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)

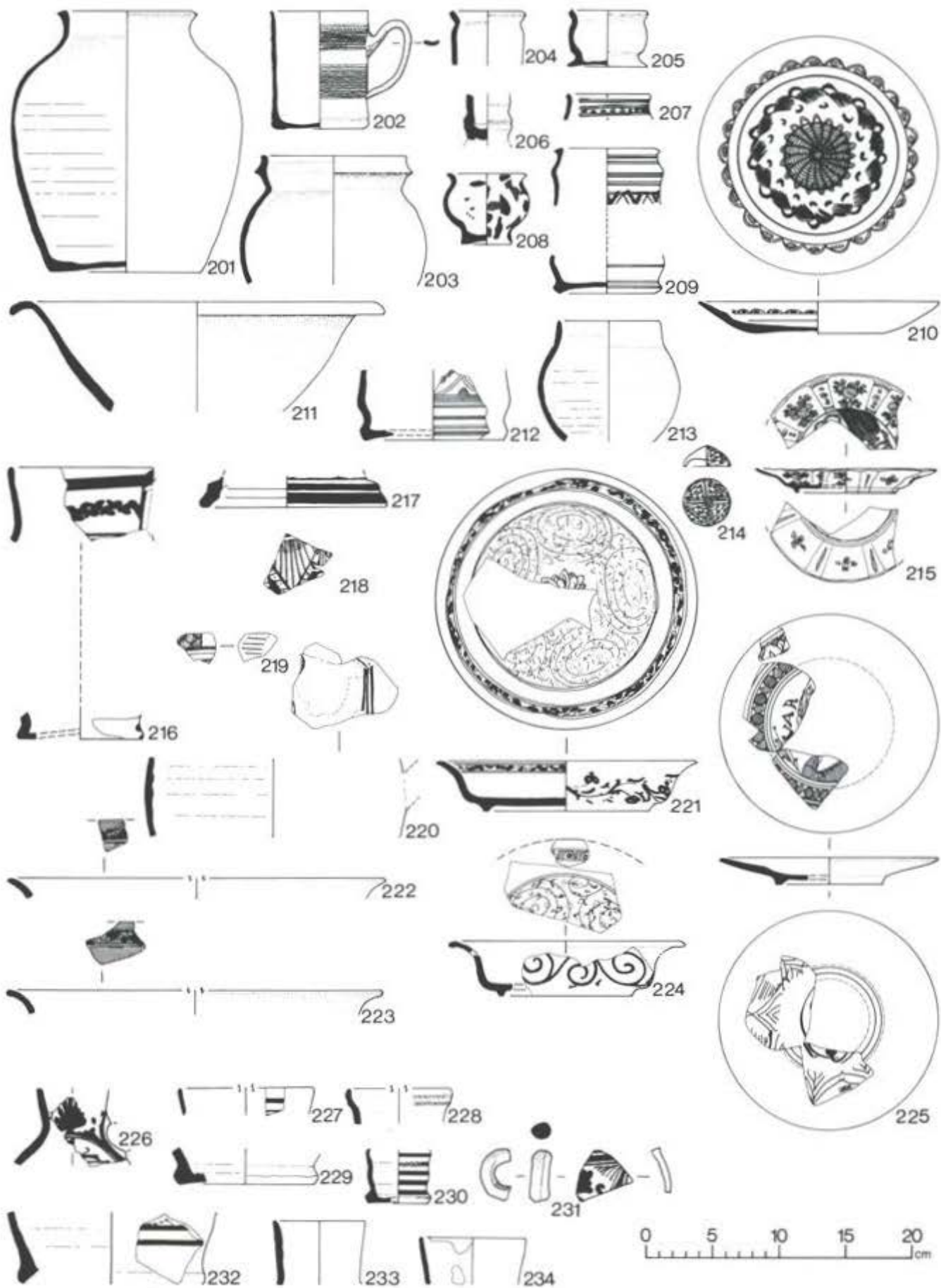


Figure 9.9 English stonewares and imported wares, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)



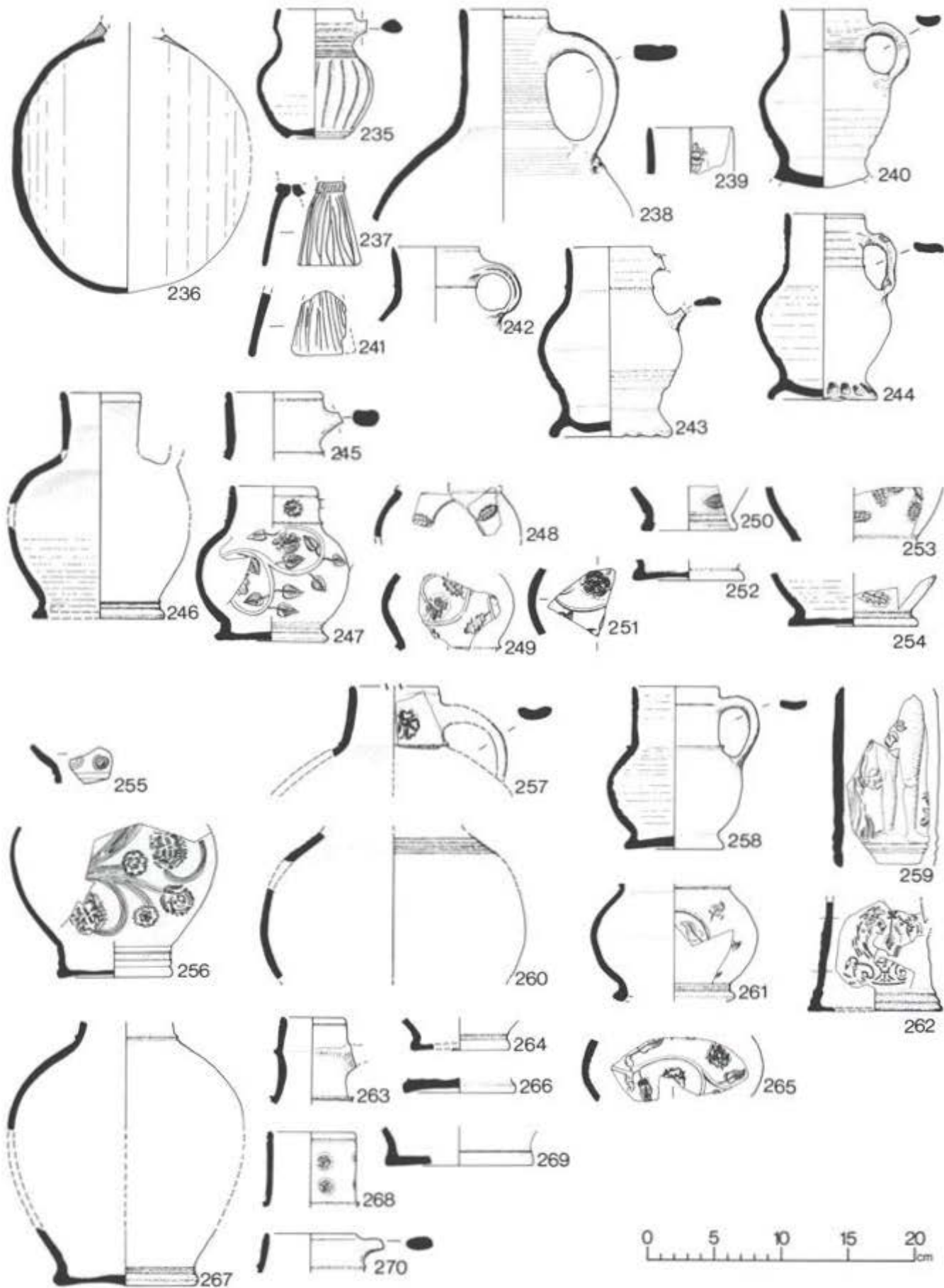


Figure 9.10 Imported wares; northern France and Rhineland stoneware, scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Warr and Suzannah England)

238	[1781] RAER DJ
239	[1286] RAER DJ
240	[1047] RAER DJ
241	[1991+1641] RAER FIG
242	[2065] RAER DJ
243	[1045] RAER DJ
244	[1046] RAER DJ
245	[3022] KOLN DJ
246	[137] KOLN DJ
247	[1048] KOLN DJ
248	[283] KOLN DJ
249	[1282] KOLN DJ
250	[1993] KOLN DJ
251	[1067] KOLN DJ
252	[1067] KOLN DJ
253	[1993] KOLN DJ
254	[1291] KOLN DJ
255	[805] WEST Jug
256	[419] WEST DJ
257	[1478] FREC DJ
258	[1067] FREC DJ
259	[1134] FREC SCHNELLE
260	[1780] FREC DJ
261	[1993] FREC DJ
262	[1134+1117+1048] FREC SCHNELLE
263	[1048] FREC DJ
264	[3022] FREC DJ
265	[1048] FREC DJ
266	[127] FREC DJ
267	[1993+1044] FREC DJ
268	[137] FREC DJ
269	[1625] FREC DJ
270	[704] FREC Mug

#### n) Spain

##### *Lustrewares and tinglazed wares*

Fig 9.11

271	[527] ANDA Jug
272	[1822+137+272] VALE Bowl, Pls XIV, XV
273	[545] VALE Bowl
274	[1048+333] VALE Dish
275	[537] VALE Jug/Vase
276	[136] VALE Bowl
277	[1477] SPTG ALB
278	[1993] SPTG ALB, Pl XVIII
279	[1134] SPTG ALB
280	[1048+1993] SPTG ALB
281	[1993] SPTG ALB, Pl XVI
282	[1402] SPTG ALB
283	[1993] SPTG ALB
284	[1993+1048] SPTG ALB

##### *Coarsewares*

285	[3022] SP AMPH
286	[956] OLIV AMPH
287	[1015] OLIV AMPH
288	[1048] SPAM Bowl
289	[540] SPAM Lid

290	[532] SPAM Lid
291	[529] SPAM Dish
292	[539] SPAM Jar
293	[530] SPAM Dish
294	[1993] SPAM Jar
295	[538] SPAM Lid
296	[529] SPAM Dish
297	[529] SPAM Jar
298	[539] SPAM Lid
299	[547] SPAM Jar
300	[1048] SPOW
301	[539] SPAM Lid
302	[529] MERC Jar
303	[545] SPAM Lid
304	[529] SPAM Jar
305	[329] SPAM Jar
306	[519] SPAM Jar
307	[533] SPOW Jug handle

#### o) South-West France

308	[313] SAIP FIG, Pl XVII
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## Discussion

### Site formation

The Acton Court excavations apparently present a situation in which a continuous sequence of occupation gave rise to a discontinuous series of archaeological deposits. Judging by the quantities of pottery recovered from a very small fraction of this occupation sequence in Period 4, there must be large rubbish deposits somewhere within easy reach of the manorial complex containing the refuse associated with occupation of the site in Periods 3, the later part of Period 4 and Period 5.

The uneven recovery of pottery makes comparison of pottery use at different periods difficult and for the majority of the sequence it is difficult enough to be sure of the actual sequence and of which wares were in contemporary use. Conclusions for these periods are therefore tentative for lack of data. For Period 4 there is a large quantity of pottery, recovered from a number of separate deposits. Analysis of joining sherds from the same and different contexts shows that many of these deposits form units and that despite the stratigraphy found within them they actually contain pottery from the same vessels. There is no advantage in presenting separately the evidence from each context within a deposit. Statistics derived from the deposits must also be used carefully, since the vessels within the groups are represented by more sherds than is normal for the site. The presence of a single,

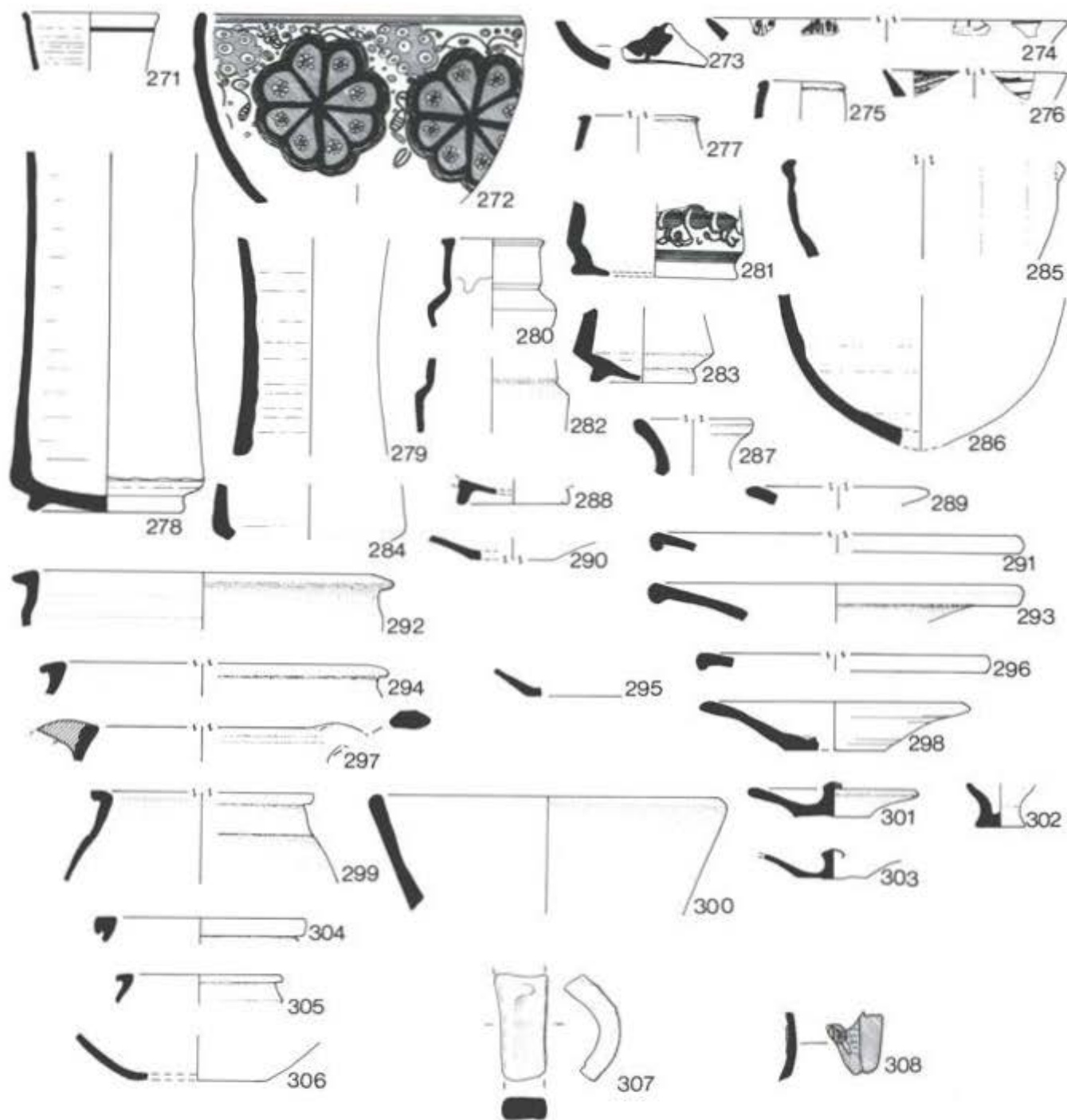


Figure 9.11 Imported wares: Spain (271-307) and south-west France (308), scale 1:4 (drawing: Dave Watt and Suzannah England)



smashed, Spanish blue-glazed *albarello* can therefore give a misleading impression about the total quantity of imported pottery in use. The method of quantification adopted, the sherd count, is too imprecise to enable actual figures for the relative frequency of these uncommon, imported pottery types to be calculated. The measurement of rim and base percentage to give estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs) was not undertaken and would in any case not have solved the general problem, that there appears to have been an uneven occurrence of pottery types in different parts of the excavation, even though sherd links and general similarity of types suggest that the vessels were in contemporary use. In such cases the laying out of the whole assemblage and an attempt to produce minimum numbers of vessels would be the only way to produce more accurate figures for the composition of the original assemblage. Study of the imported pottery in detail showed that what at first sight appeared to be single vessels actually consisted of two or more nearly identical pots (for example, the Raeren stoneware figurines and the Spanish blue tinglazed *albarello*). To identify individual vessels within undecorated red earthenwares would not have been practicable.

Of further interest in the study of the way in which the Acton Court pottery assemblages were formed is the way in which some deposits contain pottery in use over a considerable period of time and others appear to contain pottery from single events. Examples of the former are the layers which accumulated over the filled-in south moat and survived under the ciderhouse and of the latter, the 18th-century fills of the Tudor garderobes and the late 18th- or early 19th-century filling of the well. Despite their very different compositions these deposits may well all be associated with the same process, the abandonment and partial demolition of the south and west ranges and the west half of the north range between the late 17th and the early 19th centuries.

### Dating the site sequence

The only firmly fixed points in the stratigraphic sequence are those which can be related to the dendrochronological dating of the east range of the Tudor complex to spring 1535 and of the stair turret in the north-east angle of the court to winter

1575/spring 1576. The coins form a very useful guide to the date and of course should give a *terminus post quem* for the deposition of the layers in which they were (although in practice a few of the coins may have been intrusive). Prior to 1534–5, the site chronology is very largely dependent on the pottery dating. In Periods 4.2–4.4 architectural stylistic dating is possible. From Period 4.6 onwards the significance of the pottery as dating evidence re-emerges, though it is supplemented by other evidence such as clay tobacco pipes and bottles.

Unfortunately, the precise sequence of pottery fabrics and forms in the Iron Acton area depends to a large degree upon the interpretation of the Acton Court sequence, so producing the danger of circular argument. In the detailed description of the pottery given above, a fine line has, hopefully, been trodden so that a sequence established on one part of the site can indeed be used to date events in another.

To recap, the series of ceramic phases recognised within the Acton Court sequence is summarised below:

CP1: *Pottery characteristics:* BATHA spouted pitchers  
*Groups at Acton Court:* residual pottery only. No stratified assemblages  
*Suggested dating:* later than c 1050 and earlier than c 1150

CP2: *Pottery characteristics:* BATHA, MISC LY, MINETY, HG, MISC SY cps, HG jugs  
*Groups at Acton Court:* Filling of quarry and other Period 2 deposits  
*Suggested dating:* early 13th century

CP3: *Pottery characteristics:* BR jugs with applied decoration, bridge spouts, thumbled bases, NH jugs  
*Groups at Acton Court:* Periods 3.2 and 3.3 deposits  
*Suggested dating:* Late 13th to mid-14th centuries.

CP4: *Pottery characteristics:* BR plain jugs, MINETY wheelthrown cooking pots and jugs  
*Groups at Acton Court:* Period 3.3 and 3.4 deposits.  
*Suggested dating:* Late 14th to mid-15th centuries.

CP5: *Pottery characteristics:* CSTN, FP, KOLN, MALV, SNTG, SSOM, TUDG  
*Groups at Acton Court:* Area 2: Pre-Period 4 old ground surface and Periods 4.1–4.3 dump.  
*Suggested dating:* Early 16th century (coins and pottery suggest residual late 15th as well but there are no assemblages or *a priori* means of separating which local coarsewares occur before c 1500).



CP6: *Pottery characteristics:* AK, GUYS, BORD, MALVP, FREC and STROAT. KOLN and SSOM much more frequent.

*Groups at Acton Court:* Period 4.2 moat fill under north and west ranges; construction levels of north and west ranges. Period 4.3 moat fills and Period 4.4 south moat fill.

*Suggested dating:* External dating of deposition shows that Period 4.3 should be dated to the early to mid-1550s, but the same pottery range is present in Period 4.2, which is datable to between the late 1540s and the early 1550s.

CP7: *Pottery characteristics:* MALVP and MINETY out of use. SSOM dominant.

*Groups at Acton Court:* Context 136

*Suggested dating:* This is interpreted as a deposit accumulating over a long period of time and little more can be said on the basis of forty stratified sherds. Late 16th to early 17th century.

CP8: *Pottery characteristics:* NDGT, NOTS, STBRS, STMO, STSL, WEST

*Groups at Acton Court:* Make-up over south moat fill, North moat fill, filling of garderobes 222 and 1003

*Suggested dating:* Late 17th century or early 18th century (when STMO is present). Absence of SWSG is probably a good guide that these groups are earlier than c 1720 since the early slipped SWSG tankards are by no means high-class products.

CP9: *Pottery characteristics:* NDGT replacing/replaced SSOM, SWSG, developed forms of STSL

*Groups at Acton Court:* Fill of garderobe 279, Period 5.1b rubble

*Suggested dating:* Mid-18th century, c 1720–70

CP10: *Pottery characteristics:* PEAR, CREA, MISC RED

*Groups at Acton Court:* Fill of Well 80, Period 5.1b deposits

*Suggested dating:* Late 18th to early 19th centuries

It will be clear that only the vaguest sketch can yet be made of the pattern of pottery use at Acton Court. However, even this is sufficient to draw some general conclusions concerning the source or sources of local pottery and how these changed with time. Of particular interest is the source of the imported wares.

### Sources of pottery

Despite a programme of thin-section analysis, a proportion of the pottery from Acton Court could not be identified and the precise source of the majority of the handmade coarsewares used in the early 13th century

and (perhaps) later is not known. Since these miscellaneous wares have not been found in any quantity at Bristol, Bath, Gloucester or in north-west Wiltshire they are presumably from sources within 20 km of the site. This local pottery manufacture seems to have declined later in the 13th century although ungrouped, wheelthrown sand-tempered wares are present in Period 3 deposits. By the 16th century there is no evidence for local pottery manufacture and ungrouped vessels are more probably from non-local or exotic sources.

Four source areas were important in the supply of coarsewares throughout the medieval and Tudor periods. The earliest, apparently, was west Wiltshire, the source of Bath Fabric A cooking pots and spouted pitchers. The long-distance transport of these vessels is well attested. They occur in late 11th- or early 12th-century groups in Gloucester, Droitwich and Chepstow, for example, and their presence is therefore no real surprise. It does, however, demonstrate that the vessels were not simply being carried along long-distance trade routes. Nash Hill ware, present in small quantities in Period 3, comes from the same general area as Bath Fabric A and is an indication that this source of supply continued to be used in the later 13th and early 14th centuries. The fate of the Nash Hill potteries is unclear. There is no indication from the kiln sites that the industry continued later than c 1350 but the heraldry on some decorated floor tiles used at Newton St Loe suggests that tiles at least were being made in Nash Hill ware in the late 14th century. Kilns in broadly the same area, at Crockerton near Warminster (D G Hurst (ed) 1968, 187, fig 61) and Langley Burrell near Chippenham, show that pottery continued to be made in west Wiltshire in the later medieval and Tudor periods but no examples of either ware were recognised in the large collections from Period 4. It suggests that this source of supply had ceased to be significant for Acton Court by the 16th century. However, although Crockerton ware can be distinguished from South Somerset ware in thin-section, since it contains a high quantity of rounded iron ore, it is not easy to distinguish by eye.

The next source is north Wiltshire. In the 13th to 16th centuries this area supplied Minety-type wares to Acton Court while from the mid-16th to the 18th centuries it supplied Ashton Keynes wares, from the adjacent village. From the data available it is

not possible to chart the fluctuations in the trade in this pottery, although a general survey has suggested that the late 13th to early 14th centuries actually saw a decline, while there was a general decline in the 16th century, following the change in fabric, typology and source of pottery from Minety to Ashton Keynes. The assemblage from the quarry pit shows that about a quarter of all sherds found were of Minety-type ware whereas sherds from wheelthrown vessels are absent from Period 3.1 deposits and present in Period 3.3. The impression is that Minety-type ware was common in the later medieval period and the Period 4 assemblages from Area 2 confirm that in the late 15th to early 16th centuries a sizeable proportion of all sherds were from the Minety area (53 per cent in the old ground surface and 20 per cent in the overlying dumps). By the 1530s, however, the proportion of north Wiltshire wares had declined considerably even though Ashton Keynes ware makes its first appearance at this date. Despite this decline Ashton Keynes ware continued to arrive at Acton Court throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, although never forming a high percentage of the pottery found.

The pottery of the Bristol area is present at Acton Court from the early 13th century, first as Ham Green wares (both the light-firing glazed wares and red-firing cooking pots) then in the form of Bristol Redcliffe-type ware. Given the high quantity of Malvern Chase ware found in early 16th-century deposits in Bristol itself, it is unlikely that the Bristol area potteries were still in operation at that time. Their decline during the 15th century has still to be documented archaeologically. At Acton Court it is uncertain whether Bristol Redcliffe type wares were still current later than Period 3.3. The frequency of Bristol area wares can only be reliably estimated for Period 2, where they account for *c* 10 per cent of all sherds. It is fairly certain, however, that they account for a much larger proportion of the pottery used in Periods 3.1–3.3 after which, as noted above, Bristol temporarily ceased to be a significant production centre for pottery. It is probable that the one recognised North Devon Calcareous ware vessel (no 186, from the Period 4.2 dumped deposits in Area 2) was imported via Bristol. The unsourced wheelthrown glazed ware with a fine pink fabric (FP in Tables 23 and 24) may have been made from the same clay source as the Bristol Redcliffe wares but at that period there is another potential source

for this ware, Hanham Abbots, from where a potter supplied William Worcestre in the late 1470s with a pot made to his specification (Worcestre, *Itin*, 77). It is clear, however, that FP was declining in use during the construction of the north and west ranges since only one vessel, a jug from the moat fill in Area 7 (no 119) was found in a Period 4 context within the moated manor.

South Somerset ware, made at a variety of sites of which the best-known is Donyatt (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988), may have arrived at Acton Court through Bristol but this cannot be assumed to be the case, since the ware is predominant in contemporary deposits at Bath, to where the obvious route from Donyatt is overland, along the Fosse Way. Indeed, the evidence from a cesspit fill from Bristol Greyfriars, dated by the excavators to the Dissolution, would suggest that South Somerset wares were at that time rare in Bristol. By the end of the century they were dominant, while the presence of vessels from the Nether Stowey kilns in Bristol by that date is good evidence for the transport of pottery by boat from west and probably also south Somerset to Bristol (Good 1987, 36–9).

It is only really in the late 17th and early 18th centuries that there is good evidence for a resurgence in the importance of Bristol as a supplier and entrepôt of pottery for Acton Court. North Devon gravel-tempered ware occurs with increasing frequency and undoubtedly became the most commonly used coarseware at Acton Court by the middle of the 18th century. A study of Tables 33, 34 and 35 (pp 304–5) suggests that this North Devon ware may in fact have come to prominence quite suddenly in the late 17th or early 18th century since it is absent from the initial demolition of Room 32 (which contained a Charles II farthing dated early to mid-1670s), present in very small quantities in the dump over the south moat (which contains very late 17th- or early 18th-century stonewares) and accounts for 45 of the 83 sherds from the north moat fill, which unfortunately cannot be more closely dated than late 17th to early 18th century.

Many of the slipwares found in these late 17th- and 18th-century deposits may well have a Bristol provenance, although it is very difficult reliably to distinguish them from Staffordshire products. Only four or five sherds of Staffordshire red earthenware were found, a fabric which is much more common further up the Severn Valley where the majority of late 17th- and 18th-century

**Table 41: Sources of 18th- and 19th-century stoneware based on total identified assemblage**

228	62.47%	BRS Bristol
21	5.75%	DERBS Derbyshire
16	4.38%	ENGS Unknown English
67	18.36%	LONS London
33	9.04%	NOTS Nottingham
365	100.00%	<i>Total</i>

**Table 42: Sources of late 18th- and 19th-century stoneware against suggested *terminus post quem* of manufacture**

TPQ	BRS	LONS	DERBS	ENGS	NOTS	N=
1780	100	-	-	-	-	1
1790	50	50	-	-	-	2
1800	-	100	-	-	-	1
1820	100	-	-	-	-	3
1830	50	50	-	-	-	8
1840	59	29	6	6	-	17
1850	33	44	22	-	-	18
1860	87	-	7	7	-	30
1870	87	8	5	-	-	102
1880	87	8	-	4	-	49
1890	78	11	-	-	11	9
1900	-	-	100	-	-	1
N=	190	32	13	5	1	241

light-bodied slipwares are probably Staffordshire. It is also quite possible, but unproven, that the creamware which formed the majority of pottery used in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was of Bristol manufacture. The 18th- and 19th-century stonewares found at Acton Court show an increase in the quantity of Bristol stoneware, much of it in the form of flagons used for spirits purchased not directly from Bristol but from the local market town of Chipping Sodbury (Tables 41 and 42).

The final source which supplied a significant proportion of pottery to Acton Court was the Malvern Chase potteries. These wares were produced at Hanley Castle, to the north of Upton on Severn, and shipped down the Severn from the beginning of the 12th century to the middle of the 17th century. In the 1630s Malvern Chase was enclosed, robbing the potters of their fuel and, perhaps, their source of clay. Malvern Chase cooking pots formed just over 2 per cent of the pottery from the Period 2 quarry fill in the early 13th century. These vessels were made by hand and probably bonfire-

fired. Later in the 13th century reduced greyware vessels thrown on a wheel replaced this type. The absence of sherds of this type from Acton Court is evidence that the sherds of Malvern Chase cooking pot from Period 3 deposits are actually residual from early 13th-century deposits. The total size of the contemporary pottery assemblage from the whole of Period 3 is so small that it is difficult to be certain that Malvern Chase wares did not continue to be used at Acton Court in small quantities. The two assemblages of early 16th-century pottery from Area 2 both produced small collections of Malvern Chase sherds (15 per cent and 13.5 per cent) of which only one vessel is likely to be residual. The remaining twenty-six sherds were identified as jugs (seventeen sherds), jugs or jars (four sherds), skillets (three sherds) and a possible bowl (two sherds). Late 15th- and early 16th-century Malvern Chase assemblages from Gloucester similarly are dominated by jugs. Period 4.2 and 4.3 deposits (Tables 24-7, pp 300-1) produced progressively less and less of this glazed, sand-tempered Malvern Chase ware, declining from nearly 17 per cent in the fill of the moat under the north and west ranges to an average of 9 per cent in the Period 4.3 moat fills and thereafter forming only 2 per cent or less of assemblages. The forms represented in these later deposits were jugs (41 per cent), mugs (27 per cent), dishes (12 per cent), pipkins (10.5 per cent), jars (8 per cent) and a lid (1 per cent) in an assemblage of ninety-five sherds.

A further fabric, termed Malvern Chase pink ware (MALVP) is first found at Acton Court in the Period 4.2 moat fill, where it formed 10 per cent of all pottery. It too declined in frequency in later deposits, to 7 per cent in the Period 4.3 moat fills. It also accounted for a significant proportion of the pottery found in the filling of the south moat post-dating the retaining wall (Table 30, p 303) and the make-up which overlay this filling and which probably contains later 16th-century material (Table 34, p 305). It is not found in later deposits in significant quantities. The range of forms found in this ware, MALVP, is quite different from that found in the red sandy ware, MALV, even though there is a possibility that the two wares were in contemporary production, or at least that MALVP rapidly succeeded MALV. Of a total of 312 identifiable sherds the vast majority were from jars (79 per cent), followed by dishes (7 per cent), pipkins (6 per cent), jugs (5 per cent), bowls (1 per cent) and lids (1 per cent).



The only other local source of pottery of any importance was Stroata. The pottery at Stroata lay on the Gloucester to Chepstow road and its products are found mainly on sites accessible from the road. The Acton Court evidence shows that there was also an appreciable trade across the Severn. It also refines the date-range of this ware more precisely. There are no sherds from the Period 4.2 deposits in Area 2 but two (1.39 per cent) in the infill deposits associated with the Period 4.2 construction of the north and west ranges. Sherds were also found in some of the Period 4.3 moat fills, amounting to between 1 per cent and 2.6 per cent of the total, depending on the identity of twelve sherds. Stroata ware continued to be present in later deposits accounting for similar small proportions of the pottery in late 16th- and early 17th-century deposits. In the two mid-17th-century ditches however Stroata ware formed just over 4 per cent of the admittedly very small assemblages, whereas in the make-up deposits over the south moat fill it formed 5.5 per cent of all pottery, after which it is not found in any quantity. This data confirms the end date for the Stroata pottery found at Gloucester (Vince 1983b) but there the absence of Stroata ware in later deposits might have been due to the setting up of the Newent Glasshouse pottery c 1670. The starting date for the ware at Acton Court is earlier than previously imagined and earlier than the meagre documentary evidence.

### Non-local and imported wares

Although found in a residual context, there is one sherd of early 13th-century pottery which is undoubtedly exotic at Acton Court, a fragment of Developed Stamford ware jug.

Later 13th- to mid-14th-century exotics consist of six sherds of Saintonge ware (five polychrome and one green glazed) and three sherds of late 13th- to mid-14th-century Brill/Boarstall ware jug. Considering the small quantity of late 13th- to mid-14th-century pottery surviving on the site this is a high incidence. Saintonge ware of any sort is rare in the west of England except at coastal sites and river ports. It has not been found at Bath, for example, but is common at Bristol and Chepstow. It is therefore difficult to know what the importance of these finds might be since by the late 13th century the majority of Acton Court's pottery was being obtained in Bristol. Two sherds of Andalu-

sian Lustreware were found, both in 16th-century deposits, but this ware is first known in England in late 13th-century contexts. The sherds, from an *albarello* and a jug, might therefore have come to Acton Court at any date between the late 13th and the early 16th centuries.

Most sites occupied in the late 15th and early 16th centuries in lowland England produce sherds of Rhenish and Low Countries origin but the quantity found at Acton Court is exceptional. This is true for the Period 4.1-4.3 and Pre-Period 4 pottery from Area 2 as well as from the slightly later pottery associated with the north and west ranges and deposited in Periods 4.2 and 4.3.

Wares from these regions, Rhenish stonewares and South Netherlands maiolica, account for 20 per cent of the pottery from Area 2, rising to between 25 per cent and 35 per cent of the early to mid-16th-century assemblages, falling to 12 per cent and 15 per cent of the pottery from the mid-17th-century ditches, 10 per cent of the pottery from the make-up over the south moat, 2 per cent from the late 17th- to early 18th-century north moat fill, 1 per cent in the assemblage from garderobe 1003 and 0 per cent in that from Well 80, although seven sherds of Westerwald blue stoneware chamber pots and a mineral water bottle, both mid-18th-century types, confirm that Rhenish stoneware continued to be used at Acton Court. The exceptional deposit from the demolition of Room 32 has been noted and goes against this steady downward trend. It is probably, judging from the isolated fragments of later 16th-century Frechen and Siegburg stoneware (types which are rare in the West Country) that the exceptionally high incidence of these wares continued to the end of the 16th century. There are, by contrast, no examples of early 17th-century blue-decorated Raeren jugs of the types seen in Vermeer's paintings although a single possible Raeren vessel was found amongst the Frechen bellarmines in the demolition rubble in Room 32.

Spanish and Portuguese pottery is found in quantity from the early 16th century onwards. That it represents a series of purchases over a period of time is shown by the fact that the range of fabrics, forms and decoration present varies between groups. In the Period 4.1-4.3 dump from Area 2, sherds of Mercury jar and Seville whiteware were found, types not present elsewhere on the site. The Valencian lustreware has a characteristic 15th-century type of decora-



tion. Portuguese coarseware (SPAM) is the most numerous type present, accounting for 19 per cent of the assemblage whilst the remaining types account for a further 3 per cent. In the construction deposits of the north and west range however Valencian lustreware is the most common Iberian ware. Three sherds of blue-glazed *albarello*, possibly Caparra Blue type (Hurst 1995, 51), indicate that this set of vessels, undoubtedly a single purchase, had already arrived at Acton Court although the majority of the sherds, forming a higher percentage of the total assemblage, occurred in the Period 4.3 moat fills. The absence of Morisco ware is significant and tends to support Hurst's view that it was not generally traded in north-west Europe, but was owned by visiting Spaniards (Hurst 1995, 51). The overall percentage of Iberian pottery in these deposits is less than in Area 2, ranging from 9 per cent in the infill deposits, 13 per cent in the floor make-ups to 14 per cent in the Period 4.3 moat fills and back to 9 per cent in the Period 4.4–4.5 moat fill. A single sherd of Valencian lustreware was found in context 136 and may well have been used in the later 16th or early 17th century. Both the mid-17th-century ditch fills produced sherds of Portuguese coarseware (SPAM), accounting for 2 per cent and 1 per cent of the assemblages. It is difficult to say whether these sherds are from contemporary vessels since there is other pottery in both groups which could be residual and 16th-century in date. That there was still Spanish pottery entering Acton Court in Period 4.6 is shown by the presence of eleven sherds of olive jars from Seville in the make-up over the south moat fill and sixteen from various other deposits. These, however, are the latest demonstrable imports from Spain on the site and account for just over 1 per cent of the total assemblage.

French wares are absent from the Period 4.1–4.3 dumps in Area 2, although as we have seen, pottery from south-west France was used on the site in the late 13th to mid-14th century. There is a single sherd of Saintonge ware from the infill deposits beneath the north and west ranges and part of a polychrome figurine of later 16th-century date from the make-up over the south moat. With those exceptions the French pottery found is all from northern France. Beauvais wares are represented by sherds of a green and brown glazed mug, the majority of which was found in the infill levels of the north and west ranges (no 235). Martin-

camp type stoneware (Hurst Type II) and white earthenware (Hurst Type I) was also found in the infill levels and in subsequent deposits. Stoneware sherds outnumber white earthenware ones but there is no obvious progression through the sequence and it is more likely that the majority of these vessels arrived on the site early in the construction of the north and west ranges or just before. Martincamp type flasks are, however, regular finds (though never common) on West Country sites occupied in the 16th and 17th centuries and the few finds from later deposits may have been contemporary imports.

Italian wares were much rarer than Spanish or French wares at Acton Court and undoubtedly were the most highly prized of the Tudor imports. The earliest stratified sherds are of Ligurian tin-glazed ware from the fill of the medieval moat under the north and west ranges. Several nearly identical vessels are represented and must have formed a single purchase. The suggestion that they were acquired for the royal visit in 1535 is supported by the dating of similar pottery found outside the fort of Priamar at Savona, assigned to the period 1525–35 (Lavagna 1992, 138). Stylistically the vessels are based on Turkish Iznik prototypes (Raby 1989). The majority of the sherds were discarded in Period 4.2 but a few others were found in the Period 4.3 moat fills and later contexts. It is less likely that they represent vessels which had remained in use than that they are redeposited rubbish from Period 4.2. Two Montelupo tin-glazed vessels are represented at Acton Court, both parts of *tazze* (large pedestalled bowls decorated inside and out). The first was broken before the construction of the north and west ranges although sherds occur in the Period 4.3 and 4.4–4.5 moat fills. The second is represented by sherds from the mid-17th-century ditch in Area 8. Sherds of a tin-glazed plate decorated with a female head and inscription is probably from an Italian source. They were found in the Period 4.3 moat fill. A few other sherds of Italian tin-glazed ware, probably all from jugs with wide strap handles and trefoil spouts, were recognised although it is difficult to distinguish sherds of these vessels from those of South Netherlands maiolica. Imports from Italy were mainly used at Acton Court for a very short period of time in the early 16th century although there are two sherds of a marbled slipware bowl, probably from Pisa, from a Period 5.1

deposit. This ware, whose most common product in Britain is the lion's head costrel, is rare on sites in the West Country. On the evidence from excavations in the City of London they appear to arrive in the country first in the middle of the 17th century, just before the development of English marbled slipwares later in the century.

Chinese porcelain first occurs at Acton Court in context 136 where fragments of at least four vessels were found. These include a dish decorated in the Wan Li style and therefore datable to the early 17th century. A single sherd from the construction of the north and west ranges is thought to be intrusive. Twenty-one sherds of Chinese porcelain were found in later contexts from the early 18th century onwards. The high quantity of small vessels such as cups, bowls and dishes (twelve sherds) in comparison to plates and vases (six sherds) is typical of a relatively poor household. Fieldwalking over the sites of 18th-century cottages in the West Country produces sherds of similar export porcelain dishes and this ware as much as any shows the rapid decline in social status suffered by the inhabitants of Acton Court from the middle of the 17th century onwards.

## Vessel glass

by Paul Courtney

### Introduction

#### Forest glass

The forest or *waldglas* tradition of North Europe used plant-derived potash as a flux. The dark, often green, colours of the glass are derived from iron impurities in the sand used as a raw material. Potash glass is especially prone to weathering and many of the Acton Court vessels were in poor condition. Hanging lamps and urinals were particularly common medieval forms in England, and the latter form continues into the early modern period. Five thickened urinal bases (Fig 9.14.33, Fig 9.17.60 and 61) and three rims (Fig 9.17.59) were found in 16th-century or later contexts at Acton. Urinals were used by doctors to gauge the patient's health by the state of the urine. The forest glass industry was transformed in the second half of the 16th century by the arrival of Huguenot

glassmakers who introduced new forms, including beakers and the less common goblet. Immigrants are first recorded as arriving in the Weald in 1567 but were soon responsible for the spread of glassmaking to northern and western England (Charleston 1984a, 81–6). Lorrainer glass workers had reached Buckholt in Hampshire by the 1570s (Thorpe 1961, 87–8), and glasshouses of Lorrainer-type of around 1600 are also known from St Weonards in Herefordshire (Bridgewater 1963), Newent in the Forest of Dean (Vince 1977) and Woodchester in Gloucestershire (Daniels 1950).

The early forest glass, found at Acton Court in Period 4.2–4.4 (mid-16th century) contexts, was probably from the Weald, or possibly Buckholt, though some may have been imported from Normandy. The Exeter port books, for example, indicate the occasional import of glasses from Rouen in the last three decades of the 16th century (Allan 1984, 263). The later forest glass may be local in origin, for instance from Woodchester, only 25 km away. The local 'Lorrainer' glass sites presumably died out with the granting of a glass monopoly to Sir Robert Mansell in 1615 and the accompanying prohibition of wood as a fuel (Charleston 1984a, 74–5). Glass production at Newent, however, appears to have continued to about 1638 (Vince 1977, 15 and 38). Relatively little is known of the English glass industry and its products in the coal-fired era from 1615–60. However, excavations of the coal-fired furnace at Denton, near Manchester (Hurst Vose 1971), and the oil shale-fired furnace at Kimmeridge in Dorset (Crossley 1987), have helped to shed light on green glass production in this period. Glass houses are documented at Newnham on Severn in 1662 (*VCH Gloucs* 1972, 43) and at Bristol in 1651 (Buckley 1925, 36) but nothing is known of their products. Green glass continued to be used in later centuries for bottles and phials.

#### Colourless glass

In the 15th century the Venetians developed high quality, colourless *crystallo* glass. They used soda from glasswort (*barilla*), a seashore plant, as a flux and manganese as a decolorising agent. Glassmakers from Venice and Altare near Genoa soon spread glass making in the Venetian style (*à la façon de Venise*) to other parts of Europe. It is extremely difficult to distinguish glass from the different centres as they shared most



forms and even *waldglas* beaker forms were quickly incorporated into the international repertoire. The mid-16th-century glass from Acton Court, however, is perhaps most likely to derive from Venice, given the known importance of its export trade, though its products cannot safely be distinguished from the other Mediterranean glass houses at Altare and Barcelona. A group of eight Venetian glassmakers was also working in London around 1549, due to shortage of work at Murano (Charleston 1984a, 52–3). Venetian glassworkers had also reached the South Netherlands by the 1530s but it is unlikely that a substantial export trade was established until much later (Zecchin 1987–9; Barovier-Mentasti *et al* 1982; Dreier 1989; Tait 1979; Drahotová 1983 and Klein and Lloyd 1984 are useful recent works, the last three in English).

By the end of the 16th century provenancing is increasingly difficult and there is no ready way to distinguish between Venetian, English or Low Countries products. Dating is also problematic, particularly the date at which forms and decorative techniques go out of fashion (see Polak 1976a and Charleston 1967, 165 and 1979). Polak (1976a, 274) has noted that some pieces in the Rosenborg castle collection in Copenhagen, acquired by King Frederick IV in 1708–9 during a visit to Venice, could easily be mistaken for Renaissance pieces. Dating is especially difficult in regard to excavated fragments which often give little clue to the form. Among the most important published groups of the 15th and 16th century excavated in England are those from the ports of Southampton and Exeter (Charleston 1975 and 1984b). For the mid-16th century the drawings from the Colinet family catalogue of 1550–5 illustrate a range of *façon de Venise* forms being produced at their glassworks at Beauwelz in the South Netherlands (Chambon 1955).

An English *crystallo* industry was established by Jean Carré who arrived in London in 1567 from the South Netherlands. He was also responsible for introducing Lorrainer glassmakers to the Weald. In 1574 a patent for twenty-one years was granted to Jacopo Verzelini to produce Venetian-style glass and forbidding, in theory at least, imports. From 1615 Mansell had a monopoly of production and importation, though the situation in the Civil War and interregnum is confused. After 1664 the Glass Sellers' Company, a London guild, had a monopoly of the glass trade. In 1674/5

George Ravenscroft succeeded in producing lead or flint glass, a heavy glass containing lead oxide, which soon became the dominant type of English glass. Glasses produced in flint glass were thick walled and a new range of more suitable forms was soon developed.

An important group of forest glass and *façon de Venise* drinking vessels of the early to mid-17th century is the hoard of glass from a cellar in Gracechurch Street, London, which appears to represent a glass-seller's stock (Oswald and Phillips 1949). In addition to excavated pieces the inclusion of glasses in paintings is an important source for the evolution of styles, especially the Dutch still life and genre paintings of the 17th century (Polak 1976b and Grimm 1984). Much of the late 16th- to 17th-century colourless glass at Acton Court could be English but might also represent Dutch or Venetian imports. The letters of John Greene of 1667–2 recording orders sent to Venice, complete with scale drawings, provide a key source for Restoration glass forms but further indicate the difficulties of provenancing (BL Sloane MS 857). The cesspit from High Pavement, Nottingham, believed to have been in use c 1650 to c 1730, presents a useful group of *façon de Venise* and lead glass vessels of this period (Alvey 1973).

#### The Acton Court vessel glass

The deposits from Periods 4.2 and 4.3 at Acton Court are very important in presenting a large group of vessels discarded around the 1540s and 1550s. Many of the vessels have close parallels in museum collections but others appear to represent new variants, though reconstruction from small fragments is often difficult. Particularly noticeable are the *vetro a filigrana* vessels with implanted canes of white (*lattimo*) glass. The three main types of *filigrana* are known as *vetro a fili* with parallel canes, *vetro a retorti* or *a retortoli* with twisted canes and *vetro a reticello* with a layered meshwork containing air bubbles made by combining two paraisons of molten glass (Tait 1979 and Newman 1977, 330–1). This type of decoration was a Venetian innovation of the second quarter of the 16th century. In 1527 the Serena brothers were granted a ten-year monopoly to produce their new invention a *facete con retortoli a fili* (Zecchin 1987–9, 2; 185). Charleston (1984a, 48–9) has suggested that the terms 'diaper' and 'network' in a

1547 inventory of Henry VIII indicate that his collection included *reticello* glasses.

Enamelled and gilt beakers have parallels believed to have been produced in Venice for the North European market in the first half of the 16th century, for example Fig 9.14.28 (cf Wesenburg *et al* 1981, no 9; Tait 1979, 27). These phases also produced plain *crystallo*, as well as vessels with meshed relief surfaces created by blowing into a mould (eg Fig 9.14.30). Opaque white glass or *lattimo* (Fig 9.12.4 and Fig 9.15.38), as well as multi-coloured 'chalcedony' glass (Fig 9.17.53) was also found. Figure 9.12.7 appears to be a rare example of 16th-century 'opal glass' of uncertain form. The *vetro a filigrana*, *lattimo* and mesh moulded *crystallo* vessels found in residual layers also probably belong to the same group. Certainly they are identical in metal (character of glass) and style to the mid-16th century group though these three decorative techniques continued into the 17th century. A decline in the quality of the metal of the colourless glass is apparent by the end of the 16th century at Acton Court, even taking into account differential conditions of preservation, though this may be a reflection of source of manufacture and therefore not necessarily a reliable dating characteristic.

Ice-glass (*vetro 'ghiaccio'*), with roughened surfaces, was created by plunging the hot glass into cold water and reheating or by rolling the hot glass over broken glass sherds. This type of glass is first documented in Venice in the 1570 inventory of the goods of the glass-maker Bortolo d'Alvise who had been enticed to Florence (Zecchin 1987–9, 2; 174). Ice-glass is normally dated to the second half of the 16th century or later. However, the first reference to Venetian ice-glass occurs as early as 1528 in the inventory of the possessions of the late Marquis of Priego and Count of Feria made at Zafra in the Extremadura region of Spain (Frothingham Wilson 1963, 33). An inventory of the contents of the El Pardo palace of King Philip II of Spain, made in 1564, recorded sixty-five vessels of Venetian ice-glass as well as an indeterminate number of ice-glass vessels made at Barcelona (Sánchez Canton 1934, 73–4; Frothingham Wilson 1963, 39–40). Ice-glass is first found in Period 4.2 (dated to the late 1540s) at Acton Court: two sherds from context 1628 and four sherds from context 1778 (not illustrated; for an illustrated example, cf Fig 9.17.57).

Context 136 (Period 4.5–.6) accumulated beneath the floorboards of Room 30,

in the west range. This layer appears to have few if any residual finds and probably gives a good picture of the range of glasses actually used around 1600. In contrast to the earlier deposits, forest glass drinking vessels are prominent (Fig 9.18.74–8), though *façon de Venise* goblets with cigar stems (Fig 9.18.70–1), possibly of English manufacture, also occur. The impression given is of a considerably reduced lifestyle compared with the conspicuous consumption of the mid-16th century. From other contexts, several goblets (Fig 9.19.83 and Fig 9.20.102) and a double-cruet (Fig 9.20.97) are of types paralleled in the Greene letters of 1667–2 and probably belong to the second half of the 17th century. Period 4.6–5.1 contexts (17th to 18th centuries) also produced a number of green glass pharmaceutical phials and bottles (eg Fig 9.18.79–80 and Fig 9.19.90–1). Only a few 18th and 19th century vessel glasses were found (Fig 9.20.98 and Fig 9.21.111–2).

A number of glass objects are also included in the small finds report: Fig 9.50.127 (phial or needle case) and Fig 9.43.94, Fig 9.50.148, 159–60 and Fig 9.59.214 (jewellery items). A large number of glass beads were also recovered. Figure 9.43.93 is a unique survival of a 16th- or early 17th-century diamond-engraved crystal mirror.

The Acton Court glass assemblage would not be extraordinary for a gentry house except for the richness, both in quality and quantity, of its 16th-century assemblage. Indeed the unillustrated fragments in the archive catalogue and the small area of the moat excavated would suggest that the illustrated vessels form only a minority of the glass vessels deposited at the site. Moreover, the coin evidence points to a mid-16th-century date for both the purchase and deposition of this group. The stylistic similarity of many of the vessels also suggests much of it was at least approximately contemporary. Some of the vessels, for example Fig 9.12.2 and 5, may have formed matching sets. The number of vessels is staggering for a single gentry household, even though the Poyntz family appear to have been at the height of their success in this period. Glass is a rarity in 16th-century aristocratic inventories, though this may simply indicate that it was not sufficiently valuable to be included.

As has been suggested with the pottery assemblage (see above), it is possible, though unprovable, that much of the glass was



**Table 43: Quantification of high-quality vessel glass by sherd count**

Period	4.1-4.3	4.4-4.5	4.5-4.6	Other 4	4.6-5.1	5.2-5.4	Total
Crystal (Na)	324	58	54	21	168	30	655
Ice glass	6	2	-	-	1	-	9
Lattimo	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Coloured (Na)	4	-	1	3	-	-	7
Lead glass	-	-	-	-	2	1	3

(Na = soda)

**Table 44: Analysis of form types of imported glass**

Goblets/beakers	14
Standing cups	2
<i>Tazze</i>	4
Jugs/ewers	3
Bottles/flasks	1
Bowls	1
<i>Total</i>	25

bought for the visit of Henry VIII in August 1535, part of a single extravagant display of conspicuous consumption. Certainly the 1547 inventory of Henry VIII's possessions records large quantities of Venetian-style glass, presumably used at meals and banquets in the royal palaces, and reflecting the King's Europeanised taste (BL Harleian MS 1419), of which Nicholas Poyntz was no doubt fully aware. Even normal royal meals were formal affairs, accompanied by high-ranking guests and large numbers of servants (Charleston 1984a, 49-2). Royal banquets, though past their most extravagant phase by the 1530s, were often accompanied by entertainments such as mock combat, music and masks - dancing with disguises (Anglo 1968; 1969). The glass found at Acton Court would have been used to serve and drink wine (ewers and goblets), as well as to display sweetmeats and other delicacies (*tazze* and bowls) in the great hall. The prominence of so much glass in the primary fill of the moat suggests that the life expectancy of such glass in use was often short, and breakage no doubt commenced during the brief period of Henry's visit. This is hardly surprising, given its fragility and the heavy consumption of alcohol which was likely at formal feasts. One even wonders if deliberate breakage of the glassware could have formed part of the ritual of such a visit. Certainly the host, desperate for

advancement, was hardly likely to have complained.

A date in the 1530s would be early for *vetro a reticello* but, as noted above, examples are believed to have been owned by Henry VIII in 1538. The technique was not documented in Venice until 1540, in the notebooks of Domenico Bortolussi, but a time-lag in documentation would be not unexpected (Zecchin 1987-9, 2; 184). There is also an apparent reference in the *De La Pirotechnia* of Vannoccio Biringuccio (d 1539), published in Venice in 1540 but probably written 1530-5. Biringuccio refers to Venetian glass having "crisscross inlays" (*tarsie, traversi et connessi*) which appear to be in relief but are actually plain' (Bk II, ch XIV. For English translation, see Smith and Gnudi 1942, 132).

The classification and quantification of archaeological vessel glass presents many problems (Table 3). Individual sherds from a single vessel could be classified under several categories, for instance, plain *crystallo*, moulded, *a fili* and *a retorti*. Quantification by minimum vessels was found unsuitable as many of the vessels were probably represented by small fragments only. Other problems were caused by the consistency of metal and decorative styles, while such features as stems can be identical on widely different vessel types. Sherd counts were made but are likely to be biased by depositional and other factors affecting the degree of breakage. No attempt was made to separate 16th-century from 17th-century soda glass as this was impracticable on metal alone. However, it is clear from the high proportion of *filigrana* that residual 16th-century glass still predominates in assemblages associated with later periods, with the exception of context 136 (Period 4.5-4.6). The green glass has been excluded due to the difficulties of distinguishing bottle from vessel glass and its very decayed and fragmentary character in early contexts. All coloured glass has been listed in the catalogue even when not drawn.

An analysis of the form types in the imported glass was attempted for vessels from stratified contexts assigned to Periods 4.1-4.4 (Table 44). This was based on minimum vessel estimates using rims only. It is almost certainly a considerable underestimate of the actual number of vessels. At least two beakers could be identified but they are often difficult to distinguish from goblet forms using small rim fragments.

Not surprisingly this table shows the predominance of personal drinking vessels,

especially goblets. It is unclear whether the standing cups and beakers represented any social or functional distinctions at table. The glass (or at least a good proportion of it) may well have been purchased in bulk and may reflect selection by the producers or factors rather than a detailed order by the Poyntz family. Types such as *tazze*, bowls and ewers were presumably intended to be shared or were purely for display.

The only forest glass vessels to be represented by a rim from Periods 4.1–4.4 were a urinal (context 1048) and a jug (Fig 9.12.11); though at least one drinking vessel (Fig 9.14.31) was also present. The social context of the drink-related vessels in green glass is unclear. They may have been used by the family for everyday use or reserved for the children. The location of the contexts at the front of the house argues against their use by servants. Certainly several green glass vessels (Fig 9.18.74–80) were found alongside soda glasses in context 136 (Period 4.5–4.6), beneath Room 30. There is no evidence from this group that any vessels from the mid-16th century continued in use. No 69 with its blue stripe and lion head mask may well represent a later purchase of different origin.

### Glass vessel catalogue

The glass vessel assemblage from Acton Court, especially the 16th-century material, was so unusual and was generally so well stratified that it was decided to divide it into nine main groups (A–J), arranged by Period. These were in turn subdivided, so that items from different but contemporary contexts could be compared.

- Group A: nos 1–25. Period 4.2
- Group B: nos 26–52. Period 4.2–4.3
- Group C: nos 53–5. Period 4.1–4.3 (and 4.4–4.6)
- Group D: nos 56–67. Period 4.4–4.5
- Group E: nos 68–75. Period 4.5–4.6
- Group F: nos 76–80. Period 4.6
- Group G: nos 81–94. Period 4.6–5.1
- Group H: nos 94–106. Period 4.6–5.1
- Group J: nos 107–18. Period 5.2–5.3

All colourless glass in the catalogue is 16th- or 17th-century soda glass unless otherwise specified. For a discussion of provenance, see introduction (above).

### Group A1

#### Period 4.2 contexts beneath west range

#### Fig 9.12

- 1 Base of goblet in *vetro a retorti*, Pl XIX (cf Tait 1979, nos 100–2). Pontil mark on underside of knob. Period 4.2 (282), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 2 *Tazza* in *vetro a retorti*. This vessel is very similar to no 5. Period 4.2 (1291), bottom of primary west arm of moat, Area 1.
- 3 Two joining sherds of *vetro a retorti* from lower part of body, probably of ewer or flask. Period 4.2 (1286), infill of moat beneath Room 29, Area 1.
- 4 Sherd of opaque white (*lattimo*) glass, decorated with green and dark brown (probably once red) enamel dots. Tiny traces of gilt decoration also survive. Period 4.2 (1291), bottom of primary west arm of moat, Area 1.

### Group A2

#### Period 4.2 infill of west end of Room G

- 5 *Tazza* in *vetro a retorti*. This vessel is very similar to no 2. Period 4.2 (137), Area 1.
- 6 Folded foot of vessel, probably a flask, in *vetro a fili* (cf Charleston 1975, fig 2225.1531–2 and 1572, and Tait 1979, no 127). Period 4.2 (121), Area 1.
- 7 Sherd of uncertain vessel form, possibly a base or lid. The metal is semi-transparent and cloudy-white in colour, with a roughened, matt surface inside. Cf Tait 1979, 94–5, on Renaissance ‘opal’ glass, of which this is probably a rare example. Period 4.2 (121), Area 1.
- 8 Folded foot in colourless glass. Period 4.2 (127), Area 1.
- 9 *Tazza* in *vetro a retorti*. Period 4.2 (1822), Area 1.
- 10 Vessel with moulded ribbing in heavily weathered, colourless glass. This is probably the base of a large vessel, such as a standing bowl. For ribbed bases with turned over feet, on standing bowls and other forms, though usually more spreading at the foot, cf Barrington Haynes 1959, pl 14b and Tait

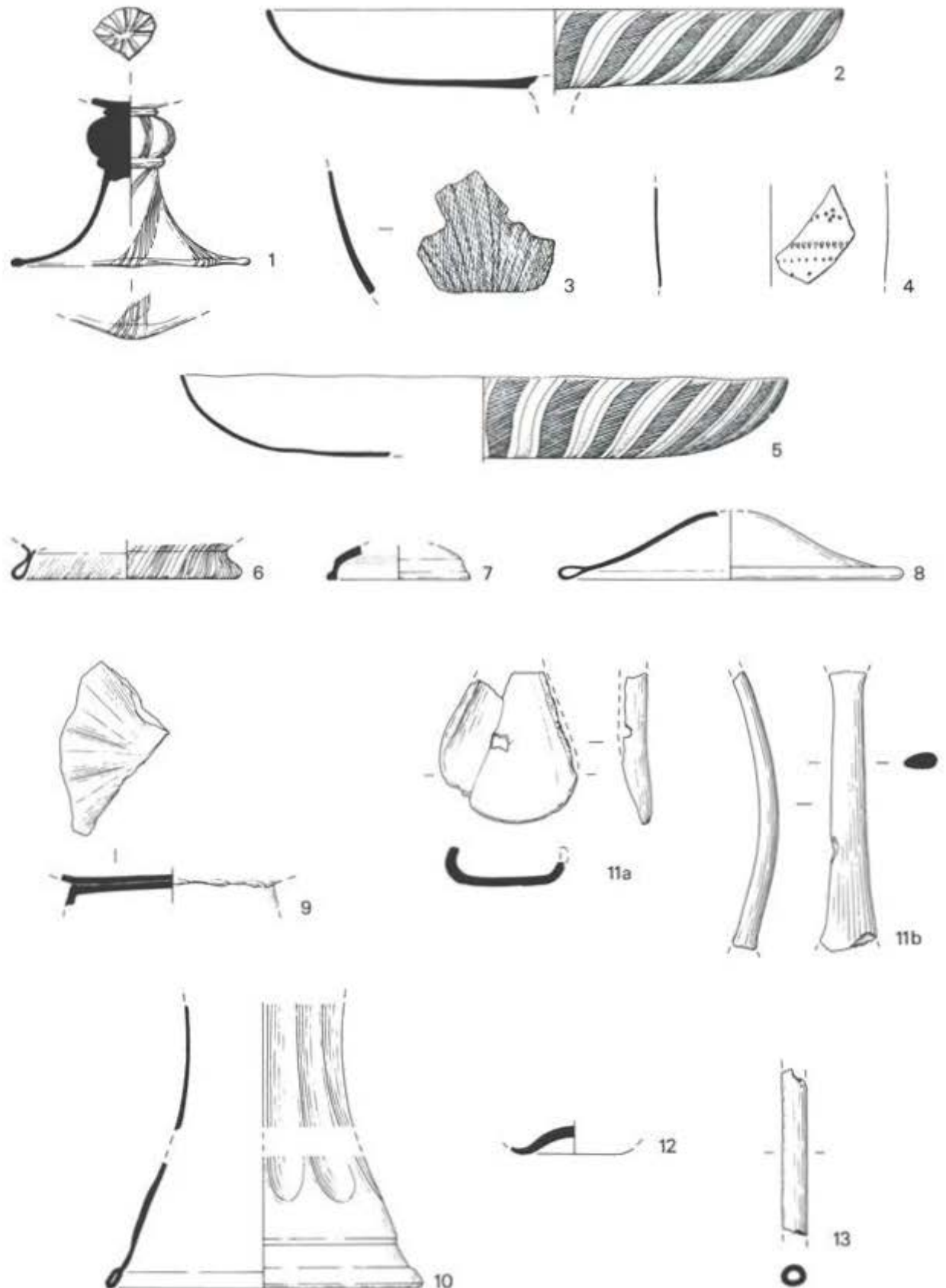


Figure 9.12 Vessel glass, Groups A1 and A2, scale 1:2



- 1979, pls 3, 4 and 63. Period 4.2 (1822), Area 1.
- 11 *a* Lip and *b* handle of jug in badly weathered black forest glass. Period 4.2 (137), Area 1.
- 12 Kicked base with pontil mark underneath in badly weathered brown to black forest glass. It is uncertain if this belongs to the same jug as no 11. Period 4.2 (137), Area 1.
- 13 Fragment of tube in badly weathered black forest glass. Period 4.2 (137), Area 1.

*Not illustrated:* sherd of translucent pale brown soda glass.

### Group A3

Period 4.2 (1778); bottom fill of drain beneath Room 31

#### Fig 9.13

- 14 Standing cup in *vetro a retorti*. Also from: Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), make-up layer beneath secondary floor, Room 32b, Area 1.
- 15 *Tazza* in *vetro a retorti* with applied white threads. Also from: Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), make-up layer beneath secondary floor, Room 32b; Period 5.2 (1618), drain construction trench fill, Area 1.
- 16 Junction of bowl and foot of vessel in *vetro a retorti* (made from two distinct 'paraisons' or bodies of molten glass), probably a beaker (cf Tait 1979, nos. 38 and 96).
- 17 Rim of cover (lid) in *vetro a fili*.
- 18 Handle from ewer in *vetro a fili*, with clear glass 'prunt' or applied blob of glass (cf Tait 1979, no. 105).
- 19 Rim of ewer or jug in *vetro a fili*.
- 20 Trefoil-shaped rim of ewer or jug in colourless glass.
- 21 Body of goblet with mould blown ribbing in colourless glass. Also from: Period 5.1 (1774), upper fill of drain beneath Room 31, Area 1.
- 22 Moulded colourless glass with applied frill. Also from: Period 4.2 (128), floor bedding in Room 32, Area 1.
- 23 Base of goblet with folded foot in colourless glass. This vessel has striation marks resulting from variation of temperature in the furnace or unequal densities of the materials used (Newman 1977, 301).

- 24 Base of goblet with folded foot in colourless glass.
- 25 Knob from top of cover in colourless glass.

### Group B1

Period 4.2–4.3 (1048/9); bottom of south arm of moat, west of porch

#### Fig 9.14

- 26 Standing cup in *vetro a fili* (stem) and *vetro a retorti* (body), Pl XX. cf Tait 1979, no 92. Also from: Period 5.1 (469), Area 1.

(Note that context 469 clearly includes material which was deposited no later than the mid-16th century, before the moat was filled in.)

- 27 Vessel with scalloped rim, probably a goblet, in *vetro a retorti*. Also from: Period 4.4–4.5 (1042) and Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 28 Rim and body sherds of beaker in colourless glass. The vessel is decorated on the exterior with applied enamel spots in blue, white and red. There are also small traces of gilding. It appears to be very similar to a complete beaker in the Museum des Kunsthandwerks in Leipzig (Wesenburg 1981, no 9 and in colour in Kämpfer 1978, pl 39). First half of 16th century. Also from: Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 29 Colourless glass bowl with moulded ribbing, applied foot ring, applied colourless thread on shoulder and kicked base (cf Tait 1979, no 28 and Barovier-Mentasti *et al* 1982, nos 84 and 114). Also from: Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 30 Mesh-moulded, trumpet-shaped bowl of goblet with merese and hollow knob on stem (cf Tait 1979, no 153). The rim and stem do not join but the profile suggests they may be from the same vessel.
- 31 Rim of goblet in colourless glass, slight greenish tinge. Also from: Period 4.4–4.5 (1046) and Period 4.4–4.5 (1047); fill of south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 32 Shoulder, possibly of flask or cruet in colourless glass.



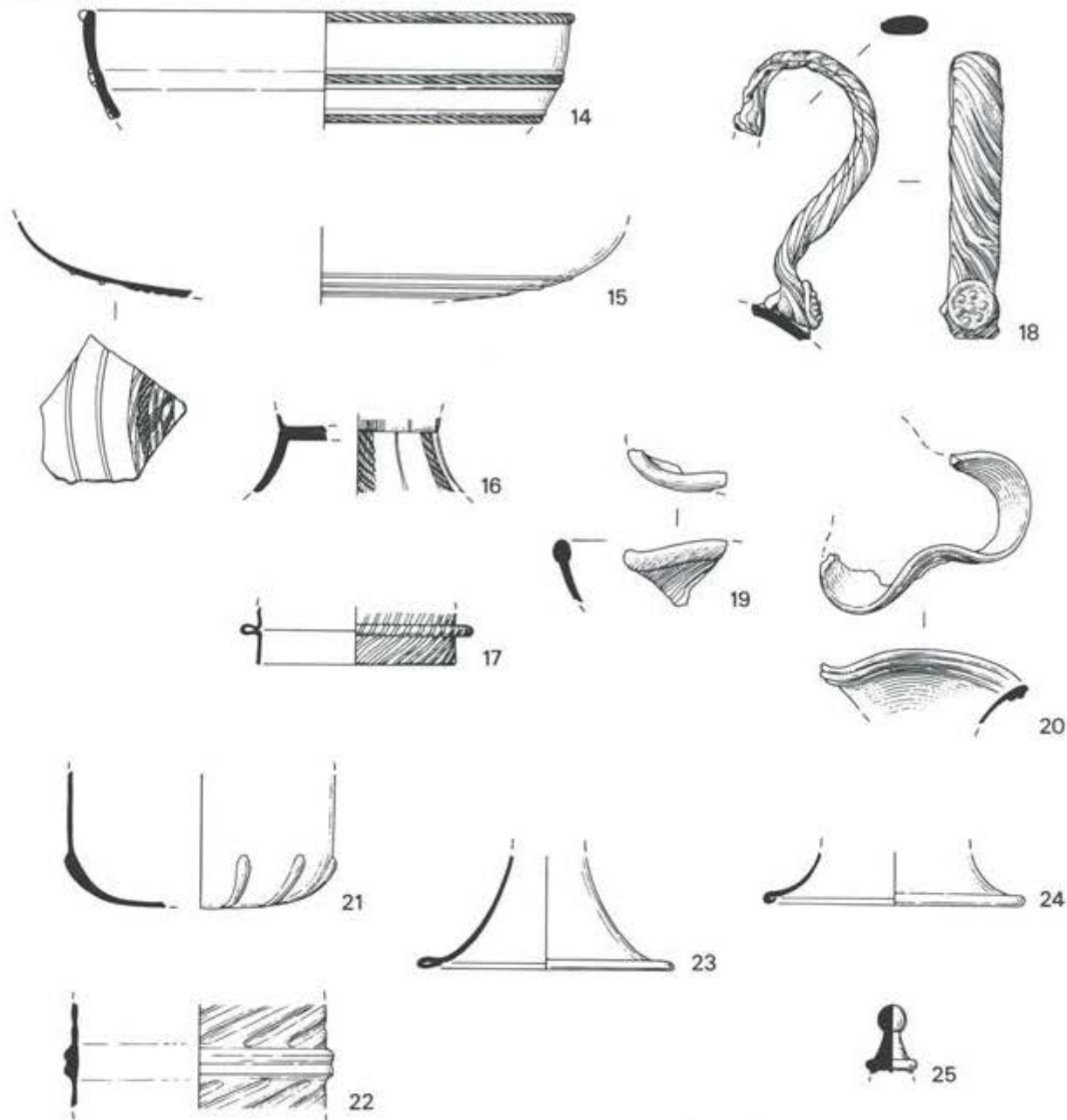


Figure 9.13 Vessel glass, Group A3, scale 1:2.

33 Base of urinal in pale green glass. Pontil mark on underside of base. English (cf Charleston 1984b, fig 148, 63-4; Exeter).

Not illustrated: Urinal rim in green glass (see no 59)

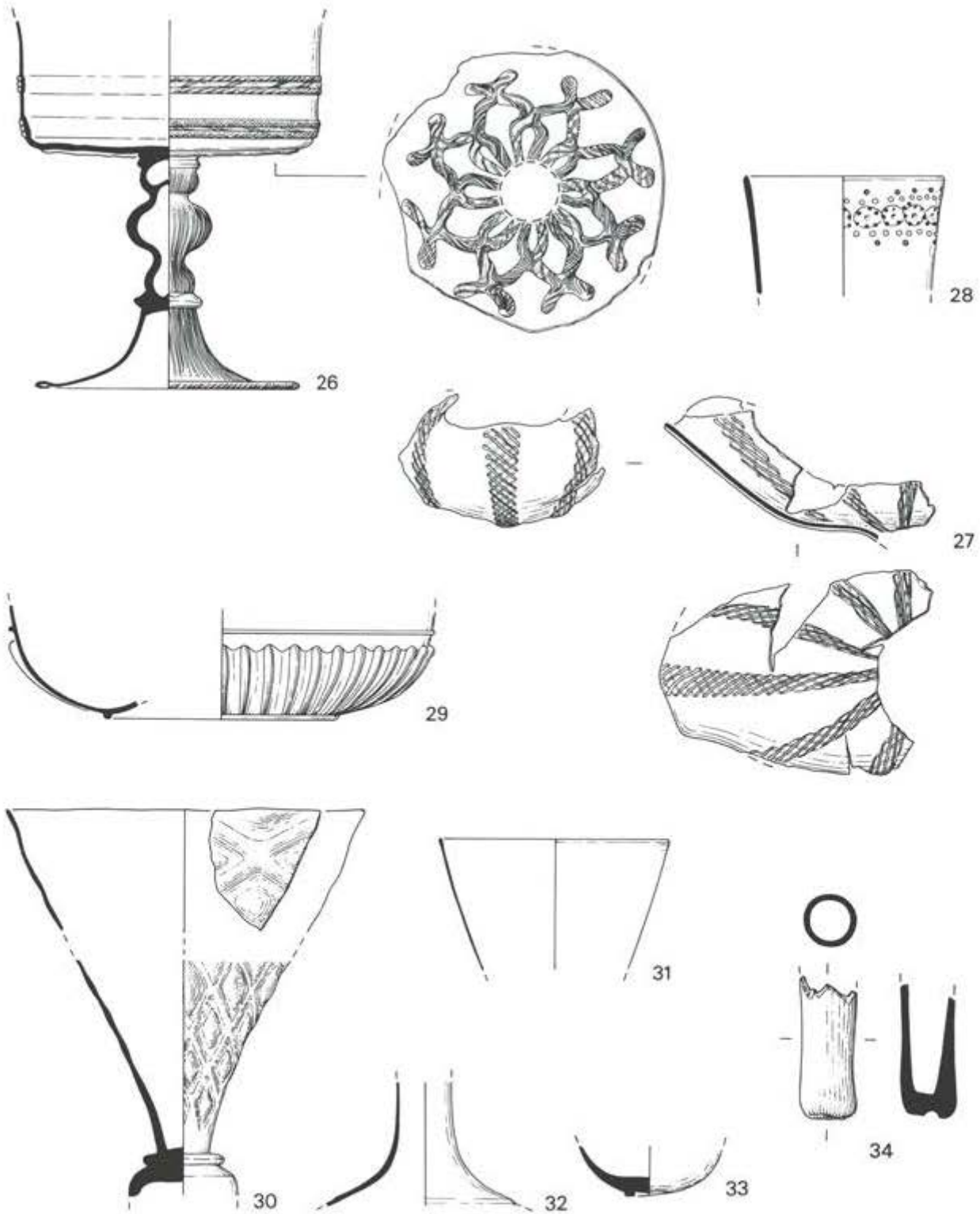
34 Hollow terminal with pontil mark on end, in an opaque black high-quality (?soda) glass. This looks very like the base of a type of Italian flask or lamp of 15th-/16th-century date, known from excavations at Upper Bugle Street - Site 3, Southampton, and at Dyers Arms in Cannon Street, London (Duncan Brown, pers comm).

Group B2

Period 4.2-4.3; bottom and fill of south arm of moat within and east of porch

Fig 9.15

- 35 Shoulder of *vetro a retorti*, possibly from a flask or spouted jug. Period 4.3 (1477), fill of moat, Area 1.
- 36 Rim sherd of *vetro a retorti* drinking vessel. Period 4.3 (1948), fill of moat.
- 37 Sherd of *vetro a retorti* (base of *tazza* or standing cup). Period 4.3 (3510), fill of moat, Area 14.
- 38 Vessel in milk white opaque (*lattimo*) glass with ribbed moulding and inturned rim. The



form is uncertain but the inturn seems too slight for it have been a lid. Lids are invariably of the form shown by nos 17 and 56. Possibly it was a small 'chalice-like' vessel on a stemmed base, perhaps for sweetmeats. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993),

39

bottom of moat, Area 1. Folded base in opaque white (*lattimo*) glass. Period 4.3 (3509), fill of moat, Area 14.

40

Rim of bottle in colourless glass with applied ring. The glass has been decorated with red enamel

Figure 9.14 Vessel glass, Group B1, scale 1:2.

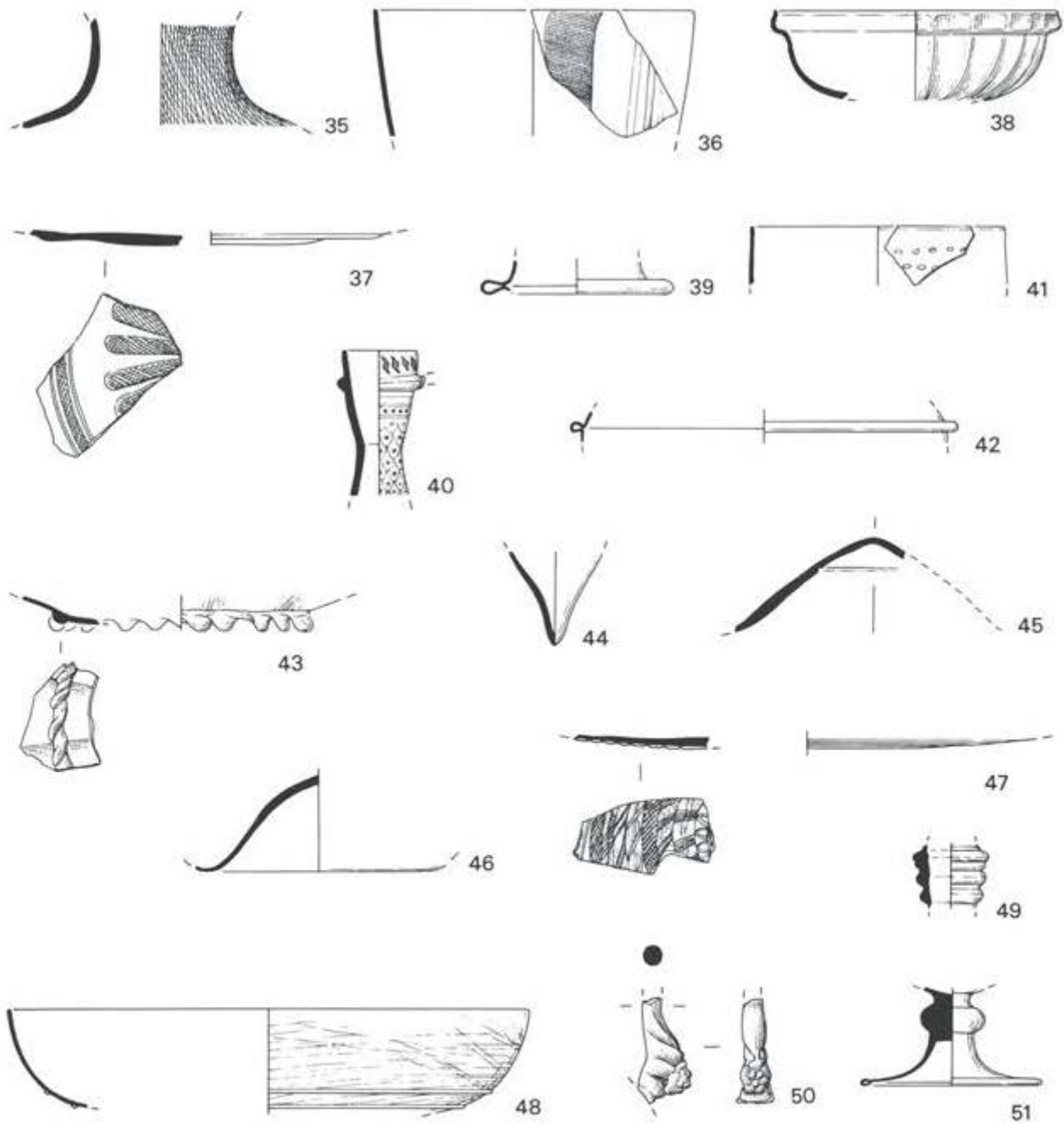


Figure 9.15 Vessel glass, Groups B2-B4, scale 1:2.

- above the applied ring and white (and ?other colours) below it. The scales on the neck have a matt surface and were probably gilt. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.

43
- 41

Rim sherd in colourless glass with white enamel dots. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.
- 42

Fragment from cover in colourless glass. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.
- Rib-moulded colourless glass with applied frill at bowl angle. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.

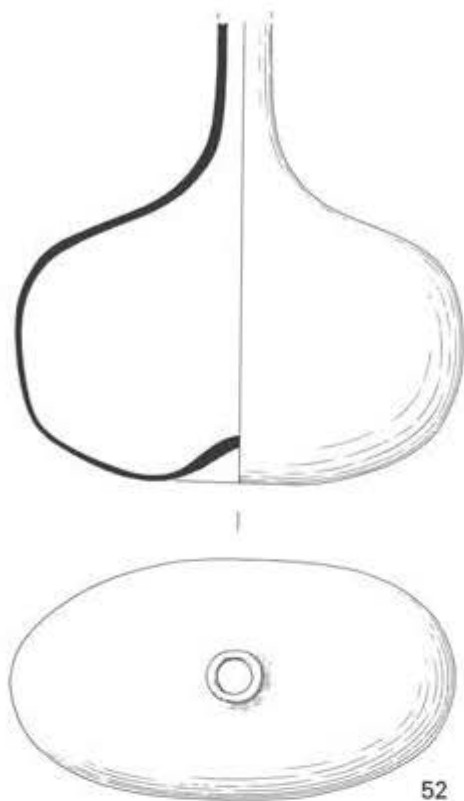
44
- Boss in colourless glass. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.

45
- Base of flask or bottle in pale green forest glass. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.

46
- 46

Kicked base of bottle or flask in pale green glass. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.





*Not illustrated:* sherd of rib-moulded semi-transparent emerald green soda glass, with specks of gilding. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of moat, Area 1.

#### Group B3

Period 4.3 (935), Area 8; bottom of north arm of moat

- 47 *Tazza* in *vetro a retorti*.
- 48 *Tazza* in colourless glass with applied white trail.
- 49 Fragment of solid knopped stem in colourless glass.
- 50 Handle in colourless glass with applied prunt.

#### Group B4

Period 4.2–4.3; bottom and fill of east arm of moat

- 51 Base of goblet in colourless glass. Pontil mark under knop. Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), Area 6.

#### Fig 9.16

- 52 Bottle in dark blue glass with thick brown surface weathering. The bottle has a kicked base of oval shape with flattened sides and a tall cylindrical neck. No rim fragments

were recovered. Probably English. Period 4.3 (2025), Area 6.

Figure 9.16 Vessel glass, Group B4, scale 1:4.

#### Group C

Area 2 dump layers and overlying soil

#### Fig 9.17

- 53 'Chalcedony' glass banded in various shades of green with a little pinkish-brown. Probably rim of shallow but very small *tazza* (cf Dreier 1989, no 30). Period 4.1–4.3 (528) and Period 4.4–4.6 (518).
- 54 Sherd of semi-transparent brown soda glass with applied white (*lattimo*) threads. Period 4.4–4.6 (518).
- 55 Spout (?from ewer) in colourless glass with slight green tinge. The glass has elongated bubbles. Period 4.1–4.3 (535).

#### Group D1

Infill of south arm of moat, west of porch

- 56 Fragment of ?cover in *vetro a fili*. Probably 16th century. Period 4.4–4.5 (1043), Area 1.
- 57 Rim sherd of ice-glass goblet. Second half of 16th century or later. Period 4.4–4.5 (1043), Area 1.
- 58 Goblet in colourless glass; hollow inverted baluster over basal knop. Pontil mark under basal mark. Early to mid-17th century (cf Oswald and Phillips 1949, pl V: Gracechurch Street hoard; and Lewis 1968, fig 4.G1: Montgomery Castle). Silver parallels date to 1635–57 (Charleston 1984a, 68). Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), Area 1.
- 59 Urinal rim (cf Charleston 1984b, fig 8 for a reconstructed urinal). Period 4.4–4.5 (1047), Area 1.

*Not illustrated:* urinal rim in brown forest glass. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044) Area 1.

- 60 Urinal base in pale green forest glass. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), Area 1.
- 61 Base of urinal in pale green forest glass, pontil mark on underside of base. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), Area 1.
- 62 Kicked bottle base in heavily weathered green forest glass. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), Area 1.
- 63 Fragment of base of bottle or flask in green forest glass. Pontil mark on underside. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), Area 1.



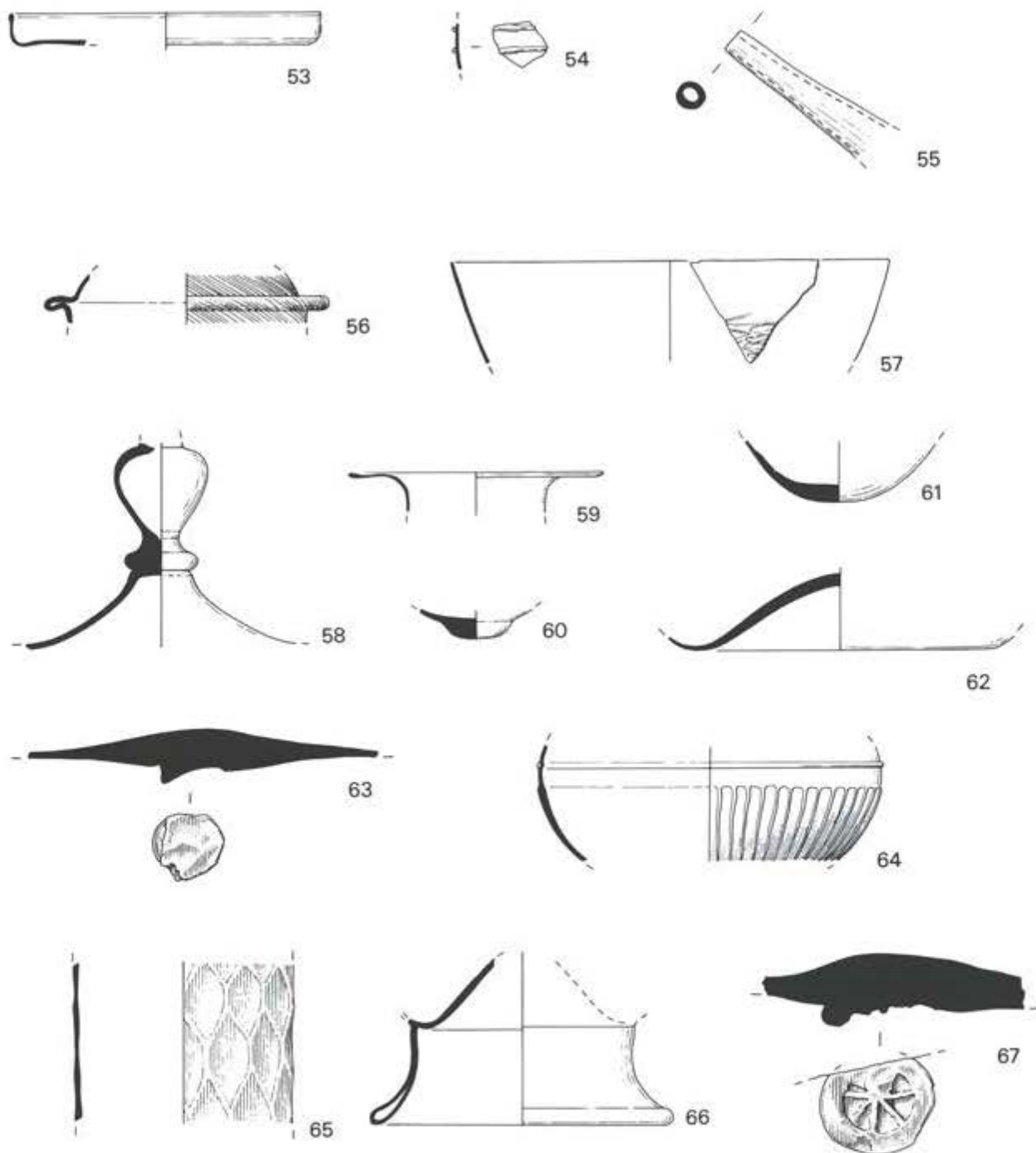


Figure 9.17 Vessel glass, Groups C and D, scale 1:2.

**Group D2**

**Infill of north arm of moat**

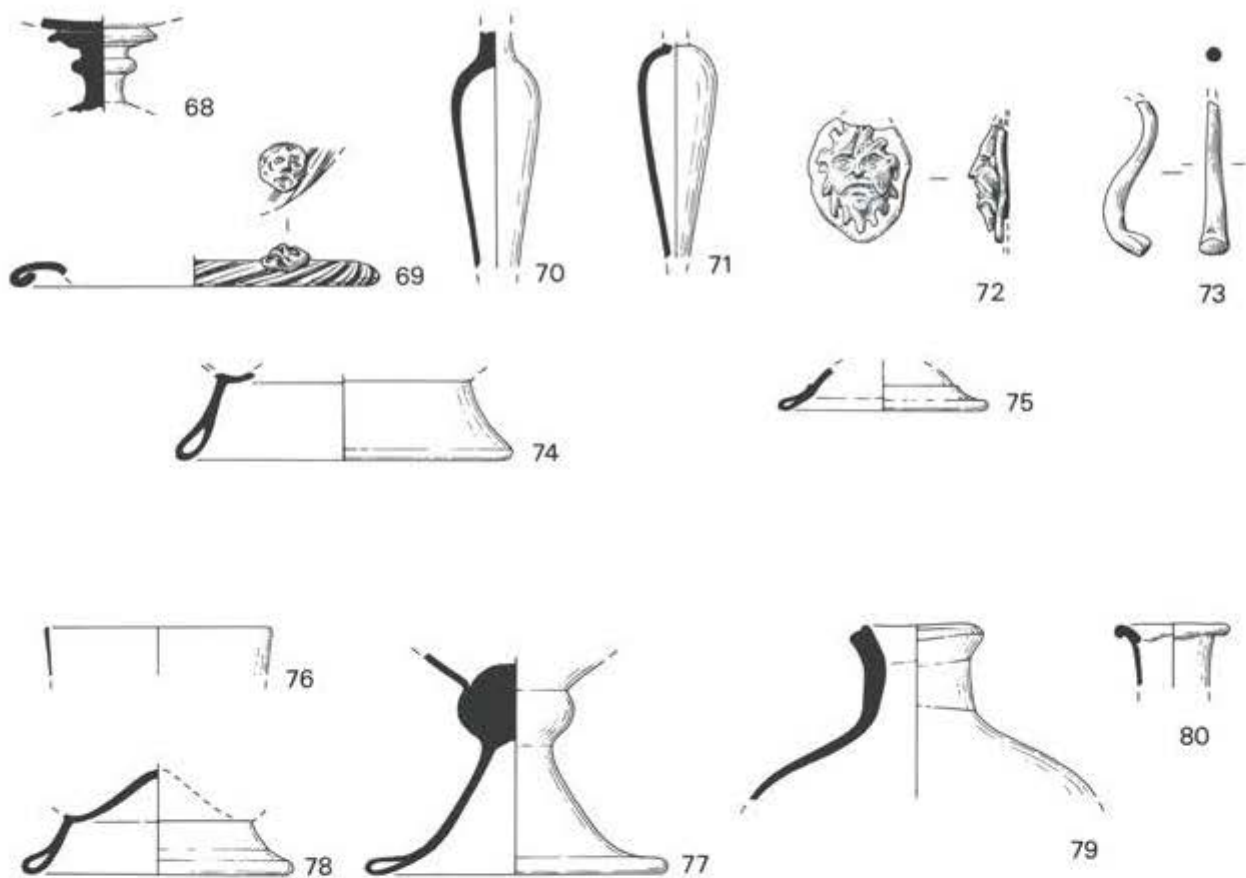
- 64

Vessel in *vetro a fili* with applied white horizontal thread. Probably 16th century. Period 4.4–4.5 (931), Area 8.
- 65

Sherd from body of cylindrical beaker with mould-blown diagonal webbing, in colourless glass. Period 4.4–4.5 (1781), Area 1/8.
- 66

Base of beaker with folded foot in pale green forest glass. Period 4.4–4.5 (1781), Area 1/8.
- 67

Fragment of kicked base of bottle or flask in black forest glass with heavy encrusted brown weathering. Pontil mark on underside indicates the pontil rod



had a radiating relief pattern on its end. Period 4.4–4.5 (944), Area 8.

#### Group E1

##### Inner courtyard

#### Fig 9.18

- 68 Solid stem of goblet with double merese in colourless glass, possibly from baluster or cigar-shaped stem (cf Noël Hume 1962, pls 7–8). End of 16th or early 17th century. Period 4.3–4.5 (1148), Area 1.

#### Group E2

##### Beneath floor of Room 30

- 69 Base of drinking vessel in *vetro a fili*, with applied lion mask in colourless glass. One inlaid dark blue stripe alternates with two white stripes. Compare with a beaker in similar style in the British Museum, with gilt masks, which Tait (1979, no 123) suggests may be *façon de Venise* from the South Netherlands. Probably 16th

century. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.

- 70 Cigar-shaped goblet stem in colourless glass, a type current in the first half of the 17th century (cf Charleston 1984a, 68). Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.
- 71 Cigar-shaped stem in colourless glass. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.
- 72 Lion mask in colourless glass. Applied lion-masks were a popular 16th- to mid-17th-century decorative feature on goblet bowls as well as many other forms, as is demonstrated by the Colinet catalogue of 1550–5, which illustrates vessels manufactured at Beauwelz in the South Netherlands (Chambon 1955, pl O). Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.
- 73 Handle in colourless glass. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.
- 74 Beaker base in weathered green forest glass. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.
- 75 Folded foot of beaker in heavily weathered pale green forest glass. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1.

Figure 9.18 Vessel glass, Groups E and F, scale 1:2.

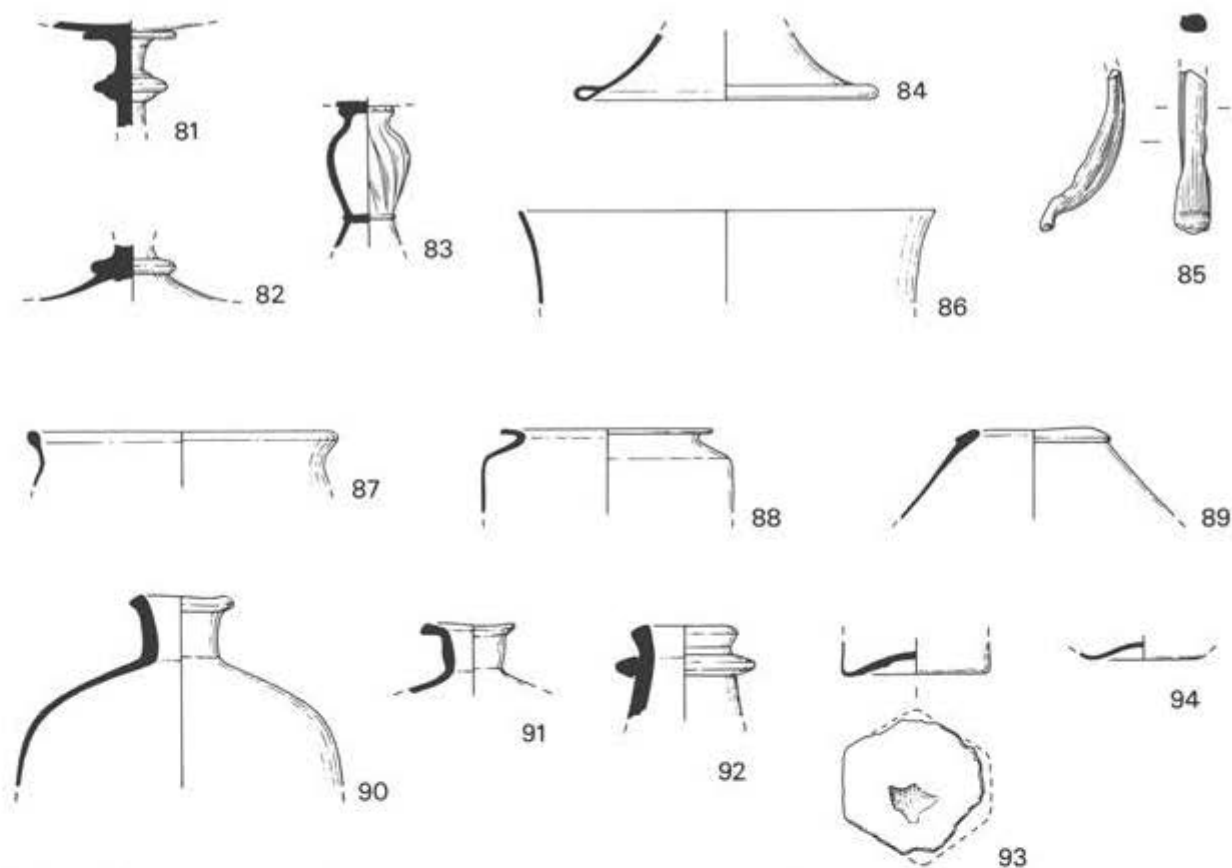


Figure 9.19 Vessel glass, Group G, scale 1:2.

**Group F1**

Above infilled north-east corner of moat

- 76 Rim of beaker in weathered moulded brown forest glass. Period 4.6 (3021), Area 13.

**Group F2**

Fill of Civil War ditches

- 77 Base of goblet in pale green forest glass. Late 16th or early 17th century. Period 4.6 (947), Area 8.
- 78 Beaker base with folded foot in pale green forest glass. 16th or early 17th century. Period 4.6 (2763), Area 11.
- 79 Rim of cylindrical, apothecary bottle in transparent, bubbled, pale green glass (cf Charleston 1984b, fig 152.143). Period 4.6 (941), Area 8.
- 80 Rim of phial in green glass. Period 4.6 (947), Area 8.

**Group G1**

Levelling layers above infilled south arm of moat; south range demolition material and fill of porch garderobe

**Fig 9.19**

- 81 Solid stem from drinking glass in colourless glass. The double mereses (collars) on the stem suggest a date in the first half of the 17th century. The double merese was a feature of silver ware of the first quarter of the 17th century, and a goblet of this type is engraved '1602' (Thorpe 1927, pl 2; and Charleston 1984a, pl 14d). Excavated examples come from Basing House: pre-1645 (Moorhouse 1971, fig 27.11-12); Exeter: c 1600 (Charleston 1984b, pl 149.77), Honey Lane and Cannon Street, London (Noël Hume 1962, pls 7-8); and Nonsuch Palace (Charleston 1984a, pl 15b). Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer, Area 1.
- 82 Foot of drinking glass with merese in colourless glass. Period 4.6-5.1 (2140), levelling layer, Area 1.
- 83 Colourless glass. Merese over hollow inverted baluster knob with ribbed moulding. Pontil mark under hollow knob. This probably belongs to a group of late 17th-



century glasses illustrated in the Greene letters of 1667–72 (BL Sloane MS 857, fols 16v and 34v) and found in the High Pavement cesspit group from Nottingham (Alvey 1973, fig 10.1–8). Also compare no 102. Period 4.4–4.5 (1042), Area 1 (probably intrusive from context 1014).

- 84 Sherd of folded goblet base in green forest glass. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer, Area 1.
- 85 Handle in colourless glass, possibly from a goblet. Period 5.1 (2128), demolition layer, Area 1.
- 86 Rim, probably of a beaker, in colourless glass. Period 5.1 (469), bottom of porch garderobe, Area 1.
- 87 Jar rim in pale green glass. Period 5.1 (2128), demolition layer, Area 1.
- 88 Rim of small jar in pale green glass. Period 5.1 (413), Area 1; Period 5.2 (400), posthole packing, Area 1.
- 89 Rim of globular flask in forest glass with encrusted brown weathering, possibly once green. This rim is very similar to two, otherwise unparalleled, rims from a mid-16th-century glasshouse at Knightons, Alford in Surrey (Wood 1982, 27 and fig 14.22–3). Note that the layer in which this vessel was found also contained material which was deposited no later than the mid-16th century, while the south arm of the moat was still open (cf no 26). The flask could have been dropped in the garderobe at any time between the mid-16th and the late 17th century. Period 5.1 (469), bottom of porch garderobe, Area 1.
- 90 Rim of cylindrical apothecary's bottle in transparent, pale green glass. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer, Area 1.
- 91 Pale green glass phial rim. Period 5.1 (413), demolition layer, Area 1.
- 92 Rim of late 17th- or 18th-century wine bottle in green glass. Period 5.1 (468), fill of porch garderobe, Area 1.

### Group G2

#### Fill of garderobe on west side of Room 29

- 93 Hexagonal-sided base of green glass phial, produced in a mould. Period 5.1 (233), Area 1.
- 94 Base of small flask in colourless glass. Period 5.1 (233), Area 1.

### Group H1

#### Make-up beneath secondary floor in Room 32b

##### Fig 9.20

- 95 Rim and body sherds of drinking vessel in *vetro a reticello*. Probably 16th century. Period 5.1 (419), Area 1; Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), Area 1.
- 96 Base sherd and small sherd of uncertain origin on vessel of diamond point engraved goblet. The base is unfolded with a flattened profile. Colourless soda glass with iridescent surface weathering. The diamond point is a crude foliage design with hatched infill on the smaller sherd. The hatched infill is typical of the 16th century, though perhaps extending into the early part of the 17th century. Attribution is difficult from such small fragments, and emigrant Venetian engravers and their pupils were working in a number of countries. The vessel could, however, have been made and engraved in London. A series of glasses with engraved dates of 1577–86 (some with plain [unfolded] feet) are associated with the glasshouse of Giacomo Verzelini and the engraver Anthony de Lysle, a former denizen of France. Verzelini was succeeded as patentee by Sir Jerome Bowes though only a single glass can be firmly ascribed to this period the 'Barbara Potter' engraved goblet of 1602, which continues the hatched infill style (Charleston 1984b, 53–63; and Thorpe 1961, 97–113). Excavated fragments of glasses with hatched engraving have been found at Southampton, including several probably by Verzelini, and at Canterbury (Charleston 1975, fig 224.1557–60 and 1987, fig 93.5). Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), Area 1.



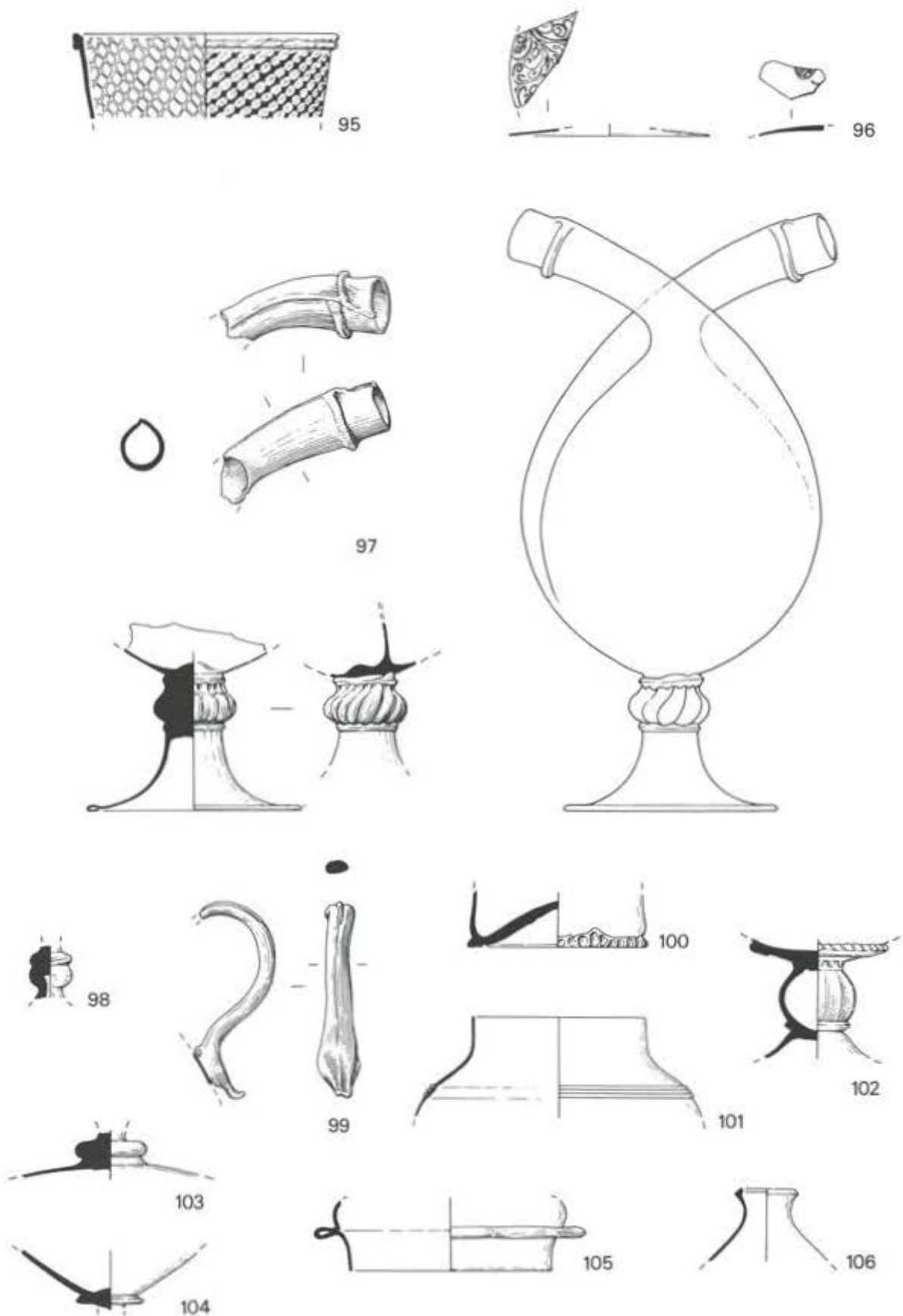


Figure 9.20 Vessel glass, Group H, scale 1:2.

- 97 Fragments of double-spouted cruet in colourless glass. Cf examples in Museum of London, minus foot (Charleston 1984a, pl 21b) and in the Berliner Kunstgewerbemuseum (Dreier 1989, no. 72). Double-spouted cruets are included in Greene's order to Morelli in February 1670 (BL Sloane MS 857, fol 41r) but the form may have an older ancestry. The spout has been formed by folding over and joining the glass with pincers. The stem has a solid lower knob with a pontil mark underneath and a folded foot. 17th century. A reconstruction is given, based on the Greene drawings. Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), Area 1.
- 98 Fragment of knopped solid stem of slender proportions of 'Newcastle-type', with air bubble, in lead glass. Mid-18th century (cf Barrington Haynes 1959, pls 70–3). Period 4.6–5.1 (1726), Area 1.
- 99 Handle in colourless glass. Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), Area 1.
- 100 Base of beaker with pinched applied foot ring in green forest glass. Late 16th or early 17th century. Period 4.6–5.1 (1723), Area 1.

#### Group H2

##### Demolition material in Room 32

- 101 Rim and shoulder of jar or flask in colourless glass with applied white threads. Period 5.1 (1742), Area 1.
- 102 Bowl base and stem knob from goblet in colourless glass. This is paralleled by glasses in the letters of John Greene of 1667–72 (BL Sloane MS 857) and a number of very similar glasses were found in a cesspit at High Pavement, Nottingham, in use c 1650 to c 1730 (Alvey 1973, fig 10.1–8). Period 5.1 (1706), Area 1.
- 103 Foot of drinking glass bowl with merese in colourless glass. Pontil mark underneath. Period 5.1 (122), Area 1.
- 104 Merese under bowl of goblet in colourless glass. Period 5.1 (1743), Area 1.
- 105 Rim of cover in colourless glass. Period 5.1 (1742), Area 1.

- 106 Rim of green glass phial. Period 5.1 (1742), Area 1.

#### Group J1

##### Residual 16th-century vessels

##### Fig 9.21

- 107 Standing cup in *vetro a retorti*. Probably 16th century. Period 5.2 (1705), drain construction trench fill, Area 1; Period 5.3 (1605), drain robber trench fill, Area 1.
- 108 Two sherds, probably from same vessel; probably a cover in *vetro a retorti*. Period 5.1 (1344), pitched Pennant track, Area 1; Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), Area 1.
- 109 Stem knob of drinking vessel in *vetro a fili*. Period 5.2–5.3 (735), subsoil, Area 5.
- 110 Horse's head in colourless soda glass with yellowish tinge. Possibly 16th century. Period 5.1 (957), drain construction trench fill, Area 8.

#### Group J2

##### Other vessels in Period 5 contexts

- 111 Stem of lead glass goblet with cushion knob over inverted baluster and basal knob, contains air bubble. c 1700 (cf Hurst Vose 1980, pl 30; and Bickerton 1986, nos 38 and 56). Period 5.2 (331), make-up layer above Room 30, Area 1.
- 112 Solid base and stem of rummer (beer glass) in lead glass. English, late 18th or 19th century (cf Leeds 1938, fig 17.L; cf Elville 1967, 159–61 on rammers). Period 5.2 (333), farmyard layer south of OB 7, Area 1.
- 113 Part of cigar-shaped stem in colourless glass. End of 16th or first half of 17th century. Period 5.2 (1766), fill of drain, Area 1/8.
- 114 Knob from top of cover in colourless glass with a few bubbles. Period 5.2 (1618), drain construction trench fill, Area 1.
- 115 Base of vessel (?*tazza*, globular ewer or flask) in colourless glass, made from two paraisons (molten gatherings of glass). Possibly 16th century (note high quality of metal). Period 5.1 (1762), ashy layer north of north range, Area 1.

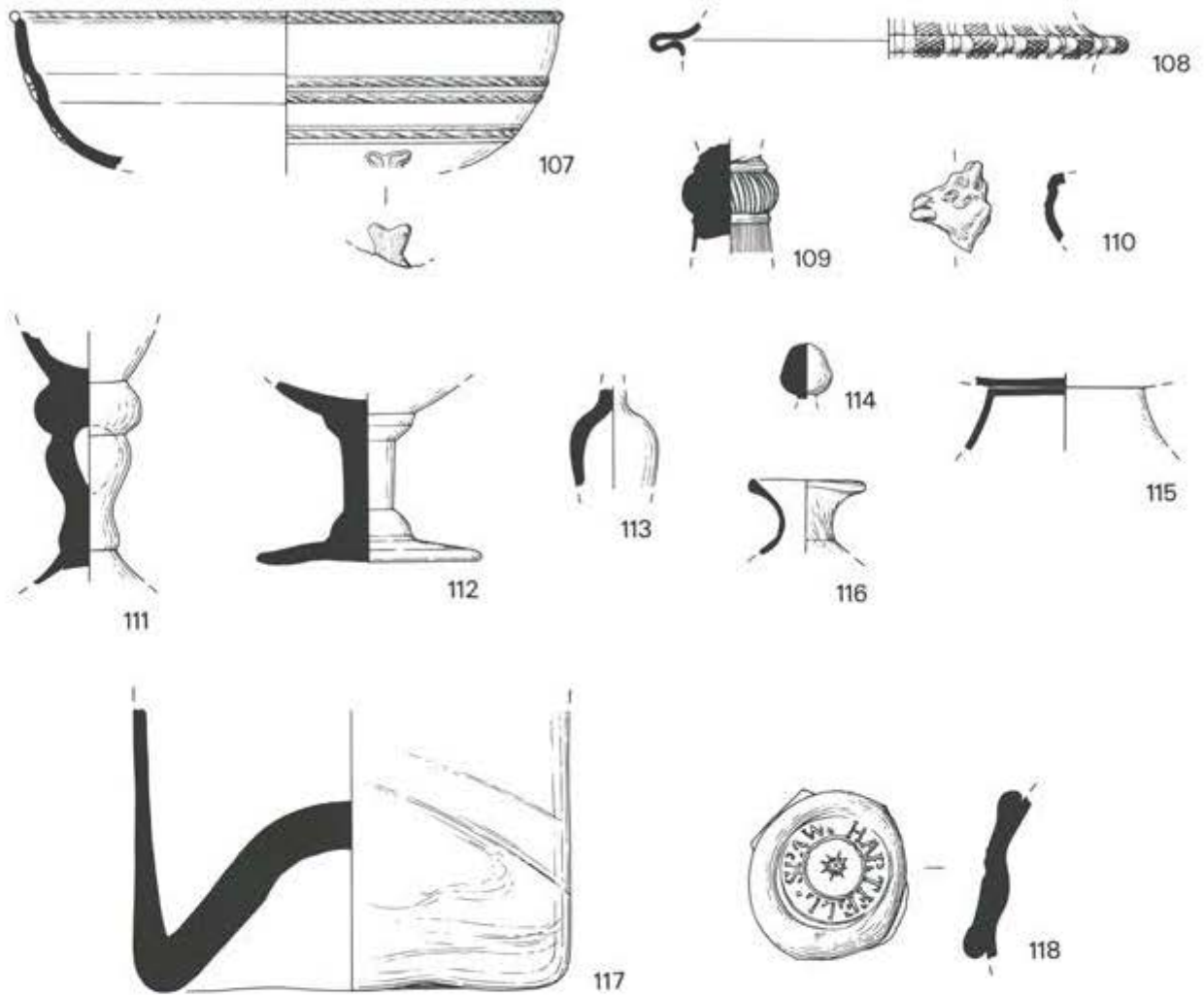


Figure 9.21 Vessel glass, Group J, scale 1:2.

- 116 Rim of phial in green glass. Period 5.1–5.2 (914), cobbled surface, Area 8.
- 117 Base of cylindrical bottle in green glass. 18th century. Period 5.1 (81), fill of well, Area 1.
- 118 Bottle seal, embossed HARTFELL SPAW. Hartfell Spa was established in 1748 by John Williamson after his discovery of a chalybeate spring in a deep ravine on the south-west side of Hartfell, 7.5 km north of Moffat, Dumfries and Galloway Region. The spring-water was analysed by Dr William Horseburgh in 1750, and was warmly recommended for its healing properties. Extracts from his paper were published in the *Scots Magazine* in 1754, and in the

same year the spring house was built by the landowner, Charles, Duke of Queensberry, who was also responsible for constructing a carriageway leading towards this isolated site. The Duke was interested in spas and he and his wife patronised both Bath and Hotwells, Bristol in 1755. Captain Henry Fletcher, writing in September 1755 from Hotwells to a friend at Dumcrieff, mentioned that he had forgotten to apply to the Duke to erect a house at Hartfield (sic) for bottling the ‘destilled spaw water’ and requested that ‘... three or four dozen of Williamson’s water could be sent to London by sea’.

Moffat prospered as a spa town in the late 18th century and improved road communications allowed Dr James Johnstone, a local medical practitioner, to export bottled water from Hartfell Spa not only to many English towns but also overseas to the West Indies (Prevost 1966, 142–5). He died in 1803, but as late as 1863, according to the Moffat Trade Directory, the water was still being bottled and sold by Thomas Hetherington, a Moffat chemist. The seal, which is the only example of its type known anywhere, whether from Scotland, England or abroad, probably dates to the second half of the 18th century. Period 5.2 (1213), clay layer west of OB 6, Area 1. (The assistance of Siobhan Ratchford, Museums Officer, Dumfries Museum, and of Jane Boyd, Moffat Museums Trust, in the compiling of this note is gratefully acknowledged.)

### Unillustrated Period 5.1–5.3 bottle glass

by Robert Bell and Paul De'Ath

The unillustrated bottle glass has no great intrinsic value, and apart from the Hartfell Spaw seal (Fig 9.21.118) no other bottle seals were recovered. However, it provides valuable corroborative dating evidence for the demolition of the south range and Room 32 in Period 5.1a, the decline and abandonment of the west range in Period 5.1b, and some of the alterations to the farm complex in Periods 5.2–5.3.

#### Period 5.1a

The demolition layer within Room 32 (125) contained two wine bottles, dated *c* 1680–90, while the spread above the infilled south arm of the moat, pre-dating OB7 (2128), included the neck and fragments of an onion-shaped wine bottle, dated *c* 1690–1710. In addition the spread contained three apothecary bottles in deep aqua glass. Further east, the demolition spread (419) included part of a mid-17th-century wine bottle and a square-bottomed pontilled bottle base in deep aqua. The bottom fill (1562) of the western end of the north arm of the moat contained the base of a wine bottle dated *c* 1680.

#### Period 5.1b

Part of an onion-shaped free-blown wine bottle, dated *c* 1690–1700, was recovered from the upper fill (61) of garderobe 279, at the west end of the former south range. Judging by the pottery from the same layer it was probably residual. The demolition spread (229) sealing the southern pair of west range garderobes incorporated the base of a free-blown wine bottle, dated *c* 1730–80. The excavated fill layers within the well (81 and 249) contained the large base of a wine bottle, dated *c* 1740–70, three necks of free-blown bottles dated *c* 1730–50 and six other bases of wine bottles varying in date from *c* 1710–1800. The neck of a residual mid-17th-century shaft and globe wine bottle was also found in the well.

#### Period 5.2

The layer associated with the construction of the cider-house, OB 7 (333) contained the bases of two late 18th-century free-blown wine bottles. The rubble sealed beneath the primary floor slabs of OB 1 (331) produced the neck, base and other fragments of a cylindrical wine bottle, dated *c* 1760–70, and the fill of the construction trench of the drain along the south side of OB 2 (1618) contained the base of an early 19th-century clear glass apothecary's bottle.

#### Period 5.3

A group of four late 19th-century bottles were found in the fill of the construction trench of the rebuilt wall linking OB 1 and OB 2 (47). They included a sauce bottle embossed FOURACRES SEVERN SAUCE, GLOUCESTER, and a mineral water bottle embossed CARTER & CO., BRISTOL. Adjacent to the east wall of the east range, just outside the entrance into the stables (Room 19), a late 19th-century bottle dump (866) was located. This was on the site of the dung heap shown in Loxton's illustration (Fig 2.5). Among the items were a veterinary bottle embossed (S. PETTIFER) ANIMAL REMEDIES, SHERSTON, WILTS. AND LONDON, a cure bottle embossed DUDGEON'S PECTORAL BALSAM, BRISTOL, and the base of a Hungarian bitters bottle embossed HUNYADI JANOS SAXLEHNERS BITTERQUELLE.



## Analysis of the Venetian-style glass

by Catherine Mortimer

All of the samples investigated analytically were well-preserved soda glasses from dated contexts or known vessel types; no potash glass (forest glass) was analysed.

Small samples (c 1–2 mm long) were taken from the edges of nineteen pieces of vessel glass, examined using a low-powered optical microscope and then analysed using energy-dispersive X-ray analysis in an electron microscope (SEM-EDX). Details of the techniques used and a fuller discussion of the results are given in the laboratory report (Mortimer 1993).

The transparent, colourless glass used in the *vetro a filigrana* examples was shown to be good quality soda-lime-silica glass (Table 45). The glasses show a relatively limited range of compositions which are closely comparable to those of analysed examples of 16th-century vessel glass from Venice (Verità 1985). The Acton Court soda glasses are most directly comparable with the *vitrum blanchum* ('standard') glasses from Venice (Verità 1985, table III); the high quality *cristallo* glasses of this period are known to have had significantly higher soda contents and lower potash contents than these samples (Verità 1985, table IV). The compositions of these samples are therefore compatible with the hypothesis that the soda glass vessels were imported from Venice in the 16th century. It should, however, be

Table 45 Analyses of transparent or nearly-transparent glass

SF	Ctxt	Na2O	MgO	Al2O3	SiO2	P2O5	S	Cl	CaO	K2O	TiO2	Cr2O3	MnO	Fe2O3	CuO	SnO2	PbO	Total
405	932	14.0	3.0	0.4	68.3	nd	nd	0.5	8.2	4.6	nd	nd	0.8	0.4	nd	0.5	0.3	101.2
723	1833	13.7	3.1	0.4	66.4	0.3	nd	0.4	9.3	3.2	nd	nd	0.5	0.2	nd	0.4	0.2	98.2
768	1014	17.4	2.0	0.7	68.5	0.2	nd	0.5	5.3	3.2	nd	nd	0.4	0.4	nd	0.4	0.2	99.2
781	1043	17.2	2.4	0.8	66.4	0.5	nd	0.4	7.4	2.9	nd	nd	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.2	100.5
827	931	15.5	2.7	0.6	63.3	0.3	nd	0.4	10.0	4.1	nd	nd	0.4	0.5	nd	0.8	0.3	99.0
842	935	16.2	2.3	1.2	64.7	0.5	nd	0.4	6.5	3.7	nd	nd	1.0	0.7	nd	1.3	0.5	99.1
847	1630	14.0	2.1	1.1	68.0	0.3	nd	0.5	6.2	2.9	nd	nd	0.8	0.7	nd	0.6	0.4	97.8
851	2128	13.5	3.2	0.5	68.8	nd	nd	0.4	7.6	4.7	nd	nd	0.3	0.4	nd	nd	nd	99.6
863	1646	13.8	3.2	0.6	67.0	0.2	nd	0.4	10.2	2.0	nd	nd	0.4	0.5	0.1	nd	nd	98.6
876	1043	15.6	2.7	1.0	66.8	0.5	nd	0.4	8.2	3.2	nd	nd	0.4	0.5	nd	0.3	nd	99.8
879	1042	11.7	3.5	0.7	69.3	0.2	nd	0.4	10.9	2.1	nd	nd	0.4	0.4	nd	nd	nd	99.8
954	1048	13.4	2.1	0.8	70.1	0.9	nd	0.5	5.3	4.7	0.2	nd	1.1	0.3	nd	nd	nd	99.5

SF = small find number. Ctxt = context. nd = not detected. Detection limits are 0.2% for most oxides, but 0.1% for MnO and PbO.

Table 46 Analyses of coloured glass

### a) Opaque white glasses used in *vetro a filigrana*

SF	Ctxt	Na2O	MgO	Al2O3	SiO2	P2O5	S	Cl	CaO	K2O	TiO2	Cr2O3	MnO	Fe2O3	CuO	SnO2	PbO	Total
723	1833	11.9	2.2	0.9	50.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	7.3	2.2	nd	nd	0.2	0.2	0.2	10.1	11.6	98.2
768	1014	12.3	1.2	0.7	41.8	nd	nd	0.6	3.0	1.9	nd	nd	0.2	0.6	0.3	21.3	23.7	107.6
847	1630	11.1	1.5	0.7	43.1	0.3	nd	0.4	3.6	1.4	nd	nd	0.4	0.6	nd	18.7	19.4	101.4
851	2128	10.7	2.3	0.6	46.8	0.2	0.4	0.5	4.8	3.2	nd	nd	0.1	0.3	nd	16.6	21.8	108.4
863	1646	9.5	2.0	0.3	45.8	nd	nd	0.3	5.7	1.4	nd	nd	0.3	0.4	nd	17.8	19.4	103.0
[54]*		0.5	1.6	nd	41.7	nd	0.5	nd	nd	6.7	nd	nd	0.1	0.2	nd	nd	48.6	100.3

### b) Other colours

Cat/Colour	Na2O	MgO	Al2O3	SiO2	P2O5	S	Cl	CaO	K2O	TiO2	Cr2O3	MnO	Fe2O3	CuO	SnO2	PbO	Total
4/op white	15.2	0.4	0.7	50.0	nd	0.2	0.3	2.1	2.4	nd	nd	0.1	nd	nd	13.5	14.2	99.2
7/opal	14.1	nd	6.3	76.7	0.2	nd	nd	0.5	1.1	nd	nd	0.2	nd	nd	0.2	0.1	99.6
34/dark green	17.6	4.6	7.2	54.7	1.3	0.3	0.4	5.6	3.3	0.4	nd	0.1	2.1	nd	nd	nd	97.8
38/op white	16.2	0.3	0.3	49.5	nd	nd	0.4	2.0	2.4	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	13.5	12.8	97.6
39/op white	14.5	1.9	0.7	52.6	nd	nd	0.3	5.7	2.3	nd	nd	0.5	0.5	0.2	7.5	9.2	96.0
53/chalcedony	13.5	1.3	0.6	64.3	nd	nd	0.3	4.1	2.0	nd	nd	0.3	0.6	0.4	nd	7.9	95.5
54/purple	4.5	3.3	4.6	55.6	0.7	0.2	0.2	9.1	3.3	0.3	nd	8.7	2.3	nd	nd	1.5	94.4

Figure in square brackets = catalogue number. op white = opaque white \*opaque white glass trail on purple glass (see Table 46b).

noted that, since there was a well-documented trade in raw materials for glassmaking at this time and Venetian-style glass was made in France and in the Netherlands, soda glass made in several areas of Europe will be closely comparable visually and compositionally. Hence, compositional evidence cannot be used unequivocally to associate glass artefacts with particular provenances or dates.

The opaque white canes and trails on the *vetro a filigrana* examples are soda-lime-silica glasses (of similar composition to the colourless glasses analysed from the site) opacified by having elevated levels of tin and lead oxides (Table 46a). Tin-opacified opaque white glasses were used throughout the medieval and early post-medieval periods. Three opaque white vessel glasses were also analysed and shown to be of a similar composition (Table 46b); two of these vessels are decorated, one with enamelled dots and gilding (no. 4) and the other with ribbed mouldings (no. 38). An opaque white trail on a piece of purple glass (no. 54) proved to have a very different composition; silica-lead-potash. The cause of the opacity in this case remains unclear.

Seven fragments of coloured vessel glass were also analysed and shown to be soda-lime-silica glasses which were deliberately coloured by the presence of various oxides (Table 46b). The colours investigated were dark green (no. 34, coloured by iron), purple (no. 54, coloured by manganese), chalcedony – a ‘marbled’ effect in reddish-brown and green, (no. 53, probably coloured by copper) and opal (no. 7). The addition of the colourants may have added other oxides accidentally (for instance magnesia and alumina are high in two of these cases). Low levels of lead oxide may have been introduced deliberately in two cases, to help the colours develop or ‘strike’. The cause of the opalescence in no 7 is not yet understood.

## The clay tobacco pipes

by Marek Lewcun

The earliest known English reference to tobacco is by John Sparke the Younger who, when speaking of the people of Florida in 1565, said that ‘when they travel they have a kind of herb dried which with a cane and an earthen cup in the end, with fire, and the dried herbs put together, do suck through the cane the smoke thereof’ (Oswald 1975, 4). It

was probably first introduced into England at some time in the 1560s or early 1570s, but from where or by whom it was brought is debatable. Its cultivation is recorded in France as early as 1557, and in Portugal in 1558, though perhaps more for medicinal purposes at this date. Certainly by 1573 the use of pipes to smoke tobacco was widespread in England, because in that year William Harrison, in his ‘Great Chronologie’, wrote that ‘in these daies the taking-in of the smoke of the Indian herbe called “Tobacco” by an instrument formed like a litle ladell, whereby it passeth from the mouth into the hed and stomach, is gretlie taken-up and used in England, against Rewmes and some other diseases ingendered in the longes and inward partes and not without effect’ (Oswald 1975, 3).

This would suggest that Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618) was not the first person to bring tobacco into England, his main series of journeys to the New World not having taken place until the first half of the 1580s. But he was certainly responsible for introducing it to the court of Queen Elizabeth, and probably also for spreading its use to other parts of the country. On his travels he visited Acton Court, where one of the earliest recorded incidences of smoking other than at Elizabeth’s court occurred. John Aubrey (1626–1697), in his biography of Raleigh (Aubrey, *Lives*, 319), wrote:

Sir Walter was the first that brought Tobacco into England and into fashion. In our part of North Wilts (ie Malmesbury hundred) it came first into fashion by Sir Walter Long.

I have heard my grandfather Lyte say that one pipe was handed from man to man round about the table. They had first silver pipes; the ordinary sort made use of a walnutshell and a straw.

It was sold then for it’s wayte in silver. I have heard some of our old yeomen neighbours say, that when they went to Malmesbury or Chippenham market, they culled out their biggest shillings to lay in the scales against the tobacco.

Sir W. R., standing in a stand at Sir Robert Poyntz’ parke at Acton, tooke a pipe of tobacco, which made the Ladies quitt it till he had donne.

Within these 35 yeares ‘twas scandalous for a Divine to take Tobacco. Now the Customes of it are the greatest his Majestie hath.

Among the pipes found at Acton Court were four examples and probably a fifth (Group A) which are contemporary with Raleigh's time. The paucity of such early pipes from other excavations suggests that smoking was very much a habit of fashion (Oswald 1975, 5), and the Poyntz family were perhaps among the privileged few who were able to enjoy it.

The whole assemblage of excavated pipes from Acton Court (Table 47) provides a useful indicator of local market forces, in comparison to groups from other places in the region such as Bristol and Bath, and also to smaller groups such as the one recovered as a result of field-walking in Marshfield parish, 14 km south-east of Iron Acton. Pipes found in Bristol were made almost exclusively within the city, with only a small proportion manufactured outside, in such places as the pipemaking villages of north-

east Somerset. In Bath the situation was reversed, the vast majority of pipes coming from north-east Somerset, with only a limited amount from Bristol. Outside the two cities, it is clear that market forces were in operation within the smaller villages, away from the centres of pipe manufacture. The Marshfield group (Russett 1985, mf 1-2) indicated that 7 per cent of the pipes dated before 1730 (the period covered by stamped examples from Acton Court) were of Bristol origin, whereas 73 per cent came from north-east Somerset. The source of the remaining 20 per cent was uncertain. At Acton Court, the pipes were mostly from Bristol (76 per cent), with a much smaller proportion from north-east Somerset (11 per cent), and the remainder (13 per cent) from elsewhere. The pipes stamped EC and TR were omitted from this analysis because their provenance is uncertain, although they

Table 47 Analysis of the marked pipes

<i>Stamp</i>	<i>Probable marker</i>	<i>Place or area of manufacture</i>	<i>Date recovered</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
O. Ash	Obadiah Ash	Wickwar	1686-1715	1
RB	Richard Berriman	Bristol	1619-52	9
RB	Uncertain	London	1630-40	1
WB	Uncertain	? Gloucs	1660-90	1
EC	Unknown	Gloucs	1630-60	6
NC	Unknown	Gloucs	1630-60	4
WC	Uncertain	Bristol	1630-60	4
EDWARDS	Philip Edwards I	Bristol	1632-80	1
PC/G/V	Unknown	N E Somerset	1650-70	1
GH	Jeffry Hunt	Norton St. Philip	1630-50	1
IEFFRY HUNT	Jeffry Hunt	Norton St. Philip	1645-70	1
IH	Unknown	? Gloucs	1640-70	1
THOMAS HUNT	Thomas Hunt	Norton St. Philip and Woolverton	1650-80	2
IK	John Kelloway	Bristol	1648-60	2
EL	Edward Lewis I or Elizabeth Lewis	Bristol	1631-70	13
IOHN	John Mats	Broseley or N E Warwicks	1660-70	1
McLARDY	Samuel McLardy	Manchester	1869-1930	1
MANCHESTER				
IP	Uncertain	Bristol	1670-1700	1
TR	Uncertain	? Bristol/Gloucs	1640-60	14
RT	Robert Tippett I/II	Bristol	1655-80	1
IW in bell	Uncertain	Bristol	1640-60	1
IW or TW	Uncertain	Bristol	1780-1840	1
JW	Uncertain	Bristol	1820-60	1
Diamonds motif	Unknown	Bristol	1680-1730	1
DUBLIN	Unknown	Bristol/Gloucs	1850-1920	1
Fleur-de-lys motif	Unknown	? Gloucs	1630-50	1
Fox motif	Fox family	S E Wilts	1620-60	1
Gauntlett	Gauntlett family	Amesbury	1640-60	1
Hand motif	Unknown	Somerset/Gloucs	1630-60	3



are probably of local origin and possibly from Bristol.

The excavations at Acton Court produced several particularly interesting groups of pipes. Group B came from the fill of the Civil War period ditch, immediately to the north of the house. Group C was beneath the wooden floor in Room 30 (context 136), and is mid-17th century in date, consisting of pipes discarded while the room was still in use. Groups D–F, although small, are important because they were contemporary with the partial demolition of the house between the late 17th and the early 18th centuries.

Within the groups were a number of noteworthy individual pipes, including a complete mid- to late 17th-century pipe stamped with the name of the maker Thomas Hunt of Norton St Philip (Group D, Fig 9.25.58). All illustrable makers' marks and most of the bowl forms are illustrated in this report, either within the selected groups or in the miscellaneous group (Group G).

## Catalogue

### Group A

#### Early pipes (Fig 9.22.1–5)

- 1 Bowl. Highly polished and remarkably similar in form to later Bristol products of the mid-17th century. Bore 2.85 mm; *c* 1580–1610. A pipe of this date, very well finished like most early pipes, but also illustrating later shape characteristics, was found during excavations at Norton Priory, Cheshire (Davey 1985a, 170–1). Oswald (1969, 134). This suggests that a pipe from Plymouth, only slightly larger than this example and also showing later characteristics may have been a toy variety of the Bristol pipes of the 1650–80 period; similar pipes are recorded from Bristol, Chester and in the British Museum. It is worth noting that none of the later Bristol products from the same context illustrate such excellence of finishing. Bristol was certainly exporting pipes by 1597, while the earliest documented pipemaker in the city is Miles Casey, who had died by 5 May 1617, when an

inventory of his goods was made (Jackson and Jackson 1985).

Period 4.5–4.6 (136), beneath floor of Room 30, west range, Area 1.

- 2–4 Three bowls. Polished. Bore 2.4 mm; *c* 1580–1620. Only no. 4 can be attributed to a particular source. It is of a type common in London (C Tatman, pers comm), where it was probably made. An identical pipe is recorded from Bristol (Pritchard 1923, 174).  
 Period 4.5–4.6 (136), beneath floor of Room 30, west range, Area 1; Period 5.3 (940), fill of soakaway, Area 8; Period 4.6 (2763), fill of Civil War period ditch, Area 11.
- 5 Bowl. Polished. Bore 3.2 mm. Relief design of an inverted dagger within a pear-shaped enclosure, stamped on heel, *c* 1600–30. Later pipes bearing the initials RB on either side of an upright dagger were probably made by Richard Berriman, who is recorded working in Bristol between 1619 and 1652 (Price *et al* 1979). This pipe may possibly be one of his earlier products. Period 4.3 (2215), fill of east arm of moat, Area 7 (intrusive).

### Group B

Pipes from fill of Civil War period ditch immediately north of house Period 4.6 (947), Area 8

Only a short length of the ditch was excavated, but it contained 60 bowls, of which 21 are stamped. Fragments of at least another thirty pipes, and 143 stem fragments were also recovered. They fit broadly into a date bracket of 1631–59, based on makers' marks (Price *et al* 1979), but a

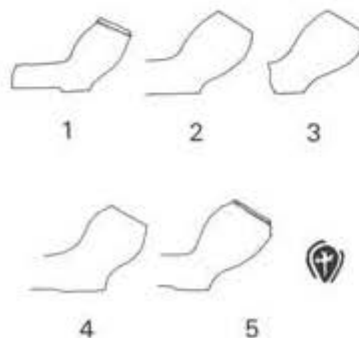


Figure 9.22 Clay pipes: Group A, scale 1:2.



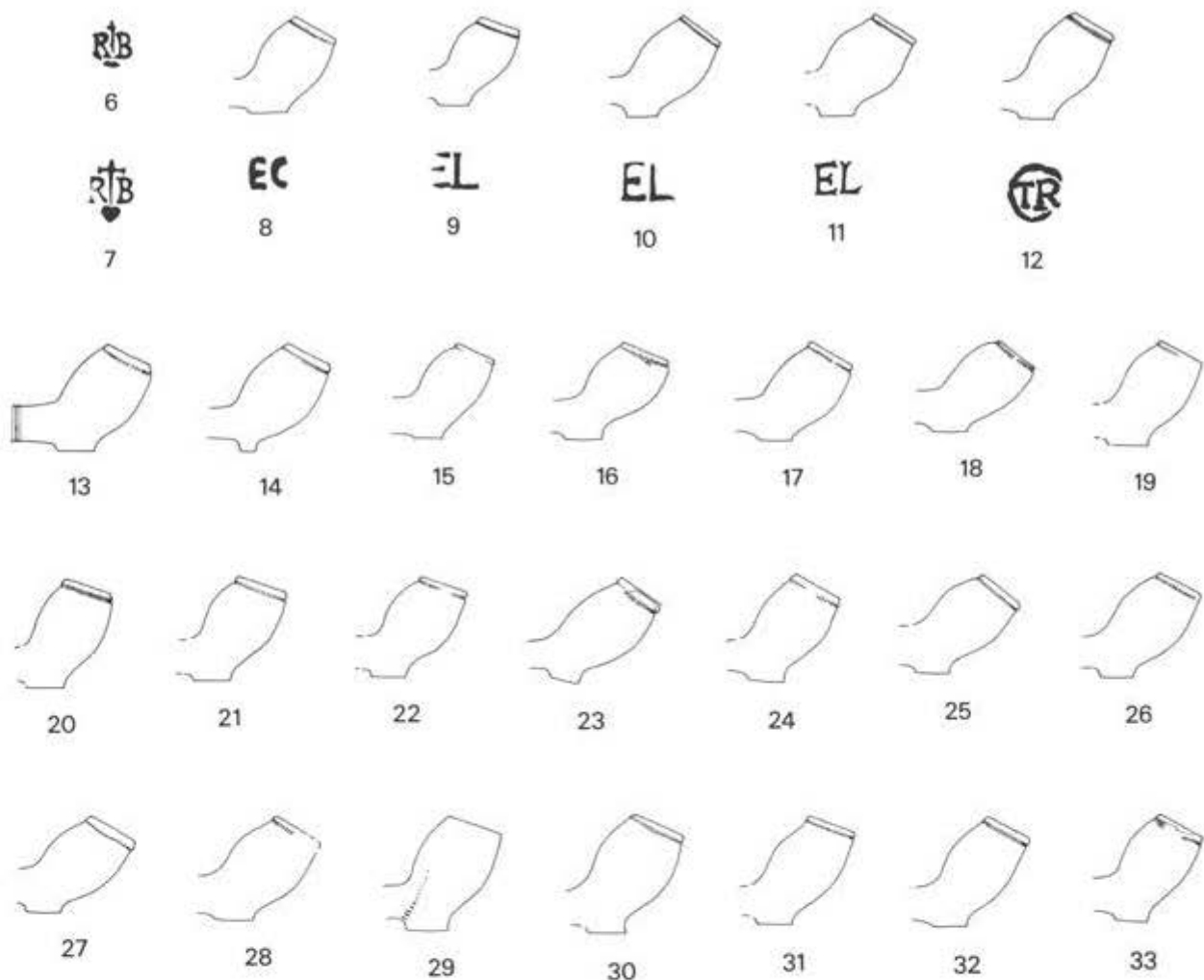


Figure 9.23 Clay pipes: Group B, scale 1:2.

more closely defined date of *c* 1640–50 would be quite acceptable. Recent excavations on the site of the Civil War ditch at 106, Southgate Street, Gloucester, also yielded a large quantity of pipes (S Atkins, pers comm), but not enough stamped examples to provide a comparison with the Acton Court material.

Fig 9.23

- 6–7 Stamps from two heels, a heart at the point of a dagger between the initials RB. Richard Berriman of Bristol, *fl* 1619–52 was the probable maker.
- 8 Bowl. Initials EC on heel. Five examples. Quantities of pipes bearing this stamp exist in local collections in Bristol Museum, but no maker with these initials has yet been documented.
- 9–11 Three bowls. Initials EL on heels. Two makers with these initials are

12

recorded in Bristol in the mid-17th century: Edward Lewis the elder (*fl* 1631–41, deceased by 1652; and Elizabeth Lewis, working by 1652 (Price *et al* 1979). Either could have been the maker.

Bowl. Initials TR on heel. Ten examples. Large numbers of these pipes exist in local collections, but like no 8, no documentary references to a maker with these initials during the likely period have yet been found. The pipes have been attributed to Timothy Ricketts, who was made a freeman of Bristol in 1669 (Pritchard 1923, 183), while a Thomas Richards was apprenticed to John and Joan Abbot of Bristol in 1660 (Price *et al* 1979). Although the TR pipes are stylistically earlier than the period at which both men were working, it is possible that old moulds

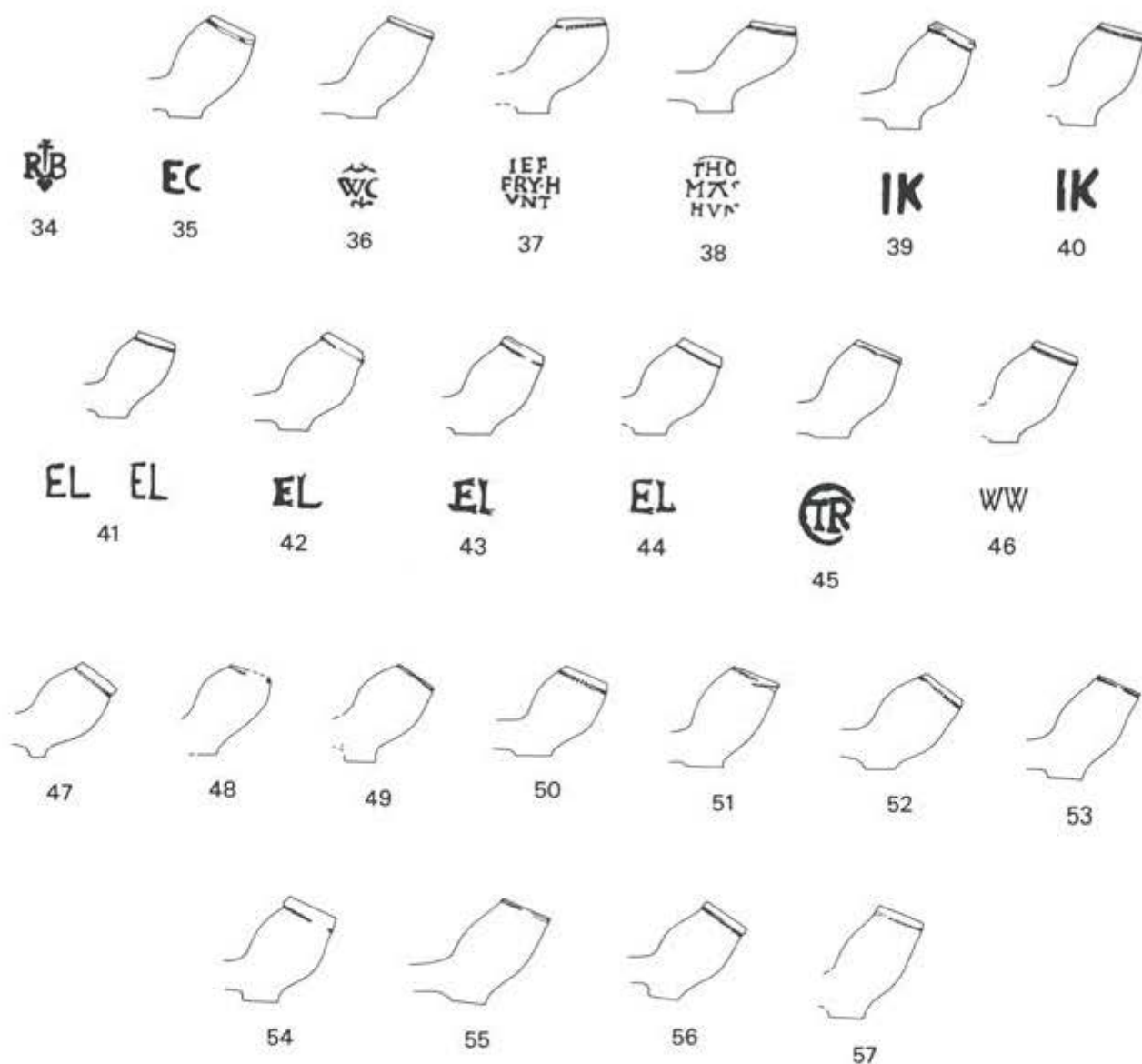


Figure 9.24 Clay pipes:  
Group C, scale 1:2.

- 13 acquired from another maker were being used.  
Bowl. Part of stem exhibits mould-imparted ring moulding. Although a local form, no local parallel for this type of embossed design is known.
- 14–33 Unstamped bowls
- 14 Six examples.
- 15 One example.
- 16 Four examples.
- 17–20 One example of each.
- 21 Four examples.
- 22 Two examples.
- 23 Three examples.
- 24–5 One example of each.
- 26 Three examples.
- 27–33 One example of each.

#### Group C

Pipes from beneath floor of Room 30, west range. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Area 1 (*cf* Group A, no. 1)

The forms in this group fit into a date bracket of 1630–70, and most of the stamps suggest deposition between 1645 and 1660.

#### Fig 9.24

- 34 Initials RB on either side of a dagger and heart, on heel.  
Probably same maker as nos. 6–7
- 35 Bowl. Initials EC on heel. From same die as no. 8.
- 36 Bowl. Initials WC on heel, between foliage in relief. Four makers with these initials are recorded in Bristol during the

period: William Carter in 1641 (deceased by 1647); William Cherrington the elder, from 1660 onwards; William Cissell from 1661 to 1670; and William Cooper, from 1641 to 1642 (Price *et al* 1979). Any one of these could have been the maker.

- 37 Bowl. IEF/FRY/HVNT on heel. Made by one of two Jeffry Hunts, father and son, who worked at Norton St Philip, Somerset, during the 17th century (Lewcun forthcoming).
- 38 Bowl. THO/MAS/HVNT on heel; *c* 1650–80. Made by Thomas Hunt of Norton St Philip and Woolverton, in north-east Somerset (Lewcun forthcoming).
- 39–40 Two bowls. Initials IK on heel. Probably made by John Kelloway (Calloway), who is recorded working in Bristol from 1648, when he acquired his freedom, to 1681 (Price *et al* 1979).
- 41–4 Four bowls. Initials EL on heel. Mid-17th century. Probably made by Edward Lewis or Elizabeth Lewis (cf nos 9–1).
- 45 Bowl. Initials TR on heel. Maker unknown (cf no 12).
- 46 Bowl. Initials WW on heel. William Williams, working in Bristol from *c* 1647 to 1684 (Price *et al* 1979), was probably the maker.
- 47–57 Unstamped bowls. One example of each.

#### Group D

Pipes from fill of south porch garderobe 1003. Period 5.1 (468 and 469), Area 1

##### Fig 9.25

- 58 Complete pipe in five fragments. THO/MAS/HVNT on heel; *c* 1650–80. This is the first pipe made by Thomas Hunt to have been found in its entirety (cf no. 38).
- 59 Near-complete pipe. Initials WB on heel; *c* 1660–90. William Biddell is recorded as working in Bristol from 1652 to 1670, and William Bosly began his apprenticeship in 1653 (Price *et al* 1979). Either may have been the maker, but the pipe is not of the form characteristic of Bristol products during this period. The shape of the bowl is similar to

Gloucester Type 5 (Peacey 1979, 47), and two makers with these initials are recorded in Gloucester at the time: Walter Barney in 1664, and William Brimyard by 1687 (ibid 1979, 50). It is possible that this pipe is a product of Walter Bayly, a pipemaker originating from Rode, Somerset, who was living in Iron Acton in 1677. He had been at Tytherington two years earlier, and had moved to nearby Wickwar by 1679. He died there in 1692 (Lewcun forthcoming).

*Not illustrated:* Heel stamped with initials TR. Maker unknown (cf nos. 12 and 45). Two bowls; *c* 1650–80.

#### Group E

Pipes from fill of west range garderobe 222. Period 5.1 (233), Area 1.

This group is dated *c* 1670 and 1730, and contains three different forms.

##### Fig 9.26

- 60 Pipe. Bowl of Somerset–Wiltshire style; *c* 1660–80.
- 61–3 Pipes. Bowls of later Bristol barrel-shaped form; *c* 1660–90.
- 64–5 Spurred bowls of a type in use *c* 1690–1730. No. 65 probably dates to later in this period.

#### Group F

Pipes from south range demolition material, overlying infilled moat. Period 5.1 (2128), Area 1

##### Fig 9.27

- 66–71 Six bowls with forms typical of the period 1690–1730.
- Not illustrated:* two bowls, dating to second half of 17th century.

#### Group G

Other stamped and decorated pipes

##### Fig 9.28

- 72 Bowl. Mould-imparted mark of O. ASH above an ash leaf. Obadiah Ash is recorded at Wickwar, Gloucestershire, between 1686 and 1715 (Peacey 1979, 74–6). He was the brother-in-law of Walter Bayly (see no. 59) and appears to have spent his final days at Compton Dando in north-east Somerset, in 1718 (Lewcun forthcoming).

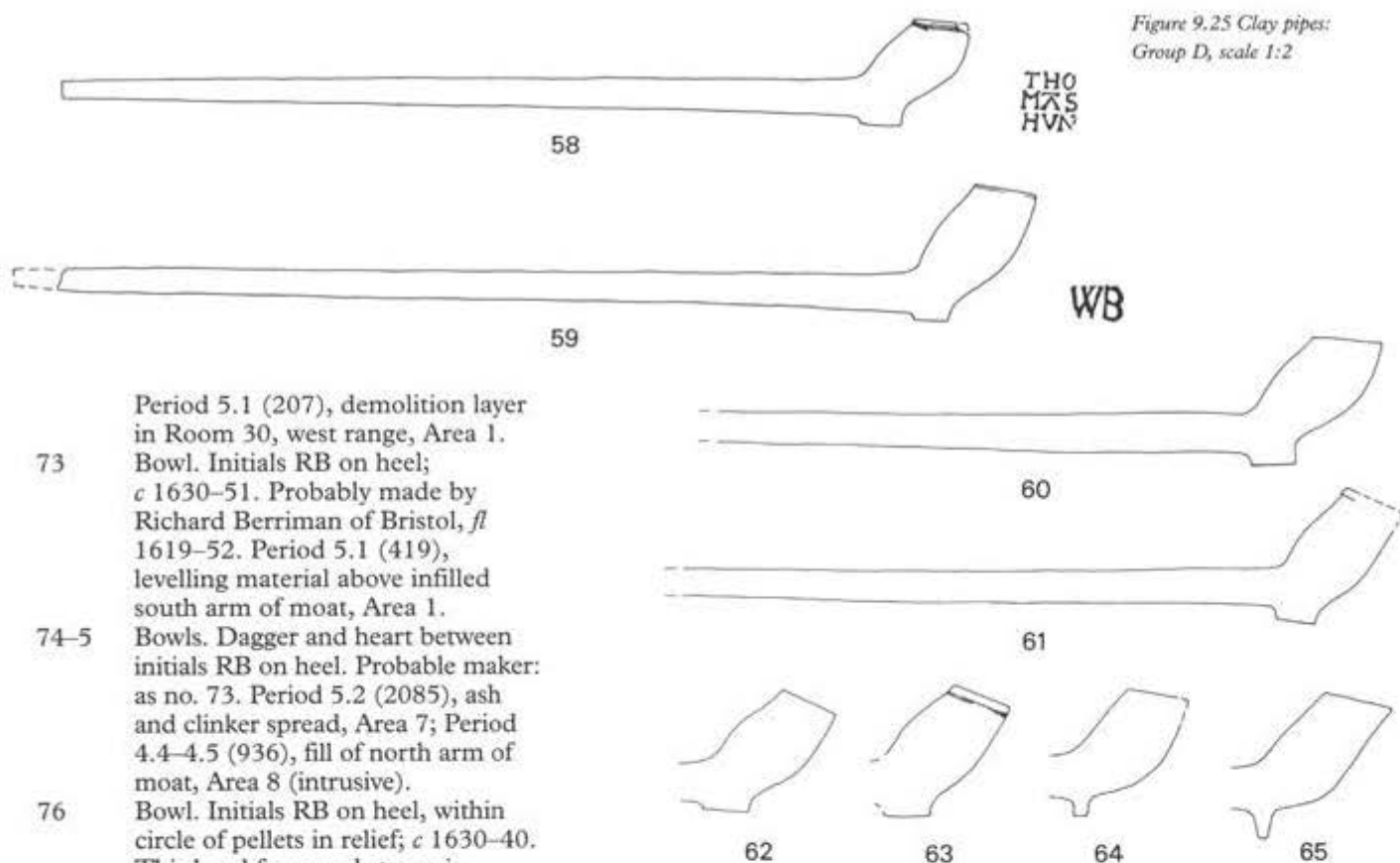


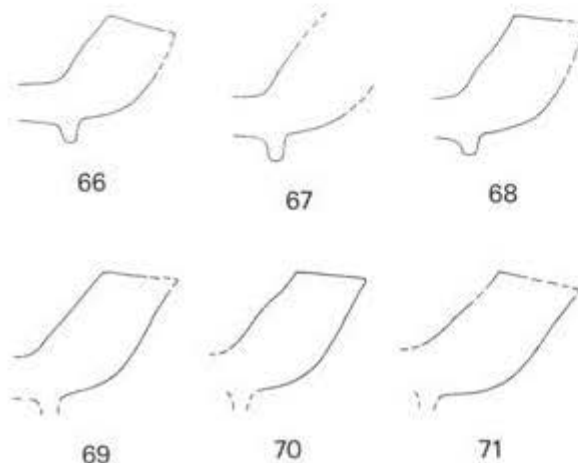
Figure 9.25 Clay pipes:  
Group D, scale 1:2

- 73 Period 5.1 (207), demolition layer in Room 30, west range, Area 1. Bowl. Initials RB on heel; *c* 1630–51. Probably made by Richard Berriman of Bristol, *fl* 1619–52. Period 5.1 (419), levelling material above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 74–5 Bowls. Dagger and heart between initials RB on heel. Probable maker: as no. 73. Period 5.2 (2085), ash and clinker spread, Area 7; Period 4.4–4.5 (936), fill of north arm of moat, Area 8 (intrusive).
- 76 Bowl. Initials RB on heel, within circle of pellets in relief; *c* 1630–40. This bowl form and stamp is attributed to a London maker, possibly Robert Burn of Cow Cross or Robert Bull of Wapping (Atkinson 1965, 249). A similar pipe is recorded from Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire (Higgins 1985a, 360). Period 4.6–5.1 (2142), demolition layer above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 77 Bowl. Initials NC on heel between two flowers or crude wheel motifs above and below; *c* 1630–60. Four examples of this stamp were recovered at Acton Court, but no maker with these initials has yet been discovered either in Gloucestershire or the adjacent counties. Identical pipes exist in the collections of Bristol City Museum. Period 4.6 (3021), charcoal layer above infilled north-east corner of moat, Area 13.
- 78 Bowl. North-east Somerset form. Initials PC, PG or PV on heel; *c* 1650–70. Only two other examples of this stamp are known: from Bath (Lewcun forthcoming); and from Farleigh Hungerford, Somerset (Wilcox 1980, 106).

- 79 Period 5.2–5.3 (2085), ash and clinker spread, Area 7. Bowl. Bristol form. Initials WC stamped on heel with a floral design above and below; *c* 1630–60. Attributable to one of the same makers as no. 36. Period 4.6 (3020), clay above infilled north-east corner of moat, Area 13.
- 80 Bowl. Crude initials WC on heel; *c* 1630–55; cf no. 36. Period

Figure 9.26 Clay pipes:  
Group E, scale 1:2

Figure 9.27 Clay pipes:  
Group F, scale 1:2.





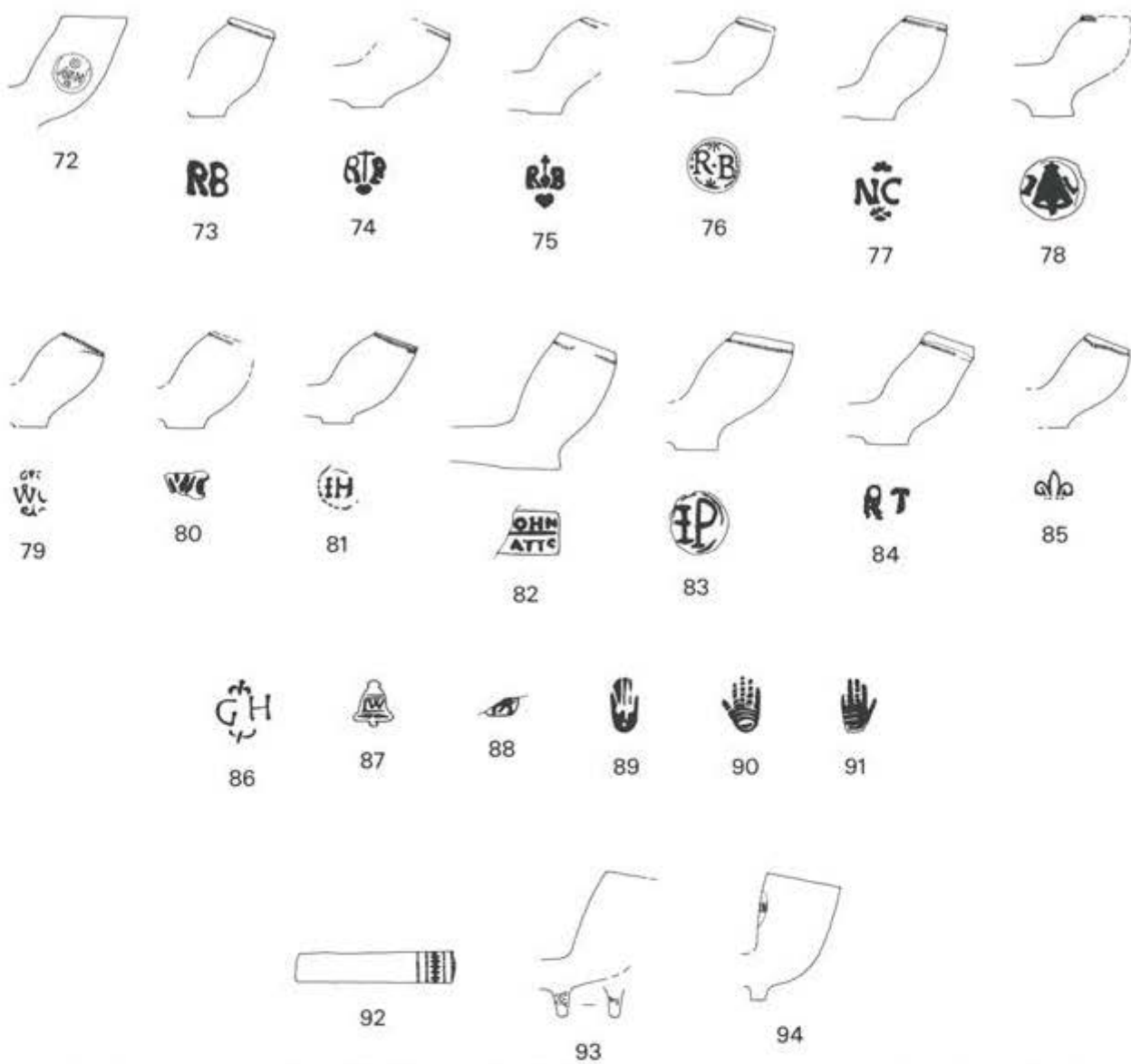


Figure 9.28 Clay pipes: Group G, scale 1:2.

- 81 Bowl. Small initials IH on heel within a dashed border; c 1640–70. Another example of this stamp is recorded at Bath (Lewcun forthcoming), but their place of origin is unknown. Period 5.3–5.4 (2061), fill of posthole, Area 7.
- 82 Bowl. Broseley form. IOHN MATTS stamped on heel. Second half of the 17th century. John Mats is recorded at Broseley, Shropshire, from 1649 to 1663. Pipes stamped with the same name and bearing the date 1689 are known, and it has been suggested that the maker may have worked elsewhere (Atkinson 1975, 71). Higgins (1985b, 293) suggests that a first John Mats worked at Broseley, and that a second moved from Broseley to north-east Warwickshire. Period 5.1–5.2 (508), gravel surface, Area 2.
- 83 Bowl. Relief initials IP on heel; c 1670–1700. Probably made in Bristol. Seven makers with these initials are recorded in the city: John Pierce the elder from 1696 to 1738; John Pickering, from 1700 onwards; John Poyte the elder, from 1667 to 1715; John Probin, from 1700 onwards; Jacob Prosser, from 1663 to 1686; John Prosser the elder, from 1673 to 1696; and Joseph Prosser, from c 1687 to 1704 (Price *et al* 1979). Period 5.1

- (1743), demolition layer in Room 32, Area 1.
- 84 Bowl. Crude initials RT on heel; *c* 1655–80. Robert Tippet senior and junior are recorded in Bristol from 1660 to 1680 and from 1678 to 1722 respectively (Price *et al* 1979), and one of them was probably the maker (Walker 1977, 1732). Period 5.2–5.3 (2085), ash and clinker spread, Area 7.
- 85 Bowl. Local form, with heel bearing the partial stamp of a fleur-de-lis; *c* 1630–50. Period 4.6 (938), cinder and coal layer above infilled north arm of moat, Area 8.
- 86–91 Stamps from bowls, of which only the heels survive:
- 86 Initials GH with a fleur-de-lis above and below; *c* 1630–50. Probably a product of Jeffrey Hunt of Norton St Philip, Somerset (Lewcun forthcoming). Period 4.6 (3022), clay layer above infilled north-east corner of moat, Area 13.
- 87 Relief initials IW within a bell on heel; *c* 1640–60. Two makers with these initials are recorded in Bristol during the period: John Wall, from 1630 to 1650, and his widow, Jane Wall, from 1650 to 1661 (Price *et al* 1979). One of the two was presumably the maker, given the large numbers of these pipes in local collections. Period 5.1 (184), demolition layer in Room 29, Area 1.
- 88 Partial stamp of a fox motif on the remains of a pipe heel; *c* 1620–60. Probably made by one of the Fox family in south-east Wiltshire (Lewcun forthcoming). Large numbers of these pipes are recorded from the Salisbury area (Atkinson 1980, 67). Other members of the family were making pipes, stamped with their full names, in the west of the county at Trowle, in Bradford-on-Avon parish, by 1638 (Lewcun forthcoming). Period 5.1 (419), levelling material above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 89 Stamp of the ‘monkey-paw’ gauntlet type; *c* 1640–60. Probably made by one of the Gauntlett family of Amesbury, Wiltshire (Atkinson 1970, 178–9). Period 5.1 (413), demolition layer above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 90–1 Two stamps of skeletal hand motifs; *c* 1630–60. Common in collections from Somerset and Bristol, some of these types were probably made in north-east Somerset (Lewcun forthcoming). Period 5.1–5.2 (918), Area 8; Period pre-4.1 (551), old ground surface, Area 2 (intrusive).
- 92 Stem fragment with part of rotated design of linked diamonds within milled bands; *c* 1680–1730. Often accompanied by makers’ initials amongst the diamond design. A Bristol product, common in local collections. Period 5.1 (1742), demolition layer within Room 32, Area 1.
- 93 Bowl. Plain. Embossed initials JW, mould-imparted on the spur sides; *c* 1820–60. There were a number of makers with these initials working in Bristol in this period (Price *et al* 1979). Period 5.3–5.4 (1133), dumped soil in inner courtyard, Area 1.
- 94 Bowl. Plain and upright. DUBLIN stamped on its back in an oval frame; *c* 1860–1920. A type produced in England and aimed at the Irish workforce. Period 5.3–5.4 (2100), manure layer in OB7, Area 1.

## Coins, jettons and tokens

*by Robert Bell, Marion Archibald and Barry Knight*

### Introduction

*by Robert Bell*

The coins, jettons and tokens form an extremely important assemblage, both in terms of their value as dating evidence for some of the alterations to the house, and as an indicator of the changing economic fortunes of its occupants. In preference to producing the customary list of all the coins, followed by all the jettons and tokens, it was decided to group the coins and jettons together chronologically, and to separate four specific stratigraphic groups.

There were no coins or jettons from any Period 2 or Period 3 contexts. Given the absence of Period 3 occupation layers over much of the site of the medieval house, this is not particularly surprising. However, Group 1 (nos 1–6) came from the Period 4.1–4.3 layers of dumped material in Area 2, and the soil immediately above them. This material was redeposited and probably derived mainly from the Period 3 structures beneath the present east range. It included a late 12th- to mid-13th-century farthing (no. 1) and an early 14th-century English jetton (no. 4), but no items which need be later than the early 16th century, nor any Tudor coins, suggesting that it represented material which had formerly been deposited beneath or within the Period 3 structures. Since only a small proportion of the demolition rubble

penny (no.10), which indicates that the ranges were not erected before 1547, assuming that it was not intrusive from the overlying context 136 (Group 4).

Group 3 (nos. 13–24) included nine coins from the bottom of the south arm of the moat, within and in the immediate vicinity of the south porch. Obviously, the moat was still open when these were dropped, either accidentally or intentionally. Nos.13–17 form a sub-group of three groats, a half-groat and a penny, which may have been deposited simultaneously. As they were probably all in circulation during Henry VIII's second coinage (1526–44), and no.17 can be no earlier than 1533, the interesting possibility arises that they may have been thrown into the moat at the time of the royal visit in 1535. The remaining coins in Group 3 must, however, be later. The presence of a groat of Mary (no. 21) demonstrates that this part of the moat was filled in no earlier than the mid-1550s. The groat, although encrusted, was in fairly fresh condition and is likely to have been lost within ten years of issue. The absence of any Elizabethan coins, which were relatively prolific elsewhere on the site, might imply that no. 21 and the Hans Schultes I jetton (no. 23) were discarded shortly after they were issued and immediately prior to the infilling of the moat.

Of the other early to mid-16th-century coins on the site, the Portuguese ceitil of King John III (no. 26) is noteworthy.

The last group, Group 4 (nos. 28–74), appears to have accumulated beneath the wooden floor of Room 30, over a period of about eighty years, while the room was in use. The earliest of the eight coins found was minted in 1565–7 (no. 29), while the latest was minted in 1641–3 (no. 34). The thirty-seven Nuremberg jettons (nos.

**Table 48 Incidence of coins, tokens and jettons**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Coins</i>	<i>Tokens</i>	<i>Jettons</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Totals</i>
13th to mid-15th century	2		3		5
Late 15th to mid-16th century	13		6	1	20
Mid- to late 16th century	9	1	41		51
Early to mid-17th century	9		2		11
Mid- to late 17th century	2	3			5
18th to mid-19th century	17				17
Mid- 19th to 20th century	33				33
<i>Totals</i>	85	4	52	1	142

in the south court was excavated, it is reasonable to assume that there are likely to be other medieval and early 16th-century coins and jettons nearby.

Group 2 (nos 9–12), containing two coins and a jetton, was contemporary with the demolition of Rooms H–L and the construction of the Period 4.2 north and west ranges. The latest coin was an Edward VI

**Table 49 Incidence of coin denomination by date**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Denomination</i>								<i>Totals</i>
	1s	6d	4d	3d	2d	1d	½d	¼d	
13th to mid-15th century								1	1
Late 15th to mid-16th century			5		2	5			12
Mid- to late 16th century	1	5	1	1	1				9
Early to mid-17th century	1	2			1			5	9
Mid- to late 17th century								2	2
18th to mid-19th century						1	15	1	17
Mid- 19th to 20th century		4		4		12	9	4	33
<i>Totals</i>	2	11	6	5	4	18	24	13	83

(Portuguese ceitil and Venetian soldino omitted)



37–74), presumably forming a set, and the diamond-shaped late-Elizabethan token (no. 36) come within this date range.

Finally, four coins, one token and one jetton (nos. 75, 79, 81, 86, 89 and 92) came from the demolition material within Room 32. The latest was a Charles II farthing, dating to the early to mid-1670s.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the coin evidence is that there is a dramatic contrast at Acton Court between the early 16th to mid-17th-century period, and the mid-17th to twentieth-century period. In purely numerical terms, the majority of the coins were from the latter period (Table 48) but those of the earlier period were generally of a higher denomination. Groats, sixpences and shillings constituted half the total number of coins, implying a fairly extravagant lifestyle (Table 49). In the later period however, most of the coins were farthings, halfpennies and pennies, and it was only in the mid-twentieth century that sixpences were once again deposited on the site.

## Catalogue

**Group 1 (nos. 1–6): Area 2 (south court) Periods 4.1–4.3 and 4.4–4.6 (518, 519, 527 and 535)**

### Coins

- 1 Cut farthing; short cross issue. Obv hen; rev ]ER.ON[ The shape of the *e* in *hen* suggests Class 6 (Henry III, 1210–17). If so, the possible moneyers are Roger or Walter at Canterbury, or Walter at London. Deposited pre-1250. Not very worn. Period 4.1–4.3 (535).
- 2 Doge Michael Steno (1400–13) Venetian soldino. Period 4.1–4.3 (535).

*Marion Archibald* comments: Venetian soldini, known as galeyhalpens because they arrived with the Venetian galleys, circulated unofficially as halfpence in England, (in default of an adequate supply of regal halfpence), during the early 15th and again during the early 16th centuries. They are rarely found in hoards because they were discriminated against, but are very common site finds.

- 3 Edward IV, fragment of penny. Durham, first reign, heavy coinage (1461–4/5). Average wear; lost by

end of 15th century. Period 4.4–4.6 (518).

### Jettons

- 4 English bronze jetton; early 14th century, *temp* Edward II. 22 mm. Obv lion in tressure, X\_ repeated in place of legend (Berry 1974, Type 5E, pl 3, 14). Rev fleur-de-lis in each angle of a cross pommée, rosettes in place of legend. Period 4.1–4.3 (527).
- 5 Nuremberg jetton; early 16th century. 24 mm. Ship/arms of France in lozenge; garbled Lombardic legends. Period 4.4–4.6 (519).
- 6 Fragments of jetton (not complete); same as no. 5. 25 mm. Period 4.1–4.3 (535).

### Other medieval jettons

- 7 English sterling jetton, pierced; early 14th century, *temp* Edward II. Discarded pre-1350. 21 mm. Obv King's head facing; border of alternating cinquefoils and pellets. Rev Long cross fourché, cinquefoils in angles, border of pellets. Punches as in Edward II type XV, *c* 1325. Edward II type I (Berry 1974), and Fox class XV. Period 5.4 (851), topsoil in Area 6.
- 8 English jetton; early 14th century, *temp* Edward II. 21 mm. Obv two leopards (Berry 1974, type 5C, pl 3, 12). Rev long cross with three pellets at each end, and a rosette of pellets in each angle. Pellets in place of legend on both sides. Period 5.4 (2072), subsoil, Area 7.

**Group 2 (nos. 9–12): Area 1. Period 4.2 infill of Room H, beneath west range (281 and 284), and fill of construction trench of north wall of north range (1628)**

### Coins

- 9 Henry VIII 'Sovereign' penny, second coinage (1526–44). Canterbury; Archbishop Cranmer (enthroned 1533). Incomplete; heavily encrusted, very corroded and cracked (284).
- 10 Edward VI penny (in the name of Henry VIII). London. H.D.G. ROSA SINE.SPINE. (1547–51). Lozenge stops, no. i.m. (281).



*Jettons*

- 11 Nuremberg jetton; early 16th century. Same as no. 5. (281).  
 12 Nuremberg jetton of late French type; early 16th century. 28 mm. Arms of France in escutcheon/cross fleury in quadrilobe. Corroded. (1628).

**Group 3 (nos 13–24): Area 1 Bottom of south arm of moat. Period 4.2–4.3 (1044, 1048, 1941, 1992 and 1993)**

*Coins*

- 13 Henry VII groat; 1502–4; type IIIC, i.m. greyhound's head. Not very worn. (1048).  
 14 Henry VII 'Sovereign' penny, Durham, Bishop Fox (enthroned 1495). D and R beside shield, mitre over. Worn. This issue remained current into Henry VIII's second coinage. (1993).  
 15 Henry VIII groat, second coinage (1526–9), London; i.m. rose. Lombardic letters. Little wear. (1993).  
 16 Henry VIII groat, second coinage (1526–44), London; i.m. lis. Not very worn. (1993).  
 17 Henry VIII half-groat, second coinage; 1533–44. Canterbury, Archbishop Cranmer; i.m. Catherine wheel. (1993).  
 18 Henry VIII groat, third coinage (1544–7), Canterbury. Roman lettering. Heavily encrusted. (1993).  
 19 Henry VIII half-groat, third coinage (1544–7), Canterbury. Lombardic lettering; incomplete. Heavily corroded. (1993).  
 20 Edward VI groat (in the name of Henry VIII). 6th bust (1547–51); i.m. rose. Canterbury. No i.m. on rev. (1992).  
 21 Mary groat, sole reign (1553–4), London. Unworn; lost fairly soon after issue. Very encrusted. (1993).

*Jettons*

- 22 Nuremberg jetton, early 16th century. Same as no.5. (1993).  
 23 Nuremberg jetton of Hans Schultes I (*fl* 1553–84). 24 mm. Reichsapfel/crowns and lis. (1993).

*Coin weight*

- 24 Brass coin weight for a gold rose noble; 16th to 17th century.

Weight: 7.30 g. Very worn. Coin-weights for obsolete coins were often included in boxes of weights in case the coins ever came into a merchant's hands. (1044).

**Other late 15th to mid-16th-century coins and jettons***Coins*

- 25 Henry VII 'Sovereign' penny, c 1485–9, York, Archbishop Rotherham. Badly struck. Period 4.4–4.5 (929), fill of north arm of moat, Area 8.  
 26 John III of Portugal (1521–57) ceitil; equivalent in size to a half-groat, but copper alloy, not silver. Obv Crown over IHNS monogram; legend obscure. Rev Portuguese arms in tressure; legend obscure. Period 5.2 (486), farmyard surface above Room 24, Area 1.

Bristol City Museum holds a considerable number of medieval and early post-medieval foreign coins, many of which were found in the latter part of the 19th century during dredging operations in the harbour at Bristol. The largest number (fifty-eight) are Portuguese coins, ranging in date from the late 13th to the early 18th century, though the majority are 15th to 16th century. At least twenty-eight Spanish coins are also recorded. They clearly reflect the close trading links between Bristol merchants and the Iberian Peninsula (du Quesne-Bird 1971).

*Marion Archibald* comments: a ceitil of John III was found in a hoard at Guildford in 1986. A chinfrans of Alfonso V (1448–81), equivalent in size to a groat, was found in a hoard buried at Hartford, Huntingdonshire, in c 1507.

*Jettons*

- 27 Nuremberg jetton, of late French type; early 16th century. 21 mm. Arms of France in escutcheon/cross fleury voided. Period 5.2 (1213), farmyard surface above Room 22, Area 1.

**Group 4 (nos 28–74): Area 1. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), subsided layer below floor in Room 30**

*Coins*

- 28 Elizabeth I sixpence, 1582; i.m. bell. Bent twice. Worn.

- 29 Elizabeth I sixpence, 1565–7 (probably 1566); i.m. portcullis. Very worn.
- 30 Elizabeth I sixpence, 1572; i.m. ermine. Not very worn.
- 31 James I farthing, 1613–14; 13 mm. 'Harrington' small size; i.m. fret. Virtually no wear.
- 32 James I farthing, 1613–14; 12 mm. Same as no. 31. No wear.
- 33 James I farthing, 1613–14; 15 mm. 'Harrington' normal size; i.m. lis. No wear.
- 34 Charles I shilling, 1641–3; i.m. triangle in circle. Average wear. Some clipping.
- 35 Charles I farthing, 1625–34; pierced, 'Richmond' round; no i.m. No wear.
- 71 Same as nos. 39–68, but motto is GLVCK BESCHERT IST VNGEWERT.
- 72 Large size Nuremberg jetton, no name. Obv Reichsapfel in trilobe, garbled Lombardic legend; rev 3 crowns and 3 lis, legend nvre:nvre:nvre:nvre.
- 73 Large size Nuremberg jetton of Georg Schultes, 1553. Obv Reichsapfel in trilobe, IORG SCVLTES 1553; rev 3 crowns and 3 lis, IORG:SCVLTES EMGO (?).
- 74 Small size Nuremberg jetton of Hans Schultes III (fl 1606–12). Obv Reichsapfel in trilobe, HANS SCVLTES ZV NVRENB; rev bust of Mercury, GLIK KVMPPT VON GOT IST WA.
- Tokens**
- 36 Bristol farthing token, c 1590–1603; 'diamond-shaped' type, (Gloucestershire no 21, in Williamson 1889, I, 241).

*Marion Archibald* comments: these early Bristol pieces are quite scarce; an example of local circulation, though the Bristol tokens travelled further than most. The exact date of issue is unrecorded, but it must have been late in the reign of Elizabeth. In 1594, the mayor and Corporation of Bristol were ordered to call in unlicensed tokens. The licensed tokens, of which this is an example, ceased in 1603 on the succession of James I.

#### Jettons

- 37 Small size (21 mm) Nuremberg jetton of Hans Krauwinkel (fl 1562–86). Obv 3 crowns and 3 lis, HANNS KRAUWINCKEL IN NVR; rev. GOTTES GABEN SOL MAN LO.
- 38 Same as no 37, but the motto is GOTT ALLEIN DIE EERE SEI.
- 39–68 Large size (25 mm) Nuremberg jettons of Hans Krauwinkel (twenty-nine in all, since nos. 65–6 are two parts of the same jetton). Late 16th/early 17th century. Obv 3 crowns and 3 lis, HANNS KRAUWINCKEL IN NVRNBE; rev. Reichsapfel in trilobe, DAS WORT GOTS BLEIT EWICKLICH.
- 69–70 Same as 39–68, but the motto is spelled differently and is on the
- Paul Courtney* writes: Most documentary references to sets of jettons indicate numbers of a hundred (Barnard 1916, 83). In 1420–1 however, Elizabeth Berkeley, Countess of Warwick, purchased three dozen counters in London 'for making of the account of the household' (Ross 1951, 103). This raises the possibility that the thirty-seven jettons from context 136 could have been a set. Apart from use in household accounts, two other possible functions are suggested by the strong feminine nature of the finds from this context (cf small finds catalogue, Group C below). They may have been used for instructing children in the nursery, and a counting board is documented in a nursery at Lambton, Durham, in 1595 (Barnard 1916, 252, no 154). Alternatively the jettons may have been used as toys, perhaps after written arabic numerals had replaced the use of the counting board at Acton Court, reflecting the general trend of the mid-17th century. A number of jettons, some modified by hammering or piercing, have recently been found with wooden tops and other confiscated toys, walled up in Market Harborough church (S Mastoris and Y C Courtney, pers comm).
- Other mid-16th to mid-17th-century coins and jettons*
- 75 Elizabeth I contemporary counterfeit of a shilling, 1583–5; base metal

- instead of silver; i.m. A. Fairly worn, so has circulated undetected for some time. X-ray fluorescence analysis shows that it is made of arsenical copper (with a natural silvery colour), with a thin silver wash. Period 5.1 (122), demolition infill of Room 32, Area 1.
- 76 Elizabeth I sixpence, 1594; i.m. woolpack. Period 5.1 (671), fill of pit, Area 4.
- 77 Elizabeth I sixpence; 1592; i.m. tun. Period 5.1 (666), clay and ash layer, Area 4.
- 78 Elizabeth I threepence, 1582; i.m. sword. Bent. Average wear. Period 5.1 (184), demolition layer in Room 29, Area 1.
- 79 Elizabeth I half-groat, 1592–5; i.m. tun. Not very worn. Period 5.1 (1706), demolition layer in Room 32, Area 1.
- 80 James I sixpence, 1606; i.m. illegible. Period 5.2 (652), bedding for floor-slabs, Area 4.
- 81 Charles I sixpence, 1643–4; i.m. (P). Fairly worn and clipped. Period 5.1 (122), demolition layer in Room 32, Area 1.
- 82 Charles I half-groat, 1644–5; i.m. probably R. Fairly worn. Period 5.1 (184), demolition layer in Room 29, Area 1.
- 83 Charles I farthing, 1634–6, 'Maltravers' round, i.m. bell. Slight wear. Period 5.2 (1318), farmyard cobbling above south range, Area 1.
- 84 Small size Nuremberg jetton of Hans Krauwinckel; same as no. 37, but motto reads: HEVT RODT MORGEN TODTT. Period 5.4 (904), fill of modern disturbance, Area 8.
- 85–6 Nuremberg jettons of Hans Krauwinckel. Same as no. 71. No. 85: Period 4.3 (1478), upper fill of south arm of moat, east of porch, Area 1 (probably intrusive); no. 86: Period 5.1 (1743), demolition layer in Room 32, Area 1.
- 87 Half a small size Nuremberg jetton (broken, not cut); obv Reichsapfel in trilobe, ] ZV NVRNBER; rev 3 crowns and 3 lis, GLVCK BESCHERT [. Period 5.2–5.3 (35), farmyard spread above west range, Area 1.
- 88 Small size Nuremberg jetton of Hans Schultes III (*fl* 1606–12). Same as no 74, but rev type is turbanned moustachioed bust r. Period 5.2 (1386), farmyard spread above Room 23, Area 1.

*Mid- to late 17th-century coins and tokens*

*Coins*

- 89 Charles II farthing; date illegible, but must be 1672, 1673 or 1675. Heavily encrusted and corroded, but in unworn condition when lost. Period 5.1 (125), demolition layer in Room 32, Area 1.
- 90 William III farthing, 169(?8). Very worn. Period 5.1–5.2 (503), gravel track surface, Area 2.

*Tokens*

- 91 Farthing token, 1652; issued by City of Bristol (Gloucestershire no. 12, in Williamson 1889, I, 241). Period 5.1–5.2 (507), gravel surface, Area 2.
- 92 Same as no. 91, but date 1662 (Gloucestershire nos. 18–19, in Williamson 1889, I, 241). Period 5.1 (1706), demolition layer in Room 32, Area 1.
- 93 Farthing token, 1668; issued by the portreeve of Yeovil, Somerset (no. 326, in Williamson 1889, II, 995). Period 5.2–5.3 (12), rubble spread above Room 29, Area 1.

*Marion Archibald* comments: this piece, like so many 17th-century tokens, has not travelled far from its place of issue.

*Unnumbered coins*

*18th to mid-19th-century coins*

Seventeen coins were recovered. A single cartwheel penny, dated 1797, was fairly worn and had probably lasted well into the 19th century. There were fifteen halfpennies, which included one from George II's reign, dated 1730; five George III coins with legible dates (1799, 1803 and 1807); and one George IV Irish halfpenny, dated 1822. The remainder were very worn and illegible 18th-century coins, and included two possible contemporary forgeries, and a third which was unofficially countermarked SS. One very worn 18th-century farthing was recovered.



*Mid-19th to twentieth century*

Thirty-three coins (two Victorian, the remainder twentieth century, of which the latest was a 1957 halfpenny) were found. They consisted of four sixpences, four three-penny pieces, twelve pennies, nine halfpennies and four farthings. A group of seventeen coins came from a muck-heap immediately south of the main farmyard, and presumably represented the contents of a purse.

## Small finds

by Paul Courtney

### Introduction

Very few small finds were found in stratified medieval contexts, and most of these were in Period 2 deposits. This was due to the extremely limited survival of construction and occupation layers related to the Period 3 manor house, and also to the cleaning out of the moat in the first half of the 16th century. The finds in the Period 4.1–4.3 dump layers in Area 2 included several late medieval artefacts but these were clearly residual.

However, Acton Court has a rich assemblage of 16th-century material, especially the finds from the bottom of the moat (Period 4.2–4.3). The coin and structural evidence suggests that these deposits were sealed when most of the moat was infilled in the mid-1550s, and the finds therefore present a large, closely dated group of mid-16th-century artefacts. Material from this period on most sites is usually poorly stratified and difficult to date closely. The Acton Court assemblage invites comparison with the finds from Pottergate in Norwich and the Free Grammar School at the Whitefriars, Coventry. The assemblage from 31–51 Pottergate in Norwich represents the contents of affluent merchants' houses which were destroyed in the fire of 1507 (Atkin and Carter 1985, 9–86). The finds from the Free Grammar School at Coventry date to c 1545–58 and include many dress items such as pins and beads, which were lost beneath the floorboards of the choir stalls (Woodfield 1981). Only a small part of the moat at Acton Court has been excavated, however, and the range of artefacts, such as the glass and dress items, suggests items discarded from the hall or private rooms of the

house. More complete excavation of the moat would probably give a more balanced picture of the range of artefacts used at Acton Court in the 16th century. Particularly noticeable is the lack of kitchen items.

The group of finds from beneath the floor in the west range (Period 4.5–4.6 (136)) is also noteworthy. This assemblage seems to represent the accumulation of objects beneath a planked floor during the late 16th century and the first half of the 17th century. These finds would appear to have been lost, or deliberately swept, through the clearly considerable gaps in a floor, probably of oak planks, coarse and thick.

Three categories of finds (the dress items, the beads and the lead shot) are considered in more detail below.

### Dress items

One of the most interesting features of the Acton Court finds is the large number of 16th- and 17th-century dress and dressmaking items, especially from context 136. Finds from this layer include thimbles (Fig 9.45.103–4), a needle (Fig 9.45.105), embroidery wire (Fig 9.45.109), scissors (Fig 9.47.115), combs (Fig 9.48.117–18), sequins (Fig 9.50.130–3), beads (Fig 9.50.134–59) and glass droplets (Fig 9.50.160–1), as well as 3539 pins. These suggest a strong female element in the usage of the room. The number and nature of the items is unlikely to be explained just by casual losses from clothing being worn and suggests that dressmaking and possibly lacework (cf no. 105: netting needle) was carried out in Room 30, an interpretation supported by the presence of textile fragments and of numerous lace tags from the same context (*see below*).

The purpose of some of the dress items is far from clear. Very few pieces of clothing survive from the 16th and early 17th centuries, and knowledge is largely based on documentary sources and paintings. This evidence has a heavy bias to high status clothing, though this is not a hindrance in interpreting the Acton Court finds. A number of twisted loops of Ae wire were recovered from 16th-century and later contexts (Fig 9.39.56–7 and Fig 9.45.110). They are almost certainly dress or hair accessories although their precise function remains uncertain. Similar loops seem to be almost ubiquitous in assemblages of the 16th and early 17th centuries. The earliest published context appears to be



**Table 50 Lead shot sizes**

Context	Period	Diam (mm)	Wt (g)	Wt (oz)	Bore
281	4.2	12	10	0.35	46
894	4.2	13	15	0.53	30
1993	4.2-3	6	2	0.07	229
1993	4.2-3	10	6	0.21	76
1993	4.2-3	11	8	0.28	57
935	4.3	6	2	0.07	229
519	4.4-6	14	16	0.56	29
136	4.5-6	12	10	0.35	46
136	4.5-6	11	6	0.21	76
136	4.5-6	17	33	1.16	14
941	4.6	14	17	0.60	27
947	4.6	17	35	1.23	13
		17	33	1.15	14
		17	35	1.23	13
3022	4.6	13	15	0.53	30
722	4.6-5.2	17	32	1.13	14
754	4.6-5.2	17	28	0.99	16
122	5.1	16	29	1.02	16
1742	5.1	16	24	0.85	19
1202	5.2	16	21	0.74	22
502	5.2-3	11	8	0.28	57
723	5.2-3	11	7	0.25	64
2085	5.2-3	13	15	0.53	30
		17	29	1.02	16
89	5.3	17	3	1.09	15
801	5.4	16	29	1.02	16
<i>Impacted</i>					
1414	3.4a	14	13	0.46 (probably intrusive)	
1048	4.2-3	16	20	0.71	
<i>'Burrshot'</i>					
419	5.1	c 16	28	0.99	
<i>With sprues</i>					
1993	4.2-3	13	(17)		
1993	4.2-3	12	(11)		

**Table 51: Bores**

	Barrel length (inches)	Overall length (inches)	Bore (bullets to the lb)
Pistol	18	26	24
Arquebus	30	45	17
Carbine or Petronel	30	45	24
Musket	48	62	12
Caliver	39	54	17

c 1450-1500 at Alms Lane, Norwich (Margeson 1985, fig 36.15). Other dress items include a number of bone stiffeners of lightweight construction from context 136 (Fig 9.49.120-3). They may have been used in stomachers, ie stiffened triangular pieces which were fastened to the bodice, point

downwards, on womens' dresses in the 16th and early 17th centuries (Cunnington 1972, 82). Alternatively they may have been used in one of the many types of head-wear worn in this period, though they seem a bit too weak for such a use (Cunnington 1970 and 1972).

**Beads**

The excavations produced 40 beads from 16th- or 17th-century contexts, of which 34 came from context 136. The beads were made of glass, jet, bone, amber and quartz and may derive from necklaces, dress embroidery or rosaries. A jet bead (Fig 9.59.213) from a Period 4.6-5.2 context has pecten shells and is closely paralleled by a 'medieval' rosary in the museum of Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany (Muller 1987, fig 6.10). The scallop was the symbol associated with the apostle St James the Greater, whose chief cult centre was at Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain. The Acton Court bead may have been produced there by the renowned *azabacheria* or jet works, which specialised in the production of pilgrim souvenirs. The industry, with its own guild, reached its height in the 15th and 16th centuries. Products included statuettes of St James as well as pendants, badges and rosary beads with scallop motifs (Köster 1983 and 1985). The Acton Court find is likely to be of 16th-century or earlier date. It should be noted that Sir Nicholas Poyntz (d 1585) was a recusant (Catholic who refused to attend the Church of England). Other jet beads found at Acton Court are Figure 9.43.95-9. Several jet beads, possibly from rosaries, have been excavated in 16th-century contexts at Hull (Armstrong 1977, fig 26.52 and 1980, fig 25.1-2).

The mid-16th-century glass beads at Acton Court are likely to have been made in Venice, where beads formed the most lucrative part of the industry (Gasparetto 1958, 204-19). The glass beads found in contexts of the 1540s-50s at Coventry Free School are also probably Venetian (Woodfield 1981, 102-3). Much research has been carried out on North American beads of the 16th and 17th centuries. On Spanish colonial sites they may be Spanish or Venetian in origin (Deagan 1987, 156-83), while those on Indian and colonial sites on the eastern seaboard are likely to be Venetian or Dutch. Glass bead making was established in Amsterdam by 1597, and possibly by the 1580s (Baart 1988 and Karklins 1974). Spanish, Venetian and Dutch beads cannot confidently be distinguished at present.

A useful series of 16th- to 17th-century beads of Netherlandish or Venetian origin were found in Plymouth, though not in closely dated contexts. The Plymouth finds include the multi-layered 'miliofiori' or 'chevron' beads, absent from Acton Court and Coventry. In addition there were drawn tubes both in one colour and with inlaid stripes (types common in Amsterdam) and faceted beads, all forms represented at Acton (Charleston 1986, 39–40). Most of the Acton Court beads were produced by drawing and cutting tubes of glass, often with secondary working, rather than being wound around a wire. The direction of bubbles and stress lines, where visible, gives a clue to manufacturing technique. Some of the elongate black-glass beads (eg Fig 9.50.148 and 158) from Acton Court may be of the type referred to in contemporary documents as 'bugles', which were used to decorate apparel (Oxford English Dictionary *sub* bugle).

#### Lead shot

The lead shot were measured to the nearest gram and converted to ounces. The bore indicates the number of shot to the pound (Table 50).

Early firearms did not have standard bores, which caused grave problems in supplying munitions to armies. In the early 17th century, attempts were made to standardise the weapons used by militias. An order of 1630 by the Council of War gives the dimensions below (also Table 51 and Blackmore 1961, 24).

The shot from 16th-century contexts are 6–13 mm in diameter and 30 to 229 bore. It is likely they were used in pistols. Certainly wheel-lock pistols occur in a number of 16th- and early 17th-century portraits of members of the English gentry and aristocracy, for instance the portraits of Sir Thomas Tresham (c 1565), Sir Martin Frobisher (1577) and Colonel Richard Neville (Civil War). Not only were they prized possessions but were symbols of status and the chivalric virtues of glory and bravery, indicating the sitter as a protector of family, Church, and State (Schneider 1990, 183).

Two shot from 16th-century contexts still had their casting sprues attached (Fig 9.40.71–2), showing they had been cast in single shot moulds, probably on site. The moulds may have been in iron of scissors-like construction, similar to the examples from early 17th-century deposits at Jamestown (Cotter 1958, 284 and pl 175; Brown 1980, 84) and Wolstenholme, Virginia (Noël Hume

1979, 758), or else made from two stone blocks as was an example from an 18th-century context at Marlborough, Virginia (Malcolm Watkins 1968, fig 83c).

Shot of 16–17 mm diameter, a size suitable for a long gun such as an arquebus, caliver or musket, first appear in Period 4.5–4.6 (late 16th to mid-17th century). The musket had largely superseded the other two types of long gun by the Civil War (it is interesting that three musket balls were found in the fill (947) of the Civil War period ditch close to the northern entrance to the house), but antiquated weapons persisted for a long time in the armouries of private houses. Such weapons would be suitable for both hunting and military use, for instance by the militia. One shot (Fig 9.57.199) had secondary working to give it a jagged surface. This may be an example of 'burrshot', which is referred in 17th-century documents (*SP Dom C*, 1643–4, 535 and Blackmore 1976, 243–4). Burrshot seems to have been used as case shot, packed into tin-cases or bags, and fired from cannon. If this is indeed an example of burrshot, the Civil War period seems the most likely context for the presence of a small cannon at Acton Court. Another possibility is that the shot was used in a child's toy, though there do not seem to be any contemporary parallels.

#### Catalogue of small finds

The illustrated small finds, apart from the nails and the pins, are arranged in four chronological groups.

Group A (nos 1–9): medieval to early 16th-century contexts (Periods 2–3).

Group B (nos 10–101): 16th-century contexts (Period 4.1–4.5).

Group C (nos 102–61): context 136, late 16th to mid-17th century, beneath the former wooden floor of Room 30 in the west range (Period 4.5–4.6).

Group D (nos 162–218): mid-17th-century to modern contexts (Periods 4.6–5.4).

The nails and pins are then discussed, and the illustrated examples (Fig 9.60.219–22 and Fig 9.61.223–36) are catalogued typologically.

#### Group A

##### *Copper alloy*

##### Fig 9.29

- 1 Ferrule, with two attachment holes. Period 3.3 (1746), make-up within Room K, Area 1.

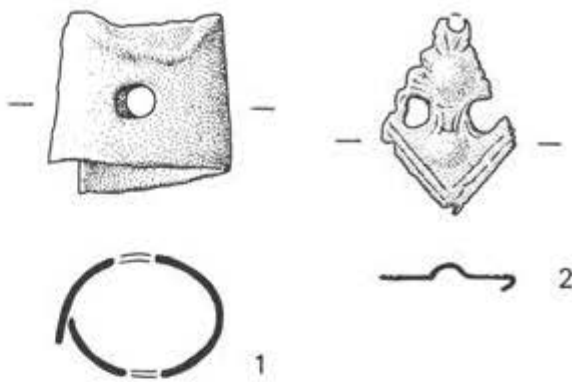


Figure 9.29 Small finds: Group A, copper alloy, scale 1:1.

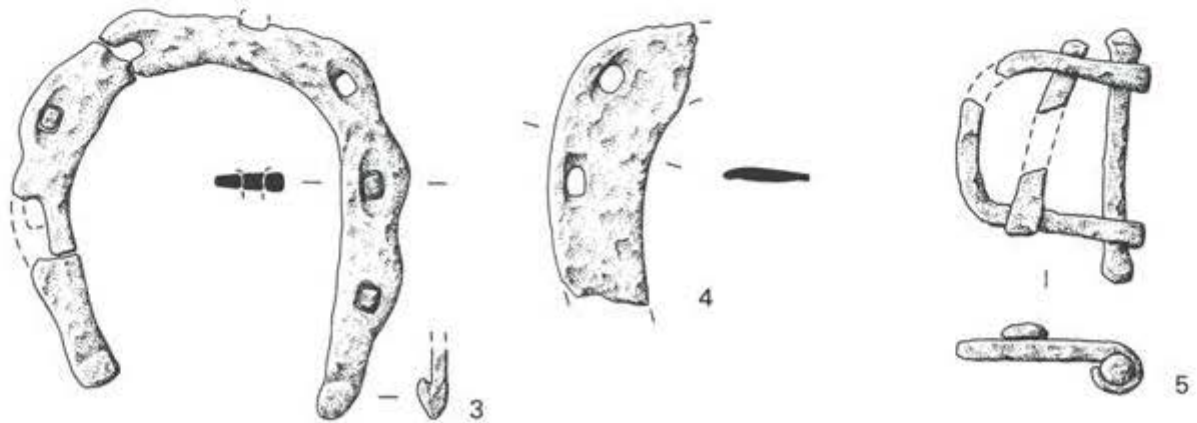
- 2 Fitting with embossed and inscribed decoration, possibly part of strap end. Pre-Period 4.1–4.3 (543), pre-Period 4 ground surface, Area 2.

**Iron**

Fig 9.30

- 3 Horseshoe with six counter-sunk rectangular nail holes, wavy outer edges and calkins (thickened terminals). Clark (1986) suggests this type dates from the mid-11th to mid-13th centuries. He also argues, on the basis of the London evidence, for a change from round to rectangular nail holes in the mid-12th century. Period 2.1–2.2 (1976), clay and rubble beneath Room A, Area 1.
- 4 Horseshoe fragment, with two nail holes. Period 2.4 (1687), rubble and clay next to inner edge of north arm of moat, Area 1.
- 5 Buckle, probably from harness. Period 2.5 (1859), rubble make-up beneath Room A, Area 1.

Figure 9.30 Small finds: Group A, iron, scale 1:2



**Bone**

Fig 9.31

- 6 Flute made from long bone of a large bird such as a goose. It has three fingering holes but the mouthing end has been lost. A very similar example comes from a context of c 1300 in Southampton (Megaw 1975, 252–3 and fig 248.1934; see also McGregor 1985, 148–51). Period 3.2–3.3 (1191), rubble and loam, north of Room A, Area 1.

**Stone**

- 7 Whetstone of grey Norwegian Ragstone (mica-quartz schist) from the Eidsborg region of Norway (Moore 1978; Ellis and Moore 1990), broken. Period 3.3 (1839), drain construction trench fill, north of Room A, Area 1.
- 8 Spindle whorl made of grey calcitic mudstone. For similar spindle whorls from 12th- to 13th-century contexts in Bristol, cf Nicholson 1987, 28 (nos 4–5) and Watts and Rahtz 1985, 143. Period 2.4 (1410), internal surface, beneath Room A, Area 1.

**Ceramic**

- 9 Damaged spindle whorl in soft, pale grey to yellow ceramic fabric with brownish exterior surface, sparse quartz inclusions. Period 2.4 (1410), internal surface, beneath Room A, Area 1.

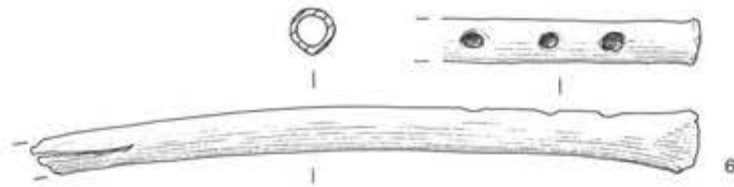


## Group B

## Silver

Fig 9.32

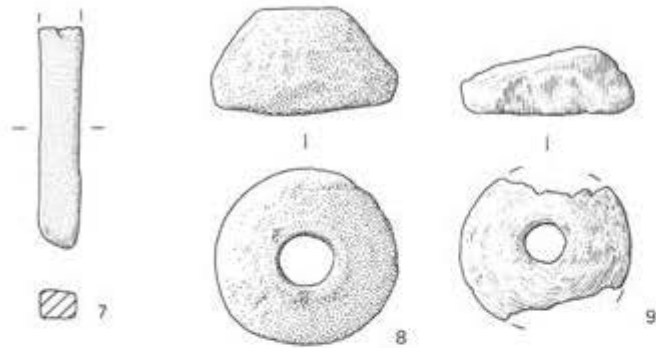
- 10 Silver whistle made of cast stem with two part bulb and wire attachment loop. This was possibly worn sewn onto clothing. Compare with a gold whistle said to have belonged to Henry VIII (Starkey 1991, VII.18). Period 4.3 (1992), bottom of south arm of moat, within porch, Area 1.



## Copper alloy

Fig 9.33

- 11 Rim of large hammered sheet vessel. Period 4.1–4.3 (529), dump layer, Area 2.
- 12 Rim of cast cauldron-like vessel. The rim is badly corroded and appears to have a casting fault or line of corrosion weakness. Period 4.1–4.3 (533), dump layer, Area 2.
- 13–14 Rims of cast bowl-like vessels. Period 4.1–4.3 (533), dump layer, Area 2; Period 4.1 (3809), east wall construction trench fill, Room 21, Area 17.
- 15 Rim of vessel, probably cast. Period 4.2 (137), infill at west end of Room G/32, Area 1.



zinc, lead and tin and traces of lead solder at the join (XRF). A 15th-century type of North German or Flemish manufacture (Lewis 1987 and Theuerkauff-Liederwald 1975). Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

Figure 9.31 Small finds: Group A, bone, stone and ceramic, scale 1:1.5

Fig 9.34

- 16 Foot of cauldron or tripod ewer. Leaded copper with some tin and antimony (XRF). Tripod ewers were in use in the 14th century and possibly into the 15th century (Lewis *et al* 1987). XRF indicates leaded copper with some tin and antimony. Period 4.4–4.6 (519), clay above dump layers, Area 2.

Fig 9.35

- 17 Rod, solid and broken at one end. Possibly foot of small cauldron. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 18 Fragment of handle, angular, possibly from small cauldron (cf Lewis 1978, pl 38). Period 4.2 (127), infill at west end of Room G/32, Area 1.

Fig 9.34

- 19 Dog spout from pedestal-based ewer. Copper with low levels of

Fig 9.35

- 20–1 Cast handles. No. 20 has evidence of finishing with a file, and decorative pits on the upper surface. The two handles are very similar, but were not cast in the same mould. They probably come from a chafing dish (cf A R Goodall 1984, fig 192.165 and Lewis 1978, pl 43). This type of handle is found on Lewis's (1978) Type B and C chafing dishes, which he dates respectively to the late 15th to early 16th centuries, and to the 16th century. An English origin is tentatively suggested for Type B, while a

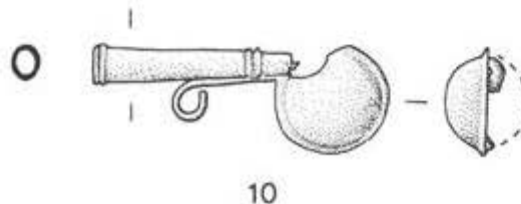
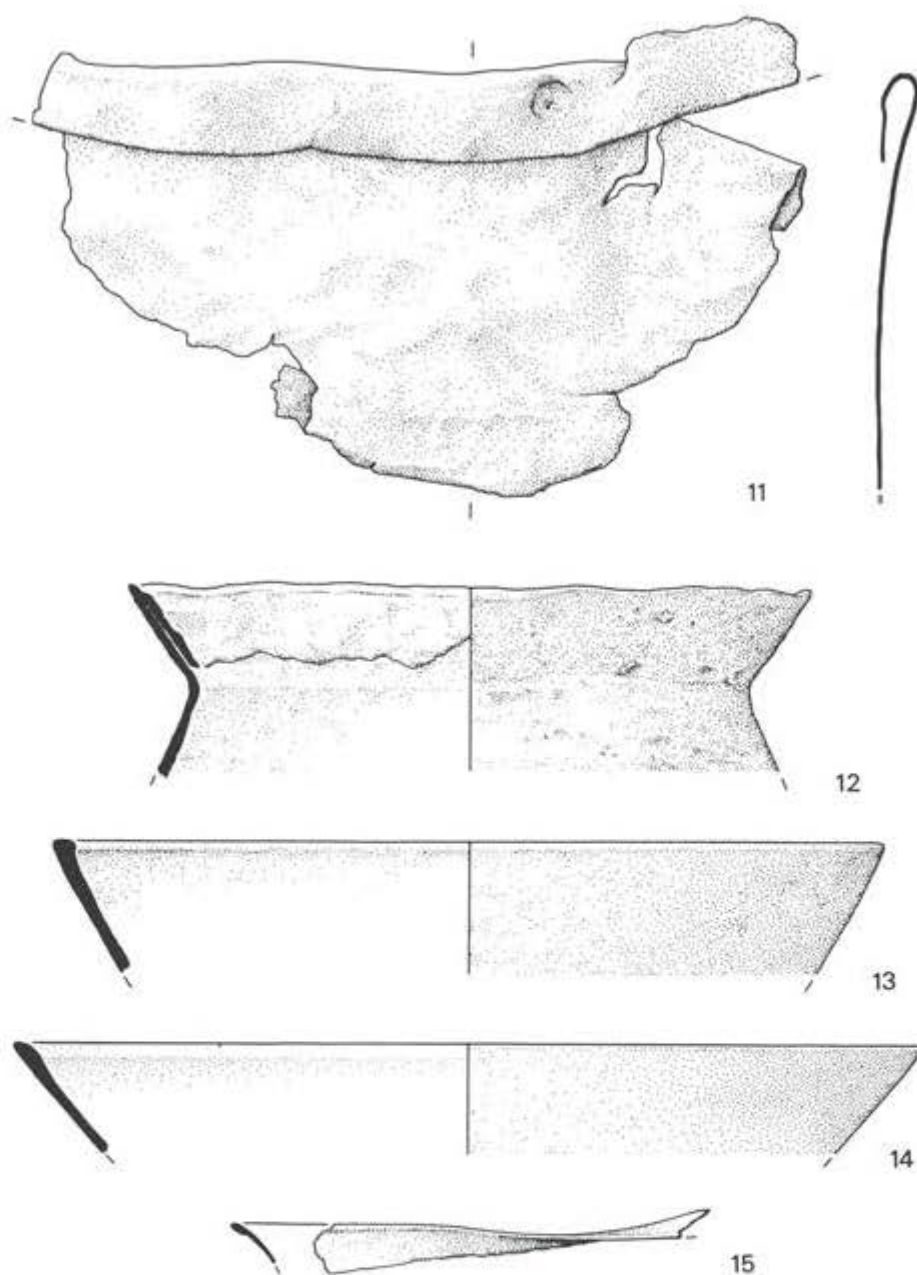


Figure 9.32 Small finds: Group B, silver, scale 1:1.



Figure 9.33 Small finds:  
Group B, copper alloy,  
scale 1:2.



- 22 continental origin is thought possible for Type C. Period 4.2 (137), infill at west end of Room G/32, Area 1.
- 23 Cast horn with attachment prong, presumably from statue or aquamanile. Period 4.2 (281), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- Fig 9.36
- 24 Casing for syringe (no. 24), with evidence of a rectangular cross-sectioned solder mark, possibly for an attachment such as a badge. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of

south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

Found adjacent to no. 23. Part of medical syringe, comprising end-cap of pipe and plunger. Two syringes were found in the surgeon's cabin on the *Mary Rose*, sunk in 1545, one of brass and the other of pewter with a copper alloy pipe (Rule 1982, 192-3: this account includes contemporary references to the varied uses to which syringes were put (cf Oxford English Dictionary *sub* syringe and

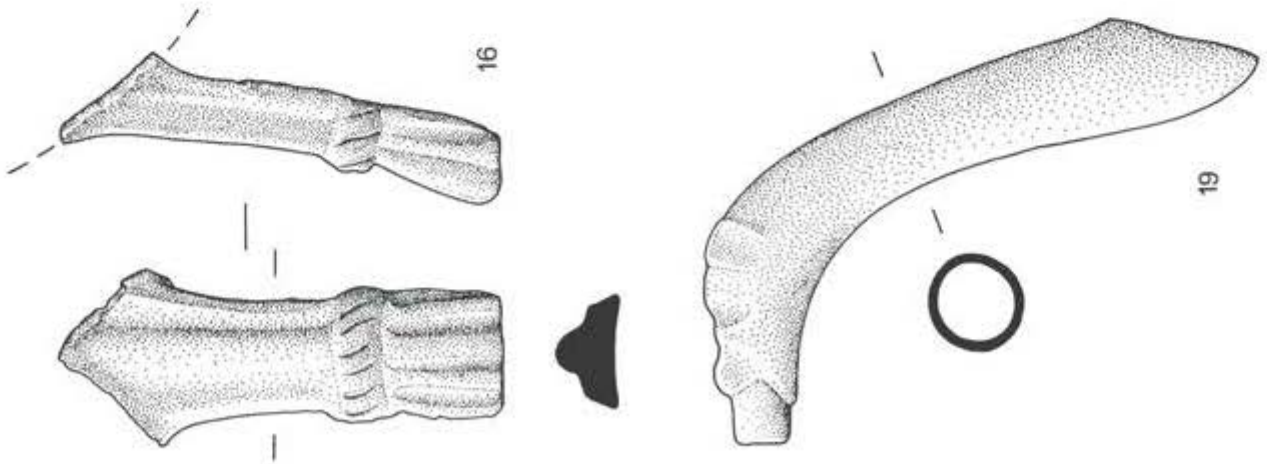


Figure 9.34 Small finds: Group B, copper alloy, scale 1:1.5

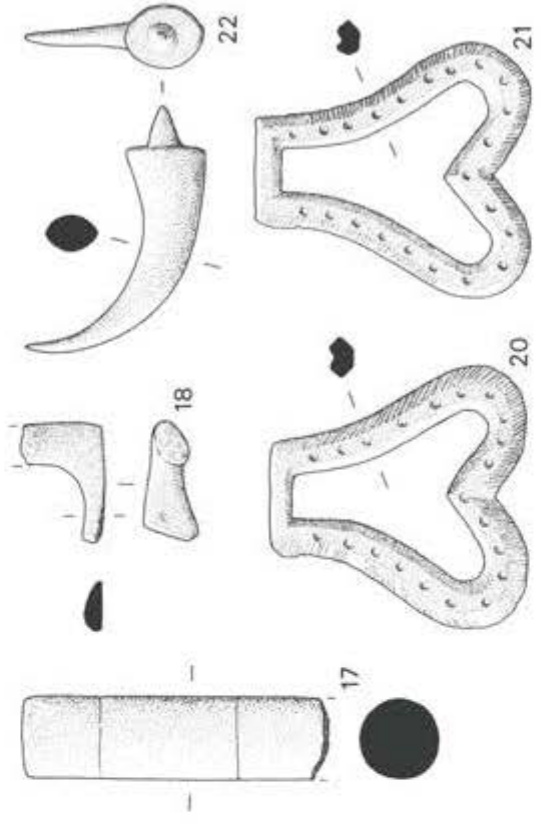
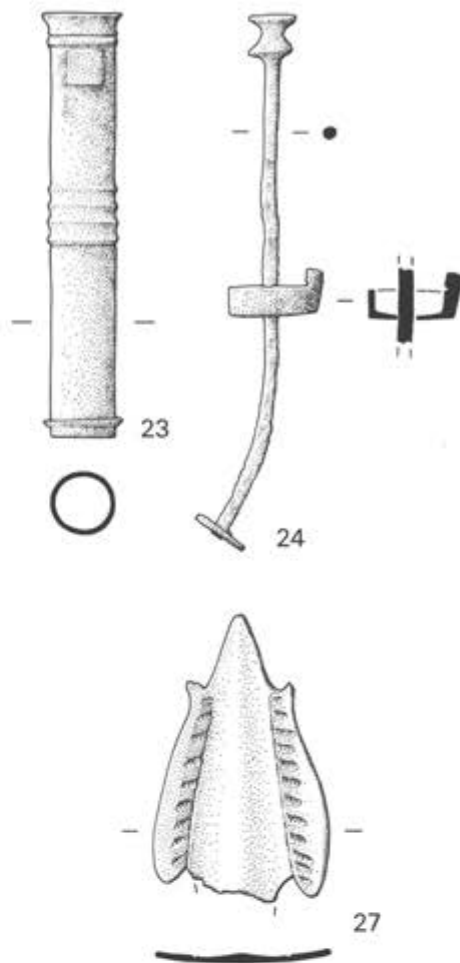


Figure 9.35 Small finds: Group B, copper alloy, scale 1:1.5

Figure 9.36 Small finds:  
Group B, copper alloy,  
scale 1:2.



clyster)). The Acton Court item appears to resemble closely the syringe illustrated from the *Mary Rose* (Rule 1982, 188). Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

Fig 9.37

25 Handle with surviving fragment of iron blade inserted into split handle end. The similarity to handles from some 17th-century steel wheel lock spanners (cf Blackmore 1983, pl 364) suggests that it may have been designed to hang from a belt. Period 4.1–4.3 (535), dump layer, Area 2.

26 Book clasp. Period 4.2–4.3 (2026), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.

Fig 9.36

27 Cast decorative fitting. Period 4.2 (137), infill at west end of Room G/32, Area 1.

Fig 9.37

28 Scabbard fitting. Traces of gold

[leaf] (XRF). Brazing is evident on the X-ray. This is probably 16th-century (cf gilt scabbard fitting on portrait of Sir Richard Bingham in National Portrait Gallery, dated 1564). Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.

29 Brass (XRF) scabbard chape, with brazed-on back. This type of chape was current in the 15th and 16th centuries, according to Ward Perkins (1940, 280–8). Compare to a residual example from Winchester: Hinton 1990, fig 348.1083. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

30 Rumbler bell with iron ball inside. Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.

31 Rumbler bell in two halves. Period 4.2 (276), infill of Room H, Area 1.

32 Lower half of rumbler bell. Period 4.1–4.3 (539), dump layer, Area 2.

Fig 9.38

33 Thimble, with oval shaped indentations. Period 4.2–4.3 (1048), bottom of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.

34 Thimble with circular indentations. Period 4.1–4.3 (535), dump layer, Area 2.

35 Curved rod with perforations, probably purse frame (cf Ward Perkins 1940, 162–74). Period 4.4–4.6 (518), clay above dump layers, Area 2.

36 Toilet item (cf 15th-century copper alloy ear scoop from Norwich: Atkin *et al* 1985, fig 39.22). Period 4.2 (884), north porch wall construction trench fill, Room 34, Area 6.

37 Brass (XRF) decorative sheet object, with stamped foliage decoration and remains of attachment prong on rear. Period 4.1–4.3 (540), dump layer, Area 2.

38 Lozenge-shaped decorative fitting, decorated with double line of punched dots. One attachment prong (probably one of a pair) on back. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

39 Embossed strap end with one iron rivet. Period 4.2 (128), mortar floor bedding in Room 32, Area 1.

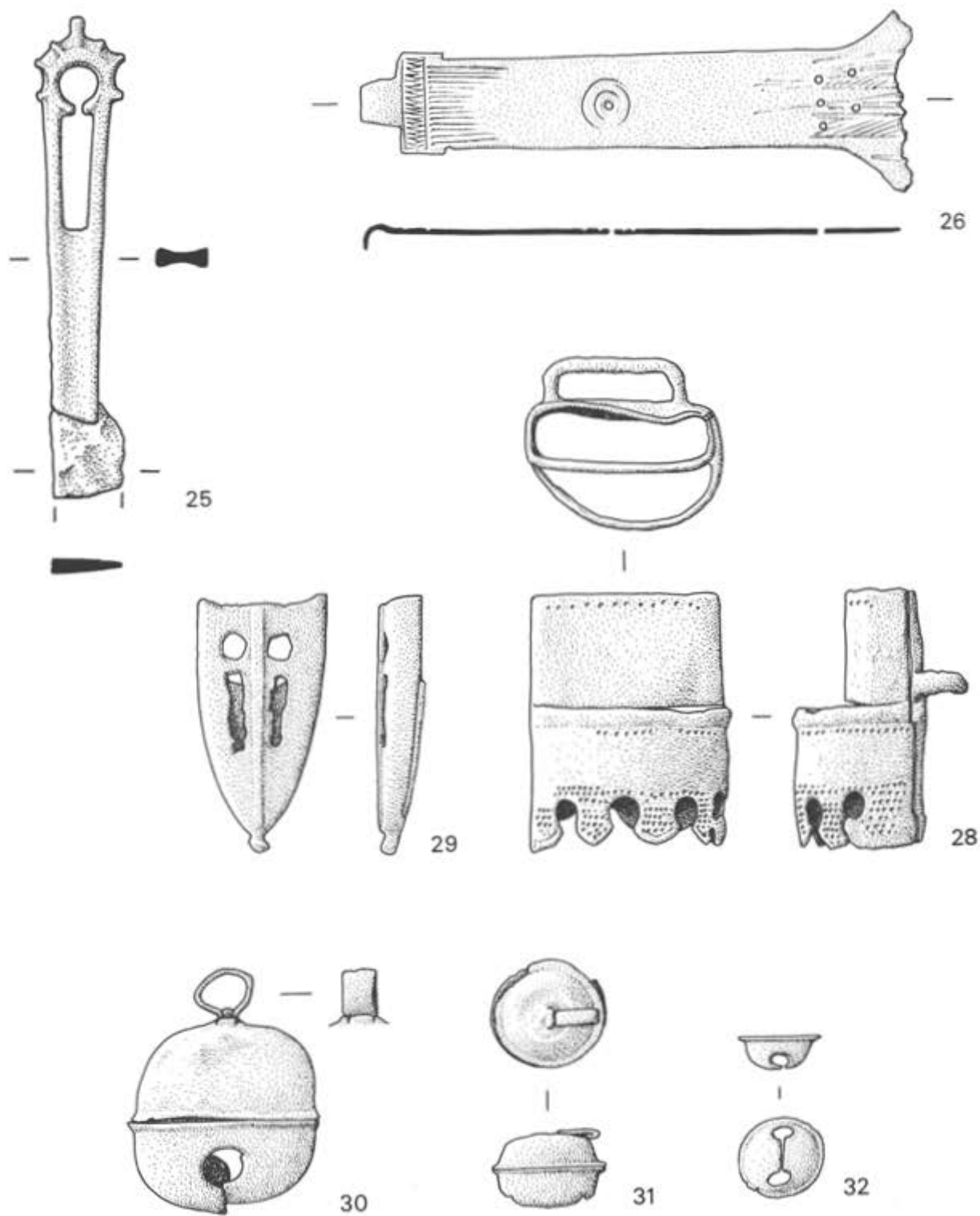


Figure 9.37 Small finds: Group B, copper alloy, scale 1:1.



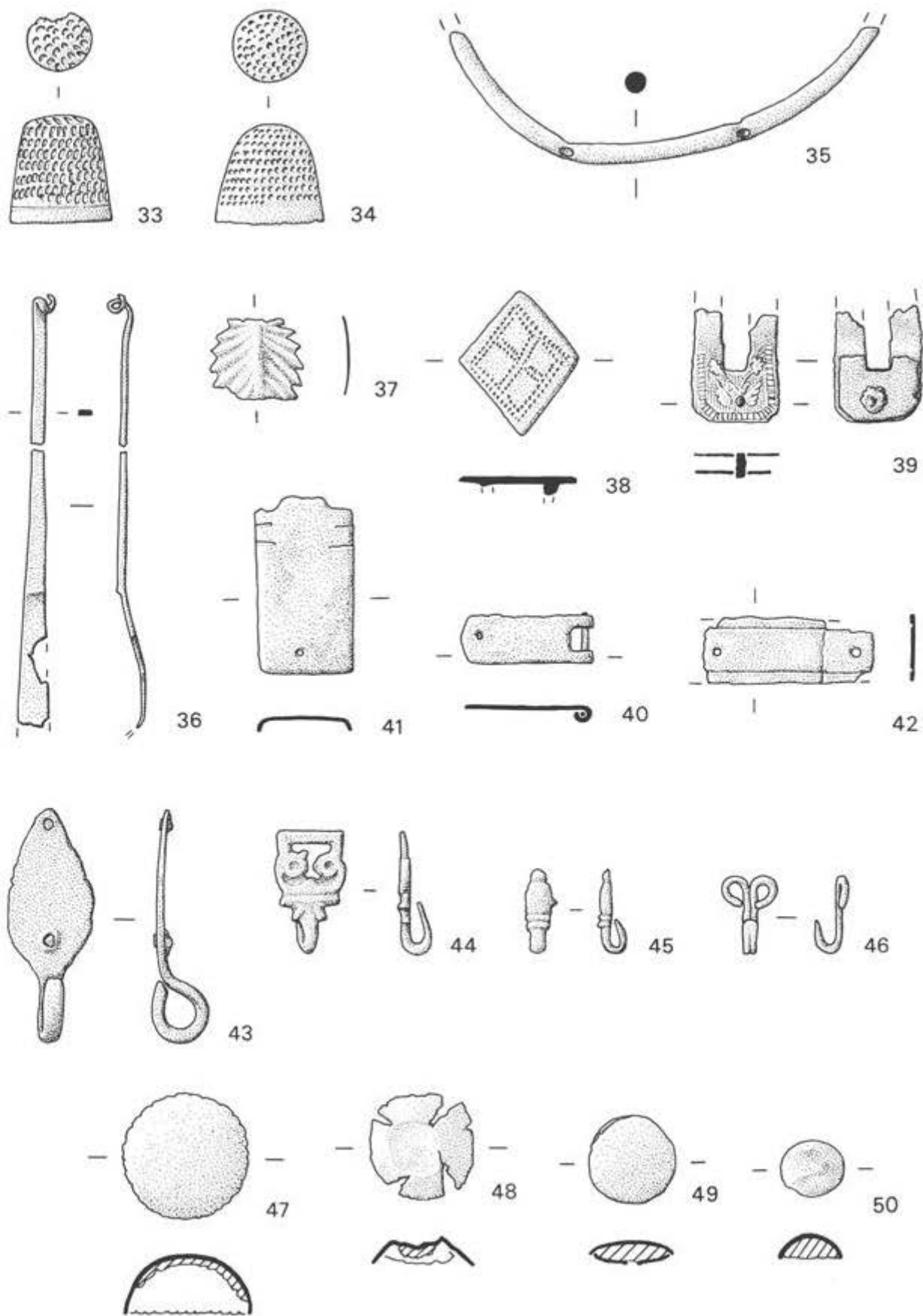


Figure 9.38 Small finds: Group B, copper alloy, scale 1:1.

- 40 Hinged plate, probably from a buckle. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 41 Strap end with rivet hole and traces of what is probably decayed leather on the back. Period 4.2–4.5 (2802), fill of posthole, Area 11.
- 42 Strip fitting with two inscribed decorative lines and two rivet holes. Period 4.2 (1571), make-up beneath Room 30, Area 1.
- 43 Belt hook with two copper alloy attachment pins. Period 4.2 (1630), north wall construction trench fill, Room 31, Area 1.
- 44 Cast fastening hook. Period 4.1–4.3 (540), dump layer, Area 2.
- 45 Hooked fastener, with loop for attachment pin broken off. Period 4.2 (276), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 46 Hooked eye. Period 4.2 (127), infill at west end of Room G/32, Area 1.
- 47 Sheet dome. Period 4.3 (1992), fill of south arm of moat, within porch, Area 1.
- 48 Stud head. Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.
- 49 Stud with lead fill. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat, within porch, Area 1.
- 50 'Stud' with lead fill on back. Period 4.4–4.6 (511), clay above dump layers, Area 2.
- Fig 9.39
- 51 Point with traces of socket. Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.
- 52 Flat button-like object with soldered loop and wire link. Heavily corroded. Period 4.3 (935), bottom of north arm of moat, Area 8.
- 53 Pierced fitting (damaged), probably from belt. Period 4.1–4.3 (546), dump layer, Area 2.
- 54 Stud, made of pressed sheet with back-plated rivet and traces of leather. Period 4.1–4.3 (533), dump layer, Area 2.
- 55 Pierced dome. Period 4.1–4.3 (527), dump layer, Area 2.
- 56 Mail. The links are made from cut lengths of wire, the ends of which have been flattened, punched and rivetted; though the rivets, almost certainly iron, have all corroded away. Each link is joined to four others as is standard in mail. About sixty complete rings were found in seven connected pieces of mail as well as fragments (the exact number is uncertain due to heavy corrosion of some pieces). The largest piece of mail had nineteen rings in six rows (see Martin Burgess 1953 on construction techniques and Blair 1958 on the long history of mail armour). Period 4.2 (1571), make-up beneath Room 30, Area 1.
- Not illustrated:* pieces of similar mail. Period 4.2 (428), fill of drain in Room J, Area 1
- 57 Twisted wire loop (c 7 mm internal diameter). Period 4.2 (1265), infill beneath Room 29, Area 1.
- 58 Twisted loop (c 5mm internal diameter). Period 4.2 (278), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 59 Cast ring with evidence of filing. Period 4.2 (284), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 60 Cast ring. Period 4.2 (282), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 61 Cast ring. Period 4.4–4.6 (518), clay above dump layers, Area 2.
- Pewter*
- 62 Tankard lid. Tin with minor traces of lead and copper (XRF). The underside has a maker's mark comprising a windmill with the initials TW. The thumbpiece is of a type believed to be purely Dutch and pre-1600 (C Hull, curator of the Pewterers' Company archives, *in lit*). Similar 16th-century lids with 'bell bar' thumb pieces from pewter pots and stoneware jars can be seen in the Museum Boymans-van Beunigen in Rotterdam (Ruempol and van Dongen 1991, 150–7). For English pieces of this period see Pewter Soc 1983, 7–9 (examples from Museum of London). Period 4.2–4.3 (2026), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 6.
- 63 Lid or cover fragment, attached by sleeve to handle of Raeren stoneware mug (grey fabric with glossy light grey glaze with patches of brown). A ceramic type common in the first half of the 16th century. Documentary evidence shows stoneware mugs were often

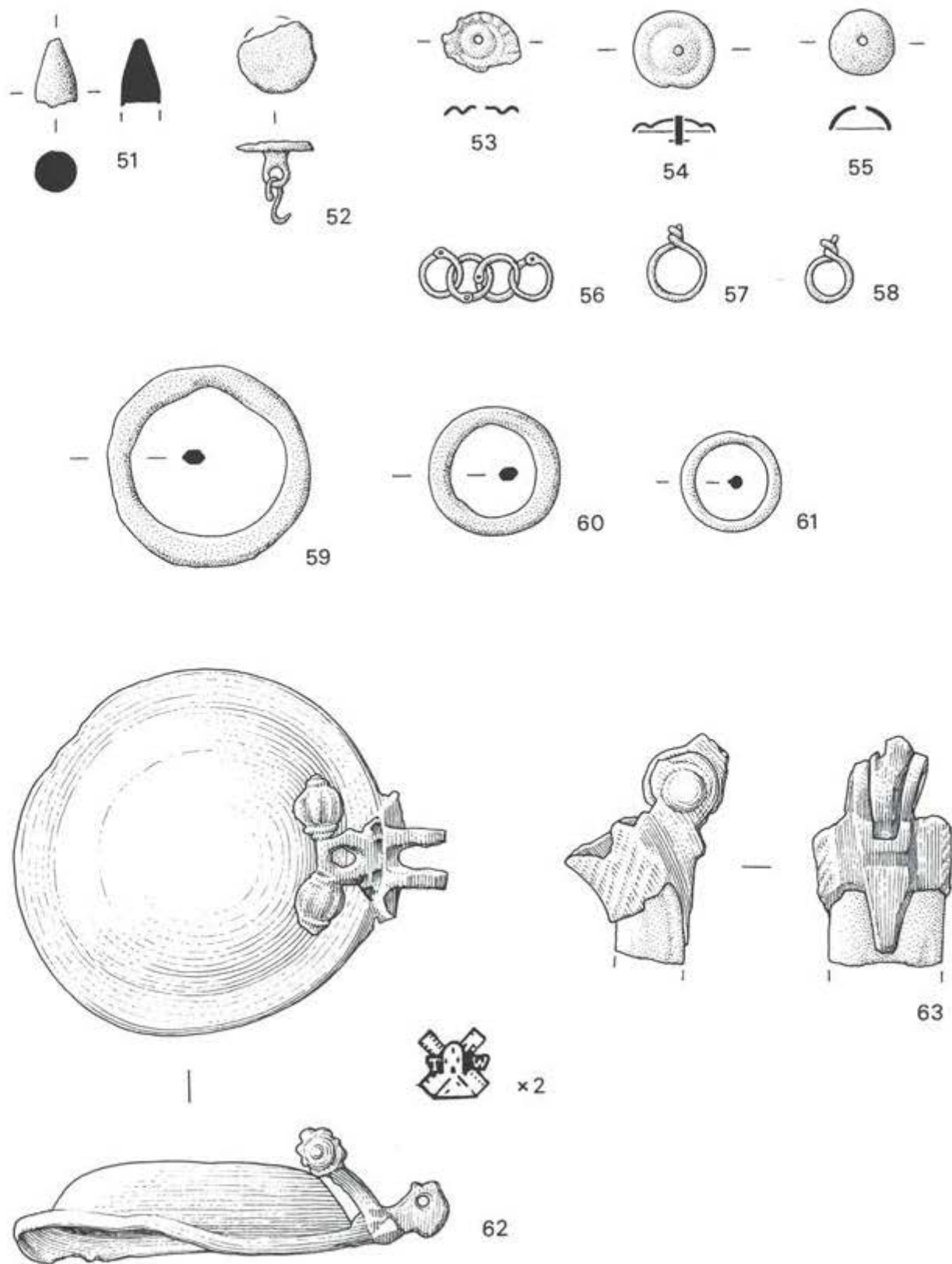
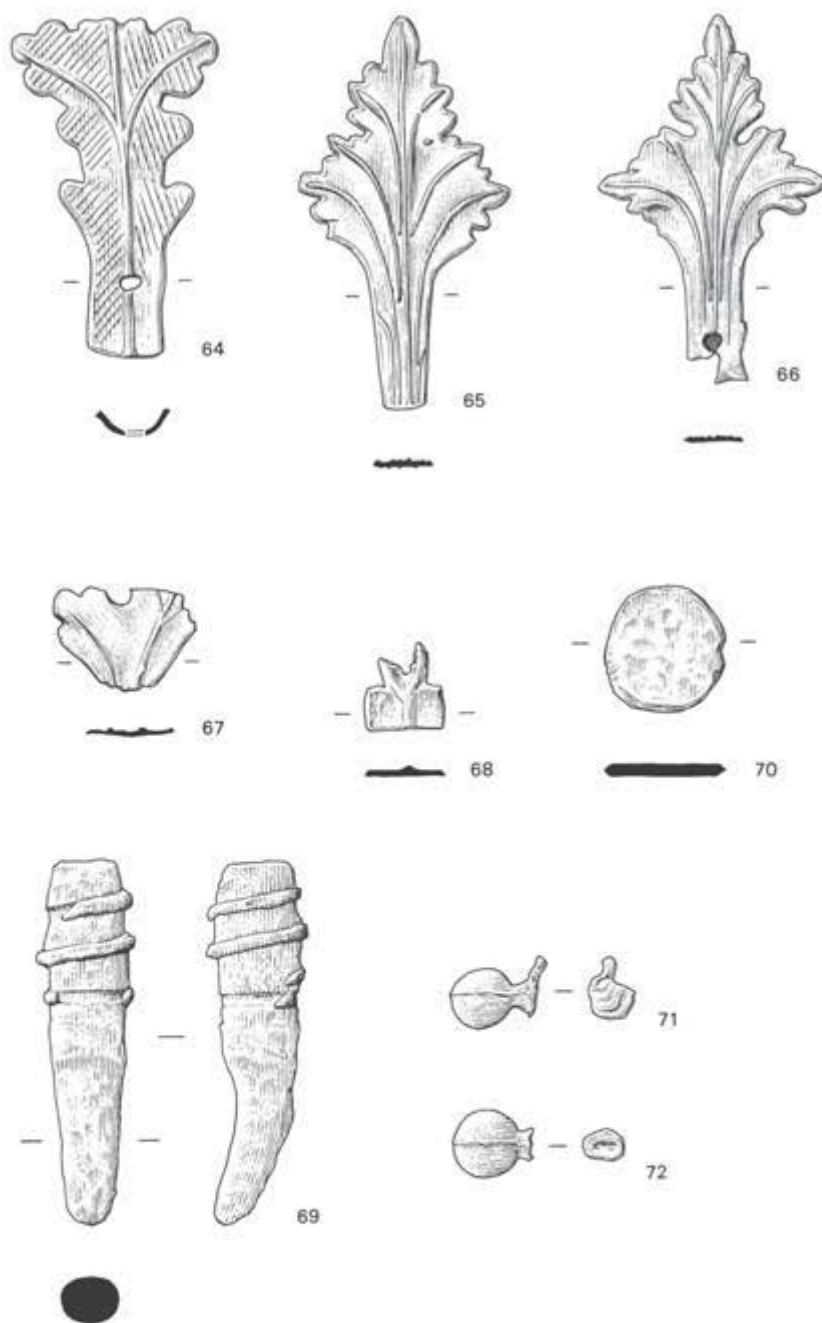


Figure 9.39 Small finds: Group B, copper alloy and pewter, scale 1:1.

Figure 9.40 Small finds:  
Group B, lead, scale 1:1.5



imported with covers, though silver gilt examples with Exeter hallmarks show that covers were also added in this country (Allan 1984, 118–21). Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

#### Lead

Fig 9.40

64 Cast lead oak leaf with traces of

gilding, one of five from the site (65–7, 198). They are from ornamental ceilings of a type installed at Greenwich in 1533 (Colvin 1982, 104), which had raised wooden ribs ('frets') embellished at the intersections with sixty-seven 'bullions' and 218 'buds', or formalised wooden flowers each with four lead leaves. The former were larger. Leaves of



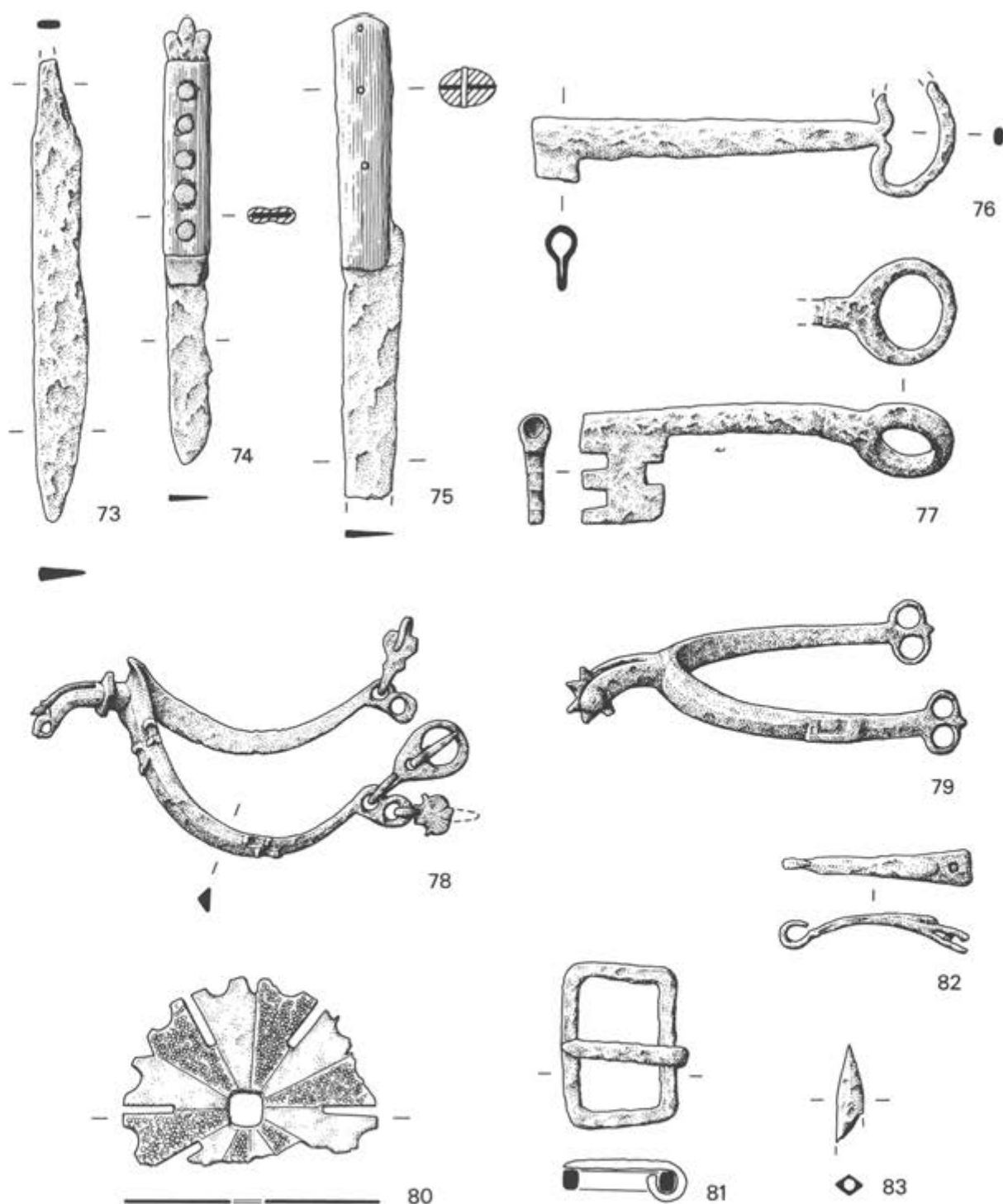


Figure 9.41 Small finds:  
Group B, iron, scale 1:2.

this type have been found in excavations at Greenwich Palace (Starkey 1991, 21) and at the Manor of the More, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire (Biddle *et al* 1959, 185, fig 20). At Acton Court the leaves are derived from the Period 3.5 house. Period

4.2 (137), infill within Room G/32, Area 1.  
65 Cast lead oak leaf as 64. Period 4.2 (283), infill in Room H, Area 1.  
66 Cast lead oak leaf with traces of gilding as 64. Period 4.3 (882), infill of east arm of moat, Area 6.  
67 Fragment of cast lead oak leaf as

64. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom fill, south arm of moat, between arms of porch, Area 1.
- 68 Cast fitting fragment. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.
- 69 Object with thread. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 70 Disc, 25 mm diam, 2 mm thick. Weight 11 g. Period 4.3 (1950), fill of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 71 Shot (14 mm diam) with casting sprue, weighing 17 g (including sprue). Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 72 Shot (12 mm diam) with casting sprue, weighing 11 g (including sprue). Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- Iron**  
Fig 9.41
- 73 Tanged knife. Period 4.1–4.3 (533), dump layer, Area 2.
- 74 Knife with scale handle and trefoil terminal. The mineralised wooden scales survive. One of the rivets was made of lead with some copper and zinc (XRF). Period 4.3 (1991), fill of south arm of moat, south of porch, Area 1.
- 75 Knife with scale tang and iron rivets attaching mineralised wooden scales. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 76 Key with hollow stem. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 77 Key with hollow end to stem. Period 4.1–4.3 (528), dump layer, Area 2.
- 78 Rowel spur (rowel missing) with buckle and two hooked links for attaching the straps, one no longer attached to terminal. Of a type current in the 16th century: compare with an example from Somerby, Lincolnshire, associated with 15th- to 16th-century finds (Mynard 1969, fig 11.24). Short necked spurs like nos 78 and 79 seem to have replaced the long-necked types, which funerary monuments indicate were the fashion in the 15th century (Ward Perkins 1954, 103–6). Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.
- 79 Spur. The rowel box has been totally corroded. Compare with examples from Somerby associated with 15th- to 16th-century finds (Mynard 1969, fig 11.19–22). Period 4.2–4.3 (1048), bottom of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.
- 80 Decorative plate with a tin and lead coating (XRF). The X-ray shows radiating decoration (?incuse). This is paralleled by an object from an early 16th-century context in Amsterdam, which has a keyhole shaped perforation in the centre indicating that it is a lock plate (Baart 1977, no 691). Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 81 Rectangular buckle. Period 4.2 (205), make-up beneath Room 30, Area 1.
- 82 Strap end with hooked terminal and rivet. X-ray suggests tinning. Period 4.2 (283), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 83 Socketed point, probably part of arrow head. Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.
- Fig 9.42
- 84 Hinge. Period 4.2 (282), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 85 Ring with tang for attachment to wall. This may have been used for holding a torch and is possibly medieval. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), but like no. 84, it probably derives from the layer below, Period 4.2 (282), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 86 Hinge. Period 4.2 (282), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 87 Strip. Badly corroded. Period 4.4–4.5 (1043), fill of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.
- 88 Tapering tube or ferrule. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.
- Bone**  
Fig 9.43
- 89 Decorated bone handle with iron whittle tang *in situ*. Period 4.2–4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

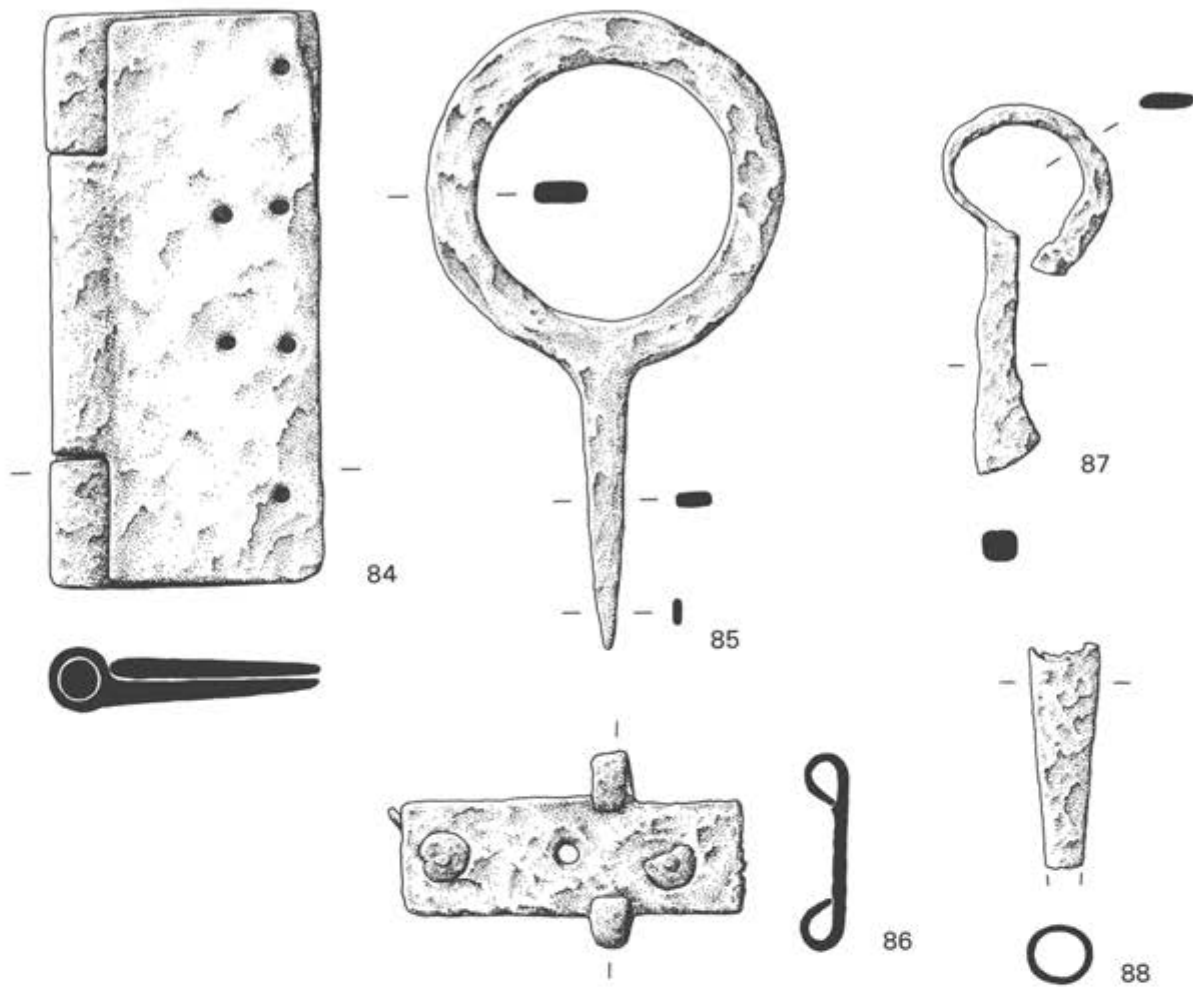


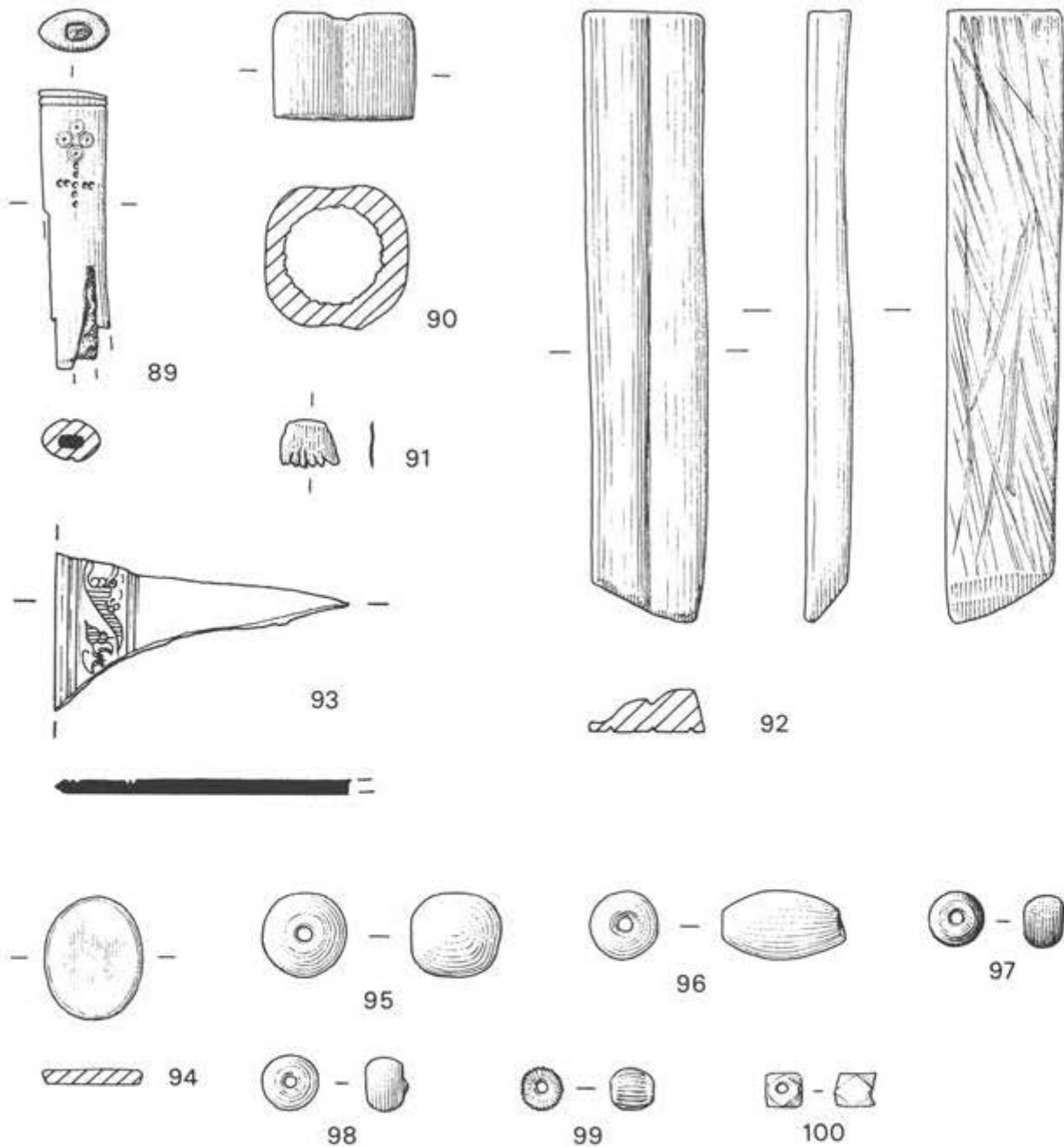
Figure 9.42 Small finds:  
Group B, iron, scale 1:2.

- 90 Bone 'nut' (made from long bone) with polished shaft and upper-end surface. It has a groove across its upper-end surface but it is not clear whether this was cut or due to wear. Period 4.3 (1991), fill of south arm of moat south of porch, Area 1.
- 91 Worked bone fingered 'scale', presumably decorative from box or other item. Period 4.2 (1658), fill of drain cut, Room 31, Area 1.
- 92 Bone decorative fitting with one end bevelled to form a corner. Period 4.2 (276), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- Not illustrated:* a similar piece, without the bevelled end, from Period 4.2 (283), infill of Room H, Area 1.

**Glass**

- 93 Fragment of mirror in colourless crystal glass with an edge bevelled from both sides. The glass is

decorated with diamond point engraving along its border; this comprises a hatched-in foliage design contained between straight lines. This form of decoration suggests a 16th- or early 17th-century date. The plate has lost its metallic backing. Mirrors of the Venetian type were made from cylinder glass, which was cut, flattened and polished with irons. They were backed by the tin-amalgam method which replaced the lead backings of the medieval period. A sheet of tin-foil was cemented with mercury leaving a thin metallic backing comprising about 80 per cent tin and 20 per cent mercury. Venice was famous for its mirrors from the 16th century onwards. Crystal mirrors were also produced in the Low Countries by the 1570s, though it is possible that, at least initially,



they were finishing Venetian plates or 'sites'. Production also started in London during the Mansell monopoly in the 1620s. The Acton Court fragment appears to be a unique survival from this period of mirror production (Schweig 1941; Gasparetto 1958, 161-5; Godfrey 1975, 235-41). For examples of medieval mirrors with lead backings, see Bayley *et al* 1984. Period 3.4b (149), infill beneath Room R/28, Area 1 (intrusive).

94 Oval shaped setting of heavily weathered opaque dark blue glass, presumably from jewellery. Period 4.2-4.3 (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

*Beads*

95 Globular jet bead. Period 4.4-4.6 (511), clay above dump layers, Area 2.  
 96 Globular black jet bead. Period 4.3 (1992), fill of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.

Figure 9.43 Small finds: Group B, bone, glass and beads, scale 1:1.

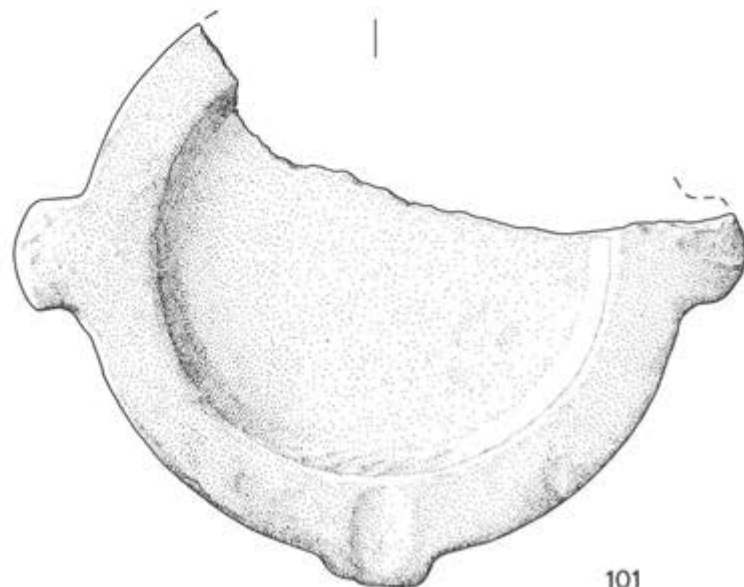
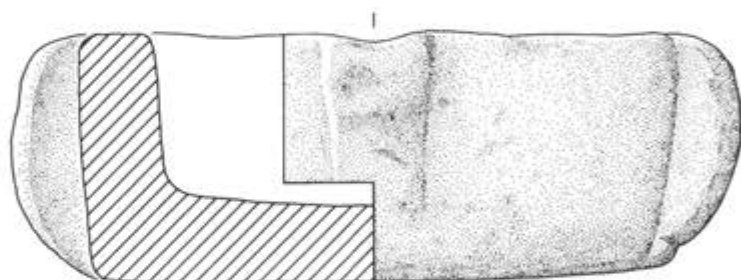


- 97 Globular black jet bead with faceted ends. Period 4.2–4.3, (1993), bottom of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
  - 98 Globular black jet bead with faceted ends. Period 4.2 (121), infill at west end of Room G/32, Area 1.
  - 99 Globular jet bead with grooves in surface. Period 4.3 (1455), fill of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
  - 100 Emerald-green faceted glass bead. Period 4.4–4.5 (1044), fill of south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.
- Not illustrated:* an identical example from Period 4.2 (284), infill of Room H, Area 1.

**Stone**  
Fig 9.44

- 101 Broken medieval mortar of grey micaceous Pennant sandstone,

Figure 9.44 Small finds:  
Group B, stone, scale 1:2



101

partly weathered to an orange-brown. Pennant sandstone outcrops locally, and was widely used in Bristol, for example the Pennant mortar from Buchanan's Wharf (Nicholson 1987, 28.3). Period 4.2–4.3 (2027), bottom of east arm of porch, Area 6.

**Group C: all from Period 4.5–4.6 (136)**

**Silver**

Fig 9.45

- 102 Silver pin with angled point. There is no trace of any stress marks so the angle may be an original feature. No precise parallels have been traced but possible functions (if intentionally angled) are as a toothpick or an implement for unpicking stitches. A silver toothpick is documented in a Fulford (North Humberside) will of 1579 (Clay 1912, no. LXXII, 93). If the pin was originally straight it may have been a hat pin.
- 103 Silver thimble made from soldered sheet.

**Copper alloy**

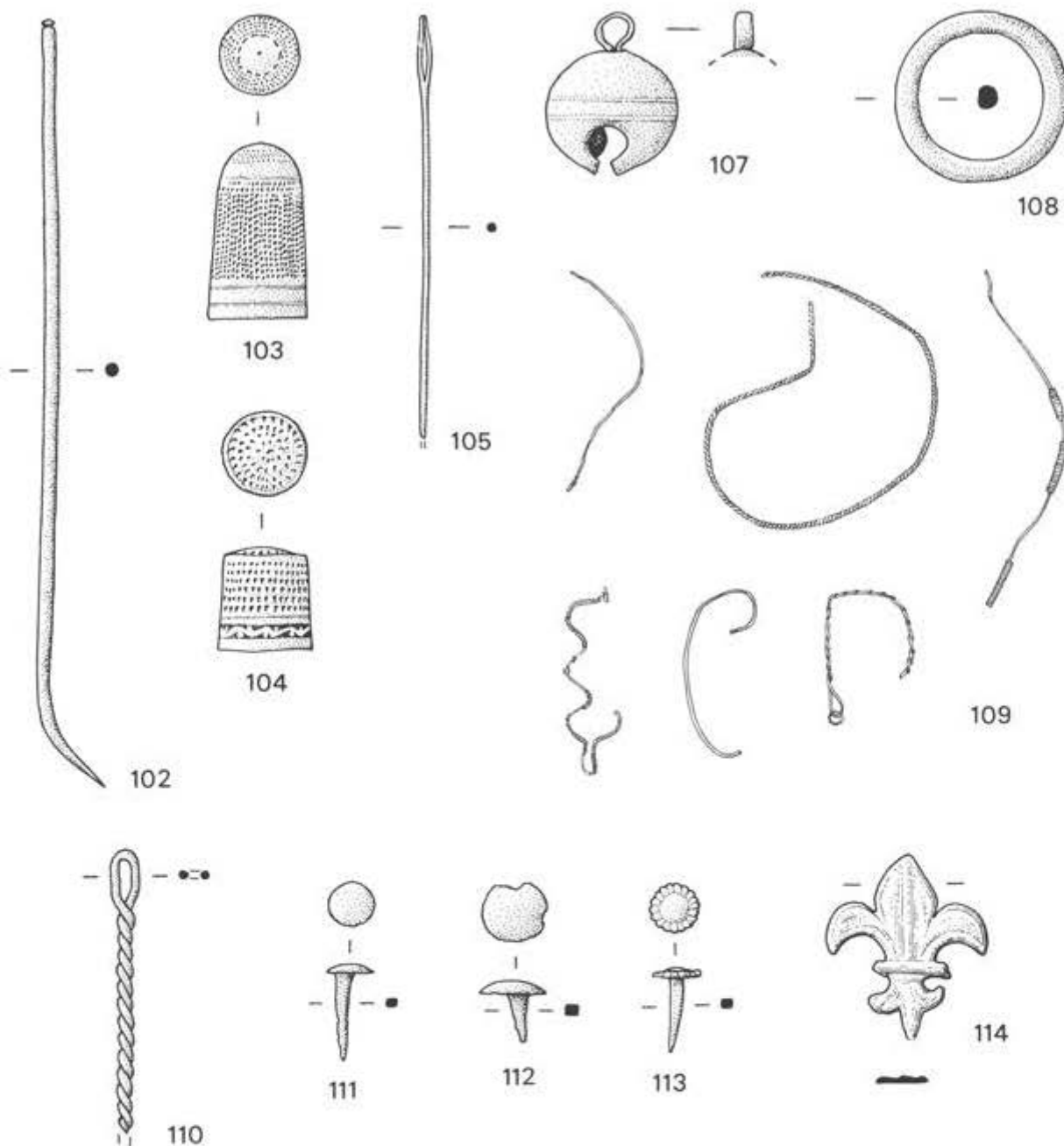
- 104 Thimble with rectangular-shaped indentations, wave decoration around base and bald crown. Holmes (1989, 3) notes that thimbles with bald crowns date to before c 1650.
- 105 Netting needle with split point. This may have been used to make 'lacs' lace-work, especially popular in the 16th century. In lacs work, patterns were darned upon a ground of netted square-meshes (Palliser 1875, 17–20 and Swan 1970, 87). Examples of similar needles come from London (Steane and Forman 1991, fig 12.7, nos. 10–12) and Amsterdam (Baart 1977, no. 123).

Fig 9.46

- 106 Two embossed plates, on either side of an iron strip, held by three copper alloy rivets. Mineralised wood survives between copper alloy and iron on one side.

Fig 9.45

- 107 Rumbler bell with iron ball inside. The bell is decorated with four inscribed lines, two on each side of the join.



- 108 Cast ring.  
 109 Six fragments of coiled wire, brass with a trace of lead (XRF). Possibly from hair net.  
*Not illustrated:* Tangled mass of fine (c 0.3 mm diam) wire, silver-coated (XRF). Probably from embroidery. Period 4.2 (276), Area 1 (possibly intrusive from context 136).  
 110 Twisted loop, possibly an ear scoop/toothpick of Egan and Pritchard (1991, 378–90) Type 4. It would have had one end of the

wire slightly longer than the other to act as a toothpick.

111–13 Tacks.

#### Lead

- 114 Fleur-de-lis fitting with traces of gold leaf on the front, containing some copper (XRF). Possibly sewn onto clothing.

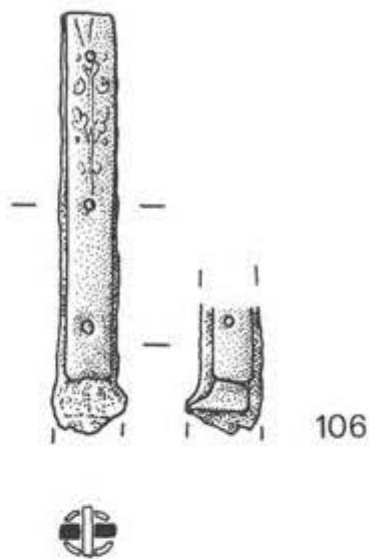
#### Iron

Fig 9.47

- 115 Scissors handle.

Figure 9.45 Small finds: Group C, silver, copper alloy and lead, scale 1:1.

Figure 9.46 Small finds:  
Group C, copper alloy,  
scale 1:2.



- 116 Lock comprising back-plate, bolt and spring.

*Bone and ivory*

Fig 9.48

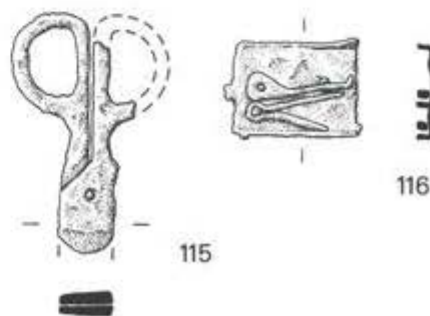
- 117 Polished comb of unusual curved profile. The curvature suggests it was designed to be worn in the hair.
- 118 Fragment of ivory comb (showing growth lines).
- 119 Two halves of polished rod with hollows in both ends. The function of this object is uncertain but it could possibly be a stiffener, eg from a head-dress, possibly with wires slotted into the two hollows.

Fig 9.49

- 120 Stiffener in five fragments, notched at broad end with shallow diagonal grooving on surfaces, presumably a by-product of manufacture.
- 121 Fragment of notched stiffener.
- 122 Flattened point with diagonal grooving, probably fragment of stiffener.

*Not illustrated:* Fragments of at least six other stiffeners from same context.

Figure 9.47 Small finds:  
Group C, iron, scale 1:2.



- 123 Fragment of polished handle with faceted cross-section for whittle tanged implement.
- 124 Ivory peg with heart-shaped head. This seems unlikely to be a tuning peg as there is no hole to take the string. Some of its decoration would be obscured by the tuning box and the taper is in the wrong direction. Possibly it is associated with some game, perhaps indicating the score or trumps.
- 125 Polished peg. Uncertain function.
- 126 Ivory die.

*Glass*

Fig 9.50

- 127 Tube or phial in weathered opaque forest glass, now of indeterminate dark colour with iridescent surface weathering. Complete except for nick in rim with twisted 'wrythen' decoration. Its function is uncertain and it seems to have too small a capacity to have been used to hold perfume, for instance. One possibility is that it was a needle-case, for keeping a valued steel needle (see Groves 1966, 18-23, though the objects she describes as pin cases are in fact lace tags).

*Shell*

- 128 Shell button (gastropod minus outer shell) with iron loop.

*Sequins*

- 129 Mercury-gilded (XRF) silver sequin, oval-shaped, c 5 mm by 4 mm.
- 130 Mercury-gilded silver sequin, circular, c 4 mm in diameter.
- Not illustrated:* three other oval sequins, as no. 129, and two other circular sequins, as no. 130, from same context.
- 131 Decorative sequin-like copper alloy dress fitting, silver-coated (XRF), c 4.5 mm in diameter with wire loop.
- 132 Bone sequin.
- Not illustrated:* Four other bone sequins, as no. 132. From same context.

*Beads*

- 133-4 Globular beads of milky quartz.
- 135 Ivory bead.
- 136 Bone bead.
- 137 Globular bead of dark green glass.

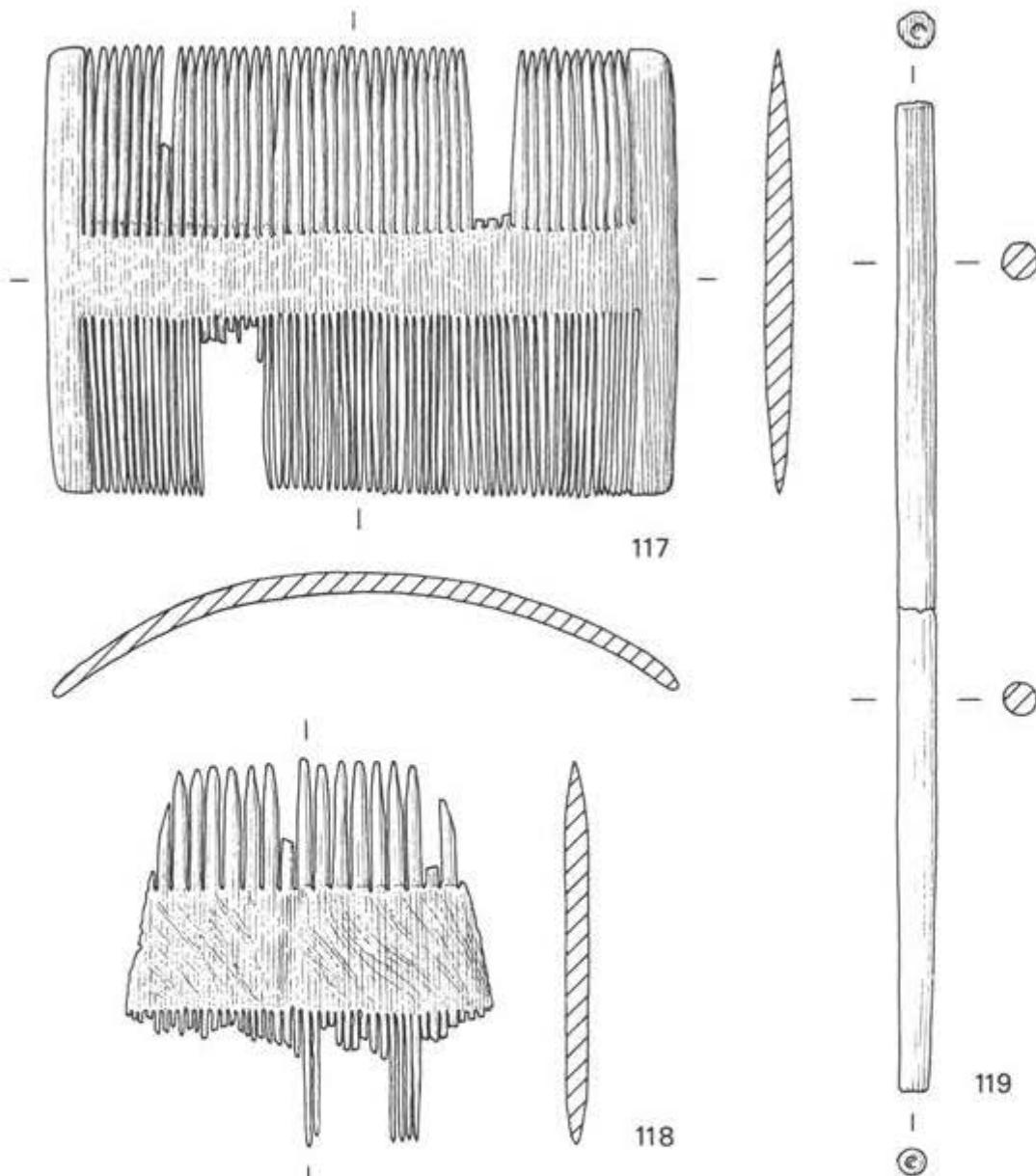


Figure 9.48 Small finds:  
Group C, bone and ivory,  
scale 1:1.

- 138 Globular glass bead with coating of opal glass over white core.
- 139 Globular bead in colourless glass. This bead is hollow, with a silver-coloured layer on the interior except for two circular areas around the string holes (cf no. 140). This bead has probably been silvered, perhaps using a mercury-based amalgam, though this has not been confirmed with any archaeometric analysis (see Newman 1977, 131-2 and 284 on technology).
- 140 Globular bead in colourless glass. This bead is hollow, and has a mottled dull golden layer on the interior which is probably gilding

- 141 though this has not been confirmed by any archaeometric analysis; cf no. 139. For the several possible methods of gilding, cf Newman 1977, 131-2 and Charleston 1972.
- 142 Small globular emerald-green bead with slight longitudinal surface ridging.
- 143 Bead of pale yellow glass (possibly imitating amber).
- 144 Glass bead of yellowish semi-transparent glass.
- 145 Doughnut-shaped dark-coloured glass bead.
- 146 Globular pearl bead.
- 147 Elongate bead of decayed deep blue glass.



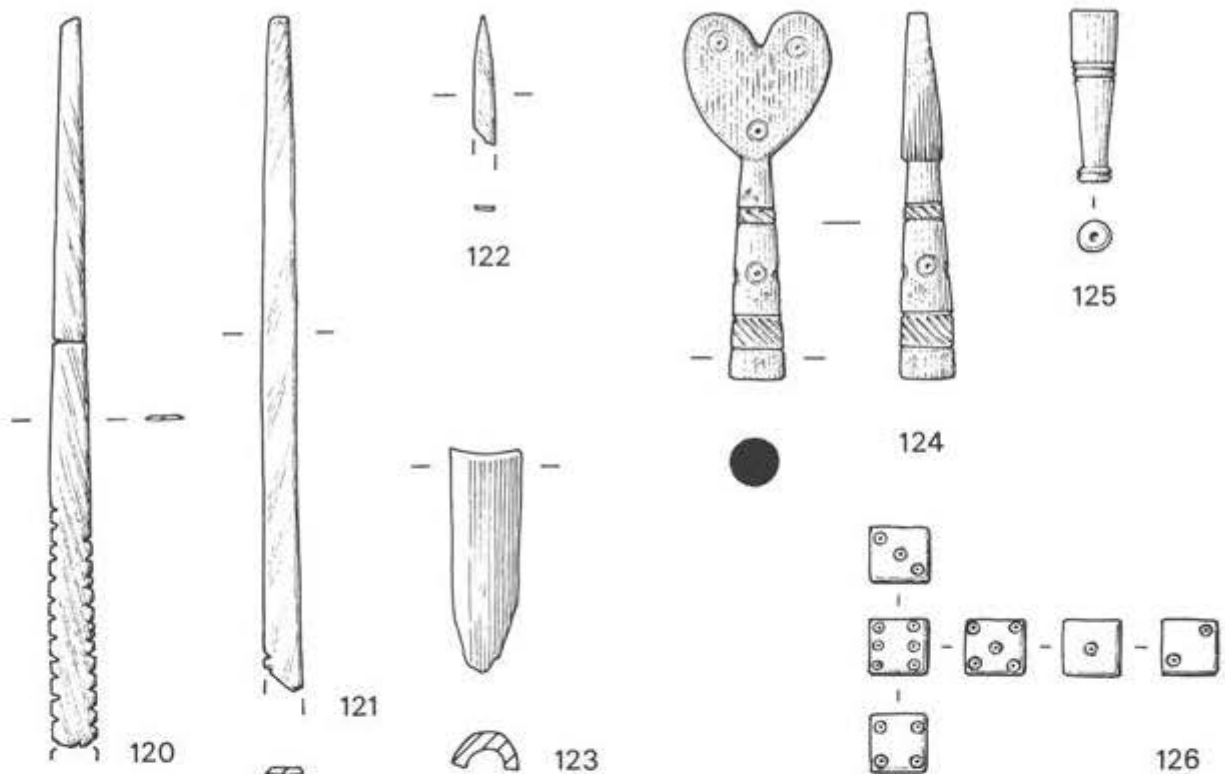
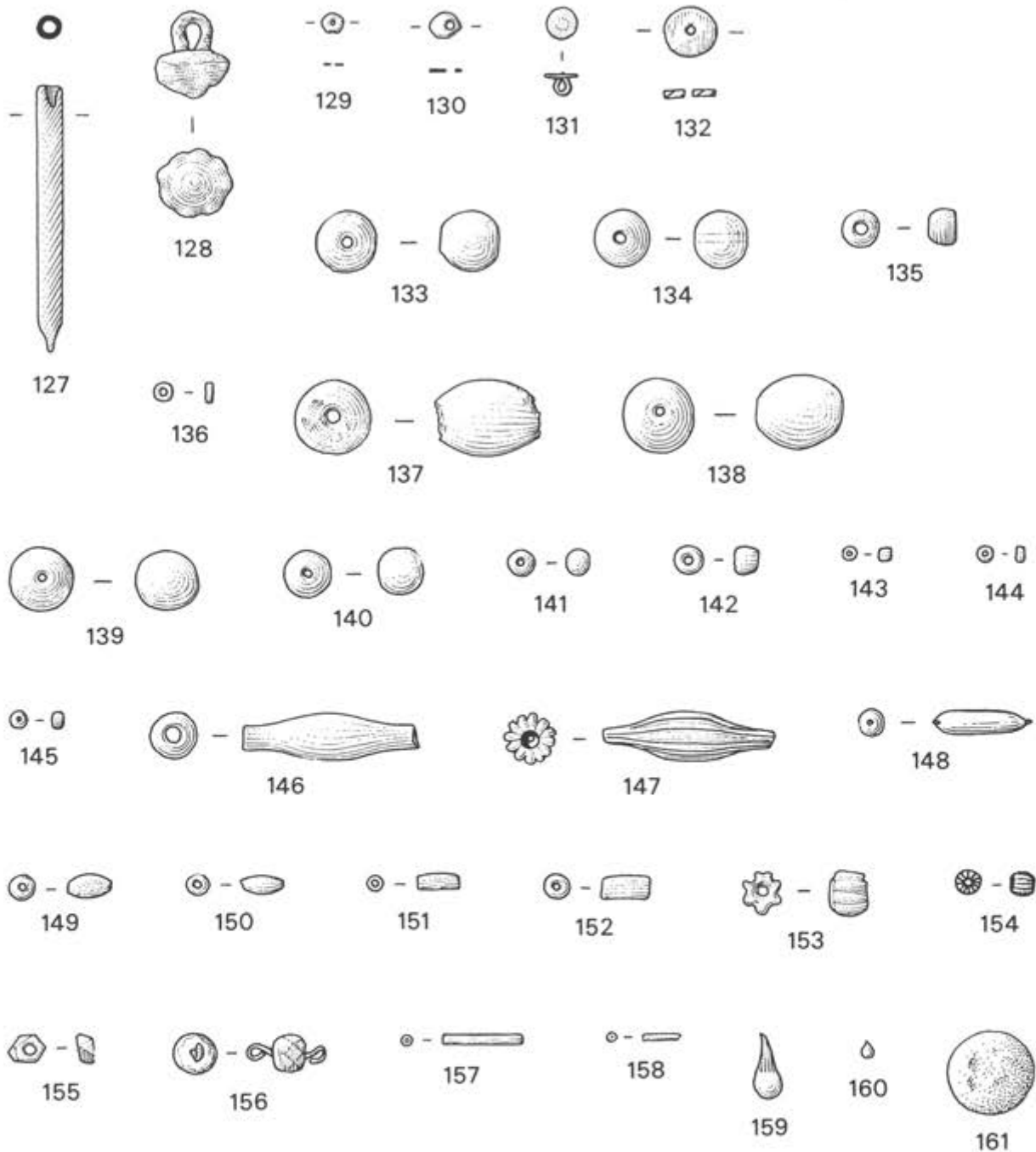


Figure 9.49 Small finds: Group C, bone and ivory, scale 1:1.

- 147 Faceted elongate bead of black glass.  
*Not illustrated:* two other identical beads from same context, and a third, somewhat decayed, from Period 4.6 (941), fill of Civil War ditch, Area 8.
- 148 Hollow elongate colourless glass droplet, with remains of black wire loop (probably silver with sulphide on surface).
- 149 Bead of black glass.
- 150 Oval glass bead with some decay, ?off-white.
- 151 Tubular bead of red glass with fine inlaid longitudinal red lines in the surface.
- 152 Red tubular glass bead with fine inlaid longitudinal white lines.  
*Not illustrated:* three other beads, as nos 151–2, from same context.
- 153 Faceted bead of opaque green glass with some weathering.
- 154 Globular bead of shaped green glass with a red (decayed to white when dry) glass coating. The bead thus has green circular areas around the holes linked by longitudinal green lines through the red body.
- 155 Faceted jet bead.
- 156 Faceted emerald green glass bead with copper alloy hook.
- 157 Tubular bead of black glass.  
*Not illustrated:* one other bead, as no. 157, from same context.
- 158 Tubular bead of black glass, damaged (probably same as no. 157).
- 159 Pale green glass droplet with twisted 'wrythen' decoration on hollow stem. It probably had a wire.
- 160 Tiny black glass droplet with black wire (?silver).  
*Not illustrated:* i) Bone tubular bead 2.5 mm diam and 1.8 mm in length; ii) Bone tubular bead 4 mm diam and 3.5 mm in length.
- Ceramic**
- 161 Opaque brown glazed ceramic marble.
- Group D**
- Silver**  
 Fig 9.51
- 162 Silver thimble, containing some copper (XRF), with square indentations and inscription: TEND YOVR NEDILL. Several similar silver thimbles with



inscriptions are illustrated by Holmes (1985, 38 and 229 no. 4) and dated by him to c 1580–1650 (1989, fig 6). Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1 (though possibly associated with Period 4.5–4.6 (136), immediately beneath).

*Copper alloy*

163 Thimble in fragments. Period 5.1a

(1706), demolition layer, Room 32, Area 1.

Fig 9.52  
164

Candlestick (XRF indicates a leaded copper alloy with lead-tin solder at the join). The candlestick is of 16th-century form and is missing the lower part of the base including the drip tray (cf Brownsword 1985, fig 9 and Michaelis 1978, fig 32). The upper

Figure 9.50 Small finds: Group C, glass, sequins and beads, scale 1:1.

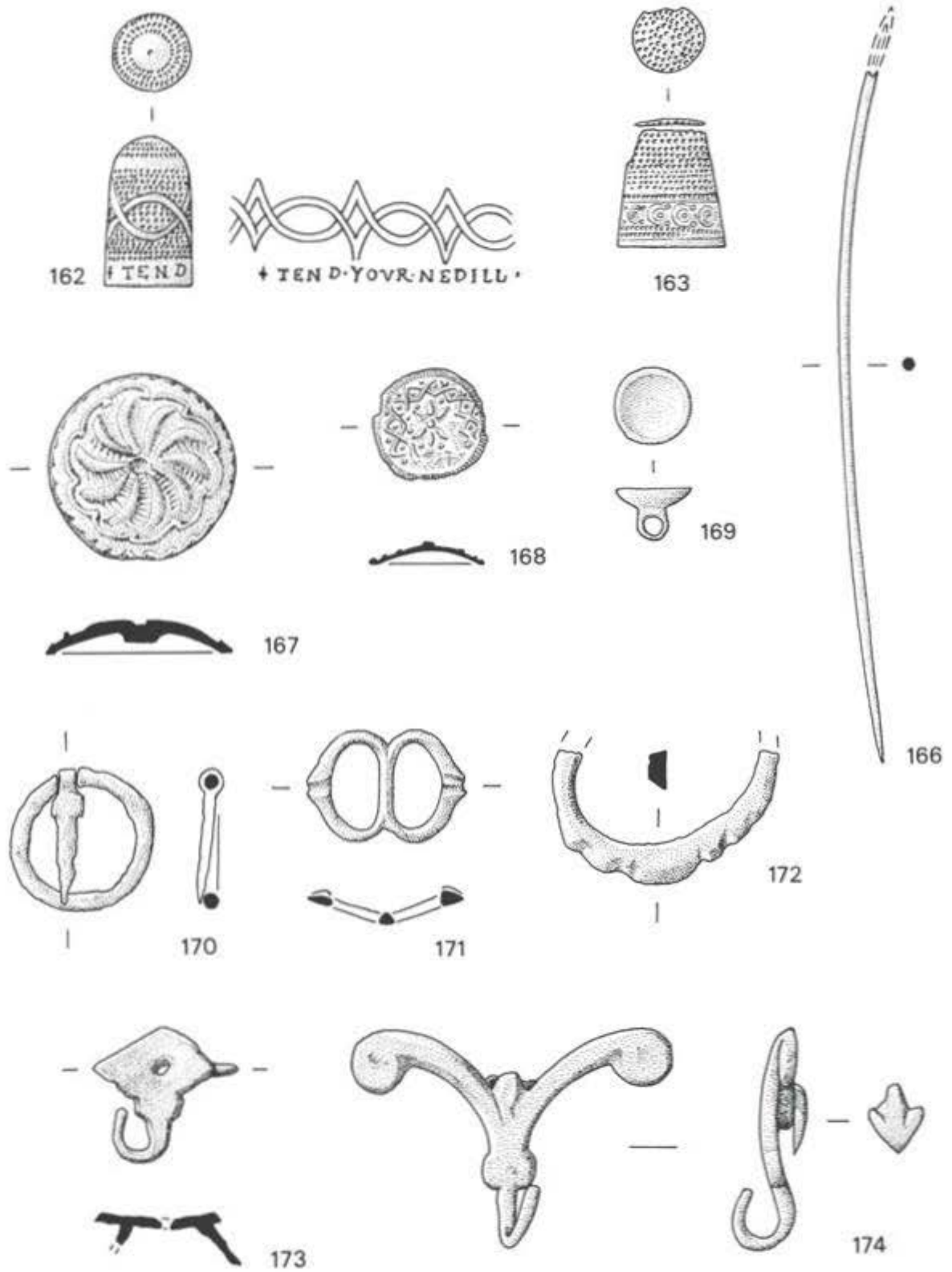


Figure 9.51 Small finds: Group D, silver and copper alloy, scale 1:1.

section of the candlestick was cast in one piece. It is joined to the lower section by an iron rivet and solder. The inside of the base shows concentric rings indicating working on a lathe. This could have been discarded either while the garderobe was in use, or else when it was being filled in. Period 5.1a (469), bottom of garderobe in porch, Area 1.

- 165 Rim of sheet vessel. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer above south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.

Fig 9.51

- 166 Needle, broken at eye. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer above south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.
- 167 Brass button with cast floral decoration, containing minor levels of lead and traces of silver coating (XRF). Probably late 17th or early 18th century in date (cf examples from Exeter (Goodall and Goodall 1984, fig 191.134–5)). Period 4.6–5.2 (871), rubble spread, Area 6.
- 168 Slightly domed tin disc with evidence of cast cable and pellet relief decoration; c 1 per cent trace of copper, zinc and lead (XRF). Period 5.1a (233), fill of garderobe in west wall of Room 29, Area 1.
- 169 Half of hollow button, cast in one piece with drilled eye. Type 1 in South's Florida-based typology and dated by him to 1726–76 (Noël Hume 1970, 90–2). Period 5.1a (2128), demolition layer south of Rooms 27/28, Area 1.
- 170 Ring brooch, medieval in style (cf A R Goodall 1981, 68–9). Period 4.6–5.2 (856), rubble spread, Area 6.
- 171 Buckle. Tin-coated copper, containing some zinc (XRF). Late medieval or early modern. (cf I H Goodall 1983, fig 1.11–14). Period 5.1a (2128), demolition layer south of Rooms 27/28, Area 1.
- 172 Cast fragment of buckle or handle. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer above south arm of moat west of porch, Area 1.

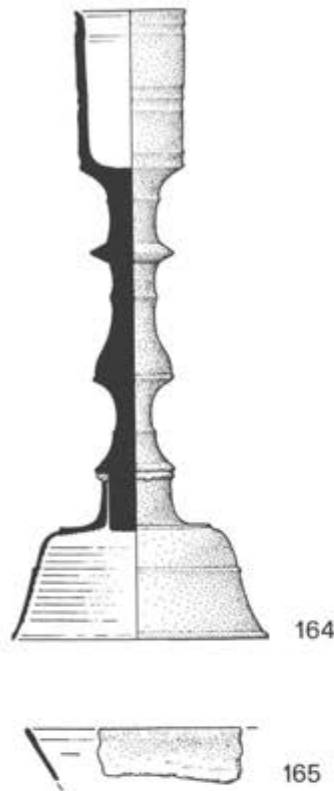


Figure 9.52 Small finds: Group D, copper alloy, scale 1:2.

- Not illustrated: a very similar item from Period 5.2 (1318), cobbled surface, Area 1.
- 173 Hooked fitting, probably from belt with two cast attachment prongs and secondary hole. Period 5.1a (1742), demolition layer, east end of Room 32, Area 1.
- 174 Brass belt hook, with traces of silver coating (XRF). Traces of leather survive on the rear. Period 5.2–5.3 (2085), ash and clinker layer, Area 7.

Fig 9.53

- 175 Book clasp made of two pieces of sheet, with copper alloy pins and inscribed decoration at the broken ends. Period 5.4 (10), topsoil above Room 29, Area 1.
- 176 Book clasp. Period 5.4 (2052), make-up below modern track, Area 7.
- 177 Decorative fitting. Period 5.2 (486), farmyard surface, Area 1.
- 178 Brass decorative fitting, mercury-gilded, but no trace on reverse (XRF) with two attachment prongs. Possibly 16th century. Period 5.2 (652), bedding for floor slabs, Area 4.
- 179 Brass decorative fitting, mercury-gilded (XRF), with two attachment



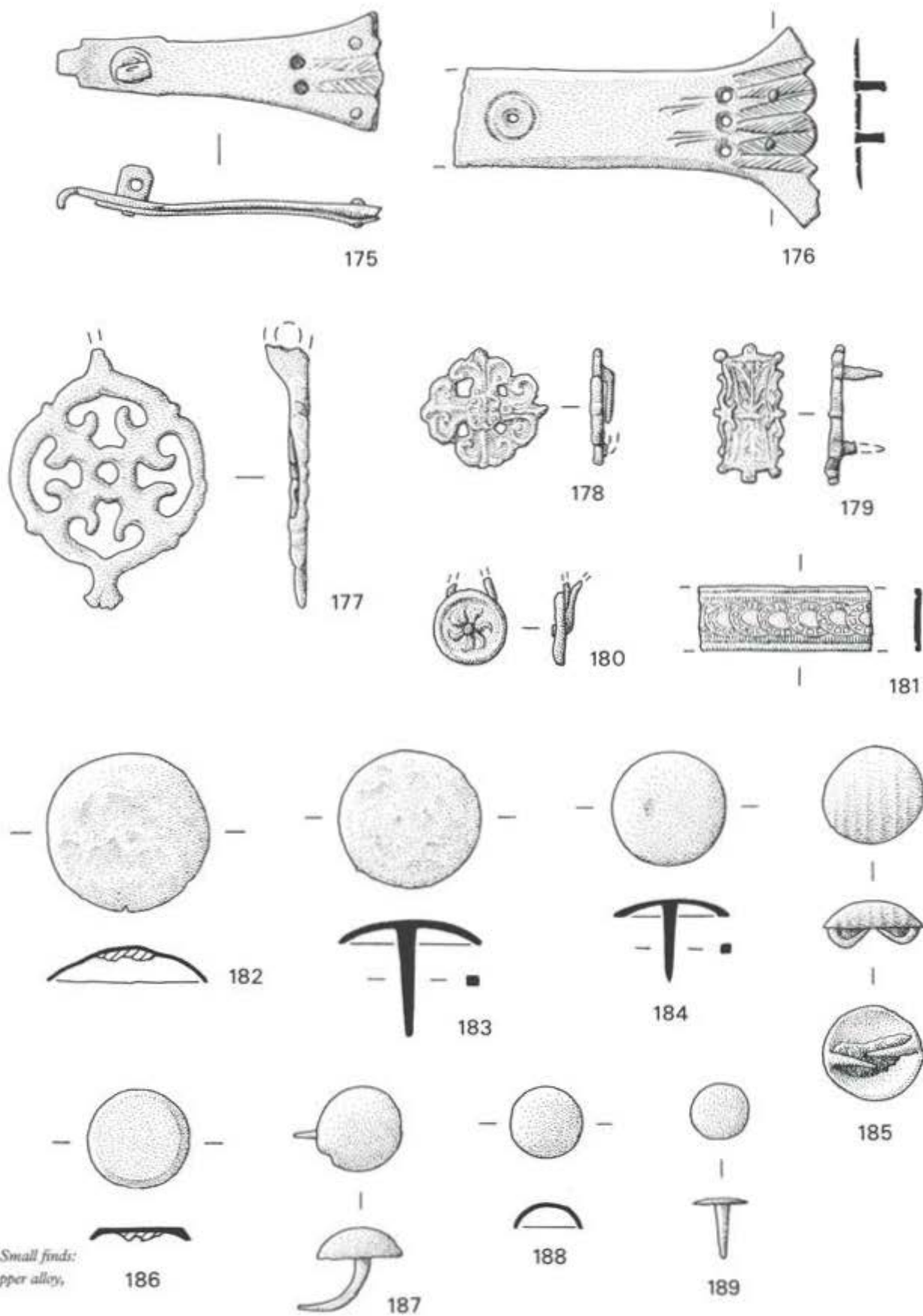


Figure 9.53 Small finds:  
Group D, copper alloy,  
scale 1:1.

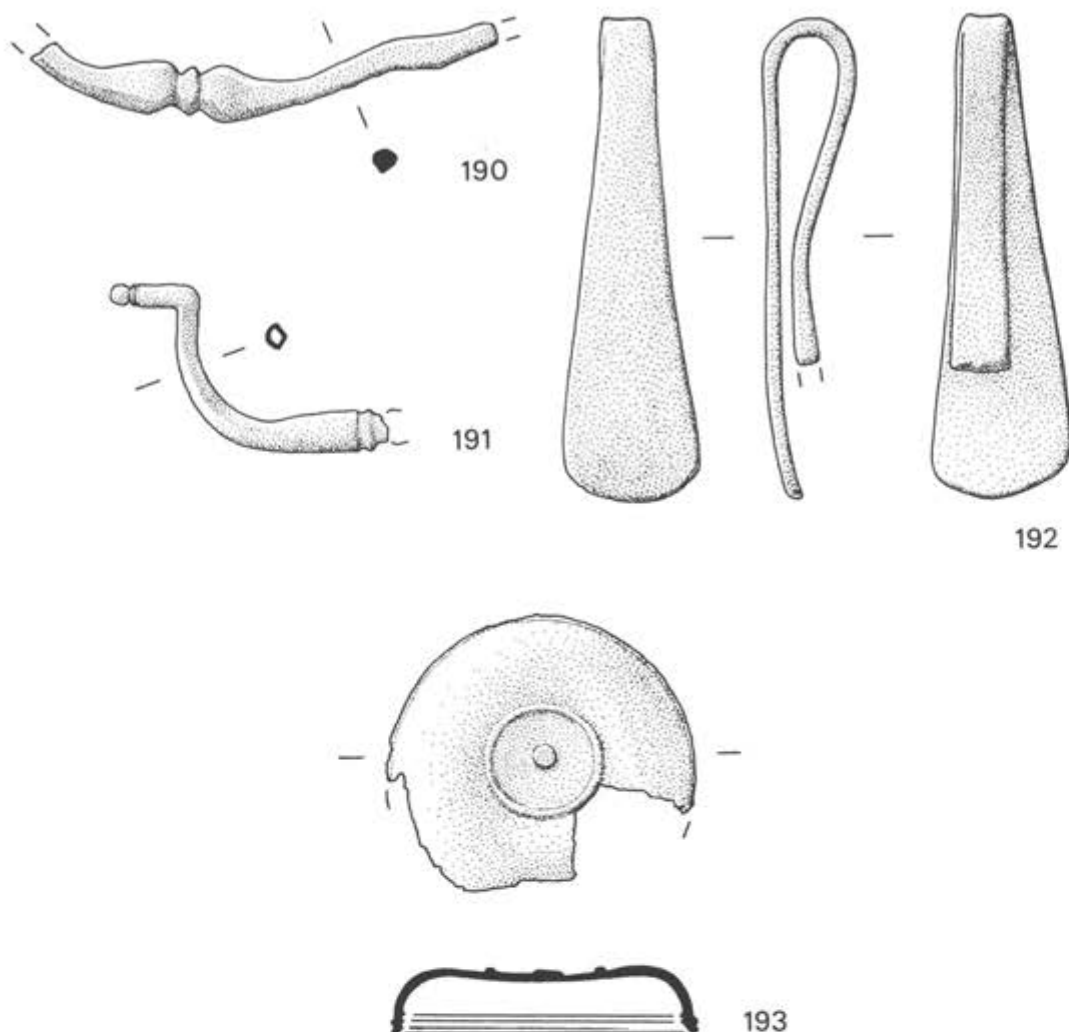


Figure 9.54 Small finds:  
Group D, copper alloy,  
scale 1:1.

- 180 prongs on back. Possibly 16th century. Period 5.2 (2640), make-up for floor of OB 15, Area 10. Brass fitting, mercury-gilded (XRF), with floral decoration and two attachment prongs. Period 5.1b (183), demolition layer, Room 29, Area 1.
- 181 Strip with horseshoe decoration, possibly milled. Period 5.3 (852), subsoil, Area 6.
- Not illustrated:* a second example from Period 4.6–5.2 (842), rubble spread, Area 6.
- 182 Dome, possibly a stud head. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.
- 183 Stud. Period 5.1 (671), ashy fill of pit, Area 4.
- 184 Stud. Period 4.6 (947), fill of Civil War ditch, Area 8.
- 185 Decorative stud with a gently faceted surface. It has two bent prongs at the back enclosing leather remnants. Period 4.6 (2758), fill of Civil War ditch, Area 11.
- 186 Stud head with lead on inside. Period 5.1b (34), pitched Pennant surface above Room 28, Area 1.
- 187 Stud. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.
- 188 Sheet dome, possibly lower half of 16th/17th-century button. Period 5.1a (1728), demolition layer, Room 32, Area 1.
- 189 Stud. Period 4.6 (947), fill of Civil War ditch, Area 8.
- Fig 9.54
- 190 Furniture bail arm handle *c* 1720–50 (Noël Hume 1970, 228 and fig 72.4). Period 5.1a (2128), demolition layer south of Rooms 27/28, Area 1.
- 191 Furniture handle, broken, of bail type, *c* 1720–50 (Noël Hume 1970, 229). Period 5.1a (125), demolition layer, Room 32, Area 1.

Figure 9.55 Small finds:  
Group D, copper alloys,  
scale 1:2.



- 192 Handle, possibly from a spoon or fork. Period 5.1a (2128), demolition layer south of Rooms 27/28, Area 1.
  - 193 Screw-top from container, possibly for condiments or toiletries. Period 5.1 (925), cobbled surface, Area 8.
- Fig 9.55
- 194 Spur with iron rowel pin and remnants of five-pointed iron rowel. The arm of the spur is bent (stress fractures are apparent); its side profile would have been straight. The spur is of a type current in the second half of the 17th and early 18th centuries (cf B Ellis in A R Goodall 1984, fig

192.145-6). Period 5.1 (3009), cobbled surface, Area 12.

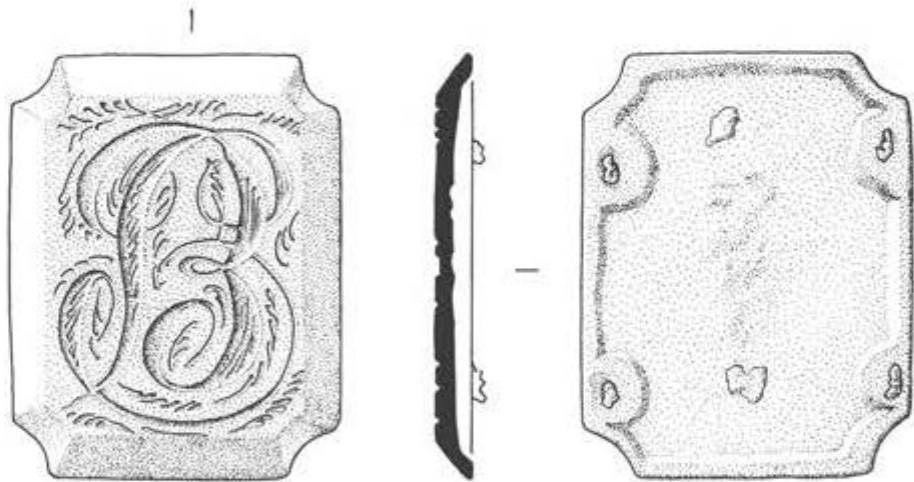
Fig 9.56

- 195 Backplate fastened by four pins at rear. Inscribed with initials LB. Period 5.2-5.3 (866), dump layer above east arm of moat, Area 6.
  - 196 Silver (more than 90 per cent in XRF) whistle with mother of pearl and initials LB. Period 5.4 (851), topsoil, Area 6.
- Not illustrated:* copper alloy harness decoration with attachment hole and inscribed initials JL. 19th or early 20th century in date. A similar example was excavated at Donyatt (North and Snodin 1988, 45/41, 361 and pl 48d). Period 5.4 (304), spoil from machine trench, Area 1.

Tin

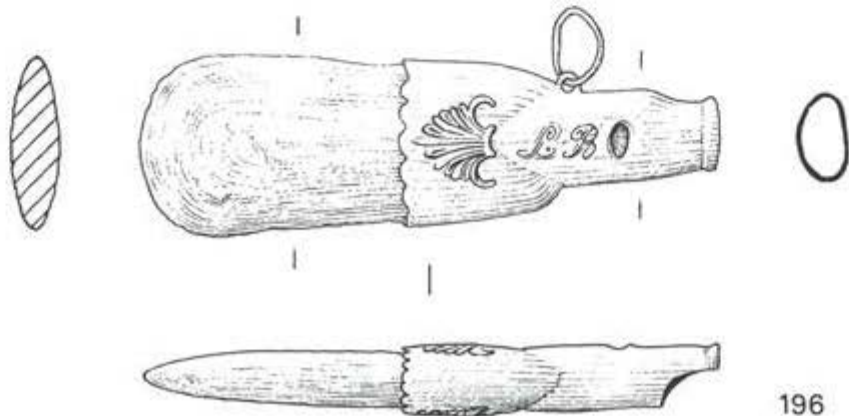
Fig 9.57

- 197 Object, possibly a decorative fitting, with small amounts of copper and



195

Figure 9.56 Small finds:  
Group D, copper alloy and  
silver, scale 1:1.



196

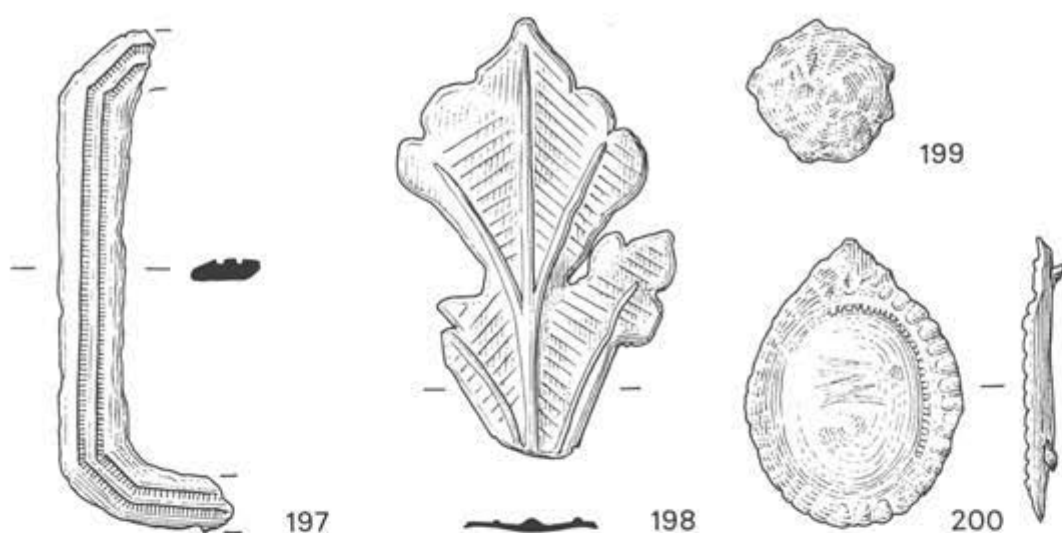


Figure 9.57 Small finds:  
Group D, tin and lead,  
scale 1:1.

zinc (XRF). Period 5.1 (3502),  
loam garden layer, Area 14.

#### Lead

- 198 Cast lead oak leaf, see no. 64.  
Period 5.1b (185), demolition  
rubble in Room 29, Area 1.
- 199 Burrshot 16 mm diam, 28 g (see  
p367). Period 5.1a (419),  
demolition layer south of Room 24,  
Area 1.
- 200 Lead/pewter fitting. Period 5.4  
(860), modern dump layer, Area 6.

#### Iron

##### Fig 9.58

- 201 Knife with bolster and whittle tang.  
The bolster demonstrates the knife  
to be of post-medieval date (I H  
Goodall 1979, 38-9: nos 1-13).  
Period 4.6-5.2 (722), rubble  
spread, Area 5.
- 202 Tip of scythe blade. The X-ray  
shows a weld-line down the middle  
of the blade (G McDonnell, pers  
comm). Period 4.6 (2758), fill of  
Civil War ditch, Area 11.
- 203 Lock bolt. Period 5.1a (1706),  
demolition layer, Room 32, Area 1.
- 204 Key with solid stem. Period 5.1a  
(1742), demolition layer, east end  
of Room 32, Area 1.
- 205 Rowel spur, badly corroded. Traces  
of tinning (XRF). Period 4.6  
(2756), fill of Civil War ditch,  
Area 11.
- 206 Horseshoe with seven nail holes and  
one calkin. This type of shoe appears  
before the mid-14th century (Clark  
1986, 3) and continues into the 17th

207

century (I H Goodall 1983, fig  
9.207-13). Period 4.6-5.2 (854),  
rubble spread, Area 6.

- Buckle, rectangular, of oval cross  
section. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling  
layer above south arm of moat west  
of porch, Area 1.

208

Shoe patten. The iron ring would  
have supported a wooden sole used  
to keep the wearer's shoes out of  
the mud. Compare with a late  
17th/early 18th-century example  
from Oyster Street, Portsmouth  
with the wooden sole preserved  
(Fox and Barton 1986, fig 155.1).  
Period 5.1b (61), top fill of  
garderobe, Room 28, Area 1.

*Not illustrated:* thin sheet from a colander or  
strainer, in several dozen  
fragments. Period 5.1 (671), ashy  
fill of pit, Area 4.

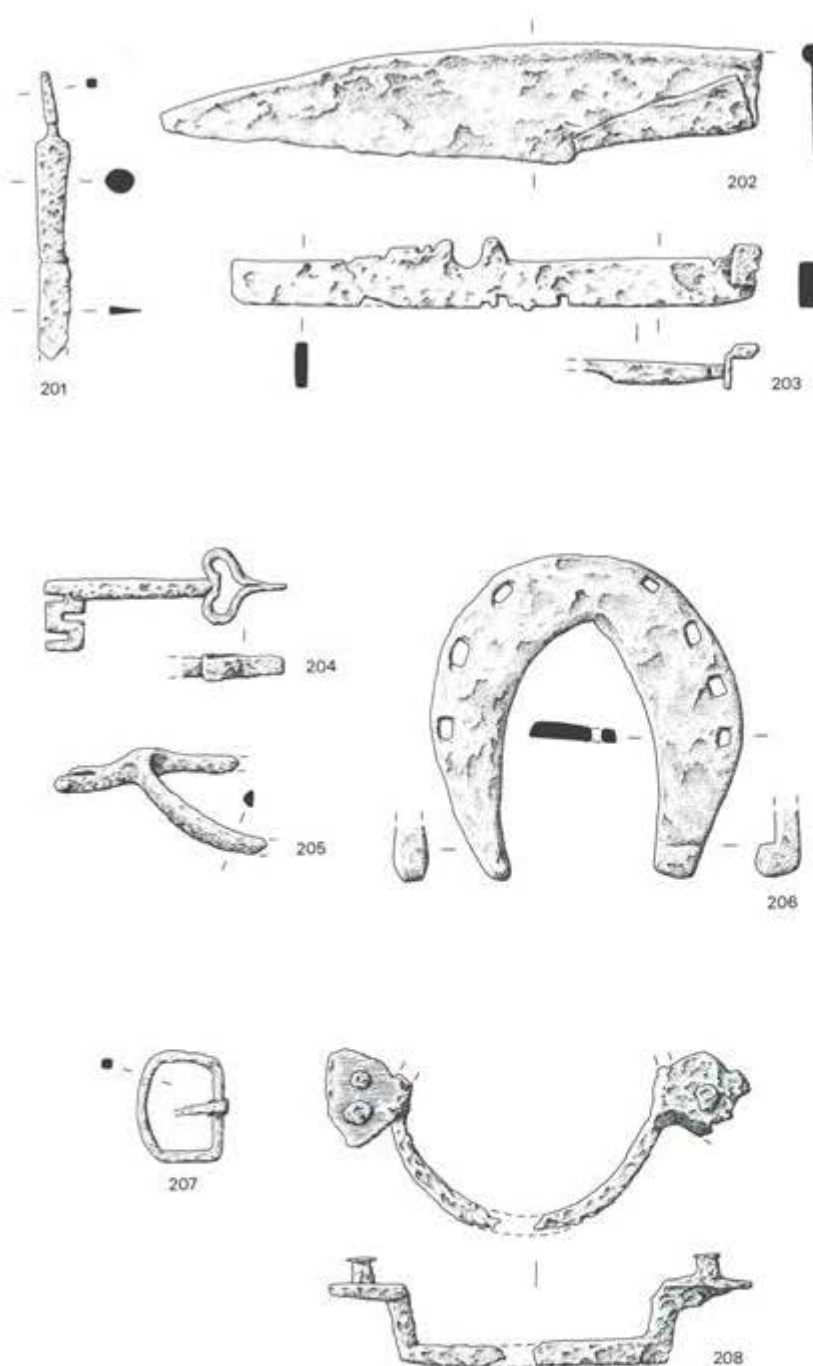
#### Bone and ivory

##### Fig 9.59

- 209 Handle for whittle tanged knife or  
tool, made from long bone, with  
bone plug and notched decoration.  
Period 5.1b (184), demolition  
layer, Room 29, Area 1.
- 210 Object, lathe-turned, possibly a  
bobbin or parchment pricker. It  
appears to have been modified for  
another purpose by having its point  
sharpened with a blade. It is very  
similar to an object, also with  
secondary sharpening, from  
Norwich in a context dated  
c 1760-80 (Margeson 1985, fig  
39.24). Period 5.2 (1733), fill of  
drain cut, Area 1.



Figure 9.58 Small finds:  
Group D, iron, scale 1:1.5

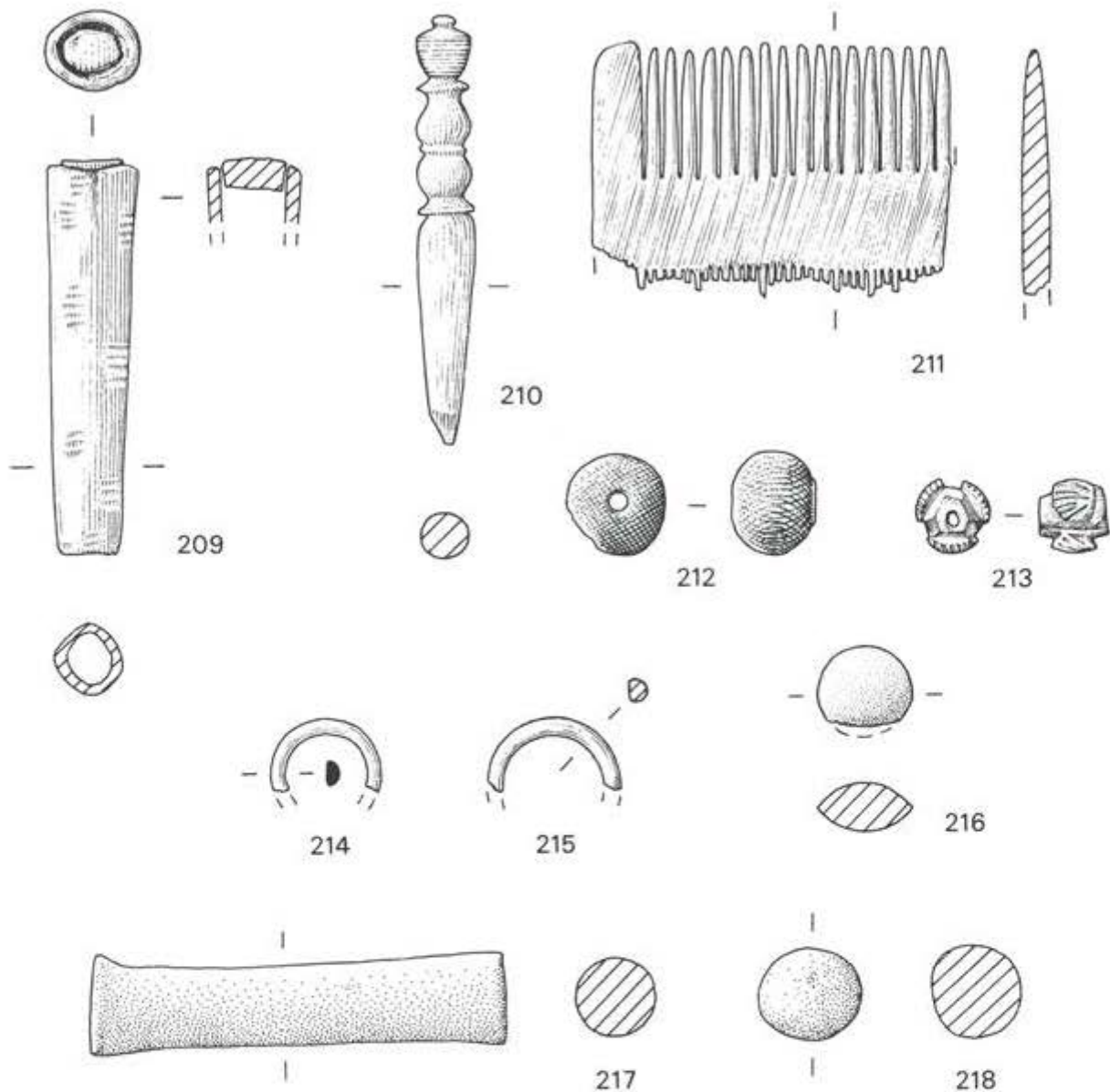


- 211 Fragment of ivory comb (showing growth lines). Period 5.1b (183), demolition layer, Room 29, Area 1.  
212 Bone sequin, in three fragments. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.

*Beads*

- 213 Black jet rosary bead with pecten

shells. Probably of Spanish origin (see p366). There is a very similar bead but with a circular motif, rather than pecten shells, from an early 19th-century context in Winchester. This might be a 19th-century copy, but it could be early post-medieval in the light of the Acton Court bead (Biddle and



Creasey 1990, fig 181.2116).  
Period 4.6–5.2 (722), rubble  
spread, Area 5.

#### Glass

- 214 Fragment of ring made of black opaque glass, possibly sewn onto clothing. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.

#### Stone

- 215 Part of a ring made of orange nearly transparent stone with fine bands of red. Probably carnelian, a variety of chalcedony (SiO<sub>2</sub>).

Period 5.1a (1706), demolition  
layer, Room 32, Area 1.

- 216 Polished mauve gem, mainly calcium with traces of silicon, iron and copper (XRF). Probably fluorite, CaF<sub>2</sub> (M Hutchinson AML, pers comm). Period 5.1b (13), demolition layer, Room 29, Area 1.

*Not illustrated:* gunflint, of gunspall type, of the late 17th or 18th century, with broken striking edge in mottled grey and brown flint (Noël Hume 1970, 219–21; De Lotbinière 1977). Period 5.1–5.2 (507), gravel surface, Area 2.

Figure 9.59 Small finds:  
Group D, bone and  
miscellaneous, scale 1:1.

**Table 52: Classifiable nails**

Periods	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
2	6			
3	5	1		4
4	5	1	1	146
5		1	1	130
<i>Totals</i>	16	3	2	280

**Table 53: Quantification of pins by Period/Phase**

Period	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type W	Totals
2			1		1
3	3	3			6
4.1	1				1
4.1-4.3 (Area 2 dump)		21	20		41
4.2-4.3	1	15	281		297
4.4-4.6			8		8
4.5-4.6(136)	2	30	3913	1	3946
5.1	1	4	634		639
5.2-5.3			10		10
<i>Totals</i>	8	73	4867	1	4949

**Ceramic**

217 Ceramic wig curler, in buff pipe clay. Period 5.1a (1742), demolition layer, east end of Room 32, Area 1.

218 Pinkish buff ceramic marble. Period 4.6 (746), fill of posthole, Area 5.

**Nails**

Many of the Acton Court nails were fragmentary and badly corroded. However, four basic types could be distinguished among those which could be classified. Type 1 (no 219) comprised fiddle-key nails used with

horseshoes possessing countersunk holes. These should date to the 13th century or earlier. Type 2 (no 220) comprised small nails with pinched heads and tapering rectangular shafts. Type 3 nails (no 221) had angular heads and square-sectioned shafts and would have been suitable for decorative use, for instance, on doors. The vast majority of nails belonged to Type 4 (no 222), with roughly circular flat heads and square or rectangular-sectioned shafts. Of the 208 classifiable nails of this type, 71 (25 per cent) came from Period 4.2 and 108 (39 per cent) from Period 5.1 (Table 52).

**Illustrated nails**

Fig 9.60

- 219 Type 1 (fiddle-key) nail. Period 3.3 (1839), drain construction trench fill, north of Room A, Area 1.
- 220 Type 2 nail. Period 3.2-3.3 (1189), fill of posthole, Area 1.
- 221 Type 3 nail. Period 4.3 (2020), fill of east arm of moat, Area 6.
- 222 Type 4 nail. Period 4.6 (2763), fill of Civil War ditch, Area 11.

**Pins**

The pins were classified according to the system developed by Caple 1983 (Table 53; also Caple and Warren 1983). Type A comprises pins with heads of unworked wound wire. Type B pins have heads which show some traces of secondary working with a hammer or punch. Type C pins have wound wire heads transformed into a hemisphere by means of a pair of punches. At Sandal Castle, Caple suggests that Type A is the standard medieval form; that Type B pins first appear c 1450-84 and Type C pins first appear c 1485. Types A and B continued to form minor parts of post-1485 assemblages at Sandal (Caple 1983). At Acton Court three Type B pins were found

**Table 54 Lengths of pins from Period 4.5-4.6 (136)**

<i>Length (mm)</i>	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<i>No.</i>	7	53	151	336	144	102	169	254	648	716	521
<i>Length (mm)</i>	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
<i>No.</i>	109	78	78	42	38	25	10	11	5	-	1
<i>Length (mm)</i>	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
<i>No.</i>	2	5	5	4	2	3	4	2	4	2	-
<i>Length (mm)</i>	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	
<i>No.</i>	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	2	

*Complete pins total: 3539*

in Period 3 contexts, but a single Type C pin from Period 2 is almost certainly intrusive. Type B and C pins were both found in similar numbers from the Area 2 dump layers, which were deposited in Period 4.1–4.3, but contained much 15th- to early 16th-century material. From Period 4.2 onwards, Type C pins clearly predominate. An elaborate pin with a head of wound plaited wire (no 228) came from Period 4.5–4.6 (136): classified as type W.

The site produced a total of 4949 pins, quantified by counting complete pins and fragments with heads. 284 (5.7 per cent) of these came from the Period 4.2 moat deposits but the largest group (3946 pins, 79.8 per cent) came from Period 4.5–4.6 (136). The finding of large numbers of pins from such sites as beneath the choirstalls at Cirencester Abbey (Dr A McWhirr, pers comm) and beneath floorboards at the 16th-century Coventry Grammar School (Woodfield 1981) suggests that pins were much used as clothing fasteners as well as for dressmaking. This is supported by documentary references from the 15th century onwards (Oxford English Dictionary *sub* pin and Cunnington 1970, *passim*). An example is an Elizabethan reference to the securing of cuffs to bodice with 'smalle pinnes' (Ashelford 1983, 14). The large numbers of pins found is not surprising given an entry in the 1555 Petre household accounts 'Item pd ... for a thowsen of clowt pinnes 8d' (Cunnington 1970, 188).

The pins from Acton Court ranged in length between 15 mm and 67 mm (Table 54). Measurements of the complete pins from context 136 show a bimodal distribution with peaks at 18 mm and 24 mm suggesting different functions. A scattering of pins covers the range 30–57 mm, often with proportionally large heads, also suggesting variation in function possibly as cloak or hat pins.

#### Illustrated copper alloy pins

Fig 9.61

- 223 Type B pin. Period 3.4b/5 (1807), construction trench fill, widening of west wall, Room A, Area 1.
- 224 Type B pin. Period 3.4b/5 (1807), construction trench fill, widening of west wall, Room A, Area 1.
- 225 Type C pin. Period 4.2 (276), infill of Room H, Area 1.
- 226 Type B tack. This is not actually a pin, but it has a Type B head. Period 4.3 (1474), fill of south arm of moat east of porch, Area 1.

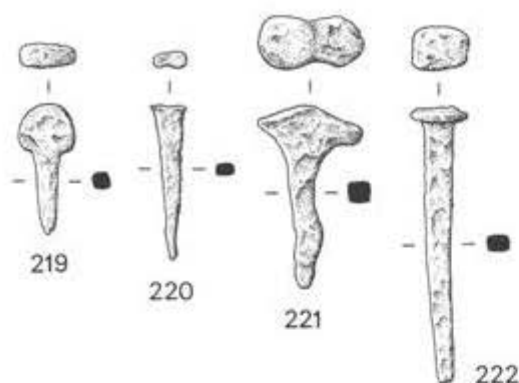


Figure 9.60 Small finds: nails, scale 1:2.

- 227 Type C pin. Period 4.3 (1931), fill of south arm of moat within porch, Area 1.
- 228 Type W pin. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Room 30, Area 1.
- 229 Type C pin. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Room 30, Area 1.
- 230 Type C pin. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Room 30, Area 1.
- 231 Type C pin. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Room 30, Area 1.
- 232 Type C pin. Period 4.5–4.6 (136), Room 30, Area 1.
- 233 Type C pin. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.
- 234 Type C pin. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.
- 235 Type C pin. Period 5.1b (207), demolition layer, Room 30, Area 1.
- 236 Type C pin. Period 5.1b (1743), occupation layer, east end of Room 32, Area 1.

## Stone objects

by Kirsty Rodwell

The following fragments were all recovered from the Period 4.3 infilling of the moat and were originally classified with architectural fragments.

Fig 9.62

- 1–3 Three fragments of tapered octagonal section: 1 (127) has a round socket in one face and is broken; 2 (2027) is complete and has a socket in the top; 3 (1048) is fragmentary. These are stone lamps, cf Biddle 1990, 985, where three basic types are identified. These appear to belong to Group B, pedestal lamps: no 1 may have



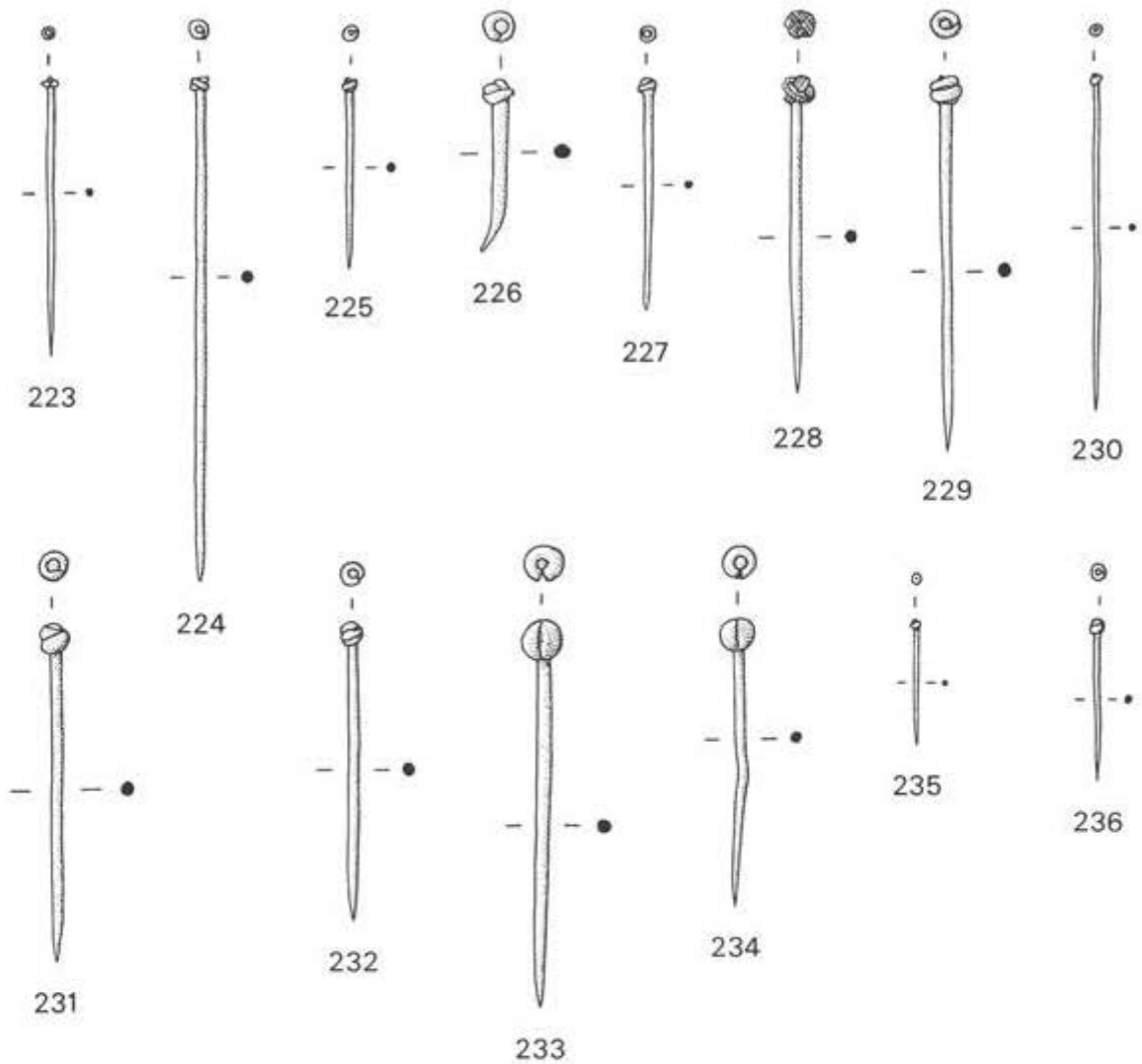


Figure 9.61 Small finds: pins, scale 1:1.

finished in a bowl (*ibid*, fig 308b, 3548), the others were probably spiked for candles.

*Not illustrated:* section of window mullion 0.17 m long, one face is hollow-chamfered, the other has been rebated and pierced, possibly to

allow suspension as a weight; all surfaces are abraded (262).

Seven flat discs of roughly trimmed Penant sandstone 50–60 mm (4), 90 mm, 120 mm and 160 mm in diameter; thickness 10–25 mm. Weights or counters (1259, 1993, 2701). In Chelmsford two sets of eight and sixteen counters cut from peg tile were found in 16th-century contexts (Cunningham and Drury 1985, 81, pl VII).

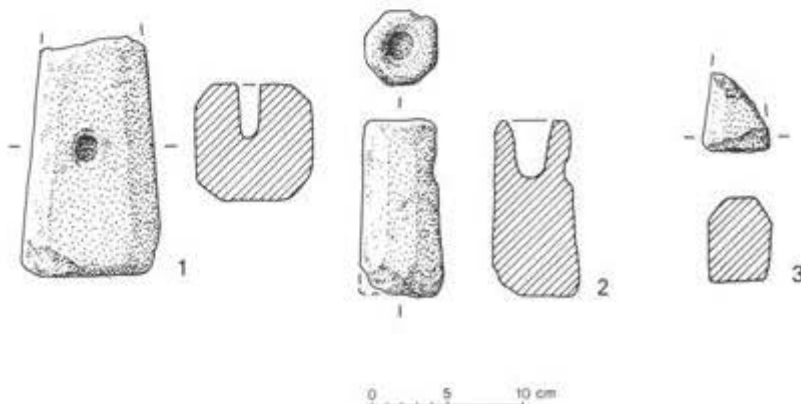
Three limestone discs cut from ridge pieces; 55 mm in diameter, 25 mm thick, counters or gaming pieces (1993).

## Flint

by Andrew David

Thirty-eight flints were recovered from the excavations.

Figure 9.62 Stone objects.



The only prehistoric item of any diagnostic significance was a single microlith, a scalene 'micro-triangle' (16 mm by 5 mm), characteristic of later Mesolithic assemblages. Scrapers are unreliable cultural markers, but of the four examples two are end-scrapers and might be of broadly Mesolithic date while the remaining two resemble later prehistoric (Neolithic/Early Bronze Age) types. With the exception of the gunflint (from context 934, fill of stone-capped drain 920 Period 5.1–5.2, Area 8)

**Table 55: Flints**

Flakes	9
Bladelet	1
Flake fragments	16
? Retouched flakes	2
Fragments with retouch	4
Scrapers	4
Microlith	1
Gunflint	1
<i>Total</i>	38

none of the other pieces have any reliable diagnostic value. Any period from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age could be represented. The entire collection appears to be mixed and derived from historic contexts.

## Textiles

*by Elisabeth Crowfoot, with fibre identification by H M Appleyard*

The textile remains from Acton Court are all preserved by contact with metal, either because they were made with decorative metal threads – a cut metal strip wound spirally round a silk core – or else because they were in contact with metal objects, which protected the fibres, though sometimes mineralising them and leaving only a cast of the original threads. In the small first group, the metal-covered threads have been used for costume details – a button, fragments of cord edgings and embroidery, and scraps of a picot-edged braid. The second textile group consists of tiny fragments of cords, plaits and tapes, preserved inside copper alloy tags (see below), again a clothing accessory.

The distribution within both groups of objects is scattered, but there is a very heavy concentration in the subsidence beneath the wooden floor (136) of Room 30. Given that

the deposit also included thimbles, needles, sequins, beads and bone stiffeners, as well as an enormous number of pins (see above), it would appear that sewing and tailoring were carried on here. The room was possibly a wardrobe in which garments were stored and altered. Some of the fragments may be earlier, but the late 16th- to early 17th-century date of the deposit indicates the period when they were discarded, either because they were worn out, or else because they ceased to be used owing to changes in fashion.

All the objects in the first group, with one exception, come from this deposit or are similar to it in date. They are easily recognisable as fragments from the decoration of fashionable costume of the late 16th century, when heavy embroidery and braids on the collars and the 'wings' and 'skirts' of doublets, and the ornamented 'guards' on ladies' skirts were carried out in metal and coloured silks, and often edged with plaits and cords – the button (Fig 9.63.1) from the opening of a doublet; the fragments of laid embroidery, where the metal threads still retain something of the shape of a leaf (Fig 9.63.2a) and stems (Fig 9.63.3); the joined cords (Fig 9.63.4) and 4-plait in double metal thread (Fig 9.63.5), perhaps from the outlining of an elaborate panel (Arnold 1985, buttons: plates 78, 120 and 170; braids: plates 140–2, 193, 230, 279–82 and 288–91). The picot-edged braid (Fig 9.63.6), though possibly later, gives the same appearance as 16th-century bobbin-lace braids trimming gowns and petticoats (Arnold 1985, pls 336–8).

## Illustrated costume fragments, embroidery, etc

Fig 9.63

- 1 Button on wood mould, half-preserved; *c* 13 mm to centre; decoration: three circles; thread silver-gilt; grouped in threes (five–six per cm), ?continuous on round centre; single rays. Period 4.5–4.6 (136).
- 2a Fragment of embroidery; 13 mm by 17 mm; ?petal or leaf; thread: silk core, *bombyx mori*; silver strip containing some zinc and copper; laid threads (17 per cm); tabby (weft gone) or underside couching. Period 4.5–4.6 (136).

*Not illustrated (from 136):* 2b Fragment of embroidery; ?stems or outlining;

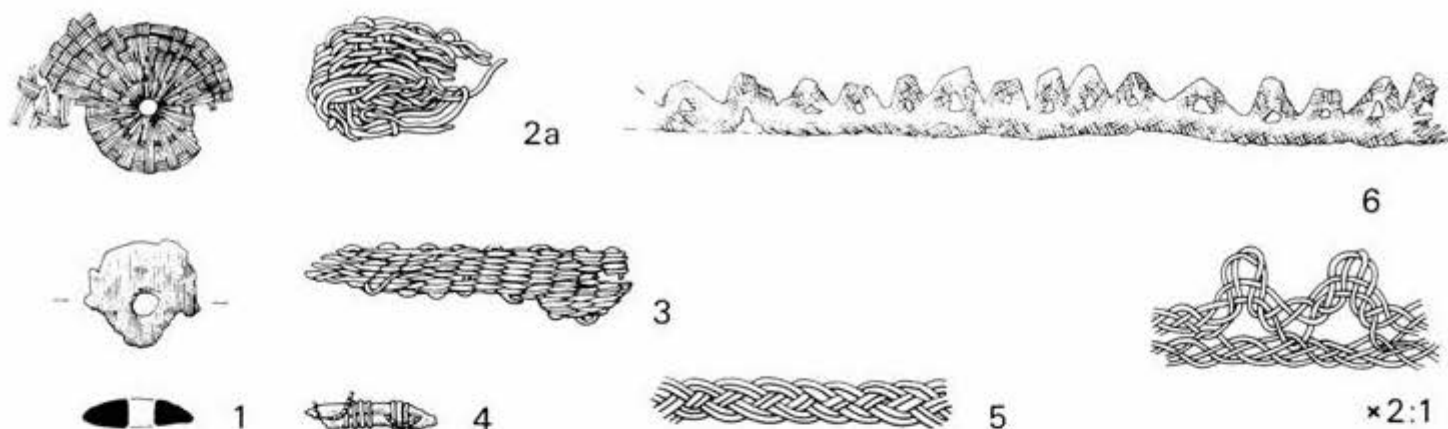


Figure 9.63 Costume fragments, scale 1:1.

- threads same as above;
- 2c Fragment; tabby area (wefts visible in X-ray); rolled into ?cord. Fragment, 32 mm by 9 mm; tabby; count threads 14–15/5 per cm; probably made as a narrow tape and sewn on. Period 4.5–4.6 (136).
- 3 End of two cords ?plaits; threads protruding; silk core (reeled); silver and brass strip; whipped tightly together with silk. Period 4.5–4.6 (136).
- 5 Fragment; length 68 mm, width 2 mm; 4-plait, paired threads; core: ?wool (fine animal fibres; deposits obscuring surface structure, but general appearance scale structure wool); metal deteriorated; traces from sewing down. Period 4.4–4.5 (933), fill of north arm of moat, Area 8.
- 6 Fragments of decorative braid, based on two 4-plaits, linked, with two threads of the second plait pulled up into a loop to form picots; lengths: 96 mm, 28 mm, c 0.1 m; height at picots: 5–7 mm; silk core, cross-sectional appearance, *bombyx mori*; silver-gilt strip. Period 4.6 (1015), levelling above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.
- Not illustrated:* Material inside copper alloy ring; fine white tabby weave; undyed cotton; c five threads per mm, on bias, held inside ring edge; ?part of cloth-covered button. Period 5.2–5.3 (502), subsoil, Area 2.

## Lace tags

by Sharon Strong

In total, 239 tags, not all complete, were found (Table 56: a full catalogue is in the archive; this report was compiled in 1990). Lace tags can be divided into three types (Oakley and Webster 1979, 262–3; Bayley *et al* 1985, 47), although only Types 1 and 2 were identified at Acton Court. Ten of the tags could not be grouped.

Type 1 tags, of which there are 97 (?+5), are produced from a piece of sheet metal rolled around a lace, to form an overlapping (Fig 9.64.4, 5) or butt joint (Fig 9.64.1, 2, 6). The majority are riveted a few millimetres below the top of the tag to secure the lace in place, or alternatively the end may have been pinched to hold the lace. The ends of Type 1 lace tags are usually neatly rounded-off and generally tapered to a point (Oakley and Webster 1979, 123; Bayley *et al* 1985, 47). The complete Type 1 tags on this site vary in length between 16 mm and 30 mm.

The rivets are usually copper alloy, as is the case at Acton Court, although iron rivets have occasionally been found (Oakley and Webster 1979, 263). There is normally only one rivet, running through a transverse hole in the tag. However, there are sometimes two parallel rivets, one directly below the other. The lace tags from Acton Court include six examples of this form (Fig 9.64.3), four of which still contain copper alloy rivets. There are 47 examples of transverse-riveted tags, 32 of which contain copper alloy rivets. There is one possible example of a single rivet, with only one rivet hole on one side of the tag.

Type 2 tags, of which there are 123 (?+4), are generally longer and thicker, the length range of complete tags at Acton Court varying from 22 mm to 40 mm. A sheet piece of metal is folded over at each end to grasp the lace (Fig 9.64.7-11). They are rarely riveted (Bayley *et al* 1985, 47). No examples of riveted Type 2 tags were identified at Acton Court.

Thirteen examples of decorated lace tags were recovered. Of the Type 1 tags, four possessed a transverse groove decoration (Fig 9.64.2), which Bayley (Bayley *et al* 1985, 47) suggests may have been caused by the use of ridged pliers. Of the Type 2 tags, one was decorated with two incised lines both at its top and its bottom (Fig 9.64.9), while three had a lattice decoration (Fig 9.64.10).

Many of the tags were found to contain remains of the lace, either textile or leather. Analysis of the textile remains was carried out by Elisabeth Crowfoot, while Glynis Edwards analysed the rest of the organic material. Textile remains were identified in sixteen of the Type 1 tags, and a further eleven contained leather. Twenty-seven other tags also contained organic material. In the majority of cases it was thought to be leather. Of the 85 Type 2 tags possessing organic material, 27 contained textile remains, while 10 contained leather. It has been suggested that the typological differences between Types 1 and 2 reflect a difference in the type of lace which was used, and that Type 1 tags were bound around a leather thong or rolled braid, whereas Type 2 tags were associated with a flat ribbon-like lace (Bayley *et al* 1985, 47).

Several tags have a very shiny black patina. Three of these were examined by Michael Heyworth, using energy-dispersive X-ray fluorescence analysis. Two proved to be brass (copper-zinc alloy) with a minor trace of lead, while the third was just brass. No trace of a coating was found on any of them. A further two tags which did not exhibit the black patina were also analysed, and both were shown to be brass with a minor trace of lead.

Only six of the Type 2 tags are from contexts predating the late 16th century, and four of these could be intrusive, since they were from the fill of Room H immediately beneath the sub-floor deposit in Room 30 (136). The earliest stratified lace tag, belonging to Type 1, came from a late 13th- to early 14th-century layer (Period 3.2-3.3 (1802)). The evidence from Acton Court tends to support the conclusions from else-

**Table 56: Lace tag quantification**

Period	Type 1	Type 2	?	Totals
3	4	2	-	6
4.1-4.3	38	4	1	43
4.4-4.5	8	-	1	9
4.5-4.6 (136)	23	78	5	106
4.6-5.1	21	28	2	51
5.2-5.4	7	13	1	21
U/S	1	2	-	3
Totals	102	127	10	239

where, eg Northampton (Oakley and Webster 1979, 263) and Moulsham Street, Chelmsford (Bayley *et al* 1985, 47), that the Type 1 tags were most popular during the 15th and 16th centuries. From the late 16th century onwards, there is a reduction in the number of Type 1 tags found at Acton Court, and the Type 2 tags become predominant. Context 136, dated late 16th to mid-17th century, contained 106 lace tags, (44 per cent of the total number from the entire site), of which 78 belonged to Type 2 and only 23 were of Type 1.

### Illustrated copper alloy lace tags

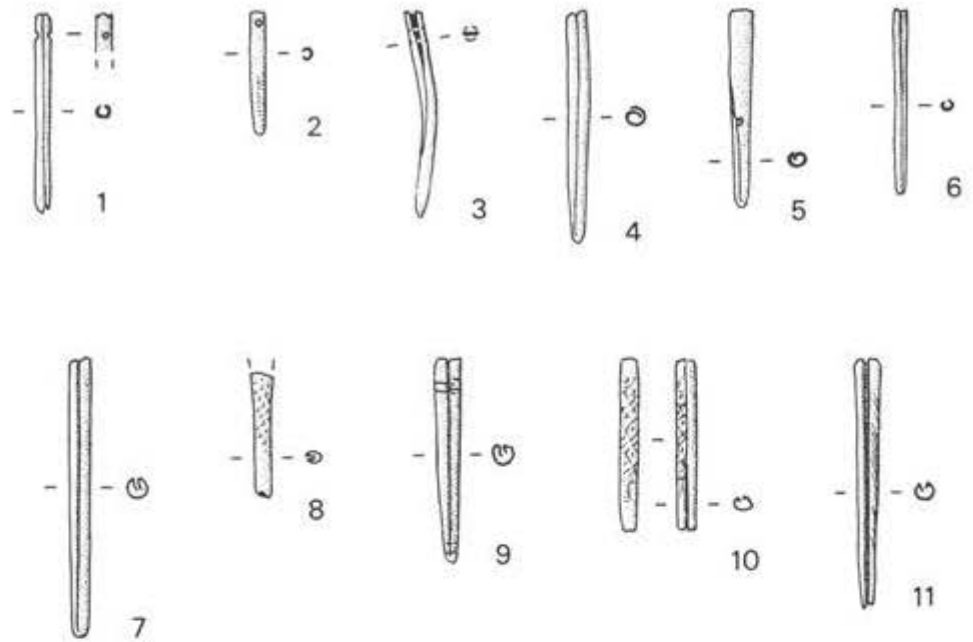
Fig 9.64

#### Type 1

- 1 Virtually complete. 27 mm long. Butt-jointed; beginning of folding of tip end. Transverse rivet-hole; no rivet remains. Period 4.1-4.3 (533), dump layer, Area 2.
- 2 Complete. 16.5 mm long. Butt-jointed. End rounded at tip. Remains of very small grooves running widthways across tag. Transverse copper alloy rivet still in place. Period 4.1-4.3 (539), dump layer, Area 2.
- 3 Complete. 30 mm long. Slightly bent. Rounded end. Parallel rivet-holes with two copper alloy rivets still in place. Period 4.2 (281), fill of Room H, Area 1.
- 4 Probably complete. 32 mm long. Overlapping joint. No rivet. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.
- 5 Complete. Formed from two joined fragments. 27 mm long. Rounded end. Overlapping joint. Transverse copper alloy rivet still in place. Period 4.6 (1014), levelling layer above infilled south arm of moat, Area 1.



Figure 9.64 Lace tags, scale 1:1.



6 Virtually complete. 25 mm long. Very thin. Butt-jointed. Period 4.3 (2215), fill of east arm of moat, Area 6.

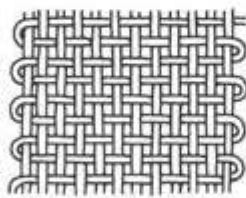
Type 2

7 Complete. 37 mm long. Rounded end. Period 5.1 (184), demolition in Room 29, Area 1.  
 8 Incomplete. 17 mm long. Decorated with circular

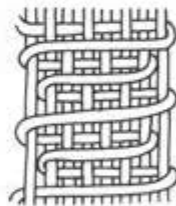
indentations. Pattern does not continue to the end of the tag. Period 4.5-4.6 (136).

9 Complete. 27 mm long. Decorated with two incised grooves at top, and two at bottom. Period 4.5-4.6 (136).  
 10 Incomplete. 23 mm long. Decorated with criss-cross lattice, in which there are circular spots. Decoration does not continue to the end of the tag. Period 4.2

Figure 9.65 Lace techniques.



a



b



bb



c



d



e



f



g

(281), fill of Room H, Area 1 (possibly intrusive from Period 4.5–4.6 (136)).

- 11 Incomplete. 33.5 mm long. Fractured at top. Incised grooves at regular intervals – ?possible decoration. Period 5.2–5.3 (2089), dump near north-west corner of east court, Area 7.

## Textiles in lace ends

by *Elisabeth Crowfoot*

The lace-tags, very small but durable objects, are found on many occupation sites from the 14th to 17th centuries. The tags from Period 5.2–5.4 contexts are almost certainly residual. The remains of tapes preserved in the tags are often difficult to identify as in many cases only the broken thread ends can be seen, but they all probably fall into well-known categories, which have survived on other sites outside tags. Most of them, possibly seventeen examples, appear to be round cords, probably similar to those often made with a lucet (Fig 9.65f). But the curling round of the braid caused by the metal being twisted makes it difficult to be certain whether the braids were originally round or flat types; ten were probably flat plaits (Fig 9.65c, d), though the use of plyed and unplyed threads complicate the counting of the ends. Five are probably flat tabby tapes (Fig 9.65a) and two are possibly round tabby constructions (Fig 9.65b, bb); these were perhaps made with two-hole tablets, an easy and quick method if a very fine tape is required; one possible example in a residual, 19th-century context seems to show the paired threads at one place which appear in circular cords made in this technique.

Fibre is only occasionally well enough preserved to be identifiable. The laces from Acton Court are of a better class than most collections from urban sites. There are four examples of silk in tags as well as in the core of metal threads, compared with two vegetable cords, one of which is certainly flax (identifications by H M Appleyard, FTI). Two examples were probably wool. Analysis by Penelope Walton (Textile Research Unit, York) showed no traces of dye.

Laces have been identified in tags from other sites, particularly those of the 15th to 16th centuries. At Grove Priory, Bedfordshire, the remains again suggest flat plaits, tabby tapes, and circular cords (A M Lab

Report no 13/90), while a tightly rolled diagonal silk plait came from Chelmsford (Walton 1985, 47, 57). 'Plain tabby' was found at Exeter (A R Goodall 1984, 339, M126) and two 4-plaits, one of which was flax, came from burials at St Margaret *in combusto*, Norwich (Crowfoot, forthcoming). The earlier examples of these tags are purely practical, and were used, for example, for holding the hose to the paltock. The more decorative ones, made of copper alloy or silver, and dating to the 15th to 16th centuries, are intended to be visible, serving as fastening details of sleeves, bodices and doublets. They can be seen in portraits, particularly those of Holbein. Long aiglets are also preserved on silk ribbons fastening trunk-hose to fashionable doublets of the late 16th to early 17th century (Arnold 1985, pls 84 and 90; fig 23A).

## Illustrated lace techniques, possibly present in lace tags:

Fig 9.65

- a Tabby-weave tape (on twelve warps)
- b Tabby cord. Circular, ?on tablets. Flattened out.
- bb Same as b, but weft pulled tight to make the cord.
- c Flat plait. 5-thread.
- d Flat plait. 8-thread.
- e Cord. 4-thread plait.
- f Lucet cord.
- g Plait. 9-thread.

## The leather

by *Quita Mould*

Fourteen items of leather were examined from the excavations, all deriving from waterlogged deposits within 0.3 m of the bottom of the infilled moat. The moat appears to have been cleaned out regularly and the assemblage of finds from it, dating from the mid-1530s to the mid-1550s (though probably no later than c 1550 in the case of the primary west arm) represents domestic rubbish discarded shortly before it was filled in. The leather finds support this interpretation.

## The shoes

Six shoe parts of welted construction were recovered, those sufficiently complete to be diagnostic comprising a matching sole and

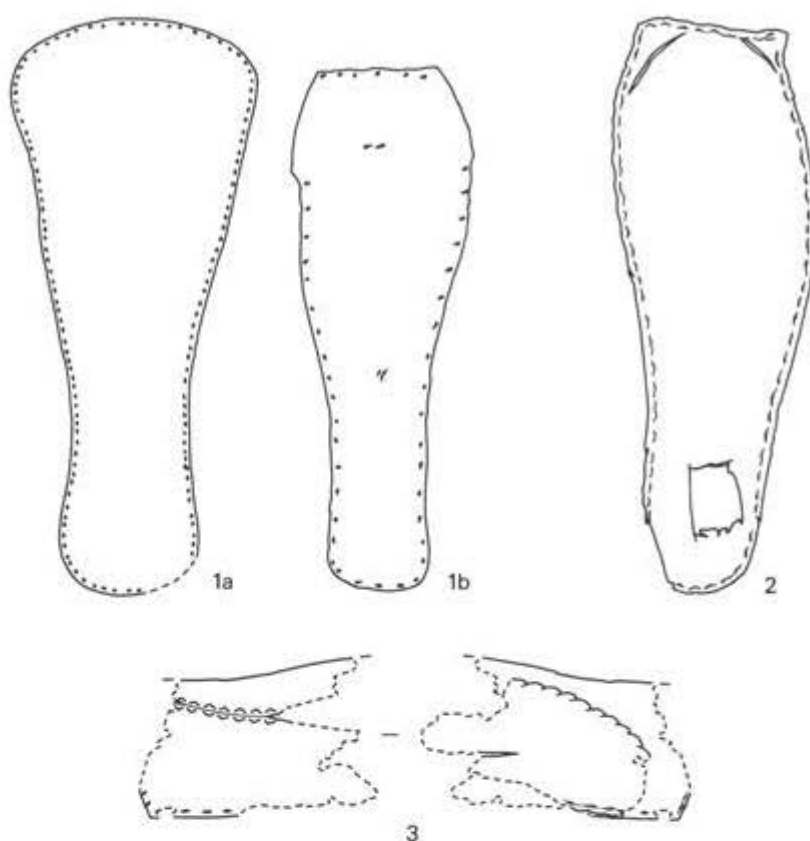


Figure 9.66 (above)  
Leather shoes, scale 1:3.

insole (Fig 9.66.1a-b) and a separate insole (Fig 9.66.2). The bottom unit (Fig 9.66.1) has a broad round-toed sole, made straight, and a square-toed insole. The seam of the insole has been deliberately cut away on either side of the toe, suggesting that its upper may have had an 'eared' or 'horned' toe originally. This insole is unusual in that a closed grain/flesh seam rather than an edge/flesh seam has been used to attach the upper and welt, and it may be that the insole is a replacement. The other complete insole found (Fig 9.66.2) has curved slits at either side of its square toe, also suggesting that its upper was 'horned' or 'eared'. For a complete shoe of this style, see the example from Hall Place, St Neots (Thornton 1972, 95-6, fig 43). These shoe components are of a style dating to the reign of Henry VIII, the 'horned' or 'eared' toed shoe which they both may represent being at the height of its popularity in the 1530s (Swann 1973, 22).

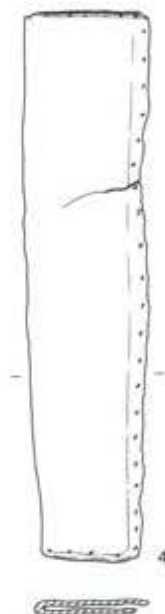
A fragment of calfskin quarters with part of its heel stiffener remaining (Fig 9.66.3) came from the bottom of the original west arm of the moat, in a context sealed c 1550). The quarters have a line of tunnel stitching on the exterior, running below the low cut top edge, and serving to prevent stretching and splitting as well as being decorative.

Figure 9.67 (right)  
Leather scabbard,  
scale 1:4.

Similar stitching is common on the shoes recovered from the Mary Rose, sunk in 1545 (June Swann, pers comm), and has recently been found on two pairs of calfskin quarters from Jennings' Yard, Windsor (Mould 1993, SF 15.7 and 19.1), dated to the mid- to late 16th century by comparison with shoes of similar style found in Holland. However, it is more frequently found on shoes of 17th- to 18th-century date.

### Waste (not illustrated)

Four pieces of secondary waste, produced during the cutting and trimming of shoe components during manufacture, were found at the bottom of the north arm of the moat (Period 4.3 (935), Area 8). Secondary waste indicates shoemaking in the vicinity but the quantity found is too small to be of significance.



### Scabbard

A scabbard of cattlehide (Fig 9.67.4) was found near the bottom of the east arm of the moat in a deposit sealed in the mid-1550s. The scabbard has a crude grain-flesh seam down the side and across its straight end. An edge-flesh seam runs along its top edge to attach a further section, so its original length is unknown.

### Illustrated items

Fig 9.66

1a Sole. Period 4.2 (1064), bottom of primary west arm of moat, Area 1.

- 1b Insole. Period 4.2 (1064), bottom of primary west arm of moat, Area 1.  
 2 Insole. Period 4.2–4.3 (2026), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.  
 3 Quarters and heel stiffener. Period 4.2 (1291), bottom primary west arm of moat, Area 1.

Fig 9.67

- 4 Scabbard. Period 4.2–4.3 (2026), bottom of east arm of moat, Area 6.

## The longbows

by Jon Humble

Two wooden staves (Fig 9.68) were recovered in close juxtaposition from a waterlogged deposit at the bottom of the south arm of the moat between the arms of the porch (Period 4.2–4.3, context 1993). The bows were probably discarded after the mid-1530s, when this part of the moat appears to have been cleaned out, but certainly no later than the mid-1550s, when it was filled in.

Upon criteria of the approximately symmetrical taper of stave profiles, the consistency of cross-sections, length, evidence of tooling, and characteristics of the wood, the staves have been identified as bows designed for use by a child archer. The slightly ogival cross-section and relative dimensions of no 1, in particular, are closely comparable to many of the full-sized Tudor longbows intended for war use which were retrieved from the Mary Rose (Paterson 1983, 50). Apart from the staves from the Mary Rose, the two bows from Acton Court are the only surviving English longbows with a confirmed Tudor date, and they are the earliest child-sized examples known to the author from Britain or from the continent of Europe.

The only other evidence of archery practice found during the excavations at Acton Court was an iron arrowhead (Fig 9.41.83). This was recovered from the bottom of the east arm of the moat (Period 4.2–4.3, context 2027), and was probably contemporary with the bows, though unrelated to them.

### Description

The bows are almost complete, but have suffered a degree of mechanical damage during post-deposition, most noticeably at the more delicate ends of the limbs. Irregular indentations are apparent on the surfaces, presumably resulting from direct

contact with small stones in the ground. Upon recovery, both bows were in a waterlogged, spongy and very fragile state. The wood identification was carried out by Rowena Gale using macro- and microscopic techniques of examination. All measurements were taken prior to conservation.

Fig 9.68

- 1 Probably *Taxus* sp yew. Length 1021 mm. Ogival rounded/elliptical cross-section. Point of balance offset *c* 15 mm from mid-point. The stave tapers fairly evenly from a maximum section of 17 mm by 16 mm at the position of the grip to *c* 11 mm by 10 mm at a distance of 50 mm from each tip. Despite the degraded condition of the wood, the back of the bow in particular bears bold longitudinal facets as a result of having been tooled with a knife. A thin layer of paler coloured wood tissue which may represent sapwood is apparent on the back of the bow. Both tips are damaged, yet the lower tip shows clear evidence of coning suggesting the use of horn nocks. The upper tip has similar, yet less well-preserved evidence of coning.  
 2 *Taxus* sp yew. Length 964 mm. D-shaped cross-section. Point of balance offset *c* 25 mm from mid-point. The stave has been skilfully crafted to reduce the maximum section of 18 mm by 14 mm at the grip to *c* 12 mm by 9 mm at a distance of 30 mm from each tip. Fewer knife facets are apparent than on no 1, perhaps indicative of a more refined finish to the bow. The upper tip is well preserved and provides the best example of shaping to a cone. The lower tip is damaged.

The lack of curvature of the annual growth rings of the wood indicates that the bows were not made from young stem material, but it is not possible to determine from which part of the tree the wood was taken. Similarly there is no evidence in the structure of the wood as to its maturity or whether the staves were seasoned before use. In line with good practice, however, the bowyer in the cutting and shaping of the staves has carefully respected the lie of the grain, and knots have been deliberately left

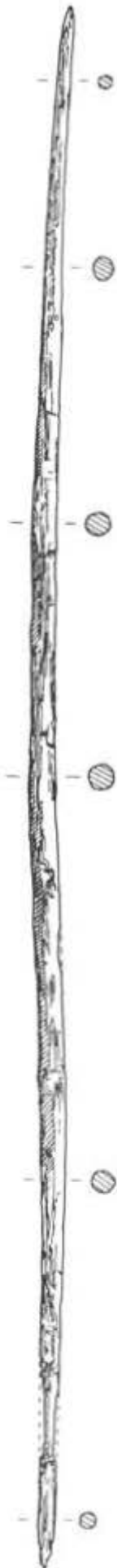




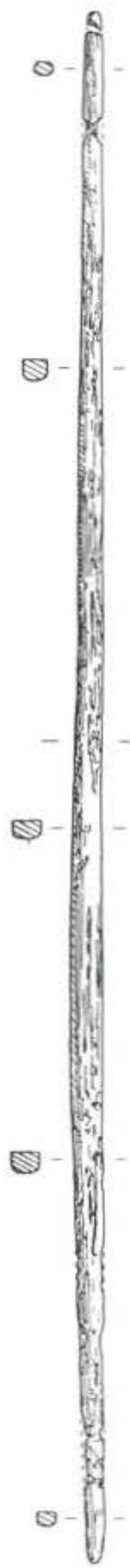
Belly



Profile



Back



Back



Profile



Belly

proud to avoid weak spots. In 1545 Ascham wrote 'Every bow is made of a bough, of a plant, or of a bole of the tree. The bough is Knotty ... weak ... and will soon follow the string; yet for children and beginners it may serve well enough' (Ascham 1545; Hodgkinson 1985, 108).

Although the differences are slight, the limbs assigned as the lower limb of both bows are the slightly more robust, a feature consistent with the demands of an even curvature to the drawn bow with a slightly off-set grip, and hence shorter and stronger lower limb, to allow for the passage of the arrow through the centre of the arc. This interpretation is in accord with modern bowery practice. The English translation (Walrond 1903) of the modern French translation (Gallice 1901) of the medieval text *L'Art d'Archerie*, written c 1498, however, in contradiction states that 'every bow should be stronger in the upper limb than in the lower' as a stronger lower limb causes the arrow to jump and shoot high and further' (Walrond 1903, 267).

Neither bow bears any traces of either tillering or stringing nocks, evidence of a leather or textile grip, or traces of damage caused by the arrow-pass. Although a light bow may be successfully strung without either horn or self-nocks, the careful coning of the tips is entirely in keeping with the use of notched horn finials to accommodate the bow-string. Their absence may be explained by their removal prior to discard with the intention of reuse. The curve set into the profiles of both bows suggests that the bows had been shot and may have been inclined to 'follow the string' (Ascham 1545; Hodgkinson 1985, 108), unless the staves were poorly seasoned and the bend is solely attributable to the tillering of the bows. A loss of elasticity and power in the drawn bow through a following of the string may have been the motive for discard. This feature, however, is not pronounced and the effects of distortion during burial should be considered.

### Performance characteristics

The clear difference in the cross-section of the two bows is of note, and although this may reflect the design preferences of two different bowyers, equally it may indicate that the bows were intended for different styles of archery. *L'art d'archerie* (Gallice 1901; Walrond 1903, 267) states that bows of square section (eg no. 2) were best for

butt shooting, and bows of round section (eg no. 1) were more effective for target and flight shooting. This distinction, however, is not mentioned in *Toxophilus* (Ascham 1545).

The draw weight of a bow of given length and cross-section is directly related to the chosen brace height (traditionally the 'fist-mele' for a longbow – the width of a fist plus outstretched thumb), the chosen draw-length (in turn related to the arrow-length and stature of the archer), and not least the performance characteristics of the wooden stave under conditions of tension and compression. Dependent in particular on the characteristics of the stave, it is estimated that no. 1 would have had a draw weight of 16–23 pounds, and no. 2 of between 12 and 19 pounds. Replication of the bows would usefully confirm or prompt revision of these estimates. Sexmodus is quoted in *L'art d'archerie* as having determined bow length 'should be that of two arrows and two small fists' (Gallice 1901; Walrond 1903, 268). Using this equation, and 80 mm as the width of a fist (measured fist of an eight-year-old boy 1.3 m in height), suitable arrow lengths of 431 mm and 403 mm can be postulated. The length of the bows and their inferred performance characteristics are consistent with designs appropriate for a young archer, most probably a boy of between seven and ten years of age.

The owner(s) of the bows cannot of course be identified, though it is worth noting that when Sir Nicholas Poyntz died in 1556, he left six sons, five of whom were still minors. One or more of these boys could conceivably have used the bows. Another possibility is that the bows were used for indoor archery by adults. This activity might have taken place either in the first-floor gallery linking the east range and Room G/32, or even in the long gallery in the north range, though the latter was built only slightly earlier than the latest date at which the bows could have been discarded.

### Historical context

In consideration of the date and size of the bows, it is especially pertinent to note the well-known (and never repealed) Royal Statute issued in 1541:

... every Man having a Man-child or Men-children in his house shall provide, ordain and have in his house for every Man-child being of the Age of seven

Figure 9.68 (facing page)  
Longbows, 1 (left),  
2 (right): see p405  
(drawing:  
English Heritage)

Years and above, till he shall come to the Age of seventeen Years, a Bow and two Shafts to induce and learn them, and bring them up in Shooting, and shall deliver all the same Bow and Arrows to the same Young Men to use and occupy ...

Henry VIII, who stayed at Acton Court in 1535, was a staunch advocate of the longbow, and its continued practice was deemed as important for continued national security. Nevertheless, this and other Statutes which demanded the practice of the longbow were widely ignored by the populace (Hodkinson 1985, 36), despite the threat of fines for non-compliance. At this time the longbow as a weapon was in direct competition with the crossbow, and had been superseded by the musket, caliver and canon (Hardy 1986, 132) on the battlefield. During the reign of Henry VIII the handgun became firmly established as the primary weapon of the English soldier (Credland 1989, 9), and the last major engagement on British soil in which longbows were drawn took place at Pinkie Cleugh in 1547 (Patten 1548). It is worth noting that firearms had already made their appearance at Acton Court by the time the bows were discarded, since five lead shot, suitable for use in a pistol, were found in precisely the same context as the bows (see above).

Regrettably Ascham's treatise *Toxophilus, The Schole of Shootinge* (1545), by far the most comprehensive and contemporary account of archery, does not specifically discuss children's bows or methods of shooting, yet there are no obvious reasons why these should have differed significantly if at all from adult practice. Direct evidence that juveniles practised archery in the 1530s

does come from the Nottingham Coroner's Inquest 1534, 'On the 10th June, 1534 Thomas RICHE ... ran between some small targets at Newark, where Francis SPAYNING, aged over eight years was shooting arrows with other boys for recreation.'

Two portraits of 1590 and 1627 depict young boys (of unknown age and five years respectively), each standing proudly with a bow and a single arrow (Credland 1989, pls 1, 2). In both instances the bows are furnished with horn nocks, but the ratios of bow lengths to the heights of the boys are far from consistent and no conclusions can be drawn.

Recent research into the records of the Craft Guild of Bowyers and Fletchers of Bristol has demonstrated that five Master bowyers were working with apprentices in the city during the 1530s and 1540s (Soar 1989, 32-3). It is possible that the Acton Court bows are the products of one of these workshops.

## The vertebrate remains

by Bruce Levitan and Robert Bell

A sample of 2396 bones from the excavated assemblage was identified and analysed by Bruce Levitan. This is a summary of the archive report.

The material from Periods 2 and 3 was excluded from the analysis because there were fewer than one thousand identifiable fragments. Most of the material from Period 5.1 or later contexts was also excluded. The sample was divided into ten groups:

Group 1 contained redeposited material, mostly datable to the early 16th century. Group 2, judging by the associated pottery, was essentially part of the same underlying

Table 57 Quantification of vertebrate remains

Group	Period	Description	Bone total
1	4.1-4.3	Area 2; dump layers	861 (36%)
2	4.4-4.6	Area 2; later layers	91 (4%)
3	4.2	Area 1; infill of room H	184 (8%)
4	4.2-4.3	Area 1; infill of south moat within and east of porch	410 (17%)
5	4.2-4.3	Area 6; infill of east moat	348 (15%)
6	4.3-4.5	Area 1; infill of south moat between porch and oriel	134 (6%)
7	4.3-4.5	Area 8; infill of north moat	121 (5%)
8	4.6-5.1a	Area 1; demolition material above west part of former south moat	141 (6%)
9	4.6-5.1a	Area 1; demolition material above former south moat between sites of porch and oriel	63 (3%)
10	4.6-5.1a	Area 1; infill of south porch garderobe 1003	43 (2%)



deposit. Groups 3–5 were mid-16th century, and Groups 6–7 were mid- to late 16th century. Groups 1–7 contained 2149 bones (84 per cent of the total). The remaining 16 per cent (247 bones) were in Groups 8–10, dated late 17th to very early 18th century.

### Quantification of the taxa

The small size of the sample must be stressed and the results must be interpreted with great caution, particularly when comparing Groups 1–7 with Groups 8–10.

#### Mammals

Overall the predominant mammal taxa were cattle (49 per cent of the identifiable mammal bones), sheep/goat – almost certainly sheep (26 per cent) and pig (10 per cent). Cattle bones comprised 50 per cent of the mammal bones in Groups 1–7. Four groups (Groups 1, 2, 5 and 6) contained over 50 per cent, and two further groups (Groups 4 and 7) contained over 40 per cent. In Groups 7–9 cattle bones formed only 32 per cent of the mammal bones, though two groups (Groups 9 and 10) contained more than 40 per cent. Sheep bones formed 15–25 per cent of the total in Groups 1, 5, 8 and 9, while they represented 35–40 per cent in Groups 3 and 7. Pig bones formed only 8 per cent of the total in Groups 1–7 (12 per cent or less in all groups) whereas in Groups 8–10 they comprised 35 per cent of the total.

Other domesticated mammals are rare, forming only 3 per cent of the overall total of mammal bones. Of particular interest however is the relatively high proportion of deer bones (9 per cent overall; 9 per cent in Groups 1–7 and 7 per cent in Groups 8–10). There were almost as many deer bones as pig bones in the analysed sample. Finally, rabbit bones were also present, forming 4 per cent of the total from all groups.

#### Birds and fish

Birds (5 per cent of the total) and fish (1 per cent) are poorly represented. More might have been recovered if a sieving strategy had been carried out, although it should be noted that Vanessa Straker sieved soil samples from the bases of the east moat and of the west moat beneath the Tudor west range and found virtually no animal, bird and fish bones. Garderobe 1003 could potentially have been more productive but like the other garderobes it was almost entirely filled

with demolition rubble rather than accumulated cess. Among the 122 bird bones which were retrieved, domestic fowl predominated (72 per cent). Goose (probably domestic) formed 10 per cent, and duck 5 per cent. Non-domestic species possibly exploited as a food source were pheasant (Group 7), woodcock (Groups 3 and 8) and pigeon (Groups 3, 4 and 10). There was also evidence of scavenging birds: herring gull (Group 4), starling (Group 3) and jackdaw (Groups 3 and 4). The presence of sporting birds in the late 15th/early 16th century is testified by the single bone of a peregrine in Group 1. The bones of only three fish species were recovered. All were sea fish: bass (from Groups 1 and 5), cod (from Group 4) and conger eel (from Group 6). No freshwater fish bones were recovered, but this is presumably due to lack of retrieval rather than absence from the site.

#### Unidentified material

The unidentified portion of the analysed material amounted to 52 per cent. This is not high for an archaeological assemblage, and figures over 60 per cent would not be unusual. Seven of the groups (Groups 1–5, 7 and 10) were within the 46–56 per cent range, suggesting that fragmentation was fairly consistent across the site.

#### Cattle

All major bones from the skeleton are found in the assemblage, suggesting that whole carcasses were present at Acton Court rather than just dressed carcasses which had been brought in from outside. The cattle bones are a mixed group but they appear to represent mainly butchery waste rather than domestic waste. All processes of butchery and preparation are represented, indicating that the animals were being slaughtered on the site, but the types of waste deposit vary between groups. Groups 1–2 contain a mixture of waste from primary butchery processes (mandibles and metatarsals) and secondary butchery (scapulae and elbow joints). Neither process appears to be dominant. In Group 4, late-stage butchery waste is predominant. Upper limb bones dominate and limb extremities, mandibles and skulls are rare. By contrast Group 5 seems to consist mainly of primary butchery waste. Group 6 is more akin to Group 4 and while elements of primary butchery are present, this is more of a late-stage butchery deposit and there is a high frequency of pelvis and upper limb bones.



Although not many vertebrae show direct evidence of butchery, the majority appear to have been split axially, suggesting that the carcass was cut along the midline at an initial stage in the butchery process. Analysis indicates concentrations of butchery on the scapula collum (neck), distal humerus/proximal radius and ulna (above and below the elbow), at the femur/pelvis (hip) articulation and on the tibia and metatarsal.

Analysis of epiphysial fusion shows that cattle were rarely slaughtered in infancy (ie for veal), though there is some evidence for slaughter as juveniles. It is clear that most survived into adulthood. Some variation between the groups is apparent. Groups 1 and 5 indicate a concentration on juveniles and older adults, with no infants at all, whereas Groups 4 and 7 have small but significant percentages of infants and fewer older adults. Analysis of mandibles for tooth wear using the Grant method (Grant 1982) tends to support this evidence, indicating that mainly sub-adult and older animals were being slaughtered, though a small proportion in Groups 4 and 5 were slaughtered as infants.

#### Sheep/goat

As with the cattle bones, differential recovery has influenced the representation of body parts, hence the rarity of phalanges, carpals and tarsals (small bones) and of skulls and femora (highly fragmented and difficult to identify). However, radiae and tibiae, especially mid-shaft/distal parts of the bones) are major elements, suggestive of late-stage butchery waste. In Groups 1–2 the bones, like the cattle bones, are a mixed assemblage. Late-stage butchery waste (mandibles, distal tibiae, distal radii) is mixed with domestic waste (upper limbs and girdles). Limb extremities and lower limbs are rare. In Group 4, radii and tibiae are also well represented, but unlike Groups 1–2, mandibles are infrequent, whereas femora are relatively common. Like the cattle bones this seems to be more of a domestic waste deposit. Group 5 contains similar material to Group 4, again suggesting kitchen waste, though this is in contrast to the cattle bones from the same group. The epiphysial and mandible evidence points to the slaughter of sheep as adults, though few of them survived well into adulthood.

Most of an articulated sheep skeleton was recovered from Area 2. It was 5.5 m east of the west wall of the south court, and

since there was no trace of any grave cut through the layers above it, it was presumably deposited at the same time as the other dump layers. The seventy-two bones were not included in the Group 1–2 totals because it would have seriously biased the sample. It was the skeleton of a polled (hornless) adult female. The right mandible provided a wear stage value of 45 and all the teeth had suffered from periodontal infection. There was no evidence of butchery or of any disease apart from the tooth infection (fairly common in sheep). All epiphyses were fused, including all those of the vertebrae. The bones were very badly preserved, and flaking and collapse of some of the long bone shafts prevented the measurement of many of the bones.

#### Pig

The sample of pig bones is much smaller than that of the other major taxa and much less can be said about them. However, mandibles dominate the sample and other frequently represented bones are scapulae, elbow joints and tibiae. The overall site pattern provides a picture of a mixed deposit though the domestic waste element appears to be predominant. The overall impression gained from the mandible evidence, supported by the evidence of epiphysial fusion, is that pigs were slaughtered young, particularly as juveniles (stages 20–9).

#### Other taxa

The samples of horse, dog and cat bones are too small to comment on. However, the deer bone assemblage deserves a mention since it provides further evidence of the high status of the house in the 16th century. Proportions of deer bones above 2–3 per cent are often associated with medieval and Tudor high status sites. For example, Middleton Stoney, Oxfordshire had significant numbers of red deer bones (and also some roe deer) in the early medieval period (Levitan 1984, 118, 120). Deer also formed a major part of the assemblages from Okehampton Castle, Devon (Maltby 1982). At Acton Court the proportion of deer bones to other identifiable mammal bones is 9 per cent. It is also interesting given Leland's description of the house *c* 1540, in which he mentioned two deer parks, one for red deer, the other for fallow deer (Chapter 2, Appendix A). The bone evidence indicates that red deer bones were infrequent while roe and fallow deer bones were equally common (though fallow deer would have provided

more meat *per capita*). Roe deer appear in seven of the ten groups, while fallow deer feature in eight groups. Red deer is much less frequent but is still present in five of the ten groups. A common factor is the higher frequency of all three species in Periods 4.1–4.5, though occasional bones of each species still appear in Periods 4.6–5.1.

Another common feature of high status sites is the exploitation of lagomorphs. Acton Court is a little unusual in that rabbit appears to be favoured in preference to hare. A warren was certainly maintained in the medieval period (the field to the north of the house is still called the Conygre), and may have been reinstated when the north garden was abandoned in the 17th century. Rabbit bones appear in all the groups apart from Groups 2 and 10, and are particularly prevalent in Group 3 (eighteen bones, 29 per cent of the identifiable mammal assemblage).

The most interesting of the bird bones is undoubtedly the single peregrine bone in Group 1. Falconry was a popular sport of the gentry and many establishments would have maintained some sporting birds. The fish bone sample is also of some interest because it supports the documentary evidence for the consumption of sea fish on inland sites (Bond 1984), although of course it should be remembered that Acton Court is only 12 km from the Bristol Channel.

## Conclusion

Although small, the assemblage from Acton Court has provided a useful group for study. The high status of the site is confirmed by the presence of deer and also by the importance of beef, particularly in the 16th century. For the later period, there are more pig than cattle bones, though Groups 8–10 are so small that it is difficult to know whether this is of any significance. The deposits examined were mostly those where the rubbish from primary and late-stage butchery was disposed, though the types of deposit tended to vary between groups.

## Plant and animal macrofossils from Period 4.2–4.3 contexts in the moat

by Eric Robinson and Vanessa Straker

Two contexts were sampled from the basal layers of the moat. These layers are very

Table 58: Macrofossils present in samples from the moat

	1064	2027
animal and bird bone	–	o
molluscs (mostly aquatic)	–	m
fly puparia (occasional)	–	o
beetles and other arthropods	o	m
cladoceran (water flea) ephyppia	–	f
ostracods	o	f
moss	m	m
buds	–	o
seeds/fruits	m	m

Key: o = occasional; m = moderate; f = frequent

precisely dated. Context 1064 was in the primary west arm of the moat, and was sealed in Period 4.2 (*c.* 1550) by infill beneath Room 30, at the north end of the west range. Context 2027 accumulated at the bottom of the east arm of the moat, which was filled in *c.* 1555.

Ten-litre samples were assessed by processing as follows. The float was collected on a 250 micron mesh and the residue on several meshes, the minimum of which was 500 microns. The sediments were wet, and as a result preservation of plant and animal macrofossils was good. All the residues were completely sorted to extract the macrofossils. A small proportion of the float (*c.* 5 per cent) was sorted as it contained mostly large numbers of seeds of the same few plant taxa (Table 58).

As time and resources were limited, only the seeds and ostracods were examined and form the subject of this report. Seeds were studied from the whole of each sample and ostracods from a 500gm (*c.* 350 ml) subsample from context 2027.

## Ostracods

The fauna is listed below:

- 11 *Cyclocypris laevis* (O F Muller) 3v A-I, 7v 7c
- 14 *Limnocythere inopinata* (Baird) 2v
- 17–18 *Cypria ophthalmica* (Jurine) 4v A-II, 4v A-I, 24v, 25c
- 22–4 *Candona candida* (O F Muller) 2v A-I, 17v 10c
- 25–9 *Candona neglecta* Sars 14v 20c A-IV, 6v AIII, 10v AII, 6v A-I, 12v 6c (male and female)

The fauna is made up of five different species, about average for a small pond.

*Candona neglecta* (40 per cent), a bottom burrower or crawler almost balances with *Cypria ophthalmica* (31 per cent), which is an actively free-swimming species. *Cyclo-cypris laevis* (15 per cent) is another free swimmer. *Limnocythere inopinata* (2 per cent), although a minor element in the total fauna, nevertheless is a sure indication of a still-water environment; it is the usual indicator of lake conditions. On balance, the ostracods suggest that the moat was more of an open water pond than a weed-choked overgrown morass. There is a general absence of weed-climbing species such as *Herpetocypris* which often occurs in reed beds.

There is a higher than usual ratio of carapaces (*c*) to single valves (*v*) in the fauna. As valves separate easily after death with just the slightest current or water movement, this number of still-joined valves is a further testimony for quiet water conditions.

#### Plant macrofossils (excluding moss)

These are listed in detail in Table 59 and are classified according to Clapham *et al* (1988). In the following section the taxa have been separated into various ecological groups for the purpose of discussion. However, these are based on the present-day understanding of the ecology of the plants which may have changed somewhat over the last few hundred years. Also, some plants which can grow in a range of habitats appear in more than one group.

Key: C – cultivated; \* – taxa occurring in more than one ecological group.

#### Edible plants

*Brassica nigra* (black mustard) ?C  
*Corylus avellana* (hazel)  
*Ficus carica* (fig) C  
*Foeniculum vulgare* (fennel) C  
*Fragaria vesca* (strawberry) ?C  
*Malus sylvestris/domestica* (crab/cultivated apple)  
*Prunus domestica* ssp *insititia* (bullace)  
*Prunus spinosa* (sloe)  
*Rubus fruticosus* (blackberry)  
*Rubus idaeus* (raspberry)  
 cf *Tanacetum parthenicum* (feverfew) ?C  
*Triticum* sp (wheat) C  
*Triticum* cf *aestivum* (breadwheat) C  
*Vitis vinifera* (vine) C

The list of edible plants from Acton Court is surprisingly small and includes taxa which

have been identified in many medieval contexts (Greig 1988), including the 15th-century barrel latrine at Worcester and the moat at Cowick (Greig 1981; 1986). The fruit and nuts at Acton Court include fig, grape, apple, sloe, bullace, strawberry, blackberry and raspberry, and hazel. The fig was probably imported. Grapes were home-produced at the time, but were also imported and it is not possible to tell from the seeds which is represented. Most of the fruits could have been collected from hedgerows or woodland edges. Sloe, bullace, raspberry, blackberry and hazel would have been easy to obtain. Strawberries could have been collected wild from woodland or, at this period, been deliberately cultivated. Likewise the apple could have been an orchard crop or collected from hedgerows or woodland. Greig (1981) draws attention to the fact that only the sour damson and sloe were found in the Worcester barrel latrine although by this time cultivated forms of plum were available. The same can be said for Acton Court. By 1912, bullace was rare in the Bristol area (White 1972). The only spices present were fennel and black mustard. Fennel is commonly found in sites of medieval and later date and was probably cultivated for its seeds although its fleshy stems can also be eaten. As well as its use as a food flavouring, it also had medicinal properties (Greig 1981, 280). Black mustard seeds could have been used to flavour food or for the extraction of oil. White (1972, 152) noted that black mustard is found on river banks and borders of cultivated fields in the Bristol area and so it is possible in the present situation that the plant was not used as a spice at all.

Feverfew has been tentatively identified. It has several close relatives with which confusion is possible. Nevertheless this is a common garden herb and disturbed ground plant today and well known for its medicinal properties.

The only cereals that were present were two charred grains of wheat, one of which is probably of breadwheat, the free threshing form most common on post-Roman sites. It was noticeable that there were no water-logged remains of cereal bran and that all the seeds of food plants were in a good condition. Although seeds such as fig and blackberry are common in cess pits, the condition of the seeds and the lack of bran suggests that the food plants represent domestic waste thrown into the moat rather than sewage flushed into it. However, there were



three garderobes in the Period 4.1 east range, decanting into the east arm of the moat, which was still open when they were constructed. The presence of sewage, despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, cannot be ruled out. It was positively identified as contributing to the fill of the moat at Cowick (Greig 1986).

#### Woods, hedges, scrub

*Corylus avellana* (hazel)  
*Fragaria vesca* (strawberry)  
*Malus sylvestris/domestica* (crab/cultivated apple)  
*Prunus domestica* ssp *insititia* (bullace)  
*Prunus spinosa* (sloe)  
*Rubus fruticosus* (blackberry)  
*Rubus idaeus* (raspberry)  
*Solanum dulcamara* (bittersweet)  
*Stellaria holostea* (greater stitchwort)

With the exception of bittersweet and greater stitchwort, all the plants in this group are edible and have been discussed above. The fact that there are so few plants that would not have been collected deliberately suggests that woodland edge/hedgerow habitats were not present in the vicinity of the moat.

#### Disturbed, waste ground and arable

*Anthemis cotula* (stinking mayweed), especially heavy soils  
*Cerastium fontanum* (common mouse-eared chickweed)  
 \**Chenopodium rubrum/botryodes* (red goose-foot)  
*Cirsium arvense* (creeping thistle)  
*Galeopsis tetrahit* (common hemp nettle)  
*Myosotis arvensis* (field forget-me-not)  
*Polygonum aviculare* gp (knotgrass)  
*Polygonum persicaria* (redshank) (especially damp ground and beside ponds)  
*Ranunculus sardous* (hairy buttercup) (damp ground)  
*Sonchus asper* (spiny milk- or sow-thistle)  
*Sonchus oleraceus* (Milk- or sow-thistle)  
*Stellaria media* (Chickweed)  
 cf *Tanacetum parthenicum* (also ?C) (feverfew)

Many of the species listed above could have grown as arable weeds, but could equally have thrived on disturbed or waste ground. None were preserved in a carbonised form, in contrast to the two grains of wheat, the only evidence for arable crops. The hairy buttercup is recorded in the *Bristol Flora*, first published in 1912 (White 1972), as

being found on damp waste ground, pasture and cultivated land, but as being very rare. Redshank also is characteristic of damp ground. White (1972) records stinking mayweed as 'frequent' (in 1912), which is interesting as today it is extremely rare and was probably one of the casualties of the widespread use of herbicides.

#### Damp meadow and pasture

\**Carex* sp (sedge)  
 \**Chenopodium rubrum/botryodes* (red goose-foot)  
 \**Eleocharis palustris/uniglumis* (spike-rush)  
 \**Juncus bufonius* (toad rush)  
 \**Juncus inflexus/effusus* (hard/soft rush)  
*Ranunculus* cf *acris* (meadow buttercup)  
*Ranunculus* cf *repens* (creeping buttercup)  
*Rumex conglomeratus* (sharp dock)

This group of plants is somewhat problematic as many of its members can also be found in other situations. Nevertheless, it is very probable that damp grassland, perhaps in the form of meadow or pasture was present in the vicinity of the moat.

#### Marshes, fens, bankside

*Bidens tripartita* (tripartite bur-marigold)  
 \**Carex* sp (sedge)  
*Conium maculatum* (hemlock) or damp open woods  
 \**Eleocharis palustris/uniglumis* (spike-rush)  
 \**Juncus bufonius* (toad rush)  
 \**Juncus inflexus/effusus* (hard/soft rush)  
*Lycopus europaeus* (gypsywort)  
*Lysimachia vulgaris* (yellow loosestrife)  
*Polygonum hydropiper* (water pepper)  
 \**Polygonum persicaria* (especially damp ground and beside ponds)  
*Ranunculus sceleratus* (celery-leaved crow-foot)  
*Rorippa palustris* (common marsh yellow-cress)  
*Typha* sp (bulrush)

#### Aquatics

*Ceratophyllum demersum* (rigid hornwort)  
*Lemma* sp (duckweed)  
*Menyanthes trifoliata* (bogbean)  
*Potamogeton* sp (pondweed)  
*Ranunculus* Subgenus *Batrachium* (water crowfoot)

These two groups give the most useful information about conditions in the moat itself and will be discussed together. Some elements can be discussed best with reference to the European ecological communities



described by Ellenberg (1988). This is based upon the vegetation of central Europe of the present day and recent past. It can also be applied to Britain, though it should be accepted that problems such as the maritime aspect of the British climate and the fact that plant communities in the past were not necessarily the same as those of today, affect its application. Unfortunately there is no published British alternative. Ellenberg (1988, 612) describes a class termed the Bidentetea which includes intermittently flooded nitrophilous annual communities. The tripartite bur-marigold (*Bidens tripartita*) is characteristic of the class and water pepper (*Polygonum hydropiper*) and celery-leaved crowfoot (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) of its alliance Bidentation tripartite. This may also have included the marsh yellow-cress. *Chenopodium rubrum* is one of the characteristic species of the alliance Chenopodion rubri which is very similar but regarded by Ellenberg as a near natural rather than ruderal community. Plants in these communities require water, abundant nutrients, bare ground and light in order to enable them to get a good start before there is competition from perennials. The nutrient-rich mud of ponds and pools drying out in the summer is ideal with the nutrients supplied from effluent, waste or animals.

There are a small number of taxa which are aquatic. Hornwort is not rooted and is free floating. Water crowfoot has floating and submerged leaves and most of the members of this large group of plants are perennial in habit, which is the case with the other aquatics in the moat. Pondweed (*Potamogeton*) is rooted but has submerged leaves and duckweed (*Lemna*) is also free floating with submerged leaves. Bogbean is also aquatic but is not free floating and has leaves and flowers above the water. Natural plant succession would result in the eventual development of 'reedswamp' communities and the almost total lack of the tall emergent vegetation typical of this (a single bulrush seed) suggests that the natural succession has been stopped,

perhaps by clearing out of the moat before the communities became established. The spike-rush, other rushes (*Juncus* spp) and sedge could have grown on the damp margins of the moat or, as suggested above, in wet meadow or pasture and hemlock is common beside ponds or on river banks.

Exactly how the moat was fed has not been established. It probably relied largely on seepage, though this natural source of water may have been supplemented by the stone-lined conduit bringing water across the north field (Chapter 3). This would allow the water level to drop in the summer, without the moat becoming completely dry.

#### Various

*Potentilla* sp (tormentil)

*Rumex* sp (sorrel)

*Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle), nitrogen enriched, often damp ground. This could have grown on the nutrient-rich mud above the water level.

#### Discussion

Both the plant remains and the ostracods testify to the fact that the moat contained still water. Although there were aquatic plants in the moat they were not plentiful enough to choke it and the water level dropped in the summer to expose nutrient rich mud which supported a range of annual plants. The lack of tall reeds and bulrushes is suggested by the ostracods and supported by the almost complete absence of the seeds or stems of these plants. Plants of disturbed, often nutrient-rich ground are present as well as an element of damp grassland flora. There is no substantial evidence for garden or orchard plants as many of the food plants could have been collected from hedges or woodlands, but the possibility exists that there was garden cultivation of fennel and black mustard, and some of the fruits could have been orchard-grown. The food plants are probably discarded kitchen waste rather than the contents of garderobes.

Table 59 Waterlogged plant remains from the moat

(The identifications in the table are 'seeds' unless otherwise stated. The term 'seeds' is used to cover what are, botanically speaking, both fruits and seeds).

Family	Taxon	Common name	Contexts 1064	Contexts 2027	Family	Taxon	Common name	Contexts 1064	Contexts 2027
Ranunculaceae	<i>Ranunculus cf. acris</i> L. subsp. <i>acris</i>	Meadow buttercup	1	0	Ficaceae	<i>Ficus carica</i> L.	Fig	2	0
	<i>R. cf. repens</i> L.	Creeping buttercup	4	0	Corylaceae	<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Hazel (nut fragments)	0	1
	<i>R. scudovii</i> Crantz	Hairy buttercup	8	0	Primulaceae	<i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i> L.	Yellow loosestrife	0	1
	<i>R. sceleratus</i> L.	Celery-leaved crowfoot	34+	88+	Menyanthaceae	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i> L.	Bogbean	0	14
	<i>R. subgenus Ranunculus</i>	Water crowfoot	5	2	Borraginaceae	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i> (L.) Hill	Field forget-me-not	1	0
	<i>R. subgenus Batrachium</i>		0	15	Solanaceae	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i> L.	Bittersweet	0	1
Ceratophyllaceae	<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> L.	Rigid hornwort	3	5	Labiatae	<i>Lycopus europaeus</i> L.	Gypsywort	1	1
Cruciferae	<i>Brassica nigra</i> L.	Black mustard	0	8		<i>Galopsis tetrahit</i> L.	Common hemp nettle	1	1
	<i>Rorippa palustris</i> (L.) Besser	Common marsh yellow-cress	0	3	Caprifoliaceae	<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	Elder	3	4
Caryophyllaceae	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i> Baumg	Common mouse-ear chickweed	0	1	Compositae	<i>Bidens tripartita</i> L.	Tripartite bur-marigold	0	1
	<i>Stellaria media</i> (L.) Vill.	Chickweed	0	4		<i>Antibemis cecula</i> L.	Stinking mayweed	0	1
	<i>S. holostea</i> L.	Greater stitchwort	1	0		cf. <i>Tanacetum parthenicum</i> (L.) Schultz Bip.	Feverfew	3	0
Chenopodiaceae	<i>Chenopodium rubrum</i> L. or <i>boryodes</i> Sm.	Red goosefoot	0	16		<i>Cirsium cf. arvense</i> (L.) Scop.	Creeping thistle	1	0
Vitaceae	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> L.	Vine	2	1.5		<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> L.	Milk- or sow-thistle	1	4
Rosaceae	<i>Rubus idaeus</i> L.	Raspberry	0	1		<i>Sonchus asper</i> (L.) Hill	Spiry milk- or sow-thistle	0	2
	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> sens. lat.	Blackberry	22	1	Potamogetonaceae	<i>Potamogeton</i> sp.	Pondweed	0	1
	<i>Potentilla</i> sp.	Tormentil	1	0	Juncaceae	<i>Juncus cf. inflexus</i> L./ <i>effusus</i> L.	Hard/soft rush	13	0
	<i>Fragaria vesca</i> L.	Wild strawberry	1	0		<i>J. cf. bufonius</i> group	Toad rush	5	0
	<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L.	Blackthorn	3	0	Lemnaceae	<i>Lemna</i> sp.	Duckweed	3	14+
	<i>P. domestica</i> subsp. <i>rusinica</i> (L.) C.K. Schneider	Bullace	0	1	Typhaceae	<i>Typha</i> sp.	Bulrush	0	1
	<i>Malus sylvestris/domesica</i>	Crab/cultivated apple	0	1	Cyperaceae	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i> <i>/aruginis</i> <i>Carex</i> sp.	Spike-rush	2	0
Umbelliferae	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> Müller	Fennel	0	38	Gramineae	<i>Triticum</i> sp. (charred grain) <i>T. cf. aestivum</i> s.l. (charred grain)	Wheat	1	0
	<i>Comum maculatum</i> L.	Hemlock	0	1	Fagaceae	cf. <i>Quercus</i> sp. (leaf buds)	Bread wheat	1	0
Polygonaceae	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> group	Knotgrass	3	2	Totals				147+177.5
	<i>P. persicaria</i> L.	Redshank	2	24					
	<i>P. hydropiper</i> L.	Water-pepper	25	8					
	<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i> Murray (with perianth)	Sharp dock	6	1					
	<i>Rumex sp.</i> (nutlet with perianth segments)	Sorrel	6	1					
	<i>Rumex sp.</i> (nutlet only)	Sorrel	1	5					
	<i>Rumex sp.</i> (tubercle)	Sorrel	0	1					
Urticaceae	<i>Urtica dioica</i> L.	Stinging nettle	14	24+					

Continued in next column

## Colour Plates

*Plate I Painted frieze  
Room 10, east panel  
(photograph:  
English Heritage).*



*Plate II Painted frieze  
Room 10, centre panel  
(photograph:  
English Heritage).*







*Plate III Painted frieze  
Room 10, west panel  
(photograph:  
English Heritage).*



*Plate IV Painted frieze Room 10, baluster, east-centre  
panels (photograph: English Heritage).*



*Plate V Painted frieze Room 10, baluster, centre-west panels  
(photograph: English Heritage).*





Plate VI Central Italian jug, Figure 9.11.216 (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate VII Montelupo tazza, Figure 9.9.217 (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate VIII Ligurian tin-glazed plate, interior, Figure 9.9.221 (photograph: Alan Vince).

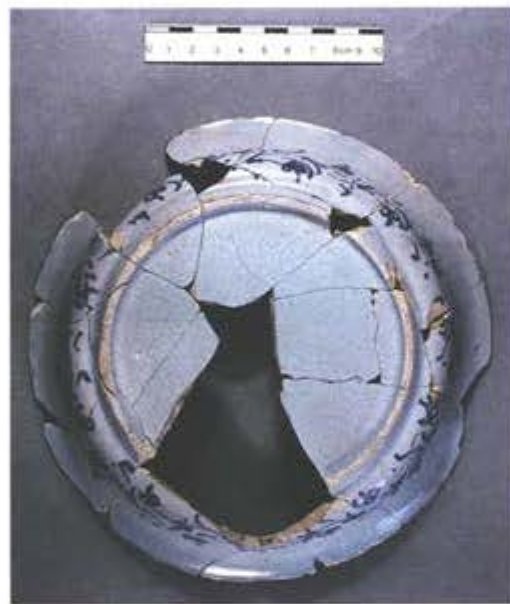


Plate IX Ligurian tin-glazed plate, exterior (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate X Ligurian dish, interior, Figure 9.9.224 (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XI Ligurian dish, exterior (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XII Central Italian plate interior, Figure 9.9.225  
(photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XIII Central Italian plate exterior (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XIV Valencian lustreware bowl exterior, Figure 9.11.272  
(photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XV Valencian lustreware bowl interior (photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XVI Spanish tin-glazed albarello, Figure 9.11.281  
(photograph: Alan Vince).





Plate XVII Saintonge polychrome figure, Figure 9.11.308  
(photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XVIII Spanish tin-glazed albarello, Figure 9.11.278  
(photograph: Alan Vince).



Plate XIX Glass: base of goblet in vetro a retorti,  
Figure 9.12.1 (photograph: English Heritage).



Plate XX Glass: standing cup, Figure 9.14.26  
(photograph: English Heritage).

# Bibliography

## Manuscript Sources

BL MSS	British Library Department of Manuscripts
BRO	Bristol Record Office
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
GRO	Gloucestershire Record Office
PRO	Public Record Office (since 2003, with the Historical Manuscripts Commission, part of The National Archives)
WRO	Wiltshire Record Office

## Other abbreviations

AML	Ancient Monuments Laboratory (now part of English Heritage, Centre for Archaeology)
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
CRAAGS	Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset
DoE	Dept of the Environment
OUCA	Oxford University Committee for Archaeology

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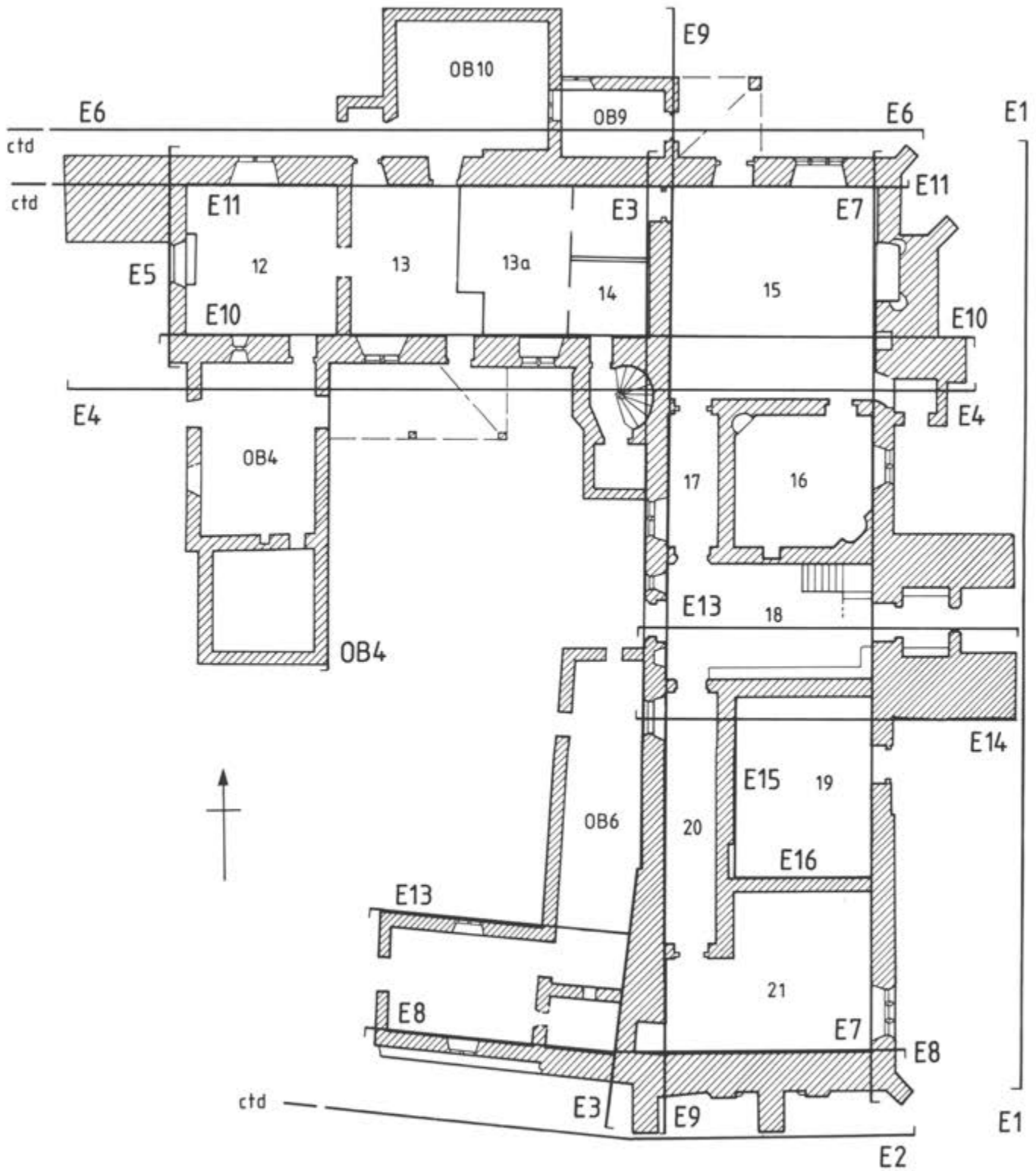


Figure A1 Key to location of elevations.



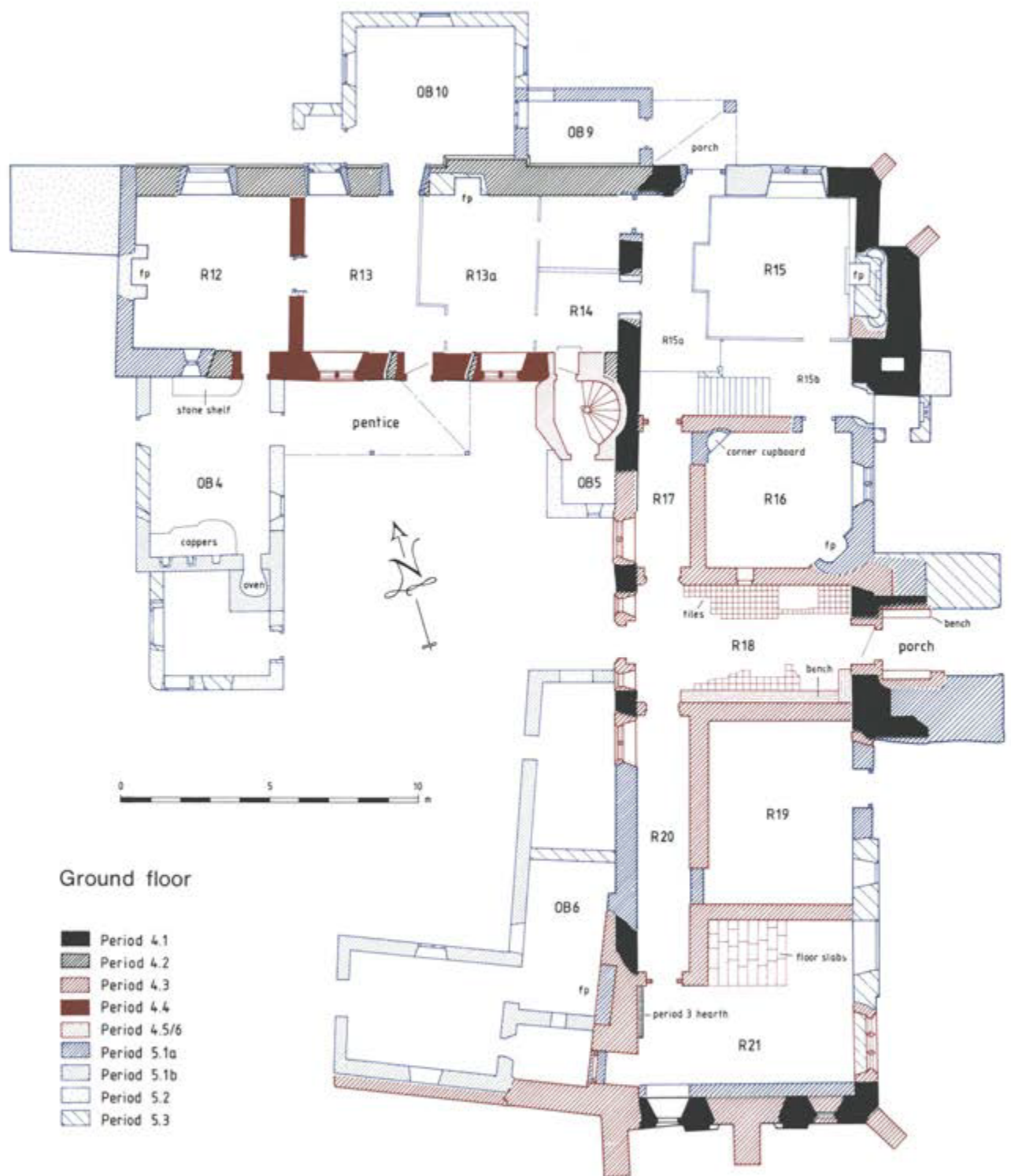


Figure A2 Ground-floor plan as existing, showing work of all periods, scale 1:200.

Figure A3 First-floor and roof-level plans as existing, showing work of all periods, scale 1:200.

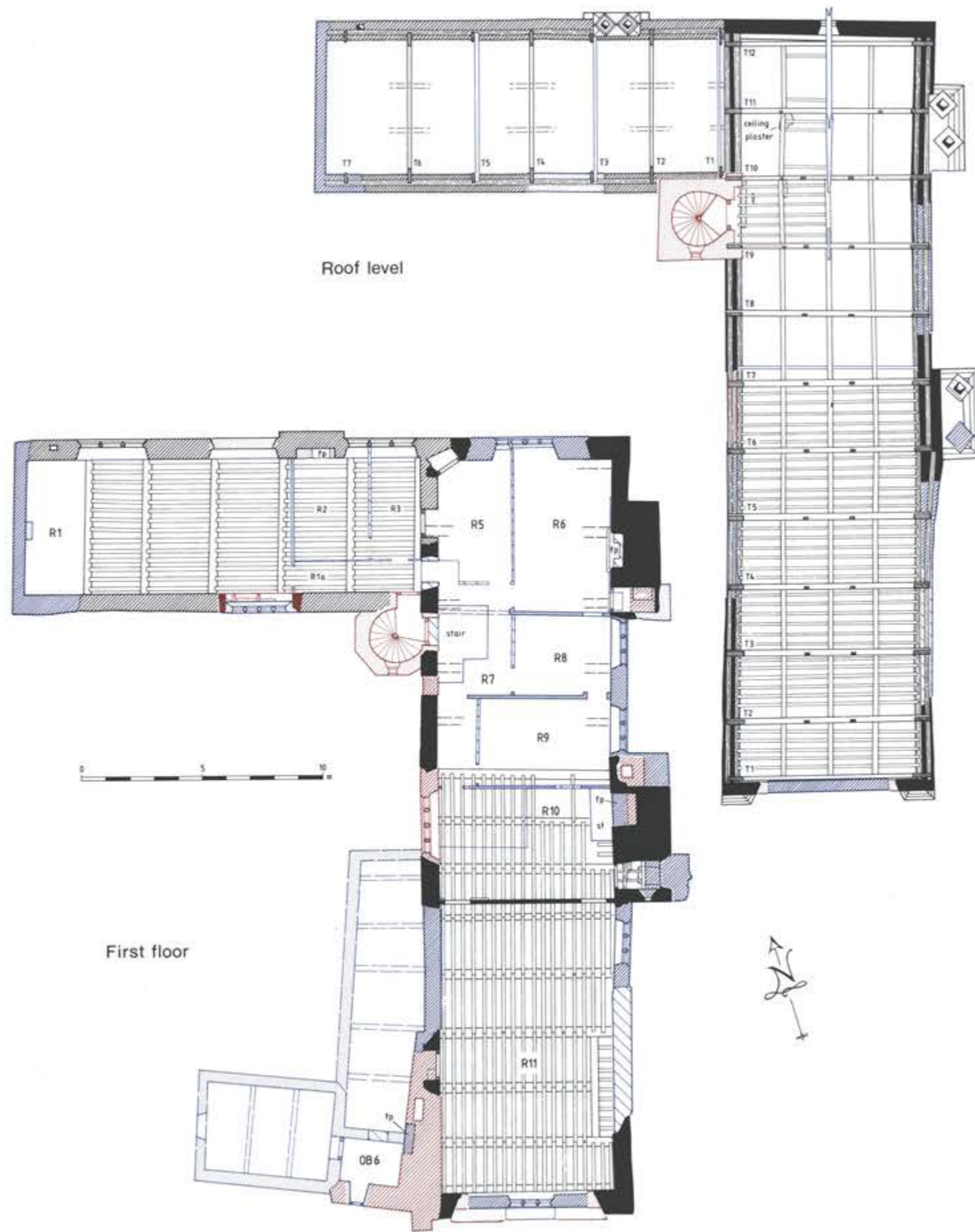




Figure A4 External elevations as existing, showing work of all periods; east range: E1 east wall, E3 west wall, scale 1:150.

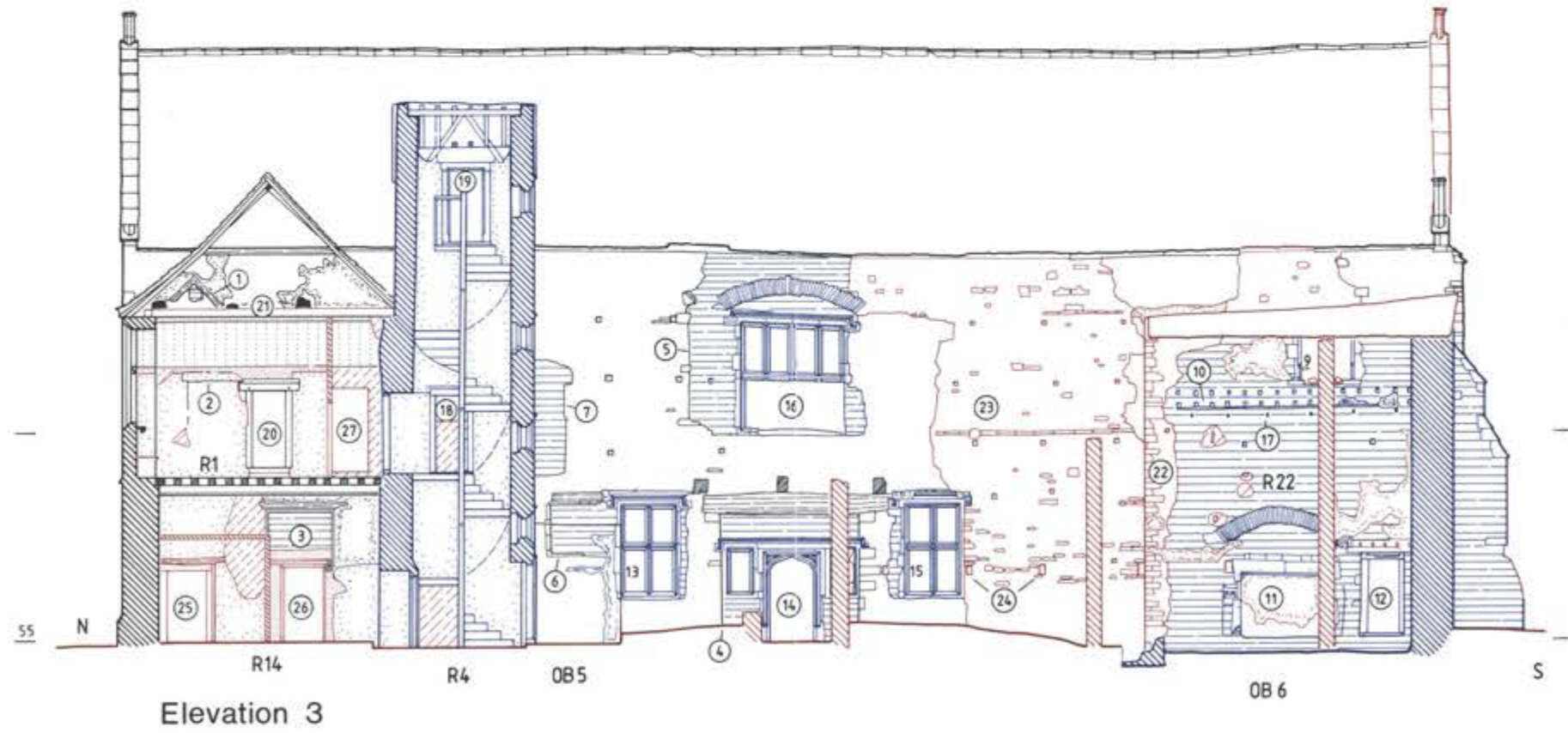




Figure A5 Miscellaneous external elevations as existing, showing work of all periods: E2 principal south elevation divided at porch; west wall of porch in moat; west range, west wall; East court, south wall; OB12 west wall, scale 1:150.

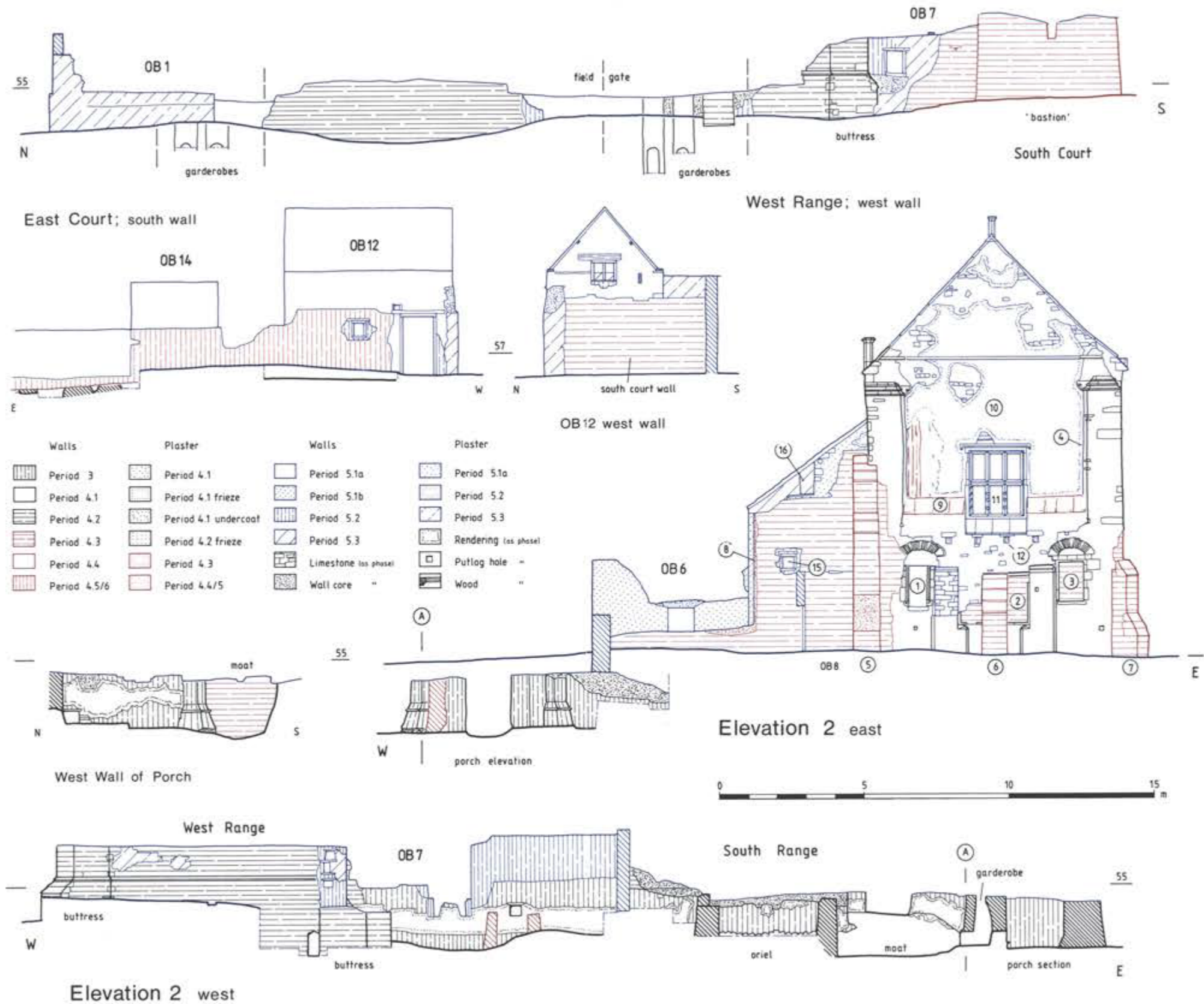


Figure A6 External elevations as existing, showing work of all periods; north range: E4 south wall, E5 west wall, E6 north wall, scale 1:150.



Elevation 6

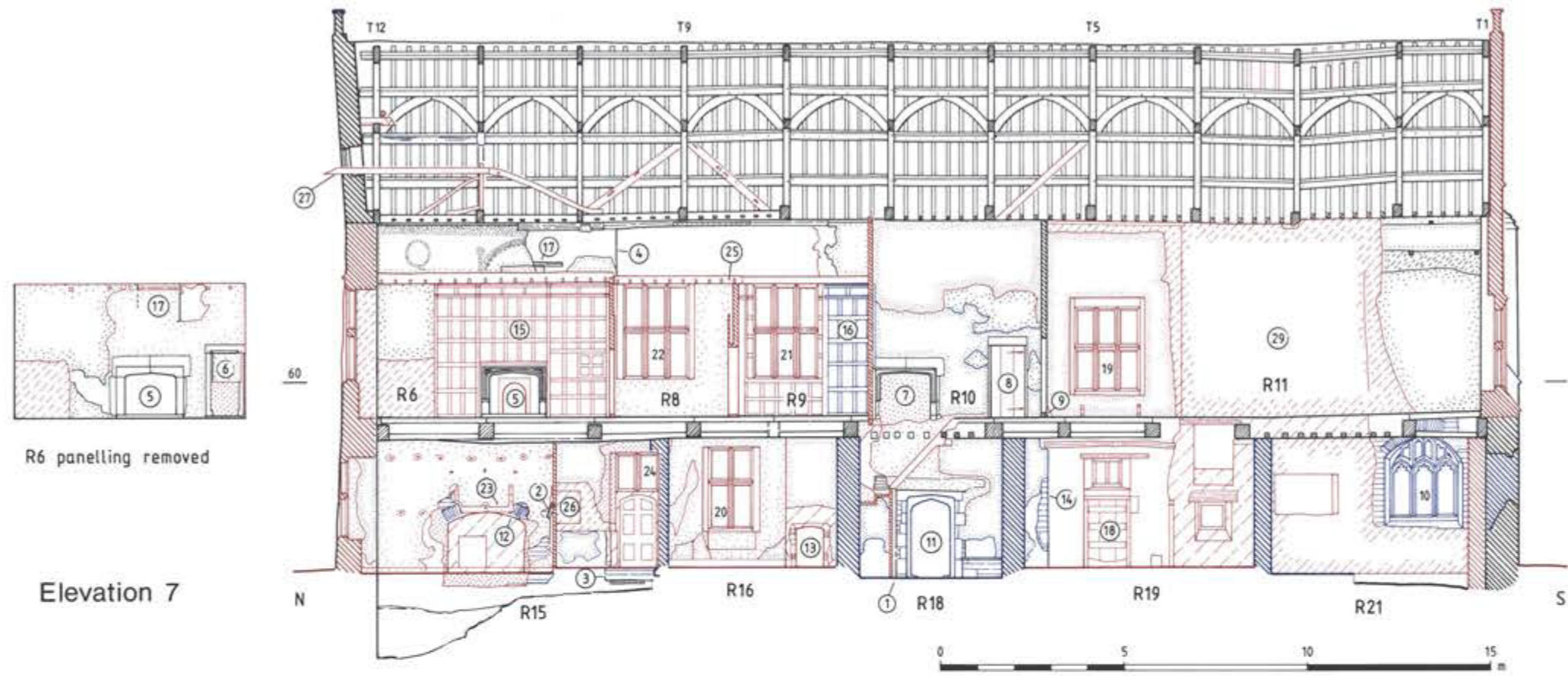


Elevation 4

Elevation 5



Figure A7 Internal elevations as existing, showing work of all periods; east range: E7 east wall, E9 west wall, scale 1:150.



Elevation 9

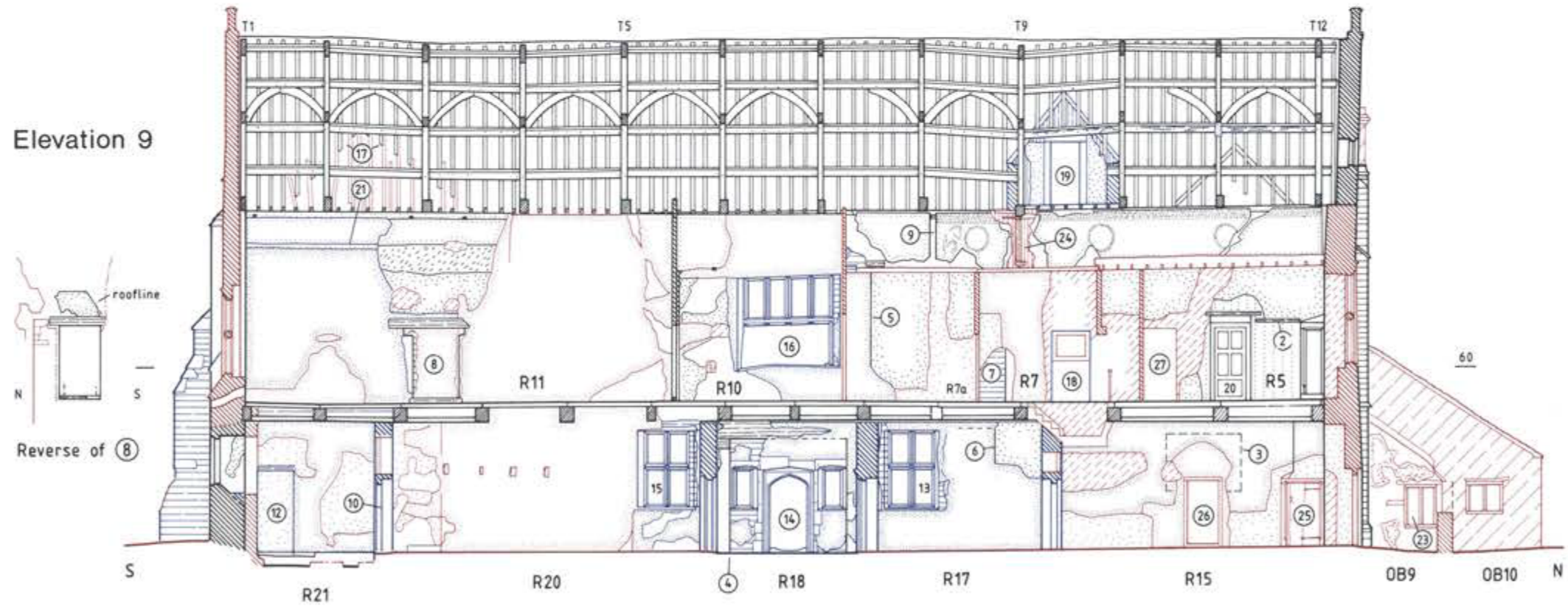
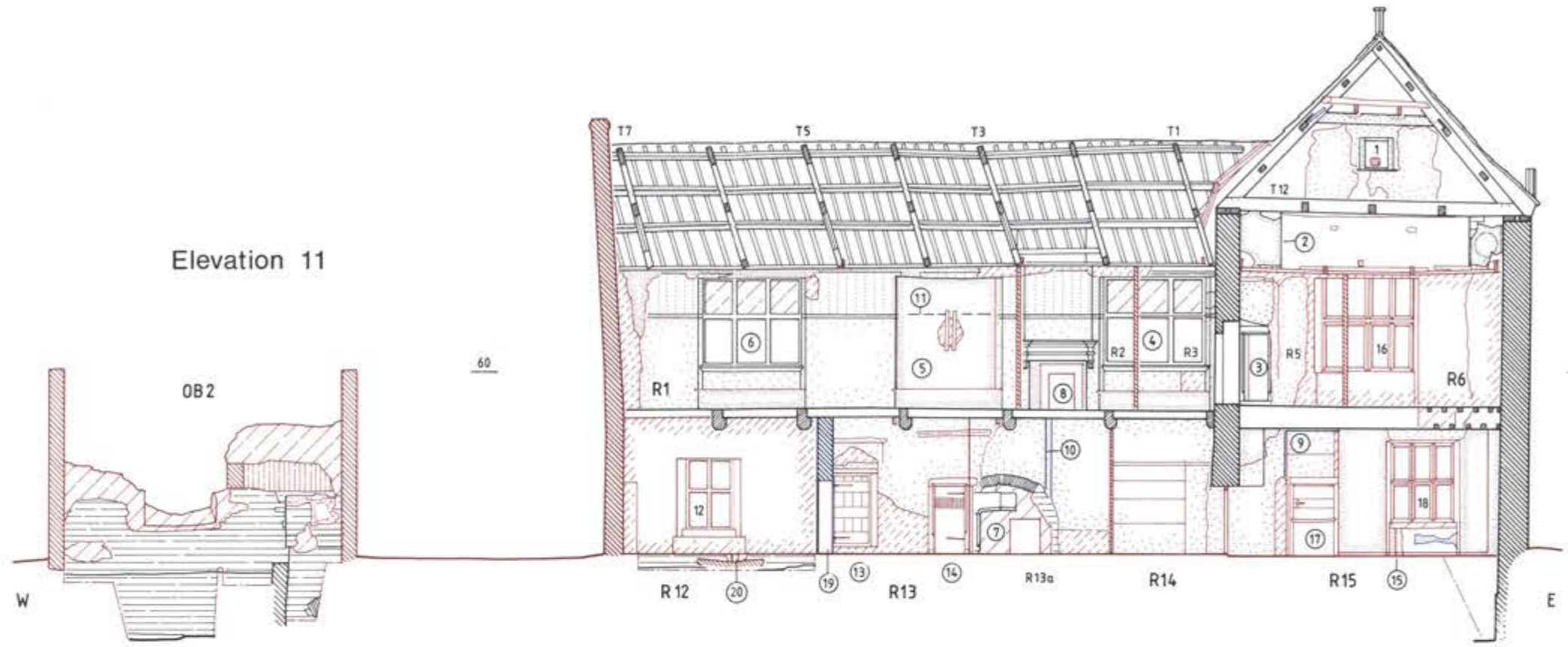


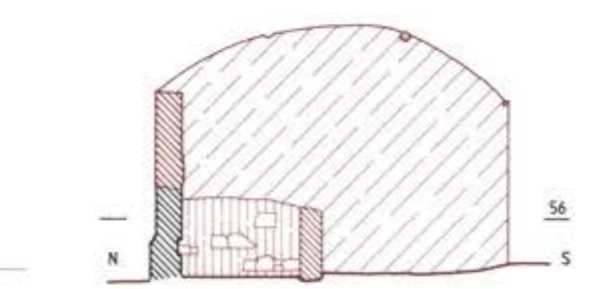


Figure A8 Internal elevations as existing, showing work of all periods; north range: E10 south wall, E11 north wall, OB2 east wall interior, OB4 east wall exterior, scale 1:150.



OB4 East wall exterior

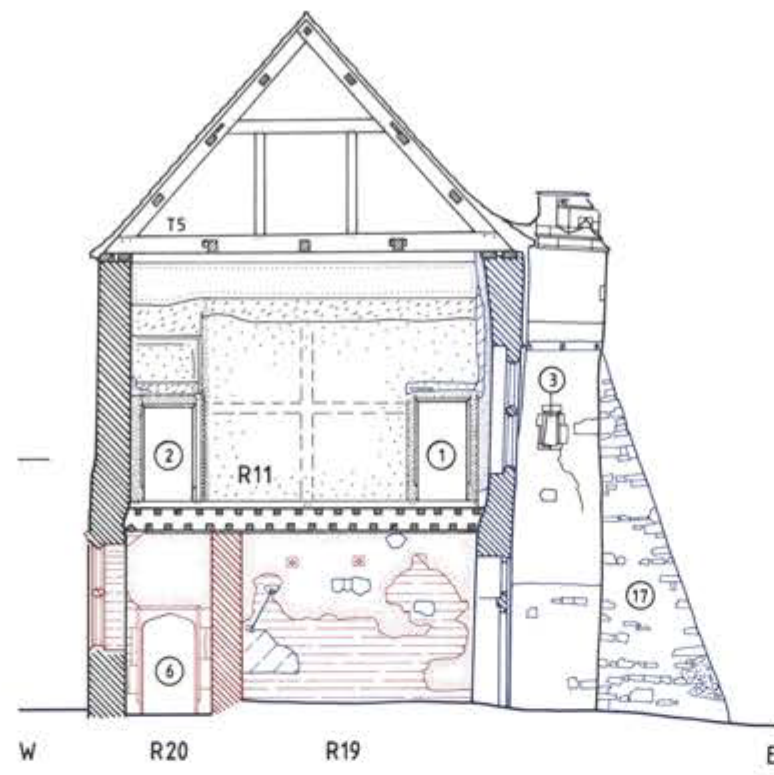
OB2 East wall interior



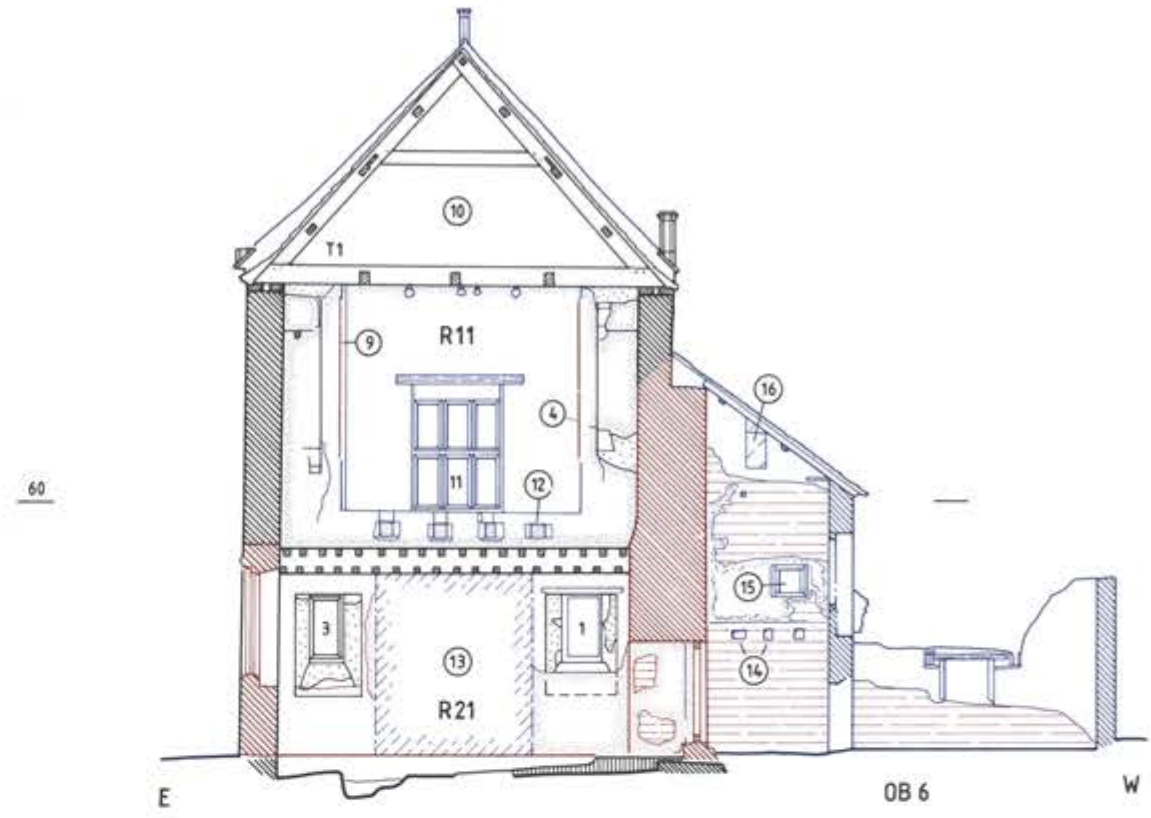
Elevation 10



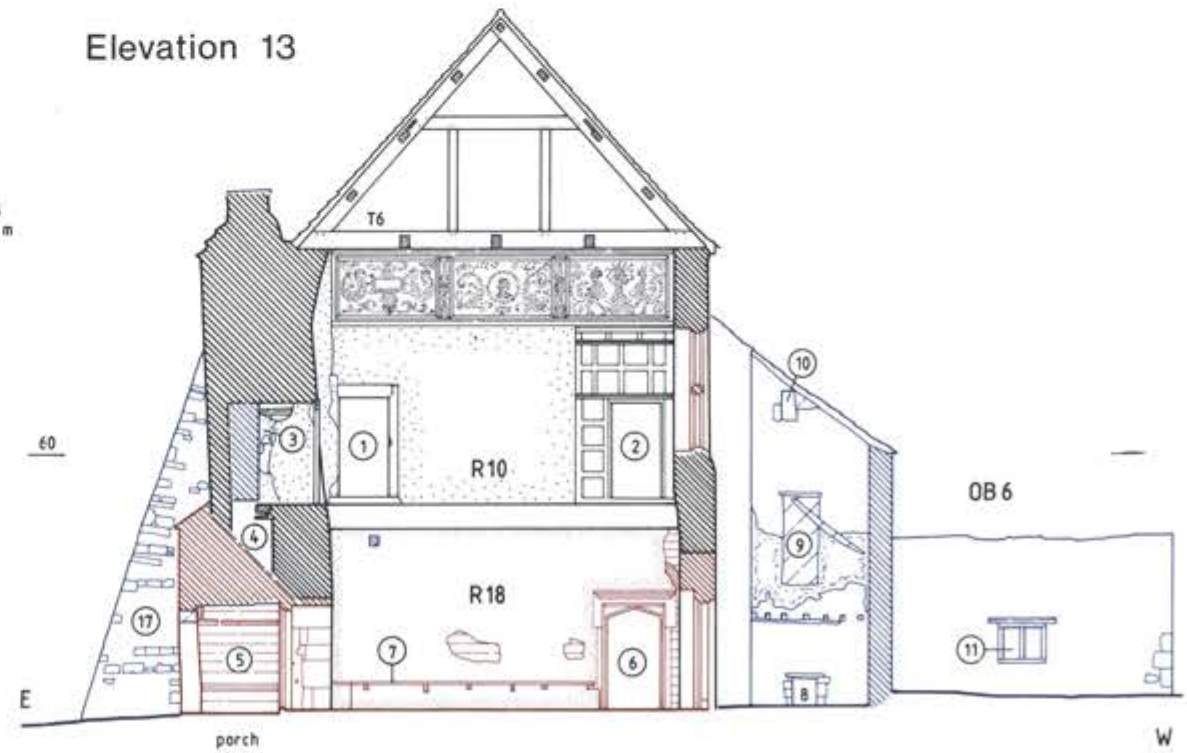
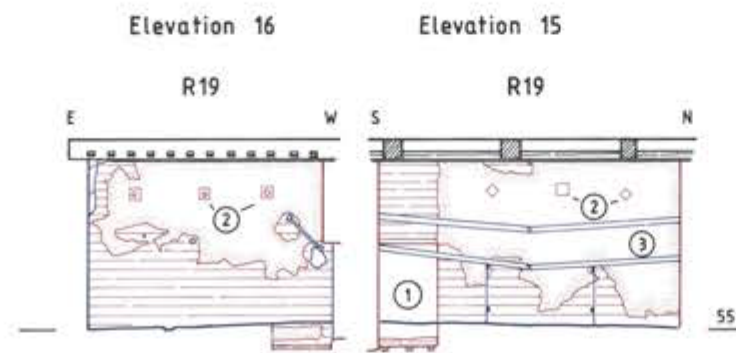
Figure A9 Internal elevations as existing, showing work of all periods; east range: E8 south wall, E13 south wall room 10, E14 north wall room 11, E15 west wall room 19, E16 south wall room 19.



Elevation 14



Elevation 8



Elevation 13



Figure 3.10 Rooms A-E, S, and the south moat.



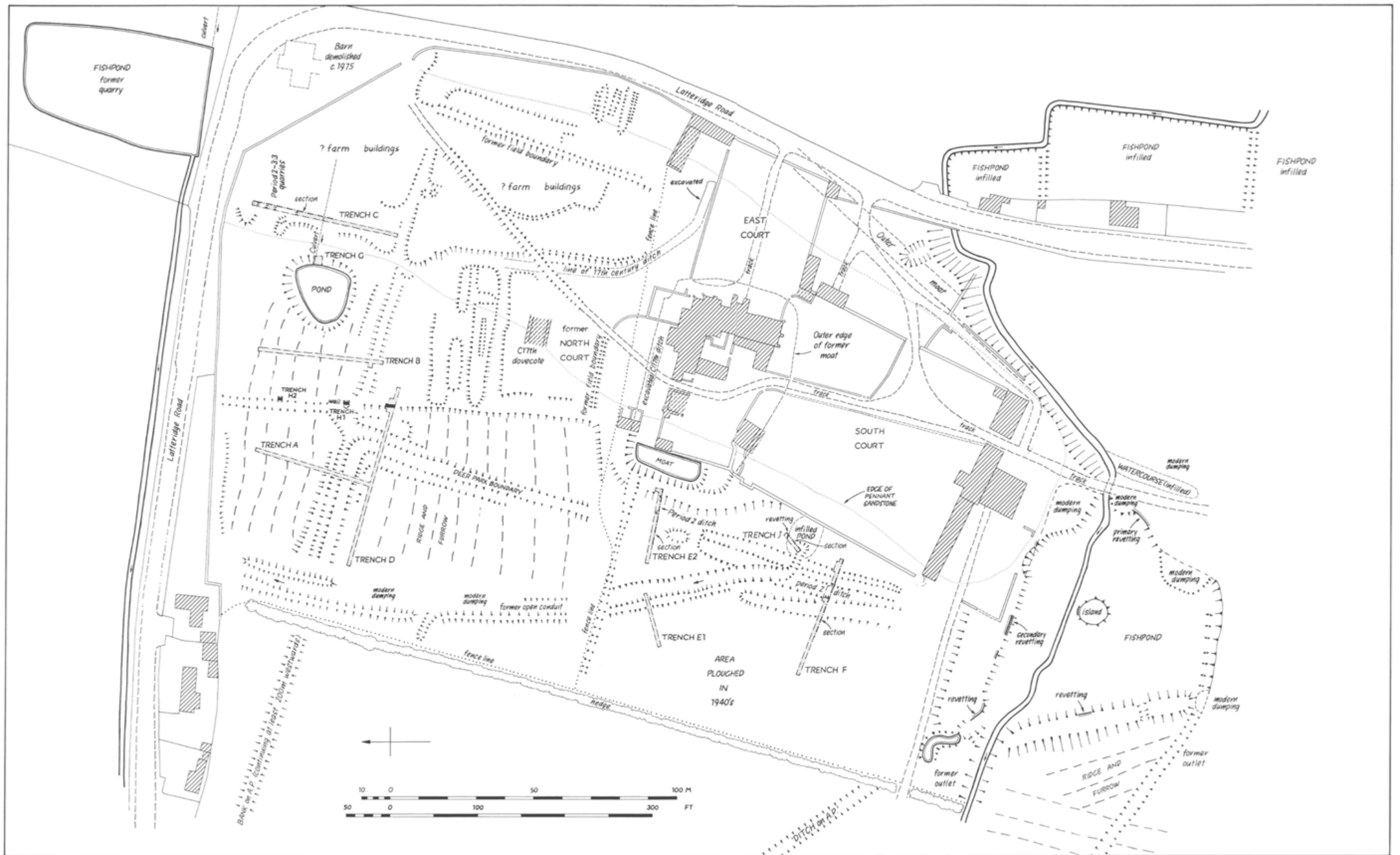


Figure 3.39 Earthworks in the environs of the house.

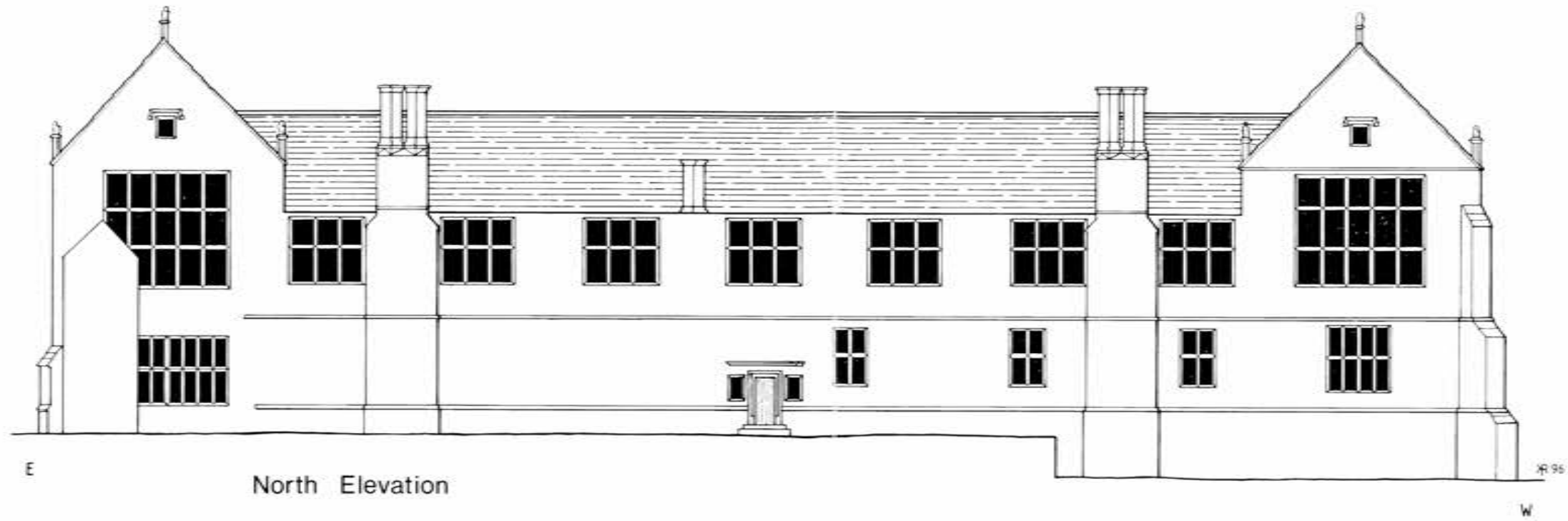


Figure 6.5 Reconstructed elevations of the Period 4.3/4 house. North Elevation (E6), showing the extent of the long gallery and west range; South Elevation (E2), showing the Period 3 core of the house, with the porch set at the centre of the Period 4.3 south court.

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**Errata information**

It has not been possible to correct the colour printing errors which were present in the original printing of this publication.

In the Appendix of foldout architectural drawings preceding page 423, Figures A6 (Elevations 4, 5 and 6), A7 (Elevations 7 and 9), and A8 (Elevations 10 and 11 of the main house, and of its Outbuildings [OBs] 2 and 4) have been printed with their overlay colours reversed:

- Features of Periods 4.3, 4.4, 4.4/5, and 4.5/6 are shown as blue, but should have printed in red
- Features of Periods 5.1a, 5.1b, 5.2, and 5.3 are shown as red, but should have printed in blue.

For Period codes, please see key on Figure A5.

In Figure A4, Elevation 1, the finials of the south gable and of three chimney stacks have been partially overprinted in blue. They should have been printed in red only.

Overlay colour rendition is correct in Figures A2, A3, A5 and A9.



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*Front cover*  
*Acton Court, view from the south east.*  
*(Photograph by Nigel Corrie: © English Heritage Photo Library)*