Medieval Britain in 1956

By DAVID M. WILSON
Assistant Keeper of the Department of British & Medieval Antiquities, British Museum

and

JOHN G. HURST
Assistant Inspector, Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Works

It is intended that year by year Medieval Archaeology shall include, as one of its main features, an account of the progress of medieval field-work and excavation and of the more important medieval chance finds made in Britain during the previous calendar year. The following summary for 1956 has very kindly been compiled by Mr. D. M. Wilson for the period up to the Norman conquest (Part I) and by Mr. J. G. Hurst for the period thereafter (Part II).

No compilation of this kind, however assiduously undertaken, can hope to succeed without the generous cooperation of field workers, from all of whom individual reports must be received if such a summary is to lay any claim to accuracy and completeness. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hurst wish to thank all their many friends and correspondents who have so generously helped them this year; and the Editorial Committee, while joining them in this expression of thanks, would combine with it their thanks to Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hurst themselves for the time and trouble they have devoted to collecting and editing the material. [Ed.]

I. PRE-CONQUEST

ENGLAND

CORNWALL: ISLAND OF TÉAN, SCILLIES (NG.910165). C. Thomas, B. Wailes and J. V. S. Megaw excavated a complicated sequence on a site on this uninhabited island, with a ruin of the late-18th century, a 16th-century cottage, a midden of the 12th (?) century, and a pre-conquest hut, midden, and supposed chapel, perhaps of St. Theona, the unknown eponym of the isle. The chapel, which partly overlay a series of undoubtedly Christian graves, invited close comparison with the small oratory on the neighbouring island of St. Helen's; the midden and hut yielded a sub-Roman native ware of Romano-British type, the 'grass-marked' pottery of West Cornwall, and a variety of the wheel-made imported wares. A general date of the 4th-7th centuries seemed likely for this earliest phase, though the chapel is presumably a little later.

HERTFORDSHIRE: MARKYATE. An important 8th-century Hiberno-Saxon gilt-bronze belt-mount was found in the garden of the old vicarage and is now on permanent loan to the British Museum. It is of the same shape and has very much the same decoration as a mount from the Oseberg ship burial (A. W. Brogger, H. Falk and H. Shetelig, Osebergfundet, III, 221). The projections at the end of the Markyate mount differ from those on the Oseberg example in that they take the form of a human head. The nearest parallels in these islands are to be seen in the Navan find (A. Mahr, Christian Art in Ancient Ireland (1932), pl. xxxiii, 7). The Markyate mount is, however, of much finer workmanship than the Navan mounts.

LINCOLNSHIRE: FONABY, NR. CAISTER (TA/110030). This site, watched since August 1956 by the staff of the Scunthorpe Museum, was excavated by P. Gathercole. So far fifty-four find-spots have been recorded, of which thirty-six are burials with associated grave-goods. Some of the material, which it has not yet been possible to recover, had been removed from the site before watching-operations began. The burials are mainly inhumations and there are only two certain cremations. Finds now in Scunthorpe
Museum include pottery, some of which can be placed fairly early in Myres's series, brooches, heads, fragments of fabric and iron shield-bosses, knives, and typical weapons. The majority of the metal-work is badly corroded and it is impossible to say anything in detail about the brooches until they have been cleaned. All the main types are represented, and while there is one cruciform example similar to a specimen from East Shefford, Berkshire, probably dated shortly after A.D. 500 (N. Åberg, The Anglo-Saxons in England (1926), fig. 64), others are much more elaborate and are presumably rather later in the series. Some of the fabric has been seen by Miss A. Henshall, and one piece is a tablet-woven braid, with the central portion worked on 'diagonal' weaves similar to the Girdle of St. Cuthbert (Antig. J., XIX (1939), 58-63).

---: Hall Hill (West Keal) (TF/357649). 21 urns with cremations from this cemetery were excavated by G. Taylor. The pottery is very similar to that from South Elkington cemetery, and no associated finds occurred. Now in Lincoln Museum.

---: Hough-on-the-Hill (SK/932473). The terminal of a whetstone, similar in general appearance to that found at Sutton Hoo, was picked up on the surface of a field during harvesting by a farm worker. The upper part of the whetstone represents the head and shoulders of a man, clean shaven. Hair and clothes are indicated by engraved lines on the stone. On the crown of the head is a socket of unknown use. The Hough whetstone seems to be smaller than that from Sutton Hoo, possibly only half its length, since it is tapered directly from top to bottom. The rock is a chloritic and micaceous sandstone similar to a rock from Dumfries. On loan to the Lincoln Museum.

---: Loveden Hill (Hough-on-the-Hill) (SK/908458). Two inhumations and more than 70 cremations in urns were excavated by K. R. Fennell in this cemetery. More than 180 urns have been found on the site, in addition to the barrow excavated in 1925-6. A hanging-bowl was found between the inhumations, and in it was a small glass palm-cup. With the bowl were other objects including a broken sword, fragments of a large bucket, and a bronze cauldron. A second hanging-bowl contained a cremation. Its base had been patched. It is interesting to note that the hanging-bowls had all been purposely 'killed' by stabbing through the bottoms in a number of places. A third small bronze vessel has also been found. The pottery indicates that the cemetery had a long life, extending into the seventh century. The finds are in Lincoln Museum. The excavation continues.

Norfolk: Norwich (63/233090) (R. R. Clarke, and D. R. Howlett). While digging foundations for new science block at Norwich Grammar School middle-Saxon, late-Saxon (Thetford, St. Neots, Stamford) and medieval pottery were found. A clay floor was found with middle-Saxon (Ipswich) ware below and late-Saxon (Thetford) ware above.

63/234090: this site was further explored eastwards (by A. P. Baggs) in the bishop's palace garden in an excavation for Norfolk Research Committee. More middle- and late-Saxon pottery was found as well as later wares, a bronze buckle (probably Saxon) and a stone mould.

---: Thornham (53/726425). A Christian inhumation-cemetery of the seventh century was excavated by R. R. Clarke within the fortified enclosure of a Roman signal station. About half the burials contained grave-goods which included iron knives, small buckles, a silvered escutcheon from a hanging-bowl, and a bronze disc with animal interlace.

Northumberland: Old Yeavering (NT/925305). Excavations on the site of the Anglo-Saxon royal township have been proceeding since 1953. They originated from the remarkable crop-marks photographed from the air by J. K. S. St. Joseph in 1949, and have been directed by B. Hope-Taylor for the Ministry of Works. The work carried out in 1956-7 brings the operation to a stage at which a general statement of the site's significance can be made.

It is now certain that this was indeed the site of the villa regalis ad Gefrin mentioned
by Bede in his Ecclesiastical History. Bede refers to it as the place to which Paulinus went with King Edwin in 627, to preach Christianity to the Bernician people; but the excavations have shown that the township was established well before Edwin's time and long survived him.

The earliest structure on the site was a large timber fort, of remarkable and at present unparalleled form. As a crop-mark it appeared to be a normal defensive earthwork with two parallel ditches, although its circular entrance-works showed that it was of a type previously unknown, in Britain at least. Excavation showed that the seeming ditches were in fact foundation-trenches: the outer for a simple palisade, the inner for a formidable double palisade with a fighting-platform. This is a work of probably the second half of the 6th century.

The development of the township proper, outside the fort, began early in the 7th century, probably in its first decade, in the reign of Aethelfrith. A massive timber hall was erected and lesser halls were set about it. While most of the latter were probably the private halls of noble retainers, there was one with various unusual features, suggesting a pagan temple, later converted to Christian use. One building of more primitive type is interpreted as a native servants' house.

The most remarkable feature of this and the two following phases was a large timber grand stand for open-air assemblies, resembling in plan one cuneus of a Roman theatre. All the evidence shows that it served a permanent need, and it is identified as the meeting-place of the moot.

The next phase was marked by the replacement of the great hall by another of more ambitious design, by the building of additional smaller halls and by the radical enlargement of the moot. This phase is equated with the reign of Edwin. Its end was a disastrous fire which destroyed the whole township. There is evidence that this was a deliberate act of destruction, and it probably marks the ravaging of Northumbria by Cadwallon after Edwin's defeat and death in 632 (Bede).

The township was then rebuilt, but in a different architectural style. The new buildings were of lighter construction and several had the new feature of annexes or porches at the gable ends. The return from exile of Oswald is historically associated with the introduction of influences from the Celtic church, and the new architectural style is thought to have come from the same source. A notable feature of this phase was the erection of a Christian church, around which there grew an extensive cemetery.

The new township dwindled, several buildings going out of use; and then a second fire destroyed it. This event is tentatively equated with the ravaging of Northumbria by Penda, in 651, when he laid waste all the towns and villages in the region. Bede describes his attempt to reduce Bamburgh by fire.

Thereafter the great hall, two smaller halls and the church were rebuilt. A Merovingian coin found in the great hall indicates that its occupation went on until 670 at least. It seems not unlikely that the reorganization which necessarily followed Egfrith's calamitous expedition against the Picts, in 685, brought about the abandonment of Yeavering, in favour, as Bede says, of another called Melmin, near by. The site of Melmin has now been identified with great probability, but it will be left untouched, at least until the great body of evidence from Yeavering has been fully considered and published. Publication of the results of the Yeavering excavations will be made as soon as the very considerable research and preparation it demands has been done. Meanwhile, the final phase of excavation will be carried out in the summer of 1958.

Wiltshire: Downton. Saxon pottery and Norman scratch-marked sherds were found during a Romano-British excavation (Wilt. Archaeol. Mag., LVI (1956), 248 f.).

Yorkshire: York. Excavations on The Mount produced Anglian sherds and part of a bone comb in disturbed 10th-century levels. It is now almost certain that the Anglian cremation-cemetery is on the site of nos. 1 and 2, Dalton Terrace, and partly within the garden of no. 150, The Mount.
Wales

Caernarvonshire: Dinas Emrys. The dark-age fort was excavated by H. N. Savory (Bulletin Board of Celtic Stud., XVI (1956), 52-3, 213-14, 555-7).

Denbighshire: Dinorben. H. N. Savory, excavating on behalf of the Ministry of Works at the northern end of the hill-fort of Dinorben, near Abergale, found that the major occupation of the site occurred in the early-iron-age and late-Romano-British periods, but a considerable quantity of sherds, mostly from flanged bowls, of pink, sandy wheel-turned ware, appear to be allied to Radford's class A ii of dark-age imported ware, of the 5th century or later. As the top-soil is shallow and the site is tree-covered, there is little stratification, but horizontal distribution suggests that these sherds are not associated with early-3rd to late-4th-century coins and sherds on the site, but are connected with a system of post-holes belonging to a large rectangular building with rows of roof supports, which cuts into another system connected with a large circular house of late Roman date. Exploration continues.


Scotland

Argyll: Iona. Charles Thomas excavated on the island for the Russell Trust of the University of Edinburgh, in order to recover as much as possible of the Columbian settlement, and to explore the pre- and post-Columbian structures.

Apart from a small fort or dun (Dun Bhurg), roughly contemporary with the brochs and wheelhouses on the west coast, Iona appears to have been deserted when Columba arrived from Ireland in 563. The vallum monasterii, an earthwork defining rather than defending the religious foundation, has now been traced from the air and by prolonged ground survey, and sections have been dug across it in two places. It is a large sub-rectangle, measuring about 1,100 ft. by 500 ft. (i.e. about 380 by 175 m.). The monastery seems to have been in the S.-E. corner of this enclosure, under the present abbey, and a few crucibles, native sherds and stone objects proper to the period have already been found here. In 1957 a small cell was discovered on top of Tor Abb, the dominating stone outcrop which lies just W. of the abbey. Following the many clues contained in Adamnan's late-7th-century life of the saint, the mound was stripped and laid bare what may well be the original cell of the saint, complete with its stone bed ('... pro stramine nudam habebat petram...' Vita, III, xxiii). The remaining structures of the first foundation have yet to be located, but most are probably inaccessible. Fragments of what appears to be a shrine of the Jedburgh and St. Andrews type were discovered, associated with the chapel known as Releig Orain, outside the vallum. This locality may be the area of the original cemetery and the site of St. Colomba's brief enshrinement in the 8th century, before his relics were removed to Ireland.

The outline of the original Benedictine church, a cruciform building of c. 1200, has been traced: certain structures which underlie this may belong to the supposed 9th-century reconstruction in stone following the Viking depredations.

Orkney: Birsay. The excavation and preservation of the Norse and earlier site on the Brough of Birsay has been continued by C. A. R. Radford for the Ministry of Works. The following sequence has now been established on the main Norse site on the edge of the cliff: 1. Farmhouse similar to those on the slope above the cathedral; 2. Large Hall; 3. Palace of Earl Thorfinn (died 1065); 4. Group of small houses connected with the 12th-century cathedral. In view of the historical record there is little doubt that stage 2 represents the hall of the earls, whose line goes back to 900 or a little before. This building is largely eroded by the sea, but a comparable midden has been uncovered on the island of Rousay, on a site suggesting that it is the ancestral hall of the 12th-century chieftain, Sigurd of Westness. A fuller study of the houses on
the slope above the cathedral and a comparison with the sequence established at Jarlshof show that some of these belong to the oldest Norse colonial period in the 9th century.

**South Uist: Drimore.** Excavation by the Ministry of Works revealed a Viking house of sub-rectangular shape, measuring 20 by 50 ft., i.e. 6.5 by 16 m. It was defined by a single course of boulders and contained a long central hearth. Finds included a fine, decorated bone comb, steatite spindle-whorls and vessels, and pins and other objects of bone and ivory.

**Wigtownshire: Whithorn.** The final report of the excavations on the early Christian sites at Whithorn and in the neighbourhood has been published (*Trans. Dumfriesshire and Galloway Nat. Hist. and Antiquarian Soc.*, 3 ser., XXXIV (1955-6), 131-94).

**Ireland**

**Kerry: Church Island, nr. Valencia.** This island in the sea off the coast of Kerry was completely excavated during 1955 and 1956 by M. J. O’Kelly. The first buildings on the island were a diminutive rectangular oratory, 2 m. by 3 m., built in wood, and a circular domestic hut also of wood and presumably contemporary with the oratory. A range of 33 inhumed burials were grouped about the oratory and were probably the bodies of laity brought from the mainland rather than those of the inmates of the monastery.

These two buildings were cleared away to make room for stone structures—a large stone-roofed, corbelled oratory of Gallarus type to replace the wooden oratory and a circular stone house to replace the wooden hut. While the wall of this house was partially corbelled, its roof had been finished in wood and thatch, and its wall had been wind-proofed by building a layer of turves against its outer face. A later group of burials was associated with the stone oratory. In due course, another rectangular house was added, built in stone, with thatched roof. The final work of improvement was the enclosing of the whole island (half an acre in extent) within a stone wall or cashel.

Amongst the finds were a decorated finial belonging to the stone oratory and a cross-inscribed slab to which an ogham inscription has been added later. The finial has low-relief carvings of a human figure and animal heads, while the incised cross is in the form of a *flabellum*, the ritual fan used in the early eastern Church, and found as an ornamental motif in such works as the Book of Kells.

No close dating evidence came to light, but the life of the monastery may have run from the mid-seventh into the tenth century (full report in *Proc. Royal Irish Acad.*, forthcoming).

**II. POST-CONQUEST**

**A. Monastic Sites**

**England**

**Buckinghamshire: Kings Langley Priory (TL/064024).** R. Fisher, digging to the W. of the supposed site of the church, exposed flint foundations of a building of the 13th century, covered by later foundations.

**Cumberland: Lanercost Priory (NY/557637).** Work by the Ministry of Works has disclosed the lower courses of a rectangular garderobe turret projecting from the NW. angle of the frater undercroft. Its adit had external rabbets, and retained part of the closing flagstone that could be removed to enable the shafts to be cleaned.

**Dorset: Milton Abbey (ST/799024).** The main object of excavations by E. Gee is to determine the plan of the earlier church, it being almost certain that the peculiar character of the main arcades of the church is due to the remodelling of an earlier one, despite the inference from a chronicle that it was entirely destroyed by a great fire in
1309. The limit of the earlier church to the W. was ascertained in 1955, when it was found that there was no evidence for the existence of a nave, Norman or later, to the W. of the present building.

Walls were found to the E., however, in 1956, and although some of these are presumably those of a large lady chapel added after the fire, others must be dated before it, and together with a heavily burnt floor-level in this area, tend to show that the earlier church consisted of a structure, the main body of which is incorporated in the present choir, but the E. end of which extended a little to the E. of the present structure (Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. and Archaeol. Soc., LXXVIII (1956), 87).

Hampshire: Selborne Priory (SU/755345). The main object of excavations by G. E. C. Knapp was to cut a longitudinal section through the W. part of the site to establish the levels and to find the foundations of the W. end of the church. At the E. end clearance of the choir and the foundations of its N. wall was continued. The finds include a collection of 13th-century stained glass (Proc. Hants. Field Club and Archaeol. Soc., XIX (1957), 285-6).

----: Winchester, The Pilgrims Hall. Three bays of this building (the part not incorporated in a later house) have been repaired under the direction of W. J. Carpenter-Turner, with the aid of a grant from the Historic Buildings Council, for use as a school hall. It is considered by the architect to be probably a grange or bdatmen administratif, in view of the details of its plan and the recorded provision of a large number of slates for that purpose in 1325/6 (G. W. Kitchen, Winchester Cathedral Records 1325/6), when it would appear to have been built. Excavations undertaken during the repairs have revealed that it originally had a slate-covered roof, to be compared with the example at Bishops Waltham.

Huntingdonshire: St. Ives Priory (TL/315711). M. Green found a 14th-century barn on earlier footings, but no traces of the other monastic buildings, which probably lie beneath the present house. 12th-century and later medieval pottery was found together with a few Saxo-Norman sherds. A number of worked stones from the priory were discovered in a near-by garden.

Kent: Canterbury, St. Augustine's Abbey (TR/155577). Following preliminary work in 1955, excavations were continued in the W. end of the abbey church by the Ministry of Works (A. Saunders). The main work was on the site of the SW. tower and the adjacent surviving structure, the latter proving to be earlier than the early 12th-century foundations. The massive nature of the Saxon work suggested the foundations of a tower, which may be duplicated further E., giving the appearance of a large gateway structure. While examining the character of the foundations of the NW. tower, part of a pre-Norman apsidal building, itself cutting into the remains of an earlier building, were found below the graves discovered in the excavations of the 1920s (Archaeologia, LXXVII (1927), 201).

----: Lesnes Abbey (TQ/478788). F. C. Elliston Erwood, continuing his excavations to the W. of the infirmary, uncovered a large 15th-century building 26 ft. long by 24 ft. wide. Two-thirds of the undercroft to the dormitory has been exposed and repaired. Recent work shows that most of the later story of this abbey will have to be re-written (Archaeol. Cantiana, LXX (1956), 246-7).

London: Bermondsey Abbey. D. Corbett excavated the NE. part of the church for the Bermondsey Borough Council, the Ministry of Works and the Roman and Medieval London Research Committee, before the building of a block of flats. Walls and traces of foundations indicated several building phases. Although little datable material was recovered, it is thought that the 12th-century building is represented by the rectangular plan of the NE. part of the abbey together with the apsidal E. end of an earlier building. The buttressed N. wall of a later rebuilding is thought to be 14th century, and to represent a contraction rather than expansion in the size of the presbytery. It is hoped
that further excavation near the transept crossing, which will be possible when some shops are pulled down, will help to solve these problems.

**Norfolk: Thetford Cluniac Priory (TL:668385).** Excavation and consolidation of the farmery, by the Ministry of Works, have been completed, revealing an interesting plan and evidence of late medieval arrangements. The main building of the 13th-century farmery was long, aisleless, and orientated. It was divided into vestibule, hall and chapel, the last being buttressed and probably vaulted. There are remains of the altar and part of a platform re-paved with tiles from the Bawsey kilns. Other buildings to the S., belonging to this 13th-century plan, await further exploration. In the 15th century these southern buildings were demolished, the hall and chapel being retained as the northern range of a new farmery of claustral plan, the W., S. and E. ranges of which were divided by wattle-and-daub partitions to form chambers with individual fireplaces. The W. range was of two stories, with stairs into the vestibule of the hall. The diminutive cloister had alleys of three bays, and a cobbled garth with surface drainage into a circular stone-lined cistern in the centre. The hall had a doorway in the centre of its S. wall, leading into the cloister, and a service hatch in its N. wall, outside which kitchen refuse was found. During work of consolidation, an 11th-century grave-cover, probably brought from the site S. of the river, was extracted from the core of the wall of the S. range and placed in the site museum.

**Somerset: Glastonbury Abbey (ST:5000347).** C. A. Raleigh Radford continued his excavations (*Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, XXVII (1955-6), 21-4 and 68-73) during 1956. The early-12th-century N. transept was found to have two eastern apsidal chapels set in echelon. Masonry was found belonging to the earlier church begun by Thurstin, the first Norman abbot (*Antiquity*, XXXI (1957), 171).

---: Keynsham Abbey (ST:656696). The site was levelled to make tennis courts and sports fields during 1956. When E. Greenfield inspected on behalf of the Ministry of Works most of the bulldozing had been completed, but several wall footings and evidence of a cemetery were located.

**Staffordshire: Croxden Abbey (SK:667397).** Excavation and consolidation by the Ministry of Works of the building considered by Lynam to be the chamber built by Abbot Richard of Shepshed in 1335-6 have shown that it was a rectangle of four bays by two, buttressed and vaulted from a central row of columns. The westernmost bay was divided from the rest by a partition, and was of two stories, with a doorway and loop to the S. and a vice in the NW. angle. It had a rough flagstone pavement on which were found remains of a furnace of the time of the dissolution. The three bays to the E. formed a single chamber, with a wall bench on the S. and a hooded fireplace in the southern bay of the E. wall. This chamber had a doorway to the N. of its western bay, and another was added in the centre bay in a later reconstruction that involved strengthening the NE. angle with a diagonal buttress.

**Warwickshire: Coventry, Whitefriars.** The cloister gate, which was destroyed by bombing during the 1939-1945 war, was investigated by Miss P. Telford on behalf of the Coventry Museum and the Ministry of Works before the remains were removed to build a ring road. Excavation confirmed that the gate was in the SW. corner of the cloister and dated from 15th century. It appears to have been built on top of a filled-in quarry nearly 15 ft. deep. Rubble foundations are carried down to the natural rock.

**Westmorland: Shap Abbey (NY:548152).** Excavation and consolidation by the Ministry of Works continue to show that Sir William St. J. Hope’s plan and description of 1889 require amendment. In the church, the three transverse walls in the N. aisle of the nave are now shown to be sheep or cattle pens of a date subsequent to the dissolution. Eight incised circles forming stations for the Sunday procession have been found on the
stone paving of the nave, similar to those at Easby abbey. The reconstruction of the NW. crossing pier, noted by Hope, also involved the addition of a diagonal buttress at the NW. angle of the N. transept. The supposed extension of the S. aisle to match the extended presbytery is now seen to be farmyard walling; in monastic times this aisle did not extend beyond the E. end of the short, 13th-century presbytery.

Yorkshire: West Riding: Kirkstall Abbey (SE/259361). D. E. Owen continued the excavation (Publ. Thoresby Soc., XLIII (1955), 1-82). Work was carried out in the abbot's house, the main drain and the meat kitchen. M. L. Ryder has reported on the animal bones, not merely giving a list but drawing valuable conclusions from the evidence (7th Report 1956 (Publ. Thoresby Soc.)).

Wales

Denbighshire: Valle Crucis Abbey (SJ/205442). During adjustment of the levels by the Ministry of Works in the presbytery of the church, the fine grave-slab of Madoc ap Gruffydd, grandson of the founder, was discovered a few inches below the turf. Arrangements have been made to keep this, and other ornamental slabs, in the chapter house, which is a roofed building.

Glamorgan: Ewenny Priory (SS/912778). The Norman vault of the presbytery has been strengthened by the Ministry of Works. This has permitted the removal of the 19th-century buttresses on the N. and S., as well as the unblocking of the arch of the inner chapel of the ruined N. transept. The roof of the presbytery is being renewed at its original pitch.

———: Neath Abbey (SS/737974). Whilst the Ministry of Works were clearing soil from the top of the ruined vault at the N. end of the W. range, a hundred silver pennies, mostly Edward I and II, were found. They had apparently been hidden below the first floor, and the make-up of the hoard is consistent with their having been put there in 1326, thus giving a date before which the transverse vault, which is a secondary feature, must have been built. Edward II spent his last days of freedom at Neath in 1326, and it is a reasonable guess that the coins formed part of the royal treasure, most of which disappeared at that time.

Pembrokeshire: St. Dogmael's Priory (SN/163458). Excavation by the Ministry of Works revealed the foundations of more buildings to the W. and S. of the W. range.

B. Cathedrals and Ecclesiastical Palaces

England

Hampshire: Bishops Waltham (SU/552173). Consolidation of the ruins of the bishop's palace by the Ministry of Works has continued and some excavation has been undertaken. Numerous sculptured fragments, including heads and the arms of bishops Langton and Fox, were discovered in the make-up of an entrance causeway, and excavation in the E. range, a subsidiary building of the early 14th century, showed that it originally had a slate roof. A higher tiled floor can be associated with early-16th-century alterations.

Norfolk: North Elmham (TF/988217). Excavations by the Ministry of Works (S. E. Rigold) have been in progress since 1954 at the Saxon cathedral. The site was first excavated by the local rector, in the late 19th century, and the results were sketchily published in Carthew's History of the Hundred of Launditch. The see of East Anglia was here from the mid-10th century until 1070, documentation of earlier occupation being questionable and as yet unsupported by archaeological evidence. The church, it now appears, was maintained, with roof and rendering, until Bishop Despencer converted it into the undercroft of a manor house late in the 14th century. At this date it was
surrounded by two moats, one closely enclosing the former church and forming a canton within the other. The outer moat is as yet unexamined; the inner moat, of which four sectional cuttings were excavated, has proved to be Despencer’s work. It was originally deep and steep-sided, but was partially filled again almost immediately. Characteristic pottery, usually yellow-glazed, comes from this filling and elsewhere, some with sgraffito decoration, including Despencer’s arms. Both within and without the church the area is covered with graves, unceremoniously disturbed by the bishop’s works. One undisturbed grave, excavated by C. B. Wells, contained rust stains of a decomposed sword and shield. The filling of most graves contains sherds predominantly of post-Thetford (11th-12th century) type. Thetford wares occur sparingly and hitherto in disturbed material only. The widespread disturbance of the floor means that early stratification only survives in areas almost underneath the nave walls, where various limy layers, sometimes separated by clay, appear to represent floors of an earlier, presumably timber, church. Such early strata are absent in the transept, which was probably added in the early 11th century to a stone nave of c. 1000. Lateral doorways discovered in the W. part of the nave, the blocking of the original W. door and enlargement of the tower arch seem, stylistically, to belong to the later 11th century.

WALES

CAERNARVONSHIRE: GOGARTH, BISHOP’S PALACE (SH/760829). D. B. Hague excavated the remains of two buildings in 1955 and 1956. One was a late-13th-century hall, which was burnt down, apparently by Owain Glyndŵr. The other was an early-14th-century hall, containing the base of the largest known medieval cruck truss; Trans. Caernarvon Hist. Soc., XVII (1956), 9-22.

C. CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

ENGLAND

HAMPShIRE: WINCHESTER. Emergency excavations carried out by the Winchester Archaeological Society, assisted by the Ministry of Works, showed the foundation plan of the church of St. Peter in the Shambles, on the S. side of St. George’s Street and at the back of the medieval property known as Godbegot. The church is referred to in a charter of 1012 (B.M. Add. MS. 15350) as having been built by Aethelwine, reeve of the city. The original chancel, about 10 ft. square internally, had deep foundations of mortared flint rubble, in which were incorporated some sarsens and a Roman colonette. It was extended eastwards on three occasions; the first extension appeared to have been a semicircular apse, and the period of this may be indicated by late-11th-century architectural fragments found built into a 12th-century wall on the site. A medieval N. aisle and W. tower were also identified. The filling of a cellar or crypt lying to the E. of the N. aisle produced 16th-century pottery and glass.


NORFOLK: BAYFIELD (TG/049405). D. R. Howlett found the surround, set with alternate yellow and green glazed tiles, and the flint-lined soakaway of the font inside the ruined nave.

SUSSEX: BARPHAM (TQ/066089). A. Barr-Hamilton has continued his excavation of this church which has a sequence of periods starting with a double-celled Saxon church, followed by a 12th-century building with nave and transepts all with eastern apses, and ending with a simple square-ended church in the 14th century.

WARWICKSHIRE: HURLEY (SP/426959). The Ordnance Survey records ‘Site of Chapel’ in a field N. of the school. Miss J. Morris, excavating for the Ministry of Works
in advance of building operations for a new school, found remains of 18th-19th-century buildings but no sign of the medieval chapel, which must have stood somewhere else in the village.

**Wiltshire: Salisbury, St. Martins.** After the appearance of chalk footings, found during repairs to the S. wall of the church, Miss F. de M. Morgan found a 12th-century rectangular structure built of large chalk blocks laid in regular courses. (*Wilts. Archaeol. Mag.*, LVI (1956), 245-6).

**Wales**

**Monmouthshire: Runston** (ST/497916). The masonry of the little Norman church, which forms the centre of the deserted medieval village, has been consolidated by the Ministry of Works, and the foundations of a tower, which preceded the bell-cote at its W. end, uncovered. The remains of a dry-built rubble wall of the churchyard were found on the N. and W., and this has also been treated.

**England**

**Cambridgeshire: Cambridge.** J. Alexander excavated, for the Ministry of Works, a large area at the edge of the castle bailey after the demolition of the law courts. Fifty-three pits were found, mostly of the 17th and 18th centuries and none earlier than the 13th century, although a large amount of Roman and some early medieval pottery was found. The line of the outer bailey was established.

**Cheshire: Chester.** A cut to 23 ft. deep was made by F. H. Thompson into the SW. side of the castle mound, but contained no finds earlier than c. 1800. It now seems that the mound may have been enlarged during the rebuilding in the 19th century and that the original Norman motte lies farther back.

**Durham:** Barnard Castle (NZ/049165). Recent work by the Ministry of Works has proved that the present ground floor entrance to the great cylindrical tower in the inner ward is in fact a forced opening into a wall chamber. The original entrance was on the first floor.

-----: Hylton Castle (NZ/358538). A jamb of the original entrance to the tower-house has been found by the Ministry of Works, beneath the pavement of the 19th-century porch.

**Kent:** Eynsford (TR/542658). Excavations by the Ministry of Works (S. E. Rigold) have been in progress since 1953. The site consists of a massive, and almost blind, polygonal curtain wall of the beginning of the 12th century, enclosing the substantial undercroft of a first-floor hall, built some decades later. An occupational-layer earlier than the hall has been found 1½ ft. below the undercroft floor. After the construction of the curtain the area enclosed was raised, and raised again when the hall was built. Three stages of forebuildings complete the hall complex, the last being after a fire in the mid-13th century, when the level was again raised both within and without the undercroft, and the hall rebuilt with glazed windows and a hipped, tiled roof of what became the typical Kentish type. The evidence for the previous roof-covering is less conclusive, but a few tiles are found in this level, apart from the many Roman tiles re-used in the medieval walls, mainly as dressings, and perhaps derived from Lullingstone. Finally, early in the 14th century, the castle was dismantled after a quarrel between two moiety tenants, and never since occupied, except as hunting kennels in the 18th century. The medieval stratification is deep and well sealed and has produced a representative series of pottery extending over two centuries, shell-filled cooking-pots
predominating throughout and getting markedly less shelly only in the last phase (c. 1300). Fine wares include polychrome in the last phase and a glass vessel in the earlier 13th century.

**Lancashire**: Farleton (SD/578669). G. L. Shearer uncovered revetment walls of hammer-dressed stones on the side of a mound thought to be of medieval date. Buildings and a moat were searched for unsuccessfully.

**Rutland**: Oakham (SK/863087). At the meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute in July, 1956, C. A. R. Radford said that the original motte is still to be seen at the S.-E. corner of the enclosure. He also suggested that the northern enclosure was part of the defences of the Saxon burgh (Archaeol. J., CXII (1955), 181-4) and made some suggestions as to how the original hall was roofed. All that remains of the castle today is the 12th-century aisled hall, but documentary and structural evidence, as well as the conformation of the ground at the E. and W. ends of the hall, prove that it was once much larger.

As a first stage in what is hoped will be a thorough investigation of the buildings of the castle by excavation and survey, J. L. Barber, with a party of boys from Oakham School, dug a trench across the E. end of the castle, opposite the three blocked-up doorways. Opposite the most northerly of the three a pantry was discovered 12 ft. across, into which at a later date a well had been cut. S. of the pantry and in line with the centre doorway lay a 4 ft. passage, which must certainly lead to the kitchens. To the S., and giving access to the hall through the third blocked-up doorway, was a buttery, at first 18 ft. wide but later extended to 21 feet. The floors were of thin cement on top of hardcore of ironstone rubble, but the walls, where they had not been robbed, were mostly of ironstone bonded together with clay. None of them stood above the original ground level. Under the floor of the buttery two earlier walls were found, representing two earlier phases, of which little can be said at present. The latest phase, consisting of pantry, passage and buttery, date from c. 1200-1300. The buildings, both on the E. end and on the W., would appear to have been pulled down and levelled early in the 16th century, when the hall was restored.

**Shropshire**: Smethcott (SO/449995). S. E. Thomas dug this low mound and found it was surrounded by a V-shaped ditch 10 ft. across cut into clean natural sand. Outside the ditch was a horseshoe-shaped stone structure about 9 ft. wide and about five courses high. Adjoining this was an open semicircle, 12 ft. in diameter and 2 ft. thick, also about five courses tall. There was nothing to indicate any difference in date between the two structures or between them and the ditch and the mound. The pottery dates from c. 1200-1250.

**Warwickshire**: Wootley (SP/022827). A. H. Oswald excavated an area of the moat of this fortified manor house, which has been shown to contain five periods of building in stone between c. 1270 and 1600, as well as traces of earlier timber structures. The year's work revealed that the moat, being dug out of sand, had to be puddled with clay to retain water (the average depth when in use was estimated to be about 8 ft.). Sections revealed six alternate layers of such puddling and also showed stratified refuse-deposits, which yielded many objects and a fine series of fairly-closely dated pottery from c. 1270-1500. Finds included a decorated pewter communion-cruet of c. 1325-1350, pewter plates of c. 1450, Spanish majolica from Valencia c. 1400-1450, 14th-century glass from the Near East and an exceedingly curious pottery retort of the 15th century containing a deposit of mercury. There was a hint of a watercourse or moat earlier than the walls and in places running below them.

SCOTLAND

ABERDEEN: KILDRUMMY (NJ/455164). Consolidation and excavation by the Ministry of Works continues. A resistivity survey was made by R. J. C. Atkinson, principally to determine the line of the missing part of the outer ditch now ploughed away. Following this, trial trenches revealed foundations of masonry appearing to belong to an outer defensive work beyond the curtain wall and covering the gatehouse.

ARGYLLSHIRE: FROACH EILEAN (NN/108251). A survey by A. R. Cross disclosed extensive remains of an early medieval castle altered at least once and then abandoned. The thick walls still stand in places 12 ft. to 15 ft. above existing ground level. In the 17th century the E. end was adapted as a dwelling house, entered from the shell of the old castle, as evidenced by the splay of the windows on that side. Considerable traces remain of the interior plasterwork, fireplaces and aumbries. The walls of the house stand over 20 ft. high and one gable end survives to a height of about 30 ft. up to the chimneys. Thomas Pennant, in his *Tour of Scotland* (18th August, 1772), remarks on the ruins of the fortress appearing above the trees. Cosmo Innes et al., *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1851-5), state that a McNaughton was licensed by Alexander II, in 1297, to build a castle.

DUMFRIESSHIRE: CAERLAVEROCK (NY/025656). The Ministry of Works continued investigation of the moat and the outer earthworks begin in 1955. On the W. side the moat, which had a maximum depth of about 4 ft. of water, has been explored and two sections cut into the outer earthwork. The N. half of the moat is an artificial cut, through an irregular rock outcrop. Much of the material excavated was used to construct the N. half of the high bank outside the moat. Stone from the moat, suitable for building purposes, was probably used for the fabric of the castle and an area of the rock outcrop outside the limits of the moat appears to have been quarried for this purpose. By the later middle ages about 2 ft. of silt and debris had accumulated in the moat. This seems never to have been removed and the major clearance of the moat represented by dumps outside the high bank can only be the upper silt. Outstanding finds recovered from the mud in perfect condition have been an embossed gauntlet and what is probably saddle leather.

WALES

CAERNARVONSHIRE: CONWAY (SH/784775). The Ministry of Works excavated the S. part of the rock-cut ditch on the W. of the inner ward and cleared the rubbish which gradually filled it during the 18th and 19th centuries: this revealed the original scheme of defence more clearly and uncovered the lower 8 ft. of the E. wall of the great hall. The removal of the 19th-century stone steps to the wall-walk in the SW. corner of the outer ward has revealed the original 13th-century steps and passage leading to the adjacent garderobe. Foundations found in the NE. corner of the inner ward are believed to be those of the granary, last mentioned as ruinous in a 14th-century survey.

CARDIGANSHIRE: TAN-Y-BWLCH (SN/583790). This motte-and-bailey was excavated by C. H. Houlder. Two phases of structural development were identified and related to Norman and Welsh occupations dated by historical evidence to 1110-1136 and 1136-1143.

MONMOUTHSHIRE: SKENFRITH (SO/457203). A long range of buildings, of which there was previously no sign, has been uncovered by the Ministry of Works between the keep and the W. curtain. A broad flight of thirty-two stone steps leads down from near the entrance to the keep to a large basement chamber with a fine fireplace. The 13th-century castle ditch was revealed on the W. as well as on the S., occupying the whole space between the castle and the road. The ditch has stone-revetted sides and was 46 ft. wide and 10 ft. deep.

---: Winchester. Emergency excavations carried out by the Winchester Archaeological Society and inspection during contractors' operations produced several discoveries of structures and material. Under the George Hotel (rebuilt 1769) and an adjacent property, at the corner of High Street and St. George's Street, there were medieval pits, one of which produced an intact 16th-century skull. From the cesspits of the hotel itself came quantities of Georgian pottery and glass. Medieval pits were also found during the construction of the new offices of the Hampshire County Council, N. of the W. gate. In one was a considerable part of a glass lamp, stratified with 13th-century pottery. A dump of pottery, wine bottles and wine glasses, under the premises of Messrs. Plummer Roddis, at the corner of St. George's Street and St. Peter's Street, included a tavern stamp (John Avery in Winton 1709), a fragment of oriental porcelain, and slip ware which may be local.

Huntingdonshire: Godmanchester (TL/246704). Recent excavations by M. Green in gardens adjacent to Purfold Lane, have yielded pottery from three medieval rubbish-pits and the robber trenches of the Roman baths. Three phases can be recognized. In the first, Saxo-Norman pottery occurs alone and probably belongs to the second half of the 11th century. In the second, glazed and other medieval pottery of 12th-century character is found with Saxo-Norman. To the third phase belonged a rubbish-pit containing late-13th-century glazed jugs.

Kent: Canterbury. S. S. Frere excavated in the Central Car Park an area due to be covered by the impending widening and straightening of Rose Lane. At a depth of 5 ft. the deep gravel footing of a medieval chalk wall was found to cross the site obliquely: this, and a number of 12th- to 14th-century pits, had partially destroyed an underlying Roman building.


Yorkshire: York. The Ministry of Works undertook excavations at Davygate, Feasegate (L. P. Wenham), and the S. corner tower of the Roman fortress (I. M. Stead). Outside the walls of the S. corner tower, Feasegate, post-Roman levels earlier than the date of the introduction of Saxo-Norman pottery revealed pieces of three leather shoes which are not of Roman type, but no post-Roman pottery.

The rough magnesian limestone footings of post-Roman structures were found in two trenches at the corner of Davygate and New Street. In one the footings were about 1½ ft. above the latest Roman feature (the 4th-century rampart) and in the other they were associated with five beads whose nearest parallels are some 9th-11th-century examples from Jarlshof.

A trench outside the SW. wall of the fortress, near Feasegate, revealed a 14th-century flight of stone steps leading down to a cellar or yard alongside the Roman wall.

F. ROYAL PALACES

London: The Jewel Tower, Westminster. The repair by the Ministry of Works of this tower, situated on the SE. angle of the curtain wall of the Old Palace of Westminster and constructed in 1365-6, has been in progress for some years. The moat,
filled with refuse of the mid-17th century, was largely cleared out in 1956. Little medieval rubbish was found in the bottom, which had evidently been kept clean, but its foundation on timber piles was exposed and stratified medieval material was found on the outer, western lip of the moat, between the retaining wall of the moat and the present wall of the Abbey. The trench for the retaining wall was cut into an accumulation of soil and construction-debris, which had been disturbed down to virgin soil not earlier than the end of the 13th century (evidently the date of the present precinct wall), and laid down rapidly afterwards, although quite settled by 1365-6.

**G. MANORS AND MOATS**

**ENGLAND**

**CORNWALL:** Crane Godrevy, Gwithian (SW/591425). This site was found, from air-photographs and field-work, in 1950; trial work took place in 1955-56, and full scale excavation will be undertaken, by C. Thomas, for the West Cornwall Field Club in 1957 on this complex site, which is expected to throw considerable light on the material culture of medieval Cornwall.

**ESSEX:** Writtle (TL/676068). Excavation on the site known as 'King John's Palace' was undertaken by P. A. Rahtz for the Ministry of Works before it was bulldozed for agricultural development. A moat about 50 ft. wide and 8 ft. deep encloses an area of 250 ft. by 150 ft., with a fish-pond to the E., which is now a reservoir. The documentary evidence extends from 1211 to 1566. The 13th-century records concern the royal hunting lodge, built in 1211 by John, repaired in 1223, 1229-30, 1231-2, and frequently visited by Henry III and Edward I. Hall, kitchen, chamber, chapel and gaol are mentioned. In the 14th century the site was passed into the hands of the Bohun family, and in the 15th century there was extensive building by the Buckingham family until the duke's execution in 1521, when a survey was made which describes the buildings as being in decay, a process which was complete by 1566. There are thus three main periods of occupation, which correspond roughly with the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries; the first, the royal hunting lodge, lay within the moated area, while the later ones spread outside; one of the latest buildings, a large barn of 1478, is still standing near the site.

Excavation has shown that the royal buildings, which lie mainly at the E. end of the site, were wholly of timber with a thatched roof. The main bridge abutment and gate-house have been located near the SE. corner of the moat. Further N. are the kitchen and several exterior ovens. It is likely that the hall and chapel lie further to the W. The area was internally drained by deep gullies in the 13th century, and these were levelled off in the next period. The 14th-century buildings are so far on a similar layout to those of the first period, with bridge, gate-house and kitchen, but the timber footings were replaced by cob, and the roofs were red-tiled. The documentary evidence suggests that the 14th-century hall and chapel lie further to the W. In the 15th century, there was a major reconstruction and change of layout. The main buildings, located at the W. end of the site, had brick footings with a tiled roof, and the documents name among them the cloister and great chamber. The kitchen, however, remained at the E. end, and its brick footings and ovens overlie the earlier kitchens.

**HAMPShIRE:** Milton (SZ/238941). Mrs. D. G. Hurst examined a 15th-century moat, in advance of bulldozing, for the Ministry of Works. No structures subsequent to the digging of the moat were found, but there were beam slots and ditches, with 12th-century pottery, on the original ground surface.

**KENT:** Pivington (TQ/924365). This moated site was excavated by Mrs. Barbara de Seyssel, revealing an occupation, perhaps sporadic, from the late 13th century until the 17th century. Little of the plan of the earliest house (a wide hall, but not proved
GENERAL PLAN OF
NORTHOLT MOATED MANOR SITE
BETWEEN 1350 & 1370 PERIOD III

FIG. 32
NORTHOLT MANOR, MIDDLESEX
MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

to be aisled) has been recovered, and the 17th-century occupation was evidently a humble cottage, but the plan of the late medieval (late-14th to early-16th century?) house was complete. It was timber framed on narrow ragstone footings, and showed signs of reconstruction and raising of the wide paved paths, one of which approached the N. door of the hall and the other the S. side of the service wing. The plan, as reconstructed, comprises a hall, with central hearth and short spores at the screens-end (a feature hardly known elsewhere in Kent), together with a projecting service compartment, doubtless with solar above, at this end, but only a narrow outshut at the high end. Pottery, not yet fully studied, of the late medieval period is abundant and should elucidate the 15th-century wares of the district.

MIDDLESEX: NORTHOLT (TQ/133841). J. G. Hurst continued the excavation of this manor (FIG. 32), which was started in 1950. Steady progress was made with the kitchen block, about 150 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, the work on which should be completed in 1957. Two rooms of the mid-14th-century building were planned. More pits, post-holes and slots of the early medieval period were found underneath. The general stratification is described in the Archaeol. News Letter, IV (1952), 111-12.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: CLIPSTONE (SK/604647). P. A. Rahtz excavated for the Ministry of Works in and around the ruin known as ‘King John’s Palace’, the principal royal hunting lodge of Sherwood Forest, to which there are many documentary references between its construction in the later 12th century and its decay in the 16th century. Today there is only a ruin with no datable features in the masonry, which stands to a height of 10 ft., and encloses an area of 58 ft. by 20 ft. Nearby is a large hollow which was probably the fish-pond. Trenching showed that this ruin was part of a large complex of several periods of construction, the earlier ones represented by post-holes and timber slots, and the later ones by many robbed walls. The ruin was shown to be the undercroft of a large building, which was probably the principal one constructed by Edward I in 1279-80. There are joist-holes for the upper floors, and the roof of the undercroft was supported on four large columns, spaced evenly along the centre of the long axis of the building. There were at least two periods of building earlier than the ruin, the first of timber, the second of stone. The latter was probably that of 1176-80, and from this came a corbel in the form of the head of an English mastiff, which was found among the rubble. There was a palisade ditch, 14½ ft. wide and 9 ft. deep, around the earlier buildings (FIG. 33).

STOKE BARDOLPH (SK/647415). Excavation by the Peverel Archaeological Group has so far been confined to the great hall and its immediate area, though the field in which this lies has every appearance of containing the foundations of other buildings. A simple rectangular hall of the 12th century was extended about 1200 or soon afterwards by constructing at its east end what may have been a two-storied building, the alterations including probably an inner staircase (Reports Peverel Archaeol. Group, 1952-56).

During 1956 a system of shallow ditches which lay partly under the 13th-century work was traced. Pottery found suggests that though they were open before the extensions took place, they may well have been connected with the first hall. They are, however, puzzling and were most likely for drainage. The pottery ranges from a few fragments of Stamford ware found in the footings of the N. wall to considerable quantities of the local wares of the 13th and 14th centuries. Occupation probably ended before, or very shortly after, 1400, a date which agrees well both with the pottery and coins, and with the attainder of the last of the Bardolph barons.

YORKSHIRE, EAST RIDING: WHARRAM PERCY (SE/858646). The cellar, of which one wall was discovered in 1955, was found to be 37 ft. long by 17 ft. wide (internally). Owing to the slope of the ground it was cut 9 ft. into natural chalk at the W. end but only 6 ft. at the E. The walls, which still stand 4½ ft. high in places, were 4 ft. thick,
constructed of roughly-dressed chalk blocks sometimes coursed and otherwise at random. Forty-nine blocks of dressed sandstone were found, including fragments of window or door columns, arches and chamfered doorways. One still had the hinge-pin of a door leaved into it. The moulding on one pillar base dated the building to the late 12th century. Most of the blocks so far found are either moulded or chamfered, which suggests that the building was built of chalk and only the doors, windows, quoins and other decorative work was carried out in sandstone. In the centre of the cellar were two blocks of chamfered sandstone, presumably two of a row of three bases for timber supports to hold up the ground floor of the building.

---: WINTHORPE (TA/000453). Excavation by the Lockington Research Team, following up their documentary identification of this medieval manor, showed extensive remains of structures and quantities of pottery mainly of the 14th and 15th centuries. One trench showed a gravel foundation for a timber beam with a robbed wall 16 ft. away, in between which there was a stone and cobbled floor. Another disclosed a small oval oven 2½ ft. by 1½ ft., with a burnt clay floor 9 in. thick surrounded by a ring of large stones, outside which there had been a ring of bricks. A second oven was found immediately adjoining, but the walling had been completely robbed. Later, these ovens were covered by a clay floor which had two hearths connected by a gully containing black ash, 8 in. wide and 4 in. deep.

SCOTLAND

WIGTOWNSHIRE: GLENLUCE (NX/199577). R. B. K. Stevenson reports the finding of an early-16th-century hoard of about eighty coins, mostly of James III but including some of James II and James IV and two English coins of the period, on the site of what seems to have been a substantial building. Pieces of pottery, window-glass and window-leading were also found. The ghosts of floor timbers in parallel lines were noticed on the side of the building.

H. FARMS AND SMALLER DOMESTIC BUILDINGS

ENGLAND

CORNWALL: VENDOWN, MINSTER (SW/103881). An oval platform house, 45 ft. by 49 ft., cut back into a hillside, partly opened by Miss D. Dudley, revealed a fragmentary dry wall of slate, and pottery which, by analogy with further sites on Bodmin Moor, is ascribed to the 12th and 13th centuries (Proc. West Cornwall Field Club, n.s. I, pt. 4 (1956), 147).

DEVON: DEAN MOOR (SX/678655). Excavations by Lady Fox for the Ministry of Works before the construction of the Avon Valley reservoir investigated an upland homestead of the late-13th to the 14th century. It was a small rectangular two-roomed house and long byre, with a yard between, and a garden enclosure, all built of dry-stone walling.

SUSSEX. Between the deserted villages on the southern slopes of the South Downs, particularly in central and E. Sussex, are tracts of downland mainly divided into large farms, each with its farmhouse and appurtenant buildings, served only by rough tracks. These areas are well known for their Celtic lynchets and prehistoric sites, but the medieval remains have received less publicity. Eliot and E. C. Curwen were the first to note and survey several earthworks yielding medieval pottery on the downland E. of Arundel (Sussex Archaeol. Coll., LXIII, LXIV).

Recent field-work by E. W. Holden on the same range between Burpham and Findon, covering an area about five miles by three, has increased the number of sites to twelve. They are of a varied nature and may consist of a single mound, with or without traces of a surrounding rectilinear croft bank, or they may be a small group of irregular
mounds, hollows or banks intermingled with prehistoric earthworks and lynchets. Most have been ploughed during the last few years, if not previously damaged by gun positions or tanks during the last war, so that the visible features are difficult to interpret. The sites are well spaced from each other and appear to be separate farmsteads. Five have yielded sherds dating c. 1250-1350.

It would appear that downland farming in past centuries required isolated homesteads, the areas being unsuitable for nucleated villages. Before the reasons for the existence and final desertion of the medieval predecessors of the later farmsteads can be more fully comprehended additional field work, surveying, historical research and at least one excavation will be necessary.

**WALES**

**GLAMORGAN: CWRT-Y-BETTWS, COED FFRANC (SS/725954).** J. Lewis excavated, for the Ministry of Works, a site threatened by the construction of the south Wales trunk road and known from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* to have been the site of a grange of Neath Abbey. A farm building containing two ovens and a circular kiln, dated by pottery to the late 17th to early 18th century, and continuing in use until the late 18th century, was uncovered, together with an adjacent walled enclosure. There were also a few fragments of late medieval pottery.

**I. VILLAGES**

**Extract from the 4th Annual Report (1956) of the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group:**

**General Notes.** With the help of A. L. Russell and R. Blackburn, 10 new sites have been added to the Durham list. M. W. Beresford has increased the number of Kent sites from 7 to 50 by a study of the documents, which were not fully examined before, as it was not thought there would be so many desertions in this county. J. G. Hurst and M. W. Beresford have reviewed Canon Foster’s list for Lincolnshire and 60 more of these have been accepted and 55 rejected. The status of 15 sites awaits further investigation. An examination of Hodgson’s *History* by M. W. Beresford has added 55 new sites to the Northumberland list. There are also 40 empty townships which are undocumented but require examination, as some have already been found to contain good earthworks. Of 48 Nottinghamshire sites suggested by M. W. Barley, 13 have been accepted, 4 are shrunk, while the others have been deleted or require further investigation. The Yorkshire lists as published in the *Yorks. Archaeol. J.* have been overhauled. 33 sites have been deleted as not qualifying under the new classification, 20 new sites have been accepted and 11 are shrunk or very shrunk.

**Air Photographs.** Oblique photographs taken by J. K. S. St. Joseph in 1955 were catalogued by J. G. Hurst and 271 of these were purchased, and carded by Mrs. D. G. Hurst. 500 new R.A.F. vertical photographs were purchased. The group now have 1,086 R.A.F. photographs of 900 sites.

**Visits to Deserted Villages.** 200 sites were visited in 1956, mainly in 6 counties. J. G. Hurst and T. A. Hume have visited 40 in Buckinghamshire; J. G. Hurst and N. Baldwin have visited 30 in Leicestershire; J. G. Hurst visited 38 in Northamptonshire; J. G. Hurst and M. W. Beresford visited 55 in Northumberland, and 35 in Yorkshire; J. G. Hurst and Mrs. M. Davies visited 6 in Glamorgan.

**Threatened Sites.** Damage, or threatened damage, was reported on 15 sites during 1956, 5 by ploughing or levelling, 4 by quarrying, 4 by building, one by a road and another by electricity cables. Of these, 3 have been preserved, 4 were damaged or destroyed before action could be taken, one has been excavated, 3 others surveyed, and excavation arranged on the 4 others before they are to be destroyed.

Leicestershire: Cotes de Val (SP/553887). A barn was built on this site without notice being given, so the work was not inspected archaeologically.

Lincolnshire: Hardwick and Wykeham (TF/122987), Snarford (TF/051825). J. G. Hurst and P. W. Gathercole visited the first two sites in the Nettleton valley. Hardwick is being disturbed by new access roads for ironstone quarrying, but it was hard to see exactly where the site was. Wykeham has been completely destroyed, as the site lay at one of the main entrances to the quarries. The W. part of Snarford was bulldozed in 1954, exposing post-medieval foundations. The eastern half was bulldozed in 1956 and watched by W. Toyn. Mainly medieval remains were found and the Ministry of Works will excavate in 1957 to see if any structures remain in situ.

Norfolk: Babingley (TF/670263). P. Jewell and B. Campbell reported that this site was ploughed early in the year. When ploughed again early in 1957 it will be watched.

Nottinghamshire: Bingham (SK/714397), Langford (SK/822591). The site of Crow Close (Bingham), which was to be built on by the Canadian Air Force, has now been saved. The farmer has been persuaded not to level Langford and it has been scheduled by the Ministry of Works.

Wiltshire: Upton Scudamore (ST/865475). The earthworks of this shrunken village were surveyed by students attending a course in surveying organized by the Department of Adult Education of Bristol University (plan in Wilts. Archaeol. Mag., forthcoming).

Yorkshire, East Riding: Flotmanby (TA/080799). T. C. M. Brewster reported that this site was bulldozed and destroyed in 1955.

———: Ripplingham (SE/963320). The W. part of this site is to be levelled by the farmer. J. S. Wacher excavated a sample area for the Ministry of Works, stripping one house completely and cutting a trench through another, and through a mound which partially obscured it. In the house which was cleared completely some six different periods of building were uncovered, dating from about the 14th century to as late as the 18th century. Beneath the 14th-century level was part of a circular depression, filled with sticky grey mud, probably a pond, containing sherds of medieval green-glazed ware. The earlier walls were almost entirely built of chalk set in clay; in the later phases sandstone was used. The later buildings had well-cobbled floors, the earlier ones clay and marl. The partially excavated house revealed three periods, the latest being of the 17th or 18th century. This house had well-built walls, plastered in places, and a good cellar. Unfortunately, in building it, nearly all evidence for the earlier periods had been destroyed and dating will prove difficult. The deserted medieval village of Ripplingham shows clearly on aerial photographs, and covers some twenty or thirty acres. In the fields a number of houses are clearly visible on the ground, together with streets and evidence of cultivation. Excavation of another house, more likely to be medieval only, will be carried out in 1957.

———: Wharram Percy (SE/858646). The fourth season of the excavation of House no. 10 (fig. 34) by the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group was mainly concerned with stripping the two grass baulks, left in previous seasons, to confirm that the upper levels represented six superimposed buildings of the 14th and 15th centuries, and with determining the extent of the building, found in 1955, cut 9 ft. into natural chalk. The removal of the baulks confirmed the original interpretation with a few minor
Plan of the six super-imposed peasant buildings of the 14th and 15th centuries, comprising House No. 10 (p. 166)
MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

changes. In period A2 there was a second door on the S. side, a similar plan to that found in house 20 by M. W. Beresford in 1951. The alignment of the building on the S. of the B1 building is such that it may in fact have belonged to period A9. The deep building turned out to be the undercroft of a 12th-century manor (see Manors and Moats, p. 162), the building of which had unfortunately removed any traces of peasant buildings built before 1300, so that another site will have to be found to try to trace the development of the house sites from the early medieval period.

The three other depressions in the excavation area were also investigated. The central one appears to be a form of entrance to the cellar of the manor either from another room or from an open courtyard on the same level as the base of the cellar. The W. depression appears to be quite shallow and has the appearance of an abandoned quarry or ditch. In the filling of the E. depression a remarkable pit was found, filled with a large amount of Staxton-type cooking-pots all dating to the middle of the 13th century, together with much household refuse, including eggshells, various types of grain, nuts and possibly fruit stones.

YORKSHIRE, NORTH RIDING: LAZENBY (SE/340986). Excavation by the Northallerton Grammar School under the direction of Miss I. Telford on two enclosures of this site produced no structures and very little pottery.

---

UNDERBANK (SE/857645). The site is on the banks of Ashbeck Gill to the SE. and E. of Underbank Farm. Surface irregularities suggest that there are at least fifteen buildings in the area, of which one might have been a small watermill. Local records yield no references to the site: even its name is lost, although local people call it 'Little Sedbergh'. Excavations were undertaken by the Sedbergh School Archaeological Society on one of an outlying group of buildings near the W. bank of the stream. A boulder-strewn alluvial surface had apparently been levelled and covered with gravel. A building, 37½ ft. by 18 ft. internally and 43 ft. by 24½ ft. externally, was uncovered. The walls were of dry-stone walling on heavy but shallow foundations, and were of unequal width, in one place narrowing from 5 ft. to 3½ ft. in a step within and without. The end walls were 2½ ft. in thickness. The floor was of beaten clay and showed signs of having been re-leveled several times.

The only evidence for dating is the pottery, which is mainly 15th-century. It seems that the settlement was a sheep-farming hamlet with buildings of stone, possibly with cruck-framed upper portions: the building excavated was probably a slated dwellinghouse with bays, with a yard and surface drains, of a type which became common in the Yorkshire dales in the 16th century.

J. OTHER SITES

ENGLAND

CORNWALL: THE PLAIN-AN-GWARRY, ST. JUST (SW/371315). The medieval playing-places (plen-an-guary) of Cornwall are imperfectly known, and most of them can now be located only through place-name study. Yet at least a dozen can be traced, and the texts of a few surviving medieval dramas in Cornish make it clear that adjuncts, as stylised as those on which reconstructions of such timber structures as the Globe have been based, existed in all of them. The form of such places so closely resembles that of a small ring-fort, or even in some cases a henge monument, that a prehistoric site may well have been adapted for use. For a useful summary of such monuments see R. Morton Nance in J. Royal Inst. Cornwall, XXIV, pt. 3 (1935), 190.

A. Guthrie, acting on behalf of the local branch of Toc H, recently cut a section across the well-known example at St. Just, near the Land's End (Proc. West Cornwall Field Club, II, pt. 1 (1957), 3. Unhappily nothing but the outline appears to be original, nearly one hundred and fifty years of reconstruction, dumping, and use as a playground, having obliterated all early traces.
Somerset: Englishcombe (ST/729620). A complex of earthworks on a spur known as Middle Field in the parish of Englishcombe includes a medieval dovecote (FIG. 35). The earthworks lie around the 500 ft. contour and are bounded on their W. side by the Wansdyke. They possibly represent the deserted manor or village of Barewe, which passed into the hands of the Crown in 1333, following the escape and capture of Thomas de Gournay. The dovecote is now a roughly circular mound and was excavated in 1956 and 1957 by J. Bolwell. The walls, of Bath stone, are preserved to a height of 3-4 ft., and the entrance is on the SW. side, marked by projections as shown on the plan, FIG. 35. The exterior diameter is 20½ ft., the internal diameter 16 ft. In the wall are recesses for nesting boxes 6 in. to 7 in. square, extending 1½ ft. into the thickness of the wall. They are 11 in. to 1 ft. apart horizontally, and 6 in. to 7 in. separate them vertically in the four rows which survive. A platform of Lias limestone projects 1 ft. from the base of the wall, level with the bases of the lowest row of nesting boxes. Below this is a paved floor of Lias slabs extending into the entrance porch. A thin layer of guano on the floor, contained several bones of doves. Above was a layer of broken pennant roof-tiles of sizes ranging from 7 in. by 5 in. to 12 in. by 7 in., and above this was rubble and earth. Fragments of a glazed ridge-tile were found on the floor of the entrance; there were also two L-shaped iron door supports 4 in. long. The circular plan suggests a roof of beehive type; the glazed ridge-tile was probably from a ridged roof of the porch. A dovecote of similar dimensions at Llanthony, Glamorgan (Archaol. Cambrensis, IX, pt. 1 (1909), 157 ff.) had a beehive roof internally plastered, with a perforated capstone, which may have held a detachable lid.

The only dating evidence found in the ruins was the glazed ridge-tile, which is probably of the 13th or 14th century. In digging the surrounding area, however, many sherds have been found, mostly 13th-century, but including some coarser wares of the 12th century, and a few perhaps of the 14th century. There is thus no evidence that the dovecote is later than the 14th century.
WALES

Glamorgan: Tywn Llewelyn, Aberthaw (ST/031664). J. Lewis examined this mound for the Ministry of Works before it was destroyed by the making of a new channel for the River Thaw for a new power station. The mound was largely composed of natural rock, but with a cairn on top. It probably marked the channel of the River Thaw during high tide. No finds were recorded.

K. SMALLER DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

ENGLAND

Leicestershire: Anstey (SK/550086). Demolition of the ‘Old Ship’ disclosed that the N. wing was an early-15th-century hall. The screens passage was separated from the main body of the hall by a substantial spere truss. The W. solar wing, adjacent to this, was also medieval (Trans. Leics. Archaeol. and Hist. Soc., XXXII (1956), 90-3).

Shropshire: Much Wenlock. During a training-school on farmhouses and cottages arranged in July 1956 by the Council for British Archaeology in conjunction with the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Birmingham, which was directed by J. T. Smith, four late-medieval timber-framed halls were found, a category of building not hitherto known to exist in this town; two of them are sufficiently complete to permit planning and the drawing of roof trusses. The discovery sheds considerable light on the economic and social history of the town in the middle ages.

Yorkshire: York. The staff of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in York during 1956 has endeavoured to establish a chronological sequence to help the stylistic dating of timber-framed houses, and as this sequence begins with buildings assigned by documentary evidence to 1320 the importance of the attempt is obvious. Several houses, since demolished, have been noted in detail, the most important of which was the Fox Inn in Petergate, an important mid-15th-century town house, with a four-storey block to the street and a great hall on an undercroft at the back. Another house close to the last proved, on demolition, to be of mid-14th-century date. What is perhaps the finest early house in the Shambles, of the late-14th or early-15th century, has been sympathetically repaired, and its outstanding roof, of very heavy scantling, is so restored as to be available for inspection.

L. INDUSTRY

England: St. Germans (SX/356578). Two superimposed kilns in a plot of land comprising two gardens in the village of St. Germans were excavated by E. Greenfield, following trial digging on the site of a sewer trench by Mrs. M. Minter and Miss V. Russell. Both kilns were of the non-septum type, their stoking-chambers or flues at one end having been destroyed by the sewer trench.

The pottery found is unglazed, and decorated with incised lines, stamps and white paint or slip, and is provisionally dated to the 15th century. Possibly five types of pots were being made. Ridge-tiles were also found in the kilns and test holes.

Devon. H. Parsons has published recent discoveries relating to blowing-houses for tin-working, including one in the Avon valley (SX/672656), where M. Spooner partially cleared the building for the Ministry of Works. Discoveries include mould-stones and an anvil stone (Trans. Devon. Assoc., LXXXVIII (1955), 189-96).

Essex. D. Woosley is forming a card index of the building materials used in the medieval parts of existing buildings, both religious and secular.

Kent: Tyler Hill. Field-work in the area of Blean Woods, N. of Canterbury, by J. Chappell, has shown the site of three tile-kilns and one pottery-kiln in
addition to kilns previously recorded in this area (Archaeol. Cantiana, LV (1942), 57-64). This was clearly a major source of supply for medieval Canterbury and the surrounding area in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Sussex. E. W. Holden has collected examples of Cornish roofing-slates from eighteen sites in the county.

Yorkshire: Meaux Abbey (TA/098406). The British Museum purchased a large type-collection of tile mosaic patterns from this site from the owner and excavator, G. K. Beaulah. It is hoped to re-excavate the kiln site in 1957.