

## DARTINGTON HALL, DEVONSHIRE

By ANTHONY EMERY

Since 1925, Dartington Hall has become famous as the centre of an unusual but highly successful social experiment. This has aimed at combining the development of all the resources of a large rural estate with the provision of opportunities for everyone connected with the enterprise to lead as full and varied a life as possible. Despite the publicity this venture has received and the extensive and remarkably fine restoration of the Hall carried out between 1926 and 1937, no detailed description exists of this important example of late 14th century domestic architecture<sup>1</sup>. It is the purpose of this paper to outline the history of the Hall and to draw attention to a number of its interesting architectural features. The lodgings of the north court, for instance, are a rare survival of 14th century planning and it is suggested that the roof of the great hall marks an important stage in the development of late medieval roof design. Furthermore, a contemporary but hitherto unpublished description of some of the furnishings of the Hall is included and the possible existence of a late 14th century tournament ground is discussed<sup>2</sup>.

The manor of Dartington was held by the Martin family between the early 12th and mid-14th centuries. The existence of a dwelling here before the 14th century is entirely conjectural, but several writers have suggested that the present entrance block was built by a member of the Martin family during the reign of Edward I or that of his son. On the death of William, Lord Martin, in 1326, the Barony of Martin fell in abeyance between his elder sister and his nephew, James, Lord Audley. James did not become sole heir of the Barony until 1342 and does not seem to have obtained Dartington until the death of Lord Martin's widow in 1359. The Audleys

<sup>1</sup> Dartington Hall has never been the seat of a family which has left sufficient mark on the history of Devonshire to attract the detailed attention of early topographical writers. Except for their brief accounts and that in Parker's *Domestic Architecture in the Middle Ages* (1859), III, 353-54, the earliest detailed description of the Hall was that in *Arch. J.*, XXX (1873), 440-42. A more satisfactory historical and architectural description was given by A. Hamilton Thompson, *Arch. J.*, LXX (1913), 553-57. The banal account in *J.B.A.A.*, XXXIII (1927), 123-35 is deservedly anonymous. *A Short History of Dartington Hall*, published at the Hall (4th ed. 1937) briefly summarises the history and even less satisfactorily, the architecture of the Hall. Unfortunately, some of the material from this booklet seems to have been used by Christopher Hussey in the two articles in *Country Life* for Aug. 27 and Sept. 3, 1938. In 1954, Miss C. E. Champernowne privately printed her history of *The Champernowne Family* (copies at Dartington Hall and Exeter City Library) and four years later, Victor Bonham-Carter ably summarised the restoration and history of the Hall between 1925 and 1957 in

his *Dartington Hall: the History of an Experiment*.

<sup>2</sup> I would like to thank Mr. John Harvey for reading this paper and making a number of valuable suggestions. He also brought the inventory of 1400 to my attention and substantially contributed to its translation. Mr. Claude Blair contributed the information on the armour mentioned in the inventory and Mr. G. F. Wingfield Digby and Mr. Donald King of the Department of Textiles, Mr. Northam of the Library and Mr. Thorpe of the Department of Woodwork in the Victoria and Albert Museum commented on many of the other entries. Mr. L. F. Salzman and Mrs. Audrey Erskine, the Archivist of Exeter Cathedral Library, forwarded valuable information and Miss Margery Sparkes, the Assistant Archivist at Exeter City Library ably coped with a number of requests by long distance telephone. Sir James Mann kindly read the section on the tournament ground. Finally, I am deeply grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst for the many facilities they have given me during my visits to Dartington Hall and the great interest they have shown in this paper.

have left little trace of their short-lived tenure at Dartington, for James died in 1386 and his only son died without heirs five years later.

In about 1339, Joan, the eleven-year-old 'Fair Maid of Kent', secretly married Sir Thomas Holand and had two sons by him, Thomas and John. A few months after Sir Thomas' death late in 1360, Joan married the Black Prince and their son, Richard, became king in 1377. In December, 1384, Richard II granted the reversion of Dartington and other estates of Lord Audley to John Holand<sup>1</sup>, the younger of the king's two half brothers and believed to be about fifteen years his senior<sup>2</sup>. In the following April, however, Holand surrendered the relevant letters patent to Richard who promptly ordered the chancellor to cancel and destroy them. The reasons for this action are not known but relations between Richard and his temperamental half brother were far from cordial during this period<sup>3</sup>. Dartington was given to the king's favourite, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who was about to embark on the conquest of Ireland. De Vere's tenancy, however, was extremely short, for the constant antagonism of the Lords Appellant<sup>4</sup> resulted in his defeat at Radcot Bridge in December, 1387 and subsequent flight from England.

In February, 1385/86, Holand had been forgiven his recent crimes and restored to the royal favour. In the following July, he accompanied John of Gaunt's unsuccessful expedition to Spain and did not return to England until early in 1388. He was created Earl of Huntingdon in the following June and granted additional estates to the value of 2,000 marks a month later. Among them was the manor of Dartington<sup>5</sup>. Hot tempered and impetuous, Holand was far more competent as a jousting than as a councillor, but he became one of Richard's chief advisers during the closing years of his reign. Richard created him Duke of Exeter in 1397, but he forfeited his dukedom soon after Richard's deposition in August, 1399. In January, 1400, Holand supported an unsuccessful conspiracy against Henry IV which not only cost him his life but also sealed Richard's fate a few weeks later.

Although far from the court of Westminster, Holand made Dartington Hall his principal seat and built most of the existing structure (Pl. XX). His wheat ears and the crest on the keystone of the porch vault have always approximately indicated that the majority of the Hall was built in the late 14th century, but only one document has been discovered so far which enables the Hall to be more closely dated. This is the record of a grant made to Holand in September, 1388 by the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, of slates from the quarry of their manor at Staverton for the roofing of

<sup>1</sup> Cal. Pat. Rolls : 1381-85, pp. 515-16. The reversion of the estates of James, Lord Audley in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall had been purchased by Edward III as part of the endowment of his new Cistercian abbey of St. Mary de Grace, near the Tower.

<sup>2</sup> The date of John Holand's birth is unknown. It was after 1350 and possibly in about 1352.

<sup>3</sup> In about May, 1384, Holand had been involved in the brutal death of a Carmelite friar and his support of John of Gaunt who was in constant opposition to Richard at this time, did not improve Holand's relationship with the king. Any semblance of friendship between

them broke down early in July, 1385 when Holand murdered the eldest son of the Earl of Stafford and a friend of the king in retaliation for the death of one of his favourite squires in a brawl.

<sup>4</sup> A group of five lords whose interests and policies brought them into conflict with Richard II and who accused the king's principal supporters of treason in the Merciless Parliament of 1388. They secured the death or exile of all the accused but were themselves put to death, imprisoned or exiled by Richard in 1397.

<sup>5</sup> Cal. Pat. Rolls : 1385-89, pp. 494-95.

buildings of the said manor of Dartington (*petras tegulium de lapidicium manerii eorum de Stauerton pro domibus dicti manerii de Dertyngton*<sup>1</sup>). Even if Holand had begun an extensive building programme in the few winter months between 1384–85 when he was granted the reversion of the manor, work would have ceased immediately after he had surrendered the estate. In the absence of contrary evidence, therefore, it is probable that he began building at Dartington soon after he entered into possession of the estate in 1388 (and the Exeter document tends to support but does not prove this), and the work was presumably carried on until either just before or up to the time of his death early in 1400<sup>2</sup>.

Holand had married Elizabeth, the daughter of John of Gaunt and sister of Henry IV. After her husband's death, she continued to live at Dartington<sup>3</sup> and held the manor at farm from the Crown during the minority of her younger son, John, born at Dartington in 1395<sup>4</sup>. In 1416, the earldom was restored to him and in January, 1443/44 he was granted the dukedom which his father had forfeited. In 1447 the manor passed to his son, Henry, but it was taken from him in 1461 owing to his ardent support of the Lancastrian cause. The estate was granted to his wife, Anne, the sister of Edward IV, and after her divorce from Henry Holand in 1472 she shared it with her second husband Sir Thomas St. Ledger. After her death in 1476 he held the estate on behalf of his daughter until 1483 when he was executed for rebelling against Richard III. Between 1487 and 1509, Dartington was held by Henry VII's mother, the Countess of Richmond.

A number of tenants held the manor from the Crown until October, 1559 when it came into the possession of Sir Arthur Champernowne in exchange for lands formerly belonging to Polsloe Priory near Exeter<sup>5</sup>. A number of major alterations were effected at Dartington in the second half of the 16th century including the almost total reconstruction of the upper solar block and the alteration of the windows in the great hall, entrance tower and lower solar block. These can probably be attributed to Sir Arthur Champernowne (d. 1578) soon after he came into possession of the estate<sup>6</sup>. Further changes were carried out by a member of the Champernowne family in the 18th century when the present staircase hall was designed, Venetian-type windows inserted in the first floor rooms of the upper solar block and a number of alterations made to the west front of the north court. Part of the east front was taken down in 1792 and the hall roof was removed soon after 1813 for reasons of safety.

Major additions to the Hall were envisaged in 1805 and again in 1845 when Pugin drew up plans for a heavy-handed block in collegiate style. Fortunately this was never built and except for the removal of the old church in 1878, Dartington did

<sup>1</sup> Exeter Cathedral Library; Dean and Chapter Exeter Ms. 3550 f. 45 r. (Chapter Act Book). This is a badly written entry: one would expect *petras tegularium de lapidicio* to have been written instead of *petras tegulium de lapidicium*. I think that the word *manerii de Dertyngton* is used here as a substitute for *caput manerii de Dertyngton*.

<sup>2</sup> A dating between 1385 and 1388 given in *Arch. J.*, CXIV (1957), 178 is obviously incorrect.

<sup>3</sup> Cal. Pat. Rolls: 1399–1401, p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Her eldest son, Richard, had died, Sept. 1400.

<sup>5</sup> Exeter City Library; DD 41950. The date of 1554 given by all previous writers is as incorrect as the statement that the manor was exchanged for the site of the priory itself.

<sup>6</sup> An entry in the churchwardens' accounts of Ashburton, 1560–61, states 'xiiis. viiid. paid to divers persons labouring at Dertyngton with Sir Arthur Champernowne, knight'.

not suffer from the excesses of the Victorians. However, the decline of the estate during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was gradually reflected in the condition of the buildings. When Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst bought the estate from the Champenownes in 1925, urgent repairs needed to be carried out nearly everywhere: the east end of the lower solar block showed signs of collapsing, part of the west front had been turned into a farmhouse and the north court was divided into a number of yards. The highly creditable restoration of the Hall was carried out between 1926 and 1937 under the direction of William Weir.

The present entrance block lies in the north-west corner of the north court. It is a two-storied building which consists of two unequal sized rooms on each floor and an entrance passage way with semi-circular arches at either end<sup>1</sup>. The modern external staircase leading to the first floor follows the line of the old covered one which terminated in front of two adjacent doorways. The larger upper room still retains its original hearth and external chimney breast at the west end. Attention in this and the adjacent room centres mainly on the heavily restored tie-beam and king-post roof supported on single arch braces bedded into the walls. Weir held that this roof and the simple bracketed wooden pillar of the ground floor dated from the late 13th or early 14th century and that the block formed part of an earlier courtyard built by the Martin family<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, John Harvey has suggested to me that it was built for Holand by local masons to accommodate the staff, materials and workshops necessary for building the two courtyards. Unfortunately, the block does not possess any features which enable it to be closely dated. All the windows are modern restorations<sup>3</sup> and the roof was built to a design adopted throughout the 14th century. The block was certainly not built at the same time as the majority of the Hall for it lacks the Beer stone used by Holand for all his dressed stonework. It is vernacular architecture by local masons but the close similarity between the king-posts found here and in the great hall supports a late 14th century dating.

A curious lack of defence marks the approach to the north court. The entrance block cannot be called a gatehouse for it has no control over the passage way and fails to boast any battlements, portcullis or other defensive features. The entrance was merely protected by two stout doors and a bar<sup>4</sup>. It was possibly this lack of defensive features which made Hamilton Thompson suggest that the principal entrance was at the north end of the east front but there is no evidence to support such a view. It is surprising that Holand should have been satisfied with this simple

<sup>1</sup> There is a similar but smaller entrance block at Shute Barton near Colyton, East Devon, tentatively ascribed by Christopher Hussey (*Country Life*, Feb. 9, 1951) to the late 14th or early 15th century.

<sup>2</sup> Many writers have stated that the large upper room was formerly used as a banqueting hall prior to the building of Holand's great hall, but even if the entrance block was built by a member of the Martin family, its position makes this purpose rather unlikely. Furthermore, there do not seem to have been any windows in

the north wall and those facing southwards were not sufficiently large to admit very much light into this room.

<sup>3</sup> From a drawing made by the owner in the late 19th century (and kindly shown to me by Miss C. E. Champenowne), the windows appear originally to have possessed semi-circular heads made of local rough stone.

<sup>4</sup> The holes for this were found by Weir but they are no longer visible. The original wooden braced arch which supported the doors still survives.

passage way as the approach to the Hall, but perhaps his death prevented him from replacing it with a more elaborate work<sup>1</sup>. When some rooms were being added against the east wall of the barn in 1936, the foundations were found of a large circular tower. This was in existence as late as Henry VIII's reign for it figures prominently in a crude drawing of Dartington Hall made in that reign<sup>2</sup>. Commanding the River Dart between Staverton and Totnes, this tower may have been built by a member of the Martin family to afford some defence and protection which the existing entrance failed to provide.

With the possible exception of the entrance block and some corbels supporting the battlements at the east end of the lower solar block, Holand made no use of any earlier buildings when he began building at Dartington in the late 14th century. His plan was that of a double court separated by the great hall (fig. 1). The north court, 245 ft. long and 157 ft. wide, was one of the largest domestic enclosures built in England in the later Middle Ages. The north side was occupied by the entrance block already described and a barn, perhaps added a little later in the 15th century<sup>3</sup>. The west and almost the whole of the east sides were closed by similar two-storied ranges of apartments but the many changes to which they have been subject have not completely disguised the original work. The south front was dominated by the existing great hall and the lower solar block separated by a three-storied porch and flanked on the left hand side by a low buttressed wall behind which rose the kitchen (Pl. XXIA). Holand's private apartments adjoined the upper end of the great hall, but they have been so drastically altered that hardly any 14th century work remains here. Little is known about the south court but it was less than a quarter the size of the north court. Only part of the outer wall of the south-facing front still survives.

It is a welcome surprise to find such an extensive example of late 14th century court architecture in a region which has never been very close to the main streams of English domestic building. It is particularly fortunate that Dartington should be so well preserved for no other house of comparable size built during the reign of Richard II has survived to the present day. A large number of castles were constructed during the last quarter of the 14th century and some of them, such as Bodiam (1385) and Wardour (1393), combine a degree of comfort with their more obvious military features. Yet the only existing domestic works on a comparable scale are the contemporary collegiate foundations of William of Wykeham at Oxford and Winchester and the great halls built for John of Gaunt and Richard II at Kenilworth and Westminster respectively during the last decade of the century. Dartington Hall was built on a scale which not only reflects the wealth and position of its builder but the size and importance of his household. No attempt was made by Holand to introduce any defensive features: Dartington was simply a magnificent country residence built at a time when it was felt that the more peaceful conditions following

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that there was a gateway leading into a forecourt which has now disappeared.

<sup>2</sup> British Museum; Cotton MS. Augustus II, art. 39. This is a map, or more accurately, a panoramic view of the whole of the coast from Exeter to Land's End.

<sup>3</sup> The roof is supported by arch-braced collar beams with upper collars. It is similar to the 15th century barn at Place Farm, Tisbury, Wilts., but Mr. Stanley Jones has suggested to me that the roof of the barn at Dartington may even date from the 16th century.



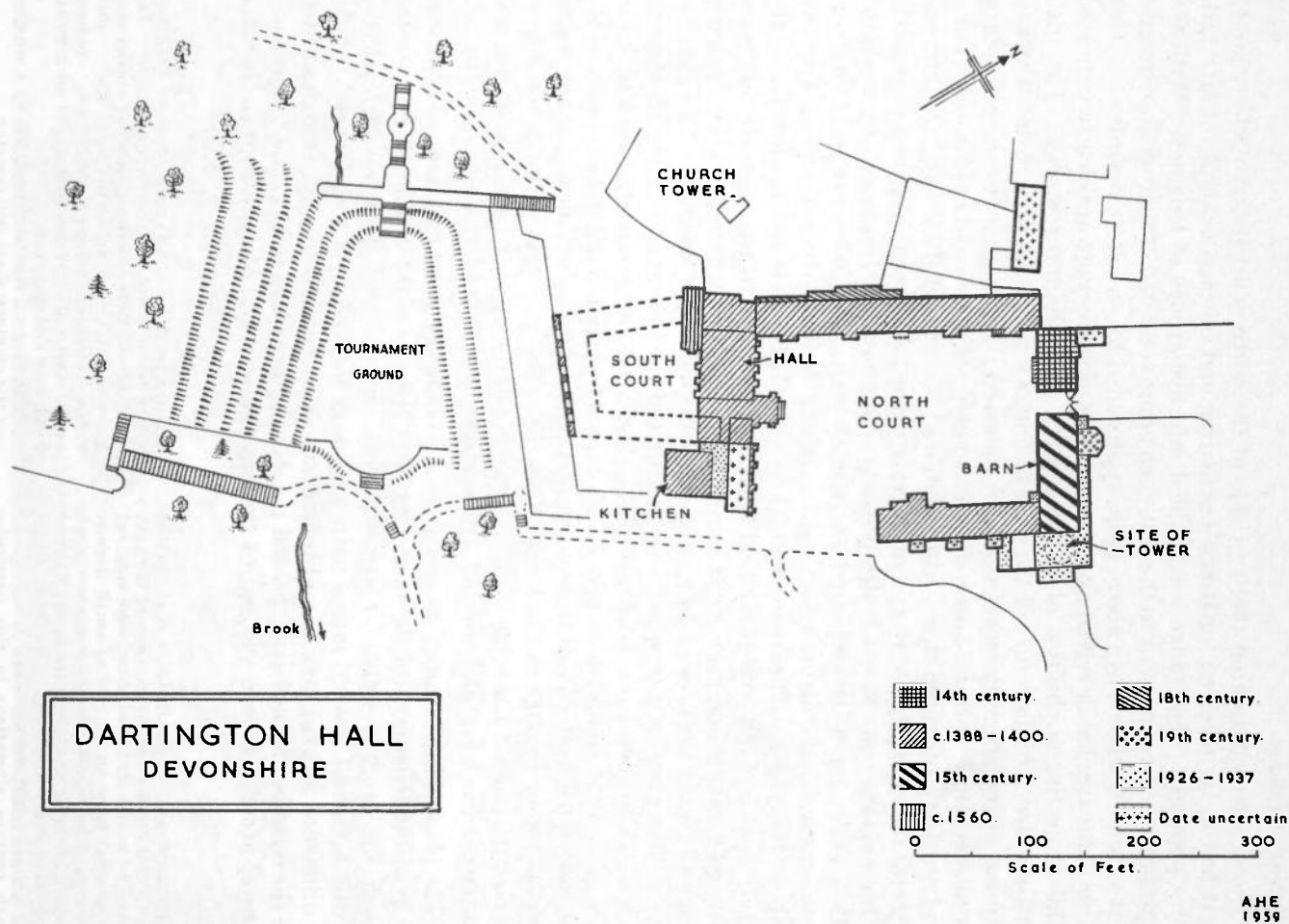


Fig. 1. Plan of Dartington Hall, Devonshire

Richard's personal control of the government from 1389 would be maintained for many years to come.

The accommodation on the west side of the north court deserves closer study than it has so far received for it is a fascinating and unusual example of late 14th century planning. The range was divided into five groups of lodgings. With the exception of the one adjacent to the hall, each group consisted of four separate rooms, two at ground level and two above them approached by an external staircase. One of these staircases has survived and the positions of three more are clearly indicated by the projecting archways which now carry a small upper storey. The fifth staircase archway in the centre of the wing no longer exists but a re-used doorway and the spring of the archway either side of it indicates its position. Each room was a self contained unit with its own entrance, window, fireplace and garderobe. Later alterations have obscured many of the internal features of these lodgings<sup>1</sup> but one group still stands at the north end of the range which has been subjected to remarkably few changes since it was built<sup>2</sup> (fig. 2). Neither the entrance arches, the stairs nor the cobbles under the archway have been altered. Two of the original four doors remain and each one, fitting into a narrow rebate, led directly into a room approximately 21 ft. square. The rooms were lit by a two-light shuttered window facing the courtyard set in a very deep internal splay. A fireplace in the opposite wall gave additional comfort<sup>3</sup> and each room boasted its own garderobe, built in the thickness of the wall facing the door and probably lit by its own small window. The removal of the dividing wall of the upper floor has altered the appearance of the rooms here and the garderobes have been completely replaced by a modern window. The garderobes on the ground floor have been adapted for modern use but examples of the arches which led to them can be seen in other parts of the range such as at the end of the ground floor passage in the fourth block from the gateway. All the walls were covered with plaster and some of that remaining in the upper rooms of both this and the adjacent block is still decorated with scratch drawings of late medieval ships.

The plan of the lodgings immediately adjoining the great hall differed considerably from the remainder of the range but later changes make it difficult to trace the form of the original work. There was only one external doorway beneath the staircase arch and this led into a narrow passage flanked by a room on either side. The difference in plan may have been because the room on the left communicated with the chamber immediately behind the dais<sup>4</sup> and perhaps because there was some means of access between the end of the passage-way and Holand's great chamber

<sup>1</sup> An enormous oven, for instance, was inserted in the second block from the gateway in the 16th century and nearly all the windows were enlarged two centuries later and a row of small dormer windows inserted above them. A narrow block was added at the same time on the west side close to the churchyard wall and a suite of rooms facing the courtyard was panelled.

<sup>2</sup> 19th century alterations in this particular group include cutting away the splay of one of the ground floor windows in order to allow a donkey to turn a cider press kept there, and

inserting a door in the north wall of the room above when it was used as an apple store. The dividing wall between the upper floor rooms may have been taken down at the same time. 20th century changes include inserting two windows in the west wall and the addition of an internal brick wall and staircase.

<sup>3</sup> One of them has been replaced by a window but the chimney shaft still remains.

<sup>4</sup> A connecting doorway with its original staple and hinges were discovered during alterations made in 1953.



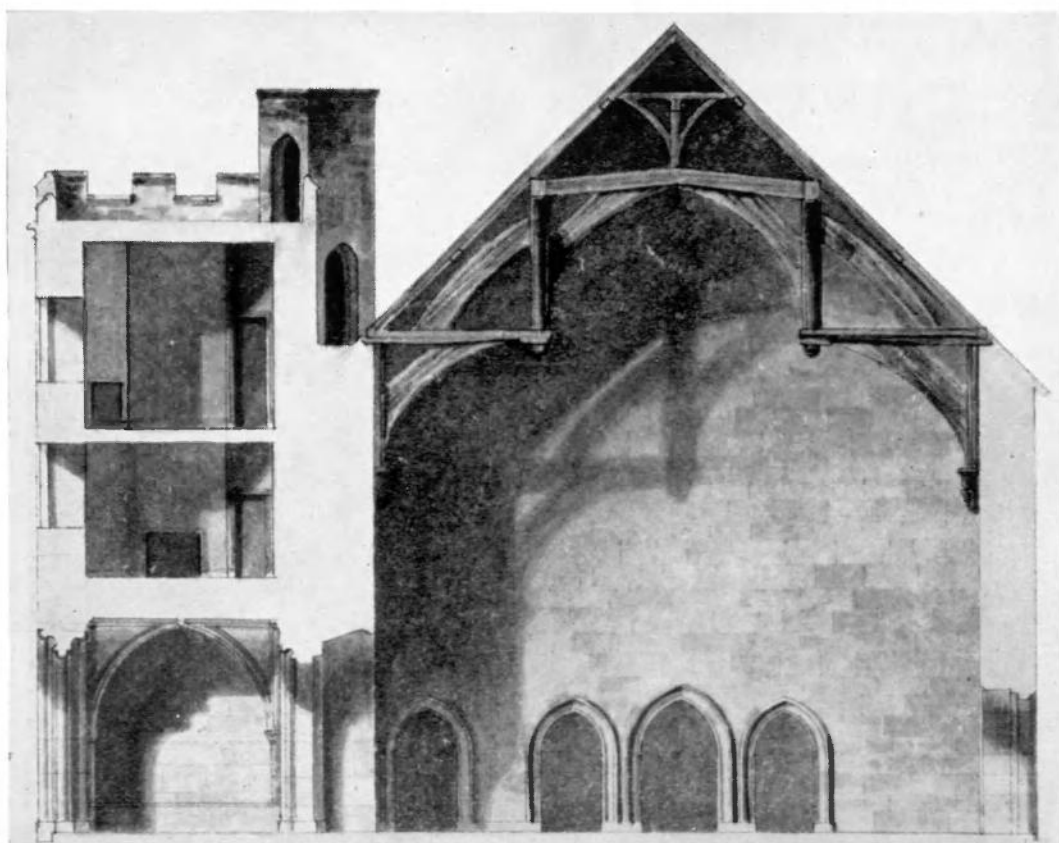
DARTINGTON HALL

*(By courtesy of Aerofilms Ltd.)*





A. The Great Hall, from the North Court  
(*Photograph : Nicholas Horne Ltd., Totnes*)



B. Section across the Great Hall, looking east. Coloured drawing by Saunders, 1805  
DARTINGTON HALL

which made it unnecessary for him or his servants always to approach his private rooms through the great hall.

Only part of the east range survives to-day and it has been so drastically altered at various times that very few dateable features remain. However, the existence in the outer facing wall of part of the head of a late 14th century window and two coupled arches at first floor level similar to the garderobe arches in the west range,

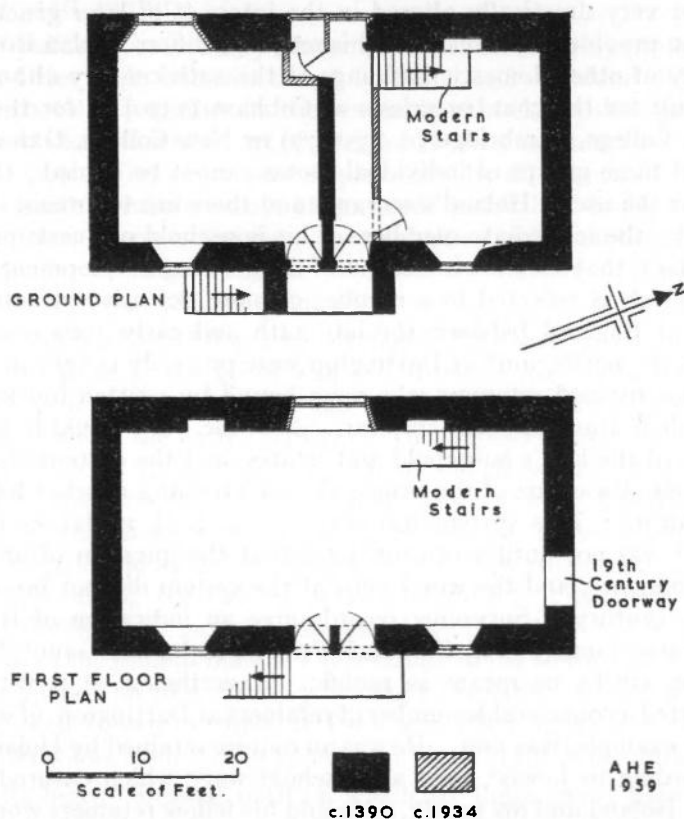


Fig. 2. The north-west lodgings, Dartington Hall

tend to indicate that part of this block was built by Holand on a plan similar to that of the lodgings immediately opposite. During the restoration in 1927, the steps and seats of two lavatories were in fact found adjacent to the first floor arches, but they were removed in favour of more modern fittings. Buck's drawing of the Hall made in 1734 indicates that this range formerly extended to the kitchen block and this is confirmed by a sketch made in about 1770 and now preserved in Exeter City Library. Furthermore, the sketch shows that the part which no longer exists<sup>1</sup> consisted of two groups of lodgings similar to those opposite and again with the cluster of four doors

<sup>1</sup> It was taken down in 1792.

in each group. There is little doubt, therefore, that at least two-thirds of this range consisted of sets of lodgings similar to those on the opposite side of the court, but the obvious change in roof levels about 35 ft. south of the barn and the position of several relieving arches suggest that they were not necessarily continued up to the north-east corner of the court.

The survival of so much of the north court at Dartington is particularly fortunate when so much lesser domestic accommodation of the Middle Ages has either been pulled down or very drastically altered in the interests of later generations. The accommodation provided by Holand for his retainers differs in plan from that found in the majority of other domestic buildings of the 14th century although it is not unlike that built for the chantry priests at Cobham (1370) or for the students at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (c. 1352-77) or New College, Oxford (1380-86). The comfort of these groups of individual rooms cannot be denied; they seem too comfortable for the use of Holand's servants and there are too many of them to be entirely filled by the immediate members of his household or guests of the family<sup>1</sup>. It is likely, in fact, that they are indicative of the growing development of livery and maintenance which is reflected in a number of more defensive structures built in various parts of England between the late 14th and early 16th centuries<sup>2</sup>. The lodgings round the north court at Dartington were probably never intended just for servants but for liveried retainers who were bound by written indenture to serve their lord for life in times of peace and war. As a rule, they would be either soldiers or else officials of the lord's household and estates, and the system of contract into which they entered was one of the principal characteristics of what has been called 'bastard feudalism'. This system has been traced back as far as the late 13th century, but it was not until a century later that the question of unruly retainers came into prominence, and the worst evils of the system did not become apparent until the 15th century<sup>3</sup>. Surviving records give an indication of the very large numbers of retainers indentured by the Black Prince and John of Gaunt, but records of other magnates are by no means so prolific. Nevertheless, it is very likely that Holand supported a considerable number of retainers at Dartington, of whom Thomas Proudfoot, for example, was one. He was an esquire retained by Holand in 1399 for life<sup>4</sup> and, according to Lewis<sup>5</sup>, paid a household wage which ensured his personal attendance on Holand and his family. He and his fellow retainers would be accommodated in the north court lodgings which are not unlike those built at Thornbury Castle between 1511 and 1521 for the many armed retainers of that over-mighty subject, the 3rd Duke of Buckingham. As at Dartington, Buckingham's retainers were housed in comfortable rooms surrounding the outer court, but they were all

<sup>1</sup> This is Mr. Raleigh Radford's suggestion (*Arch. J.*, CXIV (1957), 133) but I feel that the guests would have been accommodated in the rooms leading off the south court, possibly overlooking the pleasant aspects southwards and certainly away from the hurly-burly of the main court.

<sup>2</sup> See W. Douglas Simpson, 'Bastard Feudalism and the Later Castles', *Ants. J.*, XXIV (1946), 157-171.

<sup>3</sup> K. B. McFarlane, 'Bastard Feudalism', *Bull. Inst. Hist. Research*, XX (1943-45), 161-80; N. B. Lewis, 'The Organisation of Indentured Retinues in Fourteenth Century England', *Trans. R. Hist. Soc.*, XXVII (1945), 29-39; and Ch. 3 of *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England* by G. A. Holmes (1957).

<sup>4</sup> Cal. Pat. Rolls: 1399-1401, p. 244 where the indenture is confirmed after Holand's death.

<sup>5</sup> N. B. Lewis, *op. cit.* 34, 36.

approached by external staircases for the ground floor rooms were used as stables. Amply provided with fireplaces and divided by wooden internal walls, the Thornbury lodgings were built to accommodate considerably larger numbers of people in a room than at Dartington but the similarity in purpose and siting between the two courts is most marked. W. Douglas Simpson has shown how bastard feudalism affected the development of the English castle plan during the later Middle Ages and Dartington is perhaps an example of how it could affect the plan of domestic buildings in the late 14th century.

The great hall is approached by a most impressive and boldly projecting entrance tower, three stories high, buttressed and battlemented. Holand did not place his own badge or that of his mother on the central boss of the vaulted porch but set up the crowned and chained white hart of Richard II<sup>1</sup> on a heraldic rose, surrounded by his own wheat ears. This prominent display, seen by all who entered the hall, may have been Holand's symbolic token of gratitude to his half brother for the recent gift of Dartington. There is the usual group of three arches on the left hand side of the spacious screens passage<sup>2</sup> and the doors of the buttery and pantry, like the wooden benches in the porch, are original<sup>3</sup>.

The great hall is a splendid apartment, 69½ ft. long and 37½ ft. wide. It is lit by four majestic windows in the north wall and three on the south side: the smaller fourth window near the dais was blocked in the 16th century. Buck's drawing of 1734 shows that one of the early Champernownes replaced the original tracery with square headed windows divided by two mullions and transoms. In their turn, these were replaced by the present lights and simple cusped tracery, possibly in 1741 when the weathercock was raised above the clock turret and similar windows inserted in the nearby church. The mouldings of the inner arches are original and from pieces of tracery found during the course of the restoration, it is likely that Holand's windows were divided into pairs of transomed lights with trefoil heads set in more gentle splays than the present ones. The archway in the south wall leading from the dais probably opened on to a stairway leading to Holand's private apartments and similar to the well-known example at Penshurst Place (1341-49), but it failed to survive the alterations made to the upper solar block in the 16th century.

Despite its highly unusual position which, at times, must have made it most uncomfortable for those sitting on the dais, there is no reason to believe that the fireplace is not contemporary with the remainder of the hall. The shape of the arch is very similar to the shape of the rear arches built at either end of the screens passage and the moulding strongly resembles that surrounding the arches in the screens passage and the hall porch. Its late 14th century date is confirmed by the mason's mark found on the right hand inner wall of the fireplace and again on the inner arches of the entrance porch and the adjacent stair turret. The insertion of

<sup>1</sup> It is believed that Richard's badge was a variant of the white hind used by his mother and later adopted by Thomas Holand, Earl of Kent. A. C. Fox-Davies, *The Art of Heraldry* (1904), 335. There was no trace of any colour on the boss before it was gilded recently.

<sup>2</sup> As there was no trace of the former screen,

Weir modelled the present one on that at the Inn at Torbryan. There was no access to the gallery above it until a door was made from the room above the entrance porch in 1932.

<sup>3</sup> Weir found traces of a half door and serving shelf in the right hand archway of the screens passage.

such a gigantic fireplace, 17 ft. wide, at a later date as suggested by William St. John Hope<sup>1</sup> would have involved rebuilding the entire wall and there is no indication of that at all<sup>2</sup>. Traces were found during the restoration of the hooks which supported a large tapestry above this fireplace.

The roof of the hall was removed in the early 19th century because it was considered unsafe. The drawing made for Polwhele's *History of Devonshire* shows that it was in existence in 1806 but it had been removed by 1822 when Stothard's view of the north court was published in volume VI of Lysons' *Magna Britannia*. In 1813, Mr. Champernowne wrote to a Mr. Christopher Savery of Modbury asking him 'to have all the slating of the hall taken off. I shall then be able to determine whether to new slate or take down the timber work'. A report was made in the following June to the effect that the timbers would not last many more years and Champernowne decided that it was not economically possible for him to carry out the extensive repairs to the roof which it so badly needed<sup>3</sup>. Its removal, therefore, must have followed soon after this correspondence took place<sup>4</sup>. Fortunately, there is a considerable body of evidence to show what form this roof took. In 1805, George Saunders submitted plans for drastic alterations to the Hall and among them were a number of drawings illustrating the condition of the buildings at that time<sup>5</sup>. Saunders' work includes two cross-sections showing the east and west ends of the hall respectively and they give a clear indication of the roof structure as it existed at that time. (Pl. XXIB). The evidence of these drawings was confirmed by the outlines of the trusses visible on the end walls of the hall between the removal of the roof in the early 19th century and its restoration in 1932<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, a similar roof form covered the lower solar block above the buttery and pantry and the recesses for the trusses in the eastern gable are still visible above the ceiling of the second floor room. From these sources, it is quite clear that the great hall was covered with a hammer-beam roof of five bays. The small curved braces below the hammer-beams were supported on corbels carved with angels bearing heraldic shields<sup>7</sup>, and a king-post roof was added above the principal collar. A longitudinal drawing of the hall made by Saunders (Pl. XXII) shows that the original roof had no wind-braces at all. The large lower braces are arch-braces set vertically beneath the great purlin at collar level. The upper longitudinal and transverse braces are simply those of a normal trussed collar-purlin as used in king-post roofs. As far as we know, the main timbers were not elaborately moulded and there was none of that profusion of traceried lights found at Westminster Hall and, on a lesser scale, at the Law Library, Exeter. When Weir came to replace the roof in the early 30's, he was fortunate enough to be able to use timber grown on the estate and designed a roof which

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. J.*, LXX (1913), 557.

<sup>2</sup> An anonymous writer in *J.B.A.A.*, (1927), 131, states that ashes and cinders found in the centre of the hall were evidence of a central hearth, but they were the remains of bonfires lit in the roofless hall during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

<sup>3</sup> C. E. Champernowne, *The Champernowne Family* (1954), 284-86.

<sup>4</sup> A booklet *The History of Totnes and its Neighbourhood* (1825), states that the roof 'very

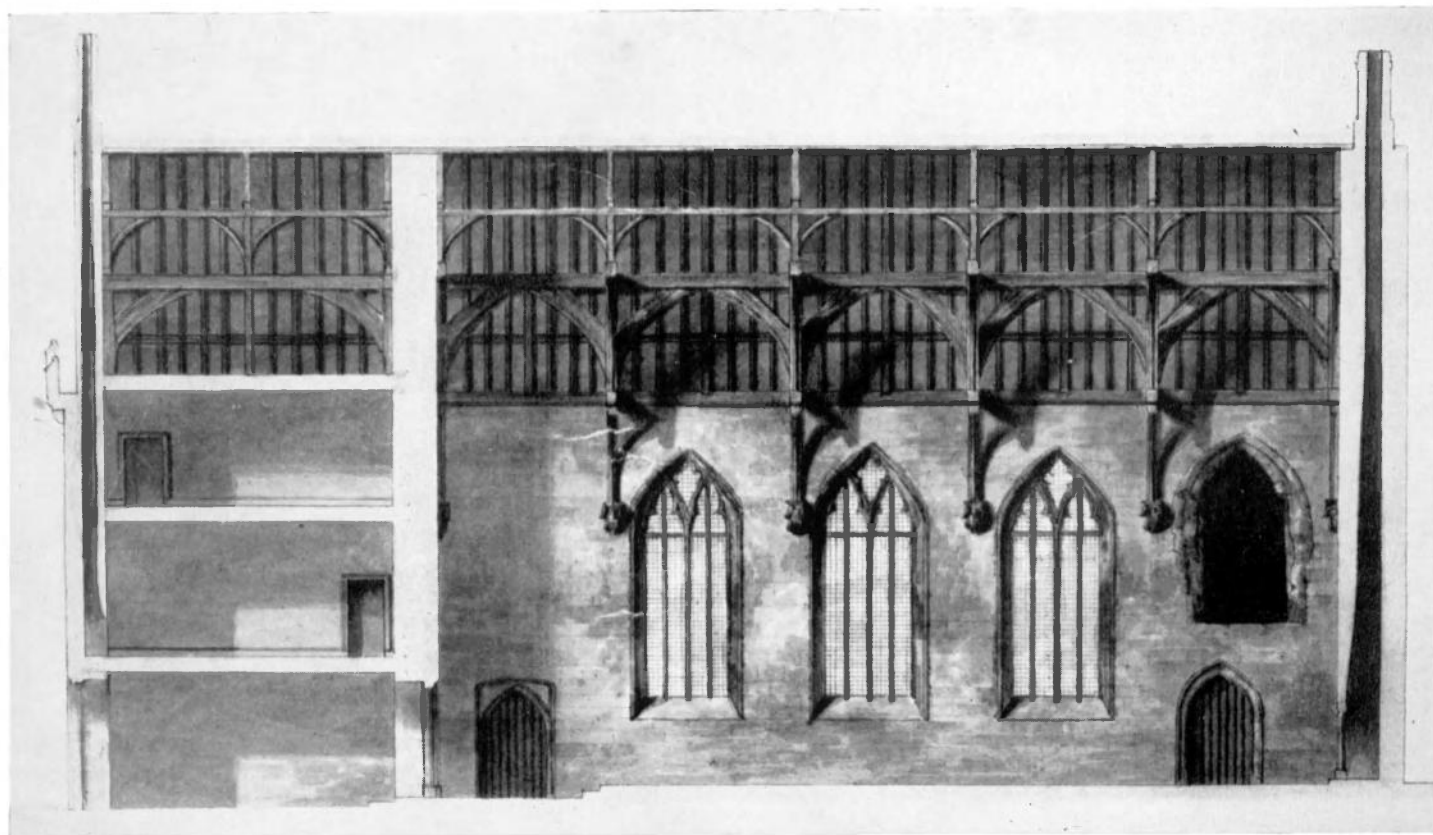
curiously framed, has of late years been removed'.

<sup>5</sup> Exeter City Library; Vol. of Plans and Drawings of Dartington Hall.

<sup>6</sup> The outline on the west wall is clearly shown in Pl. 2 of *Dartington Hall* (1958) by Victor Bonham-Carter.

<sup>7</sup> The Champernownes cut back the third corbel from the dais on the north side and changed the angel into a Tudor serving man, although he was allowed to retain the wings of his 14th century predecessor.





Longitudinal section of the Great Hall. Coloured drawing by Saunders, 1805

DARTINGTON HALL



differed little from the original one. However, as Saunders' drawings were not available at that time, he omitted the king-posts and introduced three rows of wind-braces. The roof formerly possessed the primitive characteristic of a narrow central span between the hammer-posts, but Weir felt that it would be unwise to follow the exact dimensions adopted by Holand's carpenter if the safety of the roof was to be guaranteed. Therefore, he shortened the hammer-beams on either side by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  ft. so as to create a total span between them of 20 ft.

Confusion has been caused by the alleged discovery of the outlines of a tie-beam and king-post roof, believed by one writer<sup>1</sup> to have been visible on the east wall of the hall and by another<sup>2</sup> on the east wall above the lower solar block. As a result, these writers have suggested that this was the form erected in the great hall by Holand towards the close of the 14th century and that the Champernownes replaced it with a hammer-beam roof in the second half of the 16th century. Apart from the fact that 38 ft. would have been an impossible distance to span with a tie-beam, there are no traces at all of such a form of roof structure on either the east wall of the hall or lower solar block although the recesses remain in the latter case for the trusses of a roof similar to that which covered the great hall.

Although the building of the hammer-beam roof at Westminster Hall during the closing years of the 14th century stands out as a remarkable technical and aesthetic achievement, the development of this type of roof construction in England is by no means clear. Many writers have pointed out that the accomplished form so clearly shown at Westminster could not have been achieved without some earlier experimental examples, but only three or four such roofs are yet known. The principle of supporting posts on hammer-beams is illustrated in Villard D'Honnecourt's notebook (c. 1240) but the origins of this form in England probably have to be sought in the great timber brackets supporting the roof covering the kitchen of the Bishop's Palace at Chichester (c. 1300?) and the lantern at Ely Cathedral (stone octagon and lantern, 1322-42). The earliest example of a fully developed hammer-beam roof in England is believed to be the one at the so-called Strangers' Hall at Winchester. Estimates of its date differ<sup>3</sup> but its construction probably took place between about 1320 and 1350 and possibly nearer to the earlier than the latter date. A further example was built a little later over the hall of Tiptofts manor house near Saffron Walden and although the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments suggests that it was constructed in about 1330<sup>4</sup>, J. T. Smith considers that it was built for Sir John Tiptoft some time between 1348 and 1367<sup>5</sup>. Although the roof designed by Herland between 1380 and 1386 for the chapel at New College, Oxford, has been destroyed and

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hussey, *Country Life*, 3rd Sept., 1938.

<sup>2</sup> The anonymous author of *A Short History of Dartington Hall* (4th ed. 1937), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Lloyd states about 1300, *A History of the English House* (1931), 34, 358; Geoffrey Webb considers the first half of the 14th century likely, *Architecture in Britain: the Middle Ages* (1956), 189; and John Harvey suggests a slightly later date, *Gothic England* (1947), 52, although he now feels that the second

quarter of the 14th century is rather more likely.

<sup>4</sup> *R.C.H.M., Essex I* (1916), 351-53.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch. J.*, CXII (1955), 90. The truss of another early hammer-beam roof in Essex has survived near the west end of the nave of Tending Church. According to *R.C.H.M., Essex, III* (1922), 213, it dates from the 14th century, but I do not feel that the surviving evidence necessarily favours a date before 1350 as stated by Nikolaus Pevsner in *Buildings of England: Essex* (1954), 28.

not recorded in detail, it was also possibly of hammer-beam design. Unfortunately, the evidence in this example is not conclusive but the roof built in Devon is closer in date if not in design to that spanning Westminster Hall. Moreover, it is possible to date the great hall at Dartington a little more precisely than the rest of Holand's work, for the badge of the crowned and chained white hart displayed in the entrance porch was not adopted by Richard II before October, 1390<sup>1</sup> and it certainly would not have been put up after Richard's deposition in 1399. It is possible, therefore, to confine the building of the great hall between these two dates, and on the supposition that such an important apartment would have been among the first erected by Holand, it is not unlikely that its building was in progress nearer 1390 than 1399.

At about the same time that Holand had begun carrying out his work in Devon, his father-in-law, John of Gaunt, undertook important building operations at Kenilworth Castle. It is almost certain that the great hall there was built between 1390 and 1393<sup>2</sup> but we have no indication of the final form of the roof before its removal in the mid-17th century. Yet it is difficult to see how the span of 45 ft., apparently the widest yet created in any domestic or military building in England<sup>3</sup>, could have been covered by any roof other than one of hammer-beam design. It is possible that a structure was created similar to the arch-braced collar-beam roof built at Penshurst nearly fifty years earlier, but it is more likely that such a magnificent apartment was covered with a roof designed according to principles still being developed and which not only permitted a very broad span to be covered with reasonable ease but enabled the hall to be crowned with a truly majestic and elaborate structure in keeping with the richly decorated walls and openings immediately below. Consequently, it is possible that the construction of two hammer-beam roofs had been undertaken just before the rebuilding of Westminster Hall was begun for Richard II early in 1394. The roofs built at Dartington and Kenilworth were both designed for members of the royal family and apparently within one or two years of each other. It is not unlikely that the principle which had proved successful in the hall of Richard's half-brother and possibly his uncle was then applied to the unprecedented width of nearly 70 ft. at Westminster. There is a considerable difference however, between the roof designed for Holand and that for Richard II, and although the former is an exotic bloom in its own region, it is a country cousin compared with the sophisticated structure built at Westminster.

The great hall at Dartington separates the upper from the lower solar block, a fairly common feature of large-scale domestic planning in the later Middle Ages. The upper solar block behind the dais originally consisted of a ground floor room, a great chamber on the first floor and possibly a large room above it. We know very little about Holand's private apartments for they were completely remodelled by the

<sup>1</sup> Richard had adopted the device of the white hart as early as 1379 when he possessed brooches displaying this emblem (H. T. Riley, *Memorials of London* (1868), 429, 443, 550) but the Monk of Evesham clearly states that the white hart with a crown and gold chain was first worn by Richard at the Smithfield Tournament in October, 1390. See M. V. Clarke, *Fourteenth Century Studies* (1937), 227-28.

<sup>2</sup> John Harvey, 'Side Lights on Kenilworth Castle', *Arch. J.*, CI (1944), 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> The dimensions, 90 ft. x 45 ft., were identical with those of a hall built there in 1347 (*V.C.H. Warwickshire* VI (1951), 135) but nothing else is known about this building. The nave roof of York Minister, built between 1350 and 1375 also had a span of 45 ft.

Champernownes, first of all in the 16th and then again in the 18th century. An occasional thickening of the wall is the only surviving indication of any 14th century work to-day. The lower solar block, however, has not been subject to such drastic changes. Each of the rooms above the buttery and pantry is approached from the stair turret built in the south-east corner of the porch. The insertion of the square windows in both rooms was part of the alterations probably carried out by Sir Arthur Champernowne in the early years of Elizabeth I's reign when the plaster decoration was added beneath the ceiling in the northern half of the lower room<sup>1</sup>. Weir suggested that the door in the south-east corner of this room led to a garderobe although no evidence of this has survived his alterations. The upper apartment is now covered with a well-built 19th century ceiling but it formerly boasted a hammer-beam roof similar to that in the great hall. The purpose of these two rooms, however, is by no means clear. The existence of at least one such room above the buttery and pantry, as at Penshurst Place and Minster Lovell for example, is a common enough feature of later medieval domestic planning. Yet Dartington is unusual in possessing two such apartments, both of considerable importance and which could be completely cut off from the rest of the building by a bar at the foot of the staircase. It is a matter for conjecture whether they were used by the steward in charge of the Hall during his lord's absence, restricted to members of Holand's own family, reserved for the ladies of the household or used for some other entirely different purpose<sup>2</sup>. The small opening looking into the great hall, however, which is so frequently associated with the room occupied by the ladies or the steward, is found at Dartington near the door of the upper apartment<sup>3</sup>.

The kitchen was approached from the screens passage by means of a covered way. It is a rectangular apartment, 35 ft. square, well lit by two large single light windows high above the corners of the hearths and one in the middle of the two other walls. The two enormous hearths, more than 14 ft. high at the apex of their arches and formerly protected by broad wooden hoods, fill the lower part of the east and south facing walls. One of the recesses in the southern hearth held a shelf and Weir discovered traces in its neighbour in the eastern wall of an independent air supply with an outlet further up the chimney. The drain to the left of the eastern hearth, high enough to admit a stooping man, formerly ran eastwards for about 12 ft. and then turned southwards towards the dell, but it was blocked up in Tudor times. The roof was removed before the 19th century leaving no evidence as to its original form except for two unhelpful stone brackets. Weir built up the gables and

<sup>1</sup> A plaster coat of arms which was formerly above the fireplace was probably placed there at this time. It fell down in the late 19th century as a result of damp caused through a blocked roof gutter. I owe this information to Miss C. E. Champernowne.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Harvey has drawn my attention to the two storeys above the buttery, pantry and access lobby from the kitchen at the contemporary Winchester College. The upper storey was one large room called the 'Cheese Room' and certainly used for storing cheeses from at least the

early 15th century. The lower storey was divided by a timber partition into two rooms, the original Bursary and the Audit room. It is interesting to notice that the lower room at Dartington was also formerly divided by a partition, removed by Weir, which had been in existence since at least the third quarter of the 16th century when the room so created facing the north court was decorated with a plaster ceiling.

<sup>3</sup> It is now blocked and covered by a wooden cupboard but the relieving arch is still visible inside it.



added a most imaginative if entirely conjectural covering<sup>1</sup>. The free-standing kitchens built for the abbots of Glastonbury (second half of the 14th century) and Durham (c. 1366-71) and the semi-defensive kitchen built at Raby Castle (c. 1378) all possess stone octagonal roofs supporting a central louvre. That at Dartington is more likely to have been a wooden one similar to the early structure surviving at the Bishop's Palace, Chichester. The Dartington kitchen was admirably designed as a spacious workplace where food for a large household could be adequately prepared. Danger from fire was reduced to a minimum by building it as a separate block and the fireplaces were inserted in those walls facing away from the hall buildings. The tall windows not only provided ample light but helped to take away some of the excessive heat. The constant activity surrounding the kitchen and possibly some adjacent storerooms were screened from the north court by a low retaining wall supported and decorated by a number of beautiful shallow buttresses.

The second court lay south of the great hall but little remains of it except for the lower part of the outer wall consisting of an imposing range of openings stripped of their facing stones. On the south face of the hall block is a blocked archway at first floor level to the east of the screens door. This could have led to an upper room which was either part of a two-storied range of rooms or a cloister with a single range of rooms above it. Such a block would connect with the existing range of arches at a point now marked by a slight rebate in the retaining wall of the upper lawn. There would be a return wall to the upper solar block and this began where there are the remains of the spring of an arch at the west end of the range. Marks in the lawn during the dry weather indicate the presence of walling on the west side of this court and the excavation of the whole area would clarify many details at present only suspected<sup>2</sup>.

Although the surviving work enables us to gain a vivid impression of the house Holand built for himself during the closing years of his life, all the present contents of Dartington Hall have been added by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst since 1925. It is not surprising that none of the original furnishings have remained to the present day, although it is possible that some fragments of stained glass have survived in the great hall at Weare Gifford near Bideford where four badges have been inserted in the windows at the east end of the north wall showing Holand's wheat ears enlaced with the gold letters I and E, the initials of John Holand and his wife, Elizabeth<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, two inventories exist which were made by the Crown soon after Holand's death in 1400 giving details of many of the furnishings in Dartington Hall at that time. The second and shorter inventory was made in 1401 when some of Holand's

<sup>1</sup> He also built the wooden staircase to the lower solar and added the bold corbelling immediately over it.

<sup>2</sup> The plan given by Hamilton Thompson in *Arch. J.*, LXX shows the south facing walls of the second court extended by about a further 70 ft. in either direction so that the return walls joined the main buildings at the S.W. and S.E. corners of the upper solar and kitchen respectively. Thompson fails to indicate the source of his 'old

plan' but it was made by Saunders in 1805. Not only does the surviving evidence fail to support it, but it is extremely improbable that any walls would be allowed to terminate against the S.E. corner of the kitchen and thereby increase the liability of danger from fire.

<sup>3</sup> A. W. B. Messenger, 'A Survey of the Heraldry at the Hall, Weare Gifford, Devon', *Report and Trans. Devon Ass.*, LXXV (1943), 205.

furniture was granted to Henry IV's son, Humphrey<sup>1</sup>. It has been printed in the Calendar of Patent Rolls: 1399-1401 (p. 439) but it is included here for comparison with the slightly earlier and more detailed inventory. The grant included

'three cloths of gold worked with oaks, six red rugs worked with tapestry of the arms of the earl and his wife, a bed with a canopy and tester of red tarteryn<sup>2</sup>, a bed of silk with a canopy and three curtains of blue tarteryn embroidered with letters with three curtains of red tarteryn, a trapping of red velvet, a bed of silk with a white and red canopy with curtains of the same suit, a canopy with a tester of red embroidered worsted and three old rugs of red worsted embroidered with oak leaves, and all other parcels of money and moveable goods late of the said John within his manor of Dertyngton on the day of his forfeiture and not granted by the king to anyone else . . .'

This list does not include any entries which call for particular mention but a far more elaborate and interesting inventory exists, written in a mixture of Latin and French, which was made less than two months after Holand's death<sup>3</sup>.

'Inquisition taken at Dertyngton on Monday next before the feast of St. Mathias the Apostle I Henry IV (24 February, 1399/1400) . . . that there are on the day of the present Inquisition within the manor of Dertyngton divers goods and chattels which were of the same late Earl of Huntingdon . . . namely one bed of silk embroidered with bulls and divers other arms with iii curtains of tarteryn covered with gold foil with bulls, with two rugs<sup>4</sup> ('tapeta') of tapestry ('tapiserie') with bulls and viii cushions of silk embroidered with bulls. Also one bed of baudekyn<sup>5</sup> embroidered with the arms of England and Hainault with iii curtains of red sendell. Also one bed of red tarteryn embroidered with letters with a curtain of red tarteryn belonging to the same bed. Also xix white rugs of Arace of parrots ('papeiays'). Also xiiii rugs of red tapestry with the arms of the same late Earl of Huntingdon and of the lady his wife and with the livery<sup>6</sup> of the same late Earl, namely wheat ears ('wheteneris') with ii 'fustienys'<sup>7</sup>. Also xii rugs of blue tapestry and of the arms of the same late Earl of Huntingdon. Also ii long cushions of red cloth of gold. Also ii long cushions of red velvet and viii short cushions of the same cloth. Also viii short cushions of red cloth of gold and xii cushions of white cloth of gold. Also iiiii long white cushions of white Damask cloth embroidered with M's with golden crowns and ii short cushions of the same suit. Also ii long cushions of green Damask cloth. Also i cushion of black Damask cloth. Also iii golden rugs of Arace. Also i long cushion of old damask.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the furnishings and belongings forfeited by Holand were later returned to his wife. See Cal. Pat. Rolls: 1399-1401, pp. 206, 244.

<sup>2</sup> An unpatterned material, apparently of silk, current in England between about 1350 and 1550. It owes its name to the Tartars, i.e. the Mongols, and was presumably first imported from the East.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office; Ing. Misc. Chancery 145/278 Item 37. The condition of this document makes it difficult to read one or two phrases in it. I have added a number of the interesting

technical terms in brackets.

<sup>4</sup> The word 'rug' implies mats on tables and floors or hangings on walls.

<sup>5</sup> A bed with a coverlet and perhaps backcloth and canopy of baudekyn, a rich patterned silk material current from the 12th to the 16th century. It derives its name from Baghdad and was presumably originally imported from the East.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. the badge.

<sup>7</sup> Possibly 'fusillys', a heraldic bearing in the form of an elongated lozenge or 'lusuenys', a lozenge.

Also i hanging ('coster') of tapestry for the Hall. Also i velvet covering for the lady's chariot ('quadriga') i 'pal'<sup>1</sup> of white and red . . . Also iiiii green rugs of tapestry. Also vii rugs of white Worsted embroidered with black Ragged Staves. Also iii curtains with i valance ('travers') of white tarteryn of the same work of Ragged staves. Also i bed of baudekyn with iii curtains of red tarteryn. Also xi old rugs of linsey-woolsey ('stamyn') of white and blue i 'woun . . .' Also viii old . . . of red worsted. Also i bed of green baudekyn with a canopy ('celer') and iii curtains of green tarteryn. Also viii 'carpes'<sup>2</sup>. Also i old bed torn ('dilacerat') of baudekyn with iii curtains of blue tarteryn. Also i other old bed of Norfolk with iii old curtains of 'card'<sup>3</sup>. Also an old bed of red worsted embroidered with iii curtains of the same suit. Also iii white Irish mantles. Also i horse-trapper of red and black buckram. Also an old bed of red worsted embroidered with oak leaves with iii curtains of tarteryn of the same suit and vii old rugs of Worsted of the same suit. Also i old back-cloth ('doser') and ii side-hangings ('coster') of the same suit abovesaid of oak leaves. Also i old covering of blue cloth for the lord's chariot. Also i covering for a bed of silk 'pal' of red and white. Also i missal, i antiphonal with a psalter contained within it and i gradual. Also i set of vestments of red baudekyn and ii altar coverings of the same suit and i frontal of baudekyn and ii towels for the altar and ii curtains of red tarteryn and iiiii surplices. Also viii table cloths ('nappa') and six hand towels and v cloths ('savenappes'). Also ii silver bowls with i silver washbasin ('lavator'). Also i pot and i covered salt of silver. Also one cup with a cover of silver gilt. Also ii other silver cups, vi silver spoons. Also vi plates ('disci') and iiiii saucers of silver. Also iiiii chests bound with iron and another chest bound with iron. Also i travelling chest ('trussigcoffre'). Also ii jousting saddles with ii head pieces ('testeres') for horses. Also ii helms, vi gauntlets ('maynfers') and iii pairs of plate gloves, vii vambraces<sup>4</sup> and ii pairs of rerebraces<sup>5</sup> and one pair of poleyns<sup>6</sup> and xvii vamplates. Also in the kitchen iiiii great standard pots of bronze and v smaller standard pots of bronze and vi small bronze pots and v very small pots ('olliole') of bronze. Also ii great cooking vessels ('cacobi') and ii small cooking vessels and iiiii great ladles of copper and iiiii small ladles of bronze and iiiii frying pans ('frixor') and iii great griddles of iron and i old griddle of iron, vi iron rakes, xix iron jacks ('verna') and v leaden pipes for gutters for the Hall. Also v great mortars, xiii dozen of tin plates. Also i 'pollax' of copper<sup>7</sup>. Also ii mattresses and i canvas ('canevaces'<sup>8</sup>) . . .

<sup>1</sup> Possibly 'pallum', a piece of rich material. Mr. Salzman has suggested that it might be 'paly', i.e. striped.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably a mistake for carpets, not necessarily pile carpets but thick materials for use on tables or floors.

<sup>3</sup> A coarse unpatterned woven material, thought to have been of linen, used in England between about 1250 and 1450.

<sup>4</sup> A defence for the lower arm, usually including the elbow and extending up to the upper arm.

<sup>5</sup> A defence for the upper arm and shoulder.

<sup>6</sup> Plate defence for the knees.

<sup>7</sup> A pole-axe of copper is hard to explain for it is most unlikely that such an object would have been made of copper unless it was intended for ceremonial purposes only.

<sup>8</sup> This word occurs in other inventories in conjunction with mattresses and in this context, it presumably means the canvas slung on the bed frame to support the mattress.

This splendid inventory enables us to obtain some idea of the furnishings in what must have been a very rich household. It is remarkable how many rugs and hangings are cited for instance, and a number of entries suggest that there was a private chapel in the Hall of which there are no indications to-day. In addition, the references concerning the armour are of particular interest in view of Holand's own ability in the field and the existence of what may be a remarkably fine tournament ground to the south of the second court.

During the second half of the 13th century, the tournament became less like a battle and more like an orderly combat following carefully laid down rules of conduct. At the same time, it became a great social occasion and an opportunity for all the pageantry and display of chivalry. A tournament could be held on any stretch of flat ground which allowed sufficient room for those taking part and the erection of stands for privileged spectators. Consequently, it is unlikely that many of these sites can be identified to-day unless they were particularly elaborate or documentary evidence is very explicit. The approximate positions of those set up by Henry VIII at Whitehall, Greenwich and Hampton Court are known, but whether tradition points correctly to the site at Bodiam Castle, for instance, or the name 'tilt-yard' is correctly applied at Eltham Palace or Kenilworth Castle remains to be proved. It has always been thought that a tournament ground of late medieval date still exists at Dartington Hall but it is a matter for question whether the surviving evidence supports this belief.

Immediately south of the second court lies a stretch of flat ground 60 yards long with sides converging from 50 yards at one end to 30 yards at the other. It is flanked by parallel tiers of grass banks, six on the south side and three on the north side, of which the uppermost is traditionally said to have been widened in Tudor times to make a bowling green (Pl. XX). The creation of these banks and the levelling of the ground between them must have entailed a considerable amount of labour and necessitated the diversion of a small brook underground. No mention of the work involved is made in any of the surviving 17th and 18th century records of the Champenowne family preserved in Exeter City Library and, in any case, it is difficult to see why anything of this nature should have been constructed during this period. In considering a date before the 17th century, I know of no other form of entertainment which could have taken place regularly at Dartington on a scale sufficiently large to warrant the construction of these terraces other than tournaments and jousts. Hundreds of people can be accommodated on these banks and they would all obtain an uninterrupted view of the lists<sup>1</sup> below in which the tournaments could be held. At the close of the 14th century, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester drew up detailed 'Rules for the Justus of Peace' in his 'Epistle to King Richard II'. From it, we learn that 'the lists shall be lx paces of length and xl paces of breadth'<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The lists was the area prepared for a tournament. The word 'tournament' is used to describe all mock combats, but strictly speaking it should be applied only to those involving a group of warriors and the term 'joust' used when no more than two contestants are involved. The use of a tilt, i.e. the barrier running down the

lists between two jousts, is not recorded before the jousts held at Arras in 1429 so that it is inaccurate to use the word 'tilt-yard' to describe a feature which may be earlier than this date.

<sup>2</sup> British Museum, Harl. MSS. 69 (23).

Although the length of the present ground is the same as that laid down by Gloucester, the width is only 40 yards in the middle of the converging sides. However, as the lists were constructed in a natural dell, this perhaps restricted the width available.

The lists and terraces could have been constructed any time between the late 13th century and the decline of the tournament in the early 17th century, but a number of factors favour a late 14th century date. Among all the owners of Dartington Hall, one was so skilled in the lists that his fame was known throughout Europe. Froissart frequently refers to John Holand's ability and his contest in 1387 with the French knight, Sir Reginald de Roie, while they were in Spain, is described in great detail. Holand would undoubtedly need to practice his art and there is every possibility that he would reserve a stretch of ground for this purpose at his principal country residence. If, however, he intended to carry out tournaments as part of the entertainment provided for his guests at Dartington, then such a splendid layout as still exists would not be inappropriate. The 'Epistle to King Richard II' mentioned above was written by Holand's uncle and it was about this time that the tournament became a sport more practised for its own sake than as a preparation for war. Claude Blair points out that certain of the pieces of armour listed in the inventory given above were of a type which were only used in the joust. In addition to the particular type of saddles mentioned, manifers were a special heavy form of gauntlet used solely for the joust and vamplates were a hand defence attached to a lance, similarly confined at this time to jousting. By the late 14th century, the various forms of helmet were called by their special names such as bascinet, kettle hat and pallet, and the word 'helm' was almost entirely confined to describing the very large enclosed headpiece worn at that time in the lists in England. These particular entries in the inventory simply mean that jousting armour was kept at Dartington in 1400, but nevertheless they strengthen the supposition that jousting was carried out there at that time. Finally, the south facing range of the second court does not lie parallel to the great hall but to the terraces on the north side of the lists. This not only suggests that these terraces were in existence or at least planned at the same time as the range was built, but that this range was constructed at this particular angle for some special reason. Was this range, in fact, with its series of large openings overlooking the lists, deliberately built to serve not only as a connecting corridor between the east and west ranges of the south court but also as a grandstand for privileged guests watching the tournaments below?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although I know of no other example of such a grandstand in England, Sir James Mann has pointed out to me that there are at least two European examples of loggias flanking a tilt-

yard; at Rosenberg in Austria, and at Sabioneta in Italy. They both date from the 16th century.