

EXCAVATIONS AT DARTINGTON HALL, 1962

By COLIN PLATT

In April, 1962, an excavation¹ was carried out on the lawn immediately south of Dartington Hall. The lawn had long been presumed to be the site of the south courtyard of the Hall, and the excavation was designed to test this assumption as part of a general work on the history and architecture of Dartington Hall planned by Anthony Emery. A paper by Mr. Emery on certain aspects of the historical problems posed by Dartington appeared in Volume cxv of this *Journal*.

The main block of the hall and kitchen at Dartington is securely dated to the late 14th century and is associated with the name of John Holand, Duke of Exeter and half-brother of Richard II. To the north of the hall, and of less certain date, are the surviving buildings of a large courtyard designed, apparently, as the quarters of gentlemen-in-waiting or retainers. Before the excavation nothing remained visible of the south courtyard, apart from a length of wall containing window openings generally late in appearance but badly damaged and in themselves hardly datable. The main purpose of the excavation was to explain the presence of this isolated ruin, to date it, and to relate it as far as possible to the existing buildings of the Hall.

The plan of the south courtyard as excavated. (Figs. 1 & 2 and Pl. XXVIIIa.)

Taking into account the limitations of time and of labour, it was felt that the first need was to establish a reasonably comprehensive plan of the buildings. During the course of the excavation it became possible to suggest a sequence of destruction which later examination of the finds has done much to confirm.

It will be seen that although the plan has its eccentricities, it proves the existence of a second courtyard expected by analogy with Haddon Hall, Wingfield Manor and Thornbury Castle. Broadly, the main features of the excavated buildings are a small central courtyard with a long gallery on its southern side, on the west a 'tower' and a set of apartments linking the gallery to the main block of the hall, and on the east a further block of buildings closing off the courtyard yet failing to join up with the great kitchen at the lower end of the hall.

¹ For permission to excavate, and for the financing of the entire project, I must thank the Trustees of Dartington Hall. Nothing could have been done without the whole-hearted co-operation of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst to whom I am particularly grateful. To Mr. Anthony Emery is due the entire credit for the inspiration, organization and administration of the dig, and to the students of Leeds University and the Institute of Archaeology, London, I owe its successful completion. Mr. John Hurst, Mr. Gerald Dunning and the late Mr. E. A. Lane advised me on the pottery, and Mr. H. M. Stewart of the Institute of Archaeology very kindly offered to draw it. The dating of the glass I owe to Mr. R. J. Charleston of the Victoria and Albert Museum. For the plans I am indebted to Messrs. Christopher Carter and Christopher Blackwood. The photographic record is largely the work of Mrs. Sarah Platt. The excavation lasted from 1st-19th April, and was conducted with the aid of twenty volunteers, most of them unskilled. Limitations on its scope included consistently bad weather, the obligation to preserve the garden from excessive disturbance and the impossibility of a second season.

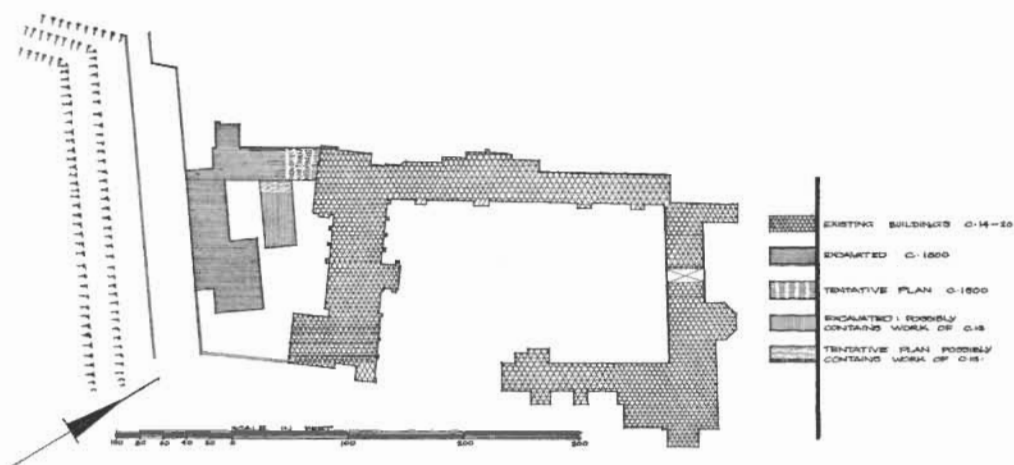


Fig. 1. Block plan of Dartington Hall

The gallery

A first-floor gallery is a reasonably common feature of larger domestic buildings of the 16th century; a ground-floor gallery hardly exists at all before the late 17th or even the 18th century. It is not impossible that the 'gallery' as excavated is actually the undercroft of a first-floor gallery; indeed, even ignoring the staircase, the thickness of the surviving wall certainly indicates an upper storey and the flattened rear-arches of the window openings suggest that they were designed to fit under a floor above. But the size of the window openings and the elaboration of the fireplace and floor excavated at F20-21 (Fig. 3 & Pl. XXVIIIb) indicate that even if this were, strictly speaking, an undercroft, it must have represented a state apartment of some considerable dignity in its own right. In any case, whatever interpretation we put upon this building, it is difficult to date it much before the 16th century — a dating which, as we shall see, is supported by other evidence on the site.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that in the plan for rebuilding the south courtyard, prepared by George Saunders in 1805 and now preserved with other plans and drawings of Dartington Hall in the Exeter City Library, the architect makes use of the surviving arches in a projected 'Gallery' with vestibules at either end exactly as we may expect the earlier gallery to have been. As Saunders himself explains, 'the gallery and terrace . . . are situated where there appears to have been a gallery and terrace in the original building, commanding the best prospects, etc. . . .'

The tower

A map of the coastal defences of South-west England, prepared in about 1540,¹ shows three towers at Dartington. Allowing for one of these as the church tower still surviving to the west of the hall, we are left with two still

¹ B.M., *Cotton MS.* Augustus li, art. 39.

unexplained. One might be the tower the foundations of which are said to have been uncovered to the east of the barn in 1936;¹ the other it is tempting, and not unreasonable, to identify with the 'tower' excavated with the buildings of the south courtyard.

The first suggestion that this building was indeed a tower arose as an attempt to explain its square plan. But the most convincing evidence of its true nature is rather the depth of the ditch or 'moat' that we excavated at its north-east corner (L6-7). In other parts of the site natural rock² had been reached at depths between three and four feet below turf level; here there were at least nine feet of disturbed ditch-fill below the top of the surviving tower walls, themselves a couple of feet under the present lawn surface. That the ditch was designed to hold water either for drainage or defensive purposes seems confirmed by the discovery of a shute drain running into it at L7; another drain (at G/H3) flattens out at some four feet below wall level, implying that the ditch ran the whole way round the tower.

The entrance, external and ground-floor as it is, lends little to the theory of the defensive nature of the building. Yet in its complications it is not at all unlike the entrance to the great tower at Wingfield. Moreover, the later blocking of the corner at K6 suggests that, at least at some stage of its existence, defence of the doorway was contemplated. The analogy with Wingfield is carried one stage further by the fireplace at K7. At Dartington, as at Wingfield, a fireplace is built with little regard to defence into an outside wall of the tower to serve an abutting building. This fireplace had later been blocked, possibly at the time of the work at the corner of the entrance.

Finally, although the plan of the building and the depth of its ditch and foundations certainly suggest a tower of considerable height, the thickness of the walls and the techniques of construction employed hardly support such an interpretation. The side wall of the tower is simply built-up (at G6) against the corner of the main block with no apparent attempt at bonding the two. It is, moreover, scarcely more than three feet in width. The contrast with the north-east corner at L7, with its careful rounding-off and strengthening, is marked. If, as has been suggested by Mr. John Harvey, this building is in fact a garderobe tower, the general flimsiness of the construction would be somewhat easier to explain. Yet if we are to start describing the tower ditch as a drainage channel it is worth noting that the only part of the ditch that was dug out to its full depth was that on the entrance side of the building (at L6-7). The tower drain is at the far corner (at G/H3), and it seems most unlikely that further drains ran over the entrance passage-way into the northern ditch, even in those areas we failed to excavate. It remains possible, of course, that the northern ditch served as a drainage outlet for apartments other than the tower, and the shute drain marked on the plan at L7 would certainly support such a suggestion.

¹ A. Emery, 'Dartington Hall, Devonshire', *Arch. J.*, cxv, 188.

² Professor Scott Simpson of Exeter University described the natural rock as 'Middle Devonian slates with natural ribs of limestone'. It is quite possible that natural gullies could exist in such conditions, and our 'moat' may owe something of its character to one of these.

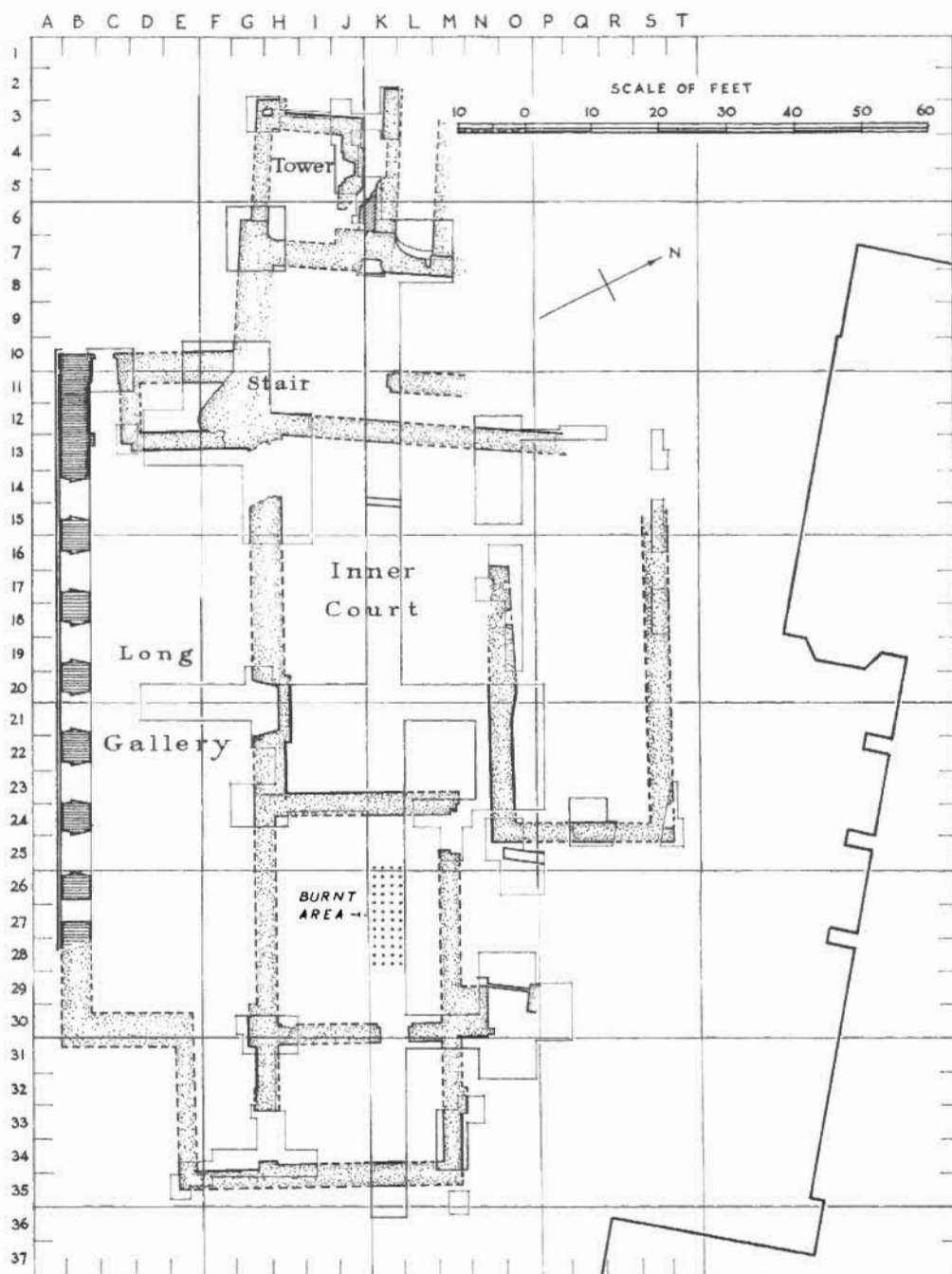


Fig. 2. Plan of excavations

The building to the north of the courtyard

The discovery of 13th-century pottery¹ at foundation level immediately to the north of the wall at O23 suggests that this building formed part of the original Manor House, with no necessary connection with the remainder of the much later courtyard complex. To some extent this interpretation is supported both by further finds of 13th-century date and by the nature of the building itself.

It is interesting to note, for example, that the building is nowhere linked with any of the other structures on the site, nor does it convincingly line up with them. The disappearance of the wall at N16 and before S13, together with its insubstantial nature towards these points, might be explained as the result of a local rise in the level of the natural rock; it might also have been the consequence of the disuse of this building following the construction of the rest of the south courtyard. A silver penny of Edward I found low in the section at N21, a 13th-century spoon handle, and small quantities of the gritty red ware characteristic of the late 13th century in Devon, all point to the occupation of this area in that century, although such occupation need have had no connection with the building we are discussing.

Indeed, it is probable that the weight of evidence turns against this being an earlier building. In its masonry and in its constructional techniques it shows no variation on the styles seen over the rest of the site. The wall width is the same, and the marked batter at this level which is characteristic of the other external walls is plainly repeated here. The late 17th-century floor ran up to the wall at N20 though not, except in part, over it; hence the wall was certainly exposed at that date and, considering the rubble nature of the floor, might well have been exposed to some height. Moreover, although the link between the wall at N23 and the securely late wall at M23 is not clear, there appeared to be some sort of flagstone floor (picked up again in the northern section at M24-5) joining the two, and implying a contemporary existence, if not origin. Finally, in describing the position of the sherds of the late 13th-century French jug the term 'level' is used advisedly — there was no sign of a foundation trench as such.

Further peculiarities of the plan

Most of these will be considered again later in discussing the interpretation of the plan. They are listed here to clarify the details of the plan itself.

The footing of a staircase is identifiable in the curving of the wall at F11-12; at K11 we have the end of what must be presumed to be a passage wall running parallel with the line of the main building; the lower part of a narrow wall that probably supported the timber structure of some sort of ambulatory or gallery is visible at K14;² at O25 an obviously later wall may have something to do with what appeared to be 19th-century garden works at O29; the stipple at

¹ Discussed by Mr. Gerald Dunning in a note on p. 221, (Fig. 5, 4).

² This was suggested by the discovery in this wall of a vertical slot, presumably to hold a timber support.

K26-28 represents a burnt floor¹ on which late 17th-century pottery was found; and at E30 the presence of a large tree has forced us to presume a corner we were ourselves unable to check.

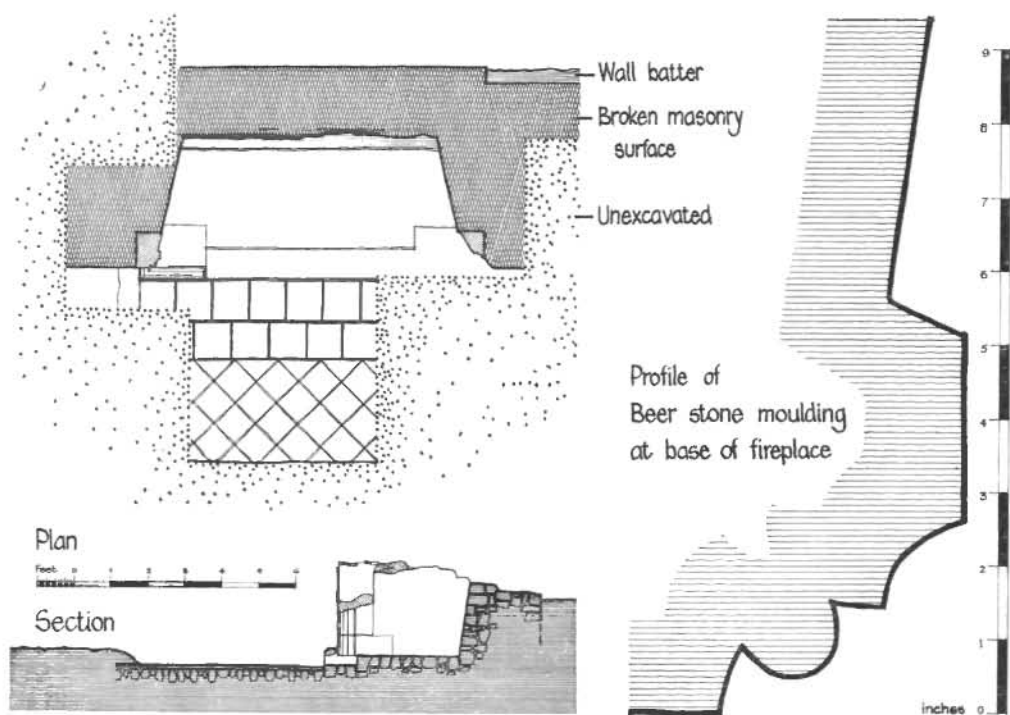


Fig. 3. Fireplace in Gallery

The destruction of the south courtyard

A first and almost complete levelling of the south courtyard seems to have taken place in the late 17th century. At that stage a rough but solid rubble and mortar floor was laid over the greater part of the remains, possibly no more than a trampling-down of the smaller debris. Any useful building stone appears to have been removed. In the early 19th century the area was dug over and a new lawn made-up to cover any remaining traces of the former buildings.

Perhaps the most conclusive evidence of the late 17th-century destruction lies in the contents of the tower drain excavated at G/H3. The miscellaneous nature and dates of the finds from this drain establish that it was filled at the date of the destruction, and *not* by silting-up during occupation of the building. Half a Hispano-Moresque plate of the 15th century, a blue and white 'Talavera' dish of the early 17th century, a remarkable French beaker of the early 16th century (Fig. 5, 3), a stoneware pot of the late 16th century and miscellaneous

¹ The burnt floor showed no signs of extending beyond the limits shown on the plan. It is unlikely, therefore, that it represents a burning of the whole building. Mr. Elmhirst suggests that it was on this spot that the workmen engaged in pulling down the south courtyard burnt the surplus timber.

glassware of the 17th century, together with fragments of clay pipes, several keys and quantities of Barnstaple gravel-tempered ware, made up by far the richest hoard found anywhere on the site. But it is significant above all that in no case were any of these finds from the drain later in date than the end of the 17th century.

Moreover, near the staircase at E13 a Charles II farthing (dated 1673) was found actually on the debris and mortar floor; at K7 a late 17th-century Delft sherd came out of the debris immediately above the wall; at K27 a rim of late 17th-century North Devon Sgraffito ware emerged from the soot and charcoal of a burnt floor; and at the very base of the gallery fireplace at G21 we uncovered a fragment of stoneware of the same late 17th-century date.

It is interesting to note that the rubble and mortar destruction floor that we must associate with the late 17th-century removal of the south courtyard building was actually seen to cover the remains of the original walls at several places; for example, at the staircase entrance to the gallery (H13-14), at the north building (N20-21), and, most obviously of all, at the entrance at M24-25, where it also covered the remains of an earlier flagstone floor (Fig. 4). There is thus no possibility that the floor could have been contemporary with the complete buildings, and we are able to say that anything above the floor, making allowance for later disturbance, post-dates the destruction; anything below the floor it is reasonable to date either to the destruction period or earlier. And yet the fact that this floor was not found in all parts of the site (there was no trace of it in the gallery or over the burnt floor at K26-8) suggests that the original intention was never simply to cover the whole area with a mortar floor and then to leave it exposed. A more likely explanation is that it represented no more than a partial levelling-off in preparation for the construction of some sort of formal garden over the top of the whole.

It seems clear, then, that towards the end of the 17th century the ruinous condition of the buildings, or simply the poor state of the family finances, persuaded the Champenownes to pull down the grandiose apartments of the south courtyard. We have assumed from the beginning that the west wing of the courtyard complex was linked to the upper solar block of the hall, and if so it seems reasonable to suggest that a certain amount of reconstruction was needed on this block at the time. In this connection it is particularly interesting that the panelling and mouldings of the present study are themselves late 17th-century work and are quite likely to be the product of such a reconstruction.

Excavations and garden improvement in the 18th and 19th centuries

The discovery of late wares associated with the upper levels of the building debris establishes beyond doubt that further garden works were undertaken at Dartington at the beginning of the 19th century. Derby and Caughley porcelains at a considerable depth imply a date for the make-up of the lawn certainly not earlier than c. 1805. At the same time the late 18th-century character of much of the porcelain recovered from the tower ditch at L6-7 suggests at least a partial excavation of the area towards the end of that century.

Such records as we have would appear to support the evidence of the porcelains. An early 19th-century description of Dartington Hall¹ mentions, in discussing the south courtyard, the discovery of foundations 'some years ago' while 'digging up the area'. Moreover, with the set of drawings prepared by George Saunders in 1805 is a plan that purports to show, in a very schematic way, the line of foundations said to have been traced underground. The fact that these lines only faintly correspond to the actual foundations as we uncovered them suggests that the area was already under some sort of garden, but, at the same time, the representation of the gallery fireplace in precisely the position at which we ourselves found it, argues that a certain amount of exploration must have taken place at the time of Saunders' plan, or at least very shortly before it. The nature of the pottery and associated finds from the tower ditch at L6-7 suggests either that the ditch was dug out and refilled in the late 18th or early 19th century or that it remained open after the general destruction of the rest of the courtyard in the late 17th century.²

I suggest, therefore, that at the beginning of the 19th century, and possibly in connection with the general improvements envisaged by Saunders and his patrons, a re-planning of the garden was undertaken, designed, no doubt, to exploit the full 'Romantic' potential of the site. It was at this time that the area was dug up, loads of earth were imported to make up the lawn (we noticed at least one isolated load of the red Paignton soil), and some note was taken of the walls discovered in the flattening of an unfashionable formal garden.

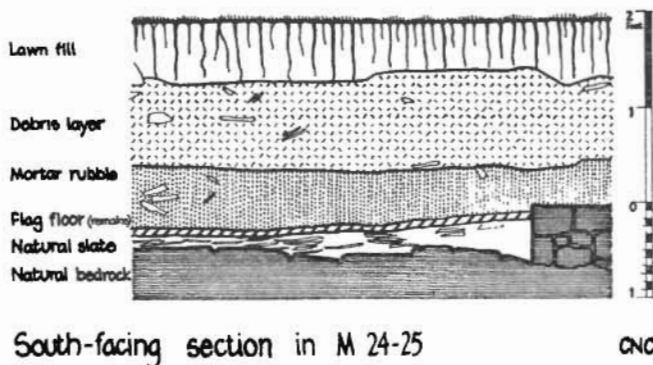


Fig. 4.

¹ John Britton and E. W. Brayley, *A topographical and historical Description of the County of Devonshire*, London, 1832, vol. 1, 119.

² The fact that most of a late 17th-century Delft plate was found deep in the ditch yet still over 18th-century wares inclines me to the first explanation, in that we may assume it to have been dug out with the first filling and thrown back again with the second.

It is curious that on a general plan of the whole Dartington precinct Saunders shows a small block of buildings almost exactly where the tower lies in our own plan. On his plan of the lawn, however, this is only lined out and cannot, therefore, have been important to his general scheme — possibly it was no more than a summer-house or garden shed. Like the 18th-century garden walls and terraces shown in contemporary engravings of the Hall, this building seems to have disappeared altogether at a later date, and certainly in its plan it could only be said to correspond very roughly with the tower as we found it. The tithe redemption map of 1839 shows the same building still in position.

The destruction levels

A typical example of the stratification over the entire site is the south-facing section at M24/25 (Fig. 4). The section is divided into the three main layers — first, lawn fill containing 18th and 19th-century porcelains mixed with a considerable quantity of earlier, particularly 17th-century, wares: second, a debris layer associated with the final levelling of the site shortly before the making-up of the lawn; here also late porcelain is mixed in almost equal proportions with pottery of the 17th century: and third, a mortar and rubble destruction floor of the late 17th century containing wares of the 17th century and earlier, and covering the wall of the demolished building. The wall itself is set into the natural Middle Devonian slate.

With the exception of the late 17th-century mortar and rubble destruction floor which, as I have already said, was not everywhere apparent, the sequence of layers told the same story in every part of the site. The greater depth of lawn fill and debris over the original buildings at the east end of the site may be explained simply as the result of levelling, in preparation for the laying of the 19th-century lawn, an area that already sloped slightly towards the east.

The dating of the south courtyard

Although it is relatively easy to establish a latest possible date for the existence of the buildings of the south courtyard at Dartington, the suggestion of a date of origin is by no means as straightforward.

The architectural dating of the remains depends very much on the surviving datable features of the gallery. If analogies with other buildings may be accepted it is unlikely that a long gallery of this type — and particularly a ground-floor gallery — can have existed before the 16th century. Hence it is obvious that these buildings in the south courtyard need not be contemporary with John Holand's late 14th-century works elsewhere at Dartington. But not all the buildings around the south court were necessarily built at the same time; straight joints abound, and, therefore, it is not impossible that the gallery is of later date than the rest of the courtyard complex. The flattened rear-arches of the window openings in the surviving wall, although not unknown in buildings of an earlier date, certainly suggest a date in the late 15th or early 16th century — a suggestion supported by the nature of the Beer stone mouldings and built-in curb of the fireplace in the buried north wall (Fig. 3 & Pl. XXVIIIb). But the straight joints by themselves fail to provide any connected logical sequence of development. If the gallery is an addition it is difficult to account for the lack of a joint at G34-5; similarly, the straight joint at the meeting of the W. wing and staircase walls at H12 implies a later date for the wing than for the gallery itself. The joint is not repeated either at G10 or at H7. The tower at first sight would appear an obvious afterthought, and yet the building-out of the corners at G6 and K6-7 seems to link it well enough with the general plan.¹

¹ The discovery of a sherd apparently of the early 17th-century Barnstaple gravel-tempered ware actually under the tower wall certainly suggests a late date for that part of the building. But the sherd is badly worn and difficult to identify, and the considerable and deep disturbances of the tower ditch at that point make it possible to argue that it is intrusive.

Taken at its simplest, therefore, the gallery on architectural evidence alone may be dated to the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century at the earliest. The tower, whether defensive or garderobe, could be somewhat later. The construction of the eastern range of buildings must have preceded that of the gallery, though it is by no means clear that there was any great lapse of time between the stages. And, finally, the western range, if we are to place much importance on the straight joint at H12, would appear to post-date the gallery.

My own strong feeling remains, however, that we are dealing with a complex of approximately contemporary buildings, with the possible exception of the tower. The general similarity of building techniques, the characteristic marked batters at a uniform depth on exterior walls, the free use of straight joints and the remarkably precise alignments of the plan — particularly in view of its somewhat odd relationship to the main block of the hall — would seem to argue first of all for at least a measure of contemporaneity, and secondly for a dating rather later than that of the main block of the hall itself.

To support the second point there is the evidence of glazed ridge-tiles found in great numbers over the site. Two varieties of tile were found — the first, a heavy green-glazed tile with a squared-off ridge and short deeply incised decoration; the second, a lightly-glazed tile with shallow incised decorative lines and frequent sharply pointed peaks in a rounded ridge. The first would appear to date not later than the end of the 14th century; the second certainly post-dates the first and probably belongs to the end of the 15th century, or the beginning of the 16th. It is significant that in no case was the earlier tiling found at a level that could without doubt associate it with the destruction of the south courtyard, whereas the later tile was widely associated with such a context. Moreover, the earlier tile was rarely found on the site, only occurring in large accumulations at points notably subject to later disturbance, *viz.* M/N29-30, the area of the later garden works, and in the tower ditch at L6-7. The implications are obvious. That is, the earlier tiles belong to the late 14th-century hall, re-roofed in the early 19th century at the time of the laying of a new lawn where the south courtyard had been; the later tiles, found at all parts of the site and at all depths, clearly belong to the buildings of the south courtyard itself.¹

The evidence for a late 15th or early 16th-century date that has already been adduced on architectural grounds for at least part of the buildings of the south courtyard is lent further weight by the nature of the pottery found on the site. It is well known that in many areas pottery becomes scarce in the 14th century and that in some cases it remains so through the 15th century as well. But it is significant, nevertheless, that there is *no* pottery at Dartington that is datable

¹ It is interesting that fragments of glazed floor tile of the familiar late medieval type — dating, that is, between 1450 and 1550 — were found in the destruction debris on the site. A particular concentration of these tiles by the gallery fireplace and in the courtyard immediately to the north of the gallery suggests that the upper floor of the gallery was paved with them. If these are indeed part of the building debris they must provide us with a valuable *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the gallery itself. Other fragments of glazed floor tile came from the west end of the gallery, and one piece came out of the fill of the tower ditch. The much eroded condition of the tiles suggests that they had a long life in the building of which they were part.

to the 14th century, and that the only pottery securely 15th-century in date is a decorative platter imported from Spain, itself sealed in the undoubtedly 17th-century context of the tower drain (G/H3). The 16th century is well represented, particularly by imported French wares, and for the last occupation phase in the 17th century there is an abundance of both coarse and finer wares, tailing off in the 18th century to a few sherds found invariably in the upper layers or in those areas subject to particular disturbance at a later date. Bearing in mind the special case of the late 13th-century sherds found associated with the building north of the small courtyard, it would seem clear that the pottery provides us with no evidence that would support a building date for the south court before the 16th century, or the late 15th century at the very earliest — a dating that is backed by the discovery of a 15th or early 16th-century bronze buckle at foundation level in the south-east corner of the courtyard at H23.

Interpretation of the plan

With so much to support a building date of c. 1500, it is particularly interesting to note that at the end of the 15th century Dartington was held by Margaret, Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII.¹ There is very little evidence that Princess Margaret ever came to Dartington, but should she have done so it is not inconceivable that the buildings of the south courtyard, advanced in design and grandiose in conception as they certainly are, reflect the period of her stay.

But even if we are to leave Princess Margaret out of account, the plan of the south courtyard has its own interesting implications. If we can possibly conceive of the whole work as contemporary, or nearly contemporary, and if we are to grant the tower any defensive function at all, it would seem at least worth the suggestion that the plan at Dartington reflects the survival of the defensive traditions of bastard feudalism.² The tower, whether treasury tower or emergency retreat, is essentially part of the range of private apartments, themselves separated from the retainers' quarters in the north courtyard by the bulk of the great hall. These principal apartments are attached to the upper solar block of the original hall at their north-west end, but at the eastern end of the court there is no trace of a link with the lower part of the hall or with the kitchen. The tower remains remote at the corner of the private quarters and the gallery: the staircase at F12 is kept under the control of the lord: and a private door leads into the gardens at C10. That this arrangement reflects a desire for privacy rather more than it represents an effective defence is obvious, but if we accept this particular interpretation at all, such an emphasis is no more than might be expected for the period.

While reserving judgement both on the question of Princess Margaret's active ownership and on the problems of a possible survival of a defensive or exclusive tradition, what the recent excavations at Dartington have shown most clearly is that the accepted interpretation of the Dartington plan as a whole must be reconsidered. Even if John Holand in the late 14th century *had* planned

¹ Princess Margaret held Dartington as one of her manors between 1487 and 1509. (Emery, *op. cit.*, 186.)

² W. Douglas Simpson, "Bastard Feudalism" and the Later Castles, *Ant. J.*, xxvi (1946).

a residence with two courtyards separated by a central hall, it seems unlikely that the plan was ever completed. It is still possible that some of the buildings of the south courtyard may contain work of the 14th century but, in the absence of any conclusive evidence of such an early date, it would be safer to exclude the possibility altogether. As there is no positive evidence whatever for the dating of the so-called 'tournament ground' immediately to the south of the site, any argument for an early dating of the south courtyard that depended on the alignment of the buildings with the tournament ground and on John Holand's acknowledged prowess as a joustier would be unsatisfactory.

Summary

A suggested date for the construction of at least a major part of the south courtyard at Dartington Hall is *c.* 1500. Its principal features are a remarkable early gallery and a tower. The buildings were pulled down at the end of the 17th century and the make-up of the present lawn seems to date from *c.* 1805.

Pottery and small-finds associated with the site are rich and abundant but for the most part date from the 17th century and later. There are, however, a number of sherds that take the history of the site back as far as the end of the 13th century.

Princess Margaret's ownership of Dartington at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries makes it possible to suggest that the buildings of the south courtyard were put up to house the Princess and her suite. The lay-out of the buildings, their detached nature and their setting imply a desire for privacy not unlike that displayed in the design of the private apartments at Thornbury Castle.

THE FINDS¹

POTTERY

The vast preponderance of 17th-century wares on the site lends considerable support to the suggestion of a late 17th-century destruction date for the south courtyard. And yet it is interesting to note that it is principally on the grounds of some earlier sherds that we can presume an occupation of the site back in the late 13th century. As it stands, the evidence of the pottery alone would suggest an initial occupation in the late 13th century; there is then no pottery until the end of the 15th century. The 16th century is adequately, though hardly abundantly, represented, particularly by imported French wares. But the great bulk of the local coarse wares seems to belong quite definitely to the second half of the 17th century, though, of course, the same ware was still being made in Devon well into the following century.

The richness and variety of the later wares is particularly notable. Late 17th-century Delfts and stonewares are abundant, but there is also a considerable range of the later green, brown and yellow glazes. Imported wares are common even from an early date. French imports range from sherds of a late 13th-century Western French glazed jug through to a Sarreguemines rim of the early 19th century. A Hispano-Moresque plate of the 15th century and a 'Talavera' dish of the late 16th or early 17th century indicate some contact, if indirect, with Spain. Dutch Delfts, German Westerwald stoneware and early Chinese export porcelain complete the picture for the later 17th century.

The considerable disturbance caused over the whole area by large-scale garden works, especially of the early 19th century, made it impossible to establish any consistent stratigraphy for the pottery. Sherds unmistakably 13th-century in date were found high up in the lawn

¹ All pottery and small-finds, plans, photographs and notebooks from the 1962 excavations are preserved at the Records Office, Dartington Hall.

fill, and early 19th-century porcelain abounded in the debris over the 17th-century rubble floor. Identical sherds were found at widely different depths and at opposite ends of the site. Clearly, therefore, the bulk of the dating of the pottery must be typological and not stratigraphical, and it is in the analysis of the pottery on these lines that I am particularly grateful for the detailed advice and criticism of Mr. John Hurst of the Ministry of Works and the late Mr. E. A. Lane of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

13th century

Not a great deal of this early pottery was found, but such as there was came from all depths and from widely separated parts of the site. Stratigraphically the most important were the sherds of a Western French green-glazed jug of the late 13th century (Fig. 5, 4). Associated with this at the foundation level of the building to the north of the courtyard were sherds of a 13th-century cooking pot. Rim sherds (Fig. 5, 2 & 7) of an identical fabric found elsewhere on the site establish the similarity of this ware to the pottery found at Beere.¹ Like the Beere pottery, and, indeed, like most of the later wares on this site, it contains black mica fragments; the surface is red or orange and the core is grey: the texture is gritty and powdery and weathers badly.

15th century

If we are to assume a building date of c. 1500 for the south courtyard it is hardly surprising that there was little or no 15th-century pottery on the site. One rim (Fig. 5, 5) and another large sherd are of the hard grey fabric with white painted decorations characteristic of the 15th century, but even these could easily be of the early 16th century. A lid (Fig. 5, 8) of a gritty red ware could be 15th-century, but it is very similar to the gravel-tempered ware so common on the site and dating to the 17th century at the earliest.

Of less dating value, though of considerable intrinsic interest, is the Hispano-Moresque plate from the drain at the corner of the tower. Only half of this was recovered, but, although badly weathered, sufficient remained to place it not much later than the mid 15th century.

16th century

The smooth fabrics and even green-glazes of the 16th century were by no means common on the site. Part of the base of a colander and a handful of other sherds are all that can be said to represent the English contribution for this century.

French wares are more abundant. Most remarkable of these is a fine French beaker (Fig. 5, 3) with a green and brown glaze on its well-finished rim and an oddly unfinished appearance to the base; a suggested date is early in the 16th century. White unglazed wares found in the tower ditch at L6-7 are probably also French of the 16th century, and to the later part of the century belongs the rich green-glaze of a finely made small beaker, most of the rim of which was found associated with debris by the staircase at F13 (Fig. 5, 6).

Finally, a damaged, though complete, small stoneware jug of the late 16th century was found in the tower drain (G/H3).

17th century

The standard coarse ware of the site clearly belongs to this century. It is a gravel-tempered ware made at Barnstaple in the 17th and 18th centuries and widely used throughout the South-west. The general features of this ware are a gritty fabric with gold and black mica fragments, a red-orange exterior, a grey core and a thick green-brown glaze unevenly applied on both the exterior and the interior of the pot. The ware retains a deceptively late medieval appearance at least throughout the 17th century, and probably later. The rim forms vary widely from the elaborate (Fig. 5, 10 & 14) to the very plain (Fig. 5, 9 & 12), bases tend to be cut off flat without special features (Fig. 5, 12) and handles may be large and bold (Fig. 5, 16).

Accompanying this ware at every level, and confirming its 17th-century origins, are the finer pottery and porcelains, largely imported but beginning to be manufactured in England towards the end of the 17th century. Netherlands maiolica is represented by part of a brightly coloured bleeding-bowl of the first half of the 17th century. Of approximately

¹ E. M. Jope & R. I. Threlfall, 'Excavation of a medieval settlement at Beere, North Tawton, Devon', *Medieval Archaeology*, II (1958), 112-40.



A. General view of excavated
area from N.W.



B. West jamb of fireplace in gallery

the same date, though possibly even earlier, is a remarkably fine deep blue-and-white plate, tentatively identified as Spanish 'Talavera' ware. French wares are still represented in the first half of the century by a pottery with a red fabric and a mottled green or yellow-green glaze (Fig. 5, 1).

The bulk of the finer wares, however, belongs to the last quarter of the 17th century. A few specimens of North-Devon Sgraffito, a fine ware also made at Barnstaple, represent the local product, but it is the early English Delfts that appear most abundantly over the site. Both pink and white Delfts are represented, most of a large plate of the latter being recovered from deep in the tower ditch at L6. Typical of the late 17th-century English Delfts are little ointment pots, several of which, including one with painted lettering, were found scattered through the destruction debris.

In addition, early Chinese export porcelains of the familiar blue-and-white variety are particularly common, and stoneware, of this and later dates, is well represented. The remains of at least two bellarmines were unearthed, and sherds of German Westerwald stoneware of the late 17th century are almost as frequent as the Delft. Staffordshire comb-ware, both in its 17th-century and its later forms, featured in almost all the upper levels on the site.

18th and 19th centuries

White salt-glazed stonewares of the 1750's and a cream-glazed earthenware of the late 18th century were found in the tower ditch in particular but also elsewhere on the site. Other stonewares and porcelains of the 18th and early 19th centuries were common enough, but it is notable that nothing later than the early 19th century was found in any of the debris layers.

Illustrated pottery:

Fig. 5:

1. Rim; red ware with a mottled green glaze; French, 17th century.
2. Rim; radius about 13 cm. (5 in.); gritty red ware with grey core, 13th century.
3. A complete, virtually undamaged small beaker, the rim glazed yellow-green with dashes of dark green and brown; French, early 16th century.
4. Jug; French, late 13th century (see below).
5. Rim; hard grey ware with a band of white paint as decoration on the rim. Late 15th or early 16th century.
6. Rim; from a small beaker; rich green glaze on both sides; French, late 16th century.
7. Rim; radius about 11 cm. (4½ in.); gritty red ware with grey core, 13th century.
8. Lid; gritty red ware with black and gold mica fragments; possibly 15th century but very similar in texture to the 17th-century Barnstaple wares.
- 9-18 Barnstaple gravel-tempered ware; gritty fabric with gold and black mica fragments; red-orange exterior and grey core; thick green-brown glaze on both sides. This is the most common ware on the site, and is unlikely to date earlier than the 17th century. The radius of the mouth of 11 is about 11 cm. (4¼ in.) of 9 about 13 cm. (5 in.), and of 10 and 14 about 20 cm. (8 in.).

The French Medieval Jug, by G. C. Dunning

The find consists of three pieces with an applied finger-pressed strip, two plain body sherds, and the lower part of a strap-handle. It is likely that most if not all the fragments belong to one and the same pot; in any case they represent the same type of jug, and so have been combined in one drawing (Fig. 5, 4).

The ware is uniformly hard-fired and very fine and white, with very little grit. The glaze on the outside of the body is good in quality, lustrous, mottled dark green. Similar glaze is on the back of the handle.

The type represented is a barrel-shaped jug with moulded rim and flat base, provided with a large bridge-spout and a handle projecting well beyond the upper part of the body. Usually the jugs are plain apart from horizontal rilling of the surface, as on one of the Dartington sherds. Some examples have simple linear grooves in zones¹ made while the pot was

¹ Cardiff: *Archaeologia*, LXXXIII, 114, pl. XXVII, I; Glenluce Abbey: *Trans. Dumfriesshire & Galloway Nat. Hist. & Antiq. Soc.*, XXIX, 185, fig. 5 and pl. vi.

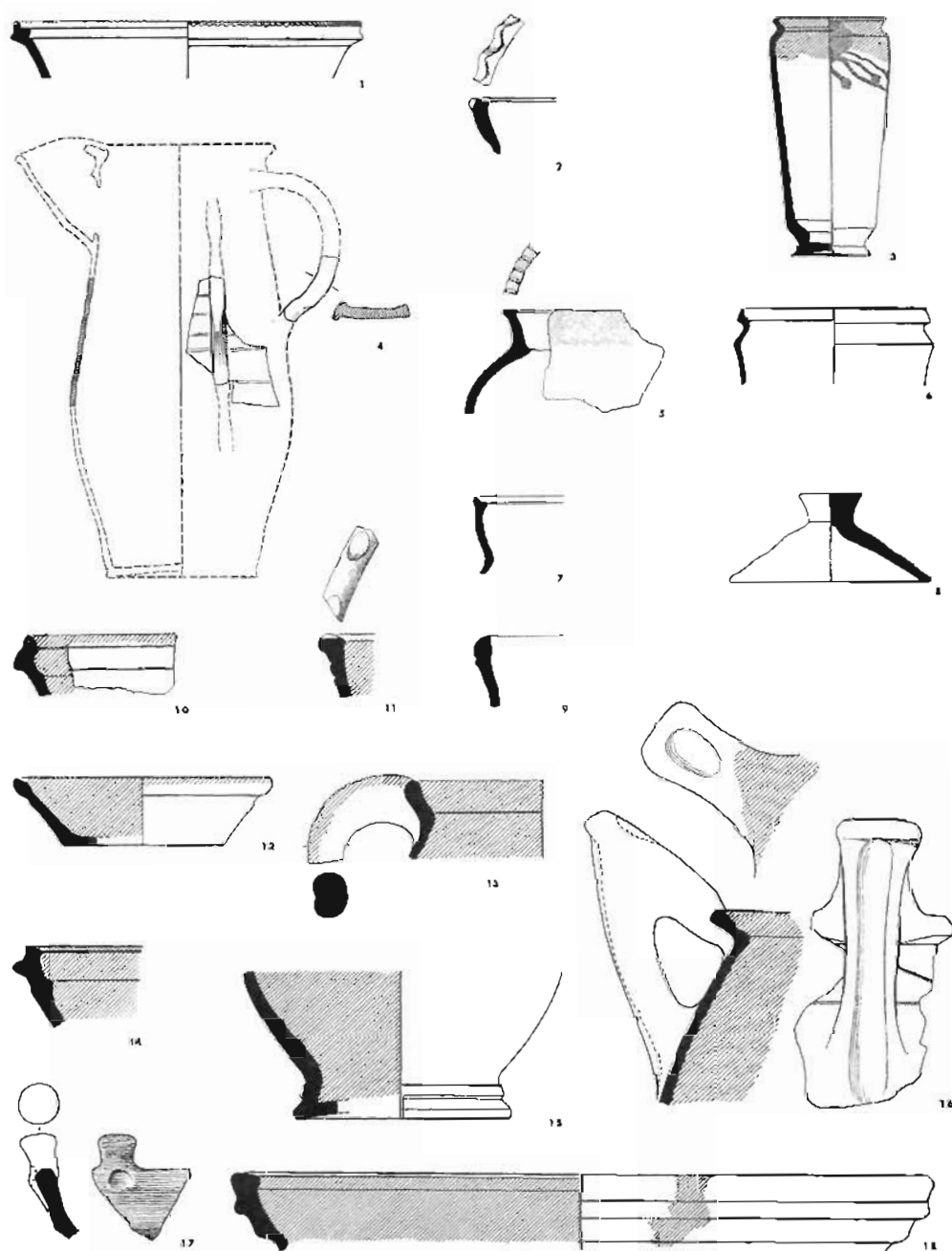


Fig. 5. Pottery of the 13th-17th century from Dartington Hall, Devon ($\frac{1}{4}$)

turning on the wheel. Occasionally the body is decorated with applied finger-pressed strips running vertically, again as on the Dartington jug. Instances of this decoration are known from Kirkcudbright Castle,¹ Kidwelly Castle,² and Tintagel Castle.³ In size the jugs are usually 9–10 in. in height, but exceptionally large ones, 11–12 in. high, have been found at Southampton, and the largest of all, 13 in. high, is recorded from the site of Back Hall, Bristol.⁴

These jugs are imports to Britain from South-west France, where examples are known at La Rochelle, Saintes and Bordeaux. In Britain jugs of this type are represented at some 16 sites in England, 5 in Wales and 2 in Scotland. Together with painted pottery, polychrome ware,⁵ and other fine-quality wares they were carried to Britain by the wine trade of Gascony. In date some of the green-glazed jugs are securely dated to the late 13th century, but the range in date is not yet known, and they may well cover the second half at least of this century. On the evidence available the Dartington jug is referred to the late 13th century.

GLASS

Such glass of interest as was found at Dartington came very largely from the tower drain at G/H3. From the drain were retrieved most of a fine mid 17th-century wine glass and fragments of what appears to have been some kind of 'pilgrim' bottle. It has not been possible to find convincing parallels for the bottle, but it has been suggested that it is probably an Islamic piece of the 17th century. The remains of what could have been a 17th-century hour-glass, some late 17th-century bottle glass and two fragments of window glass make up the total from the drain.

Elsewhere on the site finer domestic glass was rare. Two fragments of Netherlandish glass with applied blue glass ornament, possibly of the 17th century, came out of the lawn fill by the staircase; four medicine bottles, three of the 18th century and one possibly of the early 19th, emerged from a low level in the tower ditch at L6; and fragments of 18th-century wine glasses occasionally appeared in the upper levels over the site.

Bottle glass, as might be expected, was very much more common. Round-based bottles of the late 17th and particularly the 18th century were found all over the site, the greatest concentration of these being, inexplicably, in the fill over the gallery at D20. A late 18th-century flat-based bottle from the tower ditch helps to date the disturbance in that area.

COINS AND METAL OBJECTS

Only four coins were found: an Edward I silver penny of the London Mint;⁶ a gros tournois of Henry of Navarre, 1594; a Charles II farthing; and a halfpenny of George I. Yet, meagre in quantity though they were, all but the last have a considerable significance in the interpretation of the site. That is, the Edward I penny supports the evidence of the late 13th-century pottery for an earlier date for the building closing off the north side of the courtyard; the gros tournois of Henry of Navarre again complements the pottery evidence in emphasizing the Champenowne connection with France in the later part of the 16th century;⁷ and the farthing of Charles II, as we have seen, provides us with a reasonable *terminus ante quem* for the laying of the debris floor.

¹ *Proc. S. A. Scot.*, xci, 123–5, fig. 3, 3–5.

² *Archaeologia*, lxxxiii, III, class b.

³ Truro Museum.

⁴ *Trans. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Soc.* lxxix, 272, fig. 5, 8.

⁵ *Ant. J.*, xli, 4–5, with evidence of date.

⁶ J. J. North, *English Hammered Coins*, London, 1960. Class X 1302–10.

⁷ I am indebted to Mr. John Harvey for the following note from C. E. Champenowne, *The Champenowne Family* (4to duplicated from typescript, 1954).

'Sir Arthur, Vice-Admiral, died 1 April, 1578, and was succeeded by his eldest son Gawen Champenowne, aged then 24 or more. Gawen married Robarda, daughter of the Huguenot leader the Comte de Montgomery (who had escaped from the massacre of St. Bartholomew and taken refuge in England). But, according to the typescript, the marriage took place about April or May, 1572 (some three or four months before the massacre) at Ducey, her father's chateau in Normandy (Manche near Avranches). Gawen Champenowne divorced Robarda on 27 July, 1582, but seems later to have taken her back. He died in March, 1591/2 when his son Arthur was nearly 12. This Arthur in 1598 married Bridget, daughter of Sir Thomas Fulford, of Fulford, Devonshire.' (Typescript, p. 193 ff.)

The only other metal objects of any significance were a 13th-century spoon handle with apostle figure decoration, a late medieval bronze ring, a collection of iron keys from the tower drain at G/H3, and a bronze buckle, probably 15th or early 16th-century, from a foundation level at the south-east corner of the courtyard (H23).

MISCELLANEOUS

Clay pipes were found everywhere on the site. The greater part of these were 17th-century,¹ but a few 18th-century bowls were identified, with at least one decorated bowl of the 19th century.

Other finds included a silver tea-spoon of c. 1750, a whetstone, and considerable quantities of the refinements of building — glazed ridge tiles, glazed floor bricks, pierced roofing slates, wall plaster and fragments of worked Beer stone, including some mouldings.

Oyster shells were common to the whole site and proved to be particularly abundant, for no obvious reason, at G7. Animal bones included those of sheep, deer, pig and oxen; in the tower drain there were also quantities of bird bones.

¹ Adrian Oswald, *Archaeological News Letter*, April 1951, 153-8, types 4c and 5a.