

ROMANO-BRITISH AISLED HOUSES

By J. T. SMITH

This paper deals with the type of building usually known as basilican. Its purpose is to show, firstly, that a broadly similar development can be inferred for most examples of the type, and secondly, that this development implies economic and social change; it concludes with a discussion of the origins of the type. The reason for proposing a change of name is that the buildings under discussion did not necessarily conform to the definition of a basilican structure, which, in the ordinary meaning of the words, has a nave lit by a clerestorey and flanked by aisles. Buildings of this kind were not unknown in Roman Britain but may well have been rarer than is commonly supposed. John Ward, and following him R. G. Collingwood,¹ applied the term to all aisled houses with a nave and two aisles, many of which, it will be argued, probably had no clerestorey. Moreover the designation basilican does not refer to the most significant characteristic of this important class of aisled structures, nor even of those buildings in which a clerestorey is certain, and for this reason it is desirable to refer to them all as aisled farmhouses or villas. Such a designation is also to be preferred for the present to the term 'barn-dwelling'² now commonly applied to them, which hints at an association not yet proved. In principle, of course, to describe a type of house by reference to a structural device, *i.e.* the posts supporting the roof, which may have little or no bearing on the social relations expressed in the plan, is unsound, and perhaps if the conclusions of this paper win acceptance yet another name should be sought.

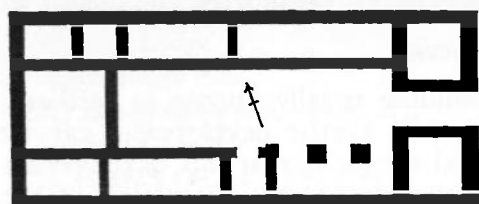
The Pattern of Development

The first step will be to consider some of the better known aisled houses that usually go under the label basilican, to see what characteristics they have in common. For the time being the problem of deciding whether they had a clerestorey or not may be postponed (p. 25, below) because it is a structural incident rather than a fundamental feature of the type. There are thirty of them or thereabouts, the number varying slightly according to the criteria of selection.³ To provide a uniform basis of comparison they have been redrawn and reproduced to the same scale and the different structural periods, in the few instances where they were distinguished in the course of excavation, have been ignored. This will bring out more clearly the remarkably similar development exemplified in these houses, without precluding reference to excavators' conclusions. Although it is difficult to subdivide the houses logically into groups the first eight (Fig. 1) include several of the best-known and display the most important characteristics of them all. At this stage of the argument we need not take into account whether any given example is an independent

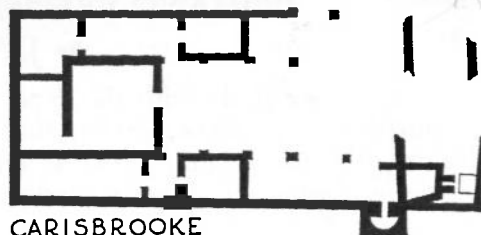
¹ J. Ward, *Romano-British Buildings & Earthworks* (1911), 174-182; R. G. Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*, (1930), 129-134.

² I. A. Richmond, in *Survey and Policy of Field Research* (C.B.A.), 103.

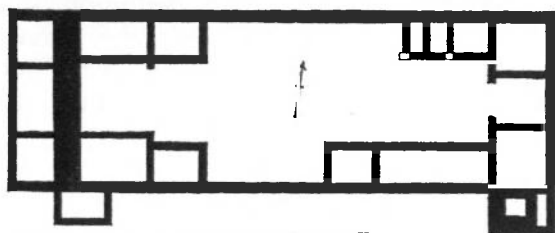
³ Sources for British sites are listed in the appendix to this paper; sources for continental sites are quoted directly in footnotes.



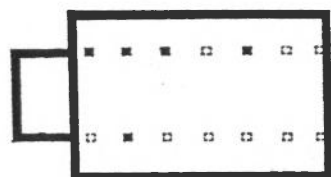
NORTON DISNEY



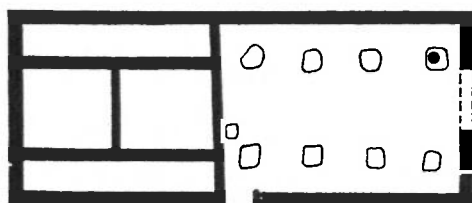
CARISBROOKE



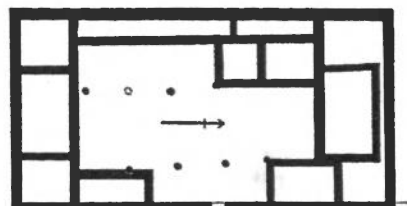
MANSFIELD WOODHOUSE



CASTLEFIELD

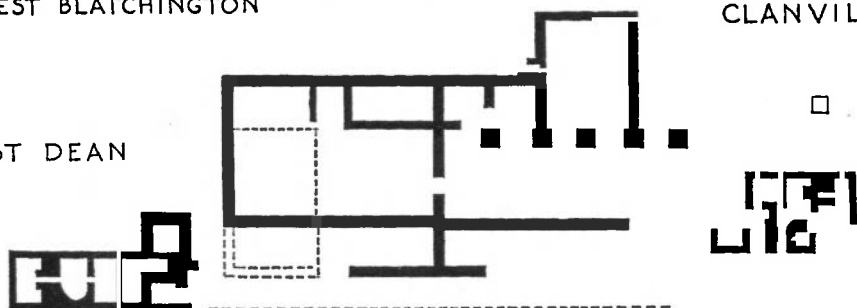


WEST BLATCHINGTON

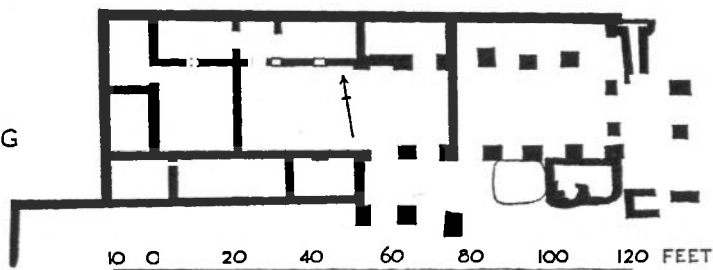


CLANVILLE

WEST DEAN



BRADING



10 0 20 40 60 80 100 120 FEET

Fig. 1.

farmhouse or part of a larger complex; it is more useful to learn what the plans, considered in isolation from extraneous factors, reveal. The plan of Norton Disney shows three bases for posts which have every appearance of being the survivors of a longer row now largely concealed by enclosure of the aisles, and it looks as if there had been a corresponding row on the north side.¹ There are two entrances, one on the south side which is a lobby or internal porch, and a more monumental one at the east end flanked by two rooms with thicker walls which suggest a slightly greater height, as if they were squat tower-like blocks of two storeys flanking an opening wide enough to take a cart. It is too wide, certainly, to be intended solely for human traffic. The nave, except for a large square private room taken out of it at the west end, remained a long and lofty apartment, still partly open to the south aisle, that must have had points of resemblance to the type of aisled domestic hall with which we are familiar from the middle ages. The overall impression left by the plan is of an original aisled rectangle partitioned off on all sides, but more completely at one end than the other, and on one side than the other.

Not far from Norton Disney is Mansfield Woodhouse, one of the classic examples of the type and one that was claimed long ago by Oelmann as having the character of a hall.² It had been added to more than Norton Disney; at the west end a range of three rooms, and on the south side two small projecting rooms, of which the east was part of a bath suite, have clearly been tacked on to a rectangular building. Within the original rectangle a process of internal subdivision can again be inferred. Once more one aisle is more completely partitioned off than the other, but here it is the one on the entrance side, the south, facing the courtyard. At the west end the hint provided by a stub of wall projecting into the nave from the north side, that here was a large square room cut off from the hall, is confirmed by a 'very smooth stucco floor', and painted walls; this room, said Major Rooke, the excavator, 'was the largest in the villa'.³ He and others long after regarded the main part of the nave as an open courtyard. Of the rows of posts lining the nave all that was discovered were two bases built into a partition wall near the east end. On the whole, then, Mansfield Woodhouse corresponds fairly closely in its development to Norton Disney.

Carisbrooke is another much-quoted example. Again it has an aisled nave with a large square room at the one end, while the other and more fragmentary end incorporated a small bath suite like Mansfield Woodhouse. On the other hand it differs from the preceding houses in having what are apparently original rooms beyond the main private room, and in the greater sophistication of a lobby serving the hall and two adjoining rooms, whereby the inconvenience of going through one room to get to another was avoided. There is a hint,

¹ The excavation report gives some warrant for this suggestion: 'it may be stated that if this building had a basilican plan in period II, such a plan must have been executed in wood, and the post-holes (if any) lie beneath the walls of the building of period III. It is remarkable that at two places where it was possible to penetrate beneath those walls, such post-holes were found': *Ant. J.*, xvii (1937), 146.

² F. Oelmann, 'Die villa rustica bei Stahl und Verwandtes', *Germania*, v (1921), 64-73, esp. n. 14, and 'Ein gallorömischer Bauernhof bei Mayen', *Bonner Jahrbücher*, 133 (1928), 51-140, esp. 122.

³ *Archaeologia*, viii (1787), 368.

too, of a wide entrance in the east gable, broken up by the insertion of a suite of baths. Both these features recur in the much larger building at Brading, where the bases of the posts remained recognisable throughout its whole length. Here at some time the hall was truncated by a wall cutting off the lower end, leaving only that part opposite and east of the side entrance to serve its hall-like function. Hardly less splendid than Brading was the larger of two buildings at West Dean in Wiltshire where, however, a greater degree of destruction makes interpretation more hazardous. Seen alone the plan makes little sense; interpreted in the light of previous examples most of it is explicable. One end, the west or private end of the hall, has been cut off and divided into rooms, along with one of the aisles. At the opposite end of the house is a bath suite, either added to the nave or built into it, and a second suite was added at the other corner on the south side.

A further link between West Dean and Brading and Carisbrooke is that one end of the house — for which we may use the convenient term lower (or socially inferior) end, used to describe the comparable part of the medieval hall — has a fragmentary and uncertain plan.¹

From five houses a consistent pattern of development emerges. There is in each a first phase of aisled timber construction, in which divisions must be inferred largely from the later transformation into stone. In the succeeding phase, when plans can be discerned clearly, the house is divided into two distinctive and more or less equal parts which we may designate as the upper and lower ends. The upper end is divided into several rooms giving the impression of a regular plan conceived as a whole; the lower is an undivided open room reminiscent of a medieval hall except for having an entrance in the gable of sufficient width for carts. In this phase the houses give the impression of being intended to fulfil similar social needs. Subsequently the hall tends to be reduced in size by the division of the aisles into rooms, the insertion of bath suites and, in one house, the building of a wing, as if the plans were being altered piecemeal without the guidance of any common purpose.

A well-excavated house at West Blatchington in Sussex seems to have had from the first just such a division into two clearly distinct parts.² The domestic part comprised two rooms of equal size flanked by what look like two corridors, since neither shows any sign of subdivision as rooms, while the remainder comprised a large open hall. Unfortunately circumstances did not allow the total excavation at West Blatchington which would have established whether there was a wide entrance at the east end, where there is space enough to put an entrance up to 12 ft. wide on the axis. So we are left with a building in which the separation between the domestic end on the one hand, with its rooms subdivided for privacy, and the large open hall on the other, seems to

¹ The most unusual feature, one which is in fact unique in aisled houses, is the wing projecting from the surviving row of posts beyond the aisle wall.

² The excavators considered and rejected the possibility that the stone footings represented the rebuilding of a timber structure. If they were right, the house is a remarkable instance of a transitional type, both structurally and socially. It is nevertheless worth noting (1) that the ditch underlying the hall gable-wall of the villa is paralleled by one at Landwade under the corresponding wall, and (2) that a pit of indeterminate date at the west end of the north aisle stood at just the right point for a post.

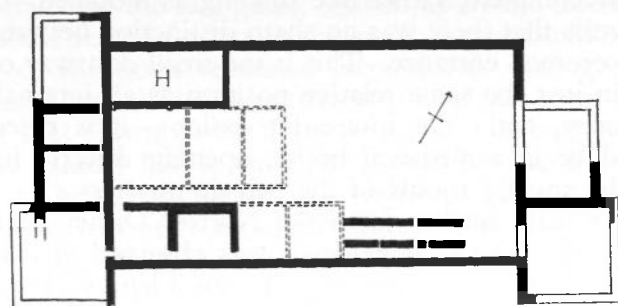
have been fairly complete, rather like Brading as modified. Only one feature of the plan reveals that there was no sharp distinction between the two parts; they shared a common entrance. This is the small doorway on the south side which stands in just the same relative position as an internal entrance lobby at Norton Disney, and — an interesting point — it is placed much as the entrance would be in a medieval house, opening directly into the hall part and not into the smaller rooms of the private quarters.

Deviating a little further from the Norton Disney pattern is Clanville where, nevertheless, very clear evidence was observed of the rebuilding of a posted structure. Despite a number of minor problems such as the very narrow corridor on the west side, only 4 ft. wide and doubtless nothing more than a corridor, the overall pattern of development is once again that of a large open hall subdivided into small rooms at both ends, but with the north end plainly more important than the other. This general resemblance is strengthened by the detail of a doorway in the middle of one side.

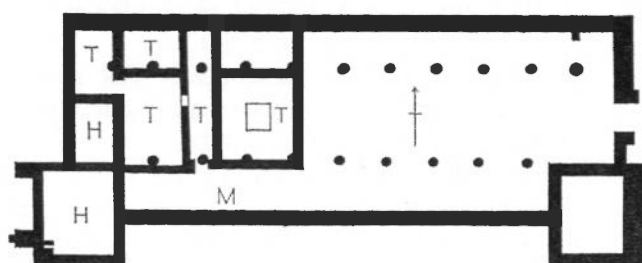
More problematic in every way is Castlefield. The shallow room of the same width as the nave is reminiscent of the comparable room at each end of Clanville, but apart from that no development is discernible. It is a perfectly simple aisled building that may be interpreted as a house by analogy rather than direct evidence.

The next group (Fig. 2) comprises four houses from Hampshire. Stroud, the most famous of them, shows as well as any of these aisled houses the cutting up into rooms of what we may term the private end of the building, but more than that it shows one facet of Romanisation whereby an aisled farmhouse could be refronted in the fashionable manner. The concealment of 16th-century timber-framed farmhouses behind 18th-century brick fronts that is so familiar in lowland England is paralleled in the Romano-British period at Stroud. Inserted into its south aisle and extending beyond it are two square rooms that go in England by the name of wings but the architectural effect of which is perhaps more appropriately conveyed by the German term *Eckrisaliten* or 'corner-projections'.¹ Whatever use they were put to in any particular house their primary purpose was to provide terminal blocks at the ends of the portico and the façade (often coterminous), and since the resulting fashionable frontage was no more essential to any kind of villa than a symmetrical façade was to an English farmhouse the whole scheme could be clapped on to any kind of building whatever. Swoboda and certain German researchers showed that the 'corridors' joining the front corner-blocks were normally porticos which, coupled with a central entrance, produced a much-admired effect of symmetry that became one of the architectural clichés of the age. That this was the effect sought after at Stroud the corner-blocks prove beyond doubt, and the domestic entrance was certainly placed centrally, like those at Norton Disney and West Blatchington, to complete it. In passing, the elevation of

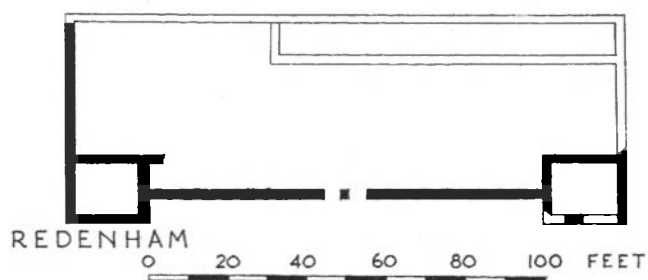
¹ K. Swoboda, *Römische und Romanische Paläste* (2nd ed., 1924), devoted many pages to 'Die Porticus-Fassade mit Eckrisaliten'. His conclusions on these façades, unlike those on the buildings behind them, have not been challenged.



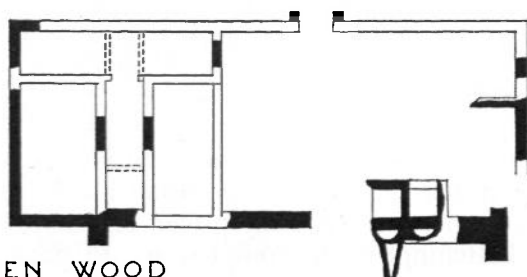
NORTH WARNBOROUGH



STROUD



REDENHAM



LIPPEN WOOD

Fig. 2.

what is called 'the corridor house'¹ into a plan type is on a par with establishing a type embracing all symmetrically-fronted English farmhouses. It is forty years since Oelmann demonstrated this simple truth for German villas and twenty or more since excavations at Lockleys and Park Street did the same for Britain.² These arguments, applied to Stroud, suggest that the house entrance was in the south aisle, which may have been rebuilt, at least in its west half, as a portico, while at the east end a second (gable) entrance, 7 ft. wide, stayed in use like the one at Norton Disney.

Haverfield's plan of Redenham — a villa about which little is known — suggests that the process of refronting went on there too. Probably the same thing happened at the Lodge Farm villa in North Warnborough (Fig. 2), though such an interpretation advances beyond what the excavator claimed.³ Compared with Stroud or Redenham, or indeed most of the villas discussed earlier, the main block has rather different proportions; it is wider, and unlike nearly all the others discussed here shows obvious signs of additions at the south-west and north-east ends besides the usual process of internal subdivision. This is matter for argument in relation to other types of domestic hall in the Roman provinces and in any case is not to be taken as acceptance of any rigid theory of proportions such as one advanced some years ago in the *Journal of Roman Studies*.⁴ Last of this group, if indeed it belongs at all, is Lippen Wood. The only reason for supposing it might have undergone a comparable addition of corner projections is that the plan is clearly incomplete on one side where there are hints of end rooms. Against this it can be urged that what looks like the main entrance is on the opposite side, and that the adjoining corridor giving access to the private block is really a small portico. Lippen Wood, in the way its private or domestic end was rebuilt, has a strong resemblance to Stroud, and also to a third villa, one which has perhaps not hitherto been claimed as an aisled farmhouse, at East Grimstead (Fig. 3) in Wiltshire. Its east end has what seem to be the stone bases of posts partly built into partition walls, while one aisle is occupied by a bath suite and the other by small rooms. It looks as if the middle or hall part of the villa, here as elsewhere, was less completely rebuilt and subdivided than the rest and hence more easily destroyed by flint digging.

Two other aisled farmhouses which have been explored more recently offer the opportunity of checking the kind of deduction so far made against conclusions ascertained by more careful excavation and observation. The first of them is Landwade in Suffolk (Fig. 3), here redrawn as if no differentiation of period were known. It belongs to the small group which has a room the width of the nave extending beyond the main structure — Clanville is one instance,⁵ and Castlefield another and very humble one. In this case a change

¹ Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*, 114. I hope to enlarge on these comments at a later date.

² Oelmann, *Germania*, v (1921), 64-73; *Ant. J.*, xviii (1938), 339-376 (Lockleys); *Arch. J.*, cii (1945), 21-110 (Park Street).

³ Other interpretations are possible; the one in the text is adopted in the light of comparative material for aisled houses.

⁴ C. A. F. Berry, 'The Dating of Romano-British Houses', *J.R.S.*, xli (1951), 25-31.

⁵ A room prolonging structurally each end of the nave is not exactly aligned with the posts but is clearly comparable with those at Castlefield and Landwade.

of wall thickness and a deviation of axis suggest two builds at the south end where an extension went hand in hand with the incorporation of the end of the nave into the private suite; and again the aisles were divided into rooms, beginning at the upper end. Yet again a bath block stands at the lower end of a nave which retains both the lobby entrance and a few clear signs of the pillars that hint at its open hall-like character. Though its detail differentiates it slightly from the others the resemblances are far more striking, and sure enough careful excavation revealed firstly the straight joints that show the



Fig. 3.

south-easternmost room to be a final addition to the earlier main building and, secondly, that all the rest of the stone structure is a renewal of timber. Denton (Fig. 3) in Lincolnshire provides no more than some interesting variations from the general picture that has so far emerged. It has a wide, open nave, with a good room cut out of it at one end in which was a mosaic pavement; no trace of post-bases remains in this plan, but there is a wide gable entrance at the east, and, in the change of alignment in one short piece of wall, a suggestion of a second or third building phase at the inferior end reminiscent of Carisbrooke. Not only did excavation establish these inferences drawn from the plan alone but it showed that all the eastern half of the villa was later than the western, so that at the end of the first phase of stone building Denton was much like West Blatchington save that the two halves were less completely

separated. One new feature Denton provides is a hearth in the middle of the nave and lying transversely to it. The conclusions drawn from modern excavations at Denton and Landwade may thus inspire confidence in the more speculative interpretation of earlier sites where only an overall plan is to be had.

Minor Aisled Buildings

About the remaining sites (Fig. 4) not much need be said, since individually they are simpler and as a group of less importance. Nearly all present one or more of the features noted earlier and likewise nearly all show some deviation from the apparent norm, which in some cases may be explicable by the date of excavation. Llantwit Major conforms well to the pattern; Tockington Park comes close to it; Ickleton has the entrance lobby clearly defined; Iwerne Minster 'A' has what was described at the time as a double post-hole but which must surely by analogy with Denton be a hearth. Of Iwerne Professor Richmond has well remarked that it 'would not be out of place in the west of Ireland or the Highlands, with farmhouse and cowhouse under one roof'.¹ A rather odd-looking subsidiary building at West Dean with only one aisle may not really belong to the same class at all, although the existence of single-aisled halls in the Middle Ages² induces caution in rejecting it, the more so since Knowl Hill in Berkshire, looks very like a two-aisled building in process of being rebuilt with one. One building claimed as aisled should be dismissed from the discussion — Cherry Hinton, where the post-holes do not add up to a regularly planned structure of the type here considered.³

Interpretation

What is the broader significance of the kind of change observable in all these aisled houses? Perhaps the most important observation is that rebuilding of a presumed or known timber structure produced everywhere a strong contrast between a fairly constant and predictable pattern at the private end and great variation at the opposite or hall end; this implies that the former was governed by custom, the latter not. In other words there was no particular difficulty about rebuilding the private quarters, because the layout of that part catered for social requirements which might be modified in detail according to the owners' tastes and purse, but nevertheless were not changed drastically. This is strikingly different from what happened when the other end of the house was rebuilt: a bath block might be inserted; the aisles split up into rooms; the gable end might either be closed entirely with rooms cut out of the nave, or its wide entrance retained and even emphasized. Clearly customary usage dictated no more than the broadest lines that alteration should take as long as a hall was preserved, yet equally clearly the proportions of these buildings as between domestic end and hall end and the relation between the principal elements were governed by custom in their earlier phase. The rule of custom

¹ I. A. Richmond, in 'Report of C.B.A. Conference on Roman Villas', *Arch. N. L.*, vi (1955), 43-45.

² R. T. Mason, 'Fourteenth-century Halls in Sussex', *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, xcv (1957), 71-93.

³ O.S., *Map of Roman Britain* (3rd ed., 1956), General Introduction, p. 12; R.C.H.M., *City of Cambridge* (1959), 2. I am indebted for further information to my colleague Mr. R. A. H. Farrar.

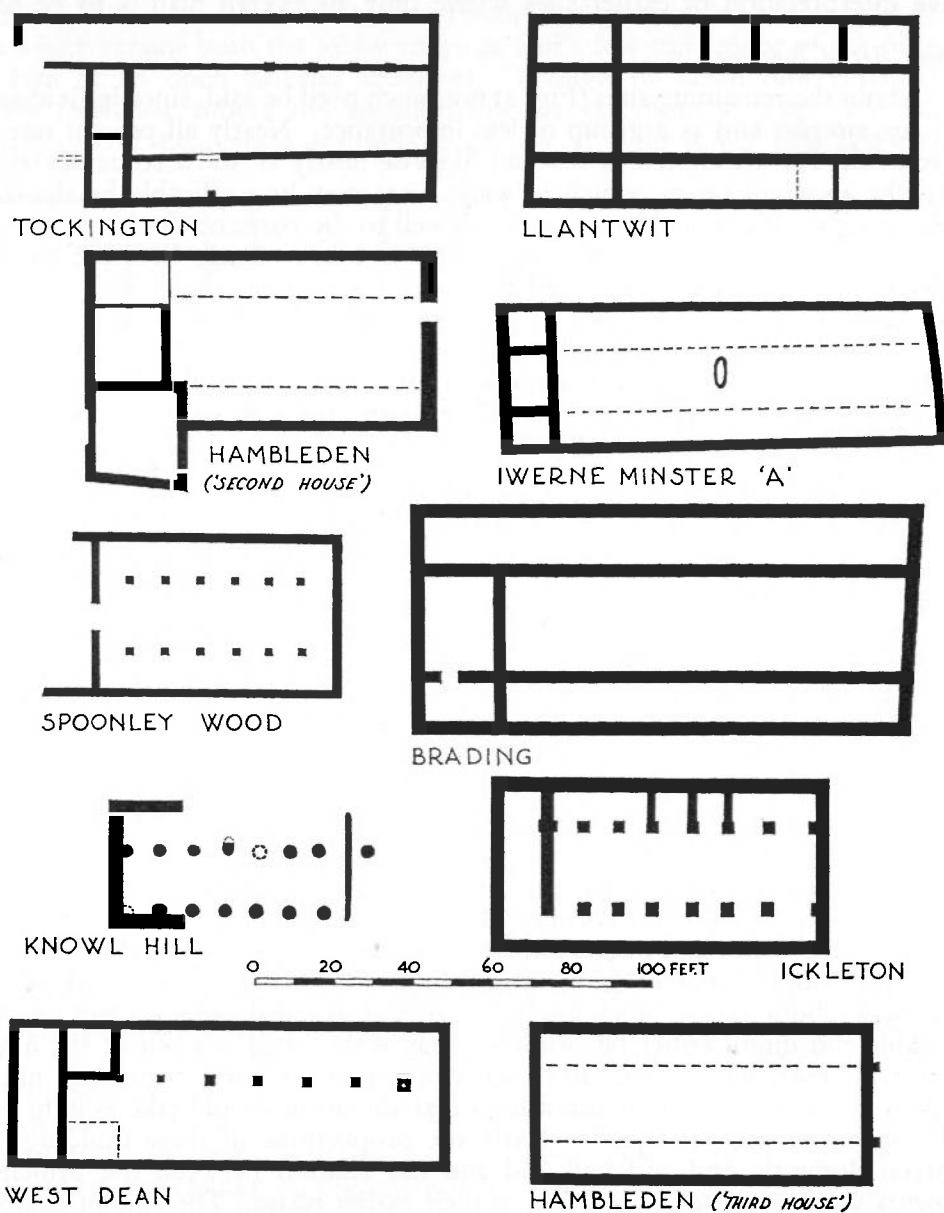


Fig. 4.

implies stability of purpose; its absence implies social and no doubt economic change. And that is part of the significance of these aisled hall-houses; they reflect some fundamental change in the way of life of their occupants. That the change is much more than just an increase in wealth can be demonstrated by reference to the domestic end, where mosaics and hypocausts reflect a growing prosperity and the Romanised taste that went with it, while conforming to the structural and social pattern laid down in the preceding timber phase. Significantly, too, whatever changes took place inside this part of the house did not alter its fundamental relation to the rest. The entrance still led into the hall in all houses where its position is known, and the principal private room seems invariably to have adjoined the hall.

If this be accepted the problem can be restated in different terms. Seeing that this lower or inferior end of the nave invariably retained a hall-like character, what earlier function did it lose that gave the rebuilders such latitude of choice? The usual answer may be quoted in Professor Richmond's words:¹ 'Where a resident staff of labourers appears, their accommodation nearly always takes the form of a barn-dwelling, frequently ranged on one side of a court. This structure . . . is planned with nave and aisles divided by timber columns. As in Friesian farm-houses today, the nave served for stores, tools and livestock, while the aisles or the whole of one end of the building were partitioned to house the workers'. For the moment discussion of the inhabitants' status may be postponed in order to consider the function of the building. As a first step it is more important to try to find out whether these aisled structures served primarily for domestic accommodation or whether they were equally important as barns or cowsheds. If the argument that the aisles were invariably subdivided later be well-founded, it is unlikely they were used originally as rooms since no trace of partitions or floors seems to have been found in the aisles anywhere, and this is certainly true of the earliest buildings at Landwade and Denton (Fig. 9). Moreover the way that the partitions so often ignore or partly mask the posts strongly suggests they are not following any earlier layout of rooms but are new spatial subdivisions. Denton has more positive evidence in the cobbled entrance 11 ft. wide at the east end of the nave that remained in use right to the end. This must have been used either for carts bringing in hay or corn, or for animals, but which? At Denton at least, and perhaps at Iwerne 'A' too, the presence of an open hearth and the consequent danger of fire precludes storage of hay or corn as the main purpose of these buildings. A hearth at West Blatchington was placed at the upper end of the hall, not in the middle. Further, if the storage of either corn on the stalk or hay were the primary object of the aisled house, the bulk of these crops would probably have suggested piling them somewhere in the nave, as was done in medieval English barns and the Friesian and North German '*Gulfbau*';² but purely on a balance of probabilities, for the evidence is not decisive, cow stalls filled the aisles or at least a considerable part of them, and possibly the

¹ I. A. Richmond, *Roman Britain*, (1955), 112, following J. Ward, R.-B. *Buildings & Earthworks* (1911), 180.

² J. Schepers, *Westfalen-Lippe (Haus und Hof deutscher Bauern II)* (1960), 149 and fig. 84b.

hay required for their winter feeding was stored above them. Just how much of the aisles were so used is impossible to say on present evidence, since any estimate must depend to some extent on where the hearth was and whether that part of the nave that served as a communal hall was flanked by cow stalls or farm stores; even supposing it were in the middle, about 30 ft. of the nave and aisles were left free at the east end for the working purposes of the farmhouse.¹

Iwerne Minster, Building 'A', provided a simpler version of this layout. If it be assumed that the three small rooms with stone footings were the domestic end, not, as has been suggested, a porch,² then what has been claimed as a large double post-hole can more plausibly be interpreted as a hearth set midway along the nave. Once more it is difficult to decide just how much of the aisles were used for cattle, and whether any part originally housed people.

Social implications

However inadequate this discussion of the agricultural function of these buildings, of one thing we can be sure, that nearly all of them provided some living accommodation; but for whom? It now becomes necessary to consider the question, which was deliberately deferred at the beginning of this paper, whether these aisled houses were independent or part of a larger complex. Winbolt described the aisled building at Brading as 'tenanted probably by servants and retainers, and ending in a barn'.³ In a structure of this sort, related to a more civilized kind of main house, Professor Richmond also places 'a resident staff of labourers', whereas Clanville or Denton were 'either small tenant-farms or bailiff-run establishments'.⁴ Since in the nature of the case no direct evidence can be offered for these interpretations, all of which are perfectly reasonable in themselves, it may be concluded that they are based either on the position of an aisled building in relation to a more compact and Roman-looking house, standing 20 or 30 yards away, or, for Denton and Clanville, on their very modest degree of Romanisation coupled with a very un-Roman plan. But if such a social distinction be generally true, Norton Disney becomes very hard to explain — it may, indeed, disprove the contention. It appears to be the only villa in which the farmhouse proper and the aisled hall-like building were joined to form a single rambling L-shaped whole, and what is so interesting is that they were joined by a bath block that seems to have been designed to serve both. This remarkable change, which took place in the final period of occupation, about A.D. 300–360, amounted to a substantial rebuilding of the whole complex and included what the excavator described as a luxurious suite of rooms '... built in the southern corridor of the basilican house'.⁵ In the old farmhouse, the whole corridor of the house was

¹ Prof. S. S. Frere kindly drew my attention to the important paper by S. Applebaum, 'Agriculture in Roman Britain', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, vi (1958), 66–86, where this line of inquiry has been pursued much farther, with adequate supporting detail.

² C. F. C. Hawkes, 'Britons, Romans & Saxons ... in Cranborne Chase', *Arch. J.*, civ (1947), 27–81; the suggestion is made at p. 55. Cf. Sir Cyril Fox's comment, p. 57.

³ S. E. Winbolt, *Britain under the Romans* (1945), 79.

⁴ I. A. Richmond, *Roman Britain* (1955), 112–113.

⁵ *Ant. J.*, xvii (1937), 154.

enlarged and a new eastern entrance built, a room added on the west, and new floors laid.¹ Such a thorough renovation of the whole complex, which included a marked raising of the standards of comfort and interior decoration of the aisled building, necessarily implies the unification of the two formerly separate structures and makes it hard to believe in such a separation of master and labourers in the last phase of occupation as the earlier periods might seem to imply. Instead it recalls Oelmann's comparison of aisled halls such as Mansfield Woodhouse with the typical late medieval hall such as Penshurst.² With Norton Disney in mind we can push the analogy further and compare the dwelling-house to the solar range, with its chambers or private rooms where a Romano-British equivalent of the lord of the manor and his family slept, conducted their non-public life, and transacted business; while the aisled hall presumably served something like the same functions of court house and communal dining-room on feast days as its medieval counterpart. Though the manner of life conducted in this architectural setting must for the present be uncertain in its details, its general character is implied by the component buildings themselves.

But even if this be true of Norton Disney can the same be said of other farms? Mansfield Woodhouse bears so close a resemblance to Norton Disney in all save the final physical link that there is no difficulty in adopting a similar interpretation. In this connection it may be remembered that houses in the early Middle Ages, and indeed as late as the 13th or 14th centuries, comprised a collection of detached structures which were only integrated into an architectural whole in the course of several centuries — point is given to this familiar fact by recent excavations at Old Yeavinger and, not irrelevant to medieval England, at Warendorf in Westphalia.³ Moreover, neither at Norton Disney nor Mansfield Woodhouse need it be supposed that private house and semi-public hall were at some stage thrown open indiscriminately to common use, only that there was no rigid social separation of the landowner or farmer in one building from workers or perhaps tenants who, for certain specific purposes, used the other; what happened, presumably, was not that the farm workers or estate tenants necessarily lived in the hall but that at certain times they entered it for recognized communal purposes.

If this explanation will fit Mansfield Woodhouse it will fit Brading, where the relation of the two main buildings is precisely the same. Tockington (Fig. 4) (where there was some evidence of an architectural link between the relevant buildings) might be explicable in the same way, but unfortunately the details of the house or private block are rather uncertain.

At West Dean what seems to have been a house of good quality was found when the London and South-Western Railway line was being built and in consequence was partly destroyed. The remains suggest a similar relation between a house and a nearby aisled hall, with a third building resembling the

¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

² Oelmann, *Germania*, v (1928), 118, 121-2.

³ Old Yeavinger; inf. from Mr. Brian Hope-Taylor. Warendorf; W. Winckelmann, *Germania*, xxxii (1954), 189 ff.

south range of Brading standing outside the main courtyard. For Ickleton no site plan was ever published, so the one presented here (Fig. 5) has been reconstructed from the account of the discovery by Albert Way who quotes R. C. Neville as saying that the aisled building stood about 30 or 40 yards south-east of the house; this distance accords with the previous examples but unfortunately a slight element of doubt is introduced by J. C. Buckler's contribution to the same article in which he says it was about 100 yards away.¹

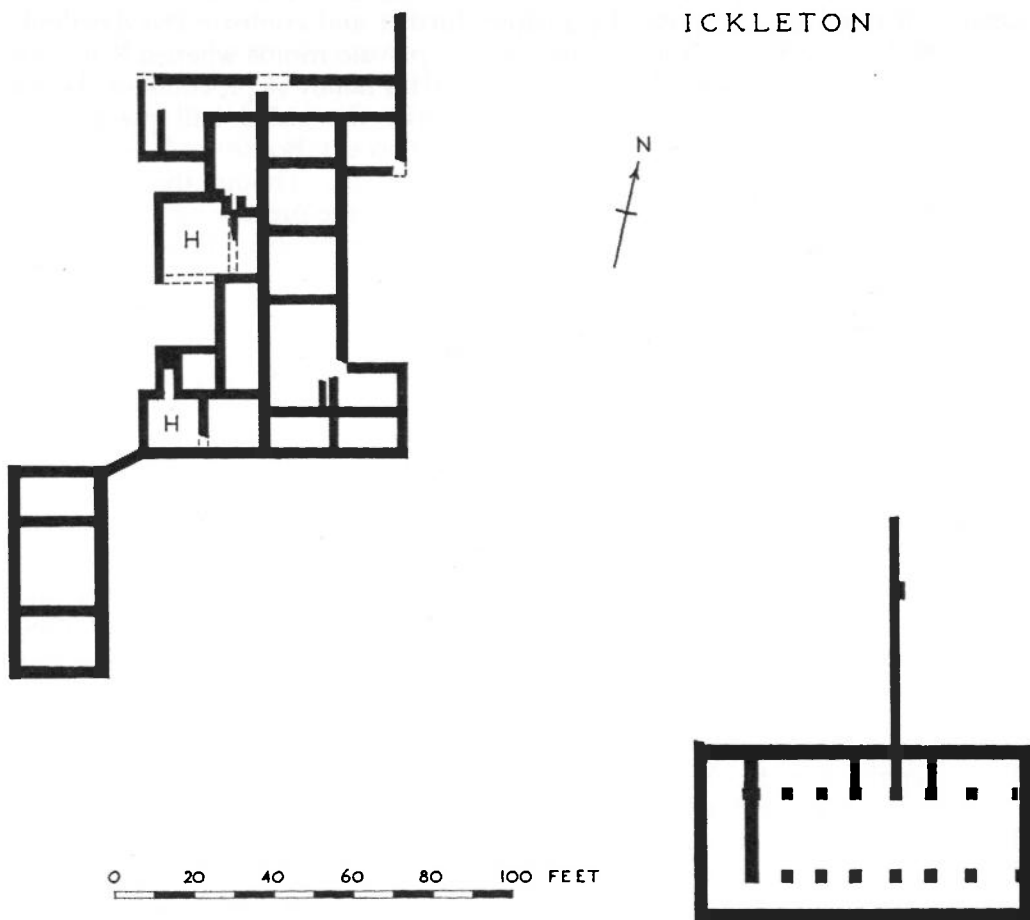


Fig. 5.

Another aisled hall, at Hambleden (Fig. 4, bottom), of modest dimensions, flanked one side of the courtyard; an even greater disparity in standards of comfort between house and hall is visible at Woodchester where, too, the architectural character of the hall—if that is the correct interpretation of the building

¹ *J.B.A.A.*, IV (1849), 364.

on the south side—is by no means as clear as elsewhere. Other villas which were incompletely explored suggest in various ways a comparable relation of house and hall. Clanville, where the north range could not be excavated because it was in separate ownership, is a possibility; so is Apethorpe in Northamptonshire, where a building that carried a faint suggestion of being an aisled hall was either inadequately explored or had been destroyed earlier. It thus appears to have been not uncommon to have the buildings of a villa grouped loosely round a courtyard, with the private house on the far side from the entrance and a larger aisled structure, that in some cases at least can be plausibly interpreted as an aisled hall, serving a semi-public purpose, flanking it. Nor did the presumed hall need to be aisled. A similar layout at Ely (near Cardiff) had flanking structures which were interpreted on the basis of 19th-century discoveries as workshops to which a bath-building was added later.¹ Without denying that they may have been used as workshops at some time it is surely strange that inferior buildings should have a tessellated corridor in front of them, especially in an establishment not rich in such amenities, and equally strange that the domestic bath-block should have been added to them. But if we regard Brading or Mansfield Woodhouse as analogies these anomalies disappear and the range can be interpreted as primarily an aisleless hall, heated by an open hearth and suitably if modestly equipped with corridor and bath-block. This theme of the association of private house and semi-public hall could be carried further with aisleless halls, but not now. Let us go back again to aisled buildings and look at Llantwit Major, where the archaeological information is much more complete than elsewhere, to see if these ideas have any bearing on it. Here ‘about the middle of the second century’ the aisled hall and the private house were built simultaneously — as they were, incidentally, at Norton Disney — but late in the 3rd century or early in the 4th ‘the main residence including the bath block, was finally given up and wholly or partly dismantled . . . Residential occupation of the site was henceforward confined to the “Basilican house” . . . forming the servants’ quarters in the southern range’.² Clearly this is a different story from Norton Disney, but is the difference one of degree or kind? That there was a decline, ‘probably reflecting a change in the fortunes of the villa-owner’³ cannot be doubted, and it has been interpreted by Professor Richmond as a change from a farm run by its owner to one run by a bailiff.⁴ It is one of those rare instances where change of plan hints at change of tenure; and probability is reinforced by the consideration that the Llantwit aisled hall shows little or none of that progressive improvement displayed by those of its fellows which evidently shared the late prosperity of the farmhouse.

In summing up these subsidiary aisled halls, it is impossible in the present state of the evidence to say more than that some of them can hardly have been slave quarters but rather were an integral part of the farmhouse, and that others show signs of change which might be interpreted in the same way.

¹ R. E. M. Wheeler, ‘A Roman Fortified House near Cardiff’, *J.R.S.*, XI (1921), 67–85.

² *Arch. Camb.*, CII (1953), 89–163; the quotation is at p. 129.

³ *loc. cit.*

⁴ I. A. Richmond, *Arch. N. L.*, VI (1955), 116.

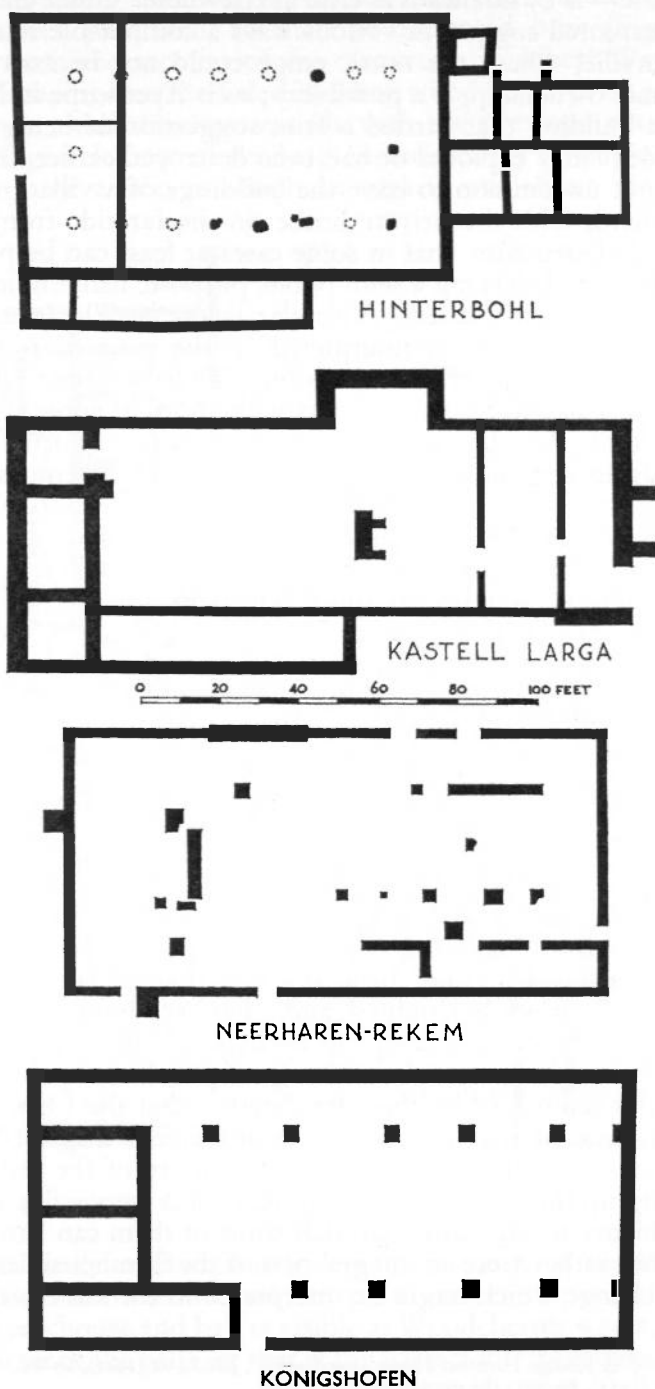


Fig. 6.

The remainder cannot all be classed simply as farmhouses. Some certainly were, such as Stroud, Denton and Iwerne and probably West Blatchington, East Grimstead and North Warnborough; but conceivably Carisbrooke and Landwade were only parts of larger complexes. Stroud, the most prosperous of all the independent farmhouses (Fig. 2), was modified in the course of rebuilding in a most interesting way. The private end was rebuilt with two quite large rooms separated by a passage connecting the front aisle — no doubt converted into a portico — with the rear aisle, which doubtless served as a corridor but may also have been a verandah. The plan gives an impression of a clearer separation between private quarters and hall than at Denton or Landwade; and East Grimstead (Fig. 3) had a substantially identical layout. The completely enclosed transverse passage appears to demand clerestorey lighting since light borrowed from the adjoining rooms or even from the portico and corridor would hardly have sufficed. Of course it is not certain this was so and maybe in practice the passage was not too dark, but judging purely from the plan clerestorey lighting was used. In that case this part of the villa must have had something like a true basilican structure in which solid internal walls replaced columns; and moreover such planning is apparently based on the type of more sophisticated structure found at Darenth in Kent.¹ Darenth is notoriously a problem house needing thorough re-assessment, but tentatively it may be interpreted as having a main range, similar in function though not in plan to those at Mansfield Woodhouse and Brading, to which is added accommodation equivalent to that provided by the secondary ranges of those houses — a private suite on one side (Fig. 3) and an aisled hall on the other, making a balanced if rather spread-out architectural composition of a kind familiar in much bigger continental villas. However that may be, the planning of the private rooms at East Grimstead, by revealing how sophisticated taste in architecture spread from the great landowners to lesser farmers, provides an index of Romanisation as much as of prosperity. Elsewhere, at Carisbrooke or Landwade, something of the old close relation between the two parts of an aisled farmhouse persisted after rebuilding.

The Origins of Romano-British Aisled Buildings

So far I have dealt with the late stages of this class of building; what of their earlier and less easily recoverable history, and their origins? Proof that they were aisled byre-houses is not claimed, only that such evidence as there is is not inconsistent with their being so. Taking up first the comparison with Friesian farmhouses, I am not sure how far it would be taken by those who have made it, nor, since specialist publications on the Friesian house are not readily obtainable, can the matter easily be pursued; but an authoritative summary of house-research in the Netherlands by R. C. Hekker² is accompanied by diagrams suggesting that its development follows broadly the same lines as the north-German aisled byre-house. A notable feature of both Friesian

¹ G. Payne, 'The Roman Villa at Darenth', *Arch. Cant.*, xxii (1896), 49-84; V.C.H., *Kent*, III, 111-113.

² R. C. Hekker, 'Die Bauernhausforschung in den Niederlanden . . .', *Niederschrift über d. Tagung d. Arbeitkreises für deutsche Hausforschung* (Cloppenburg 1952), 34-61.

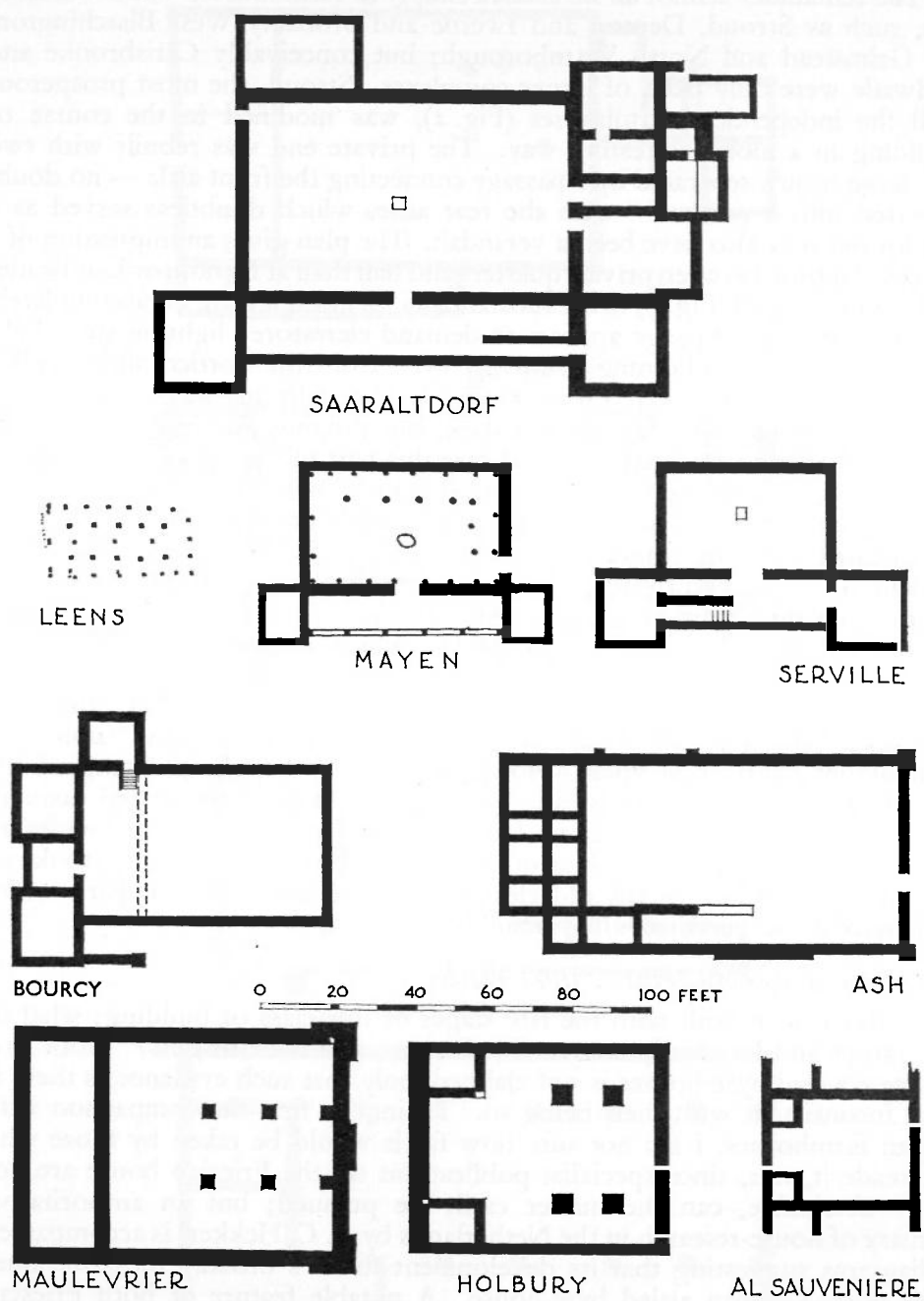


Fig. 7.

and north German types, and one which differentiates them sharply from their Romano-British counterparts, is a hall, extending the full width of the building and heated by a fireplace built against the wall that seals off the end rooms. It leaves the nave free for threshing, spinning and all the manifold tasks performed by a family comprising three generations and many relatives on a big and almost self-contained farm. An essential part of the planning is the storage of winter fodder for the animals above the aisles in which they were stalled. Social and economic change led here, as perhaps in all types of house sheltering both family and animals, to a visible architectural distinction between the two parts, and in certain types to the use of the nave for storing a big crop of hay or corn on the stalk — *i.e.* the *Gulf-haus*. But it never led to the nave being surrounded by rooms — the gable entrance always remained in use. Similar lines of evolution can be followed in the lower Rhineland.¹ From this different course of development we can check our inferences about the Romano-British aisled house; we can see, for example, that the function of the nave, in which, to judge from Denton and Iwerne, there was a central hearth, was quite different. As far as the hearth and a few feet beyond, the nave must have served as the focus of communal life, leaving the rest of it, as far as the entrance, for farm activities and even, as at Denton, for the stalling of cattle which had perforce been removed from the aisles. A row of stone-lined post-holes suggested this. The divisions of the total length of the building as between domestic and working parts are so different in Roman Britain and medieval Germany that an historical connection between the two cannot be assumed without further evidence, nor can the two types too lightly be regarded as analogous. In matters of house-planning, custom rules; a difference of function in some part of two similarly constructed house types will certainly be rooted deeply in history. What the comparison does do is to confirm that each type underwent a completely different change; the Romano-British house tended to lose its original farm purpose entirely whereas the north-German house retained it and increased the complexity of both parts.

This brings us to the question of origins. Several theories have been advanced. Swoboda in 1924² claimed on the strength of examples in England and outside it — Königshofen in Hungary, Maulévrier in Normandy — that it was an old type of Hellenistic farmhouse distributed throughout the whole area of Hellenistic and Roman culture. Next, Collingwood described the basilican house as ‘a special type . . . which is fairly common in Britain, and is not unknown, though rare, on the Continent’.³ From Swoboda’s book he instances Königshofen and Maulévrier together with one at Sinsheim that Swoboda did not claim as ‘basilican’. Collingwood continues: ‘A basilican house at Kastell Larga, between Basle and Belfort, is published in *Westd(utsche) Zeitschr(ift)* (vol. xxvi) . . . and parallels are quoted from Bachenau, Aulfigen and Siblingen’. Collingwood proceeds to claim the Rhenish villa of Mayen as basilican in origin, a piece of evidence which, he says, ‘enables us to go a

¹ A. Zippelius, *Das Bauernhaus am unteren deutschen Niederrhein* (Wuppertal, 1957), esp. figs. 34–36.

² K. Swoboda, *Römische u. Romanische Paläste* (1924), 115.

³ R. G. Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1930), 129.

little further and to say that it was an early type in the Celtic world, perhaps established there before the Romans came . . .'. A year or two later Professor Richmond drew attention to houses described in the early Irish laws which can be interpreted as aisled.¹ Of this I will say immediately that it may be a correct interpretation but archaeological evidence is needed to substantiate it,

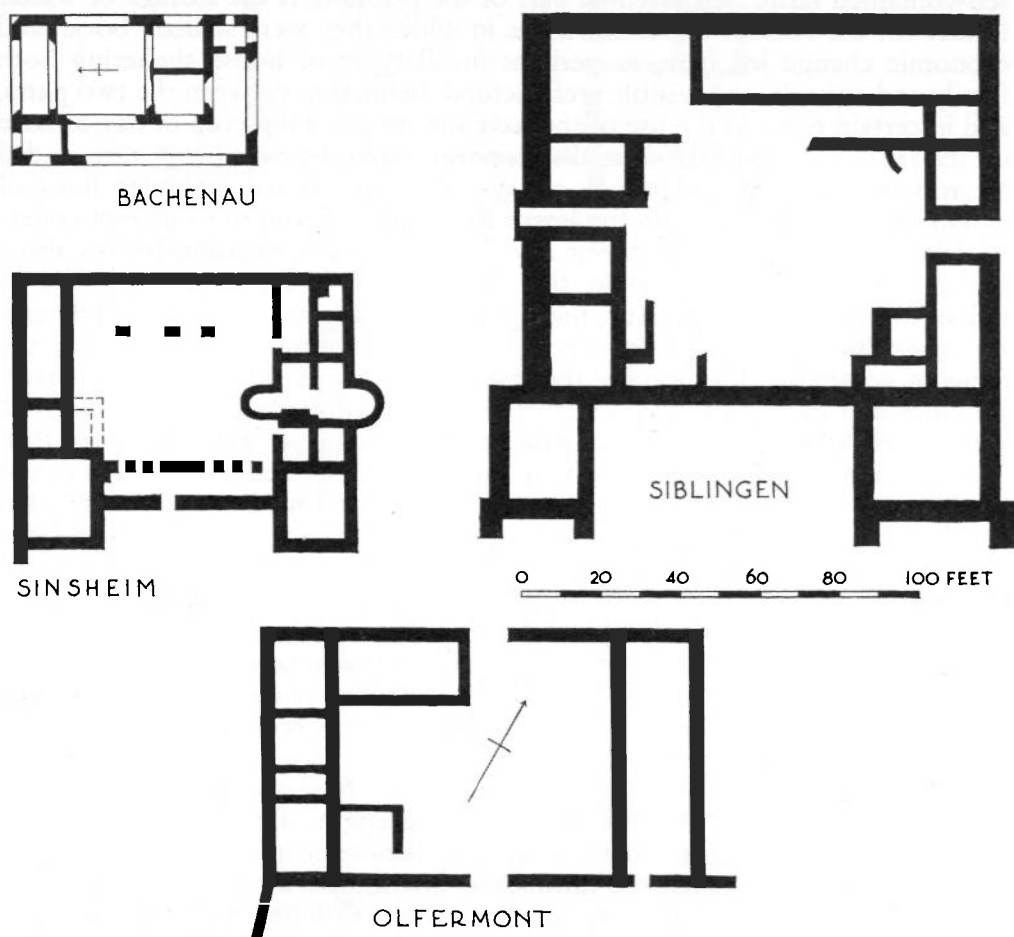


Fig. 8.

just as it is needed to settle the old controversy about the house of the early Welsh laws. More recently Professor Richmond has said that no proof of any pre-Roman antecedents of the basilican villa has yet appeared, 'and it may well be that the type is borrowed from the Italian *villa rustica*';² and again, 'it is necessary to know where this type of building comes from, and it is not certain that even Mayen in the Eifel provides the answer'.³

¹ I. A. Richmond, 'Irish Analogies for the Romano-British Barn Dwelling', *J.R.S.*, xxii (1932), 96.

² I. A. Richmond, *Roman Britain* (1955), 112-3.

³ I. A. Richmond, *Arch. N. L.*, vi (1955), 45.

The cumulative arguments are impressive. They have been presented deliberately without reference to illustrations because that, I suspect, is how they are normally read. Plans of all save one of these continental parallels have been drawn to the same scale as the English villas in the same uniform manner, ignoring different structural periods. It can be seen that Königshofen (Fig. 6), though not conforming closely to the characteristic development of the English villas, resembles them in several respects. Maulevrier appears with Holbury (Fig. 7), claimed by Collingwood as basilican, beside it for comparison. Though both are obviously out of the same stable, both, clearly, are unrelated to the English aisled halls except in so far as all aisled buildings have some likeness to each other. They are sufficiently unlike the houses discussed earlier to need no further consideration.¹ Then there is Sinsheim (Fig. 8), of which Collingwood's description, 'a remarkable compound of basilican and corridor plans',² reveals a failure to analyse house-plans rigorously and a misunderstanding of the significance of both Swoboda's book and the Mayen excavation report. In Kastell Larga (Fig. 6) it is not easy to see any trace of aisled structure; and whatever Bachenau and Siblingen (Fig. 8) provide parallels for, it is not the aisled farmhouse. The seventh example, Aulfingen, I have not yet found a plan of and can only say that it would be a most astonishing coincidence if it turned out to be aisled. Then there is Mayen — so carefully excavated and so well elucidated in the report, and yet within two or three years so misinterpreted on this side of the Channel. Collingwood's opinions may be considered first, not because he is the worst offender but because, through the pre-eminent merits of his book *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*, his views carry weight even in those rare instances where he was wildly wrong. 'The corridor house at Mayen in its original form was a rectangular one-roomed house with an aisle running along one side at least, perhaps along both sides . . . ; that is to say, it was a basilican house before it was converted into a corridor house'. A glance at the plan (Fig. 7), and even more at the published reconstruction,³ shows that the internal longitudinal row of posts standing free of the walls serves only to support a partition and has no structural significance, and anyone who wishes to give it some must first show in detail how the interpretation put forward by Oelmann and his architect collaborator Mylius is wrong. So out goes Mayen; and of the whole range of continental parallels claimed by English writers only Königshofen remains. Besides these, continental scholars have suggested two further examples, the first of which, put forward by De Maeyer — the Belgian villa of Rekem by Neerharen⁴ (Fig. 6) — has post-bases which make no pattern. Perhaps it belonged to the same class as one excavated at Hinterbohl (Fig. 6) near Hölstein in Switzerland not many years ago by Dr. Rudolf Fellman and claimed by him as basilican.⁵ Here at last is a

¹ The central part of the Belgian villa of Al Sauvenière (Fig. 7) compared by De Maeyer, *Die Römische Villas in Belgien* (1937), to Holbury and Maulevrier, is clearly irrelevant when all three are drawn to the same scale.

² R. G. Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1930), 131.

³ Oelmann, *Bonner Jahrbücher* (1928), 51-140; the reconstruction is Taf. V.

⁴ De Maeyer, *Die Römische Villas in Belgien* (1937), 113-4.

⁵ R. Fellman, 'Die gallo-römische villa rustica von Hinterbohl bei Hölstein', *Baselbieter Heimatbuch*, v (1950); offprint paginated 1-52.

building whose social and structural significance is perfectly clear; it belongs to the general type of German hall-villa first discerned and described by Oelmann,¹ though it differs in detail from his examples and indeed from most members of its large class. Saarltdorf and Serville (Fig. 7) illustrate the way such houses were enlarged without modifying the hall very much; these and other examples led Oelmann to postulate the kind of development he later

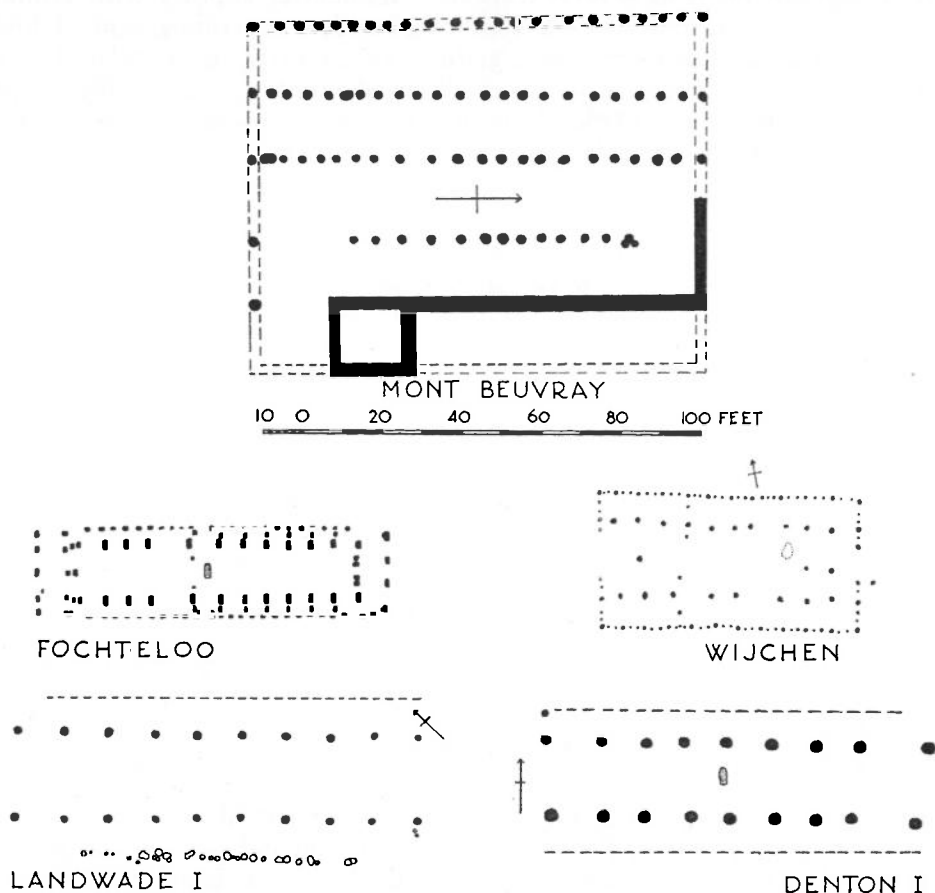


Fig. 9.

proved by excavation at Mayen. The hall at Hinterbohl, from which two rooms were cut off at the south end, was improved mainly by the external addition of a bath block at the opposite end so that it retained its character virtually unchanged. Its essential structure is perfectly clear — it derives from the kind of building which has a middle row of posts, which we may call ridge posts from the fact that they supported a ridge-piece. Such structures developed by stages we cannot yet plot from the four-aisled 'Danubian' houses — to go

¹ Oelmann, *Germania*, v (1921), 64-73.

no farther back — and are well exemplified in the chieftain's house at the Goldberg.¹ In the pedigree of Hinterbohl the timber hall at Mont Beuvray (Fig. 9), has an important place. At some date not yet clearly fixed, but perhaps as early as 500 B.C., the inconvenience of such a plan produced a technical development whereby two rows of posts parallel with the axis of the building replaced the middle row of posts; several excavated halls have a proportional width of nave to aisles which suggests a simple suppression of the middle row, while others like Wijchen (Fig. 9)² and Hinterbohl show a partial suppression. But this is quite different from the proportions found in the Romano-British aisled farmhouse, the nave being much wider relative to its length and to the width of the aisles. Nor, moreover, do these halls show any sign at any stage of their development of sheltering cattle or serving any other farm purpose — this, despite assertions to the contrary about Mayen,³ and a reconstruction of the sort for Hinterbohl.⁴ Hence the relevance of such halls to our purpose lies in their structure not their plan.

So of the parallels hitherto claimed only Königshofen remains, on which final judgment is reserved. But one house at Fochteloo in Holland (Fig. 9), excavated by Professor van Giffen,⁵ does provide a really close parallel. In its original form, before being extended at both ends, the farmhouse corresponded extraordinarily closely to the aisled timber houses of Roman Britain: the proportion of house to byre corresponds to that of private rooms to hall; the gable entrance to the byre matches those to the nave at Denton and Norton Disney; and there is the lack of an independent outside doorway into the house-part. Lastly there is the position of the side entrances in relation to the hearth at Fochteloo on the one hand and Denton, Iwerne Minster 'A' and West Blatchington on the other. The relation between these features is crucial in analysing traditional buildings, but it must be stated clearly that the interpretation of a pit in the middle of the Fochteloo house as a hearth is the present writer's and runs contrary to that of the excavator. Van Giffen considered the possibility but decided against it because 'real traces of fire were lacking'; also the possibility of its being a large post-hole (*cf.* Iwerne Minster 'A' (Fig. 4)), but this too he found unsatisfactory. Perhaps, he said, a fitting stood here that had something to do with the collection or processing of milk; and this I find unsatisfactory. The building is dated to the second half of the 1st century and the 2nd century A.D., and though at present it is the only close continental parallel for the Romano-British aisled house of timber, its antecedents are known. They too were excavated by van Giffen at the famous settlement of Ezingen,⁶ where the variety of forms of aisled long-house, going back as far as

¹ For plan see V. G. Childe, *Prehistoric Migrations* (1950), 224.

² Bloemen, 'Praehistorische woningen te Wijchen', *Oudheidk. Meded.*, N.R., XIII (1932), 5, and afb. 6, 7.

³ O. Brogan, *Roman Gaul* (1953), 121, following J. Dechelette & A. Grenier, *Manuel d'Archeologie* . . . , VI (2), 787: 'On pensera, avec quelque vraisemblance, que ces cloissons separaient l'étable de la salle où vivaient les gens'. The only basis for this idea is an unsubstantiated remark by Mylius, *Bonner Jahrbücher*, 133 (1928), 145; Oelmann does not mention cattle in his discussion.

⁴ R. Fellmann, *Baselbieter Heimatbuch*, v (1950), 35.

⁵ A. E. van Giffen 'Praehistorische Hausformen auf Sandböden in den Niederlanden', *Germania*, xxxvi (1958), 35-71; esp. 58-71.

⁶ A. E. van Giffen, 'Der Warf in Ezingen . . .', *Germania*, xx (1936), 40-47.

c. 400 B.C., shows the gradual evolution of what became a standard type. Now these forerunners are so far unknown in England, whereas one or two houses are known which look remarkably like the later standard type, and there are besides many Romano-British aisled buildings which became halls though they were something different before, and that something has points of resemblance to the house at Fochteloo. Hence, although negative evidence is a dangerous foundation for argument, it does look as if the aisled byre-house was evolved on the continent in what is now the Netherlands and the adjoining parts of Germany and arrived in Britain fully developed.¹ That at least is what the strong family likeness of all the English examples suggests, and if this is so it remains to find an historical context for it. Such, however, is our ignorance of the beginnings of nearly all Romano-British aisled houses that this task can hardly be attempted.

It is worth noting that the Fochteloo farmhouse differs from its Romano-British counterparts in having a hall which includes a double bay, and from its Friesian and German successors in having a central hearth. Consideration of these points may throw light on our English houses. It is thought that a big change came over the early Friesian and German farmhouses when, in consequence of the scythe displacing the sickle for reaping corn, the sheaves were stored instead of the ears alone. This was done at first simply by placing them on a floor built on the tiebeams spanning the nave and later when more and more space was needed first roof construction and then the plan were profoundly affected. One consequence of using the nave roof for storage must have been the removal of the hearth to one end of it, under a hood built against the walls of the private rooms. Hence, reverting to Fochteloo and its English counterparts, the central hearth suggests that the only farm purpose they served was to shelter cattle; indeed it is hardly conceivable that any house with an open hearth in the nave could have served as a barn. That does not of course prove that the big aisled outbuildings at Darenth or Bignor were not barns, it merely makes their proper examination more important, for although the basic aisled structure could just as easily have been adapted to store corn in Roman times as it was in the Middle Ages the existence of big aisled medieval barns should not lead to assumptions about earlier farm buildings.

If the association of Romano-British aisled houses with those of the Netherlands and ultimately with those of north-west Germany be well founded, what of Königshofen, marooned hundreds of miles away south-east of Vienna? Bearing in mind that it stood, like the building at Kastell Larga, in its own defensible walled enclosure or *castellum* — it was in fact called Kastell Ulmus — it seems likely to have been a hall with farm outbuildings rather than an aisled longhouse; and for what the argument is worth — admittedly not very much —

¹ In the course of revising this paper I discovered that a connection between Romano-British 'basilican' houses and the type of aisled house at Ezinge and Wijchen had already been postulated by F. Oelmann in an article entitled 'Wie der germanische Bauer am Niederrhein wohnte', in *2000 Jahre germanisches Bauerntum am linken Niederrhein*, Festschrift (Krefeld, 1935), 169 *et seq.* I have not been able to consult this article, which is referred to solely for the point mentioned by De Maeyer, *Die Römische Villas in Belgien* (1937), Addenda and Corrigenda *sub* Blz. 125. H. Hinz points to such a connection in his recent article 'Zur Vorgeschichte der Niederdeutschen Halle', *Zft. für Volkskunde*, 60 (1964), 1-22, esp. 4-7.

the proportions resemble the Hinterbohl type of hall rather than a byre-dwelling. For all that this argument is weak and inconclusive, the distance of Konigshofen from the rest should inspire caution for the future, sufficient at least to put a large question-mark beside it. It is relevant to add that examination of over two hundred plans of Roman villas in Germany, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Northern France has failed to produce even one probable parallel to our English examples.

Structural evolution

So far the discussion has been entirely concerned with the development of the plan. Having elucidated this and arrived at a possible ancestor for Romano-British aisled farmhouses it is now possible to discuss more meaningfully their structural evolution, particularly in relation to the presence or absence of a clerestorey. Van Giffen's reconstruction of Fochteloo, which is certainly correct in its broad lines, shows a roof swept down over the aisles to terminate on low side walls, in exactly the same fashion as may still be seen in some English aisled halls of the 13th and 14th century.¹ Were Denton and Landwade like this? They might have been. Nothing positively forbids it. But there is one detail at Denton which may suggest that its roof was in some way different, and that is that the filling put in the post-holes (of phase I) after the posts had been withdrawn included both stone slates and baked clay tiles. Such a find may be explicable in a variety of ways, for example the re-use of one or other of these materials brought from another building, or that the roof was of tiles with stone verge-slates in the manner still common in Dorset. They may however imply roofs of two different pitches, a fairly steep and presumably stone-clad one over the nave and shallow tiled ones over the aisles. Roofs of this sort with a varied pitch, though rare, are not unknown in the middle ages,² and such a solution would greatly have facilitated lighting the nave. Even so, since such an improvement has never taken place in the long history of the north European aisled farmhouse it can be assumed to be not strictly necessary, and this point is worth making in view of the widespread assumption that all Romano-British aisled houses must have had a clerestorey. Comparison with German aisled farmhouses shows that even when longitudinal partitions divide the dwelling part no clerestorey or dormer need be introduced. The example chosen for illustration (Fig. 10), a small farm house (*Kate*) at Lackhausen, near Wesel, in the lower Rhineland,³ has its living-quarters divided into three rooms, those within the aisles being lit each by a very small window, and the big living room (*Herdraum*) having only one window in the gable wall. Nor did a hall-nave need to have much direct light, as a photograph (Pl. I) taken in a much larger late 18th-century Westphalian farmhouse proves.⁴

¹ Two 14th-century aisled timber halls in Essex, St. Clare's Hall, St. Osyth, and Baythorne Hall, Birdbrook, illustrate this point well; their side walls are 7-8 ft. high. Both halls were lit solely by small windows below the eaves. See also J. T. Smith, 'Medieval Aisled Halls', *Arch. J.*, cxii (1955), 76-94. The Fochteloo reconstruction is in *Germania*, xxxvi (1958), Abb. 16.

² e.g. West Bromwich manor house; *Arch. J.*, cxv (1958), 140 and fig. 17.

³ Zippelius, *Das Bauernhaus am unteren deutschen Niederrhein* (Wuppertal, 1957), 78-80.

⁴ Schepers, *Westfalen-Lippe (Haus u. Hof deutscher Bauern II)*, Bild 49 and Taf. 102.

This view has been chosen deliberately to show the effect of cross-lighting through the open doors adjoining the dwelling house at the upper end of the nave because something similar to this may have been possible in certain Romano-British aisled houses, *e.g.* Carisbrooke and Mansfield Woodhouse (Fig. 1). None of this evidence proves that our aisled houses did not have clerestoreys; it merely shows the clerestorey is not the essential accompaniment of an aisled plan it is commonly supposed (by British writers) to be.

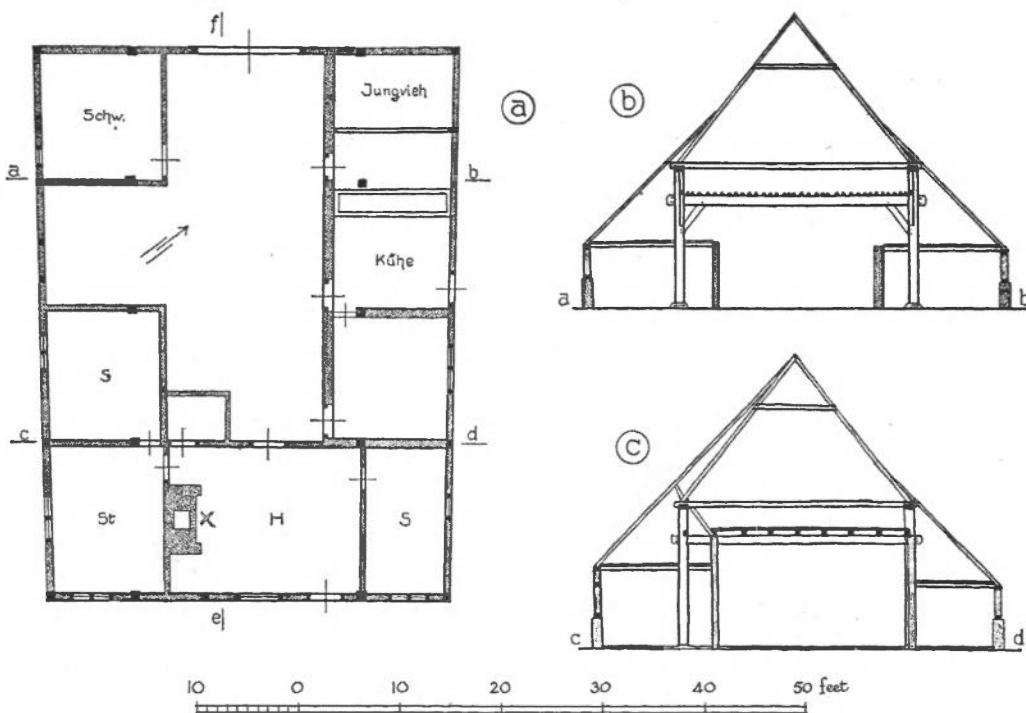
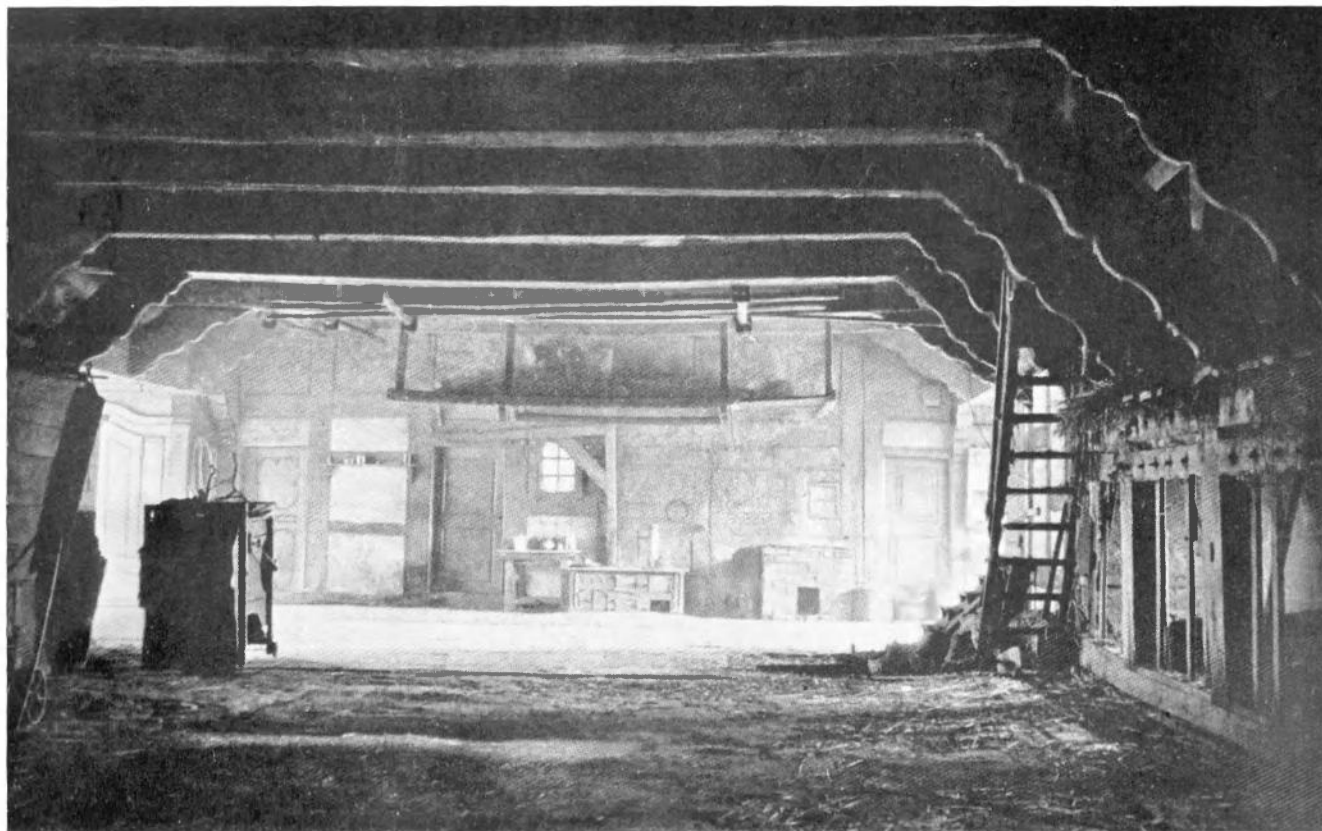


Fig. 10. A small aisled long-house in the Rhineland: Lackhausen-Ruhhof. (A. Zippelius, *Das Bauernhaus am unteren deutschen Niederrhein*, fig. 38)

But there is also some evidence bearing directly on the question. It is easy enough to assume a clerestorey in the dwelling part, particularly in a house like West Blatchington where the two parts of the building are clearly separated; it is less easy to visualize a clerestorey above a hall which was heated by an open hearth. Perhaps in practice smoke did not darken the windows as rapidly as the blackened rafters of many a medieval roof might suggest, or perhaps smoke disposal, through the kind of fuel used or the use of a timber and plaster canopy or hood, was not a problem. A hood on the lines of those discovered in recent years in northern England¹ is a possibility at West Blatchington, where it

¹ R.C.H.M., *Monuments Threatened or Destroyed* (1962), 75 (definition). A cottage at Stockdalewath and Thrangholm Farm, both in Dalston (*ibid.*, 29) show in plan how the fire is screened on three sides to provide adequate draught for the hood to work properly.



Hof Rohlfing in Preussisch Ströhen, Kr. Lübbeck, Westphalia.
View from working part of nave (*Deele*) to dwelling end (*Flett*): the house was built in 1776–80.
J. Schepers, *Westfalen-Lippe (Haus u. Hof deutscher Bauern II)*, Bild 49

could have been built against a stone wall, but at Denton, where the hearth was in the middle of the nave, there was not the slightest trace of the supports or screens that would have been necessary for efficient removal of smoke. It so happens that Denton, West Blatchington, and possibly Iwerne 'A', are the only houses where the hall hearth was found. But every hall must have been heated; and if, as may well be, there is a perfectly simple solution to the problem, the proponents of the clerestorey should announce it, and indeed expound their case fully. Until this is done it must remain doubtful whether any of the aisled houses discussed in this paper should really be called basilican. In my view it is an unnecessary hypothesis.

This paper has been presented substantially in the form in which it was originally read,¹ ignoring, mostly for lack of evidence, certain points which were raised in discussion or later. It has been urged² that the notion of a portico extending only halfway along a house such as Stroud (p. 5 above) is inconceivable. Perhaps; yet in two famous types of farmhouse sheltering both a family and its cattle — the north European aisled long-house and the British long-house — the functional division between the two parts of the building is so faithfully reflected outside that I think a partially porticoed front possible. It is not a very important matter. This fashionable kind of front could perfectly well have been imitated and continued by blind arcading, pierced here and there by windows. There is more force in the objection that no evidence of stall divisions or drains has been found,³ nor of a thick dark layer composed principally of dung, which occurs in the excavated north German houses;⁴ both points cast doubt on the notion that Romano-British aisled houses ever sheltered cattle although neither is conclusive. The presence of corn-drying kilns in at least two buildings which might have been aisled — at Woodchester, and Hambleton (Fig. 4) — reinforces the objection, although these particular buildings are not crucial to the discussion. Probably only further excavation will decide the purposes (which may vary) that these buildings were intended to serve. But it may be observed, firstly, that the union of living accommodation with a barn alone and without cattle seems to be rare, if it ever occurs, in any European culture, and secondly, that the wide gable entrance is not easy to account for in a building of either purely domestic or representational type. Whatever the answer may be, the question of original purpose is in any case of less importance than the relation of the aisled halls to the adjoining ranges of small rooms, for the conjunction in some villas of the two types of structures and the presence elsewhere of one or other type alone must indicate a difference in either the form of tenure or the economic basis of villas.

¹ At a meeting of the Institute, 13 December, 1961.

² By Professor S. S. Frere on reading the paper prior to publication.

³ Lady Fox.

⁴ Dr. C. A. Ralegh Radford.

APPENDIX

ROMANO-BRITISH AISLED HOUSES AND FARM BUILDINGS

The following list, which includes all the certain or possible aisled buildings known to the writer whether they belong to the type discussed above or not, refers only to the principal source of evidence used and the best available plan. Minor references are rarely given, but the source quoted is not necessarily the primary one. A site is listed under the name it is usually known by, with the name under which it is listed by the Ordnance Survey (*Map of Roman Britain*, 3rd ed.), when different, in brackets.

ACTON SCOTT, Shropshire

V.C.H., *Shropshire*, I. The plan and proportions suggest but do not prove an aisled house. (Not illustrated above.)

APETHORPE, Northamptonshire

V.C.H., *Northamptonshire*, I, 191; R. G. Collingwood, *Archaeology of Roman Britain*, 134. Aisled building, apparently in part domestic, is probable but not proved by excavation.

ASH, Kent

(Fig. 7); *Arch. Cant.*, xxxi, 286. A building of this width — about 47 ft. clear — must surely have had intermediate roof supports. Possibly there were two rows of posts; the siting of the gable entrance suggests a form of roof construction analogous to Hinterbohl (Fig. 6). It has a fairly close resemblance to Bourcy in Belgium (Fig. 7), which was described as a hall by its excavator: H. Roosens, 'Une villa romaine à Bourcy', *Archaeologia Belgica* 27 (= *Bull. des Musees Roy. d'Art et d'Hist.*, 4 ser., 26 (1955), 18-33.

BIGNOR, Sussex

S. E. Winbolt and George Herbert, *The Roman Villa at Bignor* (2nd ed., 1930), 74; V.C.H., *Sussex*, III, 21.

BRADING, Hampshire

The more important of two aisled buildings lay on the N. side of the courtyard (Fig. 1); a single-aisled building stood on the S. side (Fig. 4); V.C.H., *Hampshire*, I, 313.

BRICKET WOOD, Hertfordshire

Discovered 1962. Reported as a barn, of timber on flint footings 122 ft. by 36 ft., nave 17 ft. wide, aisles 6½ ft. wide, with pottery at the N. end 'suggesting slave quarters', and an entrance at the S. end. It is almost certainly related to the aisled farmhouses discussed above. *Daily Telegraph*, 21 Jan. 1963, and now *J.R.S.*, LIII (1963), 136.

CARISBROOKE, Hampshire (Isle of Wight)

(Vicarage, O.S.) (Fig. 1); C. Roach Smith, *Collect. Antiq.*, VI (1868), 121-9; V.C.H., *Hampshire*, I, 316.

CASTLEFIELD, Hampshire

(Fig. 1); V.C.H., *Hampshire*, I, 302-3. Inside were three sunk furnaces and (in the small room) two hearths. Coins ranged from A.D. 238 to 378.

CHERINGTON, Gloucestershire

(Hailstone, O.S.); *Archaeologia*, XVIII (1817), 117. May well have had an aisled structure but shows no trace of the development described in this paper and should be regarded as a separate type, along with several other villas.

CLANVILLE, Hampshire

(Fig. 1.); *Archaeologia*, LVI (1898), 2-6. May be a hall subsidiary to a smaller unexcavated domestic range.

DARENTH, Kent

(Aisled building not illustrated; Fig. 3 shows a building that probably had solid internal walls); *Arch. Cant.*, xxii (1897), 49-84. About 46 ft. wide and 102 ft. long as far as excavated, and floored with rammed chalk—'may have been used for stabling horses and stalling cattle'.

DENTON, Lincolnshire

(Fig. 3, final phase; Fig. 9, first phase); publication forthcoming.

EAST GRIMSTEAD, Wiltshire

(Fig. 3); Heywood Sumner, *Excavations at East Grimstead* (1924). Not claimed as an aisled structure by the excavator. Coins from Gallienus to Valentinian I. Some doubt may be felt about the perfectly rectilinear plan.

HAMBLEDEN, Buckinghamshire

(Yewden Manor, O.S.); *Archaeologia*, LXXI (1920-1), 141-198. Two aisled buildings (Fig. 4) flanking a courtyard and subsidiary to a domestic range. 'The Second House' is described as 'a large workshop or barn' of the late 1st century; 'probably only in the fourth century the west end... was converted into a cottage'. 'The Third House' incorporating the large furnaces and remains of floors and partitions, was used for grain-drying. This evidence, like that of Woodchester, suggests that the aisled type of structure was adapted to a variety of purposes.

HARPSDEN WOOD, Oxfordshire

V.C.H., *Oxfordshire*, I, 323-4. Probably an aisled house rebuilt at the upper end; a bath building was put into the E. aisle and projected beyond it as a wing.

HARTLIP, Kent

V.C.H., *Kent*, III, 118. Not related to the type discussed above.

HOLBURY, Hampshire

(Fig. 7); *Wilt. Arch. Mag.*, xiii (1872), 276-9; V.C.H., *Hampshire*, I, 132; Collingwood, *Arch. R. B.* fig. 34. Apparently an aisled hall-type structure of quite different type from that discussed above.

HUNTSHAM, Herefordshire

Excavated after publication of O.S. map; *J.R.S.*, LII (1962), 167 (plan), 169. An incomplete plan; type as yet uncertain.

ICKLETON, Cambridgeshire

(Figs. 4 & 5); *J.B.A.A.*, IV (1849), 356-378.

IWERNE MINSTER, Dorset

Building 'A' (Fig. 4); *Arch. J.*, CIV (1947), 55-57.

KNOWL HILL, Berkshire

(Fig. 4); *Berks. Arch. J.*, xxxviii (1934), 75-84. 1st-2nd cent. A.D. Rebuilding in stone apparently never completed.

LANDWADE, Suffolk

J.R.S., L (1960), 228. Phase I of the aisled house (Fig. 9) is early 2nd cent. A.D. Rebuilt with stone footings in late 2nd and early 3rd cent. (Fig. 3); destroyed by fire before arrival of any Constantinian coins.

LIPPEN WOOD, Hampshire

(Fig. 2); *Arch. J.*, LXII (1905), 262-4.

LLANTWIT MAJOR, Glamorgan

(Caermea, O.S.) (Fig. 4); *Arch. Camb.*, CII (1953), 89-163. Reconstruction, opp. p. 89, shows it with a clerestorey; if the column drum that was found belonged to this building this is possible.

MANSFIELD WOODHOUSE, Nottinghamshire

(Northfield, O.S.) (Fig. 1); *Archaeologia*, VIII (1787), 363; *Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, LIII (1949), 1-14.

NORTH WARNBOROUGH, Hampshire

(Lodge Farm, Odiham, O.S.) (Fig. 2); *Hants. Arch. Soc. Papers & Procs.*, x (1931).

NORTON DISNEY, Lincolnshire

(Potter Hill, O.S.) (Fig. 1); *Ant. J.*, xvii (1937), 138-178. I am indebted to Mr. Adrian Oswald for information enabling me to redraw the plan.

REDENHAM, Hampshire

(Fig. 2); V.C.H., *Hampshire*, I, 294-5. Haverfield's opinion that it was a barn or cowshed is unlikely in view of the wing rooms.

SPOONLEY WOOD, Gloucestershire

(Fig. 4); *Archaeologia*, LII (1890), 658-9. This building stood outside the villa courtyard and was interpreted as a granary. However, since it was not completely excavated, the purpose of the room that was cut off from the main aisled space was not established.

STROUD, Hampshire

(Fig. 2); *Arch. J.*, LXVI (1909), 33-52.

THISTLETON DYER, Rutland

Excavated after publication of O.S. map; *J.R.S.*, LII (1962), 171-3. Does not fall into the category of aisled house described in this paper despite certain superficial resemblances, e.g. a room projecting at the E. end of the nave.

THRUXTON, Hampshire

V.C.H., *Hampshire*, I, 298-9. No plan available. The description suggests an aisled hall.

TITSEY PARK, Surrey

Surrey Arch. Coll., IV (1865), 214-237. Just possibly aisled, but doubtful. See comment above on Cherington.

TOCKINGTON PARK FARM, Gloucestershire

(Fig. 4); *Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, XIII (1888-9), 197-9.

WEST BLATCHINGTON, Sussex

(Fig. 1); *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, LXXXIX (1950), 1-56. A clerestorey was suggested for this building on the not very sure basis of the Kreuznach models (*Bonner Jahrbücher*, CXXIII (1916), 233).

WEST DEAN, Wiltshire

Wilts. Arch. Mag., xxii (1885), 244. The larger aisled building (Fig. 1) may have flanked a courtyard on one side of which was a house with portico and rear corridor. A second building with a single aisle (cf. Brading) may have stood outside the courtyard (cf. Spoonley Wood for a comparable siting).

WOODCHESTER, Gloucestershire

Samuel Lysons, *Roman Antiquities at Woodchester* (1797).