

COWDRAY RUINS

EASEBOURNE, MIDHURST, WEST SUSSEX

An Assessment of Documentary Sources

by

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Historical Analysis & Research Team
Reports and Papers (First Series, 24)
1997



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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MAY 1997

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COWDRAY RUINS, MIDHURST, WEST SUSSEX

This document is an introduction to the site at Cowdray and the documentary sources concerned with it. It contains a description and summarised architectural history of the group of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the ruins, and lists the principal sources where material relating to the buildings and landscape are located. It is not a complete assessment of features and structures on the site but rather a starting point for the preparation of a conservation plan.

Introduction

The Cowdray ruins are a group of magnificent fragmentary remains of a major early Tudor country house set in the large country estate belonging to Lord Cowdray a mile east of the town of Midhurst. The principal components that survive are the central part of the gatehouse range which faces west, the main house on the east side of the former courtyard which includes the great hall and chapel and, to the south of this range adjoining, the splendid Tudor kitchen tower. Subsidiary components on the site include a conduit house, a range of estate accommodation, dairy, granary, stable range, lodges, bridges, gates and a ha-ha. A large area of land beyond the ruins is now used for sports events, principally Polo. The ruins are open to the public from April to September, and a small museum is housed in the tower.

The history of the present house begins with the building activities of Sir David Owen who married the heiress of the Bohuns in 1488 and began to build on the site of one of their houses in about 1520. Before his death in 1535 he had made considerable progress with the building. The house was completed by 1542 by Sir William Fitzwilliam who had bought the estate in 1529 from Sir Henry Owen, son and heir of Sir David Owen. (Fitzwilliam allowed Sir David Owen to live in the house until his death). Fitzwilliam was made Earl of Southampton in 1539; when he died in 1542 he left his Sussex estates to his half brother, Sir Anthony Browne. Cowdray remained with the Brownes, created Viscounts Montague, until the house was almost destroyed by fire in September 1793. Since then the house has not been occupied or added to; another house for Earl Egmont was built in 1879, well to the east of the ruins.

The ruins are generally well preserved; most of the internal walls of the house still survive although the roofs and staircases have gone. A fine stone carved ceiling in the porch leading to the hall survives, as do some coats-of-arms and plasterwork on the walls in the chapel. The two ranges on the north and south of the courtyard were completely destroyed by the fire; their plans are laid out as foundations.

The ruins are in the ownership of the Cowdray Trust Ltd and Rathbone Trust Ltd, trustees of the Cowdray Settled Estate. It is intended that English Heritage will make a lottery bid in partnership with others to secure funds for the consolidation of the fabric. A conservation plan is being prepared which will provide the basis for the lottery bid; this plan will look at the options in adapting parts of the building complex, where appropriate and feasible, for new use and to improve the interpretation and facilities for visitors.

Cowdray is a major courtyard house of the early Tudor period to have survived to the degree that it has, in spite of the fire. Its finest features are the 60-light bay window to the great hall, the bays to the dining parlour and great chamber north of the hall, the form and surviving decoration of the chapel, and the kitchen tower. It is a major historic building in the county of Sussex, and perhaps one of the best of the period in the country.

It is listed grade I and was designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 1934, ref. WS.100. Cowdray Park has been a Conservation Area since July 1974; it is not an area of Special Scientific Interest but is entered as a Garden of Special Historic Interest on the English Heritage Register for West Sussex at Grade II*. The stable block, conduit house and gates are also separately listed Grade II.

1 Brief History of the site: ownership and works to buildings and landscape

- c.1520-35 Sir David Owen. Sir David Owen, allegedly a bastard son of Owen Tudor, grandfather of King Henry VII, married Mary Bohun, elder daughter of John Bohun (d.1492). In 1485 Owen was appointed chief Carver to the King and a Commissioner of the Peace. He lived with his wife and three children in a house called La Coudraie,(which means hazel wood in French), a house possibly built on a moated enclosure by John Bohun, between 1273 and 1284. At some time after 1500 Owen pulled down this house and began to build a new one: St. John Hope puts Owen's building campaign as between 1520-1530. During that time Owen had the quadrangular plan laid out, the east range including hall, great parlour, chapel, buttery/pantry and kitchen tower built; and a two-storied range of chambers on the north side and the return southwards built in brick. The house was sold to Sir William Fitzwilliam in 1529, but Owen continued to live there until his death in 1535.
- 1533 - Sir William obtains a licence to '*empark 600 acres to be called the "park of Cowdray" and to add walls and towers around and upon the manor house of Cowdray and to crenellate or batten them.*'
- 1535-42 Sir William Fitzwilliam, created Earl of Southampton in 1537. Henry VIII visited the house in 1538. The Earl of Southampton carried out important additions and alterations to the house begun by Sir David Owen. This work comprised: the completion of the southern range with its return and the gatehouse, which completed the quadrangle; the addition of embattlements and towers to the house; the refacing of the exterior of the hall on the west side in stone; the addition of the porch to the hall with turrets, a Royal coat-of-arms above the entrance and its magnificent stone carved fan-vaulted ceiling; the staircase to the rear of the hall; raising of the windows of the chapel; the addition of the large hexagonal tower on the north side of the hall; the insertion of a new staircase behind the hall; garderobe blocks at N.E. corner, N.W. corner and on the south front; bays and turrets of the north and south ranges. The Earl died in 1542, by which time these works were complete.
- 1542-1548 Sir Anthony Browne, inherited Cowdray from his half-brother the Earl of Southampton, '*together with the Priory of Easebourne, forty messuages, 3 water mills, a dovecot and some 3,000 acres of land*'. He held land and property at Battle Abbey. Despite being Catholic he was much favoured by Henry VIII and accompanied him at the Seige of Boulogne in 1544. Sir Anthony had four large paintings of the campaign painted on the walls of the great parlour at Cowdray. His works at Cowdray included: the placing of a panel over the gatehouse entrance; the building of the great bay to the hall; the addition of the upper storey to the kitchen tower. He died in Byfleet House in Surrey, another of his homes, in 1548.

- 1548-1592** Sir Anthony Browne, eldest son of the above. Created First Viscount Montague in 1554. Entertained Queen Elizabeth I in 1591 for a week at Cowdray. Died in 1592. Works at Cowdray: new windows of the west front and of the upper part of the gatehouse; the substitution of his own coat-of-arms for those of his father.
- 1592-1629** 2nd Viscount Montague, Anthony Browne, grandson of the above, and author of the Book of Orders and Rules. Works done at Cowdray for which he was responsible: two canted bay windows towards the court, north of the hall bay; the wine cellar west of the hexagonal tower; the insertion of larger windows in the kitchen and buttery.
- 1629-1682** 3rd Viscount Montague inherits '*the manor of Cowdray, with three parks called Single alias Cowdray Park and two North Parks.*' A papist and a Royalist, the 3rd Viscount had his property sequestered. The house was occupied by Parliamentarians between 1644 and 1660.
- 1682-1708** 4th Viscount Montague. Between 1682-1708, the chapel was refitted and plaster decoration added.
- 1708-1717** Henry Browne, 5th Viscount Montague. No significant works to Cowdray.
- 1717-1767** Anthony Browne 6th Viscount Montague. Over the fifty years that he was the owner and resident in Cowdray, Lord Montague enlarged windows and doors 'in the French style' in the great staircase compartment, on the east front of the range north of it, in the hexagonal tower, and on both fronts of the gatehouse, and south front of the chapel. He placed the altarpiece in the chapel, erected the fountain and the wrought-iron gates in front of the gatehouse and the town; had stone bridge built over the Rother. He commissioned paintings on the walls of the great hall and staircase walls.
- 1767-1787** Anthony Browne, 7th Viscount Montague. Concentrated on improvements to the land rather than the house: Capability Brown was allegedly brought in the cut down ancient bowers and create clumps of trees. The ha-ha probably dates from this period.
- 1787-1793** George Samuel Browne, 8th Viscount Montague. He died in an accident on the Rhine Falls in 1793, just after fire all but ruined his house at Cowdray. The fire broke out as a result of unattended equipment left by workmen making improvements to the house while his Lordship was away, on 24th September 1793. No further additions or alterations were made to the house after 1793 and it was never again occupied.
- 1793** Cowdray transferred to George's sister Elizabeth Mary Browne who married William Poyntz in 1794. Their son, Mark Anthony Browne, 9th Viscount Cowdray, died in 1797 thus ending the line of Montagues. Mrs Poyntz lived in the keeper's lodge at Cowdray until her death in 1830: no

attempt was made to render the ruins of Cowdray habitable again after the fire.

- 1843 Cowdray is sold to George James, 6th Earl Egmont. He died in 1874.
- 1879 New Cowdray House built near the ruins in 1879 for the 7th Earl Egmont.
- 1908-1927 8th Earl Egmont sold the house to Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson in 1908; he was created Baron Cowdray of Midhurst in 1910, and Viscount in 1917. He was a renowned engineer and businessman. Under his stewardship, Cowdray underwent some recording, analysis and consolidation and minor repair by Sir William St John Hope under the overall supervision of Sir Aston Webb, 1909-1914. First Viscount Cowdray died 1927.
- 1927-1933 2nd Viscount Cowdray and Liberal M.P. Died 1933
- 1933-1995 3rd Lord Cowdray and polo enthusiast.
- 1995 4th Lord Cowdray, present owner

2 History of repair

Cowdray has been subjected to several phases of repair, and it would be useful to know what has been done. A preliminary search has identified two key phases:

- 1909-1919** William St John Hope. Ivy and bushes removed, tops of walls made good, loose masonry secured, necessary support given to the many mullioned windows and walls as required, below ground foundations laid out above, no restoration.
- 1983-1991** English Heritage : J.Ashurst carried out repairs to the plasterwork in the chapel (see *Practical Building Conservation Vol III (1994), Chapter 8*). Purcell Miller Tritton's Corinne Bennett carried out repairs to the gatehouse (lintel replacement and masonry consolidation) and some stonework was replaced on the great bay window, and the window reveals consolidated. There are three files containing notes on advisory visits at the E.H.Tonbridge office.

3 Description of the main structures associated with the site

Cowdray consists of one principal range of buildings which forms the east side of a large quadrangular courtyard c. 40m wide from north to south and c.36m from east to west. The north and south ranges of chambers have been destroyed, with only their footprints made visible; the eastern range is the most complete with considerable remains of the gatehouse range on the west side of the courtyard.

The main ranges of the house are described in meticulous detail by St John Hope, principally in chapter 5, 'The architectural history and present state of Cowdray'. A summary of the principal components of the complex follows, but anyone seeking a more detailed analysis should refer to St John Hope.

What is striking about the house in its complete form as shown in the Grimm views is the visual order and symmetry imposed on the ranges: turrets are repeated on the lodging ranges (usually plain) for aesthetic reasons. Maurice Howard in his book The Early Tudor Country House makes this point forcefully: '*Cowdray is a very important example of a house where visual symmetry in the court seems to have been superimposed on to a structure otherwise expressing the usual disparate arrangement of the great Tudor house with its emphasis on accentuating important points of reference like the gatehouse, the hall porch, and the great bay window to the hall.*'

The gatehouse

The three-storied gatehouse on the west side of the courtyard survives as a complete shell but the roof and floors have gone. It dates from the late 1530s. Less survives of the flanking ranges. The gatehouse has two octagonal staircase turrets with battlemented parapets. It is built of rubble faced with ashlar with white stone quoins. The wide four-centred entrance doorway once contained a double door of oak covered with richly carved oak, depicted in a drawing by Grimm in 1770. Above the doorway is a marble slab carved with the coat-of-arms of the second Sir Anthony Brown (d. 1592), first Viscount Montague. Above this is a large, square-headed eighteenth-century window, originally of eighteen panes. Over this a large carved white marble lunette. This window probably replaces an oriel which would have been over the doorway. A square-headed window of three lights with a transom is late Tudor; above that is a string course and high battled parapet on which was placed a clock (featured on many of the illustrations). The turrets have white stone quoins and arise from a plinth with a moulded chamfer. They are divided by string courses into three stories.

The heavy wooden doors opened into a passage covered with a wooden ceiling. There is a doorway into the ground chamber of the turret on the south side. To the rear of the gatehouse hall are doorways which originally led into the flanking ranges.

Rear elevation: above the entrance arch on the court side are remains of a frame of a large 17th-century window which once had twelve panes and is shown in a Grimm drawing. This window replaced an oriel, as on the front elevation of the gatehouse. Similarly a late Tudor window inserted on the top storey survives but without its mullion and transom. There was a clock on the battlemented parapet above.

The gatehouse turrets on the court side are larger than those on the front, to accommodate wooden staircases, no longer extant. They are semi-octagonal in plan and are built of rubble faced with ashlar and quoins of white stone. Leaded domes surmounted by vanes once topped the turrets. The staircases, lit by openings in the turrets, led to rooms over the gatehouse hall and to the flanking ranges. The gatehouse had two chambers each with large windows at either end, the upper chamber had a wardrobe within the turret. Evidence of former pointed doorways and stone chimneys survive on the walls of these rooms- St John Hope details exactly their location.

The western ranges

Two-storied brick chambers, plastered and lined in imitation of masonry, with a stone faced plinth, and marble floor slabs within. Much ruinous, but with many late Tudor transomed, square headed windows with labels, and some later square windows. Some rebuilding in the late sixteenth century. There was originally a canted bay window on the court side with four transomed lights (Grimm drawing). Forming the end of the range on the north side was a 3-storied block with a bay window shown in Grimm's copy of the Sherwin drawing, now mostly ruined. There was once a stair turret at the junctions with the north and south ranges.

The northern range

The north side of the court was covered by a long, two-storied range of chambers with canted bay in the middle and staircase turrets at either end. There was also a bay on the opposite side of the range. A high pitched roof also contained chambers. This range was built of brick faced with coursed ashlar, the turrets were brick and plastered. The bays and stair turrets were probably later additions (c.1530s) to the original building. There was a wooden stair in the east turret; the west turret contained wardrobes with a brick-lined pit at its base which links to the main drain on the north side. A wardrobe block was located on the north side of this range with a row of wardrobes on each floor.

This range has been completely destroyed but St John Hope makes a conjectural analysis of its subdivisions based on Gough's account in 1796, such as the upper floor containing the north gallery, panelled in Norway oak, in which was displayed a number of full-length family portraits.

The southern range

Formerly a three-storied range containing scullery and kitchen offices and cellars beneath a long gallery, all destroyed by the fire; foundations laid out by William St John Hope.

Eastern range : hall, great chamber, porch, and chapel

The roof and glass of the main range of the manor house have gone but the walls and internal partitions survive. Within was the Great Hall, called the Buck Hall (because of the eleven carvings of stags, emblems of the Browne family, which adorned the walls), the dining parlour, with a staircase and chapel beyond on the east side.

The external elevation of the hall is articulated by three high perpendicular windows (Owen's work), with three-staged buttresses between; the later, magnificent 60-light bay window, c.1545. The two, three-sided bays, (to the dining parlour just north of the hall, and the cellar adjacent), are of 17th-century date. Behind the hall was the great staircase inserted by the Earl of Southampton in the 1530s, and the chapel. To the north of this range is the cellar, brick with a tiled floor. A doorway on the north wall lead to the basement of a hexagonal tower which originally contained bed-chambers and dressing rooms (see St John Hope, p.76). The cellar has stone slabs on the floor and plastered walls with a vaulted roof of brick overhead with massive chamfered cross ribs and wall ribs of stone which spring from plain corbels in the corners. An inserted door leads to an added cellar beyond- single-storey, stone-faced brick for storing wine- probably added in the 17th century.

The porch on the west front of the hall is square in plan with octagonal buttresses largely of white stone and dates from the late 1530s: Fitzwilliam badges are overlaid with a new arch and an oblong panel flanked by Renaissance carved pilasters enclosing a carving of Henry VIII arms, in honour of the Royal visit in 1538. Carved spandrels in the inner arch with initials WS (William Earl of Southampton) and his office Privy Seal, dateable to 1537-9. Brick lined with plaster, marble slabs on the floor. Fan vault ceiling of stone carved with ostrich feathers, the badge of the Prince of Wales and Southampton initials. The anchors symbolise his position as Lord High Admiral of England. MS are the initials of his wife Mabel. The low relief vault shows a mixture of Gothic (ribs) and Renaissance detail (floral scrolls), typical of the transitional period of 1535-40.

A stone doorway leads into the screens passage that crossed the south end of the hall; south of this passage are the doorways to the kitchen, buttery and pantry- all insertions by the Earl of Southampton in the 1530s.

Inside the hall can be seen the brick wall, the high Perpendicular windows, each of three lights with cusped heads, and the remains of the moulded corbels which carried the principals of the elaborate hammerbeam roof shown in Grimm's pre-fire drawing. The east side of the hall was built of coarsed rubble and plastered, now quite ruinous. The north end is very ruinous, although remains of the coarsed rubble structure, some plaster lining and wainscoting survive. There are also remains of a square Renaissance frame of carved stone with military trophies. A thorough account of the decoration of the hall is to be found in Gough's description of Cowdray, 1793, reiterated in St John Hope, p.73.

The chapel has a three-sided apse with large windows, with cusped lights (ie Owen's work rather than later 16th-century). Fragments of 18th-century stucco ornament. The altarpiece shown in a pre-fire drawing had been designed by Annigoni, who was in England between 1729-36, and installed by the sixth Viscount Montague in that period (p.78-80).

The staircase was painted by Pellegrini who was in England in the early eighteenth century. A fragment of the 17th century balustrade survives in the museum, (p.77).

Kitchen tower

A fine example of an early Tudor kitchen, the kitchen tower at Cowdray was unscathed by the fire. Polygonal, three storied tower, roofed, floored, battlemented, with thick walls. The windows were enlarged in the 17th century and a floor inserted, indicated by the presence of a fireplace high in the wall. The hexagonal room has large fireplaces and iron hot plates, shown in a drawing reproduced by St John Hope (p.82), but the central pillar containing water has gone.

Fountain

The eight-sided, early 16th-century Italian fountain situated in the courtyard and shown in the Grimm drawings of the court, comprised a wide marble basin on a pedestal, with a bronze statue representing Neptune in the centre. It was imported by the 6th Viscount Montague. The fountain was removed after the fire and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, on display in gallery 50.

Landscape

Cowdray Park is shown on the map of 1712 as well wooded, with more open areas closer to the house, of meadows, paddocks and gardens. St John Hope described the park as being two miles long and one mile wide at its broadest. In the 16th-century it was divided into three parks, which were well wooded and inhabited by Fallow Deer for hunting, eating (and presumably decorating the walls of Buck Hall with their antlers!). The 7th Viscount Montague made improvements in 1767; he '*attempted to render the vicinity of the park more agreeable by plantations of fir.*' In 1770, according to Roundell, he improved the Closed Walks (to the south of St Ann's Hill) by destroying some trees and thickets but he '*spared the magnificent avenue of Spanish Chestnuts which stretches for a mile and a half along one side of the park.*' They were spared only to be felled at a later date.

The park was described thus by Gough in 1796: '*The house is situated in a valley encompassed with lawns hills and woods...The Park is noble having great variety of ground in it abounding with game and is well wooded with pines, firs and other evergreens planted by the late Lord's father; and some of the largest chesnut trees in England. The river Arun gliding by Midhurst sweeps through the park in front of the house though in so deep a channel as to be hardly visible from it.*'

Conduit House

The conduit house is an octagonal two-storied building of stone with a conical wooden roof covered with tiles and surmounted by a stone ball. It is about 100m north of the ruins. The walls are relatively thick, about 70cms, and covered with plaster; the floor is of brick. The building dates from the late 16th-century. In the middle of the house is a round pillar, c. 3m in height, of shaped bricks resting on a stone plinth and with a stone capital supporting two massive beams crossing at right angles to carry the joists and floor boards of the upper room. The water would have been brought from higher ground through pipes into a cistern in the conduit house and thence into a settling tank outside. From the tank it was fed through pipes to the house itself. Grimm's views show the external staircase housing. (See St John Hope p.87).

Approach, bridges and gates

The *Book of Rules* (1595) refers to the '*long alleys without the gate and the greene before it*'. The approach or causeway is shown on the Heather map as defined by a planted avenue of trees which lead up to the front of the house first traversing an early 18th-century stone bridge spanning the River Rother. (St John Hope is of the opinion that the avenue had been cut down by the time Grimm was drawing in the house in the 1780s, possibly some time in the 1770s when Capability Brown may have been active in removing trees and creating clumps. The other bridge is presumably also of an 18th-century date. Heather's map shows gates and piers both at the Midhurst end of the causeway and in front of the house. These were erected by the sixth Viscount Montague (1717-1767). One set was taken down, and the town set erected in front of the ruins, in the 1960s, when the road was widened and the car park made. The gates comprise ashlar gate-piers surmounted by urns on two-tiered bases with upright voluted brackets on the outer sides. Between the piers wrought-iron gates of six sections with cresting of fleur-de-lis.

Cottage Range

Cottage range, and kitchen garden walls and lodges are shown on the 1712 map: they were part of the outer or base court which contained the bakehouse, brewhouse, dairies etc: those on the site today probably date from the early 18th century, (see Hope p90). The dairy contains a panelled frieze of blue-and-white tiles dating from the early twentieth century, signed by William Rowe. Rowe worked from 1885-1939 and was a renowned designer and decorator associated with Doulton's Lambeth factory. He had trained as a painter and etcher and exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy.

Stable range

A range of stabling form three sides of a square, with a fourth side open towards the river. A tablet over the doorway bears the initials 'AM' with the date 1726 of Anthony 6th Viscount (1717-1767), who built the stables of stone with flint galleting. Timber roof construction.

Granary

Small, square 17th-century timber-framed building with red brick infilling. East gable end tile-hung. Half-hipped tiled roof. The granary rests on staddlestones. Probably moved from the area north of the gatehouse after the fire.

Ice House

A deep stone-lined well with an arched brick entrance and brick vaulted ceiling on the side of St Ann's Hill; probably mid-18th century.

Ha-ha

18th century, masonry-lined slope following a curved line to the east of the ruins.

4 Principal Documentary Sources

There is a good deal of material available concerning the house. Much of this has been looked at, absorbed and reprinted by William St John Hope in his invaluable book Cowdray and Easebourne Priory in the County of Sussex Country Life, 1919. This book contains chapters on every aspect of the history of the house and the state of the fabric when St John Hope excavated in 1919. The ruins and priory were '*explored, measured and noted*'. The book is by far the most useful single source on Cowdray. It reprints maps and Grimm's illustrations and quotes extensively from the known inventories and catalogues.

St John Hope's book is prefaced by Sir Aston Webb who nominally supervised the work at Cowdray, but probably had less actual input there than at the Priory: '*the remains of the priory buildings have lately undergone a complete repair and to some extent reconstruction under the direction of Sir Aston Webb.*' Webb had designed an addition to Sir Weetman Pearson's house at Paddockhurst, Worth, in 1897, and a group of cottages at Turner's Hill in 1920 (RIBA catalogue).

The book begins with a thorough history of Cowdray from the Norman Conquest to the early Twentieth Century, with a detailed account of ownership including Bohun and Browne family trees. Subsequent chapters are entitled 'The Landscape', 'The Fire', and, most usefully (Ch.V), a summary of the state of each part of the building and its salient features. This report essentially summarises St John Hope's findings; there may be room for further thoughts and different conclusions as a result of new survey and analysis. The appendices to St John Hope's book include the full will of Sir David Owen, which details the transfer of Cowdray in 1529 to Sir William Fitzwilliam, and the late 16th-century *Book of Rules and Orders* drawn up by the second Viscount Montague in 1595. This book indirectly gives a sense of the layout and function of each room before the fire and enabled St John Hope to prepare his plan of the site. The plan, coloured to show the building phases, is the most authoritative account of the complex to date.

Julia Roundell: Cowdray: The History of a Great English House 1884. History of the ownership, most of it repeated in St John Hope. Reprints some of the Grimm illustrations and new ones by Salvin. Useful comments on the landscape.

Cowdray Archives West Sussex Records Office, Chichester, Orchard Street, Westgate roundabout (Mr. Iden very helpful). They have a card index on Cowdray and the two-volume index to the Cowdray Archives indexed by A.A.Dibben (see Appendix 2 for contents list and bibliography. Of the items in the card index looked at (by no means all) the most useful item was Richard Gough's account of Cowdray after the fire published by the Society of Antiquaries in Vetusta Monumenta Vol. III COWDRAY MS 5133

Maps

The most useful historical maps are the map of 1712 by Thomas Heather, and the Tithe map of 1843. Heather's map shows a coloured drawing of the house, which shows the service buildings to the south, the lodges, gates, and bridge. It also indicates the use of

surrounding land: the gardens to the south, the wall meadow beyond, town meadow between the house and town, areas of lawn to the east and the avenues of trees of figures chestnuts to the north and the one lining the causeway to the town. A portion of the map is reproduced in St John Hope.

The Tithe map for 1843, with its apportionments belonging to the new owner, Lord Egmont, is also useful for indicating land use: the large area which is now the Polo field, is described on the map as '*Pleasure ground to the ruin*', which probably meant a large lawn for playing croquet or cricket; the old kitchen garden is marked; the field in front of the gatehouse is used for pasture, and paddocks and pastural fields outlying.

The Ordnance Survey maps (surveyed in 1873, 1898 and 1913) are helpful in identifying the location of fishponds and the surviving plantations in the park.

Illustrations

By far the most useful illustrations are those drawn by Grimm before the fire, in the 1770s and 1780s, engraved and published in 1796. They are accurate, detailed and extensive, giving a picture of the house from many angles. The Grimm views include: a general view from the west; south 'from the cottage'; north view; north-east view, east range from the court, 1782. Six are held in the map library of the British Museum; three are held in the Society of Antiquaries. The Antiquaries also have reproductions of the historical wall paintings formerly at Cowdray also by S.H.Grimm.

Tinted view of the Chapel or East Front to the Garden of Cowdray House, Sussex by an unidentified English Painter, pre-1777; reproduced in John Harris's catalogue : 'The Artist and the Country House' Sotheby's 1995.

18th-century view of Cowdray House (showing gatehouse range) engraved by George Quinton. (British Map Library, King's Catalogue vol. XLII 29 a-g)

A drawn view of Cowdray House 1772 (ibid.)

'*Cowdray Court from the lodging house copied from a drawing done by Mr Russell and corrected by Mr Grose Esq*'. 1783 (ibid.)

Other drawings not reproduced here, with location:

Drawing 1780 by 'RHG' kitchen at Cowdray shows large water pump, basin and work surfaces in the middle. Reproduced in St John Hope.

West Front of Cowdray 1793 reproduced in the Gentleman's Magazine (from Roundell). In the West Sussex Record Office: Ref: M/PD 252-254 incl. drawings by Hendrik de Cort, 1793: The chapel, the Fountain Court and the conduit house.

Drawing by Repton from a sketch book of 1805 '*plan of base of capital and elevation of a rustic order for Poyntz, Cowdray Park*' R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection

Views 1825, 1830, and ground plan, 1825 by John Buckler (d.1851) The drawings of Cowdray are part of a series of architectural and topographical drawings in the Counties of Surrey and Sussex executed by Buckler between 1810-1850. Located in British

Museum Manuscripts department, *MSS 36435 f.125*. *MSS 36389* shows a view from the N.E. of the gatehouse showing the granary to the far left i.e. to the north of the gatehouse. *MSS 37339 ff29,30*, shows details of an iron finial 'on the angle of the staircase at Cowdray' and a chimney detail, 1843, Buckler.

Views of Cowdray Ruins c.1845 Edward Blore:

MSS 42036 f 75 view of porch ceiling and doorway, with view through to the gatehouse i.e. facing west.

MSS 42022 ff 36-38 Blore pen-and-wash drawing of the kitchen tower; another from NW showing gatehouse from the south.

MSS 42019 ff 48,49,50 three detailed drawings by Blore: Rother bridge, gatehouse and ruins beyond i.e. a view from the west; east range courtside from the south showing groups of chimneys in the north east corner from the north (i.e from the field where the conduit house is).

Sketches by Sir G.G. Scott No.12 1851 'Cowdray House' RIBA drawings Collection

West Sussex Record Office: William St John Hope's photo album of his excavations at Cowdray, showing drains etc. 1913 of great interest to archaeologists.

Basil Oliver (1882-1948) Assistant to Blomfield in the 1920s: Topographical drawing of Cowdray Park 1920s. RIBA Drawings collection.

English Heritage: photographs (1934) on Ancient Monuments file; photographs (b & w) 1950s in the Keysign House Archives.

National Monuments Record, Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, Swindon: The NMR retain in their 'red box' photograph collection photographs of Cowdray dating back to 1858. Most of the pictures date from the 1940s and '50s and include the granary and lodge. They also have some measures drawings and Cowdray Park site plans acquired in 1946, including a proposed approach to the ruins from the Cowdray Estate Office. These are held in the 'measured drawings section' of the 'buildings' section of the NMR. The RCHM have not carried out any archaeological investigation around the ruins in the past.

Of great value in understanding the evolution of the building is St John Hope's ground plan of Cowdray, coloured and reproduced in his book.

Accounts

The most important account of the building is Richard Gough's description of Cowdray just after the fire in 1793. The following passage gives an indication of the sort of detail Gough goes into on the colour, decor and room function:

'The house is situated in a valley encompassed with lawns, hills and woods; it is built of stone around a square court...In all the reparations of the house (carried out for the 8th Viscount Montague, George Samuel, in 1793) the antient style has been properly preserved. The chapel was handsome; the canopy light and elegant; the altarpiece was by Annigoni. The hall was lighted by windows on one side and a cupola of 3 stories in the centre of the roof carved with Irish Oak, and its walls painted with architecture by

Roberti, the (painted) statues by Goupe. At the upper end was a buck standing carved in brown wood, on the shoulder a shield with the arms of England under it, the arms of Browne with many quarterings carved in wood. Ten other bucks standing, lying, sitting... This hall and staircase were painted by Pellegrini with the story of Tancred and Clorinda from Tasso; the parlour by Holbein or assistants, with subjects covered by plaster over stucco on which they were painted during the Civil War. The Battle of Pavia by Holbein. The south gallery which used to be called the 'Apostles Gallery' was, in 1784, made into a suite of bedrooms, some of which had anterooms..At the foot of the staircase was the entrance to the chapel which was most elegantly fitted up: Mahogany wainscot eight or ten feet high and rails of the same to the altar; the edges of the panels gilt; above it was painted white with gold ornaments.'

Richard Gough Vetusta Monumenta Vol.III MS 5133 West Sussex Record Office, Chichester

Inventories and Catalogues

R.H.Gough Vetusta Monumenta Vol. III (inventories and picture catalogues of paintings in the principal rooms at Cowdray) West Sussex Record Office

J.Ayloffe Historical Description of Cowdray Paintings Society of Antiquaries.

A Catalogue of pictures at Cowdray House, the Seat of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Montague, near Midhurst Sussex 1777, listing 233 paintings by rooms with the name of the painter where known, reprinted in St John Hope pp 59-63.

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VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY: SUSSEX VOLUMES

HARRIS, John: The Artist and the Country House, Sotheby's Catalogue, 1995

HOWARD, M: The Early Tudor Country House, London, 1987

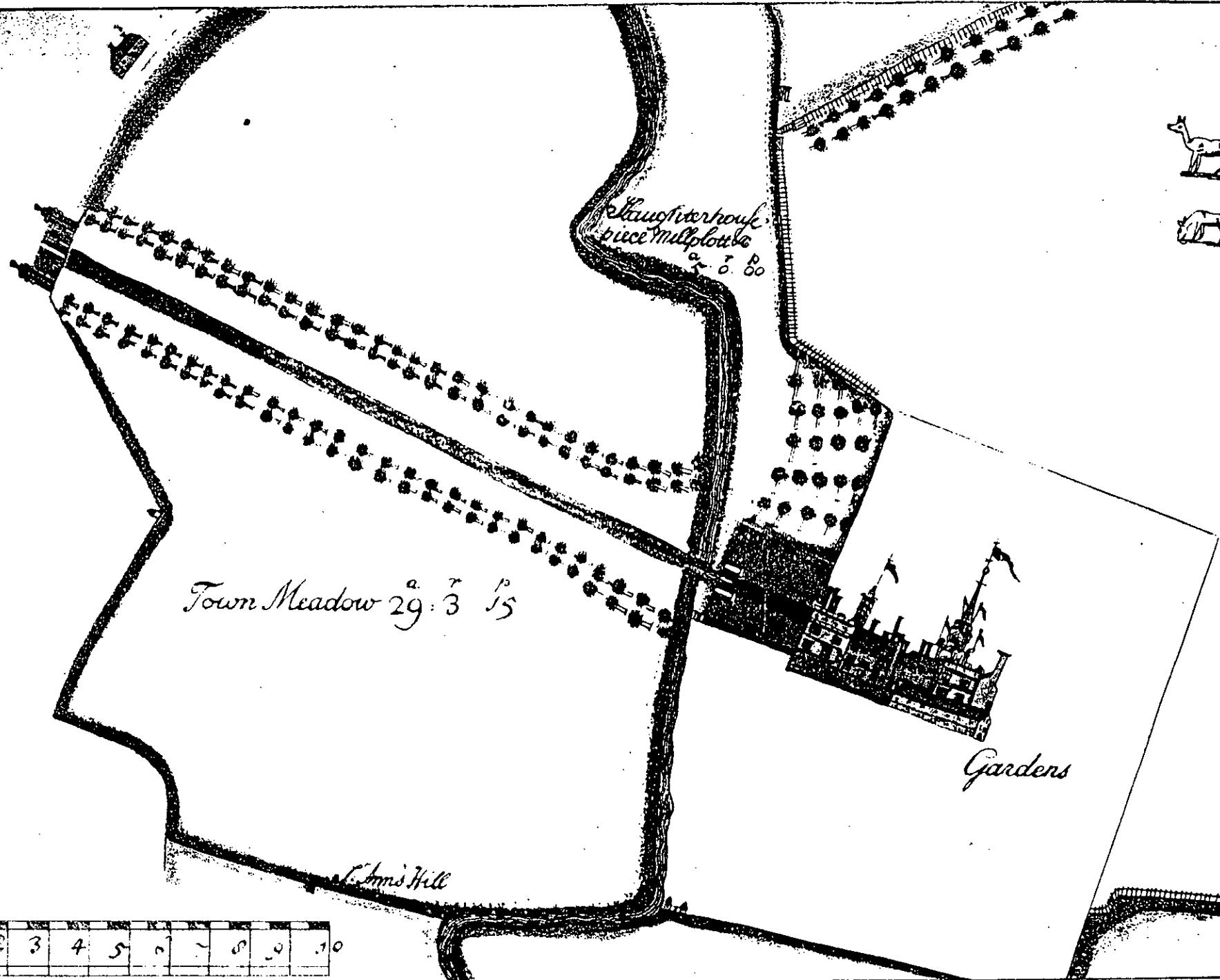
Conclusion

This document has set out the key source material for Cowdray and provides a starting point for assessing the site. Further study of some of these sources may reveal specific documentary evidence for particular aspects of the site.

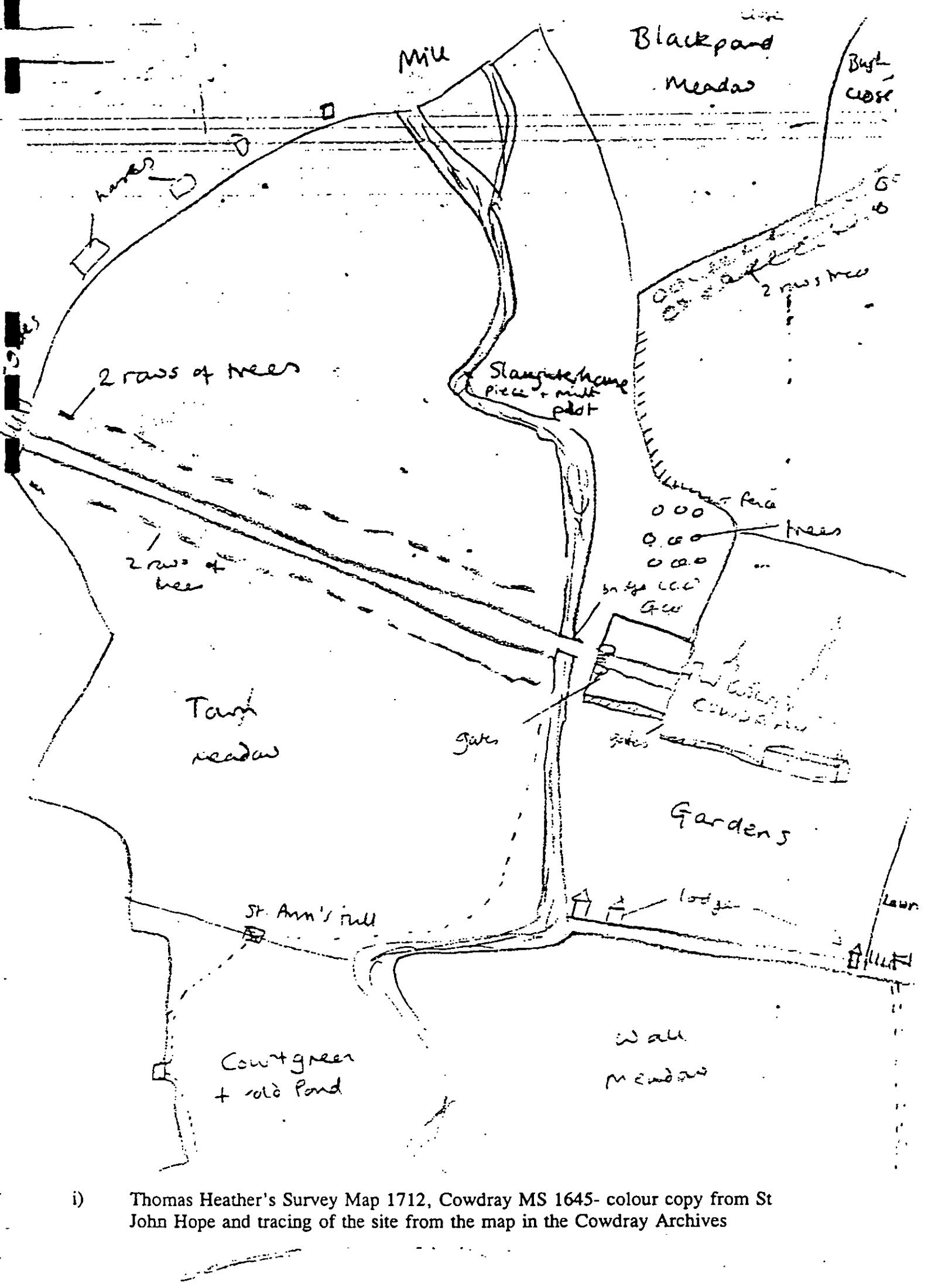
Rare books such as the work by St John Hope and Mrs Roundell's book are located in the historians' team (H.A.R.T) in English Heritage, R210. Anyone wishing to consult them should ring Susie Barson on 0171-973 3789.

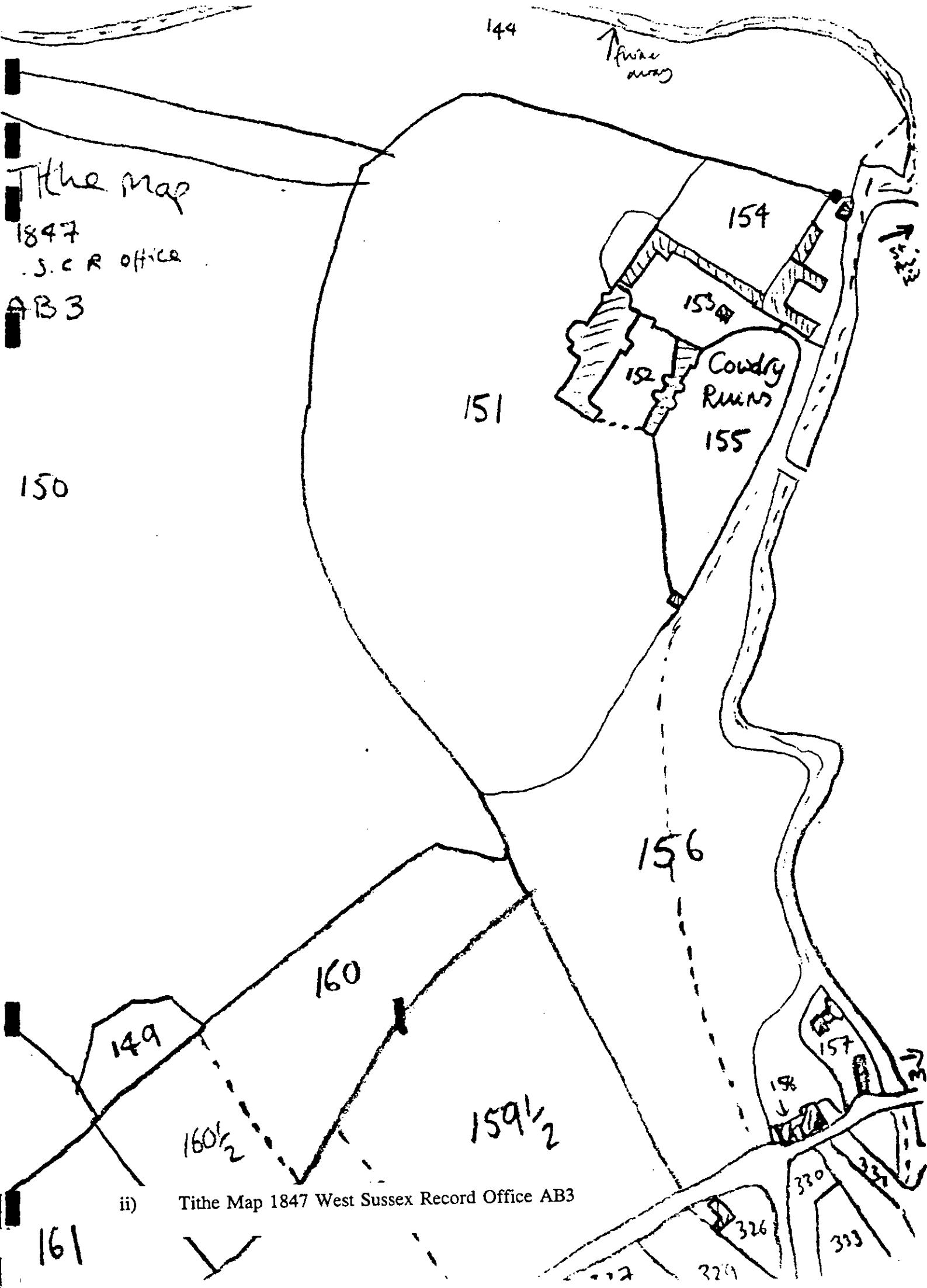
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- i) Thomas Heather's Survey Map 1712, Cowdray MS 1645- colour copy from St John Hope and tracing of the site from the map in the Cowdray Archives
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 - inner court from the gateway 1782
 - court facing west, showing north and south ranges 1783
 - view from the north 1786
 - view from the north-east
 - view from the south and west
 - view of west front 1781
 - The hall and kitchen, 1786
- viii) 18th century view of gatehouse by George Quinton
- ix) View of Chapel or East Front to the garden of Cowdray House, Sussex pre-1777, oil painting
- x) Ground plan of Cowdray House, Sussex by Buckler, 1825 (copy of the B.M. original from the NMR ref.BB78/7483).



Facsimile of part of a Survey of certain lands at Cowdray made by Thomas Heather in 1712,
showing the house and its approach





Apportionment to the Tithe Map, 1847 COWDRAY MS 1892

Landowner: Sir H.B. Seymour, Lord Egmont

151 - Pleasure ground to ruins

152 - Cowdray ruins

153 - Cottage and yard by ruins

154 - Cowdray Old Garden

155 - Plat in front of ruins/pasture

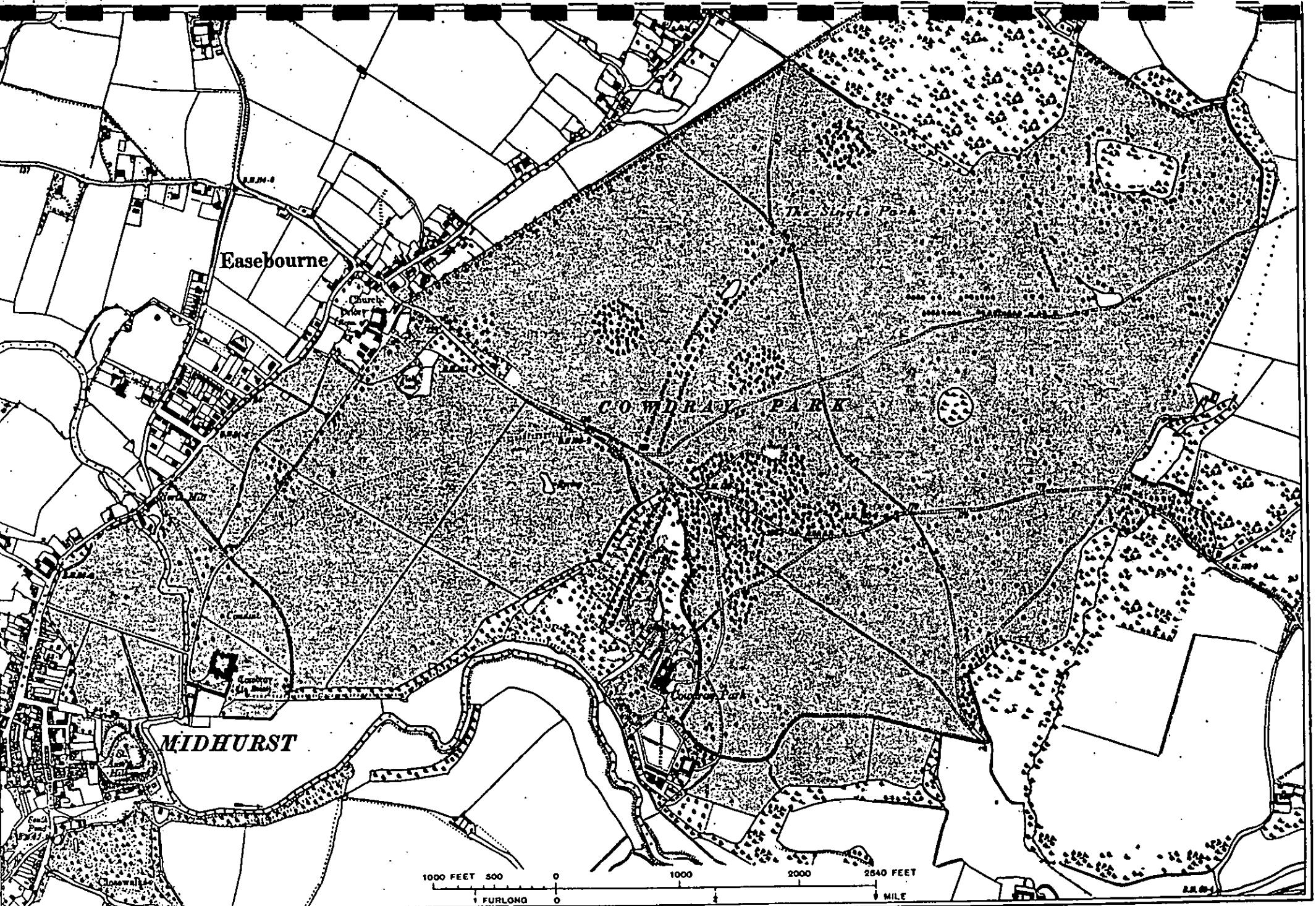
156 - Mill Plat Pasture

159 - Rickyard Paddock

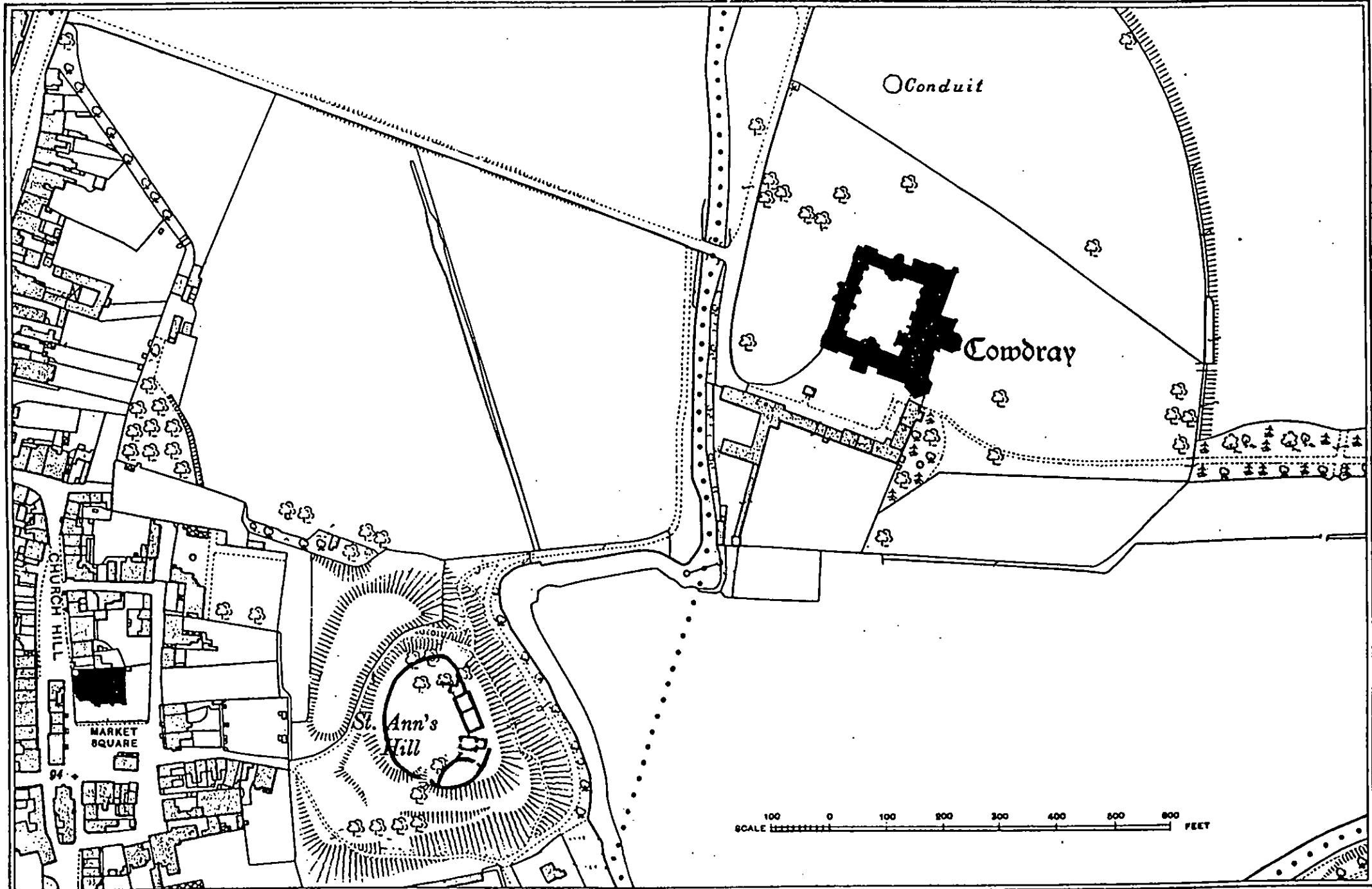
159 - Lower Paddock pasture

160 - Lowerhill

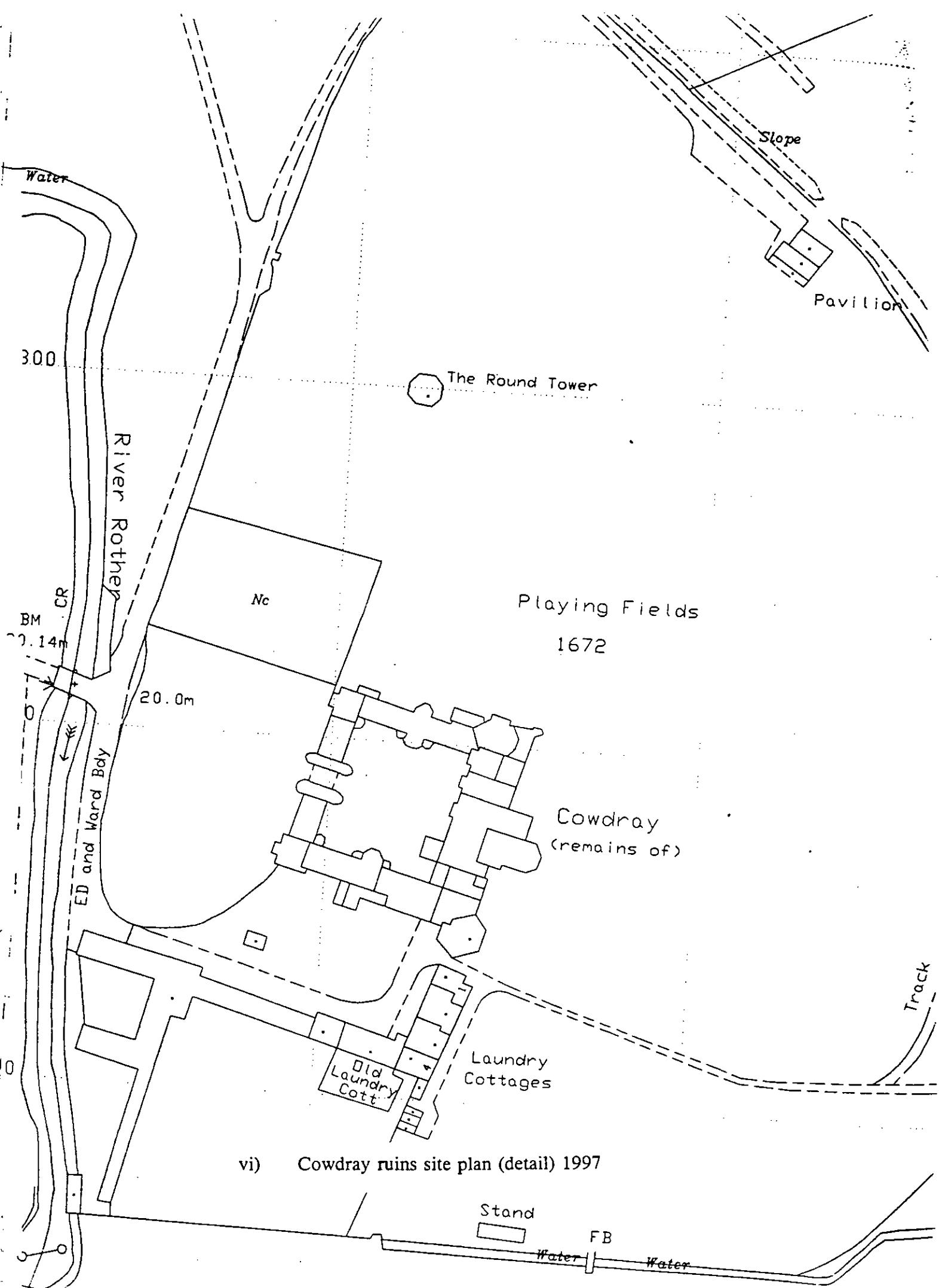
NB Timber yards, ponds etc. in the outlying fields are allotted to Seymour.



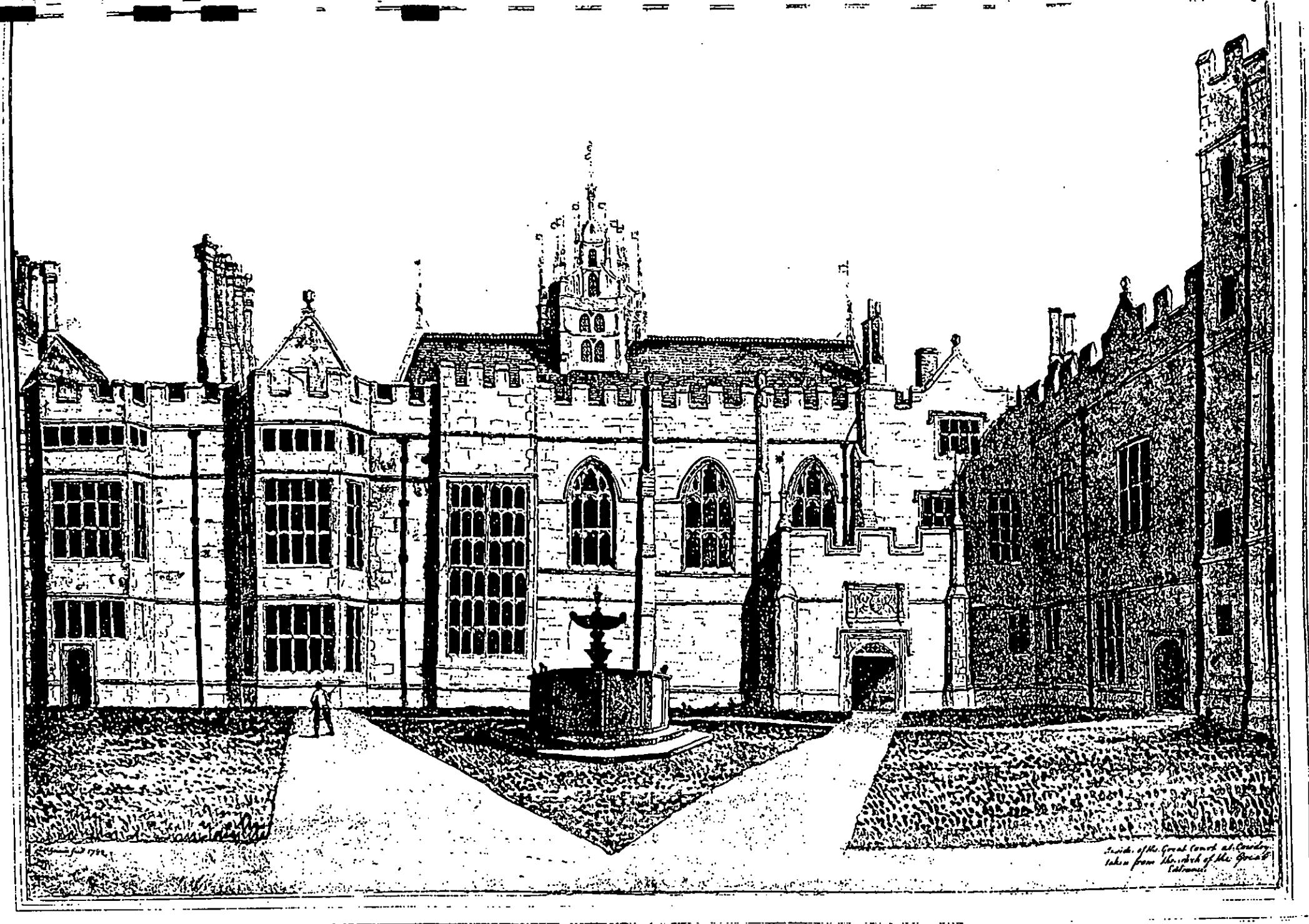
Plan of Cowdray Park, based on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey-map.



Plan showing the relative positions of Midhurst, Cowdray, and St. Ann's Hill,
based on the Ordnance Survey Map.

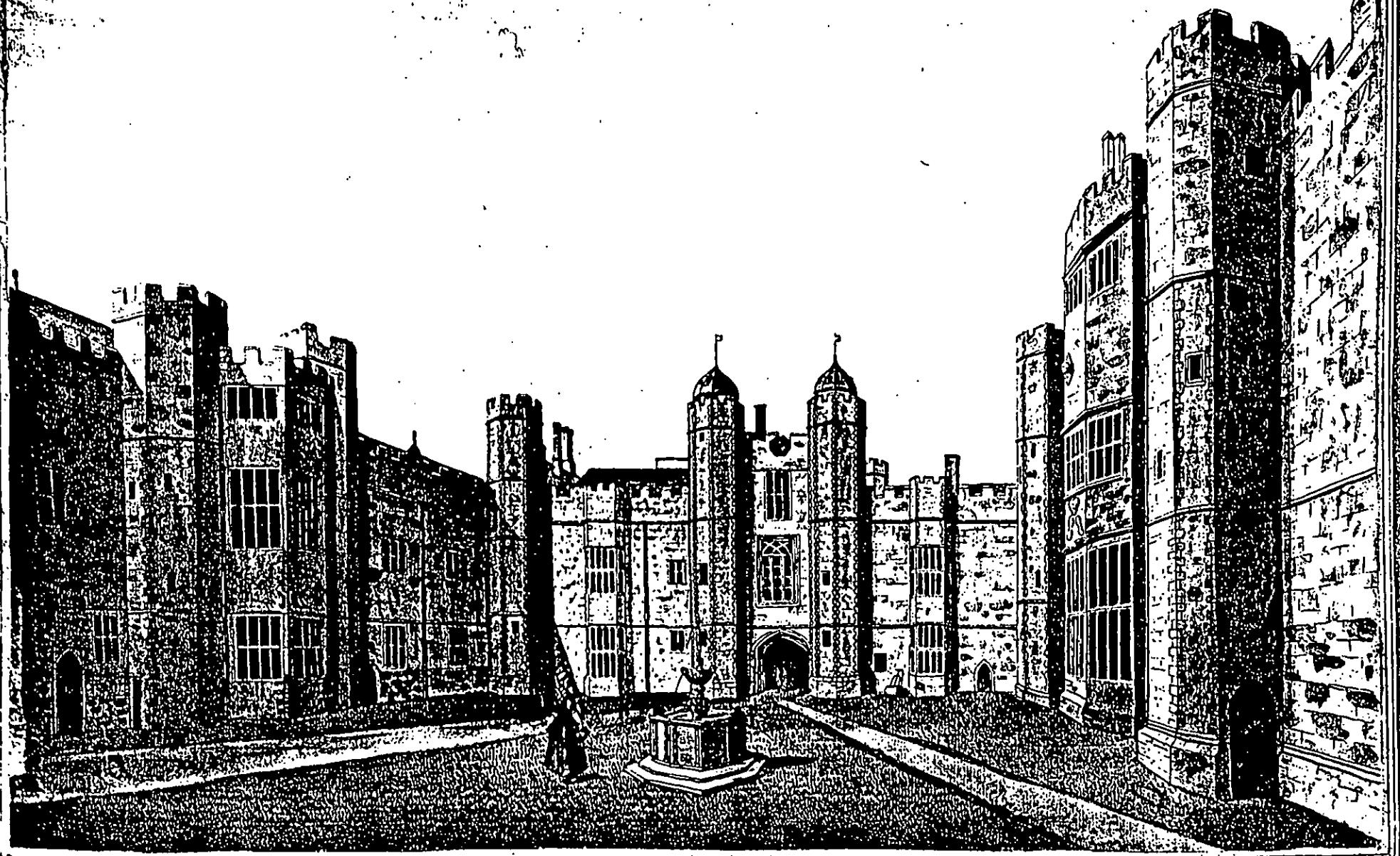


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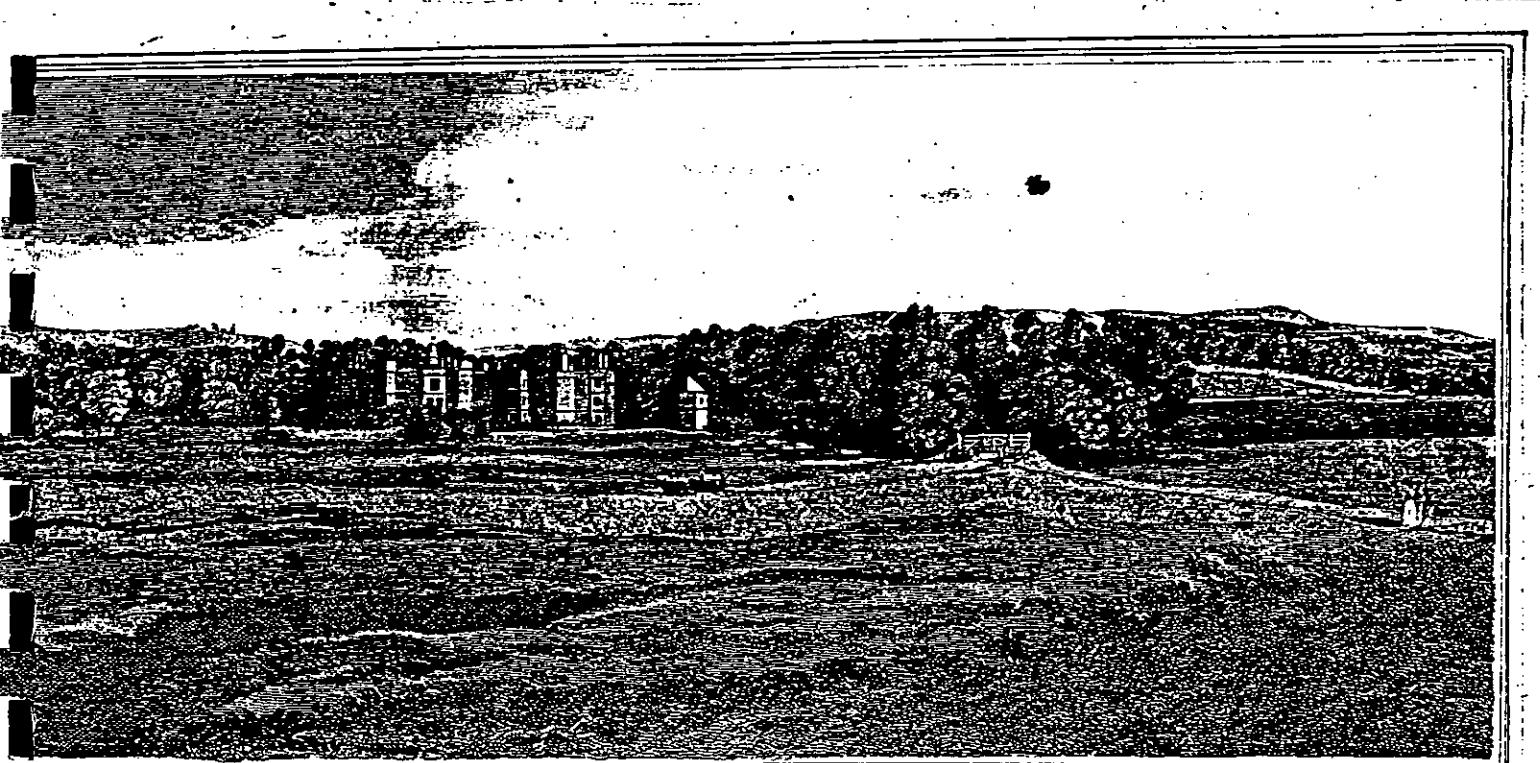


Sketch of the Great court at Cowdray
taken from the sketch of the Great
Estimate.

Cowdray. Eastern Range from the Court, from a drawing made by Grimm in 1732.



Cowdray. View of the Court looking west, from a drawing made by Grimm in 1782.

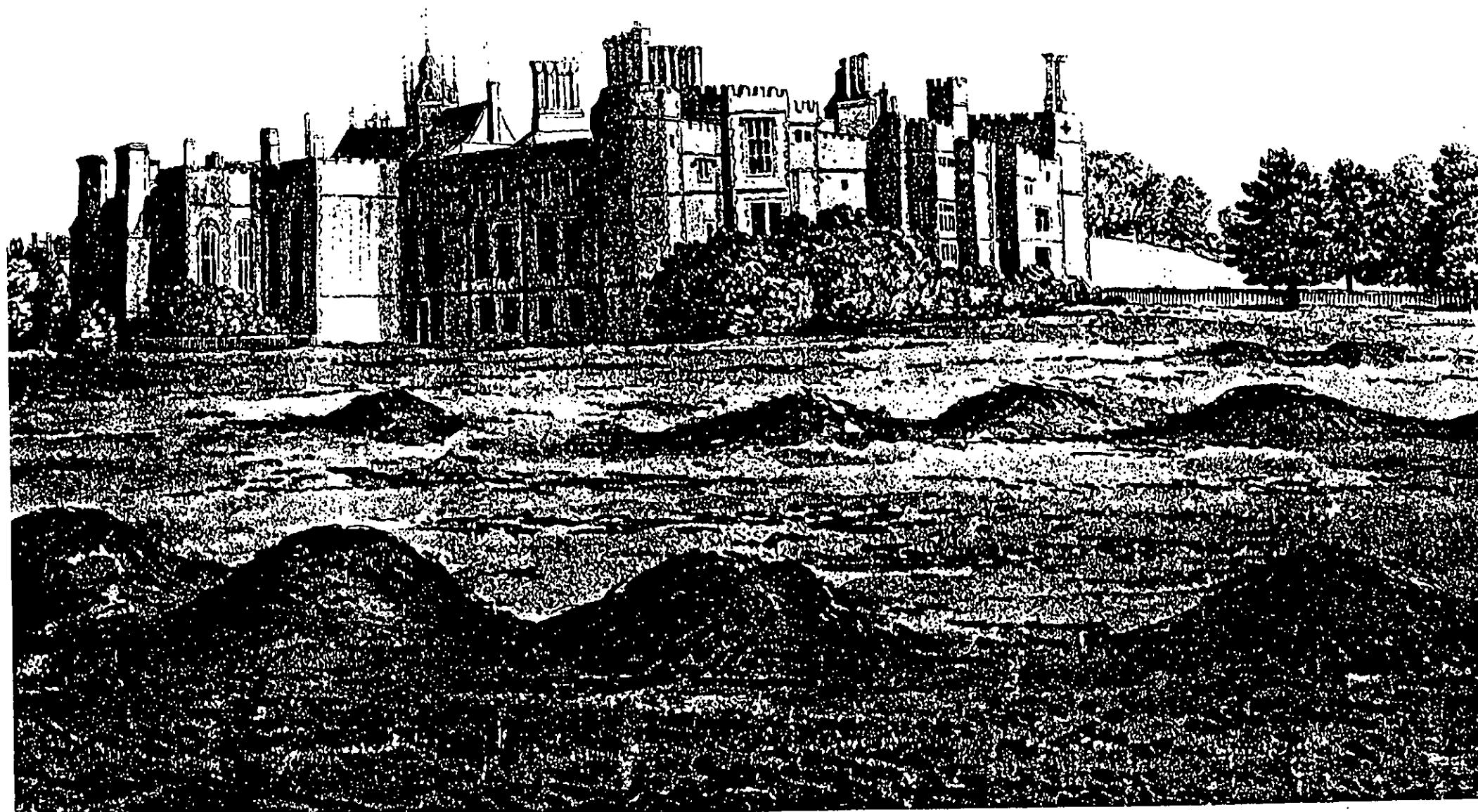


© North View of Country House.

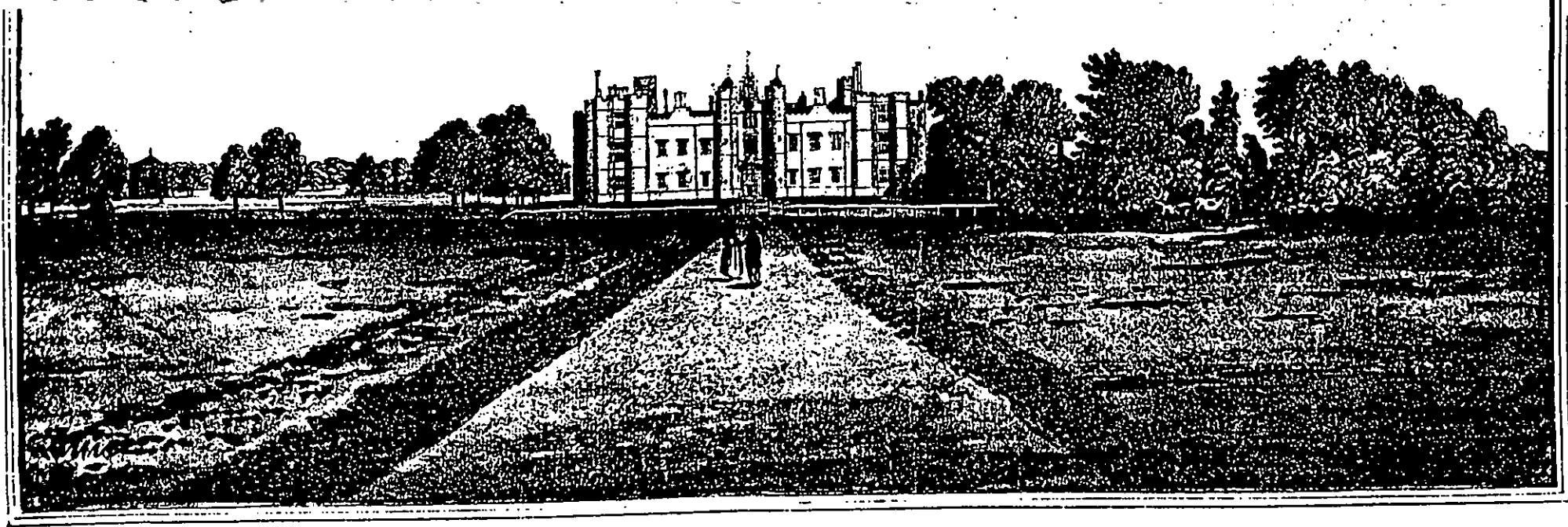
Simplicius Soc. Antiquar. Londini.

Published according to Act of Parliament, 23rd April 1796.

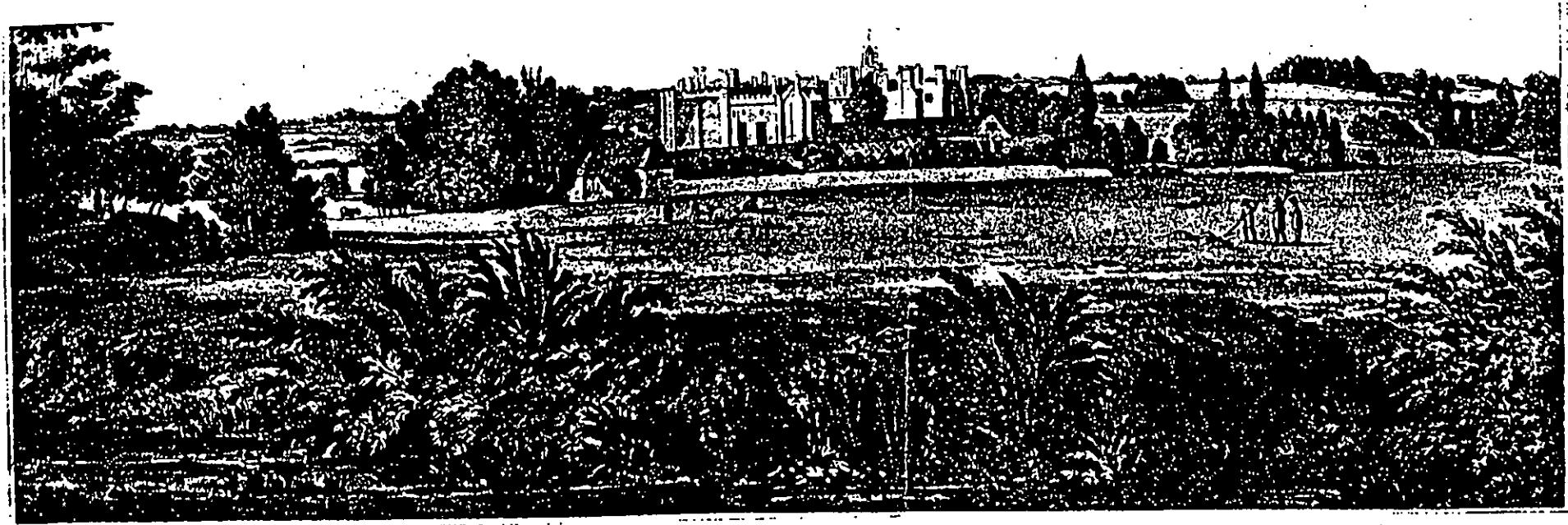
Bairns



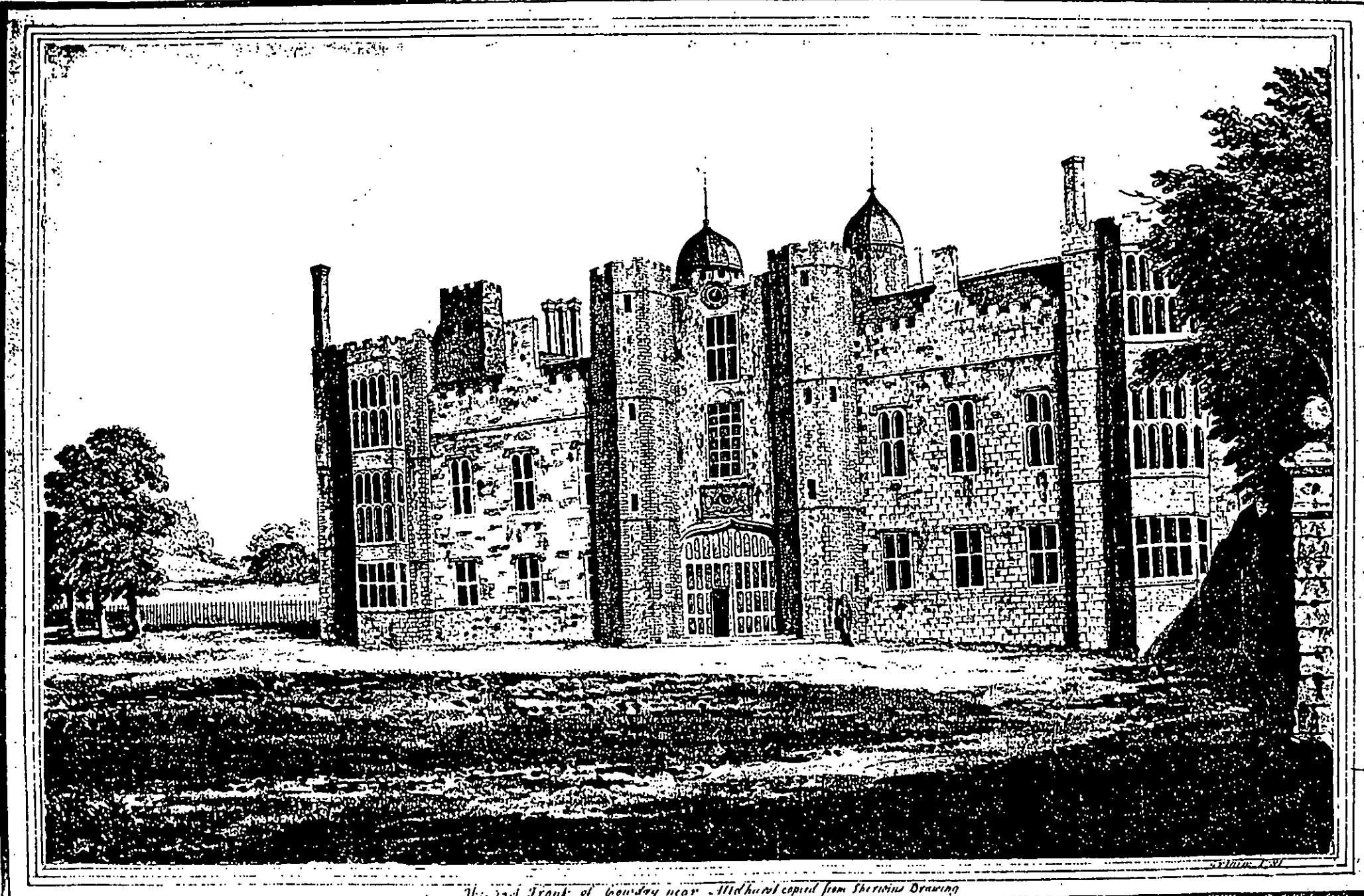
Cowdray. General view from the north-east; from a drawing made by Grimm in 1781.



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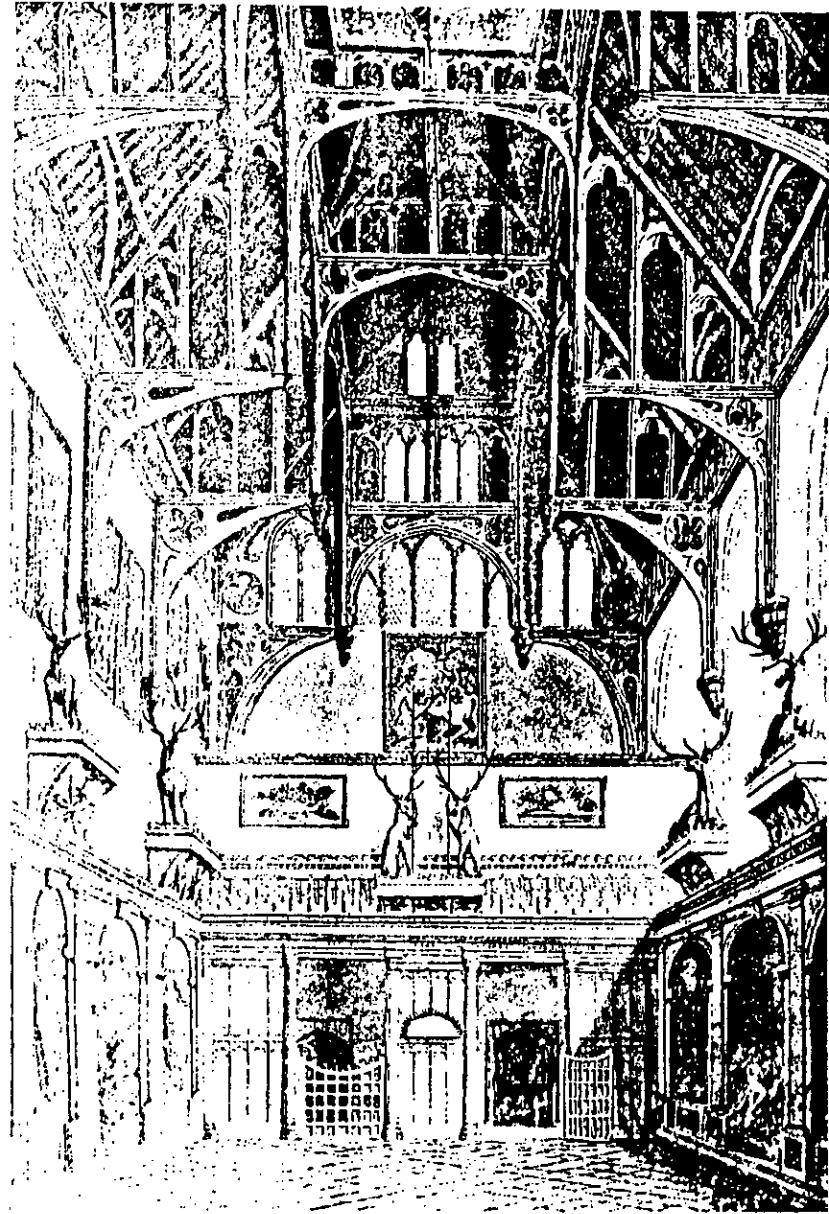


Cowdray. 1. General view from the west; 2. General view from the south. From drawings made by Grimm in 1781 (?) and 1785

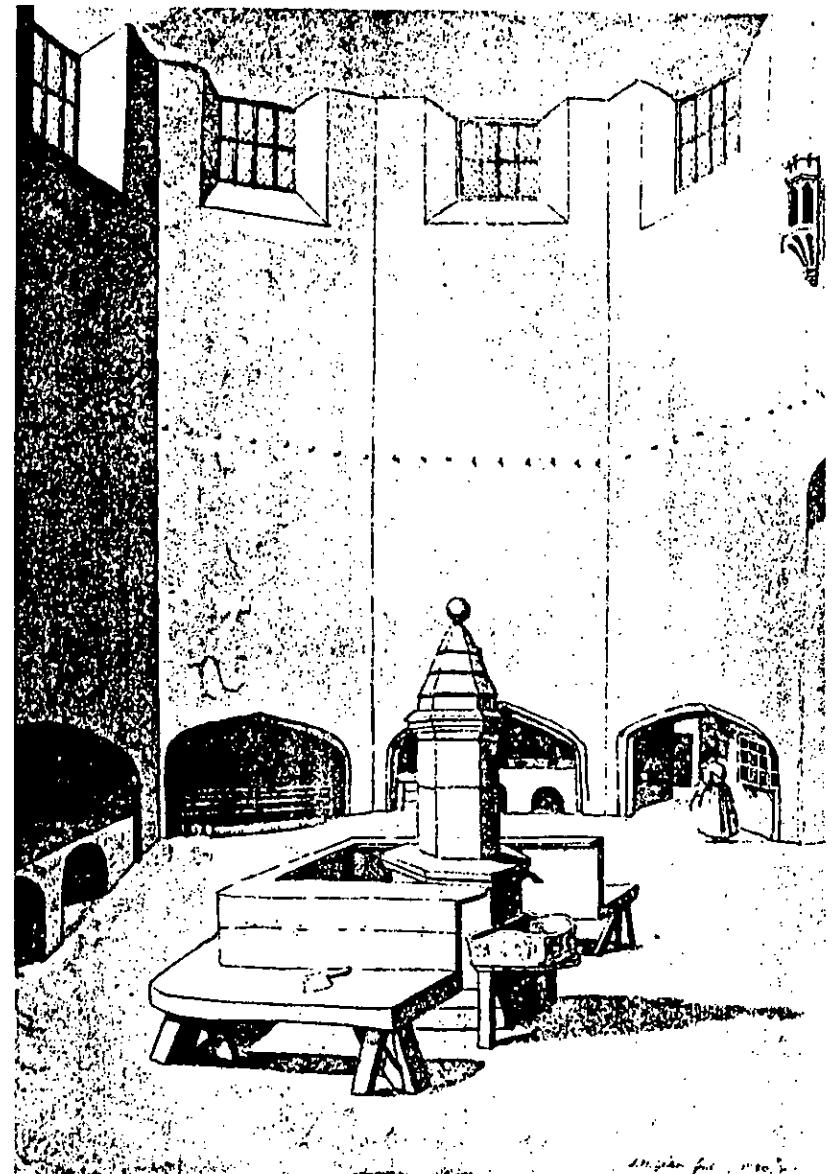


West Front of Cowdray near Midhurst copied from Sherwin's Drawing

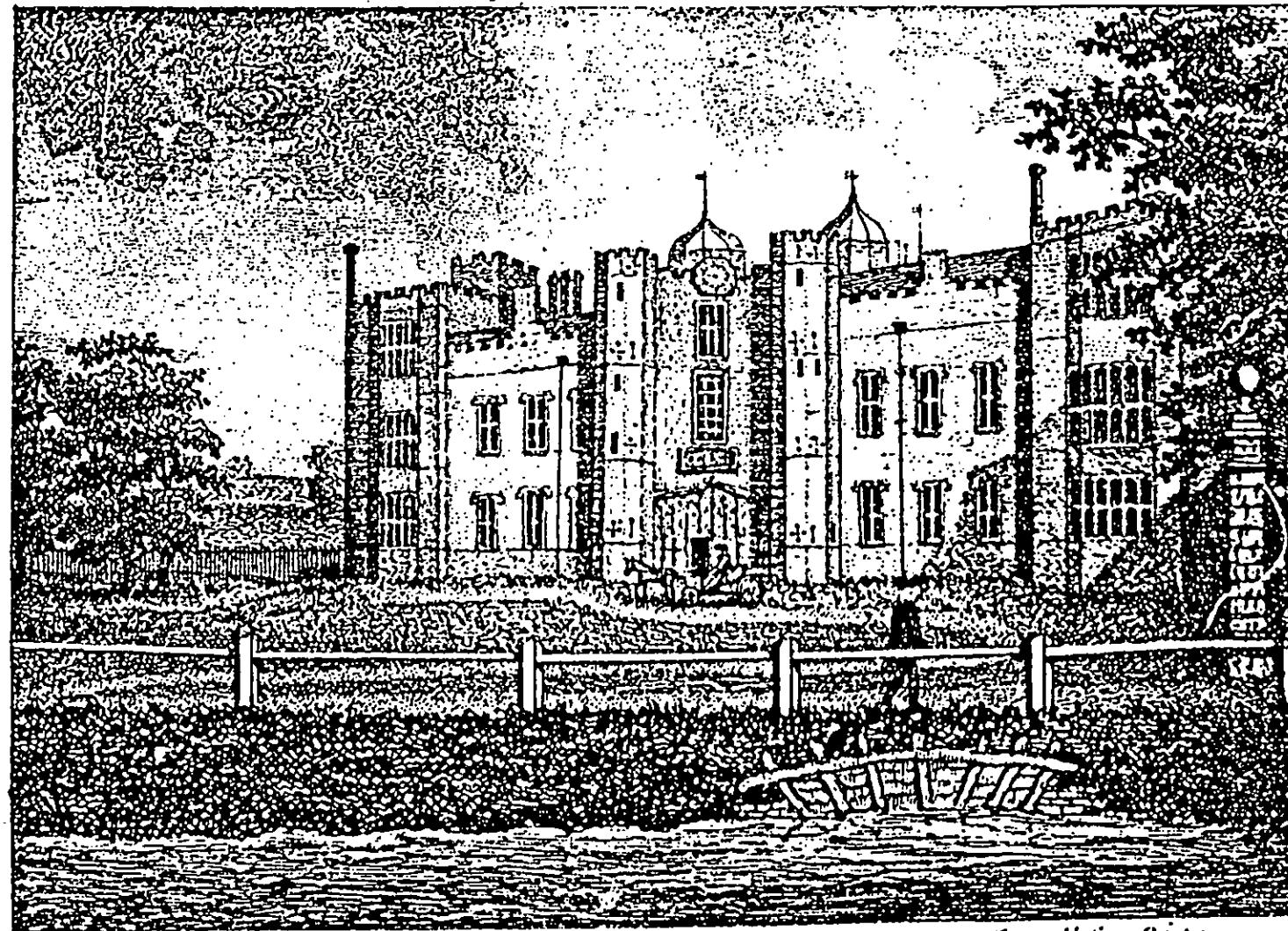
Cowdray. West Front, copied by Grinum in 1781 from a drawing by Sherwin.



COWDRAY: THE HALL, 1786



COWDRAY: THE KITCHEN, 1786



Engraved by George Quinton.

CONQUEROR HOTEL, Hastings.



83

View of the Chapel or East Front to the Garden
of Cowdray House, Sussex, Painted Before 1777

Unidentified English painter

Oil on canvas

54 by 37.5 cm.; 21 ¼ by 14 ¾ in.

The house, with its origins in the thirteenth century, was rebuilt in the Tudor fashion by Sir David Owen at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In 1793 this great Tudor house was gutted by fire, although extensive, preserved ruins remain. The present Cowdray House built nearby is largely a Victorian mansion.

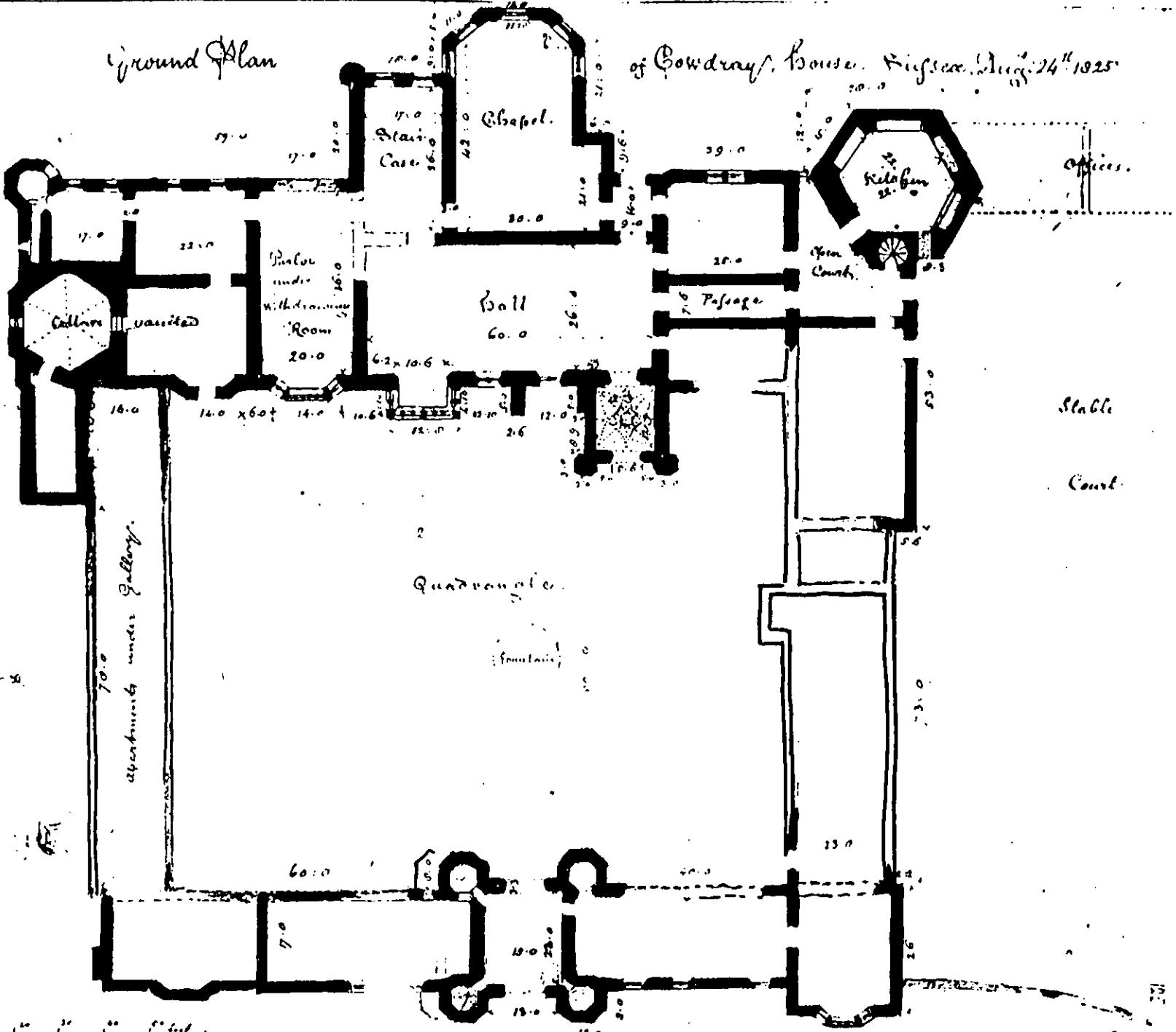
This view may be one of two listed as numbers 191 and 192 in the *Catalogue of the Pictures at Cowdray House, Portsmouth, 1777* (reproduced in St. John Hope, pg. 59).

Collection:

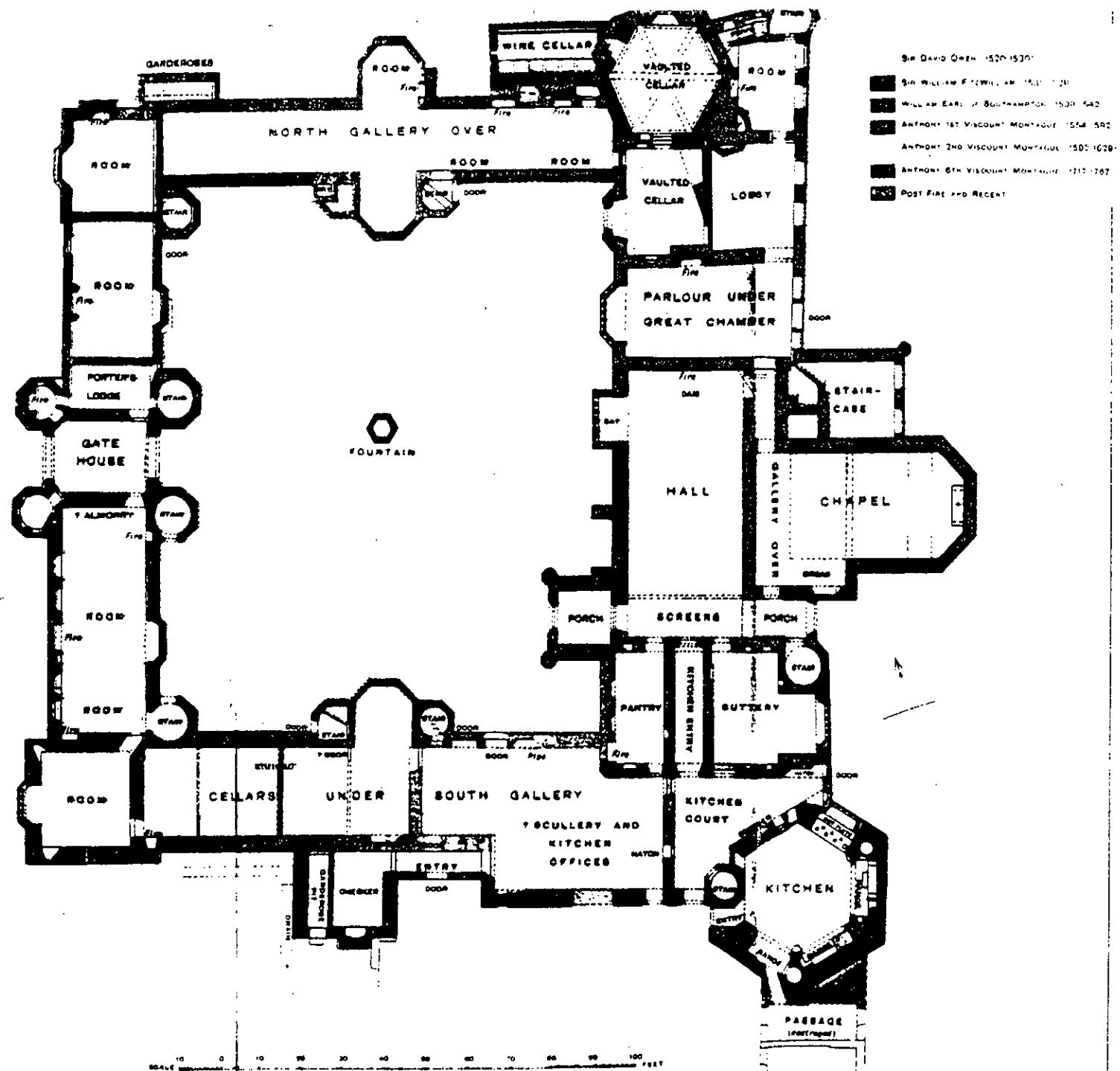
Timothy Gwyn-Jones Esq.

Literature:

Sir William H. St. John Hope, *Cowdray and Easebourne Priory*, 1919



x) Ground plan of Cowdray House, Sussex by Buckler, 1825 (copy of the B.M.
original from the NMR ref.BB78/7483).



Cudlery, Sussex. Plan of Ground Story.

Appendix 1

Catalogue of Exhibits in Cowdray Museum

- (1) Procession of King Edward VI from the Tower of London to Westminster Abbey.
- (2) Departure of King Henry VIII from Calais. (In the top right - hand corner he is seen being greeted by Sir Anthony Browne.)
- (3) Encampment of King Henry VIII at Marquison, 1544.
- (4) The siege of Boulogne, 1544.
- (6) The road from London to Chichester - old print by John Ogilby.
- (7) Names of quarterings belonging to the Rt. Honble. Anthony Browne, Viscount Montague - old print.
- (8) A Genealogical Table of the Noble Family of Browne, Viscount Montague - old print.
- (10) The arms of the Rt. Honble. Anthony Browne, Viscount Montague - old print.
- (11) North View of Cowdray House, by S. H. Grimm, 1786.
- (12) Cowdray Court, looking west, by S. H. Grimm, 1783.
- (13) Inner front of Cowdray House, from the gate - way (showing Buck Hall), by S. H. Grimm, 1782.
- (14) The Chapel, Cowdray, as it was, by S. H. Grimm.
- (15) Old picture (painted on wood) formerly belonging to Cowdray, found at Parham.
- (16) Oil painting of North Mill, Midhurst - dated 1825.
- (17) Oil painting (on tin) may represent the Ruins of the Bohun Castle, which stood on St. Anne's Hill, Midhurst.
- (19) Collection of small engravings of the Ruins etc.
- (100) Visitors' Book, in use in Cowdray Ruins from 7 July 1873 until 8 July 1899.
- (101) Bible and Prayer-book which belonged to W. S. Poyntz, Esq.
- (103) Historical description of an Ancient Painting at Cowdray, published in 1778.
- (105) Translation of a charter by Henry VIII to Sir William Fitzwilliam.

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- (200) Original fireback with Montague coat-of-arms.
- (201) Original fireback with Montague coat-of-arms.
- (202) Original fireback with Montague coat-of-arms. (This one is in the kitchen).
- (203) Finial or vane from the roof of Cowdray (another can still be seen surmounting the pinnacle north of the Grand Staircase).
- (205) Old chair from the kitchen, Cowdray.
- (207) Portion of the Grand Staircase, Cowdray
- (208) Old oak table (double stretcher) reputed to have been used by the nuns in the Refectory at Easebourne Priory.
- (209) Bell pull from the Gatehouse.
- (400) Poacher's gun. (The barrel has been sawn-off to shorten it for easier concealment).
- (401) Muzzle-loading rifle - originally the property of the sixth Earl of Egmont.
- (402) Martini-Henry sporting rifle.
- (500) Old leg irons (from Lurgashall).
- (501) Part of old stocks (from Lurgashall).
- (502) Old bells of town crier, Midhurst.
- (503) Man-trap, found in woods near Lodsworth.
- (504) Police constables' staves, used in the reign of William IV.
- (505) Old vagrancy notice board (on cottage wall at North Mill, Midhurst, until 1919).
- (506) Cell door from Episcopal Prison, Durham.
- (600) Old lock and key, from a Cowdray door.
- (601) Ancient padlock and chain, found beneath the ruins of Cowdray after the great fire, 24 September 1793.
- (602) Lock from the gate of Midhurst Town Hall.
- (603) Various old keys.

- (604) Lock of church door from Icomb, Gloucestershire (date 1333).
- (700) Collection of portions of bottles, bowls etc. (found during repairs 1909 - 1914).
- (702) Neck of Bellarmine or Long Beard Stone Jug, sixteenth century.
- (703) Earthenware vase, probably Spanish, seventeenth century - found during excavations of Snow Hill House, Easebourne, in January 1928.
- (800) A fork found at the bottom in an old iron furnace discovered north of Oates' Wood, Cowdray, when a water main was being laid in 1920. A Sheffield expert reported as follows:
"The fork is copper of the period 1736; it is a great curiosity, and our experts have not seen a copper fork before. It is rat-tailed pattern and was probably made in London."
- (801) Old forks made from vicarage gardens, Midhurst.
- (901) Old pewter measure (found when lock at "Moorlands Farm" was being cleared out).
- (902) Goffering irons and holders. (The goffering iron was inserted in the holder after being heated. Used for making dainty fluted frills).
- (903) Collection of old rush-light holders.
- (904) Part of a spit engine.
- (1000) Old sickle. (Saw-like teeth on the cutting edge, serving to differentiate the sickle from the ordinary reaping hook).
- (1100) Model of the Old Coffee Tavern or Market House Midhurst.
- (1101) Model of the Gatehouse.
- (1200) Medieval monastic tiles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries taken probably at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries (1536) from Shulbrede Priory and Easebourne Priory, both of which were granted by Henry VIII to the owner of Cowdray. They were found chiefly in the neighbourhood of the Chapel, during the repairs, 1909 - 1914.
- (1201) Old tiles etc., found during repairs, 1909 - 1914.
- (1300) Specimens of Roman-British pottery found at Hardham Camp, Pulborough, on Stone Street.
- (1500) Brass dog collar, bearing the following inscription: "The Humble, Anto Browne, Esq., Cowdray, Sussex", found at the roots of an old walnut, which stood near the

south-west corner of the principal range of buildings, and which was removed in December 1926.

- (1501) Snaffle bit (probably a dog's) found at Easebourne.
- (1503) Old rat-trap or gin (from Easebourne).
- (1506) Diamond-shaped piece of lead, with the name "John Whitter" in the centre.
- (1507) Collection of ironwork, etc. (found during repairs, 1909 - 1914).
- (1508) Stone image (found at Easebourne).
- (1509) Reputed old stone image (found by workmen digging for stone in Winter's Stone Quarry, Easebourne, in 1894).
- (1512) Wasps' nest found in rafters in Cowdray Estate garage (March 1930).
- (1513) Old boot found at Dawe's Farm, Fernhurst.
- (1514) Ammonite (fossil).
- (1516) Collection of Mexican beetles.
- (1517) Old pattern golf clubs.
- (1518) Three old rifles from the Boer War.
- (1519) Carved head in stone from Vanzell Road, Easebourne.
- (1520) Carved head in stone from St. Anne's Hill (found during excavations).
- (1521) Carved head in stone from St Anne's Hill (found during excavations).
- (1522) Carved bird in stone from St Anne's Hill (found during excavations).
- (1523) Teeth of swordfish.
- (1524) Old lead pump and plunger.
- (1525) Pike found in Mill Pond at Lurgashall, 1907.
- (1526) Collection of Central American birds.
- (1527) Cock and hen pheasant.
- (1528) Notice from Midhurst Church.
- (1529) Two samplers.

(1530) Old razor case.

(1531) Suit of "half armour".

(1532) Portable gas lamp.

(1533) Bust of Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson, First Viscount Cowdray.

Additions - not listed

- (1) Ivy root from Cowdray House.
- (2) Hinge and parts of old door.
- (3) Horse brasses.
- (4) Black-buck horns.
- (5) Lodge boards from Petworth.
- (6) Chairs made from V & A yacht Osborne.
- (7) Frying pan.
- (8) Print of Royal Family Tree.
- (10) Cordova leather panel (small).
- (11) Hands from Gatehouse clock.
- (12) Ceramic plaques of Gower and Dante.
- (13) Three oak tables
- (14) Three memorial boards.

Appendix 2

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

This list includes the more important books and articles upon Cowdray House, the families that have owned the estate, and those parishes into which it extended. It is not intended to be complete. County histories, the publications of the Public Record Office and Acts of Parliament have been deliberately omitted, and some additional references will be found in the appropriate places of both Introduction and Text. A list of printed works relating to Cowdray was given in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 18 (1866), p. 92.

A Catalogue of the Pictures at Cowdray-House, The Seat of The Right Honourable Lord Viscount Montague, Near Midhurst, Sussex (1777).

For copies, see Cowdray MSS. 5130, 5137.

A Description of some Ancient Historical Paintings preserved at Cowdray in Sussex, the Seat of the Right Honourable Viscount Montague; representing, I. The March of King Henry VIII. from Calais towards Boulogne; II. The Encampment of the English Forces at Marquison; and III. A View of the Siege of Boulogne; in the Year 1544 [1788].

For a copy, see Cowdray MS. 5131.

An Architectural Antiquary, 'Cowdray House, Sussex', in *Gentleman's Magazine* (n.s.), vol. 1, pp. 33-39.

Sir J. Ayloffe, 'An Account of some ancient English Historical Paintings at Cowdry, in Sussex', in *Archaeologia*, vol. 3 (1775), pp. 239-272.

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The [draft] will and codicil are now Cowdray MS. 12.

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Case of Henry Browne, Esq., on his Claim to the Title and Dignity of Viscount Montague. Before the Lords' Committee for Privileges (1851).

W. D. Cooper, 'Midhurst: Its Lords and its Inhabitants', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 20 (1868), pp. 1-33.

W. V. Crake, 'The Porch at Cowdray, with some Account of its Builder', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 54 (1911), pp. 113-129.

H. Dudley, *Juvenile Researches, Or a Description of some of the Principal Towns in the West of Sussex, and the borders of Hants* (2nd ed., 1835).

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Appendix 3

WEST SUSSEX

COWDRAY HOUSE

CHICHESTER

EASEBOURNE

SU8921

II*

Pleasure grounds, landscaped park c.260ha, of which approx 11ha is the Victorian pleasure grounds. Park, medieval, landscaped mid C18 by Capability Brown.

Cowdray Castle, ruins of manor, first half C16, to west of park. House, Victorian within grounds in centre of park. Pleasure grounds of lawns to south west and south east of house. Drives and paths through informal shrub and tree plantings, fish-pond with rectangular layout of paths next to it to north west. Park, originally 2 miles by 1 mile to north of Easebourne and Petworth road, known as Le Cenque or Single Park in 1284, extended 1532-3, with boundary of pales, hedge and fence. Separated from castle by ha-ha. Traces of avenues running east from castle, along Lime Bottom running north east - south west, and others north of present house. Clumps of trees, perimeter planting, deep woods to north-east and south. Some trees pre 1700, include lime, beech and oak. Adjoining castle a conduit, late C16, and timber granary. Park part farmland, playing fields and golf course.

Pevsner N, Nairn I, Sussex, 1965.

WEST SUSSEX

FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE

CHICHESTER

CHICHESTER MB

SU8304

II*

Reconstructed formal courtyard garden, originally 0.7ha, of which north half and part of south east quarter recovered, 1st century AD.

Within Flavian palace, begun 75 to 80 AD. Enclosure flanked by colonnaded walks or revetted wall. Central gravel path c.12m wide runs east-west from entrance hall to audience chamber. To each side, alternating semicircular and rectangular recesses, marked by bedding trenches, now replanted with double row of low clipped box hedging, and with seats in position of former statuary or garden furniture. Perimeter paths c.3.6m wide on north, south and west, flanked by similar rows of varying depths of bedding trenches, straight or shaped, part replanted with box. To east, path open to central space, traces of plant beds, frames or pergola, and screen set forward, posts alternate with planting. Central area now turfed, tree replanted in centre of north west quadrant. Pollen evidence for weed plants only. Replanting from literary sources. Conduit supplying fresh water, and drains. To south of palace, informal private garden on artificial terrace, laid out naturalistically, with evidence for bedding trenches and isolated pits. To north west, evidence for well-manured garden, possibly kitchen gardens, with adjacent bakery. Within AONB Sussex Downs.

Cunliffe B, Fishbourne: A Roman Palace and its Garden, 1971.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Revision Number: 2

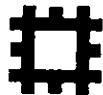


EASEBOURNE EASEBOURNE LANE
 SU 82 SE 11/57
 18.6.59 The Ruins of Cowdray House

||
 Ruins of a fine stone mansion comprising a complete courtyard with gatehouse, hall with oriel windows, chapel, kitchen, etc. The east and north sides were built by Sir David Owen in 1492 circa, the west and south sides by Sir William Fitzwilliam, later Earl of Southampton, in 1533 circa. Further alterations were made by the latter's half-brother, Sir Anthony Browne, and his son, the first Viscount Montague. It remained the home of the Montague family until partly destroyed by fire in 1792. Ashlar with quoins of a different coloured stone. Castellated parapet. Casement windows. Large bays of two storeys with two tiers of six lights. The gatehouse was on the west side. Four-centred carriage archway flanked by octagonal turrets of three storeys. Hall and chapel on east side of the courtyard.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Revision Number: 2



EASEBOURNE EASEBOURNE LANE
 SU 82 SE 11/60
 18.6.59 The former Stables of Old
 Cowdray House

||

Stables, now a farm building. Built by Anthony, Sixth Viscount Montague, in 1726. Half H-plan, the wings being of unequal length. Stone rubble. Modillion eaves cornice, hipped tiled roof. The north west wing, originally the coach-house has two round-headed archway with keystones and two tall sash windows with glazing bars.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Revision Number: 2



EASEBOURNE EASEBOURNE LANE
 SU 82 SE 11/58
 18.6.59 The Round Tower or Water
 Tower of Cowdray House to the
 north west of the Ruins
 (formerly listed as The
 Round House)

||

Conduit house, now the Custodian's office for visiting the Ruins. Late C16. Octagonal stone conduit-house with pyramidal tiled roof with ball cap. One storey only.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Revision Number: 2



EASEBOURNE EASEBOURNE LANE
SU 82 SE
11/59
18.6.59

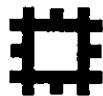
Granary adjoining the Ruins
of Cowdray House on the south
west

II

Granary. Small square C17 timber-framed building with red brick infilling. East gable end tile-hung. Half hipped tiled roof. Stands on staddle stones.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Revision Number: 2



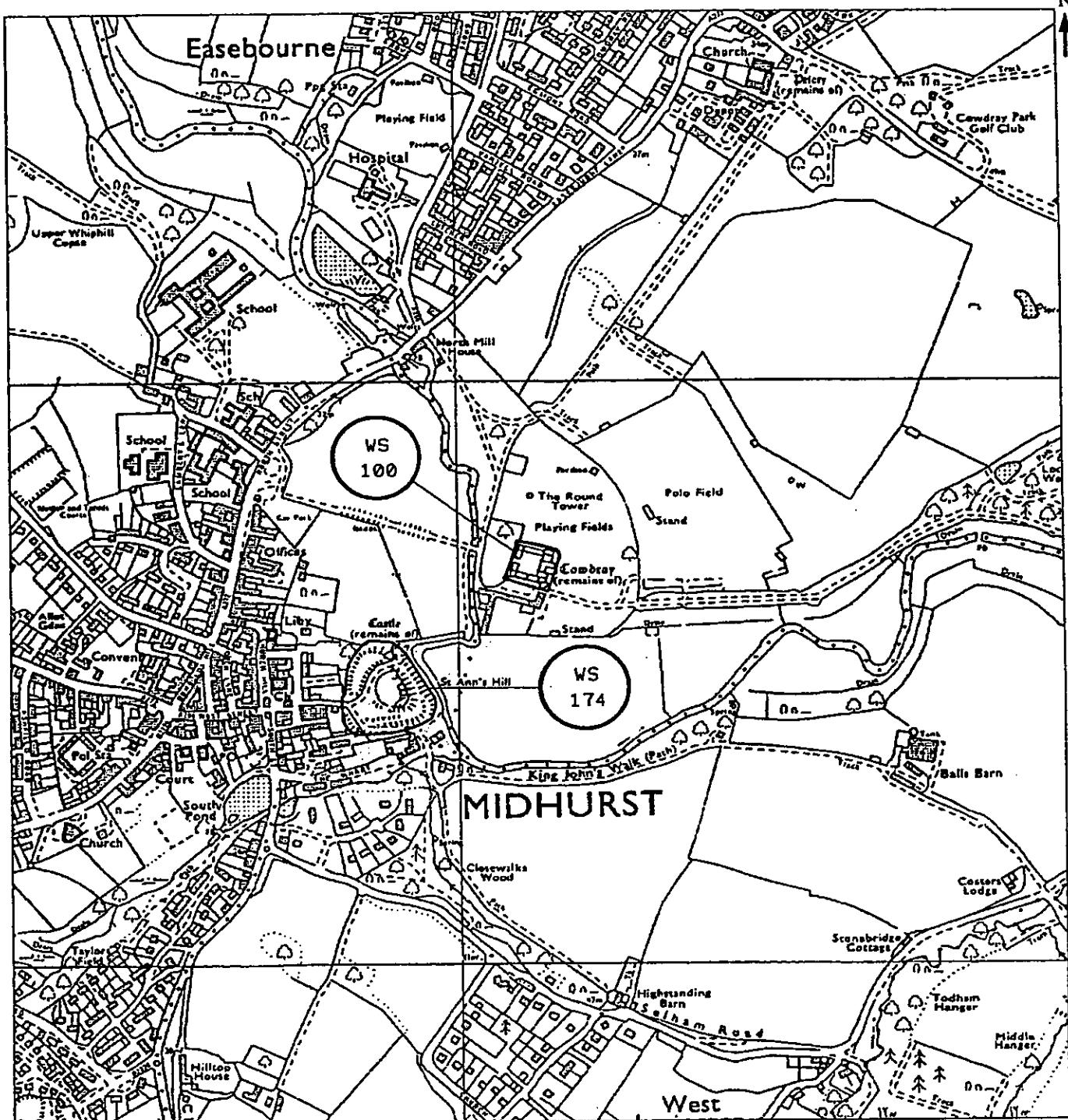
EASEBOURNE EASEBOURNE LANE
SU 82 SE
11/56
18.6.59

The Gates of Cowdray House
(formerly listed under North
Street (east side) Midhurst
as Gates to Cowdray Ruins)

II

Gates. These Gates formerly stood on the east side of North Street in Midhurst. They were moved to this site when the road was widened and car park made. C18. Ashlar gate-piers surmounted by urns on two-tiered bases with upright voluted brackets on the outer sides. Between the piers wrought-iron gates of six sections with cresting of fleur-de-lys.

Scheduled Monument



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For identification purposes only

Site Name: Cowdray

County: Sussex, West	District: Chichester	Parish: Easebourne
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Notes: Site contains listed building grade I

Key:	Monument No.	Location/extent of site	Scale: 1:10000	Derived from: 1:10000
			Centred on NGR: SU89122168	Extract from OS sheet: SU82SE
			Date: 28.2.97	Monument No: WS100

English Heritage

Fortress House 23 Savile Row London W1X 1AB Telephone 071-973 3000 Fax 071-973 3001

late c12. The chancel arch very soon after, pointed and single-chamfered, with plain imposts; c13 arcade, lengthened and partly renewed, of the usual type (double-chamfered arches, round and octagonal piers and abaci). — TAPESTRY. Foliage, animals, and birds: fresh, not whimsy, done from a design supplied by Debenham & Freebody in 1918. s aisle. — PLATE. Chalice; Paten, given 1716; Paten; Paten, given 1769. — MONUMENT. Tablet to Sarah Phipps † 1793: urn, etc. Bigger than usual but very dull.

NEOLITHIC LONG BARROW, on TELEGRAPH HILL. A magnificent long barrow, 210 ft long and some 60 ft wide at its broad end; the side ditches are clearly visible.

1030

COOLHURST
½ m. SE of Horsham

By P. F. Robinson, 1833–5. Neo-Elizabethan, the half-way stage between the Regency and Victorian seriousness. Here the detail has gone serious but the massing, and particularly the placing in the landscape, is still Picturesque. Moderate size, cemented, pathetically little feeling. Cross-shaped lodge to the W, a little more fun.

1000

COOMBES

Farms, Dutch barns, and tiny church folded into the side of the Adur valley between Steyning and Shoreham, directly opposite the cement works (p. 287).

CHURCH. Lovable and unrestored. Unbroken roof-line outside, ending in a tile-hung bell-turret and let so far into the hillside that the sill of the w window is only a few inches off the ground. Simple two-cell building inside, with a low, plain chancel arch. This and the nave Early Norman (one window on the N side, several more blocked). Chancel of c.1200 (see the priest's doorway), with two bigger Perp windows on the s side, in Winchester style (see p. 29). s window humble c16, w window humble 1724 — so the church is real century-by-century accretion of piety. The c19 mercifully left it alone. — WALL PAINTINGS. Discovered in 1949, and then properly treated and preserved by E. Clive Rouse. No touched up Tristram faces here. Originally a complete set, rather like Hardham and of the same school. The date can hardly be later than c.1100, and that alone is memorable. What can be made out is the Visitation over the s door, a Nativity series on the N wall, and Christ in Majesty

over the chancel arch, with, lower down to the l., Christ delivering the keys to St Peter and the book to St Paul. On the soffit of the chancel arch, a crouching man with a strained face, mouth wide open, carrying the arch. He is of the type of Italian caryatid sculpture from the c11 onwards. It is a brilliantly vivid and dramatic figure, and so are the fragments of other figures that can be made out. What a pity more of it is not left.* — PLATE. Cup and Paten, 1588.

COPSALE see NUTHURST

COWDRAY HOUSE
½ m. NE of Midhurst

8030

Cowdray took sixty years to build, under three owners, but its ruins are an absolutely consistent epitome of Tudor architecture at its plainest and most sober, very English in its understatement, its dignity and concern for volumes and solidity. The chain runs, parallel with more ornamented buildings, from Cowdray to Loseley, Lacock, and Hardwick, to Inigo Jones and May and Wren and then to the Palladians, independent of style: it is a perennial English trait.

Cowdray was begun by Sir David Owen, Owen Glendower's son, who inherited it in 1492. He built the e range, including hall and chapel and kitchen tower, which survive, and perhaps the N and w ranges as far as the gatehouse, which have disappeared. He died in 1535 and lived at Cowdray to his death, although the estate had been bought by Sir William Fitzwilliam in 1529 and although he had been granted a licence to crenellate in 1533. In 1535 Fitzwilliam seems to have moved in. He was much liked by Henry VIII and was made Earl of Southampton in 1537 and Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal in 1539. He added the gatehouse and the hexagonal tower in the NW corner and built the hall porch. He died in 1542, and his half-brother, Sir Anthony Browne, took over. He also was a favourite of Henry VIII. He had been granted Battle Abbey in 1538 and converted it into his house. He also held Easebourne Priory, Bayham Abbey, Waverley Abbey in Surrey and St Mary Overy Nunnery in London — a dissolution profiteer indeed. As for court appointments, he was made Master of the Horse in 1539. He died in 1548. He must have added the huge bay window N of the hall and the room s of the gatehouse,

* The w wall of the chancel also has a band of key-ornament.

unless he only remodelled these. The c.17 and c.18 decorated the inside but left the outside alone, and the fire of 1793, which left the buildings roofless, ensured freedom from c.19 interference. The fire occurred eight days before the last of the family was killed in a very Byronic way whilst trying to shoot the Rhine Falls. All this fulfilled a curse.

36b

What the visitor coming from Midhurst sees first is the gatehouse, but the core of the house is the hall range behind it on the other side of a courtyard 125 by 100 ft. The HALL has three Perp windows, high up, each of three lights with cusped heads and a transom, a huge plain square-sided projecting bay on the l. of c.1545 and the porch on the r. of c.1535. The bay is entirely divided into mullion and transom panels, sixty altogether, that is five transoms and nine mullions, and matches the earlier work perfectly, a true case of a later addition really being the completion needed by the original work. The only difference, and a difference telling of the way Perp developed into Elizabethan, is that Owen's work has all its arches cusped, Browne's uncusped. The bluntness of this is the sign of another age.* The two buttresses to the hall were given splendid polyhedron finials, another comment of 1545 on 1500. The PORCH has a four-centred doorway, with Henry VIII's arms above it in a small-scale Renaissance frame, one of the few mean touches in the whole building, although the pilasters in purely Florentine or François-Premier style are very pretty close to. Inside, the porch has a fan-vault decorated in a very low relief with an astonishing mixture of Gothic and Renaissance detail typical of c.1535-40 – and which is light enough and facile enough to look late c.18. We are lucky that this taste did not spread to the outside of the building. All the main lines of the vault are Gothic, but the ribs carry a variety of Renaissance floral scrolls. In between them are badges referring to the birth of Edward VI and Lord Southampton's appointment as Lord High Admiral – both events which occurred in 1537.

The porch led as usual to the screens passage, and the three doors are still present on the right-hand side giving access to the buttery and pantry l. and r. and the kitchen in the middle. The HALL is bare and roofless now; it had a grand steep-pitched hammerbeam roof, rather like Hampton Court. Behind the hall to the E lies the CHAPEL, an extremely unusual arrangement at a time when ranges two rooms deep hardly existed. The chapel has a three-sided apse with large windows,

* But the panelled jambs and soffit inside are cusped.

still Perp with cusped lights, i.e. Owen's rather than later work. It also is roofless, with pathetic calcined fragments of early C.18 stucco and statues still adhering to the wall. The ornament is unmistakably *Régence* and very French in style. The altarpiece was by Amigoni, who was in England in 1729-36. Next to the chapel to the N was the GRAND STAIRCASE, replacing whatever the c.16 had been satisfied with, with windows which may be of 1690 or of 1720. The staircase was painted by Pellegrini, who was in England from 1708 to 1713 and again in 1719. S of the hall a passage between buttery and pantry ran into a small irregular kitchen yard, and s of this is the KITCHEN, a large hexagonal room forming the SE corner of the house. It has large fireplaces inside and chimneys ending in turrets – a romantic accent in this important corner.

N from the hall there are two Elizabethan canted bays with big bald mullion-and-transom windows, and then the hexagonal NE TOWER, too far decayed for the design to be followed except for a splendid set of chimneystacks. Although hexagonal too, it is visually not a companion piece to the kitchen. It is rib-vaulted below and had a room above with, to the NW, one large window still recognizable by its panelled soffit, similar to that of the great hall bay. Of the N range there are only low walls (brick, incidentally: most of the house was faced with stone on a brick core), but they show two deep canted bays, facing N and S, and the southern one towards the courtyard placed pretty exactly centrally. The Long Gallery was in this range, and these two bays must have been a splendid climax. The S bay incidentally had to its side two attachments, one of them a spiral staircase, and the three together gave a double-canted group such as the age of Henry VIII liked. In the W range the GATEHOUSE was obviously intended to be the centre of a symmetrical composition like that at Titchfield in Hampshire, built at almost the same time in exactly the same spirit. The r. half is complete, the l. half was probably never entirely finished. The gatehouse is relatively tall and narrow, not spread-out like Titchfield, and indeed makes better sense as a foil to broad plain wings than as an independent design. Three storeys between polygonal battlemented turrets;* four-centred doorway on the ground floor, with the Montague arms above. Sir Anthony Browne had been made Viscount Montague in 1554 and entertained Queen Elizabeth I at Cowdray

* The gunports make it fairly clear that this gatehouse was still intended to serve a military purpose when needed.

in 1591. That may date the Elizabethan remodellings. The Montagues then stayed in possession to the fateful year 1793. The first floor has a classical window of c.1700, one of the few later alterations. To the r. is a two-storey link, with simple two-light windows widely spaced, then the sw corner tower, three storeys with a polygonal bay running the full height and the windows about as large as they could be. They are mullioned and transomed on the ground floor but have Sir Anthony Browne's uncusped arched lights on the upper floor.*

The condition and surroundings of Cowdray are delightful, like everything administered by the Cowdray Estate: rough grass, no mown lawns or notices and little huts, an object lesson to the Ministry of Works. s of the main block are cottages forming a courtyard with a nice half-timbered GRANARY on staddlestones; N of it is a small octagonal late C16 CONDUIT HOUSE. The park was landscaped by *Capability Brown*.

COWDRAY HOUSE. The present building is 1 m. E of the ruins, a jolly Victorian affair of turrets, gables, tile-hanging, and a short stone tower, all refreshingly unpompous.

1990

COWFOLD

Half-way between Horsham and the Downs. The centre of Cowfold is really memorable. The cottages all turn inwards towards the churchyard, with road access only at the back, and the result is incredibly picturesque. Soft, gentle, the buildings and planting almost indivisible, yet never false. A real picture-book group, and worth all the praise it gets. Humble houses, brick, tile, and weatherboard (and also one bit of Victorian stucco which makes a good foil). A lot of the effect is given by the long weatherboarded workshop at the w end with its strips of windows, and this must be kept. In the event, it is just as well that the houses face s, for across the road to the N is a new (1959) estate of detached houses. Cosy designs, with a lot of trees kept, but ruined at the moment by one simple thing — a brash wire fence along the road edge. Perhaps creeper will cover it, in time: but why on earth was a hedge not grown from the start, in such pretty surroundings?

ST PETER. An anthology of sturdy Wealden details. The solidity and lack of fuss is a great relief after other parts of the country. E.E. lancets on the N side of the chancel, also, blocked, on the s side of the chancel, with three double-splayed lancets, a local

* Mostly of the restoration by Sir William St John Hope, but not all.

mannerism; Perp elsewhere, as adaptable and effective as anywhere in England. The thick, dependable w tower is particularly happy. Taller stair-turret in the NW corner, like the Thames Valley, but everything much firmer. Immensely solid corbels supporting the tower arch, inside. Horsham slate roofs all through. Inside, four-bay s arcade and arch between chancel and s chapel both Late Perp — see the four-centred arches; money was left for it in 1530. The windows here have three lights straight-headed outside but a segmental head to the splay. Chancel arch C19; on its r. a very crude bit of Perp canopy-work. Originally a statue of the Virgin stood here. — FOUNT. Unremarkable Perp, but can be dated exactly, at 1481. It cost seven and fivepence. — STAINED GLASS. Tiny Crucifixion, C14 or C15, in one of the chancel lancets. — By Kempe, 1894, a s aisle window. — MONUMENTS. Brass to Thomas Nelond, twenty-sixth prior of St Pancras at Lewes, † 1433, nave floor. A mighty effigy, but alas kept locked. The prior himself big in scale (5 ft 10 in. long) but unremarkable; the canopy is enchanting, with the Virgin and Child in a gable above, the gable flanked by St Pancras and St Thomas. Beautifully preserved. — Several stately C18 tablets and cartouches.

Obviously plenty of pretty cottages in Cowfold, but nothing special. The best building in the centre is in fact the group of the VILLAGE HALL and LIBRARY, by Wheeler & Godman of Horsham, 1896. Happily and freely grouped, with a big gable for the hall and curly roof-line for the library. Would that modern architecture had some of the same gaiety; in fact, would that it had any sense of humour at all.

Several worthwhile buildings w of the village. First is CAPON'S FARM, on the s side of A272. This is historically one of the best medieval cottages in Sussex, and has been thoroughly dissected recently.* It is a very pretty building as well. All timber-framed: the oldest part was a two-bay hall, the NE part of the present house. This may be as early as c.1300. The overhanging wing to the w is C15 and was the solar. The SE wing, now refronted in brick, is another timber-framed addition (late C16?) which may have been brought from somewhere else. A pair of weatherboarded BARNs on the roadside which Mr Mason says correspond to the C14 and C15 building periods in the house. The E barn is the older.

Beyond, also on the main road, is THE CLOCK HOUSE, by Barry Parker, Unwin's partner, built in 1913-14. Absolutely

* Mason, S.A.C., xciv, 1957.