

BEAUMONT QUAY, ESSEX

Paul Pattison



RCHM
ENGLAND

BEAUMONT QUAY
BEAUMONT-CUM-MOZE,
ESSEX

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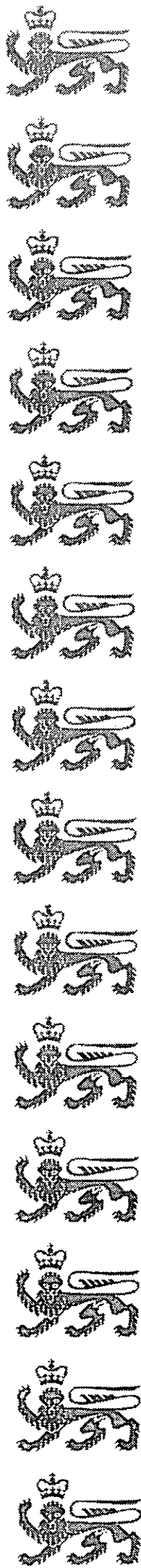
NMR NUMBER TM 12 SE 34

REQUEST SURVEY

APRIL 1996



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Archaeological Field Survey Report

BEAUMONT QUAY, BEAUMONT-CUM-MOZE ESSEX

by Paul Pattison





The wreck of the Rose, a spritsail barge launched in 1880, hulked at Beaumont Quay (NMR AA96/5733)

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1. INTRODUCTION

In April 1996 the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England undertook archaeological and buildings surveys at Beaumont Quay, in Beaumont-cum-Moze parish, Tendring, Essex. This work was undertaken following a request from Essex County Council and will contribute towards the process of understanding and managing the site. The project was the responsibility of staff of the Archaeological Field Office in Cambridge.

Beaumont Quay lies on the Essex coast at National Grid Reference TM 190 240, 1km south-east of Beaumont village and 9kms south of Harwich. The quay is at the western limit of Hamford Water (this stretch is called Landermere Creek), in an extensive and convoluted system of tidal creeks, small islands, mud flats and marshes known as the Walton Backwaters, which penetrates several kilometres inland behind The Naze (Fig 1).

The purpose of the survey was to record the remains of a small early 19th century quay and its associated buildings and structures. This report includes a historical summary but it should be noted that there is likely to be a great deal more documentary evidence for the construction of the quay and the subsequent history of its coastal trade. That, however, is beyond the scope of the present work.

Beaumont Quay is recorded in the National Monuments Record as record no TM 12 SE 34.

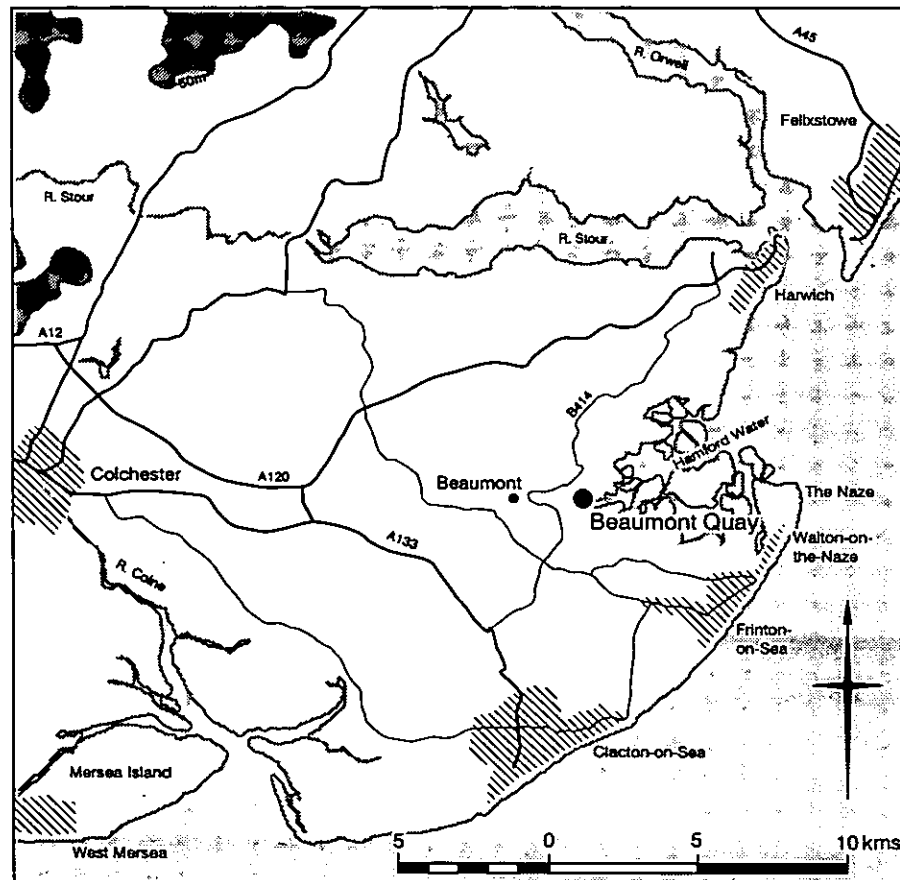


Figure 1:
Location
map

2. HISTORY

Hamford Water has provided access to the sea and its resources for many centuries. Roman pottery and tile, as well as 11th-13th century pottery, has been found only 150m south of Beaumont Quay (SMR 7409-7411). Many "lading places" for small craft on Hamford Water were recorded by a special Commission relating to Customs and the suppression of piracy hereabouts in the 16th century. In the entry for Beaumont and Thorpe-le-Soken were two landing places, one at "*Landermere lading where commonly small botes have and do lode at all times*" and another at *Moze*. The latter was a high water landing place (Allen 1965), and although there are several candidates, it may have been the *hard* at TM 1985 2406, 850m east of the later quay.

Landermere Wharf, on the southern side of the creek, was well-established in the late 18th century (Chapman and André 1777, Ordnance Survey 1796-1800) but in the fourth decade of the 19th, a new artificial navigation, Beaumont Cut, was established along the northern fringe of Landermere Creek, leading for a kilometre through marsh and mud and terminating close to the Beaumont-Thorpe road (now the B1414). Beaumont Quay was built at the head of this navigation, on land belonging to Guys Hospital in London, as part of their Beaumont Estate which Guys had acquired in the 17th century. A plaque on the only surviving quayside building (Fig 2 and see below) records the construction of the quay, using stone from Old London Bridge, in 1832. Both the navigation and the quay were built in an



Figure 2:
Limestone plaque
recording the building
of Beaumont Quay in
1832 (NMR
AA96/5750)

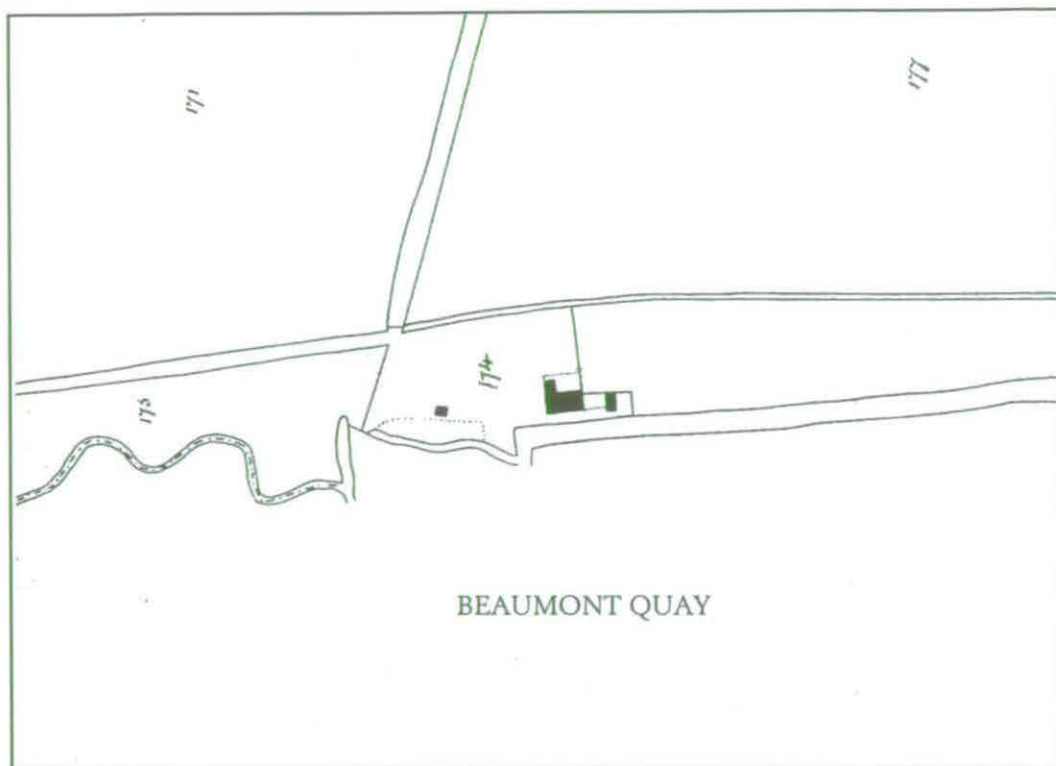


Figure 3:
Beaumont
Quay in
1838 (ERO
D/CT23)

era where it was economically important to carry goods as far inland as possible by water to keep down the excessive costs of overland transport. From the outset the wharf was rented by a tenant of Guys living in Beaumont Hall (ERO D/DGh/E7), the principal farm in the parish and the former main manorial holding. It remained linked to Beaumont Hall through most its working life.

In the Census Returns of the 19th century the wharf is called by various names: *New Wharf* in 1841, *Beaumont Wharf* in 1861 and 1871, *Beaumont Cut* in 1881 and *Cut Cottages* in 1891. In 1841 there were two households at New Wharf which by 1861 had increased to four, some ten people, but between 1871 and 1891 there were only two households recorded. By 1891 there was only one household (ERO Census).

The quay was always a small establishment. In 1838 the '*wharf with drift*' comprised three buildings and a rectangular plot of just over 3 acres: two buildings stood close together, the larger an L-shaped structure in the south-eastern corner of the plot, and a smaller, rectangular structure in its own tiny enclosure just to the east. The third building, a tiny square structure, stood inside the plot some 50m to the west. The wharf was linked by a drift to the road at Beaumont Bridge and by another to agricultural buildings at Lower Barn, 300m to the north (Fig 3, plot 174) (ERO D/CT23). A map of 1847 depicts an identical arrangement (ERO D/DZI/18). The site expanded only slightly in the 19th century with the construction of a limekiln in 1869-70 and with alterations and additions to the main building. Some trade remained in 1896 (Fig 4, Ordnance Survey 1897) but by 1921 the quay was disused (Ordnance Survey 1923).

In 1925 the Beaumont Hall estate was for sale. The catalogue suggested that the quay was still serviceable but there can have been but little trade:

'Beaumont Quay, which belongs to Essex County Council, is close to the property, and the Purchaser will be able to load and unload barges at the wharf upon payment of the usual charges'
(ERO BB 5583)

The quay continued to figure in trade directories at least as late as 1937, which repeatedly record that Beaumont-cum-Moze was situated *'...at the head of a large creek of the sea, and has a wharf'* (ERO PO Directories).

In the present century, after 1923, farm buildings were established along the old drift to the north of the site (Ordnance Survey 1923) and subsequently to the east (between 1946 and 1950: 106G/UK/1673/3156-8 28 July 1946; 58/507/5117-9/12 July 1950).

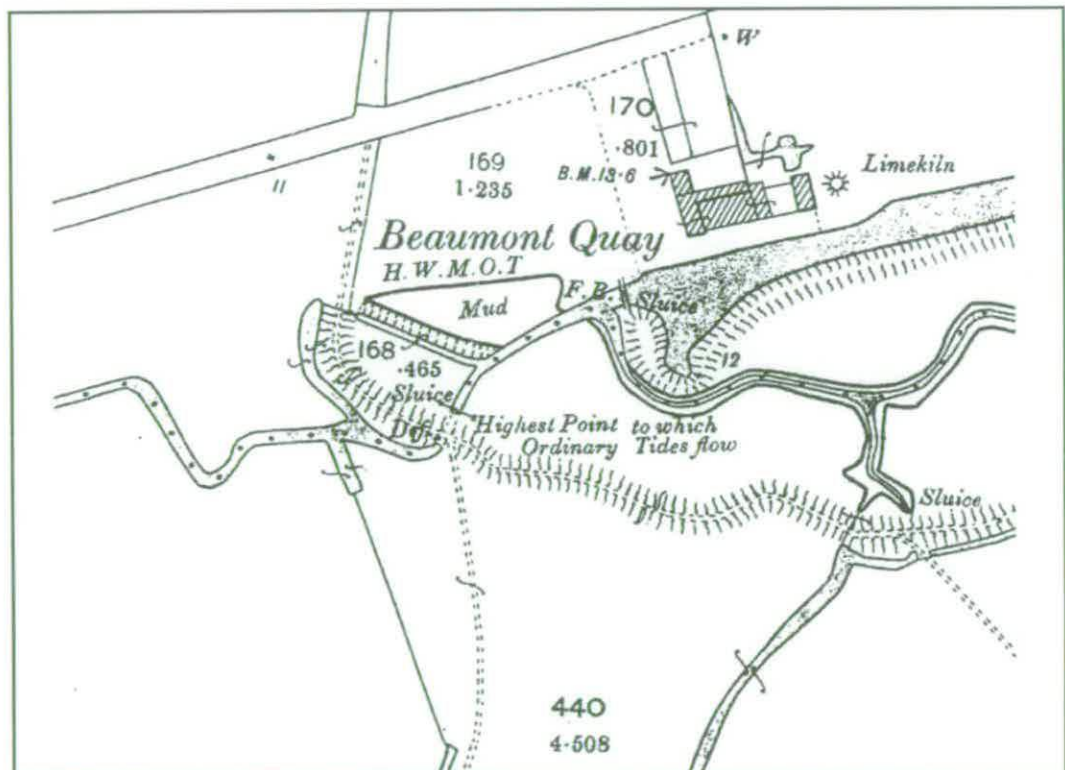


Figure 4:
Beaumont Quay in
1896 (Ordnance
Survey 2nd edition
25-inch 1897)

Trade

In 1855 the quay, just taken on by a new tenant at Beaumont Hall estate, was described as *'House, Wharf, Warehouses, Yards, Coal & Lime sheds and land...'* and it was added that:

'The wharf buildings are to be kept in good repair by the Hospital and afterwards kept so by the Tenants. The Navigation is to be cleansed at the expense of the out-going Tenant, the incoming Tenants, and the Hospital, and afterwards to be cleansed by the Tenants.'

(ERO D/DGh/E7)

Warehouses are mentioned again in 1872 and there were granaries in 1857 (ERO D/DGh/E7) but one of the principle goods appears to have been coal: there was a coal shed in 1855 (ERO

D/DGh/E7); a coal merchant called Maximilian Bates lived at the quay in 1861; resident in 1871 were Gentry Austin, a coal carter, and his cousin William Tye, engaged in the same business (ERO Census); and a coal yard is recorded in 1872 (ERO D/DGh/E7).

Lime was also being brought in to lime sheds documented in 1855, but local demand resulted in the construction of a limekiln between 1869 and 1870 when it was recorded that the tenant:

'Mr Sewell has at his own expense built a limekiln here and he tells me a pretty good trade in lime is doing from the wharf'.

(ERO D/DGh/E7).

This limekiln is depicted for the first time in 1874-5 (Ordnance Survey 1880), lime was still being made in 1881 when William Tye, a lime burner, was resident (ERO Census) and the kiln was still operational in 1896 (Ordnance Survey 1897). By 1921-2 it was disused (Ordnance Survey 1923).

Initially trade may have been good, but its variable nature is suggested by two records, the first of which dates to 1853 when the receiver for Guy's Beaumont estate noted that:

'On account of the Trade at the wharf falling off, Mr Salmon (the tenant) is allowed £10-00 p.a. pro tem, not as a deduction of rent but until the Trade shall revive'.

(ERO D/DGh/E7).

Secondly, in 1869, the receiver recorded that:

'the wharf as a place for business is now of very little use, the railways in the neighbourhood have quite diverted the traffic, the articles dealt in used to be coal, lime, guano, timber etc.'

(ERO D/DGh/E7).

Business must have revived to judge by a local newspaper report of 1881:

It is not an unusual thing to see 8 or 10 vessels at a time, some heavily laden, lying at anchor waiting for the tide, and all having without mark or guide, to hazard the dangers of the Channel and the sands. The first creek of the Handford Water runs up to Walton and is about 3 miles long. Up this creek there is the mill and iron foundry traffic.... Next comes the Oakley Creek, then Kirby Creek, and then the winding Channel to Landermere at Thorpe, and Beaumont Cut. All these places carry on an extensive trade in coal, chalk and agricultural produce of all kinds, from which some ships exceeding 100 tons, are constantly passing and re-passing'

(Walton and Clacton Gazette 23/11/1881)

Business, however intermittent, continued into the present century and the photograph of the quayside c. 1910 (Fig 5) suggests a well-maintained working establishment. Moreover, before the First World War two barges were owned at Beaumont Quay, the 44-ton *Beaumont Belle*, built by Howard of Maldon in 1894 and owned in 1911 by Alan Stanford of Beaumont Hall, and the 30-ton *Gleaner* built at Limehouse in 1897, also for Alan Stanford. The former could load just over 100 tons. In the cargo books of another vessel, the *Orion*, for the period 1918-1947, is a single entry recording a voyage to Beaumont Dock on June 1st 1918; she loaded 61 tons of wheat before leaving for Maldon on June 5th (Hugh Perks; pers.comm.).

This rather suggests that visits to Beaumont were by this time infrequent. There had been another vessel owned at Beaumont earlier in its history: one John Willet is listed as a barge owner at Beaumont in a trade directory for 1862 (PO Directory 1862). In 1861 Captain Willet was living at the quay with his family, and his barge, a 48-tonner, was tied up at the wharf and recorded as engaged in coastal trade out of London: her schedule had been delivered to Walton Quay (ERO Census).

Throughout the working life of the quay the craft using it were small coastal vessels of shallow draught known collectively as spritsail barges. The 1910 photograph shows one such vessel, a topsail barge called *Mercy*, tied up at Beaumont (Fig 5). This barge could load up to 90 tons and as she is loaded down to her iron band, it would seem that substantial barges requiring 5ft of water and capable of carrying 100 tons of cargo, could proceed up the Cut on spring tides. In most conditions, the barges would not have sailed up Beaumont Cut: rather they would have been bow-hauled from the banks and 'poked-up' using setting-booms from the vessel (Hugh Perks: pers.comm.).



Figure 5:
The Mercy
at Beaumont
Quay c. 1910

3. DESCRIPTION and INTERPRETATION

(For letters and names in **bold** used in the text, see Fig 6).

The site of Beaumont Quay has suffered from a considerable amount of clearance and disturbance since the mid-1950's. Although the quay, a store building and a limekiln survive, air photographs reveal that the main buildings were demolished after 1955 and before 1967 (RAF 58/1672/269-70, 3 March 1955; OS 67/063/16-17, 27 April 1967). Between these same two dates, a large flood bank and drainage cut was constructed along the north side of Beaumont Cut, its western end cutting obliquely from just north of the limekiln and ending close to the well at the northern end of the former quay enclosure. Most recently, the area immediately north of the quay at **A** has been top-scraped by machine, resulting in partial removal of archaeological evidence. Fortunately a 20-metre wide strip at **B**, the site of the main quay buildings, remains relatively undisturbed although long grass precluded recording of any surviving surface features. Finally, immediately west of the present access, a level platform **C**, 1m high, has been created from extraneous material in an abortive attempt to provide car parking for visitors; it is associated with disturbed ground **D** on its southern margins.

The head of Landermere Creek is encircled by a massive flood embankment up to 14m wide and 3.5m high. The section north of Beaumont Cut is entirely modern, built at the same time as the large drainage cut at its base (see above), as was that part of the western flood bank north of **E**. When the quay was operational, the flood bank started at **E**, leading along its present course south then east along the southern side of Landermere Creek. Another lower bank, which survives mainly as a scarp or disturbed bank **F**, up to 1m high, follows a straight course from **E** to the quay wall. The tidal flow along Landermere Creek was thus contained by the flood bank and along an east-west line from the quay to **E**, but separated from Beaumont Cut by **G**, a prominent bank along the southern side of the Cut, surviving today at 5.0m to 8.0m wide and up to 1.5m high. The tidal flow along the creek and the Cut were regulated by a sluice (Ordnance Survey 1897). The timber remains of the sluice and a footbridge over, can still be seen (Fig 7, foreground).

It has been suggested that the area so defined at the head of the creek could have functioned as a dry dock for repairing barges or undertaking construction (SMR 9121). However, the specific evidence of the census returns, together with the general documentary evidence, do not lend any support to this idea.

The quay

On its approach to the quay Beaumont Cut is some 12m in width. Its western end has a broad southward loop forming a basin probably intended to facilitate the turning of vessels (Fig 7). The quay, some 80m long in total, was built along the northern bank of the Cut in a straight line, except the eastern end which curves to landward slightly to follow the ground plan of the limekiln. The majority is of timber construction but the western end is in stone. The timber section is essentially a vertical plank revetment held in place by large horizontal

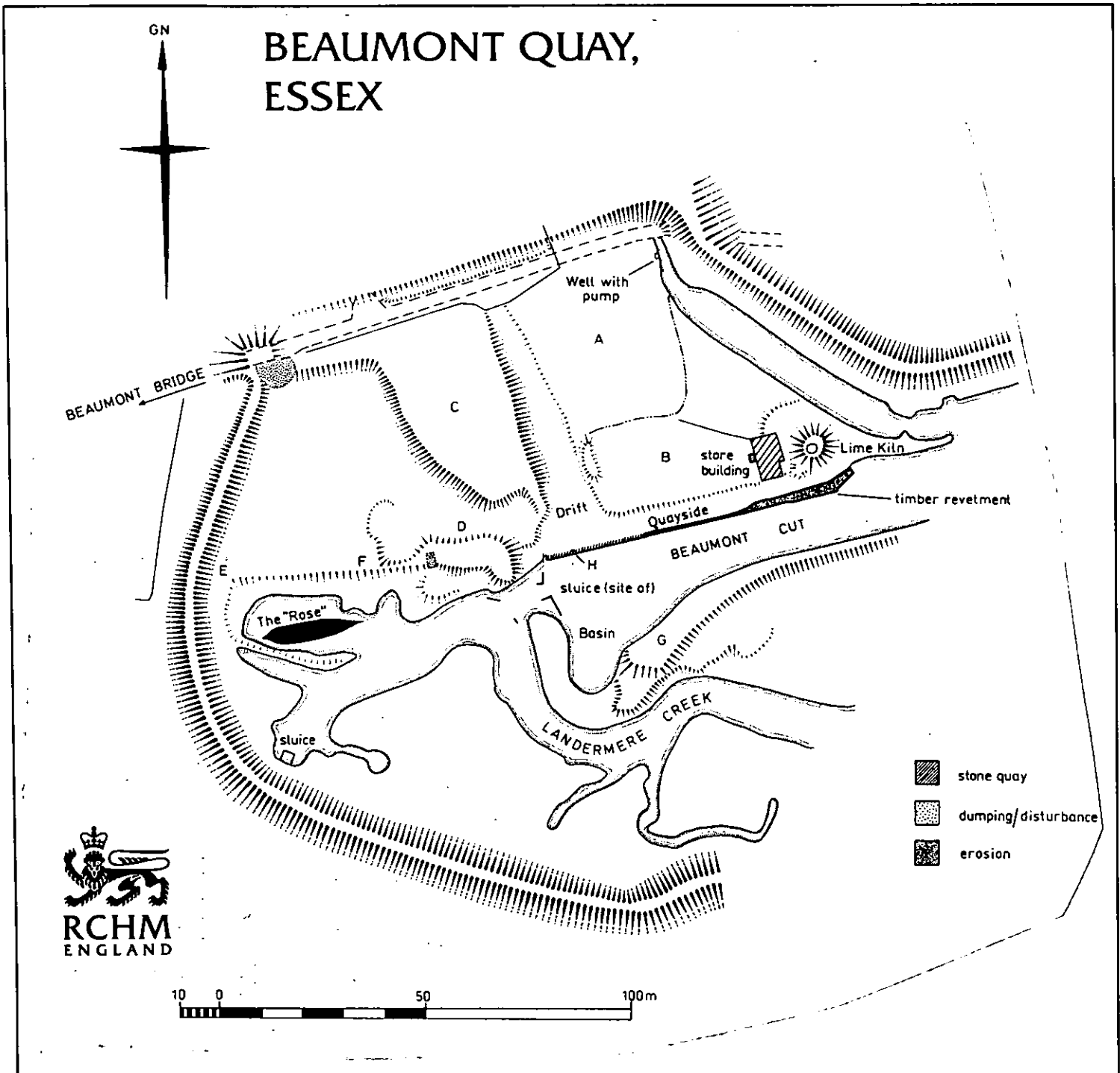


Figure 6 Beaumont Quay, RCHME plan surveyed at 1:1000 scale



Figure 7
Beaumont Quay and
Beaumont Cut, from
the west (NMR
AA96/5743)

timbers extending back under the quay surface (Fig 8), partially revealed by tidal erosion at the eastern end, where the revetment is also slumping into the Cut. The revetment structure is slightly different to east and west of the store building, possibly the result of an extension to the quay when the limekiln was built.

The stone part of the quay is constructed of massive blocks laid in four courses forming a frontage 25.7m long, and standing between 1.3m and 1.5m above the creek base, with a slight batter to the face. Further courses may be buried in the mud. The blocks, between 0.4m and 1.0m long, 0.4m or more deep and 0.3m or more thick, are unmortared but many are held together by iron staples. The stone was salvaged from the demolition of London Bridge and many of the blocks exhibit sockets which may date from this earlier use. Some 6.4m from the western end of the quay, let into top surface of one block, is a socket H, 11cm square, plugged with lead which itself retains a copper/bronze block 7.5cms across with a central recessed circular bearing. Around the bearing and centred on it, is a circular wear mark in the stone, approximately 25cms in diameter, but discernable mainly on the water side. This feature is possibly a mounting for a small dock crane.

A sluice formerly existed between the end of Beaumont Cut and Landermere Creek (Ordnance Survey 1897). Remains of the timber revetments to the banks on each side of this sluice remain, once more edge-set planking, at best 1m high but on the southern side are some driven stakes which may be part of the footbridge structure (Fig 7).

Behind the quay revetment and running its full length is a level strip, 6m wide, forming the quayside where goods were loaded and unloaded: its northern edge is still defined by a slight scarp up to 0.6m high. The quayside is visible in the 1910 photograph (Fig 5).

The quay buildings

The quay buildings formerly stood at B. The principal structure was in brick and of two stories, running back at right angles to the quay and adjacent to the drift. On the 1910 photograph (Fig 5) it is a two-storied structure, probably for several uses: a chimney over

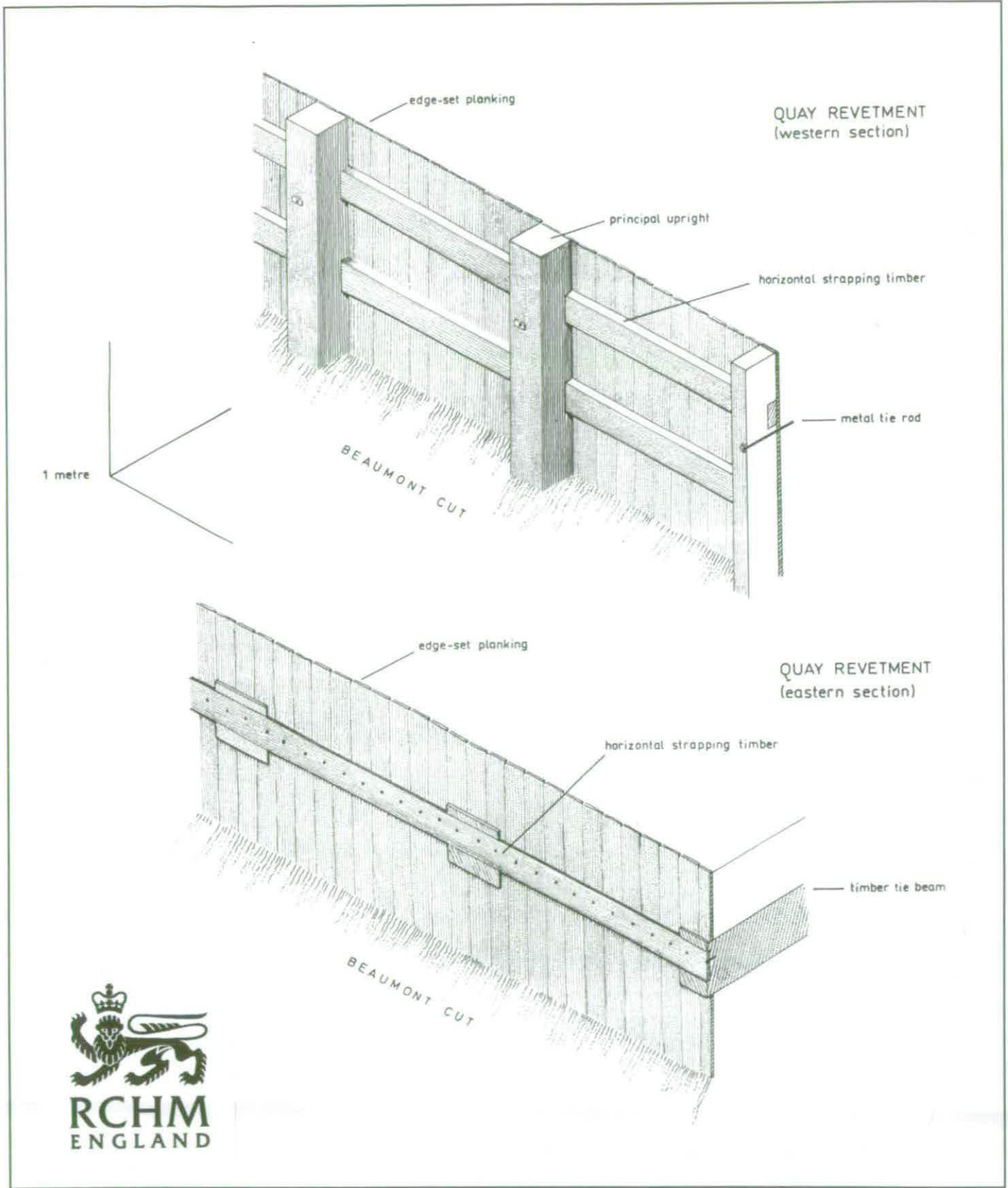


Figure 8: Beaumont Quay, RCHME isometric drawings of timber revetments

the northern gable probably confirms the living accommodation recorded in the census returns while the doorway high in the south gable suggests storage on the first floor (though no hoist is visible), as do the small adjacent louvred lunette windows and the small shuttered fenestration along the western wall. The large blind arcading at ground level along the western wall also suggests a storage function. Before the 1920's it was apparently a granary and stables but was converted into two houses at that time (Macdonald 1994, 30).

From the centre of the eastern wall of the main building, a long narrow range extended parallel to the quay, an open-fronted timber shed with a pantiled roof. A further timber lean-to abutted its eastern end, beyond which was the surviving, free-standing store building and limekiln. To the north of all the buildings were short enclosed plots, one of which contained a small pond.

An iron pump in a brick chamber 1.2m square and 0.9m high, covers a documented well (Ordnance Survey 1874-6, 1897, 1925)

The store building (Figs 9 and 10)

This is an original building shown on the 1838 map (ERO d/CT23) and set back from and at right angles to the quay. It is single-storied and rectangular, measuring 10m long and 5.4m wide, and constructed in red brick which has been rendered on all but the northern wall. The shallow pitched roof is hipped at both ends and is covered with slates. There is a single wide door in the western wall, north of centre, approached up three steps. There are no windows but a small glazing band above the door admits some light.

The walls are 0.4m thick and are reinforced at various points: the south-western and south-eastern corners have shallow angle pilasters. However, the most unusual feature of the building is along the northern wall and two-thirds of the eastern wall where a substantial battered brick buttressing projects more than 1m at base and slopes steeply to just below the eaves. At the southern end of this buttressing on the eastern wall there is a small conventional brick buttress with three offsets. The centre part of this battering on the north end, and the southern part on the east side are secondary, with the additions marked clearly by straight joints in the brickwork. There is a low-level opening in the battering on the northern end of the building and two small square apertures or vents at high level in the secondary brickwork. No openings into the battering are visible on the inside and with the external ones blocked it is impossible to tell whether the battering is solid or forming a cavity.

Inside, the building is open to the roof: there are two crude trusses with rough tie beams and straight plank-like collars which clasp a single diagonally-set purlin on each side. There is a plank ridge. The floor, of narrow boards aligned north-south, is raised c. 0.5m above the quay. At the northern end the space was subdivided into two bays or hoppers: a post against the north wall and another faced against the centre of the southern side of the north truss are grooved for horizontal boards which formed a partition between them. The north post is engraved with tally marks, with numerals I to VIII marking the quantity of goods in the bay.

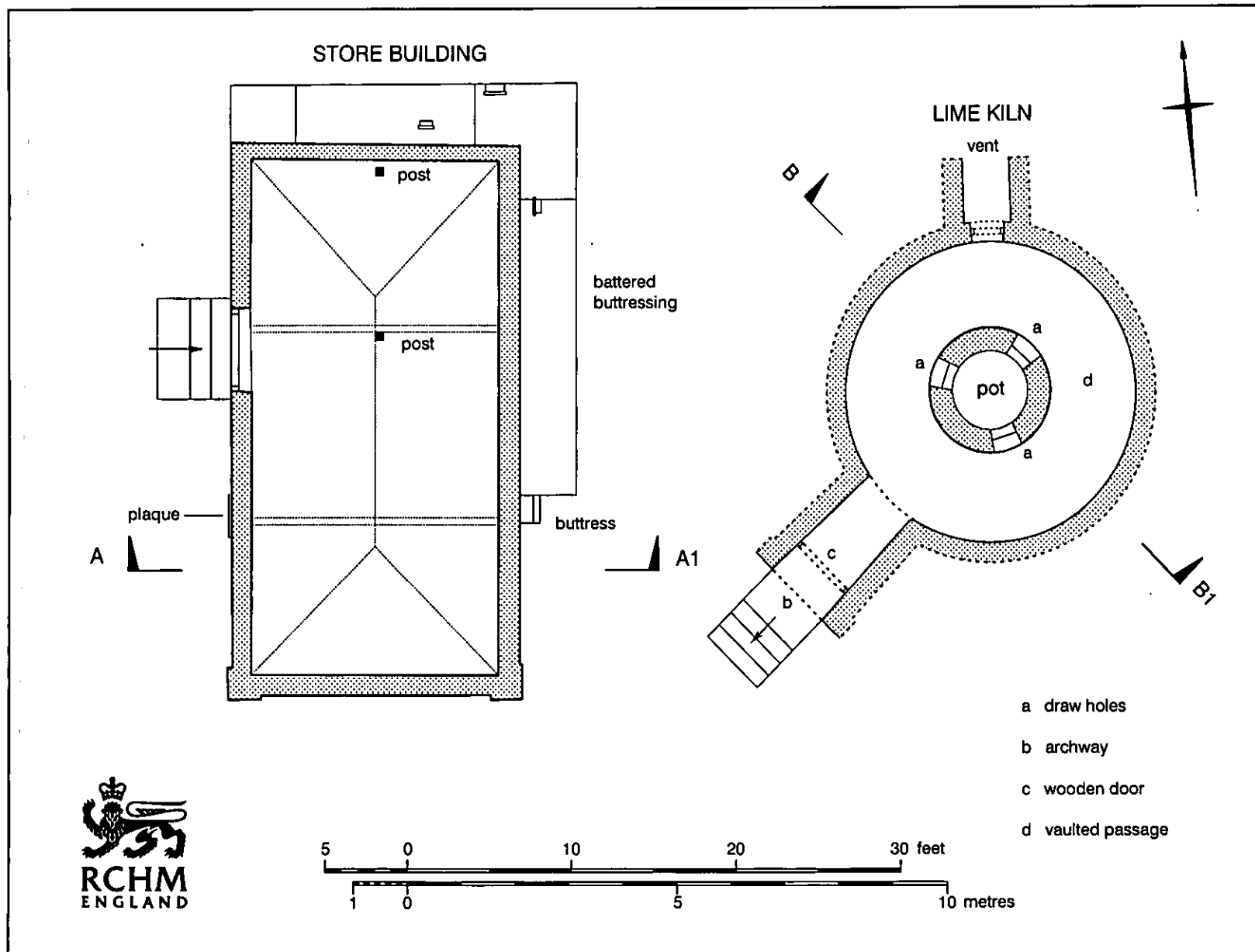


Figure 9: Beaumont Quay, RCHME plan of store building and limekiln

The precise function of the building, as it survives, is unknown but its raised floor suggests that dryness was important: it may have been used for grain storage. The reason for the massive buttressing is not known but it may be connected with proximity to the limekiln. On the west side of the building, south of the doorway, is a stone plaque with the inscription (Fig 2):

This BUILDING and QUAY
was Erected by the
GOVERNORS OF GUYS HOSPITAL
1832
... HARRISON Esq
The Stone used in the Quay.....
of LONDON BRIDGE built about
1176

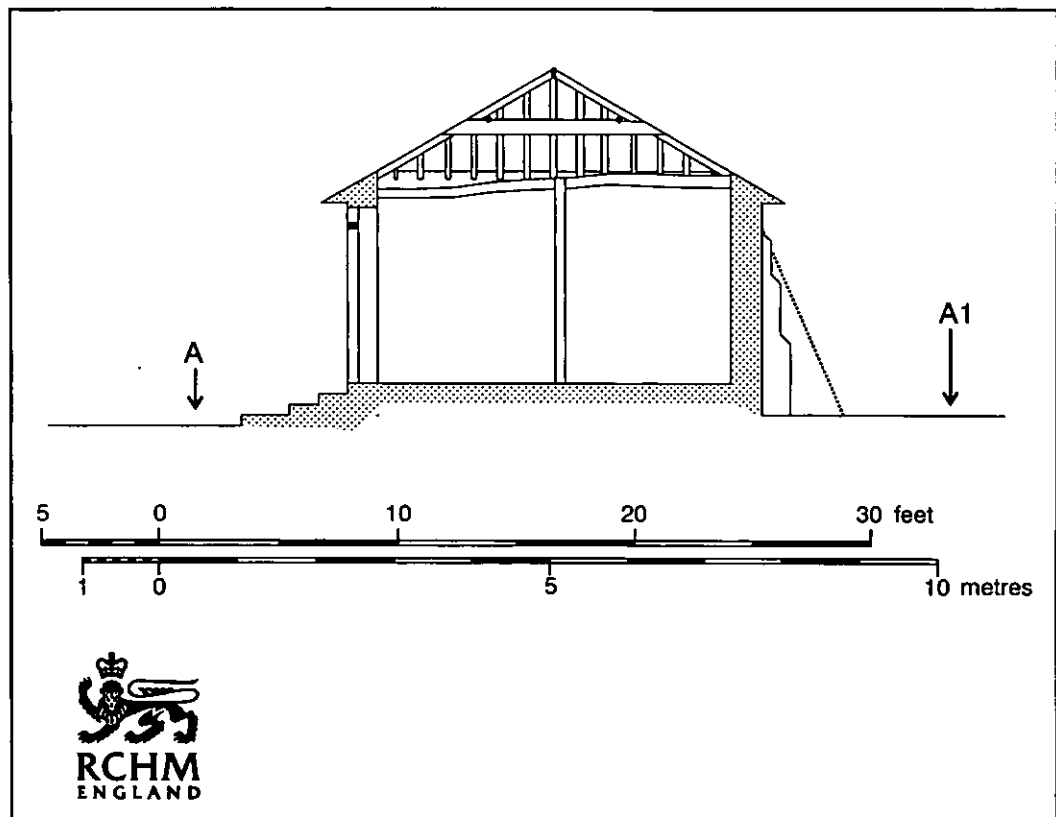


Figure 10: Beaumont Quay, RCHME section through the store building

The limekiln (Figs 9 and 11)

There was a wide demand for lime for agricultural use in the 19th century, for spreading on the fields to improve heavy clay soils and to reduce acidity. Lime seems to have been brought to the quay from the outset, probably from the Thames estuary, and the building of the kiln later in the century was no doubt a local attempt to exploit local demand. The fuel would have been coal or culm (anthracite dust), probably from the north-east via Newcastle.

The limekiln is a circular structure in red brick contained within an earthen mound. The mound itself, badly eroded by rabbit burrowing, measures 12.6m in diameter and stands 2.5m high (Fig 12). The kiln floor is sunk a further 0.5m below ground level and is reached down a flight of four steps and along a short open passage. Access to the kiln is through a segmental arch of four header courses, the top two breaking forward, closed by a wooden door with wooden frame. The interior of the kiln comprises a round, barrel-vaulted circulation passage, 1.55m wide and 2.25m high, around the central pedestal of the combustion chamber, or pot (Fig 13). The passage walls are of mortared brick laid to English bond up to a corbel course of stretchers, from which the vault rises, itself entirely of stretchers. The wall of the passage is pierced on the northern side by a small rectangular opening with shallow segmental arch and internal timber frame: it gives onto a chute leading gently upwards to the exterior of the mound. This feature is probably a ventilator allowing regulation of the draught to the kiln. The pedestal of the pot has an overall diameter of 2.25m and is pierced by three tapping apertures, placed symmetrically from the entrance to the kiln, each a rectangular opening with segmental arched head and sloping sills. These were used for setting the fire, raking off ash and removing the finished lime. The internal base of the pot is c. 1.45m wide, flaring upward through the mound to an open top; the brick rim, 2.2m across, is visible on the summit of the mound but the pot itself is choked with debris.

The kiln is of a mixed feed type in which the pot was filled with alternate layers of limestone and fuel. Its careful design may have enabled continuous re-charging and firing for a long period, the vaulted tunnel enabling access to periodically draw off ash and lime, the door and vent regulating airflow. The sunken floor was probably designed to reduce the effort required to load the kiln: at present there is no ramp or other structure visible to enable charging.

The wreck of the 'Rose' (frontispiece)

Air photographs reveal that the *Rose* came to Beaumont Quay, her final resting place, after 1955 and before 1967 (RAF 58/1672/269-70, 3 March 1955; OS 67/063/16-17, 27 April 1967). The *Rose* was a swim barge spritsail (SMR 14891) of carvel construction built by John Howard of Maldon and launched in September 1880. Her original measurements were 75.3 x 18.6 x 5.5ft (22.95 x 5.67 x 1.68m). She was owned initially by Charles Ward, a miller of Beeleigh Grange, and Charles Hawes/Samuel Thompson, hay merchants of Maldon. Around 1930 she changed hands, becoming a lighter at Heybridge Basin. She was bought around 1961 and towed to Beaumont Quay for conversion into a houseboat but was never fully restored (Perks 1996, 71). The *Rose* is now slowly decaying into the mud, all her

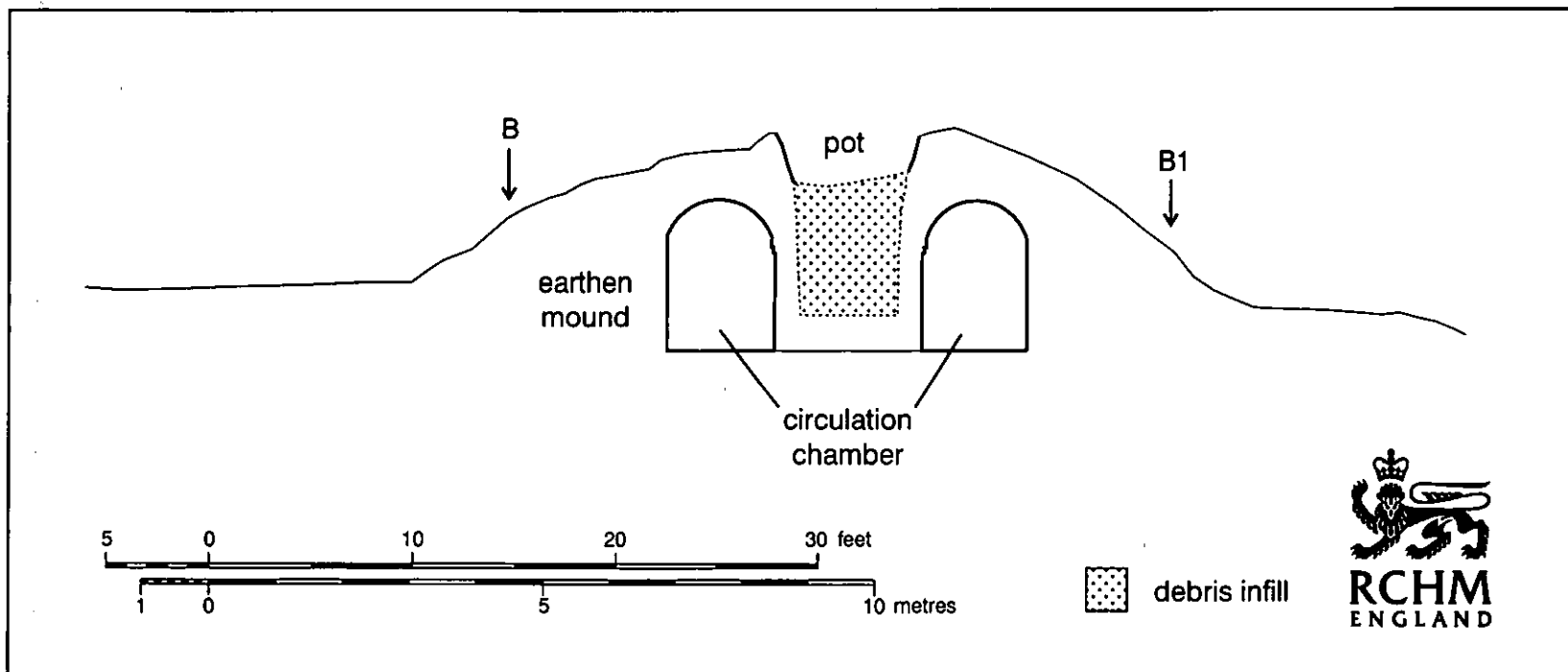


Figure 11: Beaumont Quay, RCHME section through limekiln



Figure 12:
Beaumont Quay,
store building and
limekiln from the
south-west (NMR
AA96/5745)



Figure 13:
Beaumont Quay,
interior of the limekiln
with vent (centre left)
and draw hole (right
foreground) (NMR
AA96/5758)



decking collapsed but with much of the lower part of the hull intact, along with the rudder, and the bow and stern posts which retain carvings giving the draught. She lies at the head of the creek in a rectangular area defined by scarp F on the north and a low bank along the southern side: the latter stays dry at high tide and may have provided access to the barge in her last years.

4. CONCLUSION

In essence Beaumont Cut and Quay formed a small local enterprise, perhaps in an attempt by Guy's Hospital in the 1830's to capitalise on mainly agricultural and domestic trade which had been carried out along the Essex coast for some years previously. The quay was located at the very limit of Hamford Water and shows how important waterborne transport was in comparison to the more expensive, slower overland methods, especially in the age before steam locomotives. The surviving buildings and structures, and the decaying *Rose*, together form a valuable reminder of the coastal heritage of Essex. In particular, the well-preserved limekiln is a rare survival on the Essex coast.

The site offers some potential for preservation in the context of local recreation and education. In the first instance it is important that the site be adequately protected from further disturbance to the ground surface, at the head of Landermere Creek and Beaumont Cut, which will disturb archaeological deposits relating to the 19th, or perhaps even earlier, centuries.

5. SURVEY AND RESEARCH METHODS

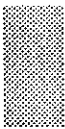
The survey of Beaumont Quay was carried out by Paul Pattison, Moraig Brown, John Heward and Tony Calladine. For the overall site survey, control points, hard detail and most of the details were surveyed using a Wild TC1600 Electronic Theodolite with integral EDM. Data was captured on a Wild GRM 10 Rec Module and plotted via computer on a Calcomp 3024 plotter. Some remaining details of the plan were supplied at 1:1000 scale with Fibron tapes using normal graphical methods. The limekiln and store building were surveyed by John Heward and Tony Calladine and a photographic survey was undertaken by Steve Cole. The figures were prepared by Trevor Pearson, John Heward and Tony Calladine, some using AutoCad, CorelDraw, and Microstation software. The text was produced with CorelVentura software. The report has been written by Paul Pattison and edited by Peter Topping.

The site archive and a copy of this report have been deposited in the archive of the RCHME at the National Monuments Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ (under record no TM 12 SE 34), to where further enquiries should be directed.

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