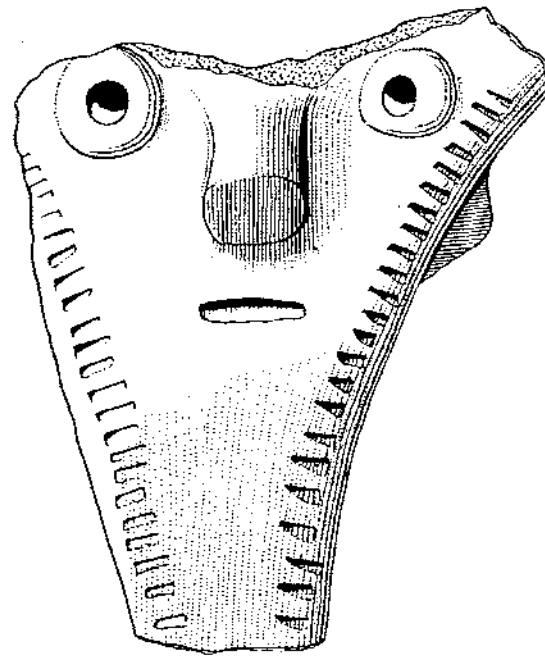


# PARADISE Scarborough



*An interim report on recent  
archaeological excavations*

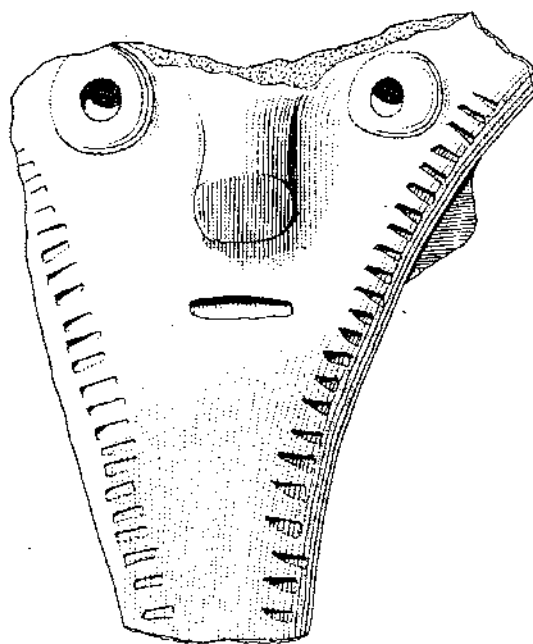
by  
*Trevor Pearson*

**Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society**

1988

# PARADISE

## Scarborough



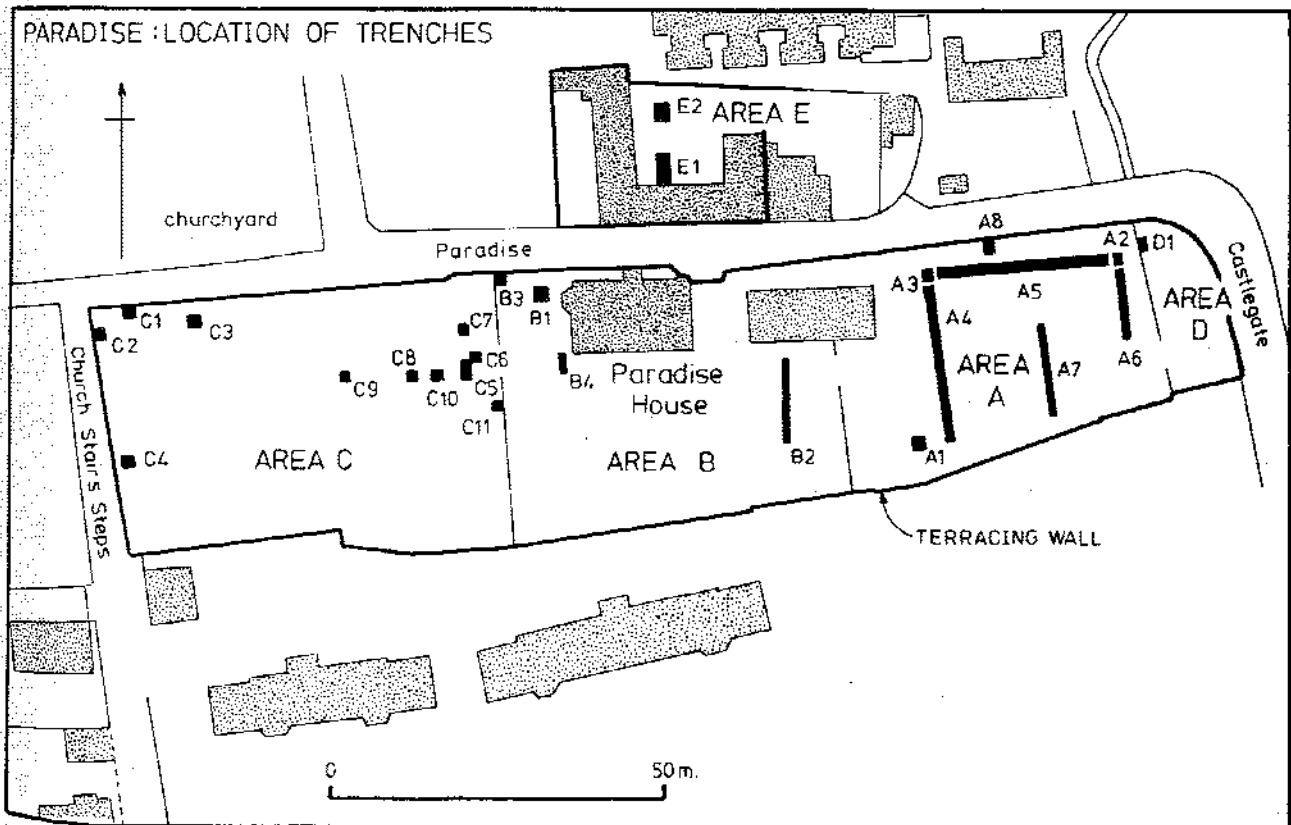
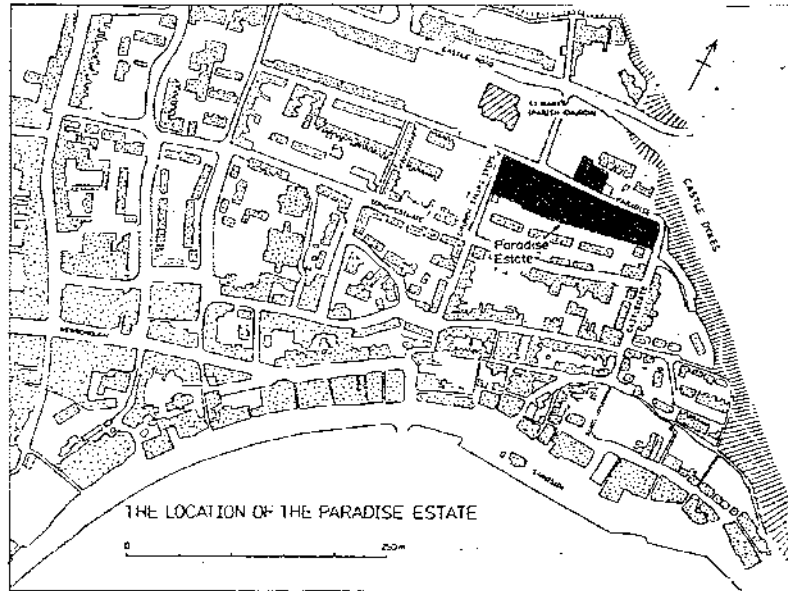
*An interim report on recent  
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# Introduction

Early in 1988 Scarborough Borough Council commissioned Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit to undertake an investigation of the archaeological potential of the Paradise Estate in response to possible development. This involved a month-long excavation in March and April 1988 carried out in conjunction with the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society. The present report summarises the results of that excavation along with past discoveries at Paradise and historical evidence bearing on the site.

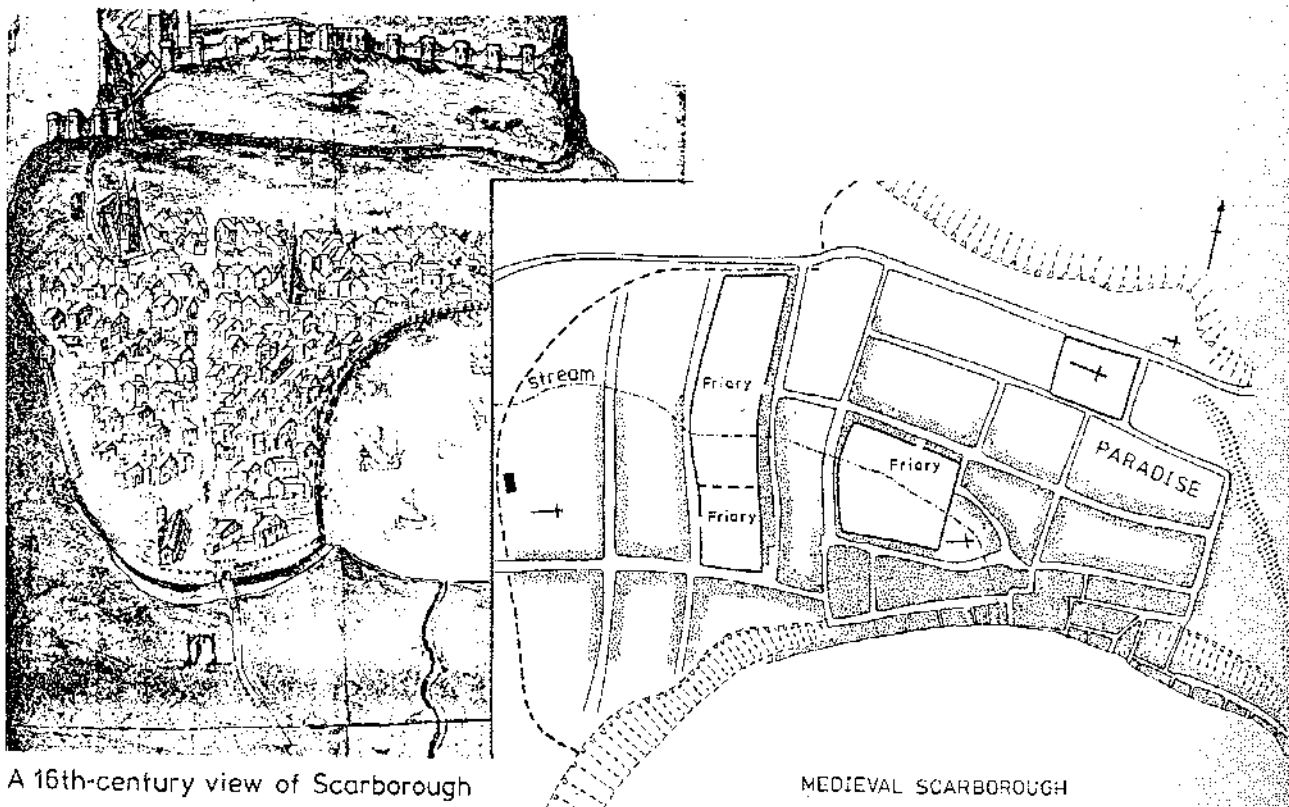


# Background

As a town Scarborough can trace its roots back to the 12th century when a substantial settlement grew up under the shadow of the newly-constructed castle. A hundred years later Scarborough had expanded inland as far as modern Bar Street and North Street where a deep ditch was dug to defend the inland approaches to the town. A view drawn in the 16th century clearly shows these defences and gives an impression of how densely populated the medieval town must have been. In this view, only the religious buildings stand out amid the clutter of timber-framed houses, the chief of these buildings being the parish church of St. Mary near the entrance to the castle. Church and castle are the only major medieval buildings surviving today and to reconstruct the history and appearance of medieval Scarborough researchers have to turn to contemporary documents and to the archaeological remains buried beneath the modern town. Archaeological evidence is particularly important when researching pre-medieval settlement at Scarborough for which there are no written records. For example, excavations have revealed an hitherto unknown Iron Age settlement some 2,500 years old and a Roman signal station of the 4th century A.D. on the Castle Headland, though the Viking fort reputedly established at Scarborough around 966 A.D. still awaits discovery.

If archaeological evidence can contribute substantially to the history of Scarborough then the Paradise Estate which encompasses some 3% of the medieval town could contain evidence of critical historical importance. Its importance is enhanced because buried remains are likely to be better preserved here than other parts of the town. The estate has largely been gardens for the past 250 years since the first town map was published in 1725. Today only two substantial buildings stand on the site. The former residence of the estate owner, Paradise House, dates back to the 18th century and was surrounded by gardens and orchards, now grassed over. On the opposite side of Paradise Street stands a former warehouse and stable block with a grassy, derelict yard to the rear. Clearly the estate has not suffered anything like the high density development of some other parts of the town which has proved so destructive to the archaeological record.

To discover what remains survived beneath the Paradise Estate, a combination of machine and hand-dug trenches were excavated within the grounds of Paradise House and at the rear of the outbuilding to the north. This report on the discoveries marks only a preliminary stage of research into the archaeology of the Paradise Estate. In the future more detailed information will come to light as excavations are arranged in advance of developments.



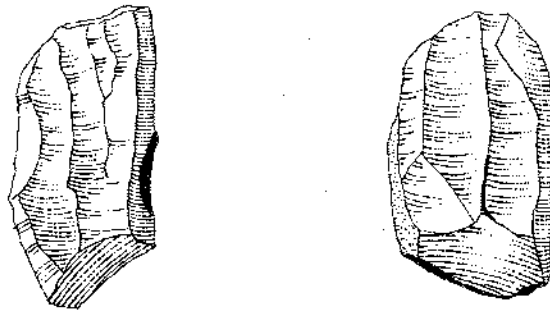
A 16th-century view of Scarborough

MEDIEVAL SCARBOROUGH

## Prehistoric finds

At the beginning of the dig it was anticipated that some pre-medieval, perhaps prehistoric, remains would come to light on the Paradise Estate as the Castle Headland just to the east has been intermittently occupied for 2,500 years since the Early Iron Age. Moreover in 1934 an armett contemporary with this Early Iron Age settlement was found in a hedge bank at Paradise suggesting a similar habitation could await discovery on the estate.

In the event the dig did not find any Iron Age features but two prehistoric flint cores were found in trench E2 on the north side of the site mixed up in a later, medieval, garden soil. Although the flints are not precisely dateable, they do indicate flint tools were being manufactured in this vicinity several thousand years ago which in turn suggests other prehistoric remains could await discovery at Paradise.



Flint cores found in trench E2 scale 1:1

## Medieval Scarborough

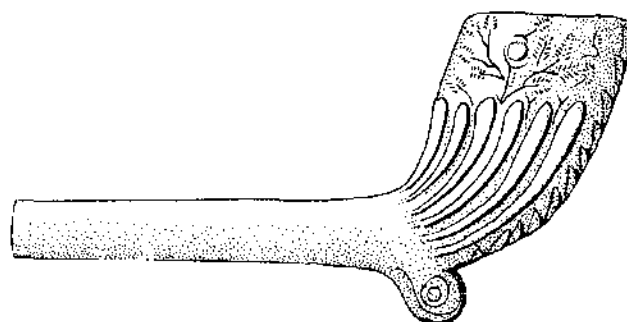
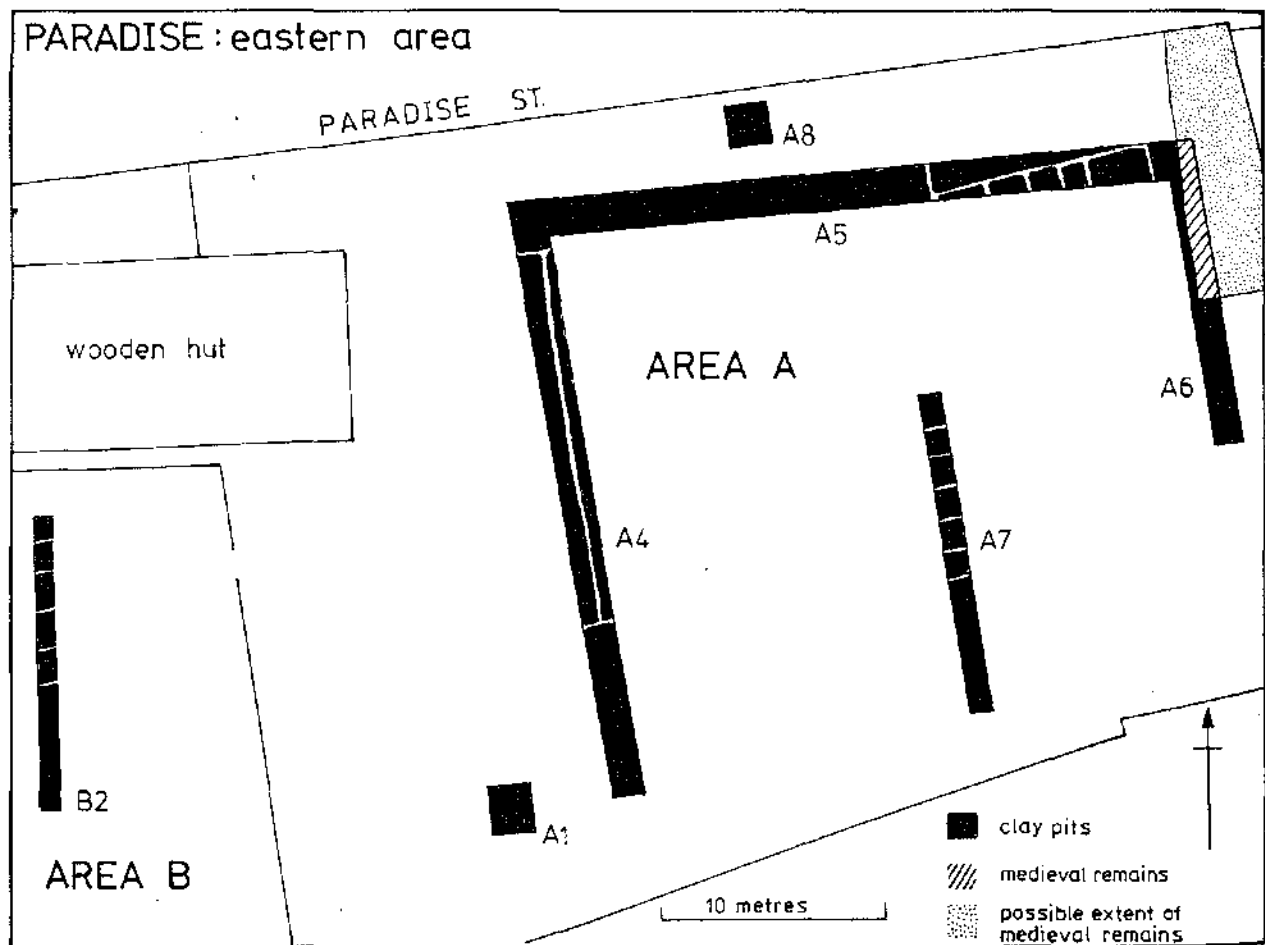
As was stated in the introduction, a town grew up at Scarborough in the 12th century stimulated by the protection of the castle and the attraction of a good natural harbour. The grid plan of streets still remaining in the old town suggests that the 12th century settlement was deliberately laid out, either by William le Gros who began work on the castle or by King Henry II who built the castle's keep.

The Paradise Estate is bounded on east, west and north by streets presumably established at this time, the most important being the present Church Stairs Steps on the west. This was the main route from the harbour up to the parish church and castle. The southern boundary of the estate is a massive stone and brick terracing wall which, like the streets, could date back to the 12th century. Whoever established the grid of streets must also have terraced the slope on which the old town stands to provide sufficient level building plots for an expanding urban population.

That the streets and terracing wall which surround the estate date back to medieval times can be argued from existing evidence, but that the area within was once covered by buildings was not known for certain until the excavation began. It was soon apparent, however, that this part of Scarborough was as densely settled as most other areas and that the streets around the estate were fronted by buildings in the middle ages. On all sides of the estate medieval remains came to light, although on the east they had been large destroyed by later clay pits and cottages.

## Discoveries on the east .....

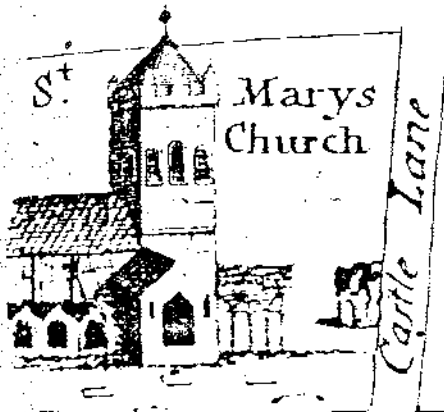
Clay pits were dug in the 18th century over virtually all of area A on the east of the estate, destroying in the process earlier, medieval remains, except for one small part in the north-east corner. Here a line of stones set at right angles to Paradise Street came to light in trench A6. Probably the stones marked the boundary of a yard belonging to a house fronting Paradise Street, which still awaits excavation. In any event, all traces of neighbouring buildings were destroyed in the 18th century, although the quantities of medieval pottery recovered from the backfill of the clay pits confirms they must have been dug through medieval remains. On the east in Area D, two cottages demolished quite recently have likewise probably destroyed the remains of medieval buildings.



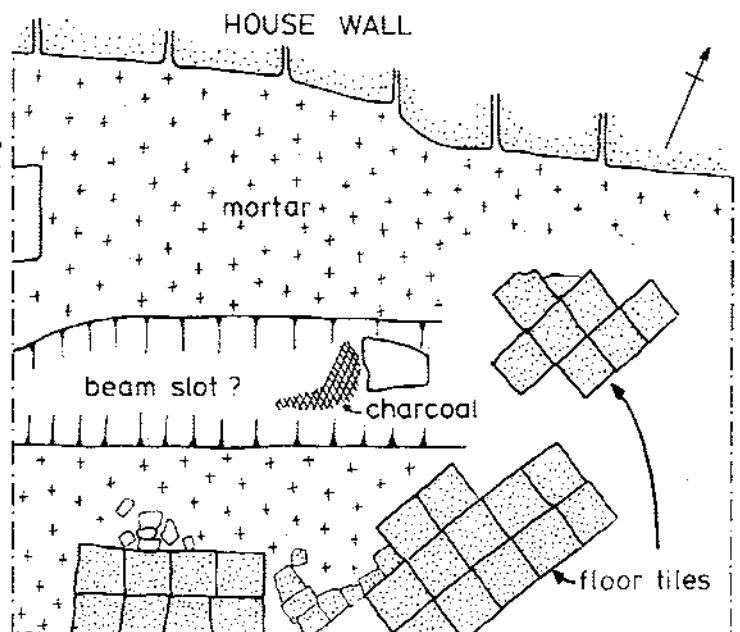
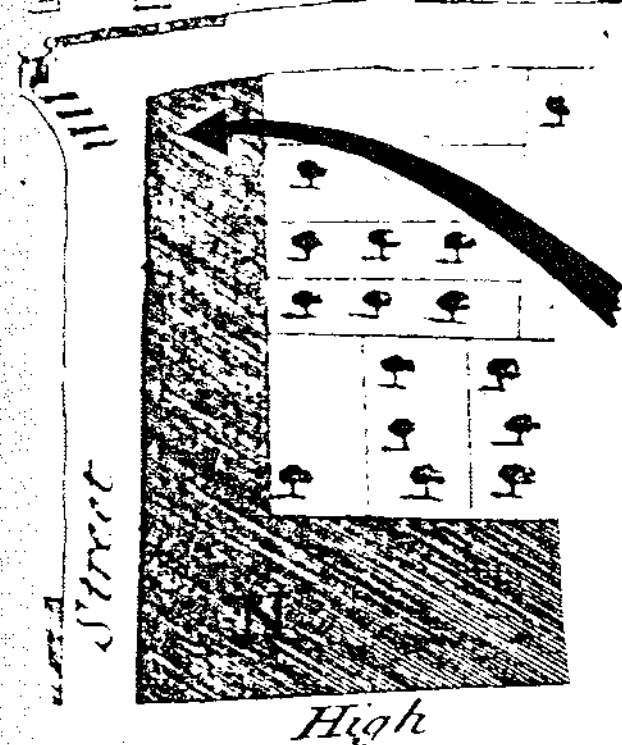
A pipe bowl found in one of the clay pits  
 scale 1:1

## .....and discoveries on the west

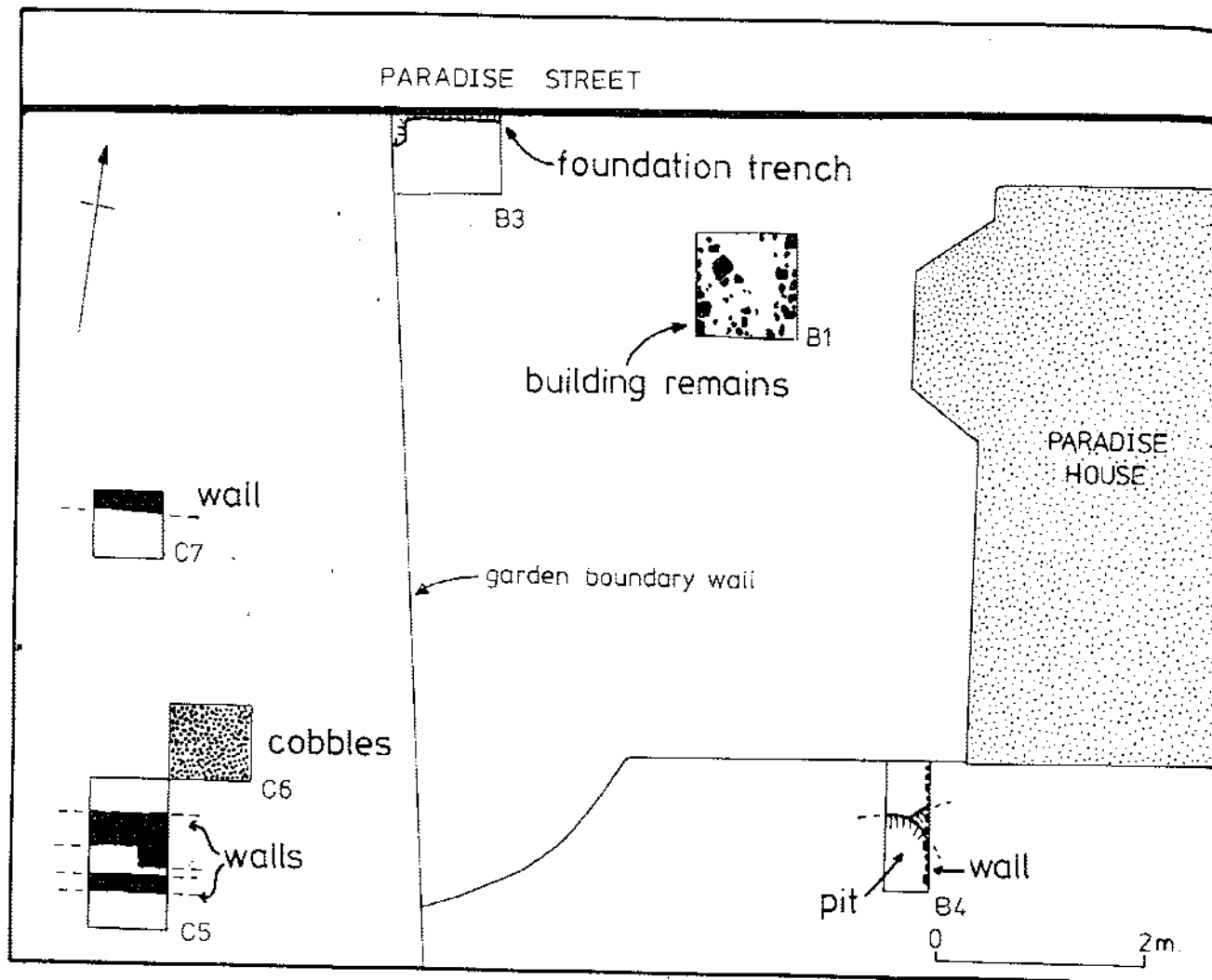
On the west of the estate trenches C1 and C2 uncovered what was once an impressive stone building fronting Church Stairs Steps, occupying a prestigious location less than 30 metres from the parish church. In trench C1, a floor of glazed tiles came to light as well as the northern wall of the building, constructed of massive stone blocks mortared together. The western wall fronting Church Stairs Steps was of a similar build though trench C2 revealed that most of the stones and the tiled floor had been robbed away when the building was demolished. This probably occurred in the middle of the 18th century because the building is shown on the first town map of 1725 but not on a subsequent map of 1747. Since then the area remained open ground, eventually becoming part of the estate's gardens. At what date the building was constructed was not firmly established although the tiled floor, and hence the building, could well be medieval in date. The builders had terraced so deeply into the natural slope as to remove the traces of any earlier buildings, though doubtless such an important thoroughfare would have been fronted by houses from the 12th century. A pair of cottages to the south were still standing until the 1930's but on demolition the vacant site was likewise grassed over and incorporated within the estate's gardens!



The remains discovered in trench C1 belonged to a building shown on the 1725 town map.



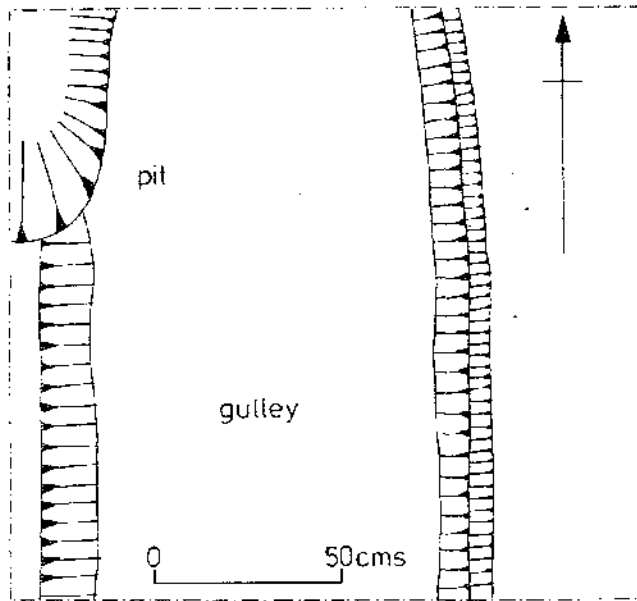
STRUCTURAL REMAINS IN TRENCH C1 scale 1:20



Around the western side of Paradise House three trenches (B1, B3 and B4) all uncovered medieval remains including traces of a building within a few metres of the house itself. These remains, uncovered in trench B1, comprised a light stone wall, a clay floor and what could have been a hearth and posthole, and large amounts of medieval pottery. More extensive excavations will confirm whether or not this was a house fronting Paradise Street and establish its relationship with the medieval remains discovered in the two neighbouring trenches B3 and B4. In B4 a medieval drystone wall, aligned north-south, ran across the top of a backfilled pit containing pottery and bone rubbish. To the north, trench B3, dug at the bottom of the present stone boundary wall along Paradise Street, dated that wall to the middle ages because exclusively medieval pottery was contained in its foundation trench. This discovery could have important implications for the origins of the Paradise Estate as will be discussed on page 8.

Medieval remains were not confined to the immediate vicinity of Paradise House. Some quite impressive medieval walls survived on the west side of the former garden boundary wall. Two parallel, drystone walls aligned east-west were found in trench C5 and were probably part of a building. In C6 immediately to the north, a cobbled surface was found though whether or not it was quite as old as the walls has yet to be established. Another wall on a different alignment was discovered in trench C7 buried beneath a metre depth of soil, but elsewhere the remains had not been so well protected. A medieval hearth, wall foundation and pit uncovered in trenches C8, C9 and C10 respectively had been badly damaged when the area was landscaped in the 1970s and the top of the natural clay was just a few centimetres beneath the surface. Nevertheless these remains, still to be fully explored, further confirm the high density of medieval buildings on the south part of the estate.



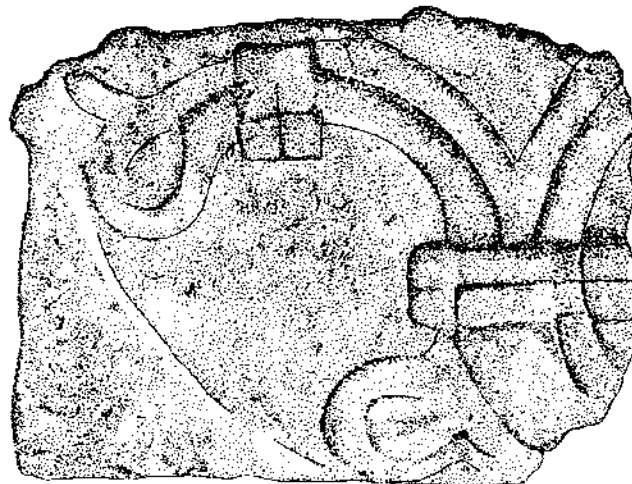


Plan of the earliest features in trench E2

## The north of the estate

On the north of the estate it was known before the dig began that there had been some quite extensive gardens in the middle ages. In 1395 Peter de Chateauneuf, a representative of the Cistercian monks that held the parish church, is recorded as granting a garden to the east of the church to a local vicar. Both trenches encountered a thick deposit of clayey soil thoroughly intermixed with medieval pottery which was probably the remains of this garden or one close to it. In trench E2 the garden soil filled two earlier features cut down into the natural clay. These comprised a pit and a shallow gulley aligned north-south and although neither their date nor function is yet known, they are probably the earliest settlement evidence discovered during the excavations.

The numerous sherds of pottery contained in the garden soil suggest there was a building close by whose occupants threw their broken pottery into the garden adjoining. The only building remains to come to light so far in this area were in trench E1 excavated against the northern wall of the present outbuilding. The north wall is made of squared stones, including part of a carved, 13th-century grave slab, probably taken from derelict portions of St. Mary's Church in the 17th or 18th centuries. Underneath it was found an earlier stone wall on the same alignment but set back about 20 cms, which could be part of a medieval building whose foundations were later incorporated in the outbuilding.



Fragment of a medieval grave slab (30x25cms)

## Origins of the name Paradise

It is not only the streets surrounding the Paradise Estate and the newly discovered remains buried in its grounds that date back to the middle ages. The name Paradise can be traced back in the town's archives to the 15th century when people such as the chaplain Henry Waste and the burgess John Thorp owned land here. This raises the question as to what the name actually means, especially since it is one Scarborough shares with other English towns. In certain cases the name points to an enclosed park where exotic foreign animals were kept but more generally it signifies religious property, particularly the garden of a monastery. This raises the possibility that in Scarborough the name is connected with the Cistercian monks who administered the considerable revenues of the parish church. When founded in the late 12th-century, this community of monks was unique in the Cistercian order for being situated in a town. Strict vows of isolation meant their houses were usually established in remote countryside far from towns such as the famous abbeys of Fountains and Rievaulx.

The surviving documents are vague about the precise location of the Cistercian house in Scarborough and the western graveyard of St. Mary's Church and Tollergate have been suggested as locations. Hinderwell, the town's first historian, mistakenly thought the Cistercians founded an abbey at Scarborough, but their property was not that grand, the monks numbering only three at the most. However a document of 1250 seems to suggest their house probably stood within a walled enclosure if only to preserve some degree of isolation from the town, and this monastic enclosure could be the origin of the name Paradise. We have already seen that in the late 14th century the head of the Cistercian household owned a garden in the Paradise area, and the monks may well have lived in this part of the town.

The present excavations have not produced any evidence for a Cistercian dwelling or a monastic enclosure beyond the discovery that one of the present stone boundary walls apparently dates back to the middle ages. Could this be the first indication that a monastic enclosure awaits discovery on the Paradise Estate? Only further excavations will tell.

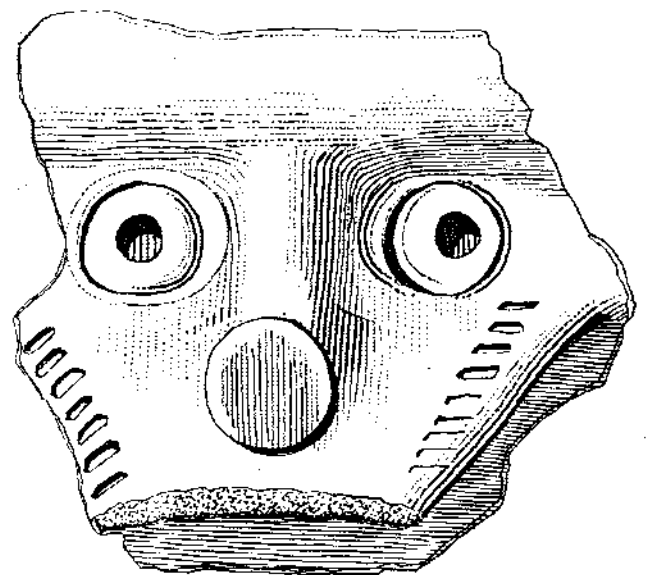
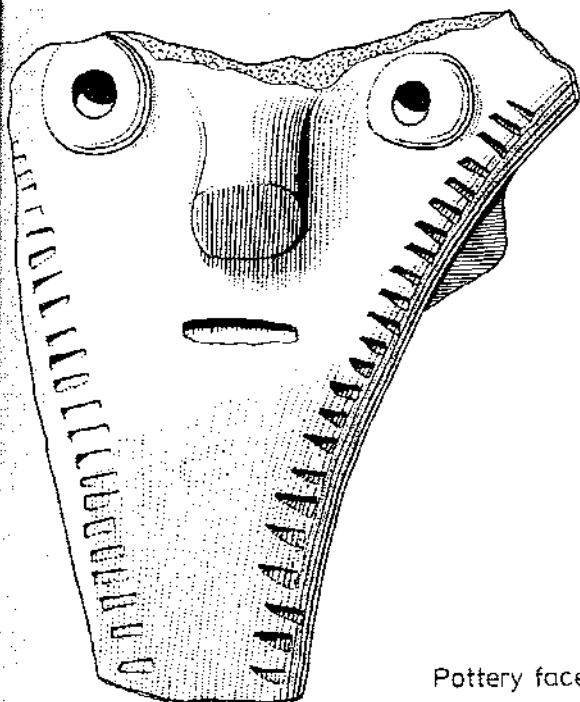




Pots like these were broken and discarded on the Paradise site.

## Pottery finds

The most frequent finds on a medieval site are broken sherds of pottery commonly covered with a lustrous green, orange or brown glaze and simply decorated. Scarborough itself produced distinctive green-glazed pots in the 13th and 14th centuries from kilns situated on Castle Road. Often highly decorated, these pots were exported around the North Sea coasts of Britain and Europe and of course also circulated within the town. Of the many fragments of Scarborough Ware found on the dig, one was fashioned like a pig's face and two other pieces had human features. Example of the latter pieces, commonly known as bearded face masks, have been found before in Scarborough and were produced by other kilns as well as Scarborough's. Usually there were two faces on opposite sides of the vessel set close to the top of the rim and, like the present examples, the face was often modelled sufficiently thick to act as a handle. This type of pottery decoration may have been the inspiration for the more highly decorated "Knight Jugs" produced at Scarborough upon which the figures of horses and knights were modelled.



Pottery face masks found on the excavation scale 1:1

# Paradise House

Although the present house dates from the middle of the 18th century, a Paradise House is mentioned as long ago as 1676, from which date its history can be traced from old maps and documents. The earliest pictorial representation of Paradise House dates from 1725 where it is shown with double gable-ends, clearly different in appearance to the present house. At that time it was owned by a wealthy shipbuilding family called the Cockerills who put the grounds surrounding the house to good use. Orchards, maltkilns, limekilns, a brickyard, a well, stables and pasturage are all mentioned at one time or another at Paradise during the 18th century. Evidence of what were probably the disused clay quarries attached to the brickyard came to light during the excavation. A tightly-packed arrangement of long narrow trenches cut down several feet into the natural clay was found extending over virtually the whole of the eastern part of the estate. They had clearly been dug to extract the clay, presumably for brickmaking, and upon disuse had been backfilled with soil and the area returned to gardens (see the plan on page 4). As Marshall, writing of the rural economy of Yorkshire in 1788, observed, "If brick earth be found near the site of a building ... clamp bricks are considered ... the readiest and cheapest walling material". Probably some requirement for cheap, clamp fired bricks in this part of Scarborough occasioned the clay extraction at Paradise in the mid-18th century.

By 1775 the present house had been built, though to discover how much of the earlier structure, if any, was incorporated in the new building would require a detailed structural survey of Paradise House. Until it became the Graham Sea Training School in the earlier part of this century, the house was owned by some of the wealthier Scarborough families. Even so, at the beginning of the 19th century it was reported to be the haunt of smugglers and a repository for contraband.

Whilst documentary evidence allows us to trace the history of Paradise House back to the late 17th century, information on earlier times is scanty and would benefit from future archaeological investigations. There is even a possibility that the first house erected on this site was that built by Cistercian monks in the 13th century. Thus some distant memory of the site's former monastic owners could be preserved in the very name Paradise House.

*Item I give and devise to my son Robert Cockerill, and to his heirs and assigns for ever all that my antient messuage house or Tenement in Scarborough aforesaid commonly called Paradise, with the Dwellinghouse or Tenement at the East end thereof and also all those three Gardens to the same belonging and adjoining and also all that other messuage house or Tenement near the same with the Malt kiln therunto adjoining, now in the tenure or occupation of George Jackson and also all that Clofe of meadow or pasture ground lying on the backside of the said house with the Malt kiln which said Clofe is now in the occupation of Alice Chapman with all and singular the appurtenances whatsoever to the said messuages Gardens Malt kiln Clofe and premises commonly called Paradise belonging or in anywise appertaining*

The will of James Cockerill 1719

Paradise House  
in 1725

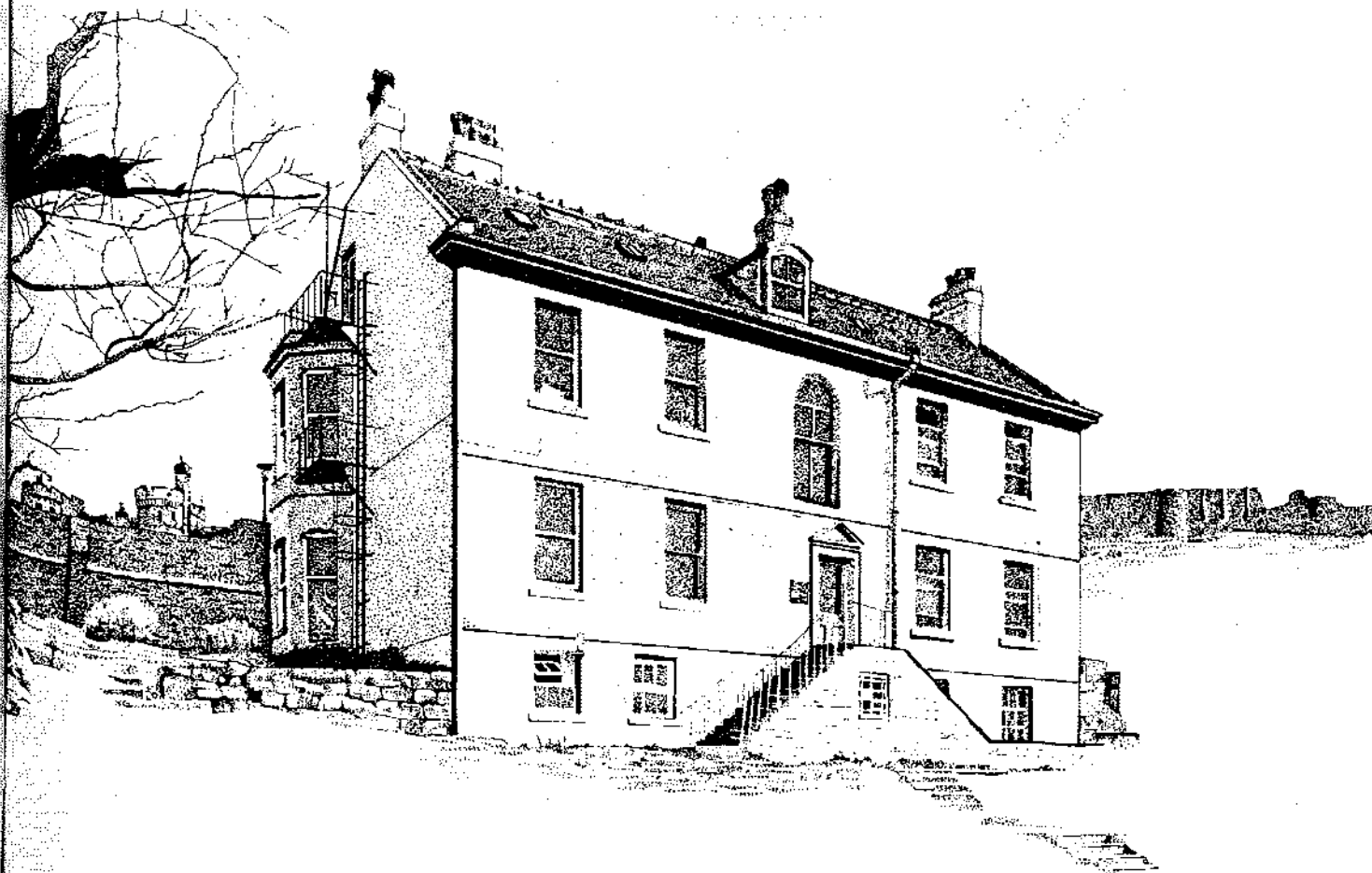


## Summary

The excavation defined areas where archaeological remains survive within the estate and began the process of exploring their historical significance. In the future more information will come from excavations undertaken in advance of development although already a basic description of the archaeological evidence is possible. Medieval remains, probably of several buildings, survive in the western part of the estate of which the most imposing belong to a stone building fronting Church Stairs Steps. On the east only one possible medieval building has survived later clay quarrying operations, and on the north prehistoric flints were found in an area used as gardens in the middle ages. Archaeology may, in the future, confirm what documents and the Paradise name already suggest; that Cistercian monks dwell in this part of Scarborough, perhaps on the very site now occupied by Paradise House.

## Acknowledgements

Scarborough Council Technical Services Department and North Yorkshire County Council Archaeology Office assisted considerably in the inception of this project which also benefited from a geophysical survey undertaken by Mr. John Gater. Members of Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Roving Team who helped on the dig were Laurence Jones, Steve Litherland, Iain McCraith and Jon Sterenberg (supervisor), assisted by David Dungworth (undergraduate student). Members and friends of Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society who freely gave of their time were Margaret Allison, Brian Antoni, Bill Broadmore, Jennifer Brownridge, Jason Corrigan, Norman Crossley and family, Ron Davies, Chris Evans, Charles Gavan-Duffy, Chris Hall (supervisor), Frances Hall, Dorothy Morrison, Norman Murphy, David Pearson, Bob Pirie, Nicky Ravis, Peter and Sophie Robson, Mia Scott, Denise Warley, Wally West and Judith Witty. Peter Leach has assisted at all stages of the project. The drawings were prepared by Sonia Hodges, Matthew Lilley and the writer, Ann Humphries and Jackie Pearson typed the report.



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Typed abstract of documents relating to Scarborough prepared by Mr. J. Rushton and available for consultation in the Scarborough Room, Scarborough Reference Library.