

THREE MEDIEVAL SITES IN WEST DEAN PARISH

by *F. G. Aldsworth, B.A.*

INTRODUCTION

During 1976 and 1977 the Chichester Excavations Committee commenced a survey of the prehistoric and Roman landscape in the Chilgrove Valley, an area extending from East Marden to West Dean and from Lavant to Treyford Hill. The results of the survey are to be published in the forthcoming report on the excavation of the Chilgrove Roman villas. When the survey had been commenced, it soon became clear that the distribution of surviving features, especially the prehistoric field systems, was affected by the extent to which they had been removed by subsequent agricultural activities, and for this reason a survey was begun of the landscape changes in the post-Roman period down to the middle of the nineteenth century, under the direction of the writer. At the same time, a survey of Sussex churches had also been started by the writer, under the auspices of the Sussex Archaeological Society and the Chichester Diocesan Arts Council.

The discovery of the three sites described in this article came as a direct result of an intensive documentary and field study of one piece of landscape, although the writer does not claim to have been responsible for their discovery since his attention was drawn to the sites by Mr. Eric Holden and previous writers. I am grateful to the Chichester Excavations Committee for allowing me to publish this article in advance of their proposed publication on the development of the Chilgrove Valley landscape in the post-Roman period, which may not appear for a number of years.

All three sites lie within the parish of West Dean, into which the parish of Binderton was taken in the nineteenth century, and all three have been recommended to the Secretary of State for the Environment for scheduling as Ancient Monuments.

West Dean is not directly referred to in Domesday Book (1086) although there can be little doubt, bearing in mind the surviving Saxon doorway in the north wall of the nave of the parish church of St. Andrew, that the church was in existence before the Norman Conquest. The village, too, can probably be attributed to the two or three centuries before 1066, although this has yet to be demonstrated archaeologically. The plan of the late medieval village and its contemporary common fields, all lying in the southern part of the parish, can be traced on an estate map of 1623¹ (Fig. 1). The shape of the village and its fields were subsequently modified by Enclosure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Fig. 2) and by the building of West Dean House, the laying out of its park, and the re-alignment of the Chichester-Midhurst road in the years on either side of 1810.

The same seventeenth-century estate map also shows that a large area in the northern extremity of West Dean parish was arable before 1623 and documentary sources appear to indicate that this was so during the late medieval period, between 1200 and 1500 (Fig. 1). The area is bounded on the south side by a bank and ditch, supporting a hedgerow, and at its south-east corner there is a copse which is known locally as 'Castle Corner'. This copse is shown on the estate map of 1623. The bank and ditch surrounding it was examined by the Chichester Excavations Committee in 1975 and a trial trench revealed that the feature originally comprised a 'ha-ha' with dry-stone

¹ *West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), West Dean Ms 3152.*

retaining wall. There was insufficient evidence to date the feature, but it may have served as a standing or hunter's station from which game could be shot on the open downland during the late medieval or post-medieval period.²

It was this community of scattered farmsteads and hamlets, generally referred to as the tithing or chapelry of Chilgrove, that the chapel of Chilgrove served. Many of the occupied areas have continued in use until the present day but Monkton, otherwise known as Northolt, is now completely deserted. This extensive area of arable appears to have been made out of open downland and woodland some time before A.D. 1200, during a period of agricultural expansion, and it seems likely that the chapel of Chilgrove would have been established at about the same time to serve a community located some distance from their parish church. The date of the foundation of the chapel might therefore indicate the approximate date of this agricultural expansion, but its location had, until very recently, been lost.

CHILGROVE CHAPEL

The chapel is referred to in a survey accompanying a covenant, made in about 1210, between the monks of Waverley Abbey, Surrey, and Thomas de Sandervill.³ This refers to 'the way under Grenemere going to the chapel of Chelegrave'. Further references occur in 1431, when the vicar of West Dean was obliged to celebrate mass in the chapel each week,⁴ and in January 1526, when a bequest was made by William Alewyn for the repair of the chapel.⁵ In May 1526, reference is made to the Chapel of St. Margaret, West Dean,⁶ which, if it does not refer to a shrine within the parish church of St. Andrew, West Dean, probably refers to Chilgrove Chapel. A list of churches made in 1563 includes the chapel,⁷ and in 1596 it is again referred to in an arbitration of four canons at Chichester.⁸ In 1601, a rent charge was left to the chapel by Bartholemew Stone⁹ and in 1618, reference is made to the repair of the roof.¹⁰ The Parish Register, which covers the period 1554 to 1812, includes references to Chilgrove Chapel and records marriages there in 1596 and 1597, and a burial in 1593.¹¹ Dr. T. Hudson, of the Victoria County History, has drawn my attention to the following references which indicate that it was taken down between 1618 and 1636. A church inspection book of 1602 contains the following report—'Chilgrove: the chancel is at fault both in walls and roof like to fall down. The church wanteth paving and glass.'¹² In another of 1636 there is no reference to Chilgrove¹³ and it can be assumed that it had been taken down before this date, but presumably after the reference in 1618. In 1640, the West Dean Churchwardens stated 'We have a fair church and a chapel two miles distant from the church long since demolished for want of maintenance for divine worship.'¹⁴

A map of 1797¹⁵ shows a field called 'The Chapel' containing in its north-east corner a rectangular building, perhaps the chapel, surrounded by an enclosure, perhaps the graveyard. The

² Down, A. Excavations at Chilgrove and Up Marden (forthcoming).

³ *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 77 (1936) 254-5 L. F. Salzman.

⁴ *A History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex* Volume 1 (1815) 168 J. Dallaway.

⁵ *SAC* 12 (1860) 81 C. Gibson.

⁶ *Sussex Record Society* 42 (1936-7) 75.

⁷ *SAC* 61 (1920) 110 V. J. Torr.

⁸ *Victoria County History (Sussex)* 4 (1953) 100.

⁹ *VCH* 4 (1953) *sub. ref.* B.L. Add Ms 39414 B fol. 62.

¹⁰ *VCH* 4 (1953) *sub. ref.* B.L. Add Ms 39426 fol. 2.

¹¹ Information from Rev. J. H. Bishop of Singleton Rectory.

¹² *WSRO* Ep.1/26/1 f.15.

¹³ *WSRO* Ep.1/26/2 f.4.

¹⁴ *WSRO* Ep.1/22/1 (1640).

¹⁵ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3157.

WEST DEAN AND BINDERTON *Medieval*

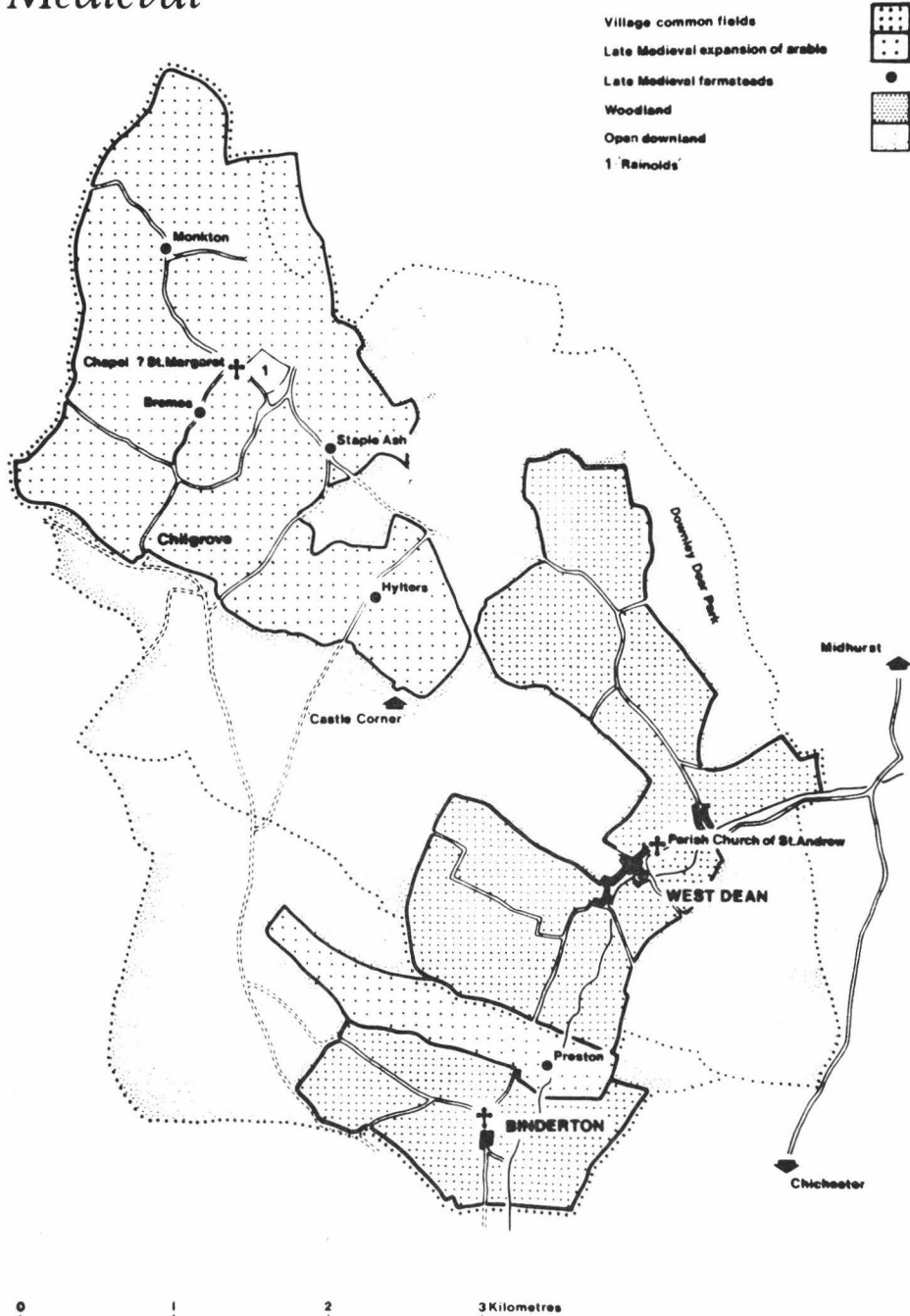


Fig. 1

WEST DEAN AND BINDERTON c.1800

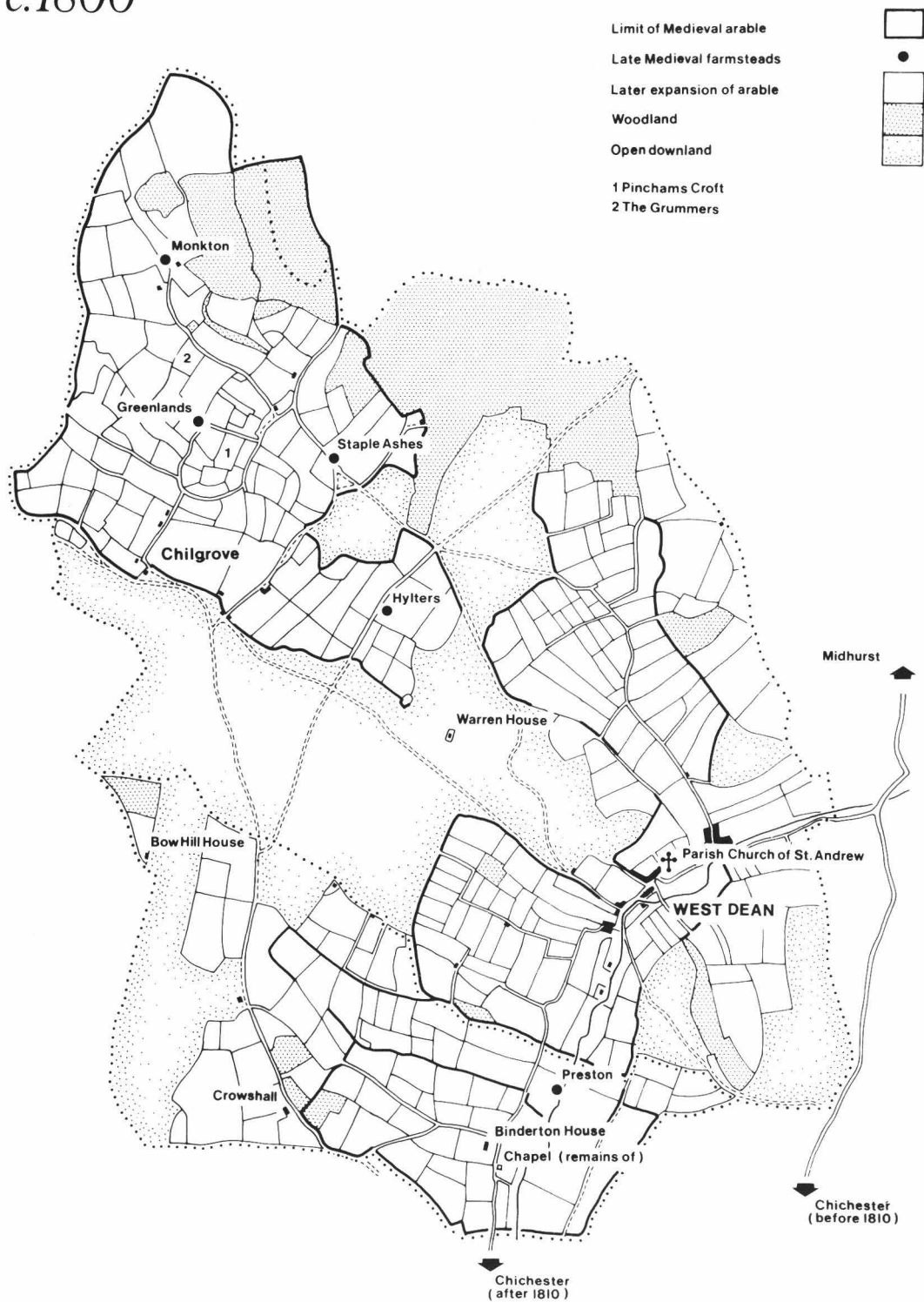


Fig. 2

Tithe Map for West Dean has 'Chapel Coppice' and 'Chapel Field', and an undated early nineteenth-century map¹⁶ also has 'Chapel Field' in the same area. In 1976, the attention of Mr. Eric Holden was drawn to the occurrence of the local name Chapel Lane by Messrs. Noel Simon and John Mills, of the West Dean Estate, and to the existence of a rectangular depression, lined with flint and roofing tile, in a small copse on the south side of the lane leading from Hog Common to Old Monkton Farm, at Grid Reference SU 8340 1575.

In an attempt to define the extent and nature of any remains, trial excavations were undertaken by the writer, in March 1977, with the assistance of members of the 1976/1977 Midhurst W.E.A. Class in Field Archaeology. I am grateful to the Trustees of the West Dean Estate for allowing the excavation to be undertaken and to Mr. Alec Down, of the Chichester Excavations Committee, and Messrs. Eric Holden and Alec Barr-Hamilton for their help and advice.

When first visited by the writer the site lay beneath undergrowth which, when cleared, revealed a depression measuring about 16m east-west by about 9m transversely, and up to about 1m in depth. Quantities of flint lay around the depression and some roofing tile lay on its northern side. A trench, 18m long and 1m wide, was dug across the depression from north to south revealing the north and south walls of the chapel and a quantity of flints further north which were not mortared, but which may be the remains of the footing of the north wall of the churchyard. A second trench, 20m long and 1m wide, was dug at right angles to the first trench, slightly south of the central axis of the chapel, and revealed the east and west walls of the nave, the curving east wall of the chancel, and a brick and stone area within the chancel. A small area was subsequently excavated to reveal the south-east corner of the nave and the south wall of the chancel (Figs. 3 and 4).

The north, south, and east walls of the nave showed the same characteristics although all had been rubbed down to their footings. These were of rammed chalk and flint, 0.70m wide, laid on the underlying chalk through a shallow layer of old topsoil. Of the west wall only a few flints in a pale buff mortar were encountered and these may not have been *in situ*. A threshold of bricks over flints in yellow mortar appeared to indicate the site of a south door. A paved area of rough greensand blocks, laid on buff mortar, some 1.4m wide, extended northwards from the threshold as far as the centre of the nave. This then turned eastwards, at a width of 1.3m, along the centre of the nave, over the footings of the east wall of the nave and into the chancel. In the chancel, the paved area widened to about 3m for a distance of 2.2m at which point it gave way to a brick step up onto an area paved with thin bricks on a foundation of rammed chalk. This presumably served as an altar plinth.

The footings of the walls of the chancel were somewhat narrower than those of the nave, being 0.60m wide, and were almost entirely made of chalk with very little flint. At the south-east corner of the nave, an attempt was made to relate the chancel and nave footings. The evidence was not conclusive but a small amount of soil between the two foundations and the difference in the character of their construction suggests that the chancel may have been an addition to the nave. Further confirmation of this interpretation seems to be indicated by the fact that the footings of the east wall of the nave were continuous and not broken or strengthened to support an original chancel arch in this position. An area of flints in yellow mortar at the south-east corner of the nave appears to represent the remains of a buttress footing or an underpinning. The east wall of the chancel comprises the remains of one course of large flints in a buff mortar, on a bed of mortar, laid on the chalk footings.

¹⁶ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3159.

CHILGROVE CHAPEL

LOCATION PLAN

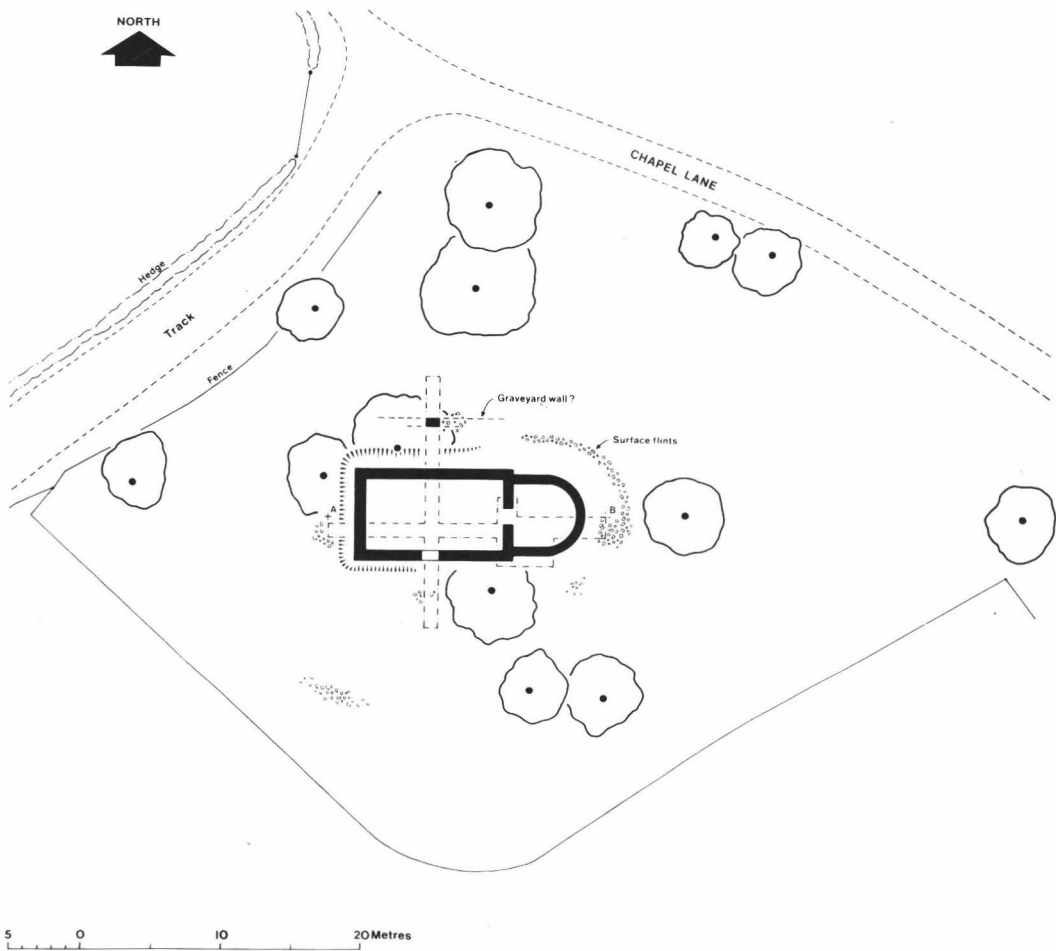


Fig. 3.

As indicated by the excavation the chapel comprised a rectangular nave, 11.3m long and 6.8m wide externally with walls about 0.7m thick. A chancel with semi-circular east wall, 5.2m long and 5.8m wide, was either an original part of the plan or a subsequent addition. The walls of the chancel were 0.6m thick. There was no evidence to suggest that any subsequent additions were made or that any earlier structure existed on the site, but the nature of the exploratory excavations do not preclude the possibility that features could be located beyond the limits of the area investigated.

Since no attempt has been made to excavate under the features encountered, the dating of the structure must be based upon the unstratified pottery and the plan. A preliminary examination of the pottery by Mr. Alec Down, who has provided the following notes, indicates that the majority dates from the early eleventh to the fifteenth century. It includes sherds from late fourteenth to early fifteenth century dishes, a fourteenth century glazed jug, thirteenth to fourteenth century cooking pots, and several sherds of a crenellated ridge tile with green glaze. At the lower end of the date range is a small group of sherds in underfired gritty fabrics, some with knife trimming, which may pre-date the Norman Conquest. There is one heavily abraded sherd, in a sandy fabric, from a rilled bowl of a type found at Chichester¹⁷ and Porchester.¹⁸ The pottery came from the topsoil over and around the foundations of the chapel, and while most of it may be assumed to have been deposited during the life of the building, some of it may be intrusive or residual. The material may indicate a pre-Conquest date for the chapel.

The plan, nave with semi-circular chancel, is not uncommon in English church architecture and can usually be attributed to the twelfth century or earlier. Plans closely resembling that of the Chilgrove Chapel occur at Balsdean, East Sussex, and Upwaltham, West Sussex. Balsdean Chapel, the site of which was excavated between 1945 and 1953,¹⁹ comprised a nave, 10.3m long and 5.7m wide with walls about 0.8m thick, with north doorway, and a semi-circular chancel, 4.8m long. On firm archaeological and documentary evidence, the chapel is dated to between about 1120 and 1147 and appears to have served a similar community to that at Chilgrove, being in an outlying part of Rottingdean parish. The surviving parish church at Upwaltham comprises a nave, 11.8m long and 6.8m wide with walls 0.8m thick, a semi-circular chancel, 4.8m long, and a later south porch. The structure can be safely attributed, on architectural grounds, to the twelfth century. The imposts of the chancel arch are incorporated into the north and south walls of the chancel and there appears to be no reason why, in this particular case, there should be foundations for an east wall of the nave, as at Chilgrove, as the chancel appears to be an original feature.

Chilgrove Chapel can thus probably be assigned at least to the twelfth century, though it could be somewhat earlier. The walls are comparatively thin, a feature which is often indicative of a pre-Conquest date for a church.

Apart from the paved greensand areas, the brick altar plinth, and the fragment of east wall, the structure appears to have been taken down to foundation level with some care. The broken roof tiles were laid in a pile outside the north wall of the nave but most of the other building material has apparently been taken from the site. No worked stone has been found in the area investigated, but a fragment of a glazed ridge tile was found. There was no archaeological evidence to indicate a date for the taking down of the chapel but the general character of the bricks in the chancel and on the threshold of the south door indicate that the building was still in use in the first half of the

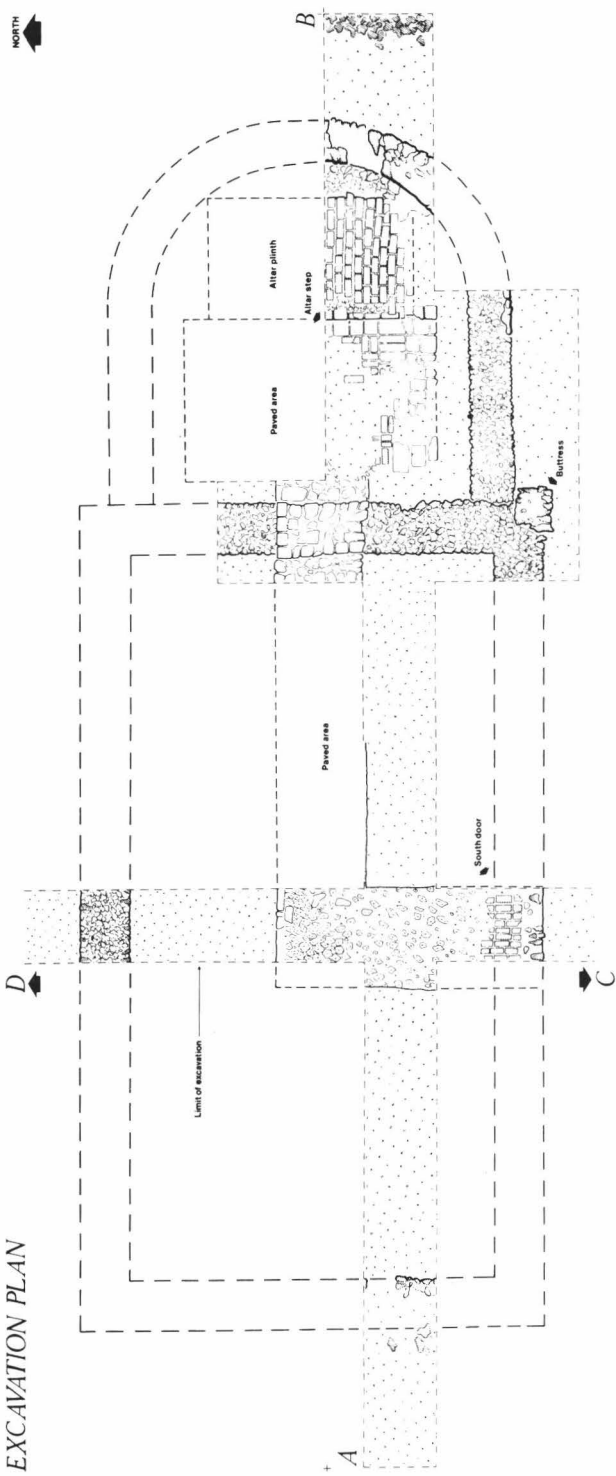
¹⁷ *Chichester Excavations* 3 (forthcoming) A. Down.

¹⁸ *Society of Antiquaries Research Report* No. 32 (1976) 'Excavations at Porchester Castle' Volume 2—Saxon B. Cunliffe pp. 187-188 and figure 127.

¹⁹ *SAC* 91 (1953) 53-68.

CHILGROVE CHAPEL, WEST DEAN

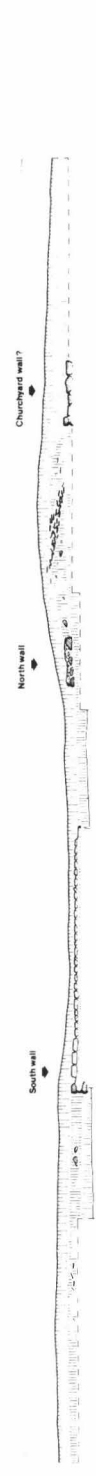
EXCAVATION PLAN



SECTION A-B



SECTION C-D



Plan	Section	Brick	Section



Fig. 4

seventeenth century, which would appear to agree with the documentary evidence for its demolition between 1618 and 1636. The medieval settlement at Monkton, which may have been a hamlet or village, appears to have been replaced by a large house and farm before 1608 and its partial abandonment may have been contributory to the demolition of Chilgrove Chapel so soon after this date.

MONKTON DESERTED MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT

In October 1975, Mr. Eric Holden drew the attention of the writer to earthworks adjoining the remains of Monkton Farm and suggested that they might represent the site of a deserted village or hamlet. The site, centred at SU 8290 1660, has subsequently been surveyed at different seasons of the year and there appears to be evidence of a settlement of about eight or more buildings, with associated tofts and field ways, extending over a distance of 400m along a dry coombe above the remains of Old Monkton Farm (Fig. 5). A double-lynchet trackway forms the main route through the site, on its north-eastern side, and this is linked to individual terraced tofts and to the surrounding land by hollow-ways and trackways. Immediately north of Old Monkton Farm are the remains of two crofts, A and B, each comprising a rectangular depression, measuring about 14m by 6m, with associated flints and roofing tile. Further north are several terraced rectangular areas which are dominated by nettles during the summer months. These may also be the sites of crofts and are shown enclosed by dotted lines on Fig. 5.

The remains of Old Monkton Farm comprise brick and flint walls which have been demolished almost down to ground level. The occurrence of sixteenth and seventeenth century brick and tile indicates that the buildings may originally be of that date, but later bricks demonstrate that it had subsequently been altered during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries prior to demolition soon after the First World War. Further south is a well and the footings of a surrounding brick and flint building which once housed a donkey wheel.

The earliest direct reference to the site occurs in a deed, dated November 1608, which refers to the place as 'Northolt alias Munckton Manor and Farm.'²⁰ It is again referred to as the manor or farm of Northolte alias Monkton in 1619.²¹ On an estate map of 1623,²² a single large house is shown and the adjoining areas are shown as Windenn, Munckon Wood, Munckon Heath, and Munckon Enclosures. On the accompanying schedule,²³ which has kindly been transcribed for me by Mrs. Alison McCann of the West Sussex County Record Office, the property is referred to as 'Munckon Farme' and was held in 1623 by two people. William Fairemanner held 'A convenient house with Barnes Stables orchards gardens and gaterooms' assessed at 2 acres 3 rods 34 perches. In addition his holdings included

	'of Arable	138a.	Or.	19p.
	of Pasture	32a.	2r.	34p.
	of Heath	94a.	Or.	33p.
	of Wooddie grounds	35a.	1r.	23p.
of Cops by Cops measure		23a.	3r.	17p.
By statute measure		28a.	Or.	23p.

²⁰ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 1100-1116.

²¹ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 1179.

²² *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3152.

²³ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3151.

DESERTED MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT MONKTON, WEST DEAN.

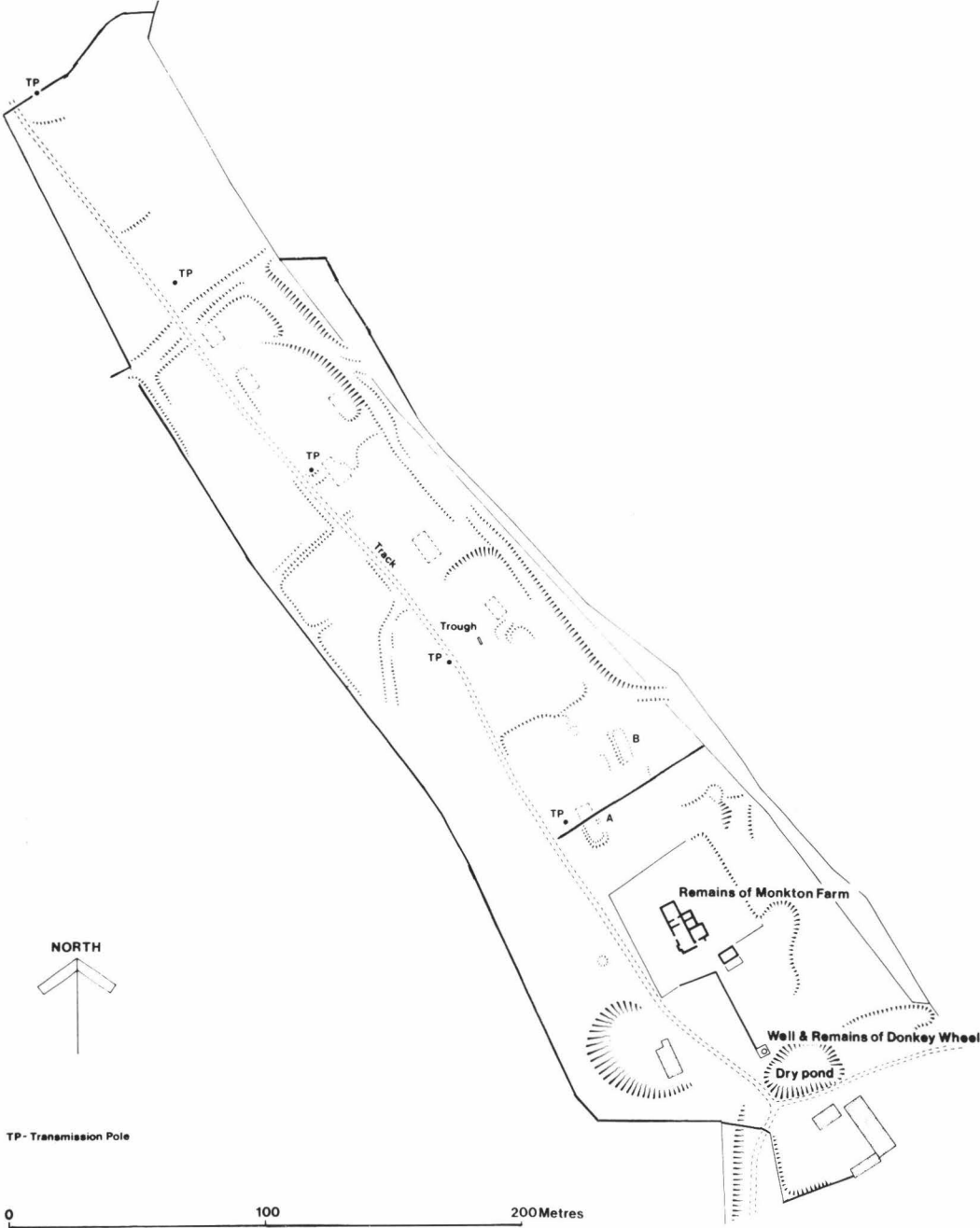


Fig. 5.

The whole Content Accompting to Copses by Cops measure	345a.	1r.	30p.
Accompting the Copses by statute measure the Content is	349a.	3r.	36p.'

Richard Rassalls Hee hath of Arable or Pasture 37a. 3r. 6p. Henry Rassals Part called Rainolds of Arable or pasture 9a. 3r. 31p.

The whole content of all the farme is accompting the Cops by Cops measure 393a. 0r. 27p. Accompting the Copses by Statute Measure 397a. 2r. 33p.'

A plot called 'Rainolds' is shown on the estate map to the south-east of the house which can be identified as Monkton Farm. The various areas shown on the estate map can be correlated with surviving stretches of woodland and arable fields on the ground and the areas of these have been measured on modern maps. The total acreage in the schedule, less the nine acres in Rainolds which was an isolated field north-east of Chilgrove Chapel (Fig. 1), is about 389 acres by 'Statute measure' and these cover an area of about 212 hectares on the ground. Thus one hectare is equal to about 1.82 acres in the schedule. The individual acreages in the schedule do not appear to correlate precisely with the areas measured on the modern maps but it is quite clear that many areas, like the present Winden Wood, were either arable or pasture in the early seventeenth century.

The property is described as a tenement, two barns, two stables, cart-house, well-house, garden, orchard, lands and woods called Moncton Farm in a lease of 1688.²⁴ On maps of 1724 and about 1740²⁵ the place is called 'Monking' and a map of 1797²⁶ shows a track leading 'to Monking'.

This evidence appears to suggest that only a large house or farm occupied the site in the early seventeenth century and that this was known as either Northolt, Munckon, Monking or Muncton. Since the northern part of West Dean parish was referred to as the tithing and chapelry of Chilgrove until comparatively recently, and since this name appears to refer to a dispersed settlement of farms, and perhaps hamlets, centred on Chilgrove Chapel (Fig. 1), it is difficult to relate early references to specific occupation sites within the area.

A covenant between the monks of Waverley Abbey and Thomas de Sandervill, dating to about 1210,²⁷ refers to 'land in the fields of Chelegrave which was common to the monks' and in the accompanying boundary survey it refers to 'the chapel of Chelegrave', and also 'Middelfeld' and 'Suthfeld'. The latter may refer to village common fields but the boundary survey cannot yet be closely related to surviving features. Of the features mentioned on the boundary, Putcroft, Hildeleia, Frithleia, Fochslichesleia, Middelfeld, Suthfeld and Grenemere, only the first and last appear to be represented in later field names, although Hildeleia may be represented by Hylters. Putcroft is possibly the field Pinchams Croft, which occurs east of Broom's Farm, on an early nineteenth century map of Monkton and Brooms Farms²⁸ and on the West Dean Tithe Map of 1847²⁹ (Fig. 2). Grenemere may be represented by the field called 'The Grummers', on the south side of the lane leading from Hog Common to Old Monkton Farm, on a map of 1797,³⁰ on an early nineteenth century map,³¹ and on the West Dean Tithe Map.³² The field names 'Putticks' and 'Grummer' also occur in a lease of 1768.³³

²⁴ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 1268.

²⁵ Richard Budgen's Map of 1724 and Thomas Bowles' Map of about 1740.

²⁶ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3157.

²⁷ *SAC* 77 (1936) 254-5 L. F. Salzman.

²⁸ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3159 Field No. 16.

²⁹ Field No. 242.

³⁰ *WSRO* West Dean Ms. 3157 Field No. 258.

³¹ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 3159 Field No. 51.

³² Field No. 258.

³³ *WSRO* West Dean Ms 1455.

BINDERTON CHURCH

LOCATION PLAN

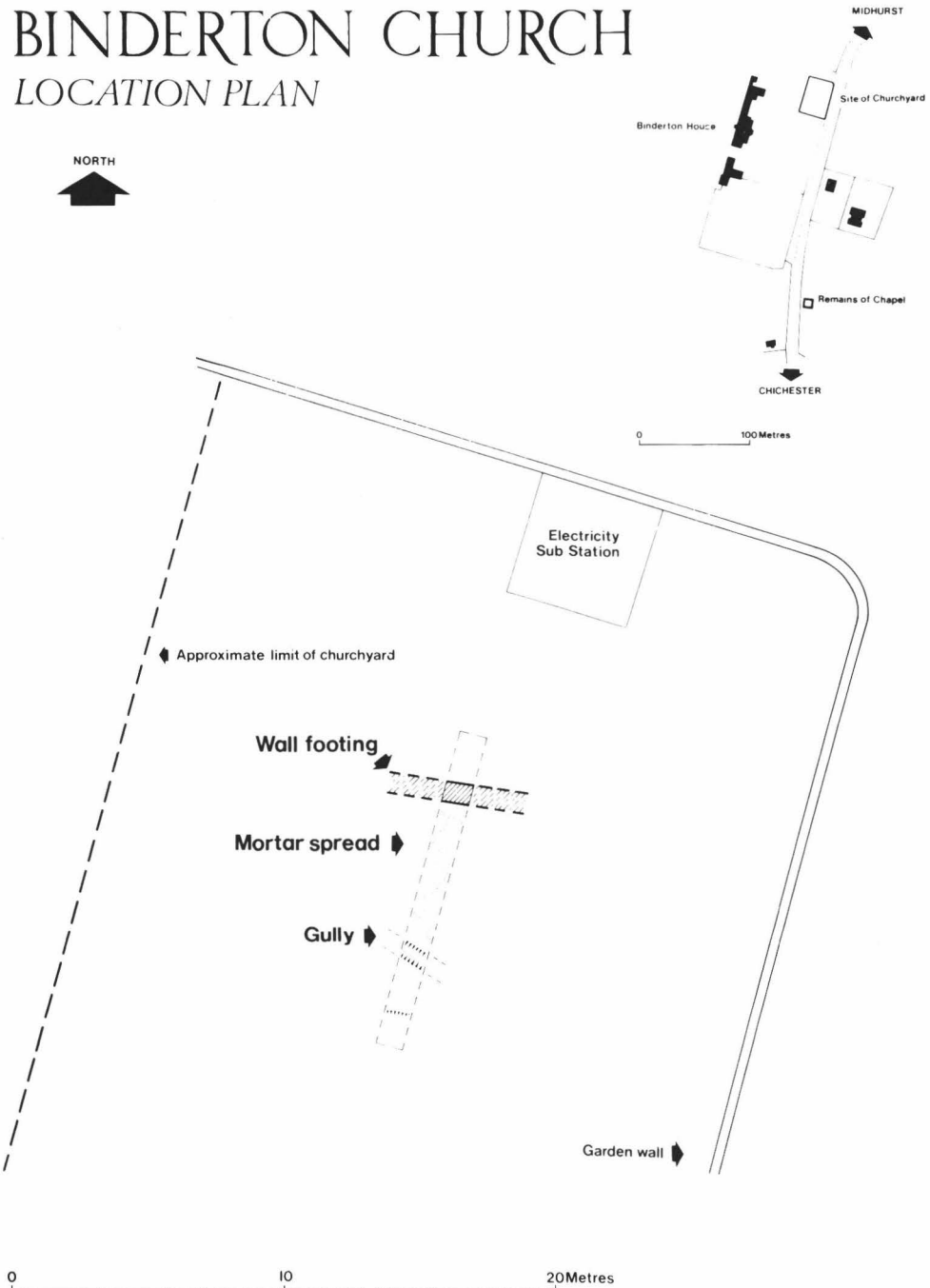


Fig. 6.

It is Chilgrove that is referred to in the Lay Subsidies of 1296, 1327 and 1332, and in 1348 tenements in Chilgrove were held of John Bernak by William and Richard atte Wenden.³⁴ The name Winden occurs on the estate map of 1623, referred to above, and survives today as Winden Wood and Winden Field, east of Old Monkton Farm, suggesting that the fourteenth century name for the site under discussion may have been Winden.

The documentary evidence and the surviving remains on the ground indicate that this was once the site of a medieval village or hamlet which was deserted, apart from a single property, before 1608. It may have been served by common fields represented on the estate map of 1623 by 'Windenn', Munckon Heaths', Munckon Inclosures', and Munckon Wood'. Some of these areas are now wooded but all contain evidence, in the form of lynchets and field banks, to suggest that they were once cultivated areas. The village or hamlet and chapel were probably situated on a downland route from West Dean to Treyford which can still be traced over the top of the Downs.

BINDERTON CHURCH

A church at Binderton (BERTREDTONE) is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086),³⁵ when the estate was held by Earl Godwin, but it does not occur again in written records until the middle of the fourteenth century. It is not referred to in the Taxation of 1291 or in the Nonae Rolls of 1340.³⁶ Although it was not mentioned by name when the prebend of Singleton was given to Chichester in the twelfth century, the confirmation of that gift, by Archbishop Simon, in 1355, refers to the chapel of Binderton as forming part of that prebend.³⁷ In 1481, the Dean and Chapter leased to William Collock the rectory of West Dean with the 'chapels' of Binderton, East Dean, Chilgrove, Didling, and Dumpford, of which Didling and Dumpford were parish churches.³⁸ In 1535, the building is again referred to as a chapel³⁹ but it is called a parish church in 1526 and 1546.⁴⁰ In 1546 and 1563, it was served by a curate.⁴¹ In about 1579, it was stated that the Dean and Chapter were patrons and that service was conducted by the curate of West Dean.⁴² In 1640, the churchwardens stated that 'our vicar lives at Westdene',⁴³ but in the following year the Protestation, signed by nineteen persons of the parish of Binderton, was made before James Eburne, curate or minister of East Lavant.⁴⁴ It seems clear, however, that Binderton was usually served from West Dean though there appears to be no trace of any formal act of union and as late as 1849 there was a separate Tithe Award for Binderton, which states that the vicar had half the small tithe of Binderton Farm.⁴⁵

When Binderton House was built by Thomas Smyth between 1660 and 1670, the medieval church was taken down and replaced by the surviving chapel on the east side of the Midhurst-Chichester road.⁴⁶ There is little evidence of the plan of the church but several features are recorded. In 1523, Alice Smith requested that she should be buried in the *chancel* next to her former

³⁴ *VCH* 4 (1953) 97-99 L. F. Salzman *sub. ref.* Cal. Inq. p.m. xii, 457.

³⁵ *VCH* 1 (1905) 421b L. F. Salzman.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 (1953) 90 L. F. Salzman.

³⁷ *Sussex Record Society* 46 (1942-3) No. 1111 p. 375 W. D. Peckham.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 735 pp. 196-7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 784 pp. 217-8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 41 (1935) 145-7 ed. W. H. Godfrey.

⁴¹ *SAC* 61 (1920) 110 V. J. Torr.

⁴² *B.L. Add. Ms.* 39454, fol. 8v.

⁴³ *B.L. Add. Ms.* 39428, fol. 51.

⁴⁴ *Sussex Record Society* 5 (1906) 32 R. Garraway Rice.

⁴⁵ *Binderton Tithe Map and Apportionment* (1847).

⁴⁶ *Sussex Notes and Queries* 3 (1930) 85-7.

husband,⁴⁷ and in 1586 it (the church) was unpaved.⁴⁸ In the church inspection book for 1602 there are two passages for Binderton. The first states that 'the chancel wanteth some paving, the windows are unglazed and some of the rough (roof) unhealed'. The second states that 'the church (i.e. the nave) lacketh some paving and mending of the wall one (on) the north side and the font wanteth a cover'.⁴⁹ In 1611, the chancel was said to have been decayed and some of the rafters had fallen into it,⁵⁰ and in 1613 'the steeple' was 'weak and shaketh very much'.⁵¹ In 1622, it is recorded that the church and *church porch* were 'in some decay'.⁵² In the church inspection book for 1636 the following report occurs for Binderton. 'The church (nave) and chancel want to be whited throughout and to be beautified with sentences of scripture. Also the Ten Commandments and the Kings Arms are to be set up in the church. The *three windows in the chancel* do all want glazing. There wants a new communion book. There is no cloth nor cushion for the pulpit. No partition between the church and chancel. Divers of the seats in the church want repairing and all the seats in the church want planking and paving. There is no bier to carry the dead to burial. The font will not hold water. The church wants paving in divers places. They have no Book of Homolies nor book for the 5th of November nor the utensils of the church. The register book is not kept in the church. There is no flagon for the communion wine'.⁵³ In 1640 the churchwardens reported that 'wee have a decent church for divine service . . . noe parte of our church is demolished nor put to any prophane use'.⁵⁴ In 1641, it was reported that it was in repair 'save that some lead in the healing wants attention, and that the vane of the *steeple*, lately blown down, is not yet up again. The chancel is severed from the church, the steeple is furnished with bells, and there is a Parish Register, a communion cup and a flagon'.⁵⁵

From the foregoing evidence it would seem clear that by 1523 the structure comprised nave and chancel, though in 1641 these were 'severed.' The Victoria County History suggests that the latter indicates that the two components were 'structurally distinct' but they may have been separated only by a chancel screen which was not there in 1636. The reference to three windows in the chancel in 1636, suggests that it was probably quite small and may have contained one window in each of its north, south, and east walls. The steeple, referred to in 1613, was probably no more than a wooden bellcote and in 1622 there is reference to a church porch. In its final form the church of Binderton may have been similar in plan, and perhaps even size, to Chilgrove Chapel and Upwaltham Church.

W. D. Peckham suggested that the site of the church lay in the north-east corner of what is now the garden of Binderton House and drew attention to a nineteenth-century map recording an exchange of glebeland in this position.⁵⁶ A copy of this map is now in Barbican House Museum, Lewes.⁵⁷ It is dated 1862 and consists of several small areas of land, but only one (Plot 29a) lies in Binderton Parish. There is no mention of a church or churchyard on the Glebe Schedules and other documents attached to the map. The piece of land in Binderton, evidently that referred to by Peckham, is listed under the first schedule as 'Part of pleasure ground and lawn of Binderton House'

⁴⁷ *Sussex Record Society* 41 (1935) 146.

⁴⁸ *B.L. Add. Ms.* 39425, fol. 55.

⁴⁹ *WSRO Ep.1/26/1*, fol. 15.

⁵⁰ *B.L. Add. Ms.* 39426, fol. 9.

⁵¹ *B.L. Add. Ms.* 39426, fol. 44.

⁵² *Sussex Record Society* 49 (1948) 45.

⁵³ *WSRO Ep.1/26/2*, folios 5v-6.

⁵⁴ *B.L. Add. Ms.* 39426, fol. 51.

⁵⁵ *Sussex Notes and Queries* 7 (1938-39) 119.

⁵⁶ *Sussex Notes and Queries* 3 (1930) 85-87.

⁵⁷ Box D/10.

and measures about 25m east-west by 34m north-south (i.e. about 850m²). There is no trace of a piece of glebeland on maps of 1771, 1810 and 1847,⁵⁸ but in 1849 the vicarial glebe was thirty poles in West Dean, obtained in exchange for land in Binderton.⁵⁹ Thirty poles is equal to about 750m², a figure which compares favourably with the area of glebeland recorded on the map of 1862.

Dr. T. Hudson, of the Victoria County History, has kindly provided the following observations on the possible interpretations of this evidence. In the Binderton Glebe Terrier of 1635,⁶⁰ it states that 'one plot of ground belongeth to the vicar or minister of Binderton aforesaid adjoining to the churchyard of Binderton, aforesaid, containing by estimation a quarter of an acre.' The glebe land and the parsonage or vicarage were part of the revenues of the benefice, and therefore their site(s) would be less likely to disappear without trace, since the income would continue to be received, or, as happened here, a piece of glebe could be exchanged for land elsewhere. The site of a church and churchyard, on the other hand, were not part of the revenues, and would have no economic value, since they would not be used for agricultural purposes, at least at first—so they might disappear altogether.

It is possible, therefore, that the plot of land recorded on the map of 1862 was the plot exchanged for land in West Dean, and contained the site of the vicarage or the church. Thus the site of the church could be on this or an adjacent plot.

In an attempt to determine whether the plot of glebeland represented the site of the churchyard and to see whether there were sufficient remains of the church to warrant preservation, a trial excavation was undertaken in May 1977 by the writer with the help of members of the Midhurst WEA class in archaeology 1976/77. I am grateful to Mr. Brian Snelling, owner of the property, for allowing the excavation to take place, and to Mr. Alec Barr-Hamilton, and Mr. T. Hudson for their help and advice.

The north-east corner of the garden of Binderton House is planted with mature trees and a small electricity sub-station has been erected near the corner. A trench, 12m long and 1m wide, was opened in a north-south direction across the centre of the area thought to be the churchyard or the site of the vicarage.

Beneath the topsoil an east-west wall footing, 0.8m wide, was found. This was of large, unmortared, flints laid in a foundation trench cut into the chalk. Its upper surface was 0.6m below the present surface. A spread of yellow mortar with flints extended, at a depth of 0.5m, for a distance of 5m from the south side of the wall foundation where it terminated with several large flints in the same mortar. Further south a gully, 0.7m wide and about 0.8m deep, lay across the trench, cut through the chalk, and was filled with loose soil and flints. No attempt was made to excavate through any of the features but it seems likely that they represent the north wall of a building and a mortared floor or demolition layer. Presumably the footing of the south wall is located beneath the mortar spread giving a building of up to 4.5m wide internally. Assuming that the remains are of the church, this would be rather narrow for a nave and therefore probably represents the width of the chancel. A few pieces of slate, roofing tile, and worked stone were found, and it seems likely that substantial remains of the footings of the church or vicarage occur in this area centred at SU 8502 1082. No trace survives of the churchyard but the evidence, referred to above, quite clearly demonstrates its possible former extent. Burials within the church and the

⁵⁸ *WSRO* West Dean Mss. 3156; 3161, 3162; and the *Binderton Tithe Map*.

⁵⁹ *VCH* 4 (1953) 90; *Sussex Notes and Queries* 7 (1938-9) 119-121.

⁶⁰ *WSRO* Par.65/1/1/3 f. 5.

churchyard are referred to in the sixteenth century⁶¹ and these, and the remains of the church, should be respected if future development is considered in this area.

The replacement chapel, built between 1670 and 1680, still survives as a ruin to the east of the main road (Fig. 2) and is described by Peckham. It was never consecrated and had 'sunk to the level of a barn within a hundred years.' The only burial, that of Thomas Smith (junior), who died in 1687-8, was removed to West Dean in 1839.⁶²

The Domesday settlement and Medieval parish of Binderton appears to have survived as a village community at least until 1641, when at least nineteen adults resided there, but, like other examples in Sussex, it became deserted during the seventeenth century. It is still listed in a religious Census of 1676 as a parish or village but, unlike other places mentioned, the population total is missing.⁶³

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Dr. T. Hudson and Mr. E. Holden have kindly commented on the text.

⁶¹ *Sussex Record Society* 41 (1935) 146.

⁶² *Sussex Notes and Queries* 3 (1930) 85-87.

⁶³ *SAC* 45 (1902) 147.