

Archaeological excavations in Steyning, 1992-95:

FURTHER EVIDENCE FOR THE EVOLUTION OF A LATE SAXON SMALL TOWN

by Mark Gardiner &
Christopher Greatorex

with contributions from
Luke Barber
Lucy Kirk

Three excavations undertaken within the area of the historic town of Steyning clarified the character and extent of the Late Anglo-Saxon settlement. At least three Saxo-Norman buildings were recorded in work at Coombe Court. These have some similarities to those previously recorded in the vicinity. Work at Tanyard Lane suggested that the site lay on the periphery of the Saxon town, but was occupied in the medieval period when it was the site of a kiln producing pottery and ridge tiles. The extension of Steyning Library allowed an opportunity to clarify the results of work undertaken there in 1962. A larger area was recorded, but no medieval structures were found. Further remains of the post-medieval buildings were recorded. Analysis of the plans of Late Anglo-Saxon remains suggests a low density of settlement within the emerging town. It is suggested that the settlement did not have a regular plan until the new town was founded on the present High Street in the late 12th or 13th century. Steyning is compared with North Elmham (Norfolk) which is identified as a failed Late Saxon small town.

Excavations in 1988 and 1989 at Market Field and on the site of the new Steyning Museum contributed significantly to the understanding of the topography and character of the Saxo-Norman and later medieval town of Steyning (Gardiner 1993; Reynolds 1992). That work continued the investigations begun in 1962 and 1967-8 by Worthing Museum and in 1977 and 1985 by the Institute of Archaeology, London (Fig. 1), and the policy of concentrated archaeological study of selected towns in Sussex (Aldsworth & Freke 1976, 6-7; Barton 1986a; Evans 1986; Freke 1979; Gardiner 1988). Three further excavations were undertaken by the Field Archaeology Unit (Institute of Archaeology) in the six years following 1989. The intention of these more recent excavations was to clarify some of the aspects of the town and to enable the research issues to be defined more closely. The present article reports that more recent archaeological work, suggests some preliminary conclusions from over 30 years' excavation within Steyning and offers some wider reflections on the origin of small towns in Late Anglo-Saxon England.

The historical evidence and topography of Steyning has been described elsewhere and need

only be briefly summarized here (Hudson 1980; Hudson 1987; *V.C.H. Sussex* 6, i, 220-25). The light fertile soils at the foot of the scarp slope of the South Downs and at the edge of the floodplain of the River Adur have been intensively cultivated and settled since the later prehistoric period. Towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period a settlement developed around the south side of the church and formed the small town recorded in Domesday Book (i, 17a). The centre of the town moved, probably in the late 12th or early 13th century, to a new, planned site on the present High Street (Gardiner 1988, 60). Part of the area of the former Saxo-Norman settlement near the church reverted to farmland, and remained open until the town expanded in the late 20th century.

PART 1: EXCAVATIONS AT COOMBE COURT, 1992

By Mark Gardiner

In January 1992 the West Sussex County Archaeologist, Mark Taylor, asked the Field Archaeology Unit to undertake a watching brief

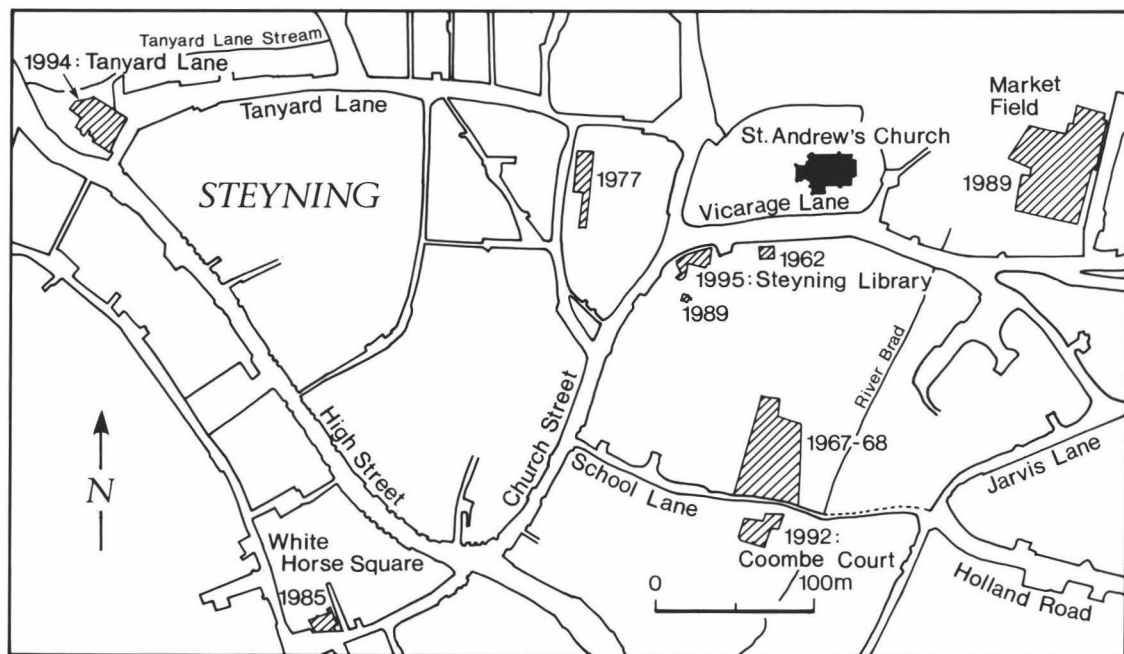


Fig. 1. Steyning: location of excavations.

during the stripping of topsoil for the site of the new parish hall at Coombe Court, Steyning (TQ 17871118). The high potential of this site was indicated by work undertaken in 1967-8 at Fletcher's Croft car park to the north (Evans 1986), but planning permission for the parish hall had been granted before publication of government guidelines on the provision of developer-funding for archaeological work (Fig. 2). It was agreed, after further discussion with the architects and the County Archaeologist, that soil stripping might take place in advance of construction work to allow a record to be made of any archaeological features.

The 1967-8 excavations had suggested that in the past the base of the valley had been marshland or had suffered from periodic flooding and was unlikely to have been occupied. Furthermore, the lower part of the Coombe Court site had been extensively disturbed by two sewers. The west or uphill area of the development was therefore chosen for stripping, and the topsoil and underlying colluvial deposits removed by machine under archaeological supervision. Few archaeological features were present. Some late Anglo-Saxon, Saxo-Norman and 13th-century pits and a later-medieval ditch were recorded. However, at the north-east

extremity of the site a group of rubbish pits were identified. Earlier work at Market Field, Steyning, had suggested that such pits might cluster around buildings (Gardiner 1993, 38). The Sussex Archaeological Society agreed to provide a grant for additional machining to allow a further area of the site to be stripped around these pits. That work exposed more rubbish pits and traces of the expected buildings. Consequently, West Sussex County Council agreed to fund further excavation. Work continued in March 1992 and lasted for the two weeks before construction work was due to start.

Coombe Court lies on the slope between the buildings and playground of Steyning Grammar School, and the valley floor occupied a stream flowing northwards from near Dog Lane. The land had not been disturbed in recent years, except for the construction of a new sewer in the months immediately preceding the archaeological work. A very considerable depth of soil had developed above the chalk. No archaeological features were noted in this deposit and it was entirely removed to the level of the chalk by mechanical excavation. These overlying deposits had formed through colluviation; deep colluvial deposits also were noted at Market Field, Steyning, on the opposite side of the stream

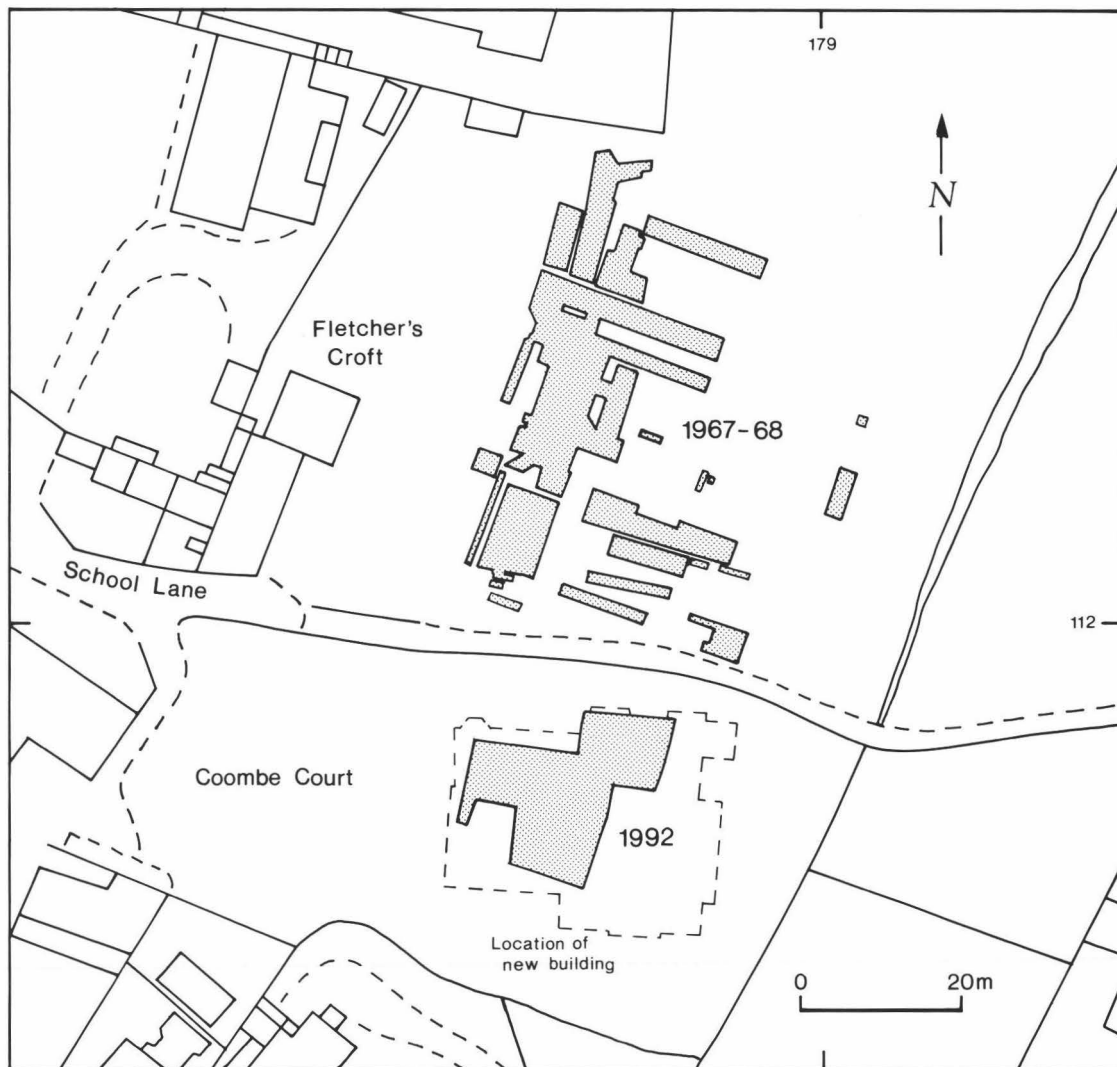


Fig. 2. Fletcher's Croft and Coombe Court: excavated areas.

valley to the north (Gardiner 1993, 22). The geology on the uphill part of the site is a shallow deposit of Clay-with-Flints which partially overlies the Lower Chalk. Chalk marl, similar to the deposits found to the north at Fletcher's Croft, was recorded on the downhill area of the excavation.

Activity on the site may be divided into five phases.

PHASE 1 - PREHISTORIC

Prehistoric activity is represented by four flint flakes and seven sherds of pottery. The pottery may be dated to the period 1000 to 300 BC. All these finds

were from colluvium or were residual in later features. No features were dated before the Late Anglo-Saxon period. Prehistoric activity is well represented in the Steyning area. Ditches dated to the 9th century BC and mid-1st century AD were excavated at Testers, White Horse Square and other, unpublished prehistoric finds are in Steyning Museum (Gardiner 1988).

PHASE 2 - LATE ANGLO-SAXON

Only two features could be certainly attributed to the late Anglo-Saxon period. These were a large rubbish pit (Fig. 3:2) circular in plan and with

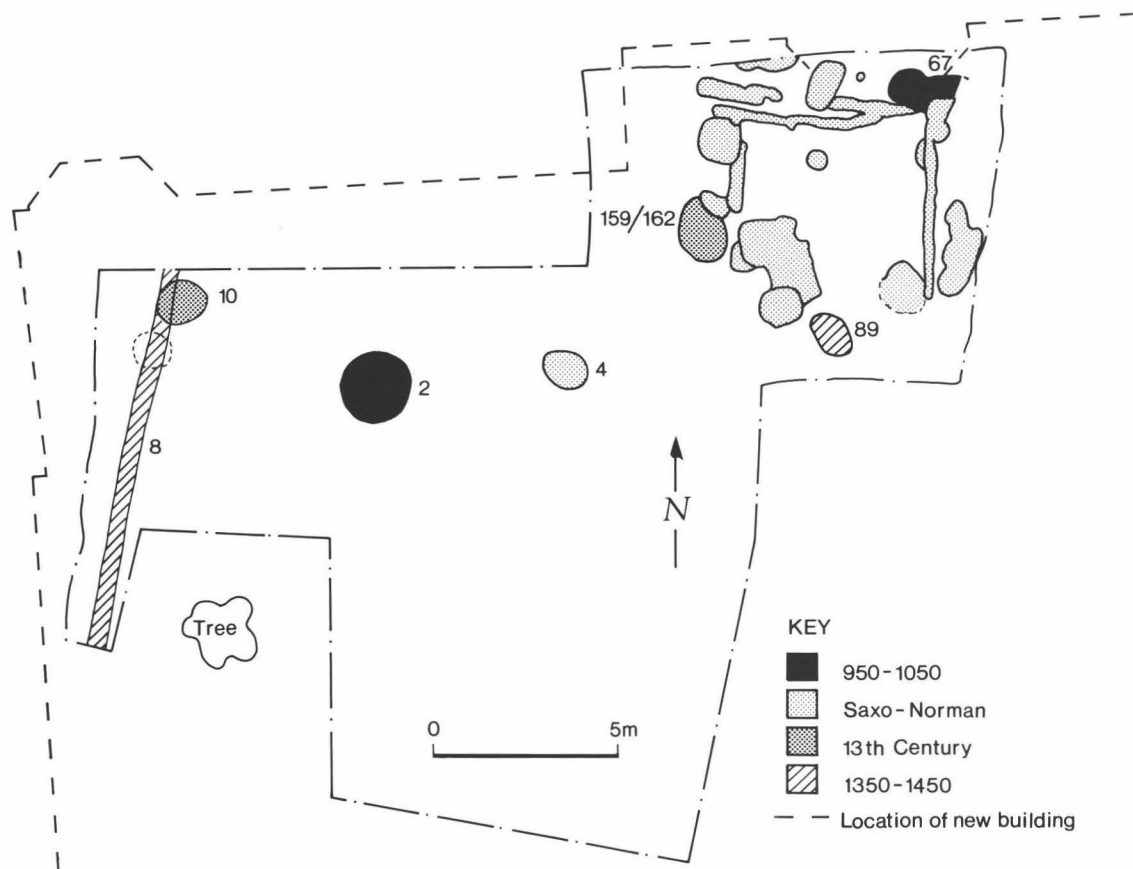


Fig. 3. Coombe Court: phase plan.

sloping sides, and an elongated pit near to the north-east corner (Fig. 3:67). A date range of 950 to 1050 for both features is suggested by the pottery.

The circular pit (2) contained large, unabraded conjoining sherds suggesting that the material was dumped in the pit shortly after breakage. The pit was probably dug for rubbish disposal. The function of the elongated pit is less certain. These pits do not fall into the categories identified at Market Field (Gardiner 1993, 34-6). The source of the rubbish in the Saxo-Norman pits was not located during excavation. The pits at Market Field clustered around the buildings and at Coombe Court any building could have lain to the north fronting on to School Lane or in another unexcavated area.

PHASE 3 - SAXO-NORMAN

All the Saxo-Norman features were concentrated in one area of the excavation, with the exception of a shallow circular pit (Fig. 3:4). That isolated feature

had yellow-green staining around the edge which may indicate that it had been used as a cesspit. The other features were bounded by the upper edge of a platform which had been dug into the hillslope to create a more nearly level surface, presumably for the buildings which were constructed there. Perhaps coincidentally, the boundary of the upper edge of the platform coincided with the lower edge of the marl. The features on the platform itself were cut into chalk.

Buildings (Figs 4-6)

Fragmentary evidence for a number of buildings was identified. The structures could be dated from the finds within the trench fills to within the period 950 to 1150. The walls of the buildings were defined by narrow trenches. These were evidently dug in short lengths since lengths of wall-trench were separated by slight changes in alignment and width. The trenches generally had one regular, vertical or

(Figs 4 & 6). Nevertheless, the slot probably belongs to a single building measuring at least 4.6 m and not more than 5.7 m long. The northern extent of the building could not be determined and there was no evidence for the end walls. The southern end of the slot is marked by a swelling, evidently to accommodate a corner-post. The east face of the slot was the more nearly vertical and regular, suggesting the interior of the building was on that side. The counterpart of the wall-trench would, therefore, have lain to the east, beyond the area of excavation. A section across the slot revealed a stone set on edge, which was probably packed against a timber. The distance between the stone and the east edge of the slot was 145 mm, which may indicate the width of timber.

Pottery from the slot suggests a date in the range 950–1100.

Building B

Building B was marked by slot 104 which terminated in a large post-hole packed with three fragments of broken quernstone (Fig. 4). These could represent later packing placed from the south side to wedge and support the base of a rotten and collapsing post. A similar explanation was suggested for the post-pad of Botolphs structure E (Gardiner 1990, 232). Alternatively, the stone-setting may mark either the end of the building, or a doorway. A similar stone-packed post-hole was found at the doorway of Botolphs structure B. If it was a doorway, then the corresponding side was probably 86 which is a post-hole with a possible adjoining wall-trenches 82 and 102 (Fig. 4; Fig. 6: building B, i). On the other hand, if the querns were set around a corner-post, then trench 93 may mark the continuation of the trench to the west (Fig. 6: building B, ii). The stratigraphic relationship of trenches 93 and 104 could not be determined. They are, however, imperfectly aligned. At the west end of trench 93 is a slight swelling, evidently marking the position of a larger post, and there is a small post-hole 117 at the opposite end (Fig. 4).

The north sides of both trenches 93 and 104 were nearly vertical suggesting that the interior of the building lay to the north. The relationship of post-holes 91 and 115 to the possible doorway is uncertain. These might mark the position of posts for a small porch, similar to that suggested for Botolphs structure B, but they are imperfectly aligned with the possible door-posts (Fig. 6: building B, i).

The pottery from slots 93 and 104 suggests a date in the range 950–1150.

Building C

The west end of slot 102 terminated in a post-hole with a base 70 mm below the level of the trench. The line of the wall-trench is perhaps continued by the short slot 127 on the east side and 45 on the west. The fill of 45 could be distinguished from the fill of slot 41, but their stratigraphic relationship could not be determined.

The interpretation of this building is problematic. Trench 102 may belong with 45 and frame a doorway 1.2 m wide. The building itself would have been only 3.6 m long (Fig. 6: building C, i). A second interpretation would associate 102 with slots 127 and perhaps 82. Feature 127 might be a post-setting by a door, with a shallow porch utilizing posts 140 and 74, and a corresponding post on the opposite side of the doorway set in feature 71 (Fig. 6: building C, ii).

The pottery from features 137 and 127 comes from the period 950–1150. Pottery from 102 can be dated more precisely to the period 950–1100.

No interpretation is offered for slot 41 with its post-hole 50 at the west end, or for slot 47 which runs at right angles (Fig. 4). Though these are probably wall-trenches, too little survives to offer a meaningful interpretation of the buildings.

Discussion

The structural evidence from Coombe Court is less complete than that recovered from either Botolphs or Market Field, Steyning. The scale of excavations did not allow the full plans of buildings to be identified: building A probably continued beyond the excavation to the east and buildings B and C to the north. No timber ghosts were identified. At the other two sites these proved crucial in determining the nature of the buildings. It is not possible to be certain about the nature of the structures at Coombe Court. The slots may have contained vertically-set timbers placed hard against the inside edges of the cuts. Alternatively, vertical posts may have been set on a horizontal sill beam placed along the length of the slots. There is no certain evidence to decide between these two possibilities, though the short trench alignments may indicate the use of a series of sill beams. If sill beams were utilized, they may have been jointed into the side of the vertical end posts which were sometimes set below the level of the adjoining slots (*cf.* Gardiner *et al.* 1991, 84).

The ground plans of buildings B and C overlap and they could not have stood at the same time. The stratigraphy did not allow the sequence to be determined. Building A might have been contemporary with one or the other, depending upon the interpretation of the ground plan chosen. This part of the excavation area appears to have been chosen for the site of a number of buildings. These would have adjoined School Lane, which has been identified as an ancient routeway from Steyning to the River Adur, although it has been attributed by Evans (1986, 91, 92) on slight evidence to the 12th century. The present work might suggest that it was earlier.

Pits

The excavated area included land which would probably have been at the rear of buildings B and C, and uphill of building A. This area was used for various functions, including the deposition of rubbish. Four of the pits (Fig. 4:21, 55, 60, 63) are recognizably sub-square or sub-rectangular in form, and therefore comparable to the rubbish pits excavated at Market Field. Two further pits of similar form may be represented by the shallow cuts 4 (Fig. 3) and 32. The latter had been largely removed by the 13th-century pit, 28.

These pits were notably less regular and carefully cut, and did not have the sharp, almost vertical sides of those at Market Field. The geology may account for the difference. The friable Lower Chalk at Coombe Court is softer and does not form good vertical faces. Only the very base of pit 55 remained and this probably accounts for its irregular form.

The rubbish pits, with the exception of pit 4, clustered in one area of the excavation. They were so closely placed that pit 63 cut pit 21 and was in turn cut by pit 55 (Fig. 5). The rubbish pits 32 and 60 were both cut by the slot 47. The concentration of pits around the buildings was also noted at Market Field and at other Late Anglo-Saxon sites elsewhere. It has already been noted that the yellow-green staining around the outlying pit (4) might suggest that it was used as a cesspit. The position of cesspits at a distance from the contemporary buildings was also noted in the Market Field excavations (Gardiner 1993, 38).

Other pits were generally shallow or of uncertain form. Pit 138 may have originally had a sub-square plan, but when excavated had a shallow lip on the south side. Pit 125 was more irregular and of uncertain extent. It was undercut on the west side,

something which can hardly have been deliberate; it was more probably the result of frost-shattering of chalk at its base. The pit was the lowest on the site with the base at 8.85 m Ordnance Datum and therefore the closest to the water-table.

PHASE 4 - THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Two rounded rubbish pits, one of which was recut, could be attributed to the 13th century (Fig. 3: 10, 159/162).

PHASE 5 - LATER MEDIEVAL: 1300-1450

Two features were dated to the period 1300 to 1450. A shallow ditch (Fig. 3:8) ran across the slope on the west side of the site. The ditch, which was cut into chalk, is unlikely to have been for drainage and therefore was probably dug as a boundary. The second feature (89) is dated to this period on the evidence of a single sherd in the lower fill which otherwise contained Saxo-Norman sherds. The sherd might be intrusive and the dating of the feature must be regarded as tentative.

PART 2: EXCAVATIONS AT TANYARD LANE, 1994

By Christopher Greatorex

During November 1994, Tanyard Properties Limited commissioned the Field Archaeology Unit to undertake an archaeological investigation of land adjoining Tanyard Lane (TQ 17451143). The site, measuring 1105 sq.m had been granted planning permission for housing subject to the satisfactory conclusion of archaeological work. It was bounded by Tanyard Lane to the south, standing buildings situated on the High Street to the west, a garage and forecourt to the east and Tanyard Stream to the north. The site was probably situated towards the north-western edge of the medieval town. No archaeological work had previously been undertaken in this area of Steyning.

The excavation was carried out in two phases. Trenches were initially dug by machine to ascertain whether archaeological remains were present and determine the nature of the stratigraphy. One of these trenches (Fig. 7: T 2B) was subsequently extended and the archaeological features were more completely excavated by hand.

Trenches 1B, 1C and 3 were dug to a depth of approximately 1.3 m below ground level. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were

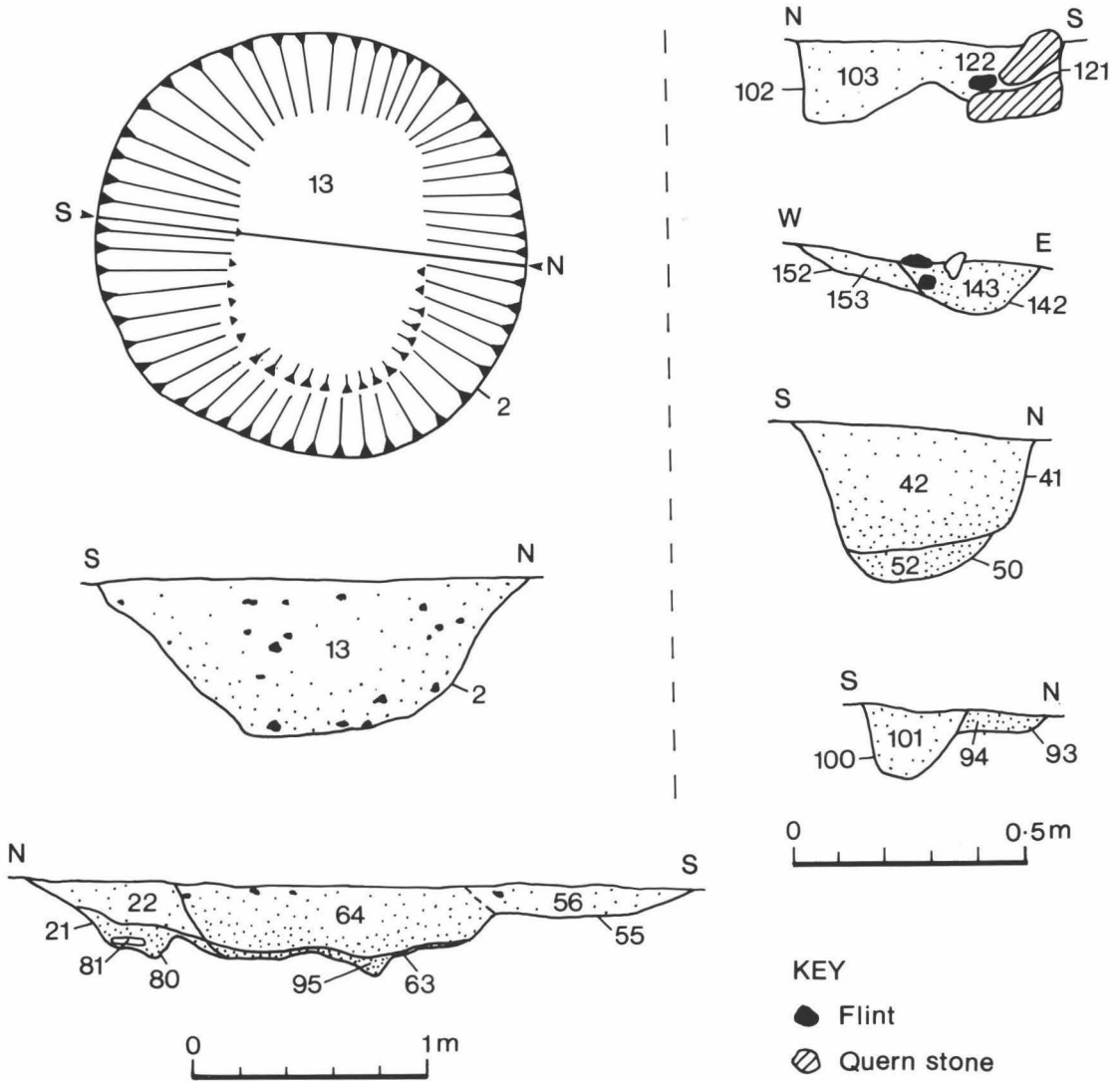


Fig. 5. Coombe Court: plan of feature 13 and selected sections.

recorded in these three trenches which were heavily disturbed by 20th-century activity.

A series of upper recent deposits in trenches 1A and 2B overlay medieval strata (Fig. 8). A deposit of Greensand fragments and degraded mortar was recorded in trench 2B below these recent deposits (3) and a 100 mm-thick deposit of compact mid grey-brown silty clay (42) was present in trench 1A. A lower deposit of silty clay, varying in thickness from 150 mm to 350 mm, was found in both trenches (2, 43). The lowest recorded deposit in trench 1A was a

layer of compact mid yellow-green, silty clay (44). A small box-section excavated by hand across it revealed that solid Greensand lay at approximately 1.2 m below the ground surface. Context 44 and its equivalent in trench 2B, context 8, contained a high proportion of Saxo-Norman wares, suggesting that they were sealed shortly after 1100.

TRENCH 1A (Fig. 8)

A deposit of friable, dark grey, silty clay (48 and 52) containing a high percentage of chalk pieces and

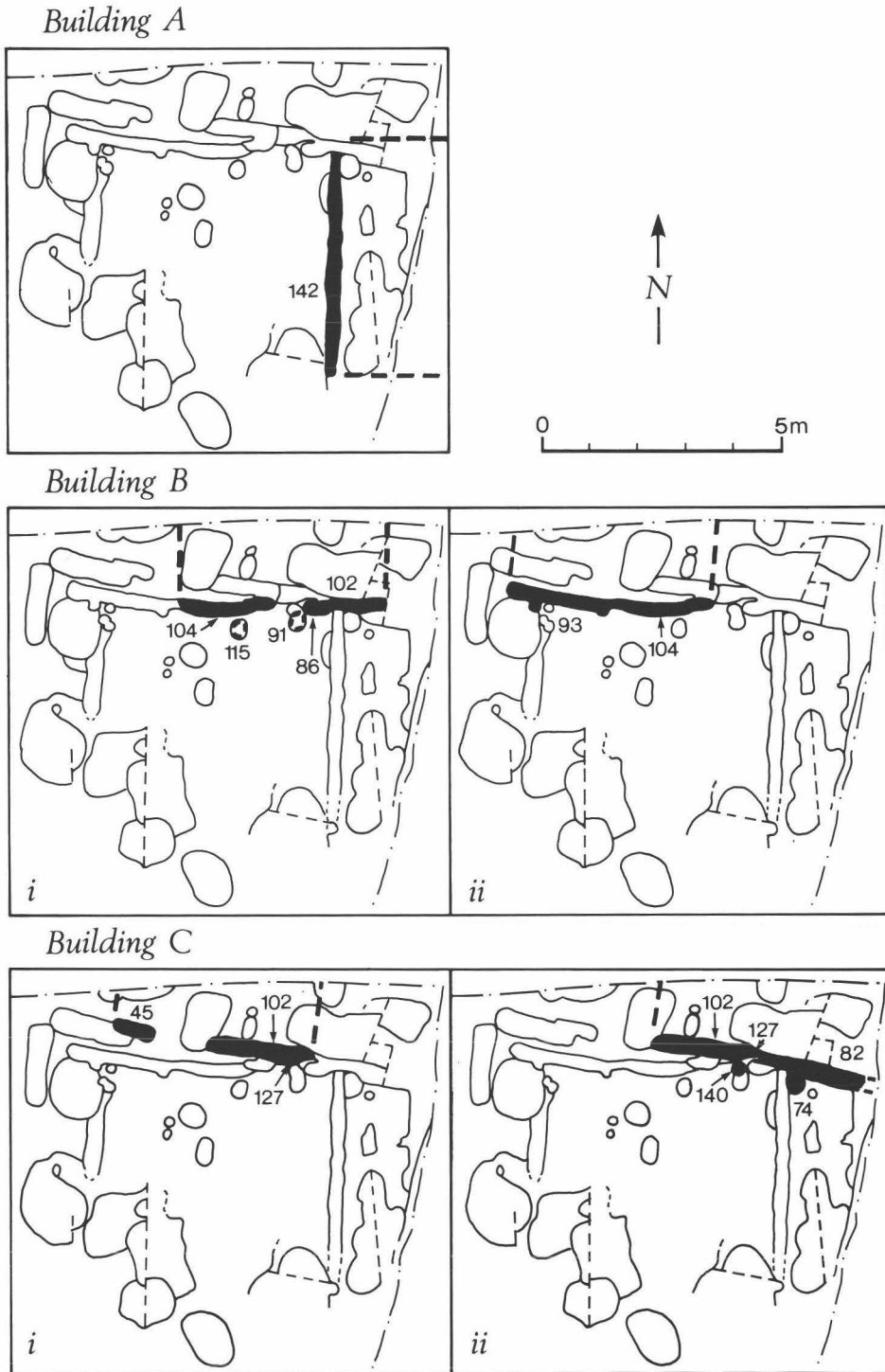


Fig. 6. Coombe Court: alternative interpretations of buildings.

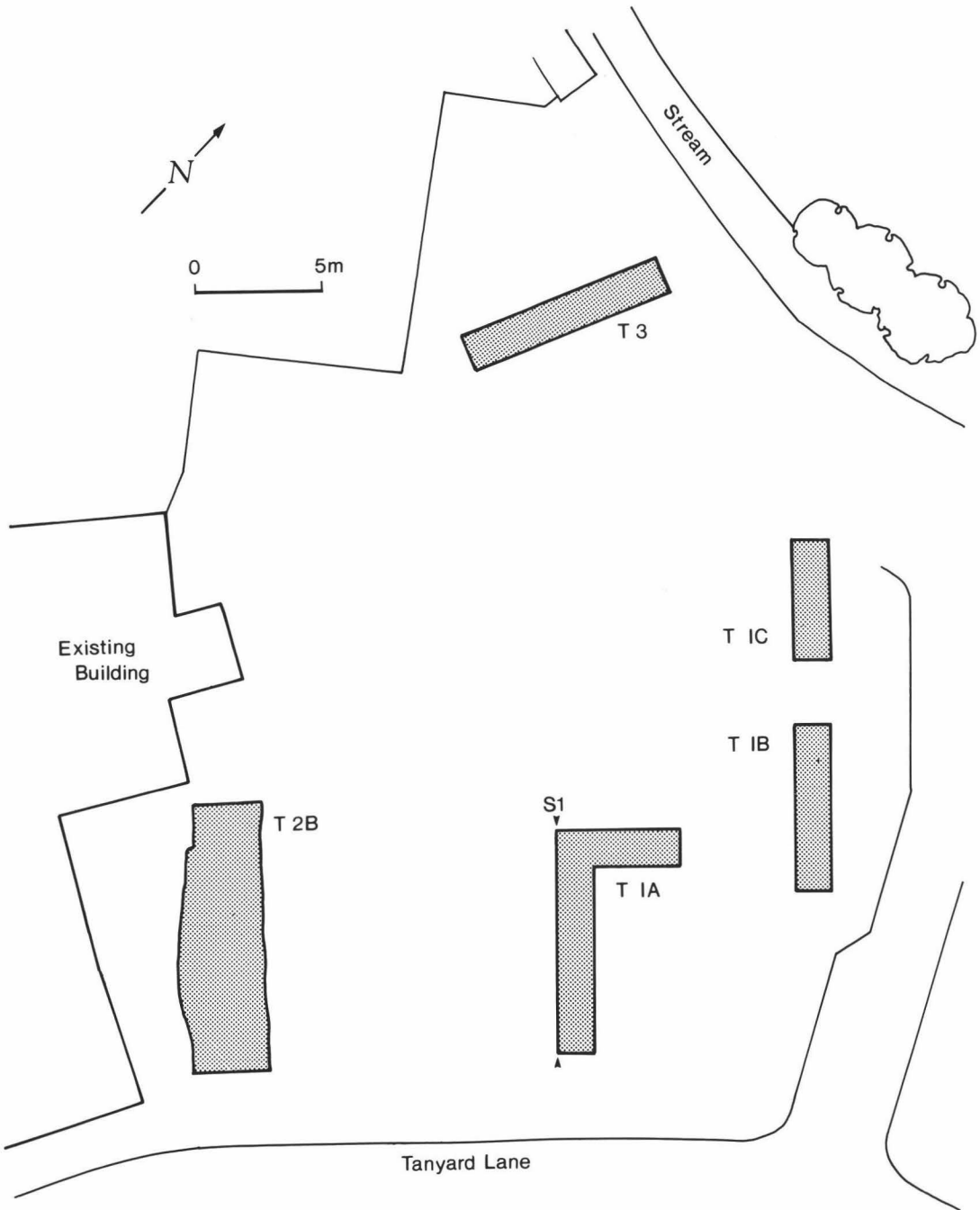


Fig. 7. Tanyard Lane: location plan of trenches.

flint nodules had been laid down during the later medieval period directly over the Saxo-Norman soil (44), probably to make up the height of the ground

surface above the wet land near Tanyard Stream. One poorly defined feature was only recognized in the north-east-facing section of the trench. This

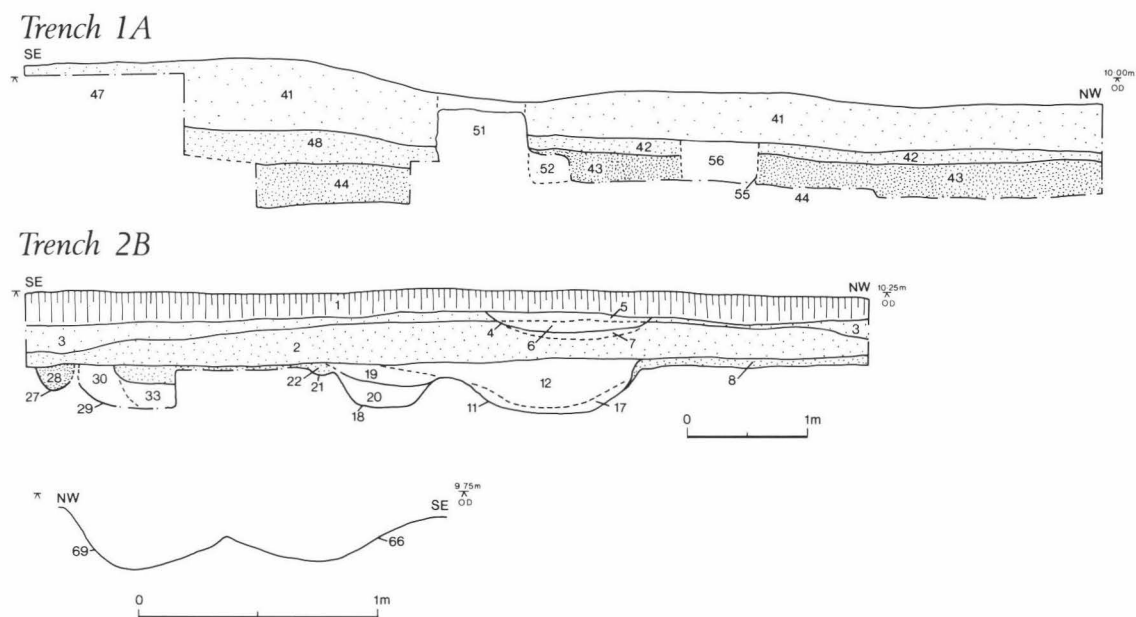


Fig. 8. Tanyard Lane: sections.

ditch (55) appeared to cut layers 42 and 43, but the extremely wet conditions under which the excavation was conducted prevented any further investigation.

TRENCH 2B (Figs 8 & 9)

A number of later medieval features were revealed in trench 2B, cut into the Saxo-Norman layer, 8. The foundations for the intended building were likely to remove these remains and consequently it was decided to extend trench 2B. Nineteen intercutting pits were located in the extended trench. These features were all roughly circular in plan and ranged in size from 550 mm to 2100 mm in diameter and from 90 mm to 470 mm in depth. The shallow nature of the cuts may indicate that the stratigraphy has been truncated since the medieval period.

Sixteen of these pits had gently sloping concave sides and irregular, but near horizontal bases. The remaining three features (cuts 64, 66 & 69) had markedly steeper sides and concave bases. All of the pits contained very similar, compact, silty clay fills. Owing to the similarity of the pit fills and adverse conditions during the excavation, few stratigraphic relationships were ascertained from the cut features. Despite this, post-excavation analysis of the recovered pottery identified two distinct

groups of pits.

The pottery from the site can be attributed to 1100–1350, with most of the activity probably dating to the middle of this period. However, a group of pits containing a substantial proportion of Saxo-Norman wares was isolated. Pits 29, 64, 66, 71 and 73 were recognized as early, on this basis. These five early features had an average diameter of approximately 900 mm and an average depth of 150 mm. Later pits had an average diameter of about 1020 mm and were 240 mm in depth.

Study of the pottery led to the identification of a number of kiln wasters. These were recovered from both the early and later features. They were presumably residual in the later contexts. The presence of wasters in the primary pit fills suggests that they may have been dug, at least in part, for their disposal. No kilns or associated features were located during the excavation. However, the quantity of waster sherds and the defects displayed by some of these, which would have rendered them impossible to use, indicate that firing must have taken place nearby. Several fragments of ceramic material were also found with uneven surfaces and impressions of grass or twigs. These may either be waste material or part of the kiln structure.

The medieval pits contained very high densities

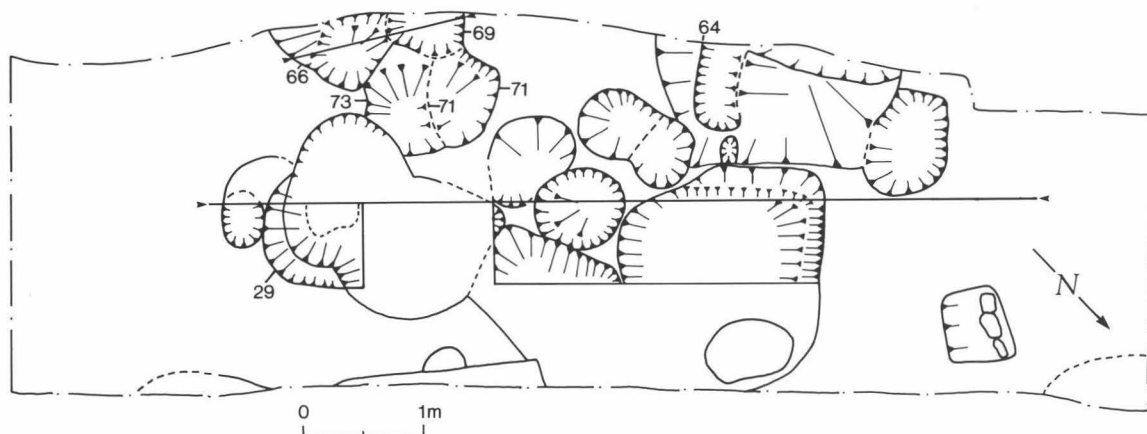


Fig. 9. Tanyard Lane: plan of trench 2B.

of pottery, but it is extremely doubtful whether all the recovered ceramics were wasters. The diversity of ceramic fabrics and the presence of sooting on the exterior of a number of sherds suggests that the pits contained both kiln throw-outs and domestic waste. Other ecofacts and artefacts within the pits included oyster shells, a quernstone fragment, plant remains and animal bones indicating the mixed origin of the deposits. A study of the presence/absence and relative percentages of the different skeletal elements in the bone assemblage revealed that these bone deposits were residues from the slaughtering and butchery of animals, rather than domestic kitchen refuse.

DISCUSSION By Mark Gardiner & Christopher Greatorex
 The archaeological evidence recorded at Tanyard Lane suggests that the site lay close to the Saxo-Norman settlement of Steyning. Pottery dating to after c. 1100 was found within the lowest deposits (8, 44) and presumably discarded from the nearby settlement. There is no evidence otherwise of activity on the site. During the early 13th century, pits were excavated into the deposits, and filled with domestic rubbish and industrial waste from a nearby pottery kiln. Dyer (1982) notes that pottery production was not a high social status craft in the medieval period and potters often combined ceramic production with other activities. Rubbish pits ceased to be dug around 1350, either because of a contraction in settlement, or more probably because of a change in the practice of rubbish disposal.

Pottery production sites before the Norman Conquest were commonly located within urban

centres; later, they were generally situated in the countryside and where urban-based industries of the later medieval period have been identified, their kilns were often situated at the margins of the towns (McCarthy & Brooks 1988, 70). The 13th-century kiln at Orchard Street in Chichester is a local example (Down & Rule 1971, 153-4). The Steyning kiln was also in such a location. It is informative to consider the relationship of kilns with urban centres in Sussex. The Ringmer industry has a clear relationship with the nearby town of Lewes as do the kilns at Spital Field with Rye. The Bohemia kilns lay close to the medieval town of Hastings. Some other kilns were remote from any urban centre, but many ceramic production centres were clearly established to take advantage of markets in towns (Streeten 1981, 331).

The kiln at Steyning joins a substantial number of pottery production centres known from south-east England (Streeten 1981, 324). The clays at the foot of the South Downs seem to have been particularly favoured and a string of medieval kilns is now known stretching from Heyshott and Graffham in the west through Steyning and Streat to Ringmer (Aldsworth & Down 1990; Farrant 1983, 121-2; Hadfield 1981). The Heyshott, Graffham and Ringmer kilns all lay near to the boundary of the Gault Clay and Lower Greensand. The kiln at Marchants Farm, Streat was situated further north on the Weald Clay. The Steyning kiln, which was very probably situated very close to the excavated area, lay on a different geology. It stood upon the Upper Greensand, close to the boundary with the

Lower Chalk. The nearest source of clay was the outcrop of Gault 900 m to the north, but the sand temper probably came from the Lower Greensand 2½ km away. In this case the costs of transporting the raw materials to the kiln must have been offset by the advantage of proximity to a market.

The area of distribution of Steyning ware has yet to be identified. The site at America Wood (Ashington) may have been using the products of the Steyning pottery, although their rim forms are rather different (*cf.* Gardiner 1994, 46-7). Alternatively, there may have been a further unidentified kiln supplying the Ashington site. Sandy wares have been previously noted in earlier excavations in Steyning and the vicinity, for example at Testers (Gardiner 1988, 69: fabric 13) and at Botolphs (Gardiner 1990, 257: EC ware). Study of sites in the vicinity will, no doubt, reveal further evidence of the extent of distribution.

PART 3: EXCAVATIONS AT STEYNING LIBRARY, 1994-5

By Christopher Greatorex

In 1962, Worthing Museum undertook excavations on land opposite Steyning church before the extension of Steyning Grammar School. The work had revealed archaeological deposits dating from the 10th to 18th century. When in 1994 plans were agreed to extend Steyning Library, West Sussex County Council commissioned the Field Archaeology Unit first to undertake an assessment of the archaeological remains, and subsequently, in January 1995, to excavate the entire area of the development.

The published report of the earlier excavations contains a number of ambiguities (Barton 1986a). Indeed, the precise location of the earlier work could not be accurately determined. One of the objectives of the subsequent work was, therefore, to define the position of the previous excavation. The second objective was to record features in the previously unexcavated area and relate these to the development of the town.

The site was located to the east of Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex and south of Vicarage Lane (TQ 17831134). It measured 636 sq.m in area and before work commenced was a landscaped area of grass and shrubs, bounded by paved footpaths on the north and west, and by Steyning Library to the south.

Under archaeological supervision the topsoil was removed from the site by mechanical excavator to expose the underlying natural Upper Greensand. No archaeological stratigraphy was identified above the surface of the underlying geology; all archaeological features were cut into the Upper Greensand.

Five 20th-century service trenches were identified within the area of excavation. These comprised two telecom cables, one electricity cable, a drain and a foul water sewer. A gravel-filled drainage channel associated with the original library building was also recorded. Six other definite 20th-century features were located during the excavation. All of the modern cuts found within the area of excavation had destroyed or disturbed features of archaeological significance.

AREA OF THE 1962 EXCAVATION

A number of pits and post-holes filled by a homogeneous deposit of light grey-brown, silty clay and containing fragments of 20th-century brick were located in the north-eastern half of the site. The shape and nature of the fills indicated that these cuts were backfilled archaeological features excavated in 1962. The plan of these features was compared by John Mills, Assistant County Archaeologist for West Sussex County Council, with those in the published report and the site notebooks held by Worthing Museum. He was able to determine the orientation and scale of the plan, and so relate the published drawing of Area 2, Period 1 to the features recorded in 1995. Nineteen of the cuts found in 1995 could be identified with the plan of Period 1 and two others with Period 2, Phases 1 and 2 (Barton 1986a, figs 2 & 3). Table 1 shows the concordance between the 1962 and 1988 feature numbers and their dates based on pottery now in Worthing Museum, which was re-examined and redated.

Barton discovered two wells during his excavation of area 2. One of these wells was located to the east of the library development site. Well 2, which contained late medieval pottery, corresponds with the concrete pad found in 1995 (Fig. 10). The pad was presumably laid to provide a secure base for the footings over the many feet of loose backfill dumped after the original excavation of this deep feature.

One notable pit, P14, shown on the published plan of area 2, period 1, was not located during the 1995 excavation. No reference to this feature, which may have only been a shallow scoop, was found in

the site records. The later work also failed to locate a number of post-holes and a small pit, assigned by Barton to area 2, period 2, phases 1 and 2. In 1995, no certain evidence was found for either the 13th- to 14th-century sunken-floor building or the 15th-century lime pit. It is possible that the shallow, irregularly shaped cuts 77, 79, 84, 128 and 130 located in 1995 represent traces of these two excavated features. No evidence was recovered for the sunken trackway dated to 1450–1600, or any of the period 2 structural features excavated within area 2 by Worthing Museum. Those building remains had evidently been removed during the course of the earlier excavation.

Three additional possible post-holes (124, 132 & 165) and four shallow pits (47, 135, 139 & 167) not shown on the published plan were located within Barton's area 2. All contained fragments of 20th-century brick suggesting that they had been excavated and backfilled. Two previously unexcavated intercutting scoops (154 & 156) were located. These had a maximum depth of only 70 mm and were filled by an indistinct deposit of very light grey-green silty-clay. It would appear that they were overlooked during the 1962 work. Twelve features (63, 65, 116, 118, 120, 122, 163, 172, 174, 223, 229 & 231) within a discrete area measuring approximately 2.7 m by 5.7 m lay immediately outside the area shown on the published plans. Nevertheless, all contained modern material and had probably been excavated in 1962 (Figs 10 & 12).

NEWLY EXCAVATED AREA

The site at Steyning Library was not deeply stratified and consisted of discrete features which generally had no physical relationship. The presence of residual and intrusive artefacts is a problem on a site such as this, where activity continued for about 800 years with little or no increase in the depth of deposits. Some of the dates assigned to features are therefore offered tentatively.

Two newly excavated pits (107 & 186) were assigned dates of 1050–1225. Two other pits (193 & 211) and a possible post-hole (206) contained pottery dating to 1125–1250. Curiously, those pits of the same date excavated by Barton (75, 137, 147 & 256) are illustrated as rectangular in shape and were interpreted as cesspits (Barton 1986a). The newly dug pits (193 & 211) were circular and the finds suggest their use as domestic rubbish pits.

Three other pits (35, 188 & 204) were attributed

to the period 1200–1300 and a fourth (217) to 1225–1350. Three large intercutting sub-circular features (23, 27 & 29) were revealed at the western end of the site. These rubbish pits all appeared to have concave sides and flattish bases. Adverse weather conditions prevented the detailed study of these. Pit 29 was the deepest of the three with a depth of 0.75 m below the existing ground surface. It was dated to the period 1150–1275. Pit 23 was approximately 3.0 m in diameter and contained six fills. The pit was dated to the 13th century and contained the complete upper part of a jug and 94 sherds from a tripod pitcher. No dating evidence was found for pit 27. Four sub-circular pits (37, 209, 213 & 215) were dated to the period 1250–1450.

A discrete group of two pits (101 & 112) and two possible post-holes (110 & 219) were identified in the centre of the site and dated to 1400–1525. These are evidently related to phases 1 and 2 (1450–1600) of the building excavated by Barton in 1962.

Two short ditches were recorded. The earlier (59), dated to 1275–1450, was cut by pits 101 and 215, and by a modern sewer. The second (57) was only 250 mm deep at the northern end and became increasingly shallow towards the south. Indeed, the southern end of the cut proved impossible to define. Four distinct fills were identified along its length (56, 58, 244 & 245). Pottery dating to 1650–1700 was recovered from contexts 56 and 58. Fill 244 was assigned a spot-date of 1575–1700. A piece of carved limestone was retrieved from context 244 and a fragment of lead window came was also collected from fill 58. It is possible that both these finds came from St Andrew's Church which stands opposite the site. A possible context is the demolition of the chancel and the west bay(s) of the nave in the early 17th century (*V.C.H. Sussex* 6 i, 244).

The ditch (57) was edged with a narrow wall (69) 200 mm wide of which only two courses of flint pebbles and occasional Greensand pieces survived. The wall included a carved limestone fragment, similar in character to the piece found in cut 57. The west side of context 69 was faced to form an external surface against the ditch. The ditch and related wall is on the same alignment as the period 2, phase 3 (1600–1700) structures excavated by Barton to which it was evidently related (Fig. 13). An internal wall, running at right angles from external wall 69 consisted of a very heavily disturbed alignment of individual flint pebbles (243) within a 80 mm-deep concave cut.

A stone-lined oven was formed by a circular cut

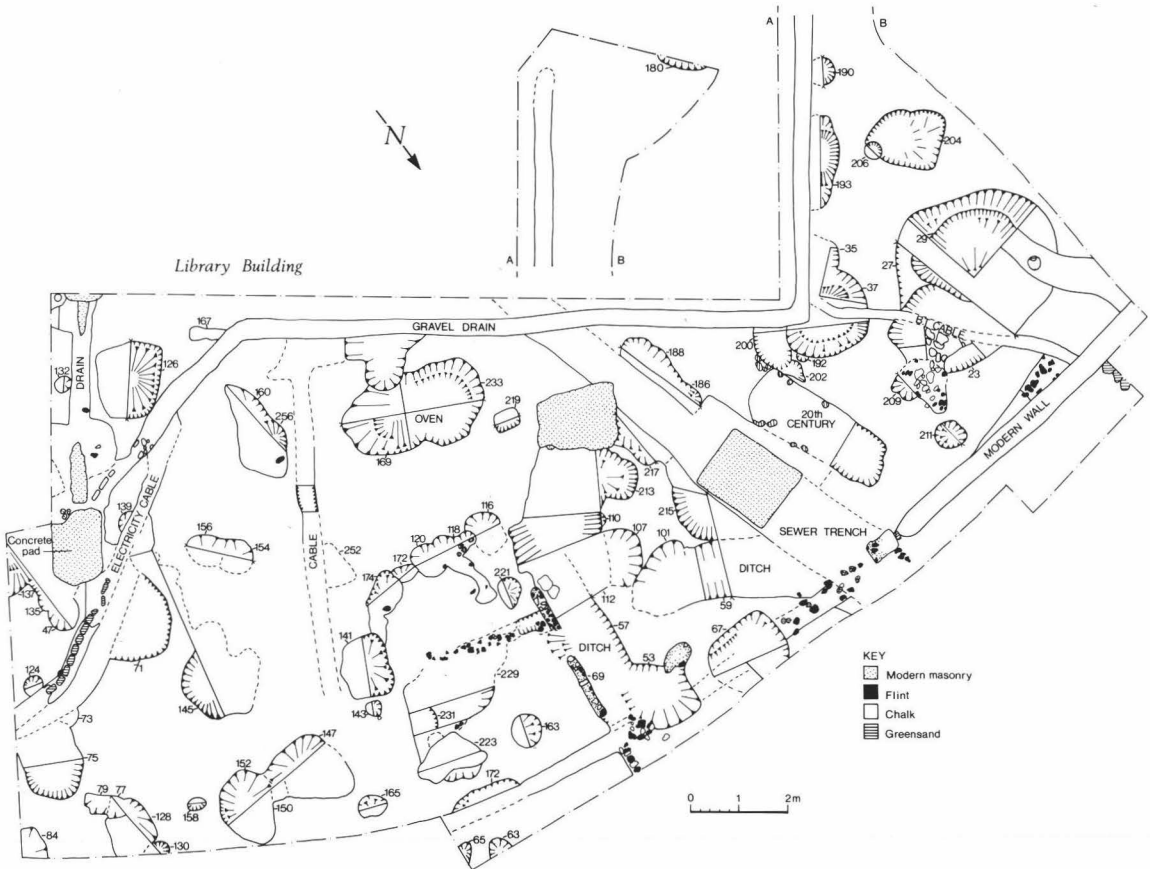


Fig. 10. Steyning Library: site plan.

with steeply sloping sides and a flat base (233) (Fig. 11). It was lined by a single course of dressed Lower Greensand blocks bonded together by a light pink mortar. The mouth of the oven was on the east side and beyond it the flue (cut 169). There were two floor layers in the oven. The later of these consisted of aligned tile-shaped pieces of Lower Greensand set on edge in a layer of light pink mortar (171). The earlier floor layer (235) was formed from a similar pattern of Lower Greensand pieces, but aligned at right angles to the later. Floor 235 was

located above a layer of burnt Greensand (234). It was unclear if this deposit was an oven fill or simply burnt natural stone. The fill (171) of the flue contained a sherd of pottery dating to 1575-1675 which provided the only dating evidence.

DISCUSSION

The fragmentary remains found during the 1995 excavation are difficult to interpret, even when considered with the results of the earlier work. The division of activity into three partially overlapping

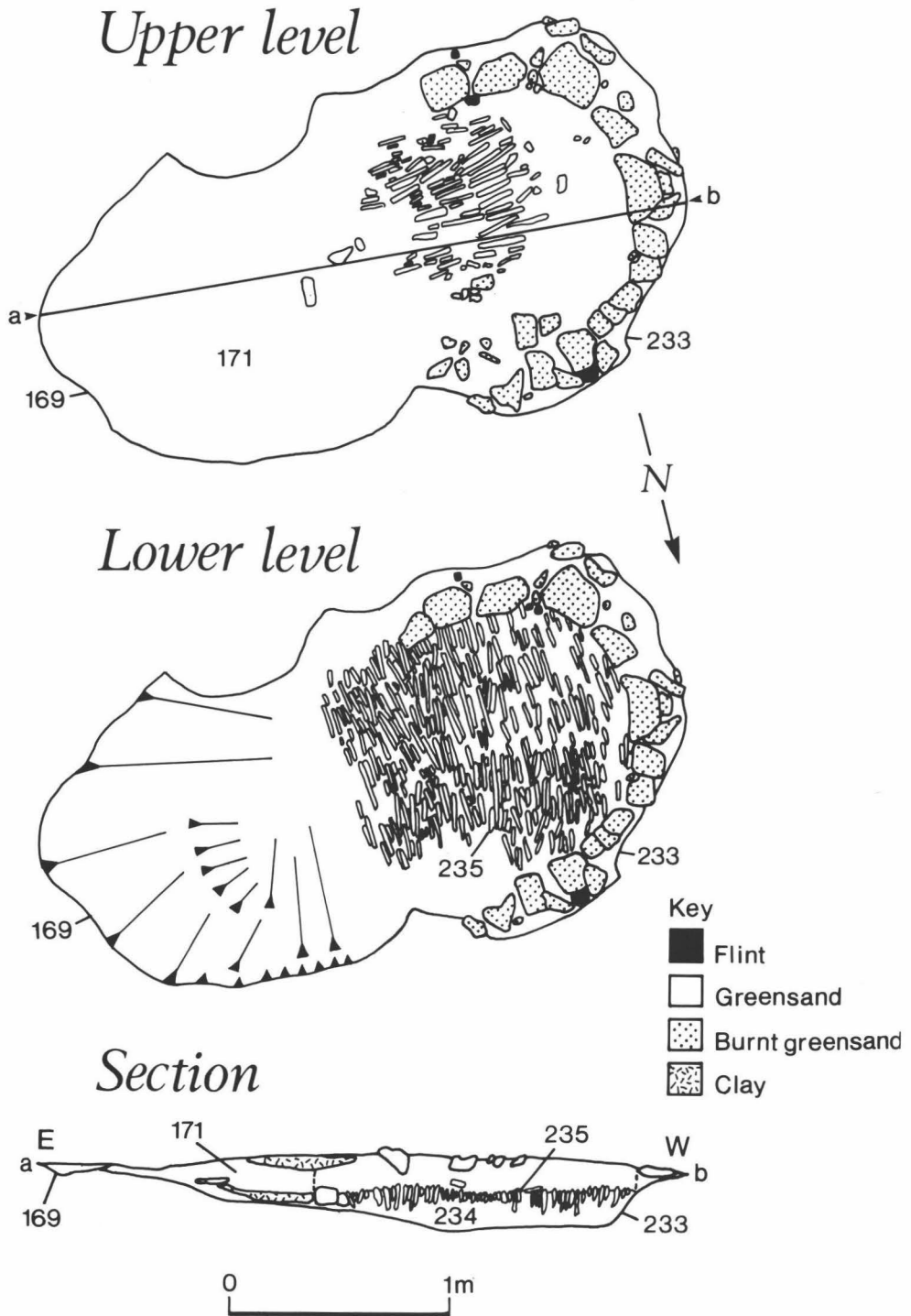


Fig. 11. Steyning Library: plan and section of oven.

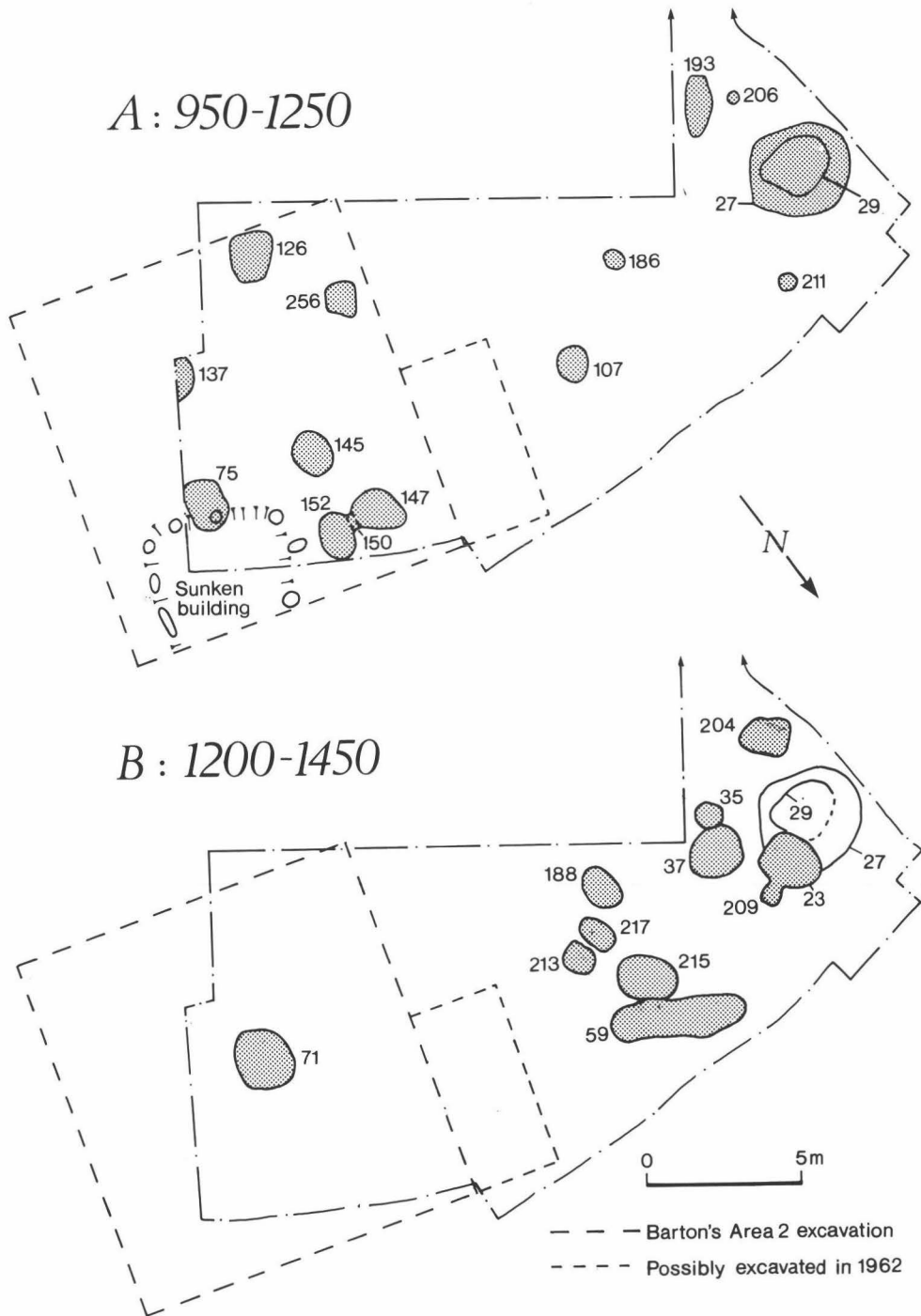


Fig. 12. Steyning Library: phase plans - A: 950-1250, B: 1200-1450.

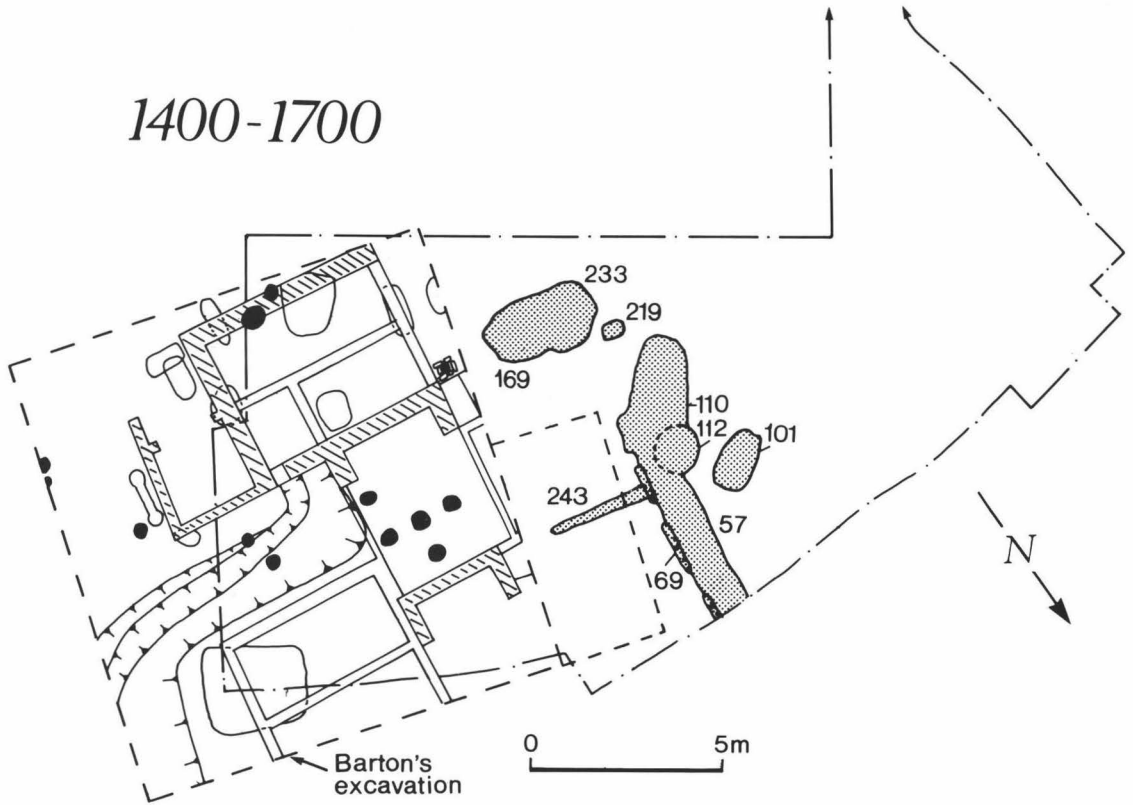


Fig. 13. Steyning Library: phase plan 1400-1700.

phases, however, does allow general trends to be identified.

Barton's view that the site was not exploited intensively before the 11th century is largely supported by the recent work. Three of the pits (126, 145 & 152) excavated in 1962 contained pottery within the range AD 950 to 1150, but activity did not increase until the 13th century. All the pits predating 1250 lay on the east side of the excavation, with the exceptions of the inter-cutting pits 27 and 29 (Fig. 12A). The latter was dated to 1150-1275 and cut the undated pit 27. The only excavated building was that recorded by Barton with a sunken floor which he dated to the 13th or 14th century. The date was tentatively assigned on the evidence that the building cut a pit containing '12th-century pottery' (Barton 1986a, 98), which has been related here to the period 1050-1200 (Table 1). An earlier date is more satisfactory, since cellared or sunken-floored buildings with timber posts at the peripheries are known from many late Anglo-Saxon

Table 1. Concordance between excavated features.

1962 Excavation	1994 Excavation	Revised dates
P24	71	1250-1450
Period 2, phase 1/2 post-hole	73	
P16	75	1050-1200
Part of lime pit	77	
Part of lime pit	79	
P15	126	950-1150
Part of lime pit	128	
Post-hole for <i>Grubenhäus</i>	130	
P6	137	1150-1250
Unnumbered pit	141	
P11	145	1000-1150
P1	147	1100-1225
Part of P1	150	1100-1225
P2	152	950-1150
Post-hole for <i>Grubenhäus</i>	158	
Period 2, phase 1/2 pit	160	
P23	256	1125-1225

towns, including London (Horsman *et al.* 1988, 108-9), York, Thetford, Oxford, Northampton, Chester and even the small town of Bampton in Oxfordshire

(Hall 1984, information from Dr John Blair). The tradition of sunken-building construction continued after the Norman Conquest, but had disappeared by the late 12th century. It is improbable that the Steyning example was a cellared structure since it was so shallow that its position could not be identified in the excavation of 1994-5.

It is notable that in the second phase, 1200 to 1450, all the cut features were located on the west side of the site with the exception of pit 71 (Fig. 12B). The virtual absence of pits on the east side of the site may indicate that it was occupied by a

ground-set building. No evidence for such a building was discovered, but any such remains could have been removed in the subsequent phase.

The third phase (1400 to 1700) recognized was contemporary with Barton's period 2 (Fig. 13). The excavated wall 243 lies on the same alignment as a wall identified in 1962 and the wall 69 marks the west end of the building. A ditch (57) beyond this wall marks the limit of activity in this phase; only a single pit (101) lies further west. The oven (169) may have been situated within a building, but no structure was identified in the recent excavations.

PART 4: FINDS

POTTERY By Mark Gardiner, incorporating information from Sue Hamilton on the prehistoric pottery

Introduction

The pottery from Steyning and the vicinity has been considered in a number of recent reports. The Saxon and Saxo-Norman fabrics have been outlined by Gardiner (1990; 1993) using the large groups excavated at Botolphs and Market Field, Steyning. The later medieval pottery has been studied in less detail. Pottery from Cuthman's Field, Fletcher's Croft, Tanyard Lane (Chantry Green House), Testers in Steyning and Bramber Castle have been reported, but the different descriptions and means of analysis do not allow a comparative view of the types and development of pottery from c. 1150 (Barton 1979, 134-8; 1986a,b; Barton & Holden 1977; Freke 1979; Gardiner 1988). The present report seeks to draw together the pottery types identified at sites in the vicinity, Strettham (Henfield), at America Wood (Ashington) and at Botolphs (Bramber) and to refine the later medieval fabric series for the Steyning area (Gardiner 1990; 1994).

The limitations in knowledge of the pottery of this area should be stressed at the outset. There is almost no independent dating for pottery anywhere in the area, and all dates are at best approximations. Only at Bramber Castle was it possible to tie the ceramic sequence to datable layers, although even that evidence was not entirely secure.

The ceramic sequence may be outlined briefly. The Saxo-Norman wares are prefixed with the letter 'D'. Fabrics DA and DB date from the 10th to beginning of the 12th century and are important chronological markers. The flint-tempered fabrics include DC, DD and DH. The first of these is a development of mid-Saxon pottery, and where reduced may be as early as the 10th century, and unlikely to be later than about 1100 (Gardiner 1993, 41). Fabrics DD and DH are found throughout the Saxo-Norman period. There is no sharp break between the Saxo-Norman and medieval traditions, but around 1200 the fabrics become finer and flint-tempering declines. The high medieval fabrics are prefixed by the letters CSW (Central Sussex Weald). The beginning of the medieval tradition is marked locally by the appearance of Steyning Coarse Sandy and Steyning Medium Sandy fabrics (SCS, SCsm, SMS), which are described below. During the 15th century the fabrics become harder-fired and there is some difficulty in separating the late medieval from the Transitional wares. The

appearance of new forms, and thick internal and external glazing, together with the presence of imported stonewares, makes the dating more certain in the late 15th and 16th century.

Flint only occurs as a regular inclusion in the later medieval wares in Fabric CSW 32 where it is white and angular in contrast to the multi-coloured sub-angular or sub-rounded flint in the Saxo-Norman fabrics already mentioned. White angular flint is found in wares produced at Binsted and Orchard Street, Chichester, and may be a feature of 13th-century kilns on the Coastal Plain.

CSW 33 is newly identified here. It resembles fabric DB, and cannot always be separated from it. The rim forms are similar. It contains very little, if any, of the limestone inclusions, with the exception of chalk, which characterise DB (Gardiner 1990, 253-4). It is not clear whether it is a Saxo-Norman fabric or might continue into the 13th century.

Method of analysis

The treatment of the pottery varied according to the nature of the assemblages and resources available. The pottery from Coombe Court was not quantified, except by a simple sherd count. A total of 842 sherds were recovered from stratified contexts. The very small numbers of sherds recovered from many of the contexts do not allow meaningful quantification. The pottery study was therefore limited to spot-dating and only larger groups were sorted by fabric and quantified. A more important group of ceramics was the material recovered from the Tanyard Lane excavation. It comprised 2056 sherds weighing 29.8 kg of pottery recovered from 30 contexts. The number of rim Estimated Vessel Equivalents (rim EVEs) recorded was 11.54, which is too low for useful analysis. The measure used for the analysis of pottery was sherd weight. A total of 10.9 kg of pottery comprising 993 sherds was recovered from 56 contexts at the Steyning Library site. Too few rims were recovered to use the measure of EVEs. Sherd weight was therefore used in the analysis of pottery. The pottery excavated in 1962 by Barton (1986a) from the features lying within the area of the library extension, and now deposited in Worthing Museum, was re-examined, but not quantified.

Coombe Court

Seven sherds of prehistoric pottery were found of which four were unstratified and the remainder residual in later contexts. All are medium flint-gritted wares and may be dated to the period 1000 to 300 BC. These sherds may be considered with the stratified pottery recorded at Testers, White Horse Square

(Hamilton 1988) and is further evidence for the prehistoric usage of the area. No Roman pottery was present.

The Late Anglo-Saxon contexts can be distinguished from those of a slightly later date by the presence of significant proportions of DA and DB fabrics. The Saxo-Norman pottery is largely of fabrics DD and DH. Imports are represented by one sherd of red-painted Pingsdorf or Beauvais ware, one sherd which may be certainly identified as Normandy Gritty Ware (NGW) and a second sherd probably of the same fabric. Sherds of Pingsdorf or Beauvais ware have been found in many excavations within Steyning and in work in the surrounding area (Evans 1986; Gardiner 1990, 255; 1993, 41). NGW jugs, the form represented at Steyning, are found in England in the mid- to late 12th century and now appear to continue into the 15th century (Thomson 1980, 678; Thomson pers. comm.). Vessels in NGW are known locally from Pevensey, Lewes and Hastings; their discovery here, together the sherd of 12th-century French painted ware found at Fletcher's Croft (Barton 1986b, 93), reflects the pattern of trade across the Channel in the post-Conquest period (Hurst 1981). All the imported sherds were unstratified, except for the one tentatively identified piece of NGW from context 64, the fill of pit 63.

Tanyard Lane

It became apparent during the course of study of the pottery from Tanyard Lane that the assemblage contained a number of wasters. Wasters were present in most of the large pits, not only in the uppermost layers, but also in the primary fills, suggesting that the pits may have been dug in part for their disposal. The proportion of identified wasters is relatively small, about 3½% by weight of the total, but this is unlikely to be indicative of the actual quantity. Only sherds which were clearly damaged during the firing process were classified as wasters. These were mainly recognized by the presence of glaze on broken edges, which could only have happened during firing. A greater number of sherds showed some signs of spalling, which may have occurred in the kiln, or could equally have happened during usage. One bowl has sooting on the base and exterior produced by use, but an examination of the faces, margins and core shows that spalling had taken place during kiln firing.

Three fabrics were identified among the wasters, although one, CSW 7, is represented only by a single sherd and the

identification is tentative. These had been previously called CSW 6, 7 and 10, but these codes may now usefully be replaced by common names. The first two are now called Steyning Coarse Sandy ware or SCS. CSW 6 is distinguished from CSW 7 by the presence of mica and may be separately identified as SCSm. The third fabric, CSW 10, shall be called Steyning Medium Sandy ware (SMS). SMS formed 61% of the total pottery recovered from the site and, if the pottery recovered is representative, was the main product of the kiln. There are clear similarities between products in SCSm and SMS, but most jugs found were in the finer fabric. Some jugs had a white slip on the interior. Bowls were produced in both fabrics and the flange rims were commonly decorated by combing (Fig. 15:16). The glaze was often applied in a casual manner, and only the upper parts of the exterior of jugs were so decorated.

Wasters were also identified among the roof tile. The kiln waste is mostly identifiable as glazed ridge pieces, and these may have been the only building material produced in the kiln. The ridge tile is notable for the diagonal slashes applied to the under-surface. The fabric is similar to SCSm, but used coarser sand-grade temper.

The pottery from the site can be attributed to the period 1100 to 1350 with a few later sherds which may be intrusive. Most of the activity probably dates from the middle of that range. The glazed jugs in Steyning Medium Sandy ware belong to the full medieval tradition of pottery manufacture. They are unlikely to date from before 1200, and indeed may possibly date from after 1225.

Stratigraphically, the earliest contexts are 2 and 8 in trench 2B and the equivalent layers, 43 and 44 in trench 1A. The lowest deposits (8 and 44) have a high proportion of Saxo-Norman wares, but they do not include fabric DA which seems to disappear around 1100, and these were probably laid down after that time (Table 3). A second group of contexts may be identified which have a substantial proportion of Saxo-Norman wares — at least 35% compared to the mean for the site of 12% — and relatively low proportions of SMS ware — less than 35% compared with a mean of 61%. Pits 29, 64, 66, 71 and 73 may be recognized as probably early on this basis.

An terminal date of 1350 is proposed for the excavated features on the basis that none contains a significant proportion of the jugs in fine fabrics. The jugs produced in SMS are in a comparatively coarse fabric and would have been in competition with 'West Sussex Ware' products.

Steyning Library

Barton identified five phases of activity from the 1962 excavations at Steyning Library but, as he recognized, his first phase can be subdivided. He suggested that there was little activity on the site before the 11th century. Re-examination of his pottery and the finds from the recent excavation generally support that statement, although some sherds might belong to the 10th century, namely those from Barton's area 2 contexts P2, 13, 15, and from context 230 in the 1994 excavation. It is notable that the earlier fabrics, DA, DB and DC, have a smaller average sherd size (5.9 g) than the full medieval fabrics (12.7 g), reflecting both the softer nature of the ceramics, but also the residual, more fragmented character of the pieces recovered.

The second and third of Barton's phases covers broadly the period of Transitional wares. His fourth phase covers the 17th century and he concludes with a phase at the demolition c. 1720. These later phases are not well represented in the

Table 2. Weight (g) of wasters recorded.

Fabric	Recorded wasters	Total from site
SCSm	211	6071
SCS	11	674
SMS	635	18,193

Table 3. Pottery types in underlying layers.

Fill	Sherd number (percentage)				Total sherd weight
	Saxo-Norman	SCSm and SCS	SMS	Other	
2	36	11	29	27	898
8	71	12	15	1	194
43	76	0	19	5	845
44	100	0	0	0	158

ceramic record at Steyning Library, although some 17th-century pottery was present in closed contexts.

Catalogue and fabric descriptions

The fabric descriptions are divided into three groups. The Saxo-Norman fabrics identified elsewhere in the Adur Valley (prefaced with the letter D), the Central Sussex Weald series (CSW, see Gardiner 1994) and fabrics not previously identified. The study of the pottery has suggested that there is considerable overlap between the Saxo-Norman and later fabrics. Where full descriptions of these fabrics have been given elsewhere (Gardiner 1990; 1993; 1994), they are summarized below:

Fabric DA - Tempered with chalk and limestone fragments.

Fabric DB - Similar to DA with a greater quantity of fine sand quartz.

Fabric DD - Fine flint temper with inclusions less than 0.75 mm, coarser than DE.

1. Rim of cooking pot. Coombe Court, context 20, fill of pit 2.
2. Slashed handle probably from jug. Coombe Court, context 23, fill of pit 29.

Fabric DE - Fine flint or quartz temper.

Fabric DF - Medium to coarse sand quartz with occasional fragments of flint and chalk.

Fabric DH - Similar to DE, but with greater proportion of chalk or shell.

3. Low bowl, hand-made and trued up on a tournette. Coombe Court, context 3, fill of pit 2.
4. Cooking pot with sooting on body and slight traces around the rim. Large scar on body of the pot from spalling during firing. Coil-built body joined to a neck made on a tournette. Coombe Court, context 13, fill of pit 2.
5. Rim of cooking pot. Coombe Court, context 20, fill of pit 2.
6. Stamp-decorated handle, perhaps from storage vessel. Compare with Gardiner 1993, fig. 15, no. 11 for form. Cross stamps are a common type on Saxo-Norman pottery, see Barton 1979, 89. Coombe Court, context 13, fill of pit 2.

Fabric DL - Very fine sand-grade quartz and occasional fragments of chalk, shell and flint.

7. Sharply everted rim with incised line on exterior below the short neck. Fabric DL. Coombe Court, context 13, fill of pit 2.

Fabric CSW 3 - Coarse subangular sand with subangular multicoloured flint up to 1 mm across.

Fabric CSW 5 - Coarse subangular sand and broken shell fragments.

Steyning Coarse Sandy micaceous ware (SCSm, formerly Fabric CSW 6) - Coarse subrounded sand with some larger quartz

inclusions and some mica.

8, 9. Two pieces from pedestal dishes. The glazing, which occurs all over except beneath the pedestal, indicates that these pieces could not be from lids. The vessels could not, however, have contained liquids, as both have small holes at the bottom of the dish. These vessels are tentatively interpreted as chafing dishes. Their form is very similar to London Ware vessels of the same function which also have a central small hole in the bowl and openings in the pedestal base (Pearce *et al.* 1985, 44, fig. 73, no. 400). The round indented decoration on the base may also indicate that these pieces were intended for the table rather than the service rooms. The London Ware pieces were dated to the early 13th century, although it was acknowledged that there no similar dishes were known from such an early period. The Steyning dishes, however, are also likely to be 13th-century and possibly come from the first half of the century. Tanyard Lane, context 19, upper fill of pit 18, and context 12, upper fill of pit 11.

10. Corner from an angular, ?five-sided chimney pot with central top vent. It bears spots of glaze, though is unlikely to have been intentionally glazed itself. Tanyard Lane, context 32, fill of pit 31.

Steyning Coarse Sandy ware (SCS, formerly Fabric CSW 7) - Similar to CSW 6, but without mica.

Fabric CSW 8 - Medium sand and occasional iron ore flecks and mica.

Fabric CSW 9 - Fine grey or translucent sand.

11. Wide-mouthed cooking pot with applied horizontal band. Steyning Library, context 214, fill of pit 213.

Steyning Medium Sandy ware (SMS, formerly Fabric CSW 10) Pale grey core with pale grey or light buff surfaces. Hard, fairly smooth texture with rough fracture. Abundant grey medium sand.

12. Jug with scored decoration on exterior and stabbed decoration around the spout (not shown on illustration). The upper part of the interior is coated with white slip. Tanyard Lane, context 12, upper fill of pit 11.

13. Jug with strap handle decorated by two scored lines along the length. The outside is covered with splashes of glaze, and the top of the interior and rim with white slip. Tanyard Lane, context 19, fill of pit 18.

14, 15, 16. Bowls, variously decorated with glazing on interior of base and rim, and with combed rim. Tanyard Lane, context 12, upper fill of pit 11, and context 33, primary fill of pit 31.

17. Small saucer with raised interior which has cracked and deformed during firing. Tanyard Lane, context 61, fill of pit 60.

18. Handle from skillet, pipkin or dripping pan handle with incised herring-bone pattern. A similar decoration occurs on another handle of the same type. Tanyard Lane, context 17, primary fill of pit 11.

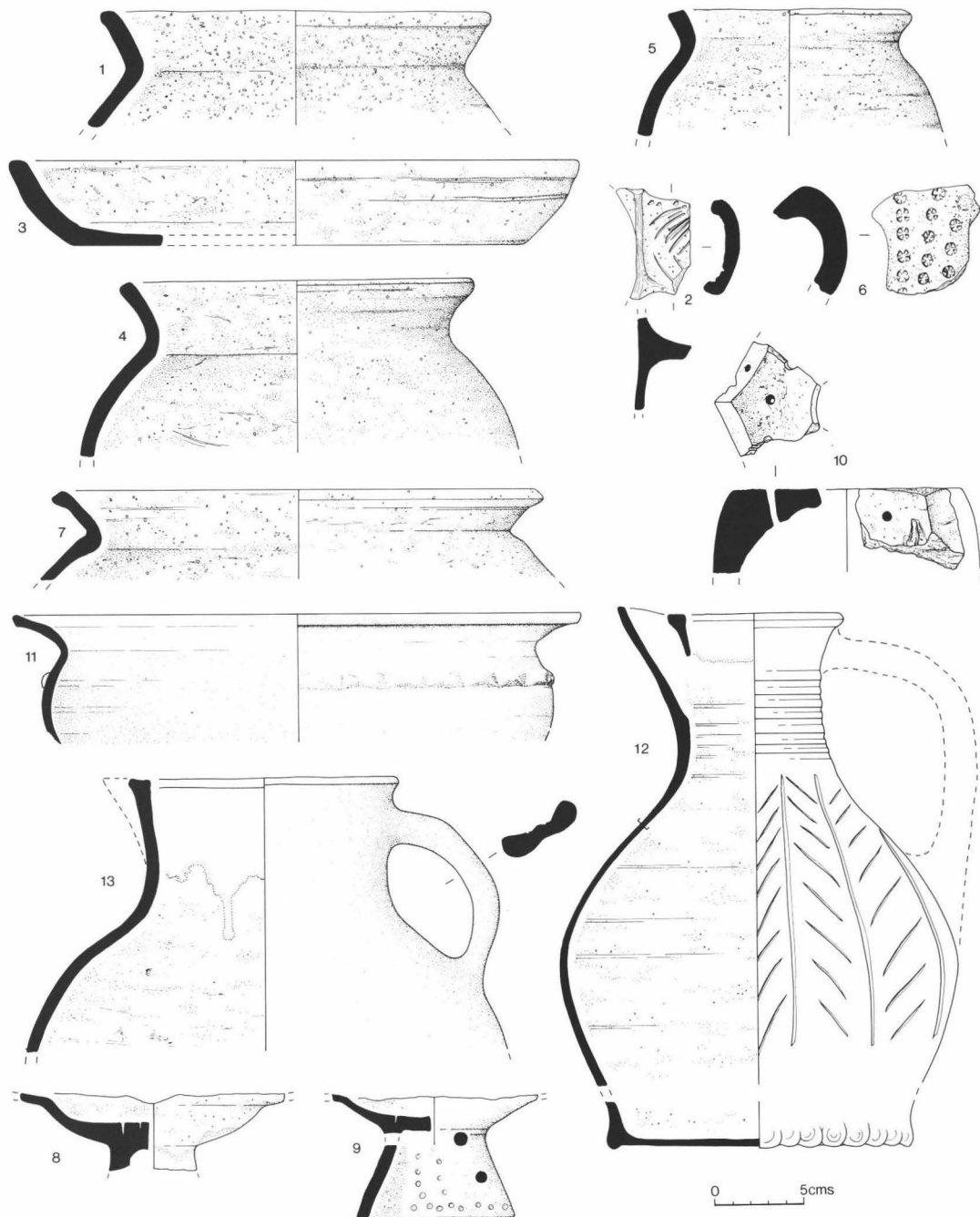


Fig. 14. Pottery (scale $\times 1/4$).

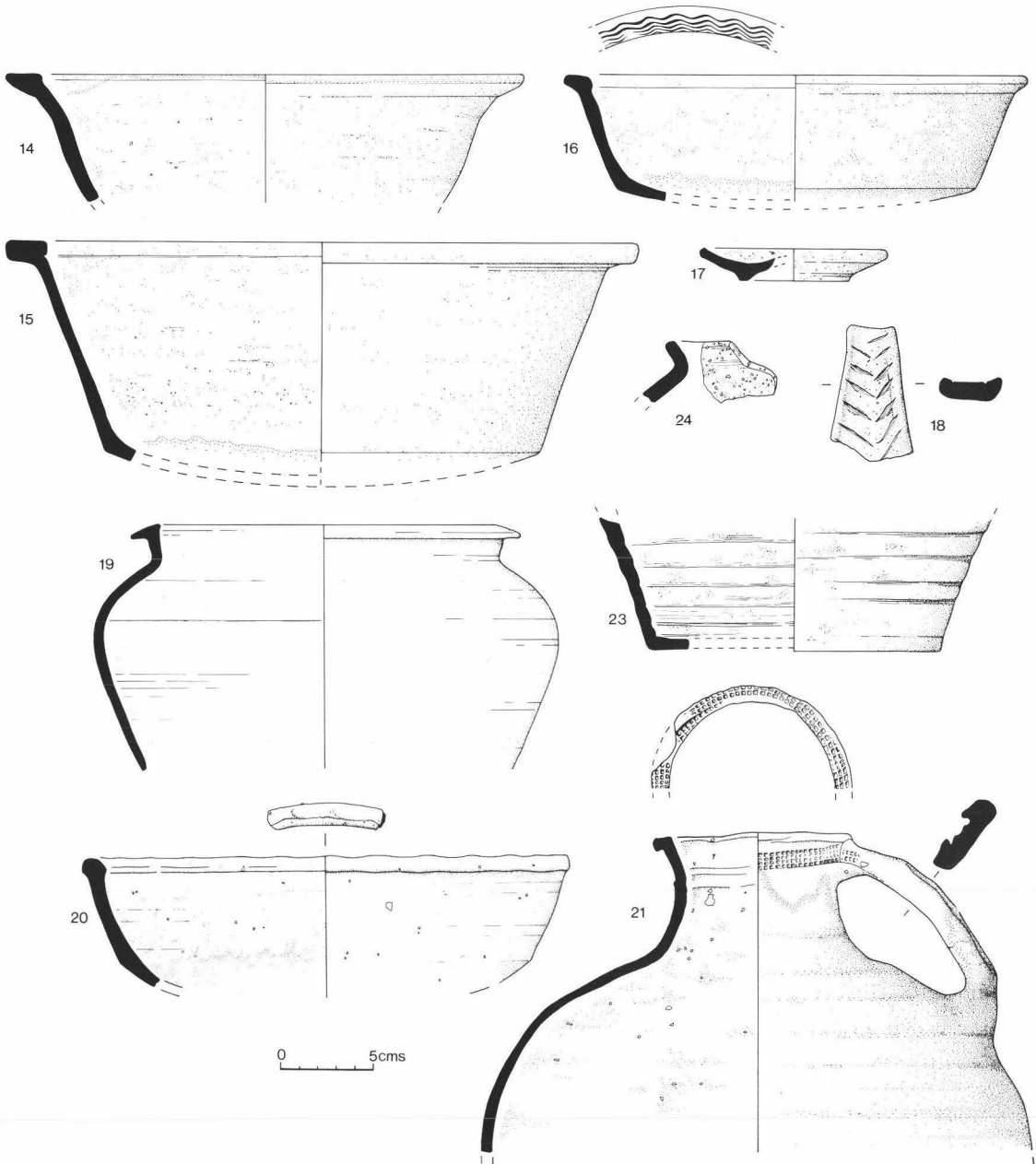


Fig. 15. Pottery (scale $\times 1/4$).

19. Cooking pot. Steyning Library, context 15, fill of trench 14.
20. Bowl with internal glazing at base and faceting on rim. The bowl combines faceting on Saxo-Norman wares with the use of glaze which is common from the 13th century onwards. Steyning Library, context 15, fill of trench 14.
21. Jug with rouletted decoration on top edge and external rim of lip. Steyning Library, contexts 11 and 13, fills of pit 23.

Fabric CSW 12 - Abundant grey medium sand.

Fabric CSW 13 - Abundant subangular fine sand, occasional grog flecks.

Fabric CSW 14 - Abundant fine to medium grey sand, occasional angular ironstone and grog.

Fabric CSW 16 - Fine to medium grey sand, usually glazed.

22. (not illustrated) Pottery counter made from rounding the corners of a sherd to form a disc. Diameter 35 mm. Tanyard Lane, context 32, fill of pit 31. Similar pottery counters have been recognized at Colchester where they fall in the range 31-36 mm diameter, and most date from the 12th century (Crummy 1988, 45). The present example cannot be that early. A broken or halved counter of similar type was also found at America Wood, Ashington in excavations in 1993. It had a diameter of 35 mm. A pottery counter is also reported from Bury, West Sussex (Evans 1968, 136).

Fabric CSW 28 - Abundant coarse sand and common mica.

Fabric CSW 30 - Abundant medium to coarse sand with large white subangular quartz inclusions.

Fabric CSW 31 - Abundant fine grey sand with occasional larger quartz grains.

Other fabrics

23. Jug base in Normandy Gritty Ware glazed on exterior with stacking scar on base. Coombe Court, context 1.

24. Slightly abraded rim sherd in a fabric not previously recognized in the area. Black faces with dark grey core, hard fabric with fairly smooth feel. Tempered with sub-rounded chalk up to 1 mm, pieces of shell up to 1 mm and angular grains of calcite up to 0.75 mm. Coombe Court, context 128, fill of beam-slot 127.

METALWORK By Luke Barber

The excavations at Coombe Court and Steyning Library produced a total of 77 pieces of metalwork from 36 different contexts. The metalwork from Tanyard Lane was not of sufficient interest to justify study. Most of the metalwork was badly corroded iron and required x-radiography in order to clarify object form. A full list of the material is housed with the archive.

Nails and nail fragments are the most common items amongst the material examined, totalling 56 examples. The earlier nails in features dating from 950 to 1150 are varied in form and consist of circular- and rectangular-headed types with both square- and round-sectioned shanks. Two examples, one

with a lozenge-shaped head, the other with a domed lozenge-shaped head are more specialized and are not dissimilar to farrier's nails.

Other ferrous metalwork artefacts of note were a figure-eight shaped link and a broken chisel or wedge. The link may be from a chain and is closely paralleled to a much later example from Norwich (Margeson 1993, no. 964). The chisel, which was from a wall trench at Coombe Court, may be a loss or was discarded during the construction of the associated building. Although an exact parallel, illustrated by Goodall (1981, fig. 50.6), is described as an ironworking tool, the chisel could easily be used for splitting timber during house construction.

The only significant non-ferrous objects were from the Steyning Library site: a copper alloy pin (context 228) and a fragment of lead window came (context 58). The latter was from a post-medieval context (c. 1650-1700).

GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL By Luke Barber

incorporating comments by John A. Cooper (Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton)

The largest assemblage of geological material was recovered from the Library site, which produced 46 pieces. All geological material from the three excavations was listed on record sheets which form part of the site archive. No statistical analyses were undertaken on the material, owing to the small sample size.

Most of the stone is of local origin and the majority are represented by the two stone variants of the Lower Greensand beds (a and b). Many of the fragments in Lower Greensand (a), an iron-stained well-bedded fissile sandstone, are likely to be from roofing slates, although no diagnostic pieces with fixing holes were present. The lining of the oven (context 239) at the Library utilized the same material. The other variant, Lower Greensand (b), is the glauconitic variety, probably from the Hythe Beds. This stone type is represented by seven pieces from Coombe Court. With the exception of the piece from context 51, all fragments of this type are from rotary querns. Where identifiable the fragments are from both upper and lower stones. The upper and lower stones from context 122 (Fig. 5) may be from the same quern, although this is not certain.

Other local stone-types present included iron-rich Sarsen, Upper Greensand and Tunbridge Wells sandstone. A very shelly limestone is also present. It is a very distinctive rock consisting entirely of cemented shell fragments. The stone is not local, the nearest source being the Tertiary or Quaternary deposits in the Selsey-Bognor Region. It is interesting to note that the same limestone has been found at the site of St Nicholas' Hospital, Lewes (Barber in prep. b). The use of this stone is not yet clear, as although lightweight, it would weather very badly if used for external work. Only one fragment was present at Steyning Library and this is undiagnostic as none of the original surfaces remains. One fragment from the outer edge of an Upper Greensand rotary quern weighing 965 g was found at Tanyard Lane. The piece is not sufficiently large to determine whether it is an upper or lower stone, although part of the grinding face is present and exhibits concentric ridges.

Non-local stone is represented by a single boulder of secondarily mineralized quartzite from the Steyning Library site. That hard, dense rock, consisting of an accumulation of coarse quartz pebbles and quartz veins, is water-rounded and is likely to have found its way to Steyning as ship's ballast, possibly from the coast of Scandinavia. Architectural fragments were found at Coombe Court and the Library. On the first of these sites was part of the corner from an architectural block

in a fine off-white limestone (context 90, dated to 1300-1450). The limestone fragment is likely to have originated in the Purbeck area and exhibits criss-cross tooling from a narrow-bladed chisel on one face. The three pieces found at the Library were in a fine grained, partly crystalline limestone, probably from the Portland area of Dorset. Two of these were fragments of voussoirs from rib vaulting and probably date to the 13th century. It is probable all these pieces were originally brought to Steyning for a building of some importance, possibly the church.

A corner fragment from a 15 mm-thick slab of polished Green Porphyry (76) was found at Coombe Court. The presence of this stone in a mid-10th- to mid-12th-century context is interesting, for this Mediterranean rock was also found in a 13th-century context at Pevensey (Barber in prep. a). The Pevensey example was considered possibly to have originated from the nearby Roman occupation, however, the presence of a piece from Steyning suggests this stone may have been imported during the medieval period. The reason for importing the stone is uncertain, although it could be for some form of funerary monument.

ANIMAL BONE By Lucy Kirk

Details of the size of the bone assemblages from Tanyard Lane and Steyning Library are given in Table 4; the assemblage from Coombe Court was too small to justify examination.

Owing to the fragmentary nature of the material from Tanyard Lane, only a small proportion was identifiable to bone type and species. The species represented and the percentage they represent within the identified sample are shown in Table 5.

The figures demonstrate that *Bos* and *Ovis* are best represented in both samples. The predominance of *Ovis* and *Bos* is mirrored at other medieval sites in Steyning, for example Fletchers Croft, and Testers. At Testers, however, unlike Fletchers Croft and Tanyard Lane, *Ovis* only appear to have played a minor role in the diet. It is worth noting that *Bos* has a much higher meat yield than *Ovis* and, therefore, *Bos* is likely to have formed a much greater part of the diet than *Ovis*. It is probable that *Ovis* would have been kept mostly for its wool, milk and manure as this was the case in medieval Britain up to c. 1700 (O'Connor 1979). At Testers, Fletchers Croft and the present two sites, *Sus* seems to have played only a limited role in the diet and the presence of one and two fish vertebrae, at Tanyard Lane and Steyning Library respectively, suggests that fish had a similar significance. The bones of *Canis* and *Felis* recovered during the excavations probably represent household pets.

Despite its fragmentary nature, the majority of the assemblage from Tanyard Lane appeared to be relatively fresh, suggesting that most of the contexts from which bone was recovered are primary locations of disposal. Weathered material was recovered from contexts 8, 12, 19, 22, 32, 43 and 59, with contexts 19 and 32 producing the most extensively weathered material. These contexts are the top fills of pits which would explain their condition. The condition of material recovered

Table 4. Size of assemblages.

Site name	Bone number	Bones identified	Contexts with bone
Tanyard Lane	378	122	22
Steyning Library	615	173	34

Table 5. Species list.

Species	Percentage of sample	
	Tanyard Lane	Steyning Library
<i>Bos taurus</i>	41	34
<i>Equus caballus</i>	2	3
<i>Ovis/Capra</i>	37	41
<i>Sus scrofa</i>	9	12
<i>Canis familiaris</i>	1	2
<i>Felis silvestris</i>	4	2
<i>Gallus</i>	5	2
Small mammal	0	3
Fish	1	1

from context 43 might suggest that it had been dumped, but not buried. Only eight unidentified fragments show any signs of burning. The majority of the assemblage from the Library site was also relatively fresh.

Butchery evidence

Butchery marks only appear to be present at both sites on *Ovis* and *Bos* bones, and are represented by a limited number of cuts to ribs and metacarpals. However, cut-marks are also visible around the base of a horn core of *Ovis* and just beneath the condyle on three separate mandibles from Tanyard Lane. These marks could all be associated with the initial skinning of the animals.

It was interesting to study the presence/absence and relative percentages of different skeletal elements represented in the assemblage from Tanyard Lane. Looking at the animals which together would have formed the main part of the diet, *Bos*, *Ovis* and *Sus*, 75% is made up of the lower limbs in particular: metapodials and phalanges, and mandibles. The best meat joints are almost entirely absent and in the case of *Bos*, completely absent. These deposits therefore appear to be residues from the slaughtering and butchering of animals, rather than domestic kitchen rubbish. In such cases, the lower limbs and heads would be the first parts of the animal to be discarded.

A comparable situation has been encountered at Steyning Library site where lower limbs and mandibles formed 77% of the total. At both sites, however, the small size of the assemblage makes it impossible to draw any certain conclusions. Nevertheless, O'Connor reached similar conclusions about the bones from Freke's (1979) excavation along Tanyard Lane. Freke's excavation did also produce a considerable quantity of meat-yielding components.

PART 5: DISCUSSION -
THE DEVELOPMENT OF STEYNING
AND LATE SAXON SMALL TOWNS

By Mark Gardiner

The excavations since 1992 have clarified a number of aspects of medieval Steyning. Remains of Saxo-Norman date have been well represented in all excavations undertaken in the town, with the exception of work at Testers, near White Horse Square. The probable extent of the town at this period can now be determined. The Tanyard Lane stream seems to have marked the boundary of the town on the north. Pottery found in the 1994 excavations at Tanyard Lane suggests that settlement extended towards the stream. The excavated farmstead at Market Field lay on the periphery of the town; no remains were discovered in assessment work to the north or north-west. The excavations at Coombe Court show that the Saxo-Norman settlement extended at least as far south as School Lane. It did not reach to White Horse Square, as the work at Testers indicated. It has been argued that the later medieval 'new town' of Steyning was laid out beyond the limits of the Saxo-Norman urban area. The rear boundary of the burgage plots on the north-east side of High Street suggest the presence of earlier Saxo-Norman enclosures (Gardiner 1988, 61). Only the eastern extent of the town remains to be defined, but it is possible that it was marked by the watercourse adjoining Coombe Court called the River Brad by Evans (1986). It is perhaps noteworthy that the Life of St Cuthman describes Steyning as lying between the streams running from springs at the foot of the Downs.

The topography of the Saxo-Norman town is therefore reasonably clear. The settlement lay to the south and west of the church which was itself situated above a tidal inlet to the north. The town lay around the intersection of a north-south road known as the Portway ('market street') marked by Newham Lane and Church Street, and an east-west track. The line of the east-west road is uncertain. It is clearly marked by Mouse Lane to the west of Steyning. Its course to the east may be marked either by School Lane and Holland Lane, or by Tanyard Lane and Kings Barn Lane, or indeed both. The means by which the road crossed the Adur before the construction of a causeway at Bramber is uncertain (Holden 1986).

The excavation at Coombe Court throws further light on the character of the early town. On initial inspection the plan of the excavated area might be thought to resemble a typical later medieval burgage plot. The buildings were probably set on or close to a street, now marked by School Lane and the space behind was used for rubbish disposal. However, the urban attributes of this plan are not supported by closer scrutiny. The work by Jane Evans in Fletcher's Croft near to School Lane uncovered no evidence of buildings there, although trenches were dug near to the street frontage. The north side of School Lane was therefore not built up. Equally, there was no evidence that the excavated buildings at Coombe Court were in a row of similar structures along the street frontage. It is possible that other structures might have been situated beyond the confines of the trench, but no rubbish pits were found. Rubbish pits are a good indicator of the presence of Late Anglo-Saxon buildings since they were commonly found close to structures, as for example at Market Field (Astill & Lobb 1989, 84).

Significant areas, amounting to about 2% of the probable area of the Saxo-Norman town of Steyning, have now been excavated. The results have shown that Steyning had a fairly low density of settlement and a level of activity considerably less than the main Saxo-Norman towns. For example, there is a low density of rubbish pits beyond the immediate vicinity of the buildings, in contrast with contemporary sites in London and Durham where pits were found throughout the whole of the open land within the tenement (Schofield *et al.* 1990; Carver 1979). Some areas of the town remained completely unoccupied, including the wet land adjoining the Tanyard stream, where no buildings were found in the recent excavations. Even close to the church settlement was not intense. The only building attested in the excavations on the Library site was the sunken structure attributed here to the Late Saxon period or immediately after, and surrounded by a concentration of pits of the same period. Re-examination of the results of the excavation by Freke adjoining Tanyard Lane allows the identification of a similar concentration of rubbish pits on the north side of the cleared area, which may also have indicated a structure nearby (*see* Freke 1979, 137-9, fig. 4).

There remain considerable problems in interpreting the plan of Steyning. There are very few

other contemporary small towns with which it can be compared, although perhaps the best parallel for Steyning is North Elmham. In spite of its identification by the excavator as the largest village in Norfolk at the time of the Domesday survey, it is better considered as a failed small town (Wade-Martins 1980a, 633). Firstly, there is very little evidence in Norfolk or indeed elsewhere in England for large nucleated settlements in the 11th century which were not urban. Studies in that county have shown that the settlement in the Late Anglo-Saxon period was polyfocal, with the church providing one of the foci of occupation (Wade-Martins 1980b; Addington 1983; Lawson 1983; Williamson 1988; Davison 1990). Secondly, North Elmham possessed a fair by the time of the episcopacy of Everard (1121-45), indicating that it was an early centre of trade (Wade-Martins 1980a, 535). Finally, it has been argued that North Elmham, rather than the alternative candidate South Elmham, was the site of the cathedral prior to the removal of the seat of the see to Thetford in 1071 (Rigold 1962-3). It was therefore also a pre-Conquest centre of ecclesiastical administration, and the presence of visitors to the bishop would, no doubt, also have encouraged its development as a place of trade. The transfer of the seat of the bishop from North Elmham evidently curtailed its growth and it failed to continue to develop into a town in the later medieval period. It is reasonable to imagine it in the mid-11th century as a place on the verge of developing urban attributes. The entry for Steyning in Domesday Book (i, 17a) reflects that place in a similar circumstance, an ambivalent state between rural and urban conditions. It says that before 1066 the burgesses 'worked at court like villans': they performed labour services on the lord's demesne. The tenants at Steyning may have been called burgesses, but there can have been relatively little in the late 11th century to distinguish them from rural farmers.

An important stage in the development in the progress from rural to urban character at North Elmham occurred in the early 11th century when the large halls of Period II were replaced by smaller houses and outbuildings with an agrarian character identified as 'peasant dwellings' (Wade-Martins 1980a, 151). These were set in fenced enclosures, though these boundaries had little permanence and were replaced in subsequent phases. The only hint of continuity is the area of the cathedral cemetery which was enlarged in the early 11th century and

remained in use for about 100 years. Later it became an open space and was occupied by two animal folds and a lime kiln, which was very probably constructed for the building of the Norman church in the early 12th century (Wade-Martins 1980a, 216). The area of the graveyard was also used as the site of a market, as indeed many churchyards were in the period before 1200 (Britnell 1993, 25, 84).

The earliest excavated buildings in Steyning were those at Market Field dating to the 10th century. Though it was suggested that the encircling enclosure with its entrance-way flanked by two substantial posts was 'typical' of Late Saxon sites (Gardiner 1993, 28, 39), the subsequent publication of a further site with a similar enclosure at Trowbridge (Wilts.) requires a reconsideration of that judgement. Two parallels for Market Field were originally cited, Cheddar palace and Little Paxton. The former is self-evidently a high-status site; the evidence for the latter is not sufficient to allow the character of the site to be determined. The position of the enclosure with gateway at Trowbridge on top of the ridge and immediately adjacent to the churchyard suggests that it may have enclosed a manorial *curia*. The association of church and manor house is not invariable, but was common in medieval England. Even if that identification is not accepted, it must be acknowledged that the enclosure was in a dominant position with regard to the adjoining settlement, a point reinforced by the subsequent construction on the site of a castle during the period of the Anarchy (Graham & Davies 1993).

Two out of three similar enclosures with two-post entrances may therefore be identified as probable high-status settlements. The Market Field buildings themselves do not identify it as high status, though the conspicuous use of timber in the south wall of building A may be significant. The presence of a gold ring in one of the rubbish pits and the proximity of the site to the church should also be borne in mind. The Market Field site may also have been close to the churchyard since burials discovered to the east of the existing cemetery indicate that it was once of greater extent (Welch 1983, 457-8). On balance, though the evidence is not conclusive, there is a case for also regarding the Market Field settlement as high status.

It is tempting to draw close parallels between Steyning and North Elmham. In both places possible high-status 10th-century buildings set near to the

church were superseded in the 11th century by a greater number of structures evidently of lower status. These were presumably the houses of the smallholders which were found in or close by many 11th-century towns, and on the sites under discussion mark the change in the character of settlement (Dyer 1994). The lower-status buildings were set within slight enclosures forming an irregular plan. Both Steyning and North Elmham were centres of trade, though whether the Elmham fair dates from before the Conquest is unknown, and both were ecclesiastical centres. How far these features typify Late Anglo-Saxon small towns is uncertain at present. Indeed, there remains a problem in defining such settlements on the verge of urban status. North Elmham and Steyning provide a standard against which other settlements may now be compared. Their study, however, has suggested that topographical analysis, which provided the basis for the examination of many Anglo-Saxon towns in a recent survey (Haslam 1984), is unlikely to be effective where the tenement boundaries were generally insubstantial and transitory. Excavation is likely to be the only means

of elucidating the character of these small primary towns which Everitt (1974) has characterized as the 'Banburys of England'.

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Authors: Mark Gardiner, Department of Archaeology, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast, BT7 1NN; Christopher Greatorex, Field Archaeology Unit, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PY.

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