

# ◆ A medieval moated site at Stretham, near Henfield, West Sussex

Edited by John Funnell

*A substantial moated site was excavated by A. Barr Hamilton between the late 1950s and early 1980s. The remains uncovered within the moat indicated a multi-phased arrangement of buildings and other features including a substantial wooden revetment in the southern moat. The purpose of the various buildings is uncertain, but it is possible that they may have been used by the bishops of Chichester, who were also the Lords of the Manor, when visiting Stretham. The site was probably in use from the thirteenth century to the early/mid fifteenth century, when it appears to have been abandoned possibly as a result of flooding. Although the excavations were not to what may be considered modern standards the site is of sufficient importance to merit publication even in basic form.*

## INTRODUCTION

The site (Figs 1 & 2) (TQ 200138) is in the parish of Henfield and situated on the floodplain adjacent the River Adur. An area of approximately 3300 sq.m (0.33 hectares) was enclosed by a moat up to 12.0 m wide and capable of holding water up to 2.0 m in depth. It is now an area of rough pasture surrounded by trees and bushes. These trees and bushes line the banks of the often dry moat, except at the southwest corner where the moat has been filled in.

The area has been much affected by modern development, such as the embankment of a stream which is a tributary of the River Adur and by the construction of the Brighton to Horsham railway (now disused). The stream now enters the River Adur by a sluice immediately to the west of the site. Poor drainage and periodic flooding must have always made the area marginally unsafe ground and is likely to have been a factor leading to its desertion.

The place name is significantly, not that of a probable village. By the thirteenth century its meaning may have changed from an original Anglo-Saxon meaning. It appears to be a compound of *Straet* and *ham* not *ham*. The best explanation is that 'Stretham' originally referred to the 'promontory of the dry land into marsh or water' though another meaning of Stretham is 'a river meadow', 'in a river bend' near a Roman road (Dodgson 1978, 80, 84). These descriptions fit the excavated moated site; which is also a site liable to suffer flooding. Also a Roman road, designated M140 by Margary (1973, 68), passes through the

area. The M140 ran along the Lower Greensand ridge, passing Wyckham, before crossing the River Adur at Stretham, which is also on the M140. That site would be suitable for controlling the crossing, but, as it lay on pervious substrate it would be difficult to defend by a moat. The bishops, their palace in Chichester, would have required good roads to make their way from Chichester to Amberley, on to Stretham and on to the east. The road that they used followed the Sussex Greensand Way based upon the M140 referred to above. The moated site was presumably connected to the River Adur, via a sluice and provided a route for the transportation of heavy goods and materials, but it is unlikely that it was used by the bishops.

From this it follows that all historical references to Stretham always referred to the whole manorial complex which incorporated the excavated site. Although this article is dedicated to the reporting of the excavation and the finds from the excavated site, other adjacent features that go to make up the complex need to be considered, as they may have affected the use to which the moated site would have been put. A short distance to the southeast, but on slightly higher ground above flood level, is the current site of Stretham Manor. This is composed of a late medieval building (TQ 2015 1370), possibly with earlier origins (A. Hughes pers. comm.), that may have also once been moated (Clinch 1905, 477) (Fig. 2). No survey or excavation work has been carried out on this surviving site and therefore there is no dating evidence that allows one to establish if it predates, is contemporary with, or post-dates, the excavated site.

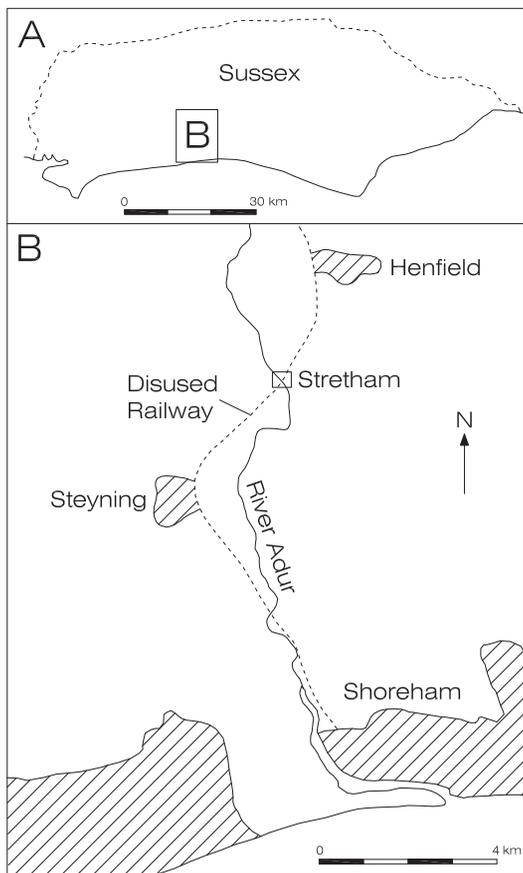


Fig. 1. Site location plans.

Stretham forms part of an estate which, together with the church of St Peter, Henfield, was endowed by a charter of 779, signed by King Osmund of Sussex and countersigned by his overlord, King Offa of Mercia. In 1066 Stretham Manor, then called *Hamfelde*, i.e. Henfield, belonged to the bishop of Selsey, and by 1086 the Domesday Survey (Morris 1976) recorded that it belonged to the bishops of Chichester, who were also the Lords of the Manor. There is documentary evidence that in the thirteenth, fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the bishops were occasionally in residence at their Stretham manor house which, having become the administrative centre of the estate, gave an alternative name to the Manor of Henfield. In 1247 St Richard, bishop of Chichester, confirmed two deeds at Henfield, presumably while staying at Stretham, and in 1374 it was implied that the bishop came there at least once a year, which

conformed to the medieval practice of a holder of multiple estates, eating the rent in kind, and holding court in each estate in turn.

For a comprehensive discussion on the placename, the siting and access, see the ADS Supplement.

#### BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The site was excavated by members of the Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society (BHAS) and Worthing Archaeological Society, under the leadership of the late A. Barr Hamilton. Following Barr Hamilton's death in 1982, Ray Hartridge prepared a draft excavation report based upon the site archives and artefacts. Following the subsequent death of Ray Hartridge in 1989, BHAS prepared the finds for the specialists, made the illustrations and redrew and converted to metric the site plans. Using the draft excavation and specialist reports J. D. Funnell, assisted by D. Martin, D. and D. A. Richardson, J. Russell, A. Stevens and K. Wiles, prepared this report for publication as it was felt the importance of the site merited publication even if the original method of excavation and subsequent post-excavation history had notably hindered its detailed interpretation.

The site archive and artefacts are likely to be deposited at Horsham Museum whilst a hearth (S. Hartridge pers. comm.) and the timbers are with the Weald & Downland Museum, West Sussex, the latter in the pond (Webster & Cherry 1978, 182).

#### THE EXCAVATION (Fig. 3)

The excavation was commenced in 1958 (Wilson & Hurst 1959) when four preliminary trenches were opened. Subsequent years saw extensive excavation and by the early 1980s the site had been totally uncovered and recorded. However, only 12 m of the moat was investigated, the remainder remained unexcavated.

The site was covered by rough turf and topsoil and only Building A was visible as a mound. A distinctive layer of disturbed alluvium was under the turf, excepting areas of foundations and trackways, suggesting the site had been flooded towards the end of its life but disturbance to this layer, possibly caused by livestock, made exact interpretation tentative.

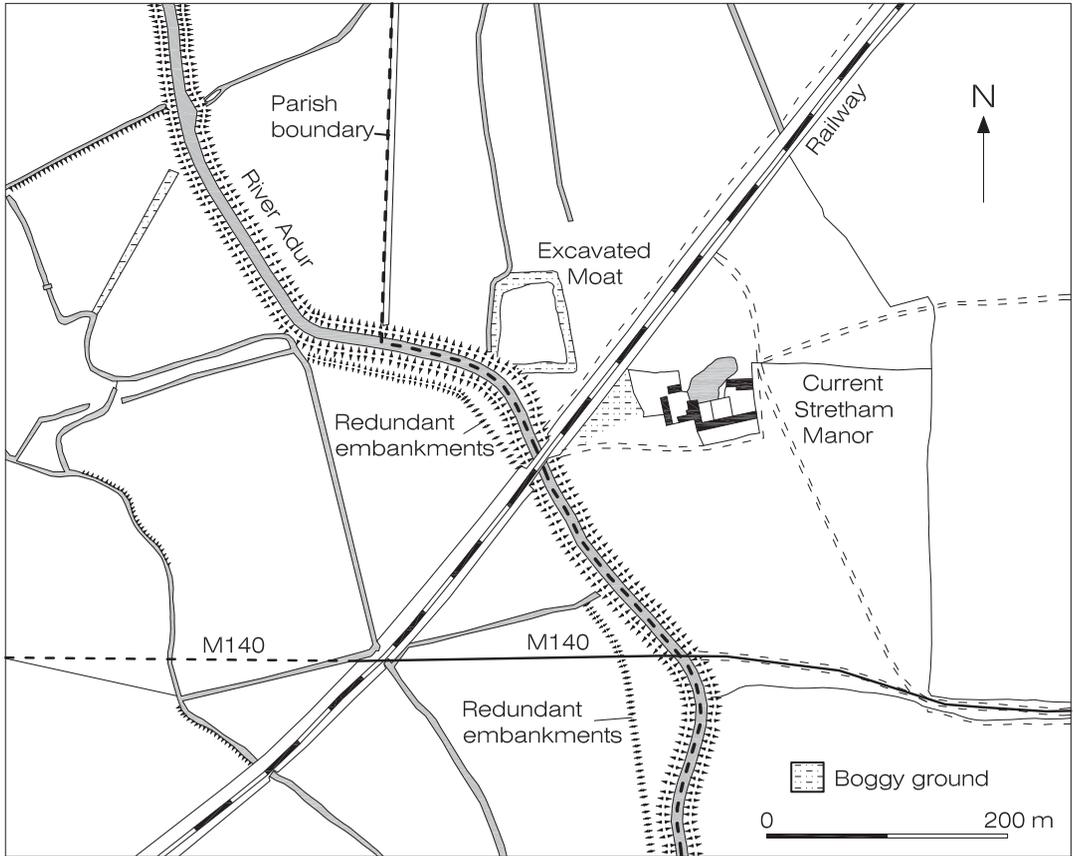


Fig. 2. Map of moated site in 1875 (based on OS 6 in. 1875 52 NW; Henfield, Steyning, Ashurst).

Sections X-X, Y-Y and M-M showing the stratigraphy of the moat are illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 with the shallow internal stratigraphy being illustrated in Figure 6.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE EXCAVATED FEATURES

##### **BUILDING A** (Figs 3 & 6)

At the northern edge of the site was a mound, which upon excavation revealed a series of walls; the most northerly of which was of water-worn flint in mortar and backing on to the inner edge of the moat. It was 15.0 m long, 0.6 m wide and survived to a height of 0.6 to 0.8 m. At the eastern end, the wall formed the back of an integral square structure containing a circular hearth of more than 1.4 m diameter with a 1.0 m opening, some broken tile was found on the hearth floor resting on sherds

of fourteenth-century pottery. To the west of this hearth was a further compartment 2.8 m long, the western wall of which had butted to it a 0.4 × 0.5 m hearth made of eight flints surrounded by two courses of siltstone slabs, which seemed to define the southerly limits of the compartment giving a width of 1.8 m. Further to the west of this hearth was a 1.0 m deep structure 3.2 m long and bounded by a 1.0 m unbonded wall. Near to the western end of the north wall were the foundations of a curved wall 'truncated' by the north wall, suggesting an earlier oven. An area 7 × 4 m to the south of the building was of reddened clay with a covering of 50 mm of ash, suggesting a considerable fire. To the eastern end of the above features was a horseshoe-shaped structure built in a variety of materials and probably representing another oven. Also, 7.6 m south of the northerly wall, and parallel to it, was a second wall of which 5.0 m was standing with

# STRETHAM MOATED SITE

## Site Plan

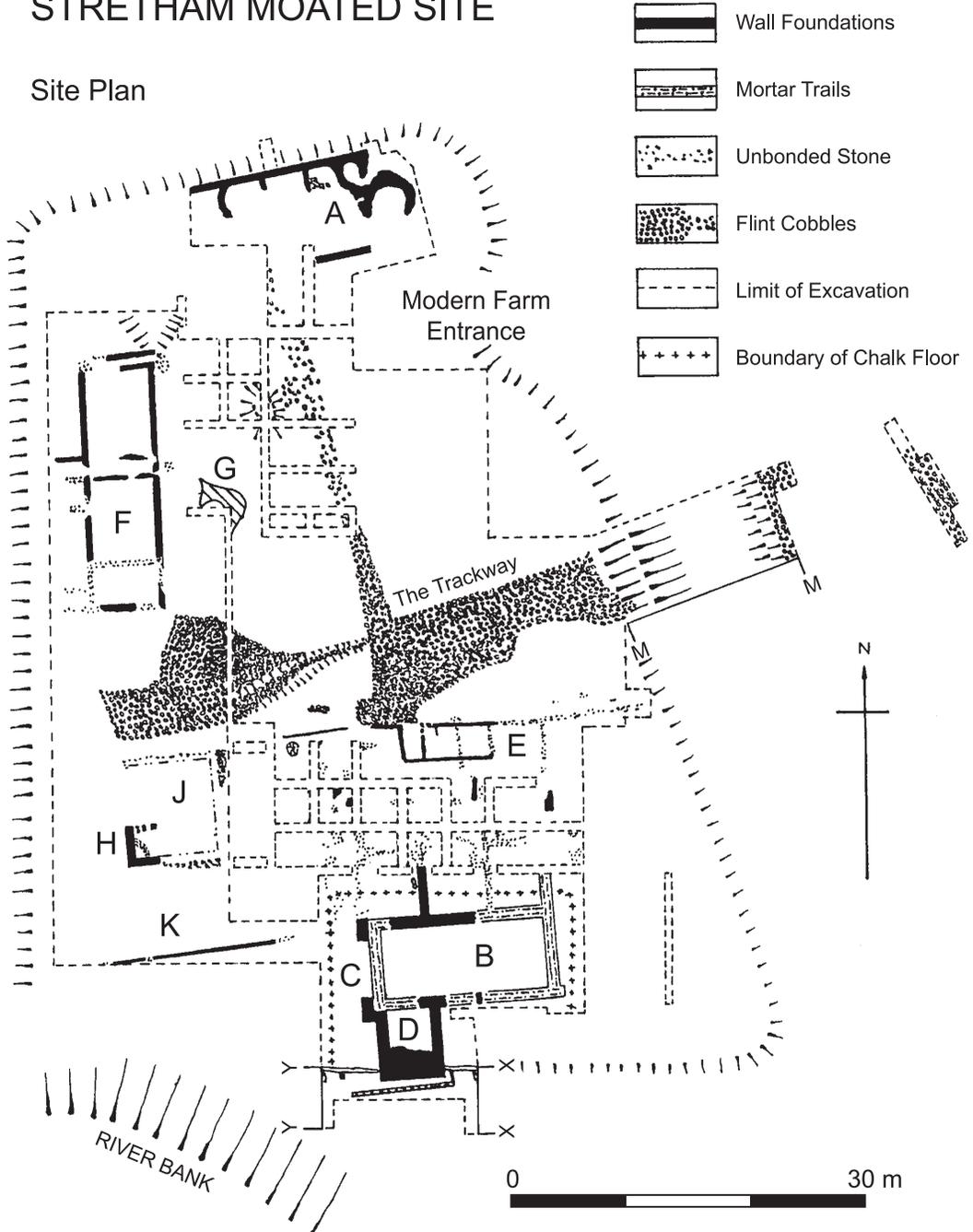
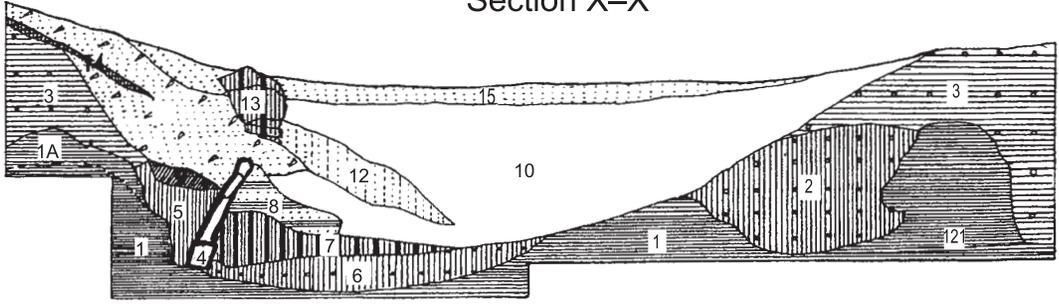


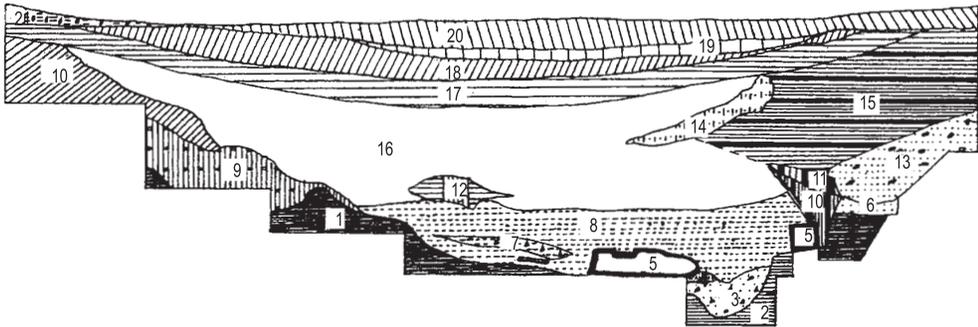
Fig. 3. Site plan.

Section X-X



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hard natural grey clay</li> <li>1a. Hard natural red clay</li> <li>2. Yellowish clay with small, water-washed flints</li> <li>3. Brown sandy clay with a few small flints</li> <li>4. Timbers</li> <li>5. Soft reddish clay</li> <li>6. Grey sand with broken flint</li> <li>7. Clay with much decayed wood</li> <li>8. Sandy clay</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Broken tile, etc</li> <li>10. Reddish brown silty clay</li> <li>11. Light brown soil with slate, etc</li> <li>12. Mortar with chalk in grey clay</li> <li>13. Tree-root and tree-root disturbance</li> <li>14. Soil with much charcoal</li> <li>15. Grey soil</li> </ul> |
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Section Y-Y



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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hard natural grey clay</li> <li>2. Hard natural red clay</li> <li>3. Black sandy humus with stones</li> <li>4. Sandstone</li> <li>5. Timber</li> <li>6. Yellow sand</li> <li>7. Flints in grey sandy clay</li> <li>8. Grey clay with much black humus</li> <li>9. Flints in yellow sandy clay</li> <li>10. Soft grey clay with humus</li> <li>10a. Light brown clay</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Red clay with humus</li> <li>12. Sandy clay</li> <li>13. Brown sand with flints</li> <li>14. Mortar and chalk in grey soils</li> <li>15. Brown clay soil with flints, slate and charcoal</li> <li>16. Reddish brown silty clay</li> <li>17. Light brown clay soil</li> <li>18. Dark clay soil</li> <li>19. Dark soil, chalk and mortar</li> <li>20. Ginger sandy clay</li> <li>21. Grey soil with small chalk</li> </ul> |
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Fig. 4. Sections through moat — X-X, Y-Y.

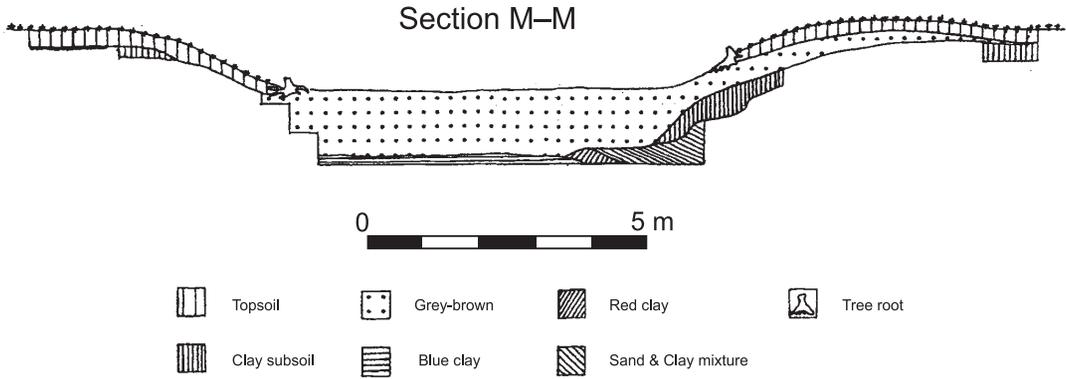


Fig. 5. Section through moat – M-M.

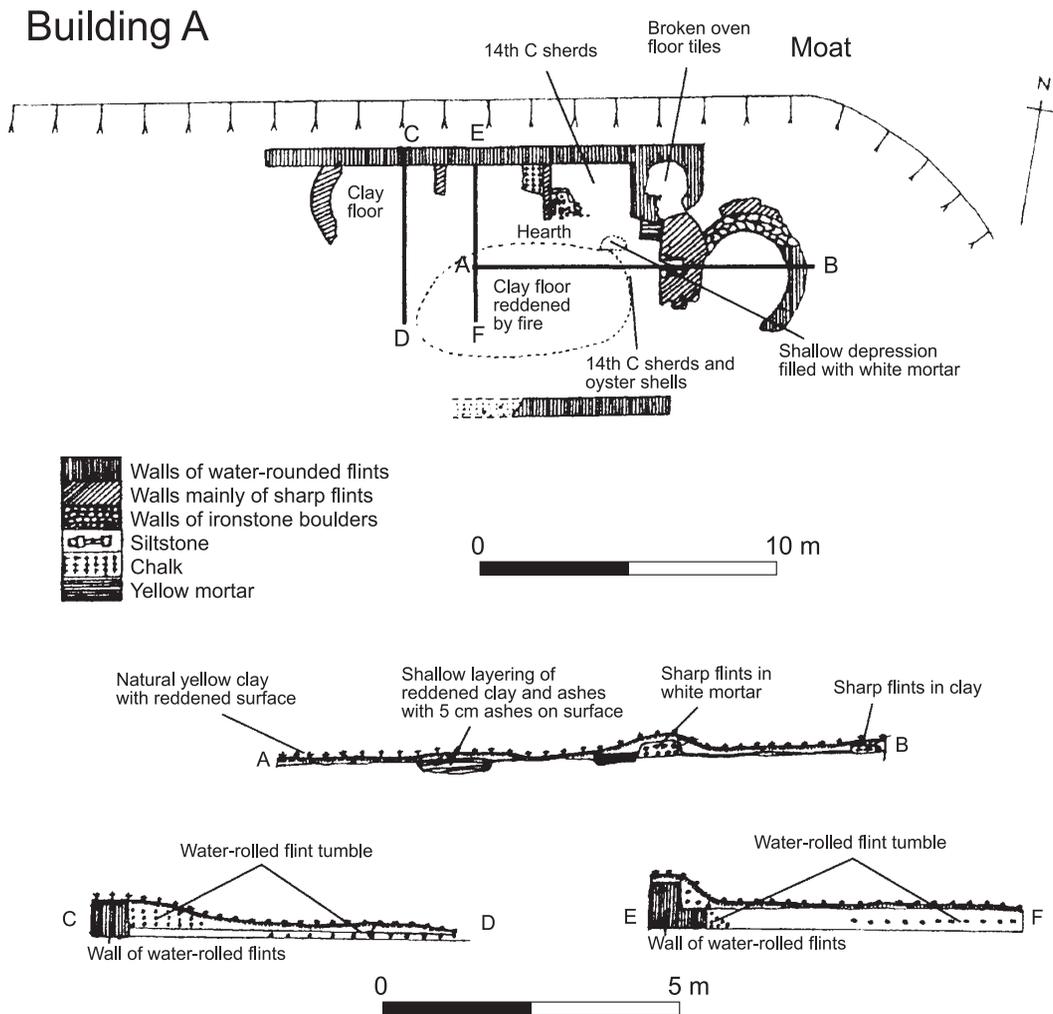


Fig. 6. Building A – plan and sections.

surviving foundations for a further 2.5 m. Pottery from this building was all initially identified as being of fourteenth-century date though whether of the first or second half was not stated, and the surviving sherds cannot be attributed to this building and thus the chronology refined.

**BUILDING B AND LAND TO THE NORTH** (Figs 3 & 7) Foundations of mortared flint and chalk rubble outlined an area 13.6 × 5.5 m. At the western end were foundations of two flint buttresses of which 13 courses survived below floor level. At 90° to the north face were foundations of two north-south walls 5.3 m apart, one solidly mortared in position, the other fragmentary.

Sealed by a fifteenth-century chalk floor, within the main building, were fragments of green glass, window lead and part of a 130 mm wide octagonal shaft of 'Sussex marble'. In addition, to the west of the building were fragments of a green-glazed West Sussex ware jug (subsequently lost), and an Edward I/II coin, also sealed by the same fifteenth-century floor.

Excavations to the outside of the northern wall suggested three sections of foundations, which could have been extensions to Building B, or possibly two chambers. These foundations were spaced approximately 4.8 m apart and extended some 3.8 m to the north.

The area between Buildings B and E were excavated using a grid system and revealed small areas of foundations, but were mainly unbonded stones.

**FEATURE C** (Figs 3 & 7)

This feature consisted of a chalk floor of fifteenth-century date which extended into, and overlay, the westerly structure of B. On this floor were deposited building materials including flint, chalk, tooled sandstone, glazed tile, slate and Horsham stone, together with glazed and painted Tudor ware.

**BUILDING D AND THE MOAT** (Figs 3, 7 & 8)

Building D measured 3.7 × 3.4 m and was formed by three walls built of ashlar blocks of hard greensand; the southern wall of Building B forming the north wall of D. A sloping chute passed through the southern wall ending at the battered southern face of D at the moat edge (Fig. 8).

In common with much of the site, the floor was covered with alluvium mixed with flint and chalk rubble; once removed the floor showed the

remnants of the walls. The south and east walls had survived to a height of more than 1.0 m, were vertical and smooth. However, the eastern face of the masonry of the chute was rough.

A 3.0 metre-wide cutting was made through the moat (section X-X, Fig. 4), initially by mechanical digger, to a depth of 1.0 m, to study the deposits in this area. At this depth the ground became wetter and wood fragments appeared. The remaining moat filling was removed by hand down to the original level. The cutting was extended to the full width of the moat to enable sections X-X and Y-Y (Fig. 4) to be drawn.

The southern face of D, was built into the moat bank (Fig. 8), rising in steps of 250 mm to 350 mm from the moat floor. The eastern and western faces were vertical.

**BUILDING E** (Fig. 7)

Building E had roughly parallel walls with internal divisions. The easterly compartment was open to the south and had foundations of water-rolled flints plus some well-tooled pieces from arched openings and stone mullions. Sandstone or siltstone foundations up to 460 mm wide extended 2.1 m westward and then, following a 1.8 m gap, continued for a further 5.4 m; immediately south of this wall was an oval hearth, 1.2 × 1.0 m, made of nine pieces of 'Sussex marble'. Such material was found elsewhere on the site, either loose or in foundations.

**BUILDING F** (Figs 3 & 9)

The foundation of Building F mainly consisted of water-rolled flint and chalk of two or three courses which varied in width between 390 mm and 550 mm. The building was in five parts; reading from the south, 5.5 × 3.8 m, 5.5 × 5.5 m, 5.5 × 1.4 m (a passage), 5.5 × 7.8 m and 5.5 × 0.7 m. Immediately beyond the northeast corner were three channels sloping downward from the building.

The westward side may have had an extension, as suggested by the presence of five sections of wall foundations. Some cobbling was adjacent to the outer eastern wall. The original floor within the building had not survived and the finds were probably deposited during or after the building's destruction.

**FEATURE G** (Fig. 3)

Feature G was a crescent-shaped sandstone floor; no walls were found and therefore no obvious

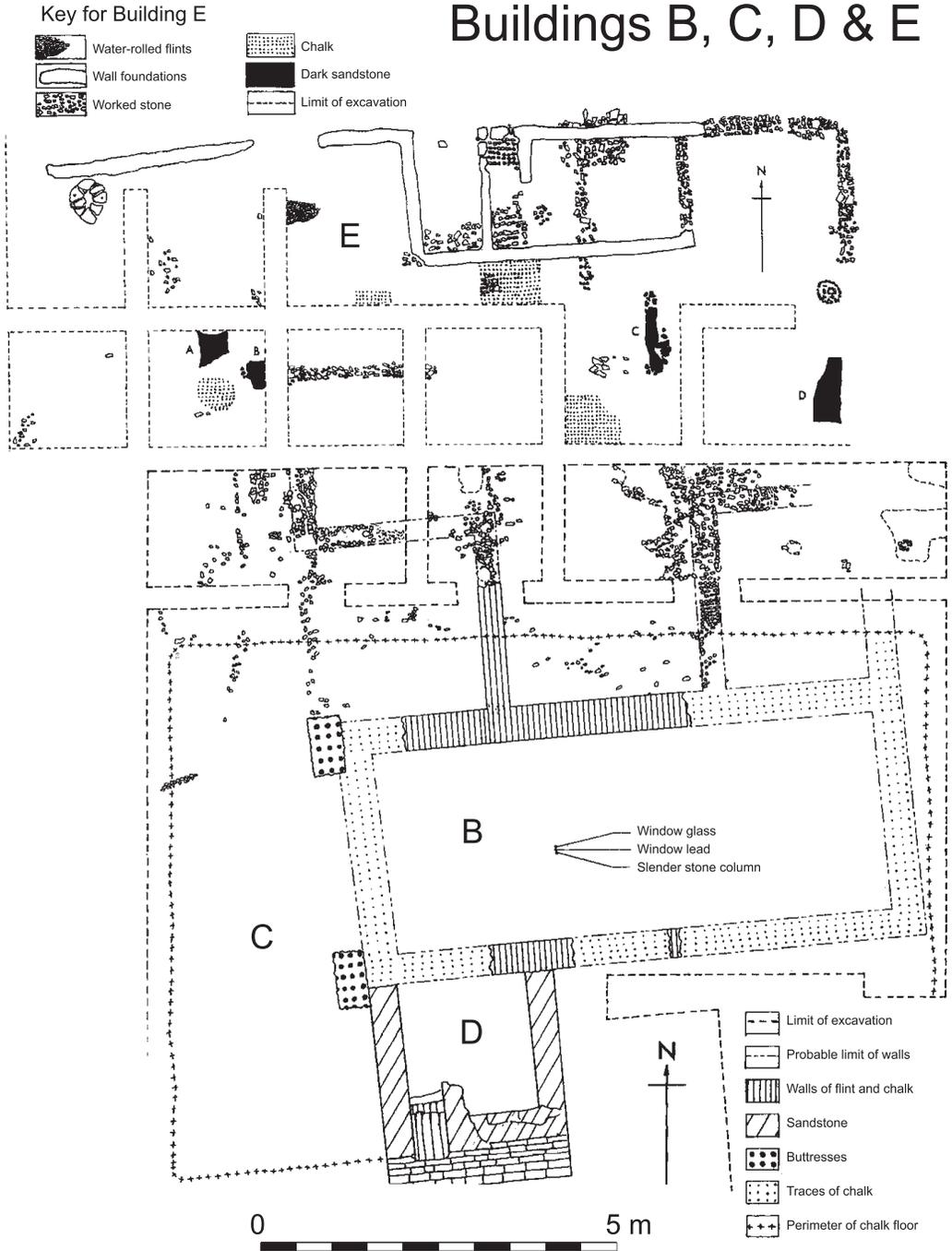


Fig. 7. Buildings B, C, D and E – plan.

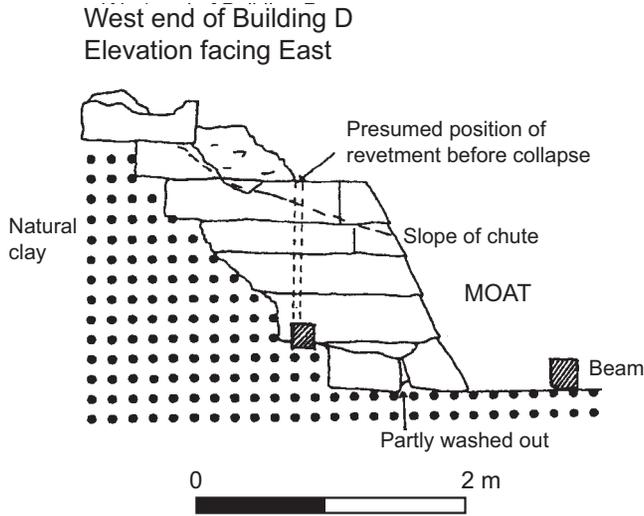


Fig. 8. Building D – elevation facing east.

function could be deduced. The floor was covered with flint, broken slate and roof tile interspersed with silt; the exception being a 300 mm-deep hollow filled with medieval slate and covered by 250 mm of disturbed topsoil.

**BUILDING H AND FEATURE J** (Figs 3 & 10)

The southwest corner of Building H was preserved up to floor level by courses of water-rolled flint and irregularly-shaped sandstone set in yellow mortar. The southern wall survived to a length of 2.4 m and could be traced eastward by a foundation trench. Feature J appeared to be later than Building H and generally overlay it, and there was no evidence of it being a full building. The east and north walls of J were represented by traces of sandstone and mortar which suggested that its size could be about 7.4 × 7.0 m. The north end of the eastern wall was bounded by a 4.0-metre length of gravel surface. The west wall of H survived for 3.6 m, but there was no evidence of its continuation further north.

Traces of a wall projected 2.0 m into the building from the west wall of Building H which created, in the southwest corner, an area 3.6 × 2.3 m containing a mass of roof tile and tabular flint. These were all set on edge and rested on a bed of ash and charcoal.

Excavation of the Feature J revealed considerable occupation debris including charcoal, oyster, animal bones, potsherds and iron fragments. Contemporary with this layer was the filling of

charcoal in the depression in the southwest corner referred to above. This depression, assumed to be a hearth, was covered with 50 mm of charcoal plus silt and debris which, in patches, was surfaced with hard materials.

In the northwest corner was another hearth about 1 m across and surrounded by a siltstone kerb.

**FEATURE K** (Fig. 3)

Feature K was represented by the bottom two or three courses of a wall built of water-rolled flint set in mortar. Its west end lay outside the area of excavation.

**WOODEN REVETMENT**

(Figs 11 & 12) by Ray Hartridge

The excavation of a 12-metre length of moat, south of structure D, revealed a number of timbers and two partially collapsed, but *in situ*, revetments running east–west, lying either side of the battered southern wall (Fig. 11). Details of the timbers, numbered in Figure 11, are to be found in the ADS Supplement.

The revetments comprised a square cross-section base-plate into which vertical posts with bare-faced tenons at their feet had been positioned at intervals of between 500 mm and 700 mm. Horizontally-laid planking, some 330 mm wide and 30 mm thick, had been set on edge against the

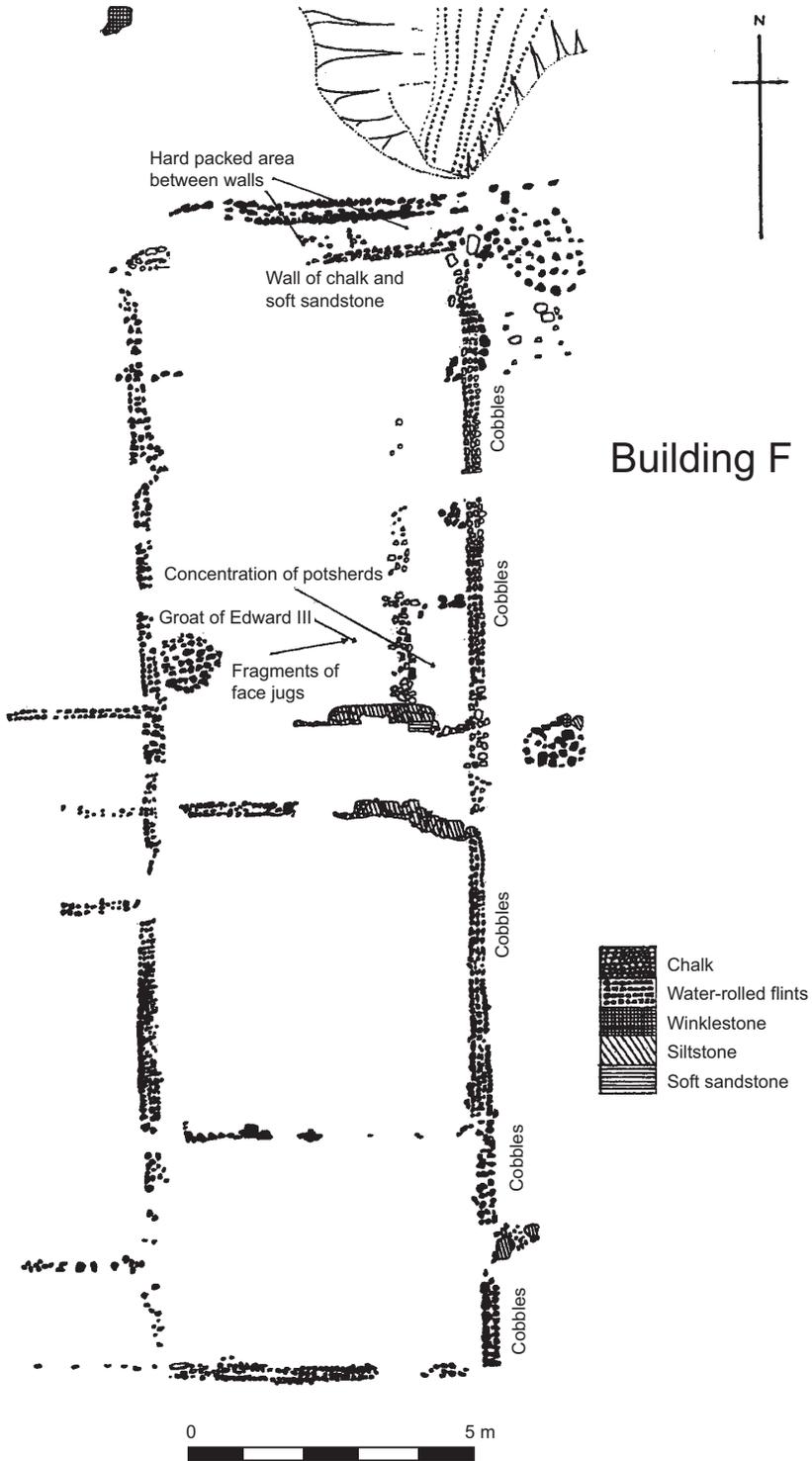


Fig. 9. Building F – plan.

### Buildings H & J

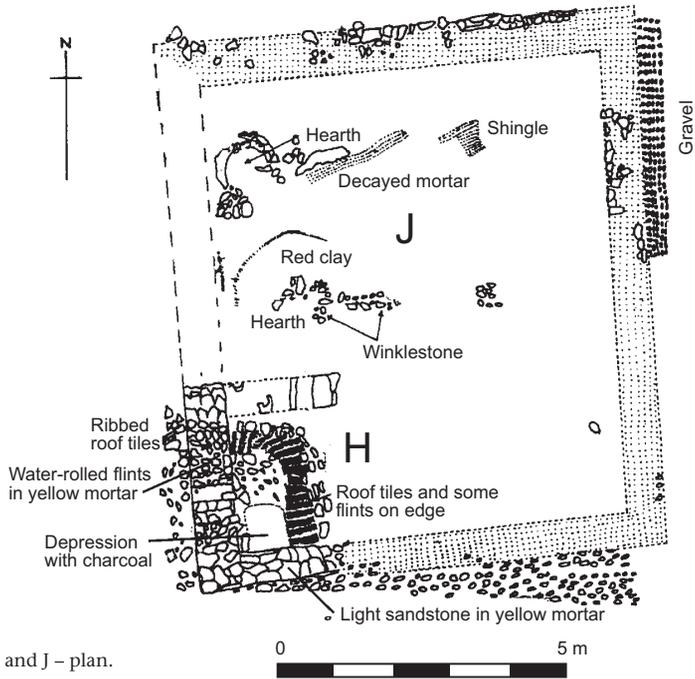
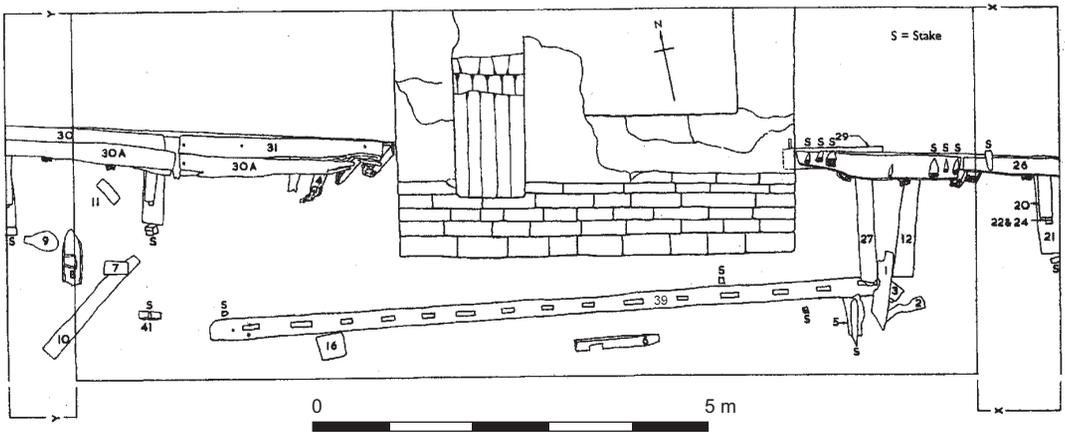


Fig. 10. Buildings H and J – plan.

### Moat Cutting



### South Elevation

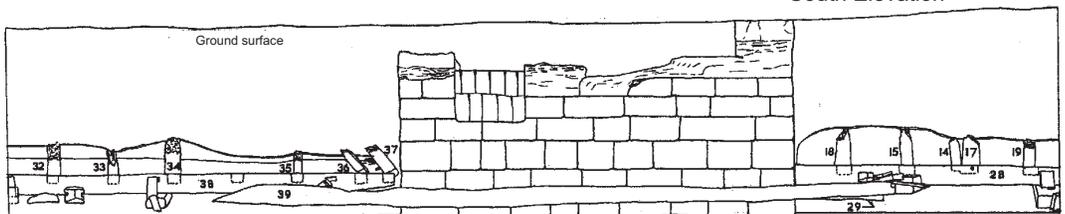


Fig. 11. Plan and elevation of the wooden revetment.

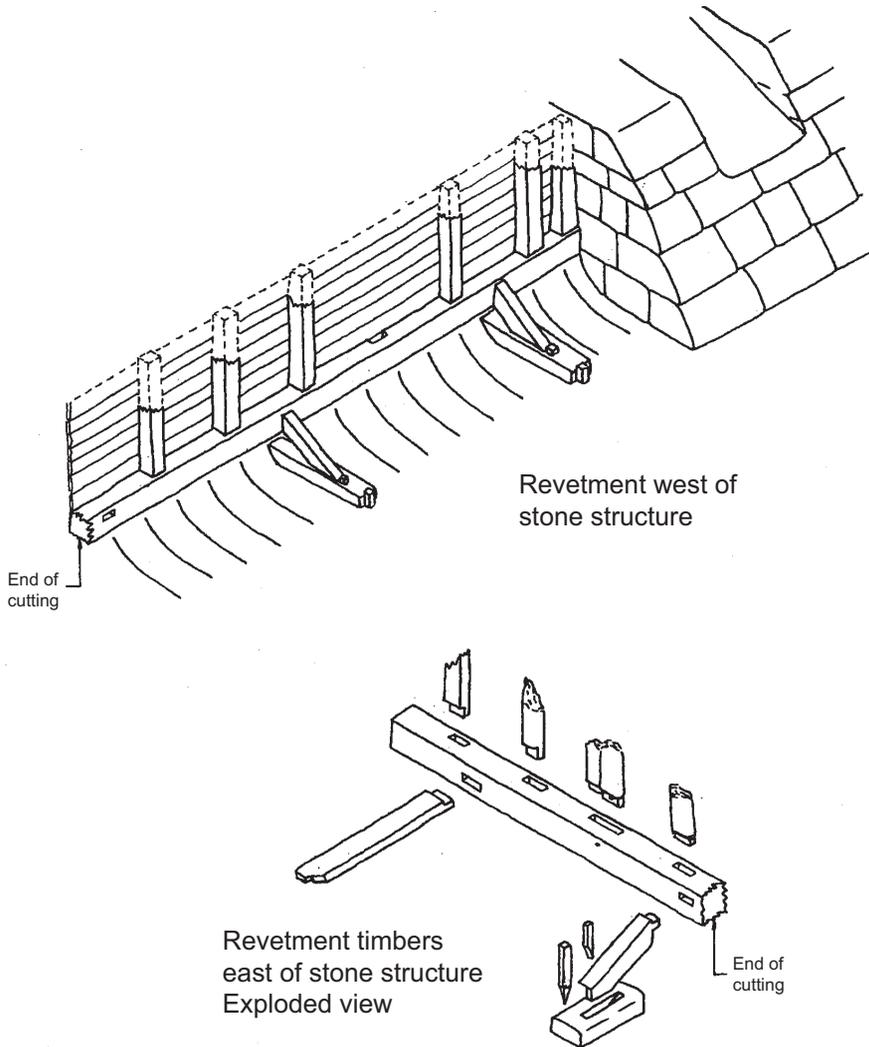


Fig. 12. General assembly drawing of the members of the wooden revetment.

northern faces of the vertical members, without the use of nails or wooden pegs, the pressure exerted by the deposits packed behind the planks being sufficient to keep them in position. The use of bare-faced tenons on the feet of the vertical posts is seen as an attempt to minimize the effect of the pressure on the crucial junction of the post and base-plate: a central tenon would have greatly reduced the capacity of the members to resist this force. Support for the revetments was provided by a series of regularly spaced shores which braced the base-plate itself, rather than the vertical posts (Fig.

12); a technique noted at some London revetments (Milne & Milne 1978). The head of the shore was tenoned into the southern edge of the principal base-plate, and ran diagonally southwards to a lower-level, subsidiary base-plate (sole plate, toe piece) aligned at right angles to the revetment, but some 200 mm below it. The dimensions of the planks varied, but one of the best preserved (timber 31), was 2.6 m long, 280 mm wide and 20 mm thick. When the bank behind the eastern revetment was cut back, stakes were found driven in behind the planks, presumably to hold the planks

whilst the bank was built up behind them. Behind the western revetment, however, there were no stakes and although two of the four planks found in place had been bored with 20-mm diameter holes, as if for pegging in places, corresponding holes in the posts were not found. The posts supporting the planks survived to lengths from 620 mm to 800 mm and at their lower ends were 130 mm to 200 mm wide and 130 mm to 150 mm thick, tapering upwards to become 20 or 30 mm smaller in width and thickness where broken off. The tenons, at the joints between posts and base-plates were not central but bare-faced with the bare face towards the bank in each case. Only one tenon was pegged in position (timber 17), where one or two tenons were fitted into one long mortise. It was noticed that the fit of the joints was not precise, e.g. timber 35's tenon was 15 mm less than its mortise giving 15 mm movement.

The base plates (timbers 28 and 38) were 250 mm square, that to the west rested throughout its length on natural clay; so did that to the east except at its western end where it rested on a re-used timber (timber 29), 270 mm square containing two mortises and a peg protruding from one face. The pegged end was inserted into a space where one block was missing from the masonry Building D.

Three diagonal braces were found complete and fixed in place, with part of a fourth disturbed example also being recorded. They were constructed as shown in Figure 12. There was a possible fifth brace of a different type (timber 27). At one end it bore a bare-faced tenon fitted into a mortise in the eastern revetment. At its other end was an unusual tenon. As found, this tenon was immediately above the long timber (timber 39) described below. The link between timbers 27 and 39 was found, but this part of the moat filling contained a mass of broken and fragmentary woodwork which it was not possible to reconstruct. The possibility cannot be excluded that the many fragments found represent a connection between the eastern revetment and timber 39. There was, however, no sign of a matching link with the western revetment.

Barely discernible numerals were scratched on the base-plates of the revetments. The two most western mortises were inscribed VI and V; it was thought this might show a sequence of construction, but on the eastern base-plate the numbers went X, IX, XII, XI, suggesting possible coding for the different joints.

Timber 39 was found lying at an angle of 3° to the stone face of Building D with two piles or stakes driven into the moat bottom immediately to the north of it. The width of the beam varied from 200 mm to 250 mm and the depth from 170 mm to 255 mm. Its length as found was 8.55 m but a scarf, with three peg-holes, and the lower part of a mortise at its western end showed that an extension had at some time been attached. Into the upper face of the beam were 15 mortises ranging in length from 160 mm to 300 mm and in width from 110 mm to 160 mm. Distances between mortises varied from 310 mm to 400 mm. Peg-holes were bored through the beam, one for each mortise and the third and fifth mortises from the east contained tenons cut off flush with the surface of the beam. Although the cross-section of timber 39 is similar to that of the main revetment base plates, the use of pegs for securing the uprights is notably different.

As might be expected at the scene of a collapsed wooden revetment there was, in the lower moat filling, a great number of smaller wood fragments, details of which are housed in the archive.

### TRACKWAYS (Fig. 3)

The preferred method of providing a firm surface was by laying down flints, which if well water-worn and greater than 100 mm long are called cobbles, whilst smaller flints are termed shingle.

Apart from patches of cobbles or shingle inside, or immediately outside buildings, three probable trackway lengths survive clear of buildings. These radiate from the middle of the site, north of Building E in eastern, northern and western directions. The eastern trackway, consisting of cobbles over a shingle base, was some 3 m wide opening out to 6 m where it met the moat. At the moat edge the trackway was much disturbed by trees and bushes and was covered with silt. In line with this trackway, a cutting was made through the moat which at this point was 12 m wide by 2 m deep (Fig. 5, section M-M).

The northern trackway was about 2 m wide and was constructed in a similar manner. The western trackway differed in that it was in a cobbled depression that ran in a curve towards Feature J, and at its western end bordered a large cobbled area.

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the trackways were of differing ages.

## THE FINDS

**THE POTTERY** by Mark Gardiner

Owing to the nature of the pottery assemblage the fabric descriptions and vessel illustrations are to be found in the ADS Supplement with only an overview being given here.

The study of the pottery from the site has been more extended than the preparation of other elements of the excavation. The pottery was originally passed to Ken Barton who gave spot-dates to individual sherds and some contexts. These formed the basis for the dating in the interim reports. The pottery was subsequently examined by Anthony Streeten, but his work was hampered by the separation of the rims, bases and decorated sherds from the remainder of the ceramics. Nevertheless, he made some progress and the fabric series used in the present report is based upon his work. His contribution to the study of the Stretham pottery is acknowledged here. Fifty-seven vessels were selected by him in 1981 for illustration, passed to the illustrator, but were subsequently lost. These included a horn from a ram-shaped aquamanile identified by Gerald Dunning as Scarborough Ware and other mundane items including jugs, bowls and cooking-pots. Ray Hartridge began work on the pottery by drawing together the notes prepared by Barton. After Ray's death in 1989 the pottery was returned to the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society and the contexts were reconstituted by combining the rims, bases and decorated sherds with the body sherds. The present report was drafted in 1995. In late 1999 some of the finds selected in 1981 were recovered. They have been re-examined and the results incorporated here.

The pottery represents one of the larger groups from a Wealden site in central Sussex. Unfortunately, the full potential of the material cannot be exploited because the information on the stratigraphy and contexts has been lost and can be only partially recovered from written descriptions on some bags and sherds. Secondly, the lost sherds sent for illustration, including diagnostic and unusual sherds has left an assemblage which is less informative.

Barton, who examined the pottery in about 1970, concluded that there were two distinct phases, c. 1000 to 1150 and 1275 to 1450. The earliest date was based upon sherds, some now lost, which were described as similar to those found beneath the keep at Bramber Castle, which he had concluded were Late Anglo-Saxon. Re-examination of the pottery from Bramber has shown this material to be prehistoric (Gardiner 1990, 251). Other prehistoric sherds do occur among those surviving from Stretham. However, although there are some sherds which might be as early as 1000, a date in the later part of the eleventh century is equally possible. There are very few Saxo-Norman sherds of DA or DB fabrics, and almost none of the DC fabric (defined in Gardiner 1990). Contrary to Barton's preliminary view, the main period represented by the pottery appears to be the thirteenth century, with no recognizable break in activity. The pottery continues into the fifteenth century, although that period is poorly represented, except in discrete areas of the site. There are a very small number of sherds of sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century date, but activity and occupation at Stretham seems to have virtually ceased by then.

All the pottery was examined and where possible date ranges were ascribed to groups. It is very doubtful that these groups were stratigraphically discrete. The pottery was generally collected by grid square, and sometimes subdivided

by layer within the square. Occasionally, it was recovered separately according to specific feature. The site has shallow stratification, and the excavation techniques used may not have been adequate to identify details of stratigraphy.

The method of ceramic study was determined by the lack of reliable contextual information and doubts concerning contextual integrity. The pottery from each grid square was examined, weighed and given a spot-date. The purpose was to seek to identify general patterns of pottery distribution and chronology. There were considerable problems in identifying the location of some bags of pottery; at least three systems of nomenclature were used during the course of work to identify the location of the grid squares. Many of the sherds were abraded suggesting that considerable post-depositional disturbance had taken place. Few closed contexts could be identified and detailed study of these was not considered to be worthwhile. The discussion of the pottery firstly considers the ceramics from the site and then its wider affinities.

The main period of activity commenced during the eleventh century, but three prehistoric and a small number of Roman sherds were identified. The greater number of Roman sherds are of East Sussex Ware, and there is a single piece of box-flue tile, suggesting the presence of a significant site in the vicinity. There were relatively few medieval sherds which could be identified from the period before 1150 and these seemed to lie mainly on the west side of the excavated area. They lay in a clearly identifiable area excavated in 1980 on the north of the metalled track leading to the possible bridge location over the eastern arm of the moat (Fig. 3). Although the number of sherds recovered was small, these belonged to the period 1100 to 1250.

The Buildings B, D and F were provisionally dated by the excavator to about 1200. The pottery examined does not allow a firm date to be given to the first two of these, although context information available to Barton, who gave the provisional dates, may have permitted greater certainty. The pottery from Building F belongs mainly to the period 1250–1400, but seems to date from the period during or after its destruction. Activity in the later fourteenth and fifteenth century seems to have been particularly well represented by deposits of pottery on the north side of the site. The quantities of pottery of this period found, may suggest that the area to the south of Building A was used as a midden during this period.

Study of the pottery from the moat was uninformative. The material should be well-stratified and allow the ceramic sequence from the site to be refined, but it was not possible to correlate the context descriptions on the finds with the section drawings.

The occupants of Stretham drew mainly on the same sources as those further south in the Adur valley at Bramber and Steyning. The pottery from the thirteenth century and before resembles finds in those towns, and Fabrics 6, 7 and 10 (ADS Supplement) were likely to have been made in Steyning where the presence of kilns has been inferred from wasters discovered in excavations in 1994 at Tanyard Lane (Gardiner & Greatorex 1997, 153–4). It also has affinities with the forms of the pottery from Hangleton village (Smith & Hurst 1963, 112–42). From the thirteenth century onwards West Sussex Ware jugs were available. The examples at Stretham show the characteristic features on vessels in this fabric found across West Sussex and westwards into Hampshire, including white slip on the top of the interior and comb-decoration on the

body (Barton 1979, 93–106). The coastal orientation of the pottery supply is emphasized by the publication of medieval assemblages from Crawley, which lies about 25 km north of Stretham. The pottery from Crawley comprised largely of Earlswood, Surrey Border and possibly Limpsfield Wares, although West Sussex Ware was also present in some quantity at the site at 15–17 High Street (Barber 1997, 200–205; Timby 1998, 89–92). This contrasts strongly with the small proportion of Surrey wares found at Stretham.

Looking further afield, the non-local fabrics, both from elsewhere in England and abroad, reflect the wealth and the wide-ranging contacts of the bishops of Chichester. French pottery is likely to have been brought in with the wine trade, although detailed work on the provenancing of individual fabrics has not been undertaken.

#### COINS AND A JETON by David Rudling

Six silver medieval coins (five English and one continental) and one French latten jeton (or reckoning-counter) were recovered during the excavation. Unfortunately, no context details are available for any of these finds. The absence of smaller, lower denomination coins, including earlier fractional (cut) halfpennies and farthings, can perhaps be explained by the probable non-use of metal-detectors by the excavators.

#### Coins

1. Edward I Penny of Bury St Edmunds, Class IVc (1282–9). Moneyer: Robert de Hadelie. Ref. North (1991, 1025). This coin shows some signs of wear and was probably lost by c. 1320.

2. Edward I/II. Penny of London, Class Xc-f (1302–10). Ref. North (1991, 1040–43). Not much wear and probably lost by c. 1320.

3. Edward III. Groat of London, Pre-Treaty Period, Series D (1352–3). Ref. North (1991, 1152). Some signs of wear but not clipped; this coin probably went out of circulation by c. 1412 when the standard weights of the coinage were reduced.

4. Edward III. Groat of London, Pre-Treaty Period, Series E (1354–5). Ref. North (1991, 1163). Some wear but not clipped, probably lost by c. 1412.

5. Edward III. Halfgroat of London, Pre-Treaty Period, Series E (1354–5). Ref. North (1991, 1165). Not clipped and few signs of wear, thus unlikely to have been in circulation beyond the end of the fourteenth century.

6. John the Blind of Luxemburg (1309–46). Sterling. Obverse: EIWANES DNS Z REX B, crowned bust (English type). Reverse: LVC ENB GEN SIS, long cross. Refs Chautard (1871, 170) and Mayhew (1983, 265).

#### Jeton

French Jeton (reckoning-counter). Latten: 25 mm. c. 1385–1415/22. Obverse: Initial cross, AVE MARIA GRACIA PLE, a large jewelled, open crown fleurdelisee, with three trefoil jewels in the crown. Reverse: A-V-E-M, a cross with three strands fleurdelisee and fleuronnee with a quatrefoil in the centre, all within a tressure of four arches fleuronnee at each angle. The legend is in the spandrels of the quatrefoil. Ref. cf. Barnard (1916, 69) and Mitchiner (1988, 462).

#### TILE AND SLATE by E. W. Holden

##### Roofing material

The quantity of fired-clay roofing tiles and slate offered for review was small, which suggests that only the better material was retained for the archive.

##### Roof tiles

The tiles are of varying fabric, well-fired to an oxidized red or reddish-brown colour and most contain some fine sand either naturally or as tempering. One piece has chalk inclusions and two bear traces of lime mortar. All were fragmentary and too small to determine overall size.

##### Plain tiles

The thickness is 12–15 mm and where there are peg-holes they are approximately circular, 10–12 mm diameter. Surface striation on the face suggests that surplus clay was struck off with a stick. One piece had a patch of olive-green glaze.

##### Nib tiles

Ten pieces were reviewed (three large, seven small), each with one nib, but no viable nail-holes. The nibs vary in shape and size and usually on the smooth side of the tile and appear to have been made by folding back a piece of clay that projected through the head of the mould. One tile was measured at 172 mm and had traces of mortar on one edge.

##### Pantiles

Two fragments of curved pantiles of differing fabrics; these appear to be intrusive and of post-medieval date.

##### Ridge tiles

The majority of fragments have traces of one or two crenellations. Five pieces of plain tile are unglazed and probably come from tiles without crests. All crested ridge tiles have patchy glaze, coloured orange or varying shades of green. The glaze seemed to have been applied to all the exposed faces, except the tops of the crests, prior to fixing. The crests, which taper upwards in all four faces, are substantial, standing 28–40 mm high, although one was 50 mm. In contrast there was one fragment with stubby crests, 12 mm high, which appear to have been pinched from the main body of the tile. The narrow gaps between crests were pushed out from one side with a 'V'-section tool. There are traces of perished dark green glaze.

##### Roofing slate

Only seven slates, all more or less whole, were retained as being representative. All specimens resembled others found in Sussex which are considered to have come from quarries in South Devon or the south coast of Cornwall in the medieval period (Holden 1965, 69; Murray 1965, 79).

##### Floor tiles

Two pieces of plain floor tiles were found, both of coarse lay with flint filler and bevelled edges. One was 37 mm thick, the other 29 mm.

##### Oven tiles

Tiles with underside stab-holes are taken to be oven tiles (Holden 1963, 145–7). Twelve pieces were reviewed.

Buff colour; square stab-holes, bevelled edge, thickness 19–35 mm, not all from the same fixing. One fragment had

a piece of roofing slate jammed in stab-hole.

Red-buff colour; one square-edged, with stab-holes, 32 mm thick; two bevel-edged, with square stab-holes, 15 mm thick; one bevel-edged, with round stab-holes, 48 mm thick and 165 × 165 mm.

A full list of tiles and slates is to be found in the ADS Supplement.

#### STONE OBJECTS (none examined petrographically)

##### Querns

Two small pieces of basaltic lava of the type from the Niedermendig area of Rhineland were recorded and are common finds on medieval sites.

##### Whetstones

Three pieces resembling micaceous schist, one with ovoid-section 105 × 24 × 22 mm. Several pieces in fine sandstone were also found, three with parallelogram sections, 40 × 40 mm, one 36 × 36 mm and another small piece was hollowed on one face. A further fragment was of fine grey sandstone, rectangular in section, hollowed on two edges and 60 × 28 mm.

##### GLASS

Several fragments of weathered, thin green glass, probably window glass, were recovered.

#### THE ANIMAL REMAINS by Owen Bedwin

A total of 715 fragments of animal bone and teeth were identified. However, 504 of these (71%) came from the topsoil within the interior of the moated site, and cannot be

regarded as either securely stratified or dated. Of the remaining 211 fragments (29%) from dated contexts, the only large concentration (163 fragments) came from the lower layers of fill in the moat, in the vicinity of Building D. This is the only substantial group of animal bone material dated to the main period of occupation of the site, i.e. the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Within the group of bones and teeth, the following species were represented:

Species	No. of fragments	Percentage of total
<i>Bos</i>	115	71
<i>Ovis</i>	20	12
<i>Sus</i>	14	9
<i>Equus</i>	7	4.5
<i>Gallus</i>	3	1.5
<i>Cervus</i>	3	1.5
<i>Felis</i>	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	

Clearly, *Bos* is the most important food animal here, and this finding may be contrasted with roughly contemporary material from the nearby town of Steyning (O'Connor 1979, 147), where *Ovis* and *Bos* predominated, with *Ovis* slightly more numerous. The presence of *Cervus elaphus* at Stretham indicated hunting, though on a small scale, and the single bone of *Felis* is probably a household pet. The absence of bone of fish and small bird is almost certainly due to the lack of sieving or flotation during the excavation.

## DISCUSSION

The site may tentatively be divided into three general periods, though the poor stratigraphy, lack of securely dated ceramic groups and excavation methodology makes detailed phasing extremely difficult.

#### PERIOD 1: LATE TWELFTH TO MID-FOURTEENTH CENTURY

This period saw the site's initial occupation and, particularly between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth century, its peak. During this time the site would probably have been used by the bishops of Chichester, during the summer months, as a base in the Henfield area when travelling about the diocese. Such usage during the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is well documented (Deedes 1908, 16). The frequent use is thought to be due to the bishops' concern to protect a right-of-way between Stretham and Amberley (Peckham 1925, 122–3). Moated areas were not uncommon and were used as a way of making land and property secure against intruders (Le Patourel & Roberts 1978, 48). It could serve the same purpose as the farmyard does today, and as such the excavated

site might have been part of a complex that could have been made up of a manor house and other buildings but with accommodation fit for visiting bishops. It is on record that in 1220 the bishop had 43 cattle on the demesne and the moat may have at times been used to contain such herds. The site is unusual when compared to the majority of moated sites in that it is situated on alluvium, rather than a normal impermeable clay, on a tidal river's floodplain. Indeed, the site was in such a location as to require protection with embankments.

It is quite clear from the ceramics and on-site stratigraphy that there are several sub-phases to Period 1, but the nature of the surviving data precludes reliable sub-phasing. Building B (Fig. 7) appears to have been constructed in flint and chalk built with indications of further accommodation, probably timber-framed, to the north. Within the main part of Building B finds of glass, window lead and part of a Sussex Marble shaft suggest at least part may have been in use as a chapel. Whether Building B was original to the site or represents an upgrade of the timber hall (Building F) is uncertain. However, Building D, (Fig. 7) built on a massive foundation of ashlar greensand, butted B and

is clearly a later addition. But why on a flat site should a building be located with its foundations extending into the moat? Possible reasons could include **(a)** boat access, **(b)** an abutment for a bridge or **(c)** additional high-status accommodation with drainage direct into the moat.

Suggestion **(a)**: If the moat was open to the river then it would have been tidal and allowed access by ferry or small river-going cargo boat. However, mooring alongside the wooden revetment would be difficult owing to the projecting braces unless the vessel was of very shallow draught (Fig. 12), but even then it would have to contend with the sloping face of the masonry. In addition, the long timber 39 (Fig. 11) in the bottom of the moat would not allow a boat to moor against Building D. Alternatively, a boat might moor at right-angles to the revetment — however, with the moat profile and a maximum width of 5.0 m, this would seem an unlikely solution. As such, it would appear that mooring at this location is an unlikely option.

Suggestion **(b)** implies that access to the site was by land, then there would be a need for a bridge and gatehouse. The foundations of D were sturdy enough to support such structures, but such an entrance would be obstructed by Building B and afford a tight approach route. The chute, in the masonry at the west of D, which seemed to be part of the original construction, would limit a bridge to a width of 2.0 m. However, a twelfth- to thirteenth-century bridge of similar width was found at Penhallan, Cornwall (Beresford 1974, 116–19). This had a stone-lined pit beneath the gatehouse to receive the drawbridge counterbalance. The Stretham structure was only excavated to a depth of 1.0 m and therefore the presence of such a pit cannot be ruled out. A drawbridge would need a sturdy structure at its outer end to withstand the impact of the bridge being lowered (Rigold 1975, 56). Could timber 39 be part of such a structure? A cutting to trace the abutment on the outer side of the moat was not possible owing to its proximity to the river bank.

Suggestion **(c)**, probably the most likely, assumes buildings B and D, which obviously stood at the same time even if not constructed together, are of high status. Building D could then be viewed as a high-quality extension, probably of two rooms, one above the other, with a latrine draining into the moat. The revetment may simply be a means of stabilizing the moat bank to avoid

erosion potentially causing structural problems. This new accommodation could be the private accommodation for a visiting bishop, situated close to the site's possible chapel/main hall complex. Similar extensions, one containing a garderobe, are apparent at Old Soar Manor, Plaxtol, Kent (Wood 1950).

Access from the south would have been by the estuary and therefore susceptible to flooding (Baker 1966, 5). An eastern approach on higher ground would have been an advantage and such a trackway was found within the site and on the outer bank of the moat (Fig. 3). Section M–M (Fig. 5), cut at this point, did not reveal signs of a bridge, nor did it produce many finds compared with the mass of material from the southern moat. This may be due to lack of maintenance of the southern moat once Buildings B and D were deserted, whilst the eastern entrance could have been regularly cleared out. Several centuries of clearance, perhaps to preserve a boundary between plots of land, could have removed traces of a wooden bridge.

The narrow foundations of Building F suggest a timber-framed hall (Fig. 9). An outer passage to the north of the building incorporated a possible latrine with a drain from the building. The southern end of F consisted of two rooms with foundations to the west suggesting a lean-to. This building may have formed the initial main hall if Building B was a later-thirteenth- or early-fourteenth-century upgraded hall and chapel complex or, alternatively, it could represent a 'secondary' hall. Pottery evidence suggests that the building was destroyed some time during the fourteenth century.

A mass of roof tile and tabular slabs, all set on edge, in the southwest corner of Building H are thought to be a laid hearth or, less likely, a collapsed oven roof. Little other evidence was found of this building, but it is possibly a detached kitchen such as found at Prestbury Moat (O'Neil 1956, 17), manor house of the bishops of Hereford, and the wooden building at Weoley Castle (Oswald 1962/3, 119). The building is well situated to serve both Buildings B and F.

Building A (Fig. 6), with its multiple ovens, certainly appears to have a semi-industrial function. The pottery suggested a fourteenth-century date for the use of this building, though whether this material was of the first or second half of the century is not certain now and the building remains floating between being a Period-1

brewhouse or bakery, or an early Period-2 semi-industrial construction. All in all, it is probable the building had its roots in Period 1 but may well have continued in use into Period 2 even after domestic occupation at the site ceased.

The wooden revetments on the inner moat bank either side of Building D had almost certainly been in contemporaneous use with the building and can also be considered as Period-1 structures. The revetment had failed and the bank slipped into the moat, however, there was no evidence to indicate when the collapse took place, though a Period 2/3 date is quite probable.

#### **PERIOD 2: ?MID-FOURTEENTH TO FIFTEENTH CENTURY**

Deterioration in climate and sea-level rises during the fourteenth century would have led to destruction along the Sussex coast (Brandon 1971, 80), on top of which one may add the impact of the epidemics of the century. Between the taxation lists of Pope Nicholas IV (1291) and the Nonorum Inquisitiones (1342) much loss of land is identified in fourteen parishes between Brighton and West Thorney (Baker 1966, 4). The excavated site, in its low-lying position, would have been very susceptible to this adverse weather. In 1378 there is a reference to a watergate, presumably in the embankment, that was protecting the area from the floods (Hudson 1987, 141). The flooding would have resulted in a downgrading of the use and ultimately to the abandonment of the site, potentially with occupation shifting to higher ground. The excavated moat is at 8.3 m OD whilst the current Stretham Manor, which is 150 m to the southeast is at 10.3 m OD. This could be the location of the new bishops' manor.

Following the abandonment of the excavated site the buildings fell into disrepair and were probably subjected to robbing of masonry and usable timber elements. It appears that the site may have continued in use for farming and semi-industrial purposes. Some simple structures may have been constructed at this time for food production/agricultural needs and others from

Period 1 may have continued to be used in a run-down state, but the lack of secure stratigraphy and artefacts does not allow this to be ascertained.

Building E had narrow foundations made from re-used stone from the site, suggesting a timber building of potentially later date, roughly laid out and providing accommodation and/or an open-sided shelter for animals or equipment. The building contained a hearth, its position was such as to present a fire hazard and therefore it is likely to have been a later addition. It is also quite possible that the semi-industrial Building A may have continued in use during this period, perhaps with the insertion of at least one replacement oven.

#### **PERIOD 3: LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY ONWARDS**

When the site was last used is uncertain; it may have been in use until 1496 when the demesnes were leased to John Bynwyne (Peckham 1952, 101). There is certainly very little archaeological evidence for use after this date, though Building/Feature C may be of this period though little survived to be conclusive.

The excavation results have perhaps raised more questions than provided answers. Further research is needed in the surrounding area, particularly on the current Stretham Manor, if we are to begin conclusively to ascertain how the excavated moated site fits into the medieval landscape and site hierarchy of the Adur valley. Hopefully, ongoing additional historical work by A. Stevens may address at least some of these issues.

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ADS SUPPLEMENT

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