

Excavations at No. 5 John Street, Shoreham-By-Sea, West Sussex

by Simon Stevens

with contributions from

Luke Barber

Samantha Crawl

David Dunkin

Lucy Sibun

Pat Hinton

Excavations in September 2001 of an area measuring c. 10 m by c. 7 m within the historic core of the town revealed a total of 32 archaeological features, including structural remains, rubbish pits, cesspits and post-holes. There was some modern truncation and an extension to the area uncovered a probable Victorian well. However, the majority of the datable features encountered were medieval, ranging in date from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, with some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century material.

Medieval finds included pottery, both local and imported in origin and glazed and unglazed fragments of roof and floor tile. Large quantities of oyster shell and a small assemblage of animal bone were also recovered. Environmental evidence was recovered from a number of the features.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission was granted by Adur District Council (Ref. SU/128/99) for a residential development at No. 5 John Street, Shoreham-By-Sea, West Sussex (NGR TQ 21154 05079). Following consultation between Adur District Council and West Sussex County Council (Adur District's advisers on archaeological issues) a condition (No. 9) was attached to the permission requiring a programme of archaeological work at the site prior to the commencement of development. The initial phase of this work was a field evaluation to assess the archaeological potential.

Archaeology South-East (a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit) was commissioned by Bramber Construction Co. Ltd to undertake the archaeological evaluation (Stage 1) in September 2001. The evaluation was carried out according to the *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork* for West Sussex and a site-specific specification prepared by John Mills, Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, West Sussex County Council.

Given the results of the initial evaluation, and following an on-site meeting between representatives of West Sussex County Council, Adur District Council and Bramber Construction Co. Ltd, it was decided that an area measuring c. 10 m by c. 7 m (the majority of the proposed building 'footprint') should be mechanically stripped and that significant archaeological features should be excavated and recorded (Stage 2). Archaeology South-East was commissioned to undertake the

excavation, which proceeded directly after the evaluation phase. The results of both stages are given in the current report, although as the excavation area incorporated the locations of the evaluation trenches, no attempt has been made to differentiate features identified in the Stage 1 evaluation and the Stage 2 excavation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies in the historic centre of the port of New Shoreham, on the western side of John Street at an average elevation of 5.5 m to 6.0 m OD (Fig. 1). It is bounded to the south by the rear of the former Woolworths store and to the north by the former Roman Catholic Church of St Peter (recently converted for residential use). The western boundary is an open yard fronting onto West Street. The underlying geology consists of Head deposits (British Geological Survey 1984).

New Shoreham was founded at the mouth of the River Adur shortly after the Norman Conquest to replace the port of Old Shoreham further upstream (Aldsworth & Freke 1976). The name *scora ham* is of Anglo-Saxon origin and *scora* appears to be a reference to the local steep slope of the downland (Mawer & Stenton 2001, 246–7). The first documentary reference to New Shoreham dates to 1151, and by 1235 the settlement was known as *Noua Sorham*, and by 1288 as *Nywe Shorham* (Mawer & Stenton 2001).

The grid-pattern layout of the streets of the Norman planned town has survived: John Street forms part of a row of streets running south to north

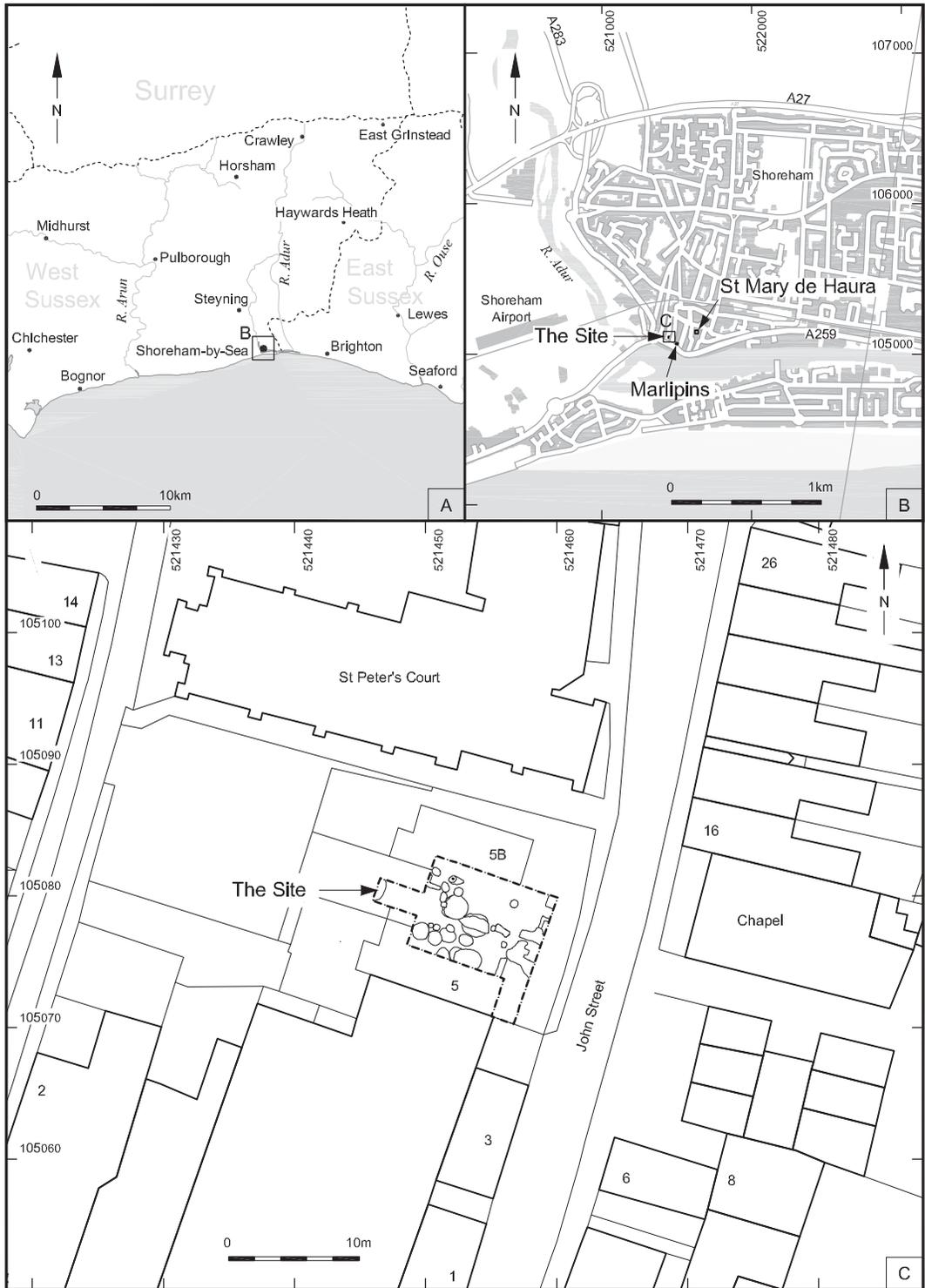


Fig. 1. Location plan.

from the High Street. The medieval port enjoyed great prosperity through the twelfth century, although it appears to have gone into economic decline in the thirteenth or fourteenth century owing to silting of the harbour entrance, and it has been suggested that the southern part of the port was destroyed by the sea in 1401 (Aldsworth & Freke 1976), although it has also been suggested that the damage was confined to the eastern part of the settlement (Elrington 1980, 146).

Documentary sources show that the town was the site of a Carmelite Priory (founded in 1316) and at least two medieval Hospitals (Cheal 1921). The surviving above-ground remains of the medieval town are the impressive church of St Mary de Haura and the twelfth-century building known as The Marlipins now housing a museum, which fronts onto the High Street to the east of the site. Despite recent research, the original function of this building remains unknown (Thomas 2005, 201).

Although there have been occasional finds of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon artefacts in the general area (listed in the West Sussex County Council Sites and Monuments Record) the exact find spots are often unclear. However, a Romano-British well discovered at the junction of Southdown Road and Mill Lane to the north of the site is of significance as it contained tesserae suggesting that a substantial Romano-British building (?villa) lies undiscovered in the vicinity (Witten 1978). Much material of a medieval date has been recovered from the town and from the immediate vicinity of the current site.

John Street was formally known as St John Street, and probably owes its name to the Knights of St John (the Knights Hospitallers) who had an establishment of some kind in the town during the twelfth century (Cheal 1921). This suggests the presence of the religious community in the vicinity of the street. Archaeological work carried out within plots fronting onto John Street has revealed that there has been much modern truncation, and hence probable destruction of archaeological deposits (Bashford 1997; Stevens 1999), but a single medieval pit has been recorded (Kirk 1998).

To the immediate south of the site, significant medieval artefacts were unearthed in 1968 during the digging of a service trench. They consisted of a cresset stone (used for lighting) and a fine imported jug manufactured in Saintonge, France, both dating from the fourteenth century (Evans 1969). To the

east of the site, medieval material including pottery and glazed roofing tile was recovered during a watching brief at the Royal Sovereign Public House, Middle Street (Stevens 1994). A recent excavation carried out at the rear of The Marlipins produced medieval and post-medieval material (Thomas 2005) and medieval pottery has also been recovered from close to the Town Hall on the opposite side of the High Street (Evans 1969).

In addition, a recent large-scale excavation at the Ropetackle site at the western end of the High Street uncovered a range of archaeological features mostly dating from the medieval period, but with significant Late Iron Age/Romano-British and post-medieval assemblages (Stevens 2004a; Stevens in prep.).

CARTOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The maps examined are held in the West Sussex County Record Office and only a summary of the cartographic background is present here; fuller details are available with the site archive.

The Gardner and Gream map of 1795 shows the surviving elements of the medieval layout of New Shoreham clearly, but the scale is too small to allow examination of the site itself. A *Plan of New Shoreham* produced in 1811 suggests that much of the frontage of John Street was not occupied at that time. There were only two buildings marked on the east side of the street: a building to the north of the site, and Shoreham House much further to the north.

By the time of the first detailed Ordnance Survey map of 1876, the street had its current name and is shown with two lines of parallel buildings occupying the site. The area between them and to the rear appears to be a yard, entered from John Street. By 1898 the site was almost entirely covered by buildings, with three large structures, a smaller building to the rear, and a yard approached from Ship Street.

By 1912 there had been some change at the site as much of the yard area was then occupied by a structure linking the buildings on the site with the row of cottages to the west. The map of 1952 shows some changes as the separate buildings at the site are now shown as a single structure. By 1965 the yard had been infilled with a building, and the westernmost part of the original building was numbered '12a'.

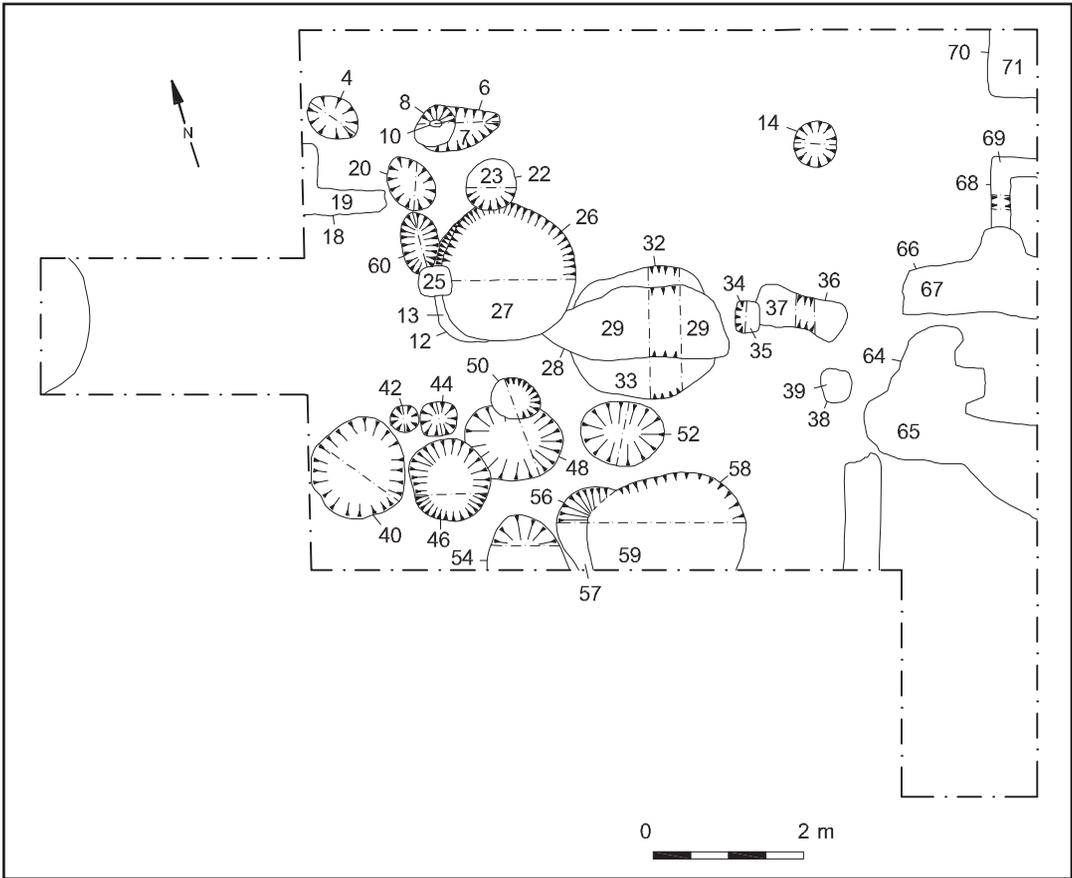


Fig. 2 Plan of features.

THE SITE

THE FEATURES (Figs 2 & 3)

Following the mechanical removal of *c.* 750 mm of recent overburden from the excavation area, a number of archaeological features were identified. Although there had clearly been some post-medieval truncation of the site, the following features were identified and recorded:

Phase 1: AD 1100–1225

Two features dating from this period were excavated and recorded in the northwestern corner of the site. Cut 4 was a heavily truncated post-hole/small pit (Fig. 3, S1). Its dating is based on the recovery of a single sherd of twelfth- to early-thirteenth-century pottery from the fill (Context 5). Animal bone was also present.

The other feature was an elongated pit (6/7) (Fig. 3, S2). A large unabraded rim sherd of twelfth-century date was recovered from the fill as well as tile and animal bone. Sherds of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century pottery were also recovered from the feature, but it is suggested that their presence was the result of truncation of the pit by two other features, a post-hole (8/9) and a modern post (10/11).

Residual sherds of twelfth-century pottery recovered from a number of other features suggest that there was activity (or at least disposal of domestic waste) at the site during this period.

Phase 2: AD 1250–1400

The majority of closely datable features belonged to this phase, including the deepest feature encountered at the site, a partially stone-lined cesspit (Cut 12). The cesspit had been truncated

by two other features, a second cesspit (26/27), and an undated post-hole (24/25). On grounds of safety the full depth of the feature could not be ascertained, but it was more than 1.4 m deep. The sides were nearly vertical with some of the flint and chalk/clunch lining surviving on the western side (Fig. 3, S7). The characteristically greenish-grey silty fill (Context 13) contained mid-thirteenth- to fourteenth-century material.

To the immediate northwest of the cesspit a small pit/post-hole (20/21) was encountered (Fig. 3, S8). Pottery dating to the late thirteenth to fourteenth century, tile and animal bone were recovered.

Cut 32 was a substantial pit (Fig. 3, S3). Its fill (Context 33) contained pottery dating from the thirteenth century in association with quantities of tile and slate, and a high concentration of flint beach/river cobbles of unknown origin and function. The pit was truncated by a feature (28/29) dating from the fifteenth century.

The largest assemblage of pottery recovered at the site came from a pit (40/41) encountered in the southwestern corner (Fig. 3, S4). It contained pottery dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (including sherds from an imported French whiteware vessel), tile and animal bone. A copper-alloy harness pendant was also recovered from the pit (Fig. 4). A post-hole, (42/43), located close to the pit (Fig. 3, S5), contained pottery of a similar date.

Six of the pits clustered in the southwestern corner of the site date from this period. Pit 46/47 (Fig. 3, S9) contained an assemblage of artefacts dating from the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century. Late-thirteenth- to late-fourteenth-century tile and animal bone were recovered from Pit 52/53 (Fig. 3, S10). Pit 54/55 (Fig. 3, S11) produced late-thirteenth- to fourteenth-century material. Pottery dating from the mid-thirteenth- to the mid-fourteenth century, including a sherd of imported Saintonge ware, was recovered from Pit 48/49 (Fig. 3, S6).

The intercutting pits, (56/57) and (58/59) also date from this period. Although Pit 56 had been virtually removed by Pit 58 (Fig. 3, S12), its fill contained mid-thirteenth- to mid-fourteenth-century pottery and a fragment of Purbeck Marble mortar. Pit 58 contained pottery of a similar date, and also contained a high concentration of unmortared flint beach/river cobbles of uncertain function.

Phase 3: AD 1400–1525

Three features with pottery of this date range were identified and excavated. Post-hole 14 was clearly structural with vertical sides and a flat base, into which a pad-stone of Wealden Sandstone (Context 16) had been placed (Fig. 3, S13). The overlying fill (Context 15) contained fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century pottery, animal bone and tile. Unfortunately, no similar features were encountered at the site, so no clear evidence of the size or shape of the structure could be ascertained.

The other two features lay in the centre of the site. Cut 26 was a chalk-lined cesspit which truncated an earlier feature of similar function, Cut 12 (Fig. 3, S7). The puddled chalk lining (Context 30) was a maximum of 80 mm thick, and the main fill (Context 27) was dark brown, with a strong odour suggesting the presence of cess. It contained material dating from the fifteenth century. The cesspit was partially truncated by Pit (22/23) and a modern post-hole (24/25).

The cesspit partially truncated a shallow, elongated pit (28/29), which in turn truncated an earlier pit (32/33) (Fig. 3, S3). A single sherd of fifteenth-century pottery was recovered from Context 29.

Unphased 'medieval' c. AD 1100–c. AD 1525

Feature 60/61 was a slightly elongated pit encountered on the western side of the site. It had partially truncated the earliest cesspit (12), and was in turn truncated by a modern post-hole, (24/25) (Fig. 3, S8). Context 61 contained pottery dating from the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, tile, animal bone and shell. Presuming that the earliest material is residual and that the later material is intrusive, a thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date range is probable.

To the north, the twelfth-century pit, (6/7), had been truncated by a post-hole (8/9). No datable material was recovered from the later feature. Both features had been truncated by a modern post (10/11) (Fig. 3, S2). It is suggested that the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century pottery recovered from the earlier pit originated in the later post-hole.

A pit, (22/23), partly truncated the later of the two cesspits. Hence although no dating evidence was recovered from its two fills (Contexts 23 and 31) (Fig. 3, S15), on stratigraphic evidence the feature is datable to the fifteenth century or later. Similarly,

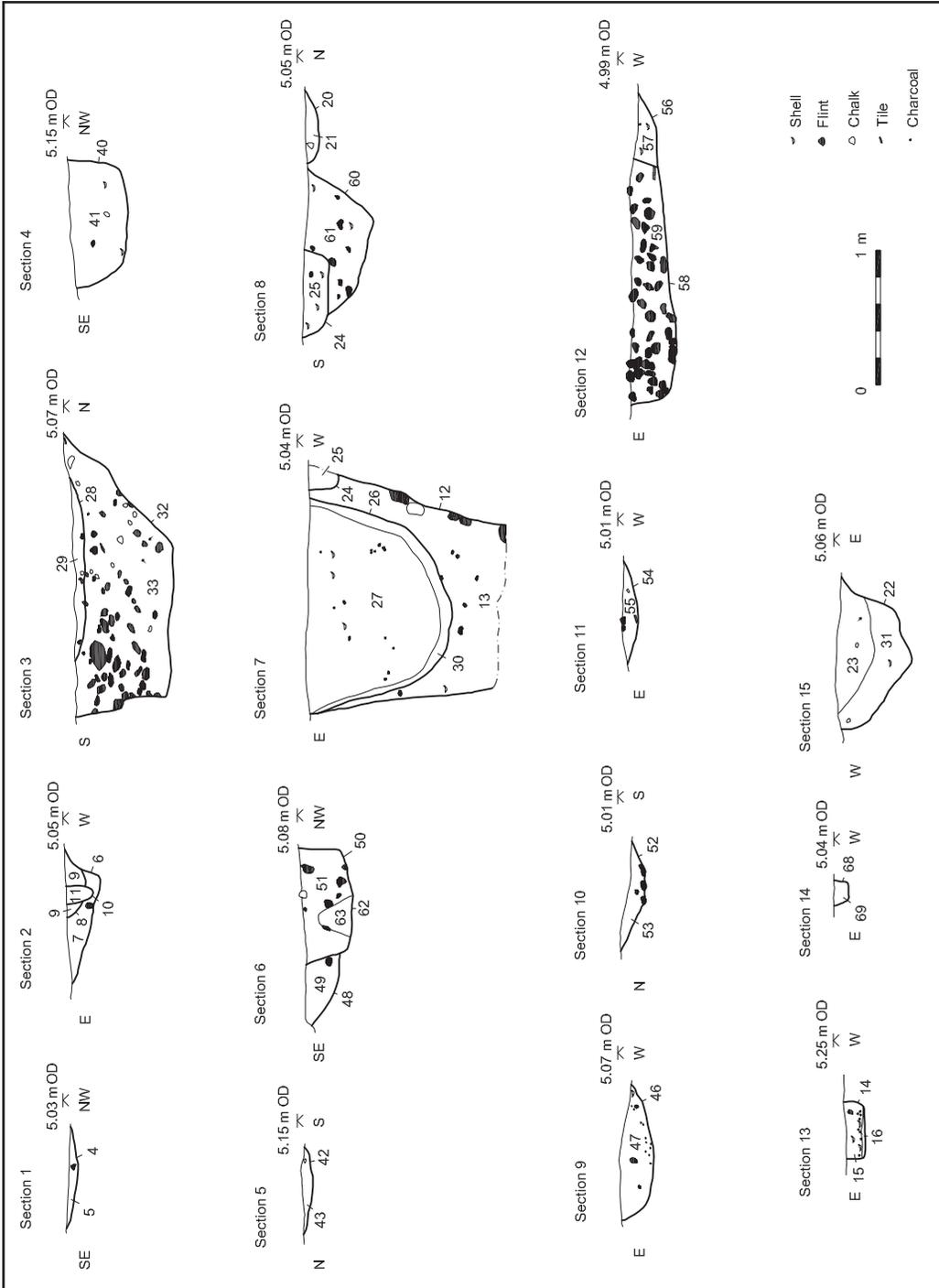


Fig. 3. Selected sections.

another pit, (50/51), partly truncated a thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century pit (48/49), providing stratigraphic evidence of a medieval or later date, despite the absence of closely datable material from the fill. The feature was itself truncated by a modern post (62/63) driven through the feature at a peculiar angle (Fig. 3, S6). A post-hole (44/45), encountered to the west was post-medieval in date. A clay-pipe stem was recovered from the main fill and there was evidence of a 'post-pipe' (Context 17) (not illustrated).

It is also possible that part of a structure of broadly medieval date was encountered on the eastern side of the site. Feature (68/69) was probably a robbed-out foundation trench of the rear corner of a building fronting onto John Street (Fig. 3, S14). No dating evidence was recovered from the fill. It had been truncated by remains of post-medieval buildings (66/67), and any other

potential foundations on the same orientation had been removed by similar episodes of post-medieval intrusion (64/65 and 70/71), and arguably, by more generalised post-medieval truncation of the site. There had also been recent disturbance further to the west: (34/35, 36/37 and 38/39). Recent footings were also encountered at the extreme western edge of the site (18/19).

THE EXTENSION (Fig. 2)

An extension to the site was requested by Mark Taylor, County Archaeologist, West Sussex County Council in order to establish if any evidence of the character of the medieval boundary survived at the rear (western) side of the plot. The overburden was mechanically stripped from an area measuring c. 3.5 m by c. 2 m. No medieval features were identified, although an unstable modern (?Victorian) well was encountered.

THE FINDS

THE POTTERY by Luke Barber

Introduction

The excavations produced a relatively small assemblage of pottery: 271 sherds weighing 3469 g from 17 individual contexts. The material spans the mid/late twelfth to fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries though the majority is of mid-thirteenth- to mid-fourteenth-century date. The condition of the assemblage is generally good. Although sherd size is often small to medium (average sherd weight is 12.8 g) and there is residuality and intrusiveness apparent in certain contexts, the material does not have extensive signs of abrasion or reworking.

This is the first recently excavated stratified assemblage from the town and as such, although small, is of some interest. The main aims of the pottery analysis were therefore to characterize the assemblage and date the excavated deposits.

All the studied pottery was divided into fabric groups based on a visual examination, using a hand-lens where necessary, of tempering, inclusions and manufacturing technique. Context groups were then spot-dated and the assemblages from each context fully quantified by fabric for the archive. Although all the pit groups are small, four of the most secure are outlined below. No sherd groups suitable for illustration are present.

The fabric groups

Despite the small size of the overall assemblage, the fabrics are fully listed below as they form the basis of a fabric series for the later medieval town. Isolating fabric groups was notably difficult owing to the dominance of sand-tempered wares. All fabrics are probably local unless otherwise stated. Codes in brackets refer to the West Sussex Fabric Reference Collection (prefixed WS) or regional post-medieval series. Quantities of each fabric are also given for the assemblage as a whole (count/weight in grams)

Fabric 1: Sparse flint and shell to 1.5 mm with sparse fine sand (WS: F+s/M3)

Cooking-pots only. Twelfth–early thirteenth century (12/218 g).

Fabric 2: Moderate coarse sand, moderate shell to 0.75 mm and rare flint to 1 mm (WS: Q+s/M1)

Cooking-pots only. Eleventh–twelfth century (8/102 g).

Fabric 3: Well-fired fine/medium sand with rare white flint to 1 mm (WS: Q+f/M1)

Cooking-pots only. Probably Binsted kiln (Barton 1979). Mid/late thirteenth–fourteenth century (2/32 g).

Fabric 4: Sparse fine sand with sparse iron oxide/quartz inclusions to 1 mm (WS: Q (f)/M7)

Jugs only. Late twelfth/early thirteenth–early fourteenth century (4/24 g).

Fabric 5: Medium sand with very rare white flint and shell to 1 mm; medium-fired (WS: Q+f/s/M1)

Cooking-pots only. Thirteenth–early fourteenth century (48/845 g).

Fabric 6: Medium sand with very rare white flint and shell to 1 mm; hard-fired (WS: Q+f/s/M2)

Cooking-pots only, often with applied thumbled strips. Later thirteenth–mid fourteenth century (9/130 g).

Fabric 7: Fine to coarse sand with rare flint inclusions to 1.5 mm (WS: Q+f/M2)

Cooking-pots only. Thirteenth century (3/18 g).

Fabric 8: Moderate medium sand with rare/sparse milky rounded quartz to 2 mm (WS: Q/M1b)

Cooking-pots and skillets (with tubular handle – Context 59). Thirteenth century (2/175 g).

Fabric 9: Moderate/abundant medium sand (WS: Q/M16)
Cooking-pots. Thirteenth century (2/17 g).

Fabric 10: Sparse/moderate medium sand (WS: Q/M17)
Cooking-pots, later ones with thin internal glaze on base. Early/mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century (43/379 g).

Fabric 11: Moderate medium sand with rare black iron oxides (WS: Q/M2)
Sparsely glazed jugs. Similar wares have been found at Bersted (Barber 2006). Thirteenth century (3/21 g).

Fabric 12: Moderate/abundant medium sand with sparse iron oxide grains (WS: Q/M24)
Glazed jugs with incised line decoration. A very similar fabric (WS: Q/M4) was found at Crawley (Barber 2008). Thirteenth to early/mid-fourteenth century (2/13 g).

Fabric 13: Sparse/moderate fine to medium sand (WS: Q/M19)
Glazed jugs with incised line decoration were noted. Thirteenth to early fifteenth century (8/87 g).

Fabric 14: Coarse Borderware (WS: Q/M10)
(Pearce & Vince 1988). Mid- fourteenth to fifteenth century (1/28 g).

Fabric 15: Earlswood-type fine sandy ware (WS: Q (f)/M9)
This fabric (Turner 1974) was common at Crawley (Barber 2008). Mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century (12/118 g).

Fabric 16: Moderate medium sand (WS: Q/M20)
Cooking-pots. Later thirteenth to early fifteenth century (4/23 g).

Fabric 17: Sparse fine to medium sand, occasionally with red iron oxides
A somewhat mixed group of late fourteenth- to fifteenth-century wares consisting of WS: Q(f)/M11, Q(f)/M16 (both found at Crawley: Barber 2008) (9/152 g).

Fabric 18: Moderate fine sand with very rare iron oxide inclusions (WS: Q(f)/M13)
Glazed jugs. Coarse 'West Sussex Ware'. Mid-thirteenth to early fifteenth century (32/295 g).

Fabric 19: Rare/sparse fine sand with very rare iron oxide inclusions (WS: Q(f)/M2)
Glazed jugs. 'West Sussex Ware'. Mid-thirteenth to early fifteenth century (4/31 g).

Fabric 20: Moderate/abundant fine sand and sparse white ?chalk inclusions (WS: Q(f)/M25)
Glazed jugs. This fabric also occurs in Chichester and may be a Binsted product. Mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century (1/37 g).

Fabric 21: Hard-fired sparse fine sand and very rare iron oxides (WS: Q(f)/M17)
Spots of glaze on cooking-pots and pitchers. Fifteenth to early sixteenth century (15/158 g).

Fabric 22: Hard-fired white painted ware with oxidized surfaces (WS: Q(f)/M20)
Knife-trimmed pitchers, bowls and jars with white painted decoration. Fifteenth to early sixteenth century (23/287 g).

Fabric 23: Hard-fired white painted ware with reduced surfaces (WS: Q(f)/M21)
Knife-trimmed pitchers, bowls and jars with white painted decoration. Fifteenth to early sixteenth century (6/138 g).

Fabric 24: Glazed red earthenware (GRE 2d)
Early/mid-sixteenth to early eighteenth century (1/2 g).

Fabric 25: French whiteware (UWW/M2)
Jugs with bright mottled green glaze. Thirteenth to fourteenth century (6/17 g).

Fabric 26: Gritty Saintonge whiteware (UWW/M3)
A fine Saintonge-type fabric with sparse milky quartz grits to 1 mm. A single jug was noted with a wide base, paralleled by vessels at Southampton (Brown 2002, nos 198–9). Thirteenth to fourteenth century (1/35 g).

Fabric 27: Tudor Green (WWG2)
A single cup fragment with thick bright green internal glaze. Fifteenth to mid-sixteenth century (3/4 g).

Fabric 28: Red earthenware with moderate ?chalk pellet inclusions to 0.3 mm (GRE 9a)
This very distinctive fabric appears in a fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century deposit (Context 15). Only one vessel is present — a dull green glazed ?whistle (cf. MPRG 1998, Type 10.30 and Hurst *et al.* 1986, no. 217). Possibly an import (4/49 g).

Fabric 29: Langewehe stoneware (LANG)
A fifteenth-century German stoneware (Hurst *et al.* 1986) (2/33 g).

Fabric 30: Blue transfer-printed 'china' (TPC 1)
Nineteenth century (1/1 g)

The assemblage

Although four small assemblages (Table 1) are useful in showing the spread of fabrics at different times, larger groups are needed from the town before useful observations can be made regarding fabric ratios in any one period.

The fabrics in these four groups clearly show the presence of residual twelfth- to mid-thirteenth-century material in all but Context 15. Unsurprisingly, the residual material is most evident in those pits that clip earlier features. Despite this, these small groups show how the new, higher-fired wares began to dominate the assemblages during the fifteenth century.

The source of much of the pottery is obviously local, though produced in a very competent fashion. Although medieval imports never make up a large proportion of the assemblage, their presence hints at the contacts the town and port had. A larger assemblage may produce more imported material. Of interest is the presence of a number of sherds from Surrey. This material, albeit present in low quantities, suggests trade with the Weald, presumably associated with the iron industry around Crawley, which must have been using the Adur as a source of transport. The presence of Binsted products

Table 1. Comparison of fabrics in Contexts 41 (Pit 40); 47 (Pit 46); 27 (Pit 26) and 15 (Pit 14).

Fabric	Context 41	Context 47	Context 27	Context 15
	No./Wt	No./Wt	No./Wt	No./Wt
	mid C13th– early C14th	mid C13th– mid C14th	C15th (resid. C12th–14th)	C15th–early C16th
1 Flint/shell, 12th–early 13th century	1/7 g	-	2/36 g	-
2 Coarse sand, 11th–12th century	-	2/5 g	2/24 g	-
3 ?Binsted, mid/late 13th–14th century	1/28 g	-	-	-
5 Sand/rare flint, 13th–early 14th century	25/567 g	2/16 g	-	-
6 Medium sand, late 13th–mid 14th century	2/46 g	-	1/6 g	-
10 Sparse sand, early/mid 13th–mid 14th century	9/105 g	12/66 g	3/60 g	-
11 Medium sand/fe ox., 13th century	-	-	1/6 g	-
13 Fine/medium sand, 13th–early 15th century	1/13 g	3/38 g	1/5 g	-
15 Earlswood-type, mid 13th–mid 14th century	-	3/20 g	1/3 g	-
16 Mod. medium sand, late 13th–early 15th century	-	1/8 g	-	1/2 g
17 Sparse fine sand, late 14th–15th century	-	-	6/98 g	1/41 g
18 West Sussex Ware, mid 13th–early 15th century	7/45 g	2/19 g	6/79 g	-
21 Hard-fired fine sand, 15th–early 16th century	2/44 g	-	9/66 g	-
22 White painted ware (ox.), 15th–early 16th century	-	-	17/212 g	5/46 g
23 White painted ware (red.), 15th–early 16th century	-	-	1/29 g	4/98 g
24 Glazed redware, 16th–18th century	-	-	-	1/2 g
25 French, 13th–14th century	3/6 g	-	1/3 g	-
27 Tudor Green	-	-	-	1/3 g
28 Redware with ?chalk C15th – 16th	-	-	-	4/49 g
29 Langewehe C15th	-	-	-	2/33 g
30 China C19th	-	-	1/1 g	-
Total	51/861 g	25/172 g	52/628 g	19/274 g

and fabrics similar to ones noted in Chichester and Bognor Regis demonstrate westward trade. However, no definite East Sussex material was noted in the present assemblage and such material ought to be carefully sought from future assemblages from the town.

THE CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

by Samantha Crawl

The archaeological investigations produced 222 pieces of ceramic building material, weighing just over 10 kg from eight individually numbered contexts. The majority of the material consists of roofing tile, in total 218 pieces in eight different sand-tempered fabrics. The assemblage is composed of fragments collected from contexts spanning the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, with the bulk of the material recovered from a cesspit (26/27) and a pit (32/33). A total of three pieces of brick weighing 444 g was collected from one undated context. A complete list of all the material by context and fabric, with samples, forms part of the archive.

The majority of the tile was collected from thirteenth- to fourteenth-century features. A total of 160 fragments of predominantly peg tile, including a small proportion of glazed examples, weighing just over 7.5 kg, was collected from features from this time period. One small fragment of nib tile and one piece of unglazed floor tile (both fabric 5) were also identified. Approximately three-quarters of this material was collected from Context 33; over 5 kg of tile was collected from this feature. Six out of the eight fabric types are represented

from this time period; the most common of these is fabric 1: 86 pieces weigh approximately 4.5 kg.

A much smaller amount of material was collected from features dating to the fifteenth century with only 56 pieces weighing just under 2 kg from only two contexts. All six fabrics from the earlier period are evident in comparatively smaller amounts, with one new fabric type (fabric 7) identified. The presence of fabrics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the earlier group in much higher concentrations suggests that these are medieval fabric types that are almost certainly residual. The small amount of fabric 8 was collected from an undated feature, but may be a post-medieval type.

The vast majority of the tile from the site was collected from the two cesspits (12/13), (26/27) and from two pits (32/33) and (28/29), which produced 195 fragments weighing just under 8.5 kg. Contexts 12/13 and 32/33 are both early features truncated by fifteenth-century pits: cesspits 26/27 and 28/29 respectively. The tile collected from these features was probably deposited during the earlier phase and disturbed by later fifteenth-century activity in the area. The large concentration of material in one area probably indicates the discrete disposal of building material in a specific event, presumably from a location near the site.

Although this is quite a small assemblage, nearly all of the material seems to relate to a relatively short period of time during the medieval period and as such, this building material helps to provide some idea of the range of different fabrics and types being used in the town at the time.

THE GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL by Luke Barber

The excavations recovered a small quantity of stone: 18 pieces, weighing 3265 g, from six different contexts. The material is fully listed for archive. The majority comes from contexts dated to the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries (Contexts 13, 41, 57 and 59). This assemblage includes three pieces of burnt Caen stone (Contexts 41 and 59), two types of fine-grained calcareous sandstone (probably Wealden), three pieces of West Country slate (Context 13) and part of a 260 mm diameter Purbeck Marble mortar (Context 57). The other two contexts containing stone (17) and (27) are respectively undated and fifteenth century, though with residual material. Context 27 contains four pieces each of West Country slate and Horsham stone, both widely utilized in the medieval period as roofing material in Sussex (Holden 1989). Horsham stone appears to have become more frequently used in the later fourteenth to fifteenth centuries (Barber 2005); its presence in Context 17 confirms a late date.

THE METALWORK by Luke Barber

The excavations recovered only 22 pieces of metalwork from five different contexts of medieval (thirteenth–fourteenth century) and ‘transitional’ (fifteenth- to early-sixteenth-century) date. The assemblage consists of 16 iron and six copper-alloy items. The ironwork is in a poor state of preservation with heavy corrosion products adhering in most instances. The majority of the ironwork consists of fragments of general-purpose nails (nine medieval and two transitional examples). In addition, there is one large structural nail (Context 41), a split pin (Context 41) and a strip fragment (Context 47). Transitional Context 27 contained a complete clench-bolt with diamond rove (gap between rove and bolt head 45 mm) and a second loose, diamond-shaped rove from a second clench-bolt. Although these may have been used in boat construction, they were also used in other structural situations simply to hold two pieces of wood together.

The copper-alloy items include a six-lobed heraldic pendant from a mid-thirteenth- to early-fourteenth-century Context 41 (Fig. 4). No surface gilding or other decoration is visible and no form parallel has been found. The remaining copper-alloy items consist of four spherical-headed pins c. 26 mm long from Context 15 and a flat-headed pin 32 mm long from Context 27. All the pins are in contexts with transitional dates.

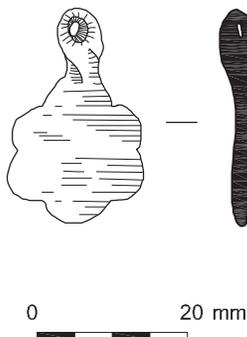


Fig. 4. Metalwork.

ANIMAL BONE by Lucy Sibun**Introduction**

Ten contexts produced a total of 99 fragments of animal bone weighing 1287 g. A single context (5) dates to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. This produced a single fragment of cattle bone. The majority of contexts date to the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries (Contexts 13, 33, 41, 47, 57, 59 and 61) and these produced 81 fragments. The two remaining contexts (15 and 27) date to the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries and produced 17 fragments. The bone was in a moderate state of preservation but fragmentary.

Wherever possible bone fragments were identified to species and the skeletal element was represented. The assemblage has been quantified in terms of both number of individual specimens (NISP) and minimum number of individuals (MNI). Each fragment was then studied for signs of butchery, burning, gnawing and pathology. Epiphyseal fusion was recorded and subsequently interpreted using data provided by Silver (1969).

Thirteenth- to fourteenth-century assemblage

The 40 fragments identified as cattle and 30 fragments identified as sheep/goat both provided an MNI calculation of one. Longbones, vertebrae, ribs and cranial fragments, including teeth, are represented by both species. Butchery was evident on ribs of sheep/goat and cattle and a vertebra of cattle has been sliced through axially. A single fragment identified as cattle displays evidence of carnivorous gnawing. The nine fragments identified as pig produced an MNI calculation of two, one aged less than one year and one more than one year. Longbones, mandible fragments and vertebrae represent pig but no signs of butchery were noted.

Fifteenth- to sixteenth-century assemblage

This assemblage comprises two fragments of cattle, six fragments of sheep/goat and four fragments of pig, each with an MNI calculation of one. Sheep/goat are represented by longbones, cranial fragments, ribs and vertebrae, one of which has been cut through axially. Vertebrae, cranial fragments and a mandible that has been cut through represent pig, whilst fragments identified as cattle are an immature acetabulum and a rib.

Discussion

Detailed analysis of the results would be meaningless given the small size of the assemblage. However, it is evident that from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries the main domesticated species; cattle, sheep/goat and pig were utilized. The single thirteenth-century fragment displaying evidence for gnawing suggests the additional presence of dogs. There is evidence that butchery was undertaken, but this is limited.

MARINE MOLLUSCS by David Dunkin

The excavation produced 13 contexts containing marine molluscs (13, 15, 21, 27, 29, 33, 41, 47, 53; 55, 57, 59 and 61 - all within pits or cesspits) and these are fully quantified in the site archive. The assemblage contained four species: *Ostrea edulis* (Common Oyster); *Mytilus edulis* (Common Mussel); *Cerastoderma edule* (Common Cockle) and *Littorina littorae* (Periwinkle). Oyster remains were found in all 13 contexts and were represented by 294 valves (left and right valves where the umbos were intact) and weighed in total 13,268 g. The assemblage also contained 31 oyster fragments from five

contexts (15, 21, 27, 41, and 47) weighing 43 g.

Four of the contexts (15, 29, 33 and 41) were thought to be of sufficient significance to require further analysis. Numerically these were the largest assemblages and were also from well-sealed and dated contexts where residuality is probably minimal.

All of the marine molluscs assemblage was retrieved from pits of medieval to early-post-medieval date (twelfth to early sixteenth century). General analysis of all contexts and particularly from that of Contexts 15, 29, 33 and 41 shows that more than 90% of the species retrieved were in the middle to upper range (5–15 years) of the estimated ages. In the case of the oyster valves from contexts 15; 29; 33 and 41 virtually all could have been utilized as a food source.

In formal food preparation it is the left or lower valve of the oyster that is served. This means that in terms of rubbish disposal there may be some patterning in the occurrence of upper and lower valves. The fact that there were generally more right or upper valves from the four contexts at the site suggests that these represent everyday domestic rubbish rather than evidence of formal feasting.

The recovered oyster valves show minimal evidence of shell distortion and there was no evidence of infestation by polychaete worms (e.g. *Polydora ciliata*/*P. hoplura*). There was, however, some infestation of the burrowing sponge *Cliona celata*, but only restricted to the oldest species, as is normal in a healthy colony. The lack of infestation and the age range which contained only a few young examples suggests that the oyster were primarily being targeted as a food source. The minimal occurrence of distortion in the recovered valves indicates that the resource was not being over-exploited.

It is not possible to identify the source of the molluscs, but they probably derive from the estuarine location of the River Adur, which runs only c. 150 m to the south and west of the site. The low numbers of cockle, periwinkle and mussel recovered from the site suggests that they were a supplementary food to the diet of medieval Shoreham. The number of oyster valves indicates that this is likely to have been a more important food between the twelfth and sixteenth century.

CHARRED PLANT REMAINS by Pat Hinton

Introduction

Dried flots from five samples were examined by stereo microscope at $\times 7$ – $\times 40$ magnification. The tabulated results form part of the archive. All samples consisted mainly of charcoal with varying amounts of cereals, legumes and wild plant seeds. On the whole preservation of the charred seeds is only fair and the totals given in the tables are of those which could be identified, although further fragments are present. The smallest bulk sample (7 litres compared with 35 litres from

the other contexts) from Context 15 contained the highest number of cereals.

Results

In all contexts the wheat grains are best described as *Triticum aestivum* type, a free-threshing bread wheat. Some are damaged by charring and many are rather puffed, but a short, broad grain with low curved back is common. There are no fragments of rachis which might indicate any other species. Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) is usually less well represented than wheat, except in Context 13. Oats (*Avena* spp.) appear only in three of the five contexts and in such small numbers that they are most likely to be weed species.

Other cultivated crop plants present in all contexts are legumes, but always in very small numbers. These seeds are difficult to identify when not well preserved but peas (*Pisum sativum*), identified by the characteristic hilum are certainly present in contexts 12, 27 and 47 and vetches (*Vicia* spp.) in all five. In context 13 one half seed (one cotyledon) c.7 mm in length is probably field or broad bean (*Vicia faba*).

In all five samples, seeds of wild plants are also few in number but the condition of the cereals and legumes suggests that some very small seeds may not have survived charring. Some, e.g. *Galium aparine* (cleavers), brome (*Bromus* sp.) and the tares (*Vicia hirsuta* or *tetrasperma*) are typically associated with crop plants, but others such as buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) and docks (*Rumex* spp.) will also grow in grassland and other disturbed places. One sedge (*Carex* sp.) in context 47 suggests a damper part and fragments of hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) and sloe stones (*Prunus spinosa*) suggest the proximity of woodland or hedgerow.

Discussion

The low count of possible arable weeds may be an effect of charring or a true reflection of what was originally present when burning took place, in which case the cereal grains may be the charred survivors of prepared cereals. Bone fragments present in all contexts suggest the disposal of refuse.

The fertile soils of this part of the Coastal Plain were particularly suitable for cereal cultivation, particularly wheat and also legumes. Peas and beans could have had a use as pottage but they, and vetches, were also valued for their soil enrichment properties and as fodder.

There is little indication of any changes through time represented by these samples. With the reservation that there are unidentified fragments it can only be noted that the three earlier contexts (13, 41 and 47) dated between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have fewer cereals, that barley grains outnumber wheat in the first two, and in the later more productive contexts of the fifteenth century (15 and 47) wheat is dominant.

DISCUSSION

Despite the small size of the excavated area, the John Street site forms one of only a handful of sites systematically excavated and recorded in the core of the medieval settlement and hence the results are of great significance. The excavated area appears to lie to the rear of a tenement fronting onto John

Street, a road that has probably been widened in the post-medieval period. The use of the site for the disposal of an assortment of domestic rubbish is clear, and the range of dates for the pottery and presence of intercutting cesspits suggest some longevity and/or continuity of occupation of the building(s) on the street frontage.

There was limited evidence for the medieval

street-front buildings themselves, but the presence of tile, stone and slate in a number of the features strongly suggests the presence of buildings in the immediate vicinity and gives some indication of the materials used. The clearly structural fifteenth-century post-hole with post-pad, and possible robbed footing are the only apparent elements of these or other structures, with floor levels presumably removed by later truncation. This is in stark contrast to the results of the excavation of a similarly-sized site, in a comparable position in the centre of Seaford, where remains of elements of a number of medieval stone-built structures surviving at some distance from the street frontage were recovered, although no internal floors survived here either (Stevens 2004b).

It was unfortunate that no obvious medieval tenement boundaries were encountered and these are also notably absent at the Ropetackle site (Stevens 2004a; in prep.). However, it is hoped that future excavations might shed light on the character of the boundaries and for the presence/absence of a 'standard' width of Shoreham's medieval plots. In addition, results from archaeological investigations at the Asda site in Crawley highlighted the use of re-cut medieval boundary ditches for the disposal of comparatively large assemblages of pottery (Barber 2008). Medieval pottery was also recovered from the boundary ditches at Bersted Street, Bognor (Barber 2006).

The finds assemblage from the pits and cesspits did provide evidence of activity from early in the twelfth century, shortly after the foundation of New Shoreham, through to the early sixteenth century, by which time the port is thought to have been in decline for more than 200 years (Aldsworth & Freke 1976). There is certainly little or no evidence for a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century decline, with assemblages providing indications of some prosperity, but perhaps by the fifteenth century the effects of a slow economic decline are more evident. It appears than even at this date, the inhabitants of Shoreham were utilizing

high-quality pottery, including imported wares, although the size of the assemblage means that these conclusions are tentative at present. However, it is clear, as at a number of other coastal sites, that although trade was still undertaken, it was probably on a scale smaller than during the early years of New Shoreham's existence.

Evidence for this apparent decline has been noted at other ports such as Pevensey (Barber 1999) and Seaford (Stevens 2004b). However, it has been argued that the virtual absence of fifteenth-century material on many urban sites is due to deposition of rubbish away from the tenements during the period of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries (Carver 1987, 69). The Ropetackle site produced only small assemblages dating from this period (Stevens 2004a; in prep.), although the Asda site at Crawley did produce substantial fifteenth-century assemblages (Barber 2008).

The John Street site offered an opportunity to study a small urban plot within the medieval port, and to add to the growing corpus of knowledge gained from small-scale watching briefs and excavations at various locations in the town. Coupled with the information gained from the equally small-scale, but significant Marlipins excavation (Thomas 2005) and from the large-scale excavation at the Ropetackle site (Stevens 2004a; Stevens in prep), it may be possible in future to draw some firm conclusions concerning the foundation, subsequent prosperity and eventual decline of the medieval port of Shoreham.

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Author: Simon Stevens, Archaeology South-East, Units 1 & 2, 2 Chapel Place, Portslade, East Sussex, BN6 8TS.

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