

# HOUGH HALL: THE TRIAL EXCAVATION OF A MOATED PLATFORM IN MERE TOWNSHIP, CHESHIRE

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with contributions from J. A. Rutter and R. Hurst Vose.

## *Introduction*

A small moated platform lies on the west side of Hulse Heath Lane, Mere at SJ 722 834. On the mid-19th-century Tithe Award map of Mere, the site was marked at 'Site of Hough Hall'. No building then existed on the platform although a small row of cottages, since demolished, stood outside the moat to the south-west. The name 'Hough' is also locally used for the fields on the opposite side of Hulse Heath Lane (where there were also cottages on the tithe map) and is the origin of the name Hoo Green, now attached to a small group of dwellings centred on the A50(T) at SJ 719 827, confirming the association between the specific vicinity and the name. The latter derives from the Anglo-Saxon *hoh*, an eminence, a name which is more pertinent to Hoo Green than to the moated site which lies north of the narrow ridge of sand and gravel which was the spine of the medieval parish of Rostherne.

Land at Hough was the subject of a grant<sup>1</sup> by Robert del Mere<sup>2</sup> to the abbey

<sup>1</sup> My thanks to Mrs. Kath Goodchild for bringing this reference to my attention. *Chartulary of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester*, I, ed. J. Tait, Chetham Soc. lxxvi (1920), doc. 310: 'Robert of Mara gave to St. Werburgh land at *Hoh*' contained within these boundaries, namely from the crosses of Roger even to the cart-road of the corn of the priests and from *Strethleye* even to the lake which is opposite, with all appertenances . . .'. These boundaries are not capable of more than tentative reconstruction. The lake must be the Mere from which the *vill* takes its name. *Strethleye* is a lost hamlet in Mere, also known as *Strethul* — Street-hill. Dodgson suggested it might be Hulme Barns (SJ 822 827) but there is no evidence to link the two: J. McN. Dodgson, *Place-Names of Cheshire*, II, (1970), 52, 55. The name Streethills Green occurs in Millington to the north, emphasising that 'Street' refers to the Roman road underlying the A556. At least two 'de Strethul' families were active in the land-market in the 2nd half of the 13th century, when settlement associated with this place-name was sufficiently well-populated to have fields organised in strips as well as crofts. The Mere family retained an interest in this land until 1337, when it was released to the Venables family and Richard de Venables and Isabel his wife were described as 'de Strethul' in the reign of Richard II: Ormerod, *Hist. Ches.* I, 468-9.

Given the absence of any evidence of a hall elsewhere in the close vicinity and the characteristic late medieval 'gentleman's' residence which the Hough Hall earthworks imply, it is possible that this residence of the Venables family should be equated with Hough Hall. If this were the case, all that has occurred is a change in the popularity of local place-names probably associated with settlement shift, shrinkage or abandonment. The priests' cartway might be the sunken lane connecting Bucklow Hill, the meeting-place of the court of Bucklow hundred, and the church site at Rostherne. The crosses are un-

*Footnote 1 (and 2) continued on next page*

of St. Werburgh, Chester (c.1176-1208). The land was quickly disposed of by the abbot to William, son of Walter de Rostherne<sup>3</sup> at a nominal rent.<sup>4</sup>

The platform is locally believed to have supported buildings, although their supposed function and date is a matter of dispute. There is no single or well-founded local tradition concerning its use. It is, however, generally agreed that the site has been permanent pasture since at least the early part of this century. In 1848 it was meadow. The moat is reputed to have held water up until 1938.

The platform is approximately square, 30 m. by 30 m. surrounded by a moat c.15 m. wide, except to the north-west where the bed of the feeder stream flowing in from the west (the headwaters of the Agden Brook) has been widened to make a shallow moat c.30 m. across (fig. 1). A substantial bank in the northern corner of the field was probably in origin a dam, designed to raise the water level in the stream, and so flood the moat. Part of the stream bed in the western corner of the field has been much widened, probably for use as a fish-pond in association with the moated platform.

This small, moated platform is one of a scatter of similar sites on the borders of the Domesday hundreds of Bucklow and *Tunendune*, with examples at Aston by Budworth (SJ 685 802), Swinyard Hall (SJ 678 838), Bradley Hall (SJ 657 846), Reddish Hall (SJ 646 847), Tabley Old Hall (SJ 720 774) and Booths Hall (SJ 770 780). Most occupy sites adjacent to land which is less suited to early medieval agriculture than other lands in the township or parish (e.g. Hough Hall lies on north-facing clay land). Such land was only lightly utilised before the period of population expansion in the century and three quarters before 1350. Most of these moated sites were probably founded in this period, when upward demographic pressures created opportunities for the proprietors of substantial blocks of land within and beneath the feudal and manorial structure. The clarity of the earth-works at Hough Hall makes this a good candidate for archaeological investigation as a type-site representative of the remainder.

The surface of the platform and the adjacent area beyond the moat to the south-east is ridged, the ridges being c.5 m. wide and 0.15 m. high. Since the ridges line up from the platform to the exterior and run over both lips of the

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traceable; crosses are not uncommon boundary markers, occurring, for example at Tatton in the early 13th century. In this context, they should be in the Hulseheath area.

The difficulties of identifying these two place-names are further complicated by the occurrence of both in Millington, to the north. Streethill Green was noted by Dodgson, *P.N. Ches.*, I, 52. *Hogh' heith* in Millington occurs in a document of 1427: F. Taylor, 'Hand-list of the Legh of Booths Charters in the John Rylands Library', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, xxxii (1950), 229-300. 'Hough' and *Strethul* were arguably both terms used within a common geographical area, in the north of Mere and in adjacent areas of Millington, the latter term eventually being abandoned in the early modern period.

<sup>2</sup> Robert was the earliest of the Mere family identifiable by Ormerod, *Hist. Ches.*, I, 469.

<sup>3</sup> The de Rostherne family held land in Rostherne under the barony of Kinderton but ended with heiresses in the mid 12th century who sold their interest to Robert de Mainwaring.

<sup>4</sup> This was probably, in effect, a sale.

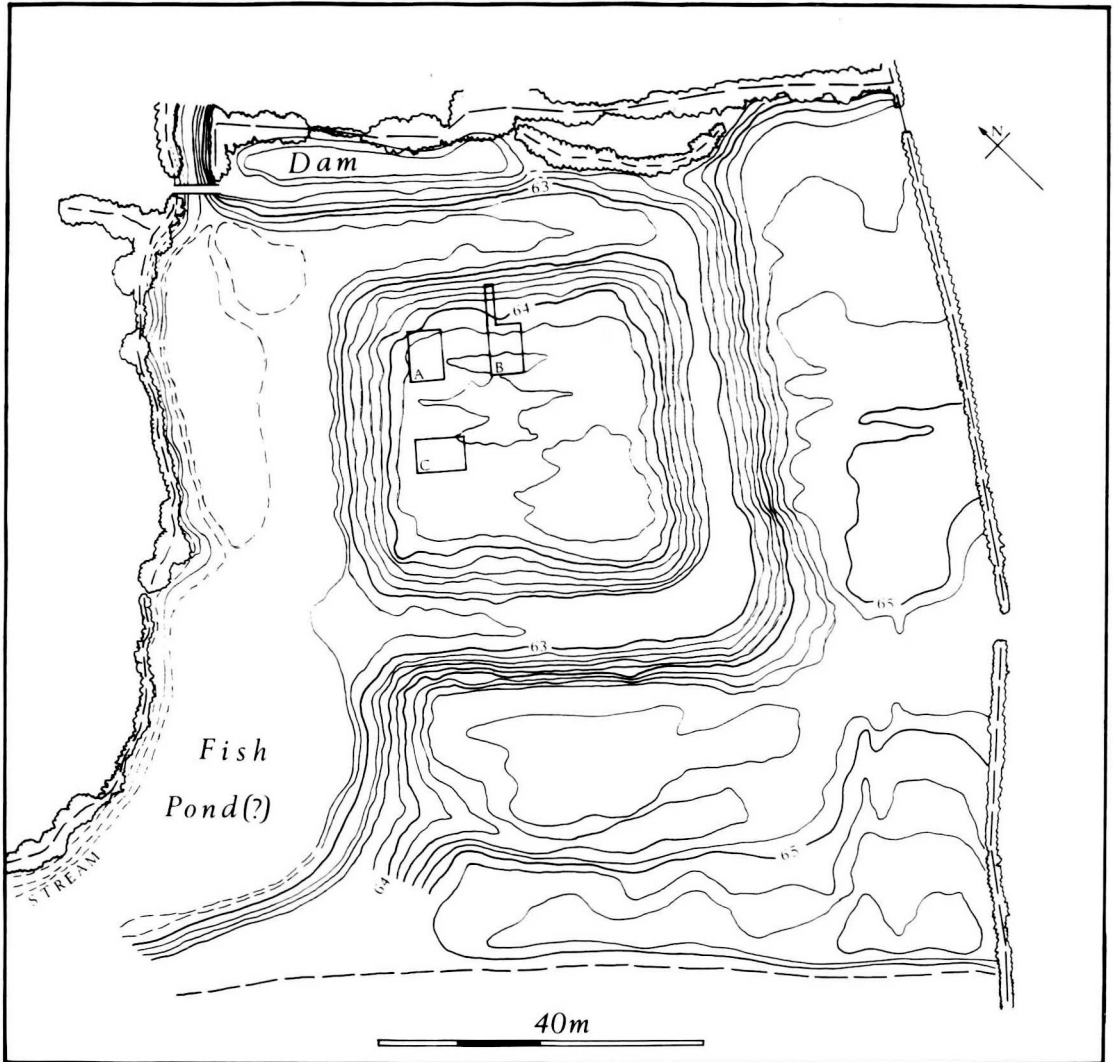


Fig. 1: Contour Survey at 0.2 m. intervals after Garbutt, 1986, showing position of trial trenches, 1988.



Aerial Photograph of Hough Hall from the North-East (photographed by the author 18.8.86).

south-eastern section of the moat, it is clear that the ridges post-date abandonment and should be associated with horse-ploughing. Ridges of this scale were widely used in the area for cereals and potatoes from the 18th century (if not earlier) until the 1930's.

In 1985-6 Mr. A. Garbutt produced both a detailed contour survey of the entire field and a resistivity survey of the platform.<sup>5</sup> The site and adjacent fields were purchased in 1987 by Mr. A. Bloor of Hulme Barns Farm, Mere and it was at his generous invitation that a trial excavation was conducted on the platform in July, 1988.<sup>6</sup> The excavation was run as a training exercise by the Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Manchester,<sup>7</sup> generously supported by Cheshire County Council.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Excavation: a Summary*

The resistivity survey<sup>9</sup> had identified an area of high resistance on the north-east side of the platform and it was decided to lay out trenches designed to test the cause of this anomaly, in an area which was thought to be the rear of the platform, where buildings might be concentrated.<sup>10</sup> Initially, two 6 m. by 4 m. trenches (A and B, fig. 2) were laid out, de-turfed and stripped of topsoil by hand. Trench B was subsequently extended north-westwards by 5 m. by 1 m. to check the edge of the platform for structural evidence and a third 6 m. by 4 m. trench opened (fig. 1 or 2 for location). By far the most archaeological evidence was identified in trench A. However, all trenches provided some evidence of human activity.

### *The Chronology of Occupation*

*Phase I:* Sub-soil was identified in all three trenches as patchy white and orange clay with occasional lenses of clayey gravel providing some sub-surface drainage.

<sup>5</sup> I am extremely grateful to Tony Garbutt for his help in many ways and for permitting the publication of fig. 1 which is based on his contour survey.

<sup>6</sup> I am extremely grateful to Anthony Bloor for his many kindnesses and consideration which helped to transform a labour into a pleasure. Without his keen interest in the site and its history no excavation would have been possible.

<sup>7</sup> My thanks to Neil Beattie, Felicity Bosworth, John Chadwick and Dennis Greaves who contributed their skills as well as their labour and to the score of adult students who attended the two courses and provided an enthusiastic work-force.

<sup>8</sup> My thanks to Rick Turner (Ches. County Council) who organised this financial support and took a substantial interest in the excavations and to Andrew Davison (English Heritage) who encouraged trial excavation of the site.

<sup>9</sup> The results, part of Tony Garbutt's work for a Certificate in Archaeology (Methods), are lodged in the library of the Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Manchester and can be consulted there.

<sup>10</sup> It is unclear from the earthworks which side formed the main approach to the platform. The north-west and north-east were thought to be the least likely. Assuming the modern A50 (700 m. south-west of the site) to approximate to the medieval route from Macclesfield via Knutsford to Warrington, one entrance might be on that side. However, the more important road was arguably the Roman road through Mere to the south-west which might suggest an entrance on that side of the platform, towards Hulseheath Lane. On some local moated platforms (e.g. Little Moreton Hall) the main structures are to the rear of the platform but this is not universal and may not have been characteristic on smaller platforms.

In trench A, an initial phase of activity was represented by three pits which had been cut into the subsoil (see fig. 3). Sections were removed from each to establish the dimensions. All were filled by a loam which was indistinguishable from that covering the whole trench, immediately above sub-soil. The dimensions of the pits were as follows:

<i>Pit</i>	<i>depth</i>	<i>width</i> ( <i>in metres</i> )	<i>length</i>
1	0.15	0.25	0.48
2	0.23	0.29	0.45
3	0.38	0.30	1.18

There were no finds from the pits, nor any indication that they had served as post pits. When dug, the pits may have been deeper; cultivation of the loam immediately above may have caused truncation. A possible fourth pit was marginal to trench C (fig. 2).

*Phase II:* The pits in trench A were sealed by a cultivated loam soil, on the surface of which were traces of a turf line (see fig. 4). Those making use of the platform may have left the loam in this area intact rather than lowering the surface. The absence of late medieval pottery suggests that this soil represents cultivation at some stage before the moat was dug and buildings erected (at a time when the surface was under grass), in which case the pits arguably pre-date the moat. Post-medieval pottery sherds had penetrated the top-surface as a result of localised disturbance by rabbits but no securely stratified finds were identified.

A not dissimilar but rather more organic, black loam covered the north-western half of trench B (fig. 2). The presence of an undue number of stones on the surface of the natural white and orange clay beneath and within the dark loam suggested that stone had been purposely brought into the area and that the loamy material represented a build-up derived from bedding, feedstuffs and manure from stalled livestock in the area. A single sherd of severely abraded pottery from within this material (Appendix I, SF4) suggests that this material was being deposited in the late medieval period. It is possible that this activity was contemporary with occupation of the moated platform but it stratigraphically precedes the putative clay floor above it (numbered 3, fig. 2).

*Phase III:* The moat was not excavated or dated but should probably be assumed to belong to phase III. A pollen corer was used to extract a core from the middle of the moat on the south-west side. Red clay was identified only a metre below the modern surface. The lower 0.5 m. of material have been submitted for pollen investigation under the supervision of Dr. Frank Chambers at Keele University. Like the majority of Cheshire moats, the excavated material was not used to raise the platform but disposed of elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> The north-eastward extension to

<sup>11</sup> D. Wilson, 'The Medieval Moated Sites of Cheshire', *Transactions of Lancs. & Ches. Antiquarian Society*, lxxxiv (1987), 152.

trench B revealed one certain and one possible post-hole on the sloping edge of the platform. Although these were 20 degrees off parallel with the platform edge, they probably represent a fence or palisade around the platform perimeter based on earth-fast posts. No evidence of replacement was identified suggesting that the period of occupation did not exceed the life expectancy of the posts.

An oven with four phases was identified in the east corner of trench A (figs. 2, 4, 5). Initially, there was little structure, the first phase being represented by an outer wall of loamy clay set on the turf. Within, a layer of white ash (up to 0.1 m. thick) lined a depression which was devoid of a clay lining and had burnt through the turf into the loam beneath (fig. 4). Charcoal staining on the turf line outside the feature to the south-west suggested an entry point in that vicinity. Three possible, shallow post-holes were identified, cut into the surface of the loam (sealed by the later clay floor). These may have been associated, perhaps even representing the line of the south wall of a flimsy structure (fig. 4).

A clay floor (numbered 1 on fig. 2) was laid beside this oven, of which an area of 3.3 m by 1.9 m. was identified within trench A. Initially, the orange clay of the floor was carried over the lip of the oven, sealing the ash layer where it overlay the phase 1 oven wall (phase 2). This clay probably provided the base for a rebuilt superstructure to the oven. A build-up of very fine charcoal and ash above it carried through into the building interior, implying that the trench section cut through the oven entrance. Clean, orange clay was used to develop a substantial outer wall for the oven on the exterior, at base up to 0.95 m. wide. At ground level, a channel was left through the clay wall to the west. This was interpreted as a vent, allowing the passage of air from the exterior to the interior of the oven.

Following a build-up of charcoal and ash, the interior of the oven was lined with a thin layer of clay (phase 3) and continued in use. This was ultimately superseded by a complete refurbishment of the oven (phase 4). The oven side within the structure was built up with a new layer of orange clay, displacing the entrance slightly to the west. A more substantial lining was utilised, based on pieces of gritstone (fig. 5). The largest piece of gritstone was approximately flat, with one surface (found face down) more deliberately flattened than the other. It was approximately 0.08-0.09 m. thick and probably represented a roughed-out millstone. The size and shape of the other pieces was consistent with their being small fragments of the same millstone. The re-utilised segment incorporated a carefully fashioned, concave edge which could have been part of a hole, 0.17-8 m. in diameter, at the centre of a circular stone c.1.40 m. in total diameter. The gritstone was not native to the site but had presumably been transported to the vicinity from the Pennines<sup>12</sup> as a rough-out, then accidentally broken prior to finishing on or close to the intended place of use. Late medieval water-mills at Rostherne, Tatton, Norshaw, Ollerton, Knutsford and elsewhere nearby suggest

<sup>12</sup> C.f. the manorial tenants of Manchester who were required as part of their dues to fetch the millstones for the Manchester mills, presumably from the Pennines: *Abstracts of Lancashire Inquests Post Mortem and Ad Quod Damnum, II, 1310-1333*, ed. W. Farrer, R.S.L.C. liv (1907), 51.

that such traffic was commonplace in the locality. The material but not the design is paralleled by fragments of early medieval hand-querns found at the Tatton Village site, 4 km. to the south-east, suggesting that Pennine grits were used for milling on the plain over a very long period. The Hough Hall find provides important evidence that millstones fashioned from Pennine grits might be transported half-finished, presumably to minimise the economic consequences of breakage, then completed at the local market centre or at the final destination. The gritstone was incorporated in the re-furbished oven sloping inwards (fig. 4) with the central hole segment at the oven entrance, where it escaped the heat damage which caused the remainder of the stone to crack into small sections (fig. 5) and become unstable; when an attempt was made to lift it the bulk of the stone disintegrated into grit and small fragments. A thin, fire-hardened, clay lining covered all of the stone which was within the oven, forming a shallow dish in which charcoal had accumulated.

The refurbished clay superstructure had provided a domed roof to the oven which had subsequently fallen in, forming a layer of clay debris above the phase 4 lining and charcoal. Within this material was identified a single sherd of late-medieval pottery (Appendix I, SF7), suggesting that it had collapsed and been finally abandoned by the middle of the 15th century. The phase 3 vent appears to have been abandoned, ash-filled in phase 4 but replaced by a funnel-shaped, stone filled vent which allowed a limited draught to reach the fire immediately above floor level at the oven entrance (fig. 5). Charcoal staining on the surface of the clay floor (immediately above a similar concentration of ash and charcoal on the old turf line beneath the floor) was roughly contained by a placement of stones (fig. 5). This suggested that it was continuing practise to rake-out the fire from the oven prior to inserting the food to be cooked. The debris was presumably then moved outside, leaving only a thin scatter of charcoal fragments on the floor.

There are some difficulties in interpreting this structure as an oven. It shares with other, medieval ovens a similarity of structure, and association with a small building is commonplace. However, ovens were not normally equipped with vents, relying on an inserted fire or fire heated stones, etc. to provide the heat necessary to warm the oven, which was a simple enclosed space with a single entrance.<sup>13</sup> The heat source would then be removed and replaced by the food. The presence in the last three phases of this structure of a west-facing vent can not be accidental and suggests the capacity to provide a fire *in situ* within the oven with a draught, a process that must imply a flu or outlet in the oven roof or elsewhere (as yet unexcavated) for the smoke. However, the total absence of waste-products leaves no doubt that this should not be interpreted as a pottery kiln or furnace; nor

<sup>13</sup> Examples built in stone are a common feature of castles and monasteries. Clay examples were similar in structure and a characteristic feature of many later medieval messuages, often in association with buildings and found even among the more affluent peasantry: C. Dyer, 'English Peasant Building in the Later Middle Ages (1200-1500)', *Medieval Archaeology*, xxx (1986), 34.



was it a corn drying kiln;<sup>14</sup> the evidence of charcoal staining adjacent to the oven entrance implies a pattern of use consistent with a function as an oven, whether for bread, malt, beer or meat.

### *The Clay Floors*

Traces of four certain or possible clay floors were identified in the three trenches. All four consisted of almost stone-free, orange-red clay similar to, but more consistent than, the subsoil on site, which presumably derived from one or more carefully selected quarry-pits in the immediate vicinity. The moat and other associated, excavated features may have been the source, if the clay excavated was sufficiently consistent. Alternatively, a post-medieval clay pit used for brick manufacture lies only 700 m. to the west, demonstrating that clay of consistent and suitable quality was available in that area. Of these floors, floors 3 and 4 were only putative, being marginal to the area of excavation and, in the case of floor 3, only being present in the section (fig. 2). Beneath floor 4, a natural hollow caused by drainage retained what may have been the original turf line, above which an infill of loamy clay and turf had been used to level the site, perhaps for the purpose of constructing the putative building associated with the floor. In trench A, two clay floors were identified, neither of which lay wholly within the trench. Floor 2 was 0.1-0.2 m. thick and over 3.7 m. long but most was presumed to lie outside the trench (fig. 2). Floor 1 was c.0.4 m. thick and 1.9 m. in width with a length in excess of 3.3 m. All four floors represented the last phase of human activity on the site prior to cultivation. All sealed loam and turf, yards or in-fill and other features as described above.

It is possible that all these clay deposits represent buildings. However, only those in trench A could be examined in any detail and only a single dimension could be ascertained (the width of floor 1). It is unclear how these structures were walled. There were no traces of post-holes or construction trenches associated with the floors suggesting that the fabric of whatever walls were provided was exclusively above-ground. Considerable quantities of mixed clay and loam were identified at the base of the plough-soil immediately above and between floors 1 and 2, consistent with plough damage of the floor surfaces and anything above them. Since floor 1, at least, had not been truncated by ploughing, it is possible that this clay derived from clay walls on the periphery of each floor.<sup>15</sup> However,

<sup>14</sup> E.g. for comparison see W. Britnell, 'A 15th-century corn-drying kiln from Collfryn, Llansantffraid Deuddwr, Powys', *Medieval Archaeology*, xxviii (1984), 190-3.

<sup>15</sup> Dwarf walls as the base of a timber superstructure are not uncharacteristic of late medieval, rural building. In those areas without good building stone, clay provided an alternative means of raising timbers out of the damp. E.g. Dyer, 'Eng. Peasant Building' *passim*. Clay walls persisted in the north Cumbrian Plain into the post-medieval period: R. W. Brunskill, 'The Clay Houses of Cumberland', *Ancient Monuments Society* (1962), 57-80. Even so, other local sites have not produced comparable evidence. Tatton Old Hall was constructed c.1500 on padstones and all the buildings in the preceding peasant messuage were founded on earth-fast posts. The only buildings tentatively identified on the moated platform at Davenport Green were constructed with earth-fast posts: D. Wilson, 'Excavation of a Medieval Moated Site at Buttery House Lane, Davenport Green, Greater Manchester: a Summary Report', *Trans. Lancs. Ches. Antiq. Soc.* lxxxii (1983), 126-7.

if this were the case then the useable, internal surface of floor 1 (where the width is known) would have been extremely small.

#### *Abandonment and Post-abandonment*

Although the site had seen some ill-defined structural activity at an earlier date, the main structural phase identified was that during which the oven and clay floors were constructed. If the single phase of clay floors identified is representative of the whole site, it seems unlikely that occupation of the moated platform lasted more than a few decades occurring within the later medieval period, probably centred within the second half of the 14th and/or the first half of the 15th centuries. Certainly, such a time span would have been more than long enough to allow for the four-phase development of the oven. The absence of transitional pottery implies that settlement had ceased by the late 15th century, at latest. The small amount of Midland Purple ware from the site came from contexts which were stratigraphically insecure and probably derived from manuring and ploughing of the site from c.1600 onwards. Manuring, at least, seems to have continued to bring glass and pottery onto the site until the late 19th or early 20th centuries. (See appendices). From the first, this ploughing resulted in agricultural ridges which were retained throughout, leading to a differential protection of the archaeological features beneath. The ridges consist of well-drained and friable loam, which would have been conducive to cereal cultivation.

#### *Conclusions*

The platform was moated and developed as a substantial messuage, probably by a freeholder of gentry status in the decades around 1400, on a site which had seen some previous (but un-dated) use. Floor 1 probably formed the base of a small kitchen or bake-house, with a successively refurbished, flued oven opening into the interior. Floor 2, from its corner position on the platform, can only have formed the base for another small, ancillary building. Further excavation would be necessary before the putative floors 3 and 4 could be proved or disproved. However, the evidence extracted from the excavation of only c.7% of the total platform does suggest that buildings were comparatively numerous, within a short period of occupation.

The remains identified by trial excavation imply a complex group of buildings occupying a messuage of high status. An impression of such a group of buildings can be obtained from contemporary documents, for example, at Wyresdale, or Moorholm (both in Lancs.) in 1322.<sup>16</sup> Recent excavations on moated platforms in and around the Mersey valley have produced little evidence of structures, for

<sup>16</sup> *Lancashire Inquests, Extents, and Feudal Aids, III, A.D. 1313-1355*, ed. W. Farrer, R.S.L.C. lxx (1915), 157-8. Wyresdale had a hall, kitchen, bake-house, stable, chapel, and 1 other building.

example at Scarisbrick,<sup>17</sup> Twiss Green, Barrow Old Hall<sup>18</sup> and Hale Barns.<sup>19</sup> At Hough Hall, the apparent early abandonment of the settlement and the later development of a deep top-soil are factors which have contributed to the survival of an encouraging degree of archaeological evidence. The latter may prove to be comparable with that recently excavated in south Cheshire at Northwood Farm, Dodcott cum Wilkesley, a site with a longer history of occupation from the late 12th century to the 18th century, which also revealed evidence of a medieval kitchen with ovens.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> J. M. Steane, 'Excavations at a moated site near Scarisbrick', *T.H.S.L.C.*, cxii (1960), 147-54.

<sup>18</sup> My thanks to Jen Lewis of the North-West Archaeological Trust for information prior to publication on these and other moated sites in south Lancashire.

<sup>19</sup> D. Wilson, 'Excavation . . . at Davenport Green'.

<sup>20</sup> D. Wilson, 'Excavations on a moated site at Northwoods Farm, Dodcott cum Wilkesley', forthcoming. My thanks to David Wilson for his readiness to discuss the site prior to the completion of his report.

## APPENDIX 1:

## THE POTTERY by Janet Rutter

17 sherds were recovered by excavation, all but two from unstratified contexts.

## Stratified:

- 1 ((S)mall (F)ind 7) Trench A: from beneath collapsed oven (phase 4) superstructure, a bodysherd of unglazed pink/white ware of a type current locally from the 14th into the 15th century. For comments see SF3, Unstrat. 3, below.
- 2 (SF4) Trench B: from the organic material, a badly weathered bodysherd from a late medieval storage vessel.

## Unstratified: Trench A:

- 1 (SF1) base, possibly of an openware vessel such as a dish or bowl. Internally glazed. Late medieval or early post-medieval.
- 2 (SF2) bodysherd of a hollow ware vessel. 'Pennine gritty' type fabric but potentially late medieval rather than 12th-13th century.
- 3 (SF3) base of a small jug or bottle in unglazed pink/white ware of a type current locally from the 14th into the 15th century and paralleled by wasted vessels in the Ewloe assemblage.<sup>1</sup>
- 4 (SF10) bodysherd of a 'Midland Purple' type hollow ware. Probably a storage vessel of late 16th or, more likely, early 17th century date.
- 5 (SF5) bodysherd of a rather less highly fired portion of 4 above, or another 'Midland Purple' vessel. Responsibility for the apparently early stratigraphic context of this sherd within the pre-floor loam should be pinned on rabbits whose burrows made extensive use of the clay floors to provide shelter from surface drainage.
- 6 (SF11) base of an internally glazed dish. Possibly slip trailed ware but certainly second half 17th — early 18th century.

## Trench B:

- 7 (SF12) rim of a thick 'Nankin' porcelain dish, 19th century.
- 8 (SF13) spigot-hole opening in wall, from a late medieval storage vessel.
- 9 (SF14 & 15) bodysherds of red/grey gritty ware already noted in this parish at the Tatton 'village' settlement as a late medieval ware 'local' to North Cheshire.
- 10 (SF16) bodysherd of a small jug or bottle as SF3 above.
- 11 (SF17) bodysherd of a small jug or bottle, as SF3 above.
- 12 (SF18) bodysherd of 'Midland Purple', probably a storage vessel, 17th century.

## Trench C:

- 13 (SF 19 & 20) bodysherds, potentially of the same partially glazed small jug or bottle as SF3 and/or SF7 above.

<sup>1</sup> See R. C. Turner, C. B. Sale & J. A. Axworthy Rutter, 'A Medieval Garden at the Belgrave Moat, Cheshire', *J.C.A.S.* lxi (for 1986, publ. 1988), 75-6. Although sherd SF3 is used here as the reference point for several sherds, the vessel represented by that sherd is of the squatter, broader-based type, contemporary with the narrower form which is represented by the other sherds. Both forms belong to the same 'family' and often occur together in similar quantities, even though the narrower form is better represented in this particular group.

## APPENDIX 2:

## THE GLASS by Ruth Hurst Vose

Glass from Hough Hall totalled 30 sherds, one (3.33%) vessel glass, 21 (70%) bottle glass, and eight (26.67%) flat (window) glass. All glass is clear unless otherwise stated. All pieces came from unstratified, upper levels in the stratigraphy, from within the ploughed soil, presumably reaching the site with farmyard manure.

*Vessel Glass*

Sherd perhaps from a small bowl, press moulded, with spiral ribbing, in clear colourless glass with good fire polish. After 1840.

*Bottle Glass*

No complete bottles were found. Sherds were generally small with little surface weathering. Dates range from c.1685 to the modern period and are listed chronologically.

- 1 Neck sherd in deep olive green glass, crude with seed and stones. England, c.1685-1770.
- 2 Two body sherds from 'onion' English 'wine' bottle form in sap green glass. England, c.1685-1730.
- 3 Neck/rim sherd in pale olive green glass, crude with much seed. V-tooled string rim applied 2 mm. below lip. Diameter at string rim, 28 mm. England, c.1690-1730.
- 3 Body sherd from broad cylindrical or 'mallet' English 'wine' bottle form, in sap green glass. England, c.1730-70.
- 5 Base sherd with bulged heel from broad cylindrical or 'mallet' form in deep olive green glass. England, c.1740-70.
- 6 Two joined body sherds from an octagonally sided bottle in crude/amber green glass. Octagonally moulded bottles are comparatively rare in England in the later 18th century from when these sherds probably date, and were much more common in American bottle making factories in the early 19th century. Base diameter c.86 mm.
- 7 Two sherds in sap green glass probably from the same bottle. c.18th/19th century.
- 8 Base sherd from cylindrical bottle in olive green glass, crude with much seed. Late 18th/19th century.
- 9 Three sherds in pale sap green metal, crude with seed, probably all from the same octagonally sided household or utility bottle. c.19th century.
- 10 Body/shoulder sherd from utility bottle in pale olive green glass, mould seam at the shoulder. Later 19th century.
- 11 Five sherds from wine/beer bottles in green or amber shades, cylindrical forms. Late 19th century/20th century.

*Flat (Window) Glass*

Eight flat glass sherds ranged from the 17th century, after 1615, to the 20th century:

- 1 Cylinder fire rounded edge in blue/green tinted glass. Thickness, 2 mm. Probably 17th century.
- 2 Corner of a small quarry (?) in cobalt green tinted glass, slightly pitted on one surface which may indicate cylinder glass. Thickness, 1.5 mm. Probably 17th century.
- 3 Four sherds in various green tints, all with slight pitting on one surface which may indicate cylinder glass. Thickness, 1.25 mm. — 1.5 mm. Quality suggests 18th/19th century.
- 4 Nearly clear colourless cylinder fire rounded edge in very good quality glass. Thickness, 2 mm. Perhaps 19th century.
- 5 Nearly clear colourless sherd in good quality glass. Thickness, 2 mm. Probably 20th century.

*Hough Hall: Site Dating — Glass*

Trench A: c.1685 to 20th century.

Trench B: c.1730 to 20th century.

Trench C: c.1685 to 19th century.

