

The moated site at South Park Farm, Grayswood

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with contributions by

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Clearance work on the moat and its environs and the excavation of bridge footings, provided some evidence for Saxo-Norman activity on the site. This was followed, in the medieval period, by the construction of a moat, with at least two main phases of development. Historical research suggests that the moat had probably been the site of the manor house of Ashurst and geophysical and field surveys gave some indication of the position of the buildings on the island and for the sequence of development of the site. Landscaping works in the 19th century and rubbish dumping in the 20th century have subsequently disturbed or obscured some of the earlier features.

Introduction

The moated site (SU 9160 3555) at South Park Farm, Grayswood, near Haslemere, lies in the parish of Witley and forms a well preserved, apparently multi-phase earthwork, covering an area of just over half a hectare (figs 1 and 2). Since the last war, the site has been subject to various agricultural and commercial dumping activities and more recently had become very overgrown. In 1991 the owner of South Park Farm, Mrs Dora Fedoruk, decided to place the site, which is a scheduled ancient monument (Surrey Nat No 12756), in the care of the Surrey Archaeological Society, with the aim of opening the site to the public.

The Society, with the advice and assistance of English Heritage and numerous other organizations, spent three years clearing the site and carrying out limited restoration works, as well as undertaking a research programme into the history of the monument. As a result, the moat is now open to visitors and has been provided with an interpretation board and basic facilities. Leaflets and teaching packs have been produced, which are available from the Society and from Haslemere Museum. The moat has attracted a large number of visitors since it was officially opened in 1994.

Geology and topography

The monument lies near the head of a slight valley, formed by a small stream, which feeds into the moat itself and then flows eastwards, ultimately joining the north branch of the river Arun. The moat is at a height of 125m OD and has extensive views of the gently rolling country to the east, while, in contrast, just over half a kilometre to the west, the ground rises steeply to form Hurt and Gibbet Hills (fig 1). These hills are part of the Hindhead escarpment, which, at a maximum height of 272m, dominates the site. Views to the north and south are however restricted by the sides of the valley in which the monument is set. The earthworks at South Park are situated on Weald Clay with localized patches of Head, while the high ground of Hurt and Gibbet Hills are formed of sand of the Hythe Beds series and have a predominantly heathland vegetation cover.

The site (fig 2) is bisected by a north–south trackway (fig 2, a–b), an evidently well established right of way, now carried across the valley by means of a 3m-wide gravelled causeway. Associated with and to the west of this causeway is a substantial bank. At one time this appears to have formed the eastern dam to one phase of the moat and a short section of brick wall with a curved water channel, has subsequently been set into an eroded section of the bank to create a

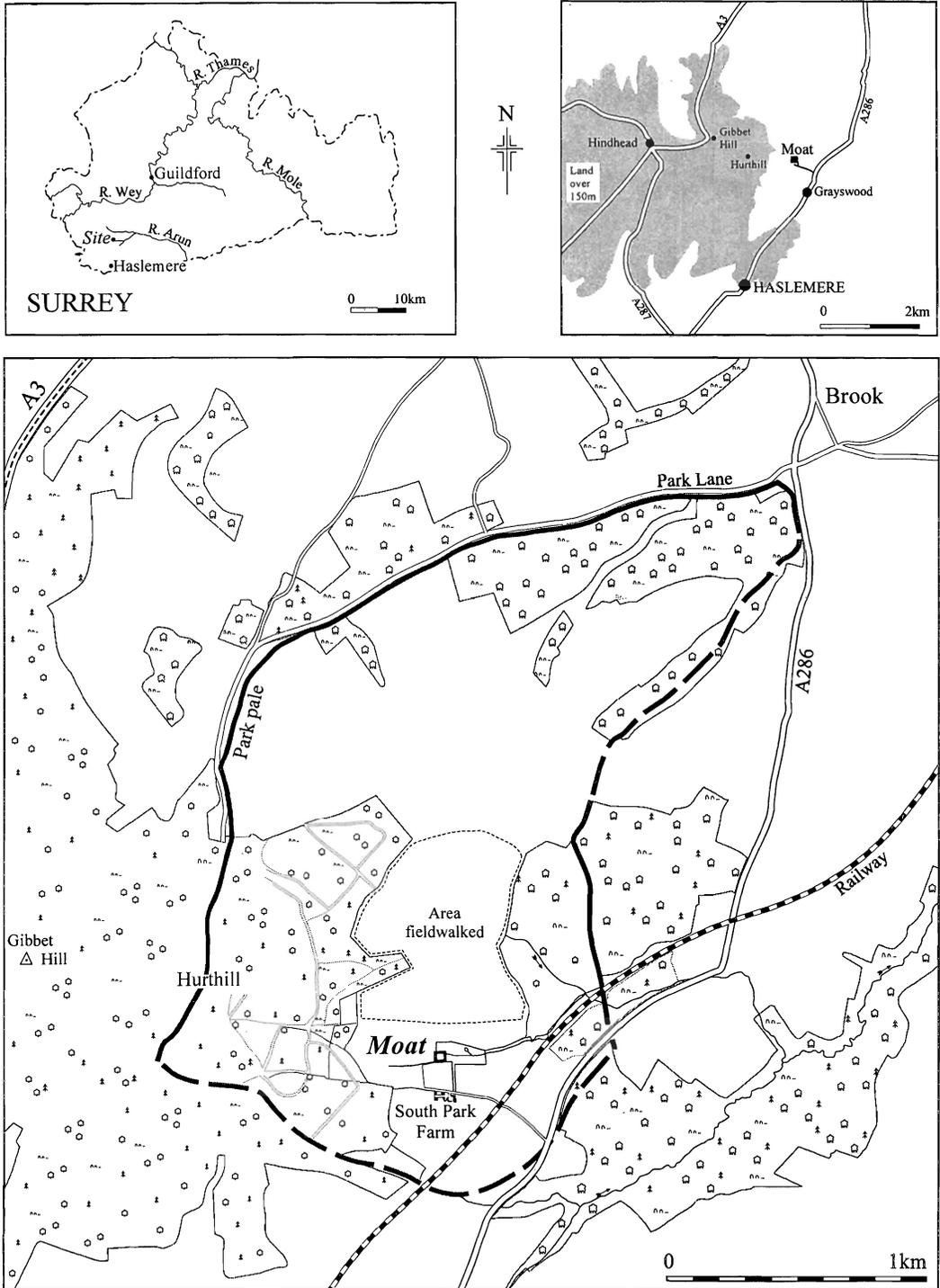


Fig 1 South Park Moat: location map showing the boundary of the deer park (solid line) and presumed line (dashed line). (Reproduced by kind permission of the Ordnance Survey, © Crown copyright NC/00/1028)

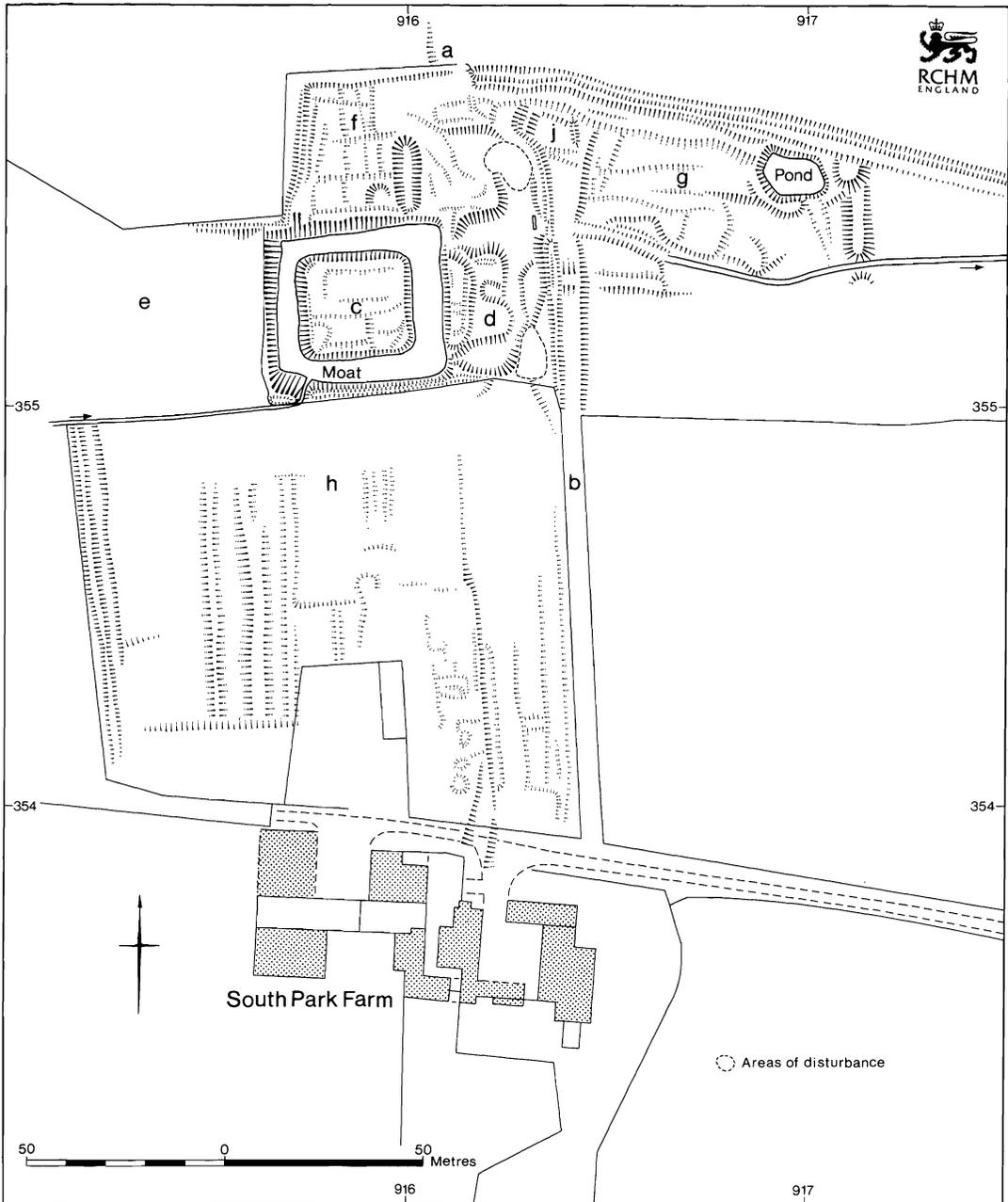


Fig 2 South Park Moat: survey of the site. (Crown copyright. Reproduced by courtesy of the Secretary and Commissioners of the RCHME)

water feature, probably in the 19th century. This wall has now been by-passed by the stream, which has eroded a cut to one side, leaving the wall standing free.

Immediately to the west of the bank is a system of wide channels, the eastern arm of which runs for some 10m north beyond its junction with the current bed of the stream. A scarp extending west from this may represent a continuation of its original line, but its true extent is

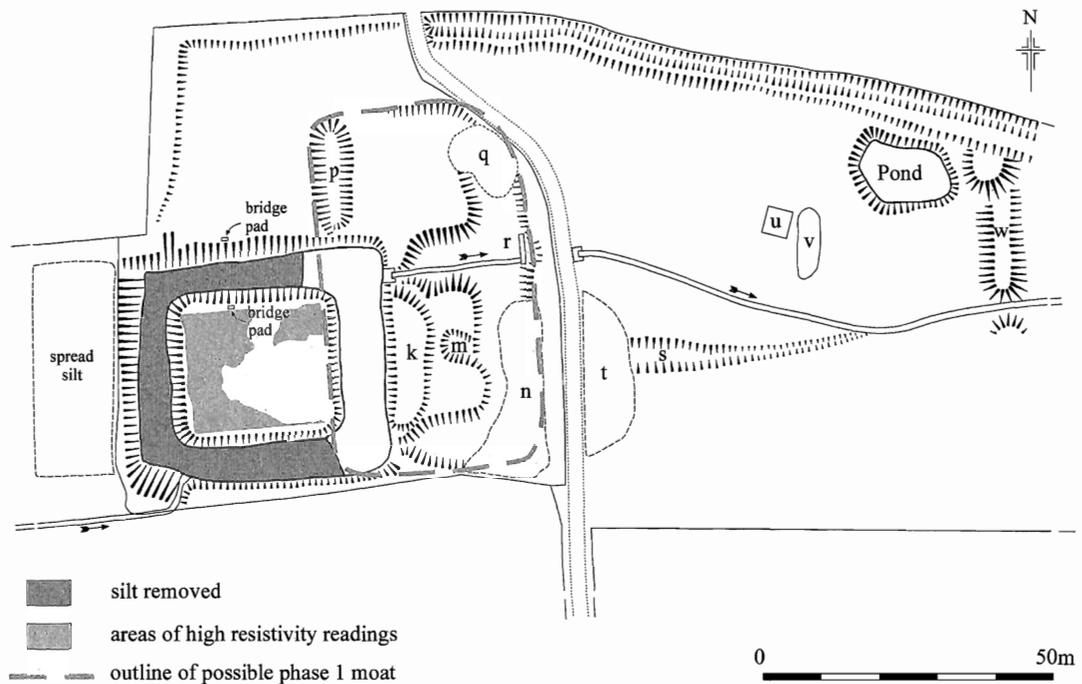


Fig 3 South Park Moat: interpretation plan (based on the RCHME survey) and location of works

obscured by a dump of modern rubble. A prominent, but now dry, hollow (fig 3, p), 7m wide and less than 0.5m deep, runs for 20m southwards from the western end of the moat, apparently forming a ditch which runs parallel to the north-south eastern channel. The southern end of the course has, however, been cut by the ditch, which forms the eastern arm of the existing (and possibly phase 2) moat.

This well-preserved moat, which in the main lies upstream of the features described so far, still holds water. It has ditches some 11m wide at the top and between 6–8m wide at water level, with a well-defined outline. These enclose a roughly square platform 22m x 24m (fig 2, c), whose interior is mostly level, but slopes gently to the south and more noticeably to the south-east corner.

A slight bank along the north and west sides of the island, may be the result of spoil from clearing the moat. On the outer edge of the moat, a bank is also present on the north and east sides. That along the east side is quite substantial and functions as the retaining dam. The dam has been breached at its north and south ends by two sluices, which, until recently, drained the moat. A slight bank runs east-west along the southern edge of the moat and forms the boundary between it and the adjacent field.

Water is supplied to the moat from a small watercourse that runs from the field to the west (fig 2, e) and enters through a gap in the south-west corner. This is unlikely to have been its original course and the topography of the land to the west suggests that water may have formerly entered the moat centrally and perhaps at the north-west corner. Today a number of field drains supply the moat from that side.

To the north of the earthworks, a number of slight scarps, partially obscured by vegetation and rubble, form an orderly arrangement (fig 2, f). The valley side here has been cut into, to form a level terrace.

The area to the east of the central footpath (fig 2, g) is bounded on the north by a west-east orientated bank some 4m wide and 0.5m high associated with a ditch on its north side. Along the same alignment are fragments of 19th century park fencing, including two 2m high kissing

gates. The remaining features in this area appear to be associated with water management activities. In the east the site is bounded by a north–south bank 7m wide, a former dam that ponded the stream. Some of the sinuous scarps that sit along the valley sides appear to represent the former edges of this ponding. These features are post-dated by a sub-rectangular pond 14m x 9m constructed within the north east bay with its spoil sitting partly on top of the latter. Immediately south of the stream, a bank 5m wide runs east–west where its path can be seen to underlie the present footpath.

The field (fig 2, h) to the south of the moat contains a number of earthworks consisting mainly of low parallel banks. At least one of these is a former field boundary, but others are likely to be the result of drainage or orchard banks. Other scarps in the south part of the field surround areas of concrete and are likely to have a Second World War origin (Mrs D Fedoruk, pers comm).

Previous work

In the early 1980s, members of the Haslemere Archaeological Group carried out some limited clearance work, during the course of which a small number of crucible fragments were recovered from outside the moat, by the current inlet stream, and from the surface of both islands (see specialist report below). They also located a scatter of Mesolithic material from the field (fig 2, e) immediately to the west of the moat.

The clearance works and investigation of the moat

When the Surrey Archaeological Society took possession of the site, the area of the moat was covered with dense scrub and trees and the ditches were largely overgrown with grass and choked with fallen timber. The clay sluices had been breached and the water level had dropped to such an extent that only the lower eastern arm of the moat still remained wet. The last real activity on the site had been the random, but large scale, dumping of building rubble under commercial contract in the 1950s. Prior to that the area had been the site of various short-lived farm buildings such as pigsties and hen houses, all of which were derelict by the start of the project.

The land managed by the Society divides into two halves. The first containing the moat itself, where archaeology was the primary concern and the second containing the lower pond, where it was decided to limit clearance and to form a small nature reserve.

From the start the Society was very aware that the moat was a scheduled ancient monument and that any works had to be carried out so as to ensure the minimum possible disturbance to the earthworks themselves. In order to establish the extent of the site, the RCHME kindly undertook a survey of the earthworks, under extremely difficult conditions. Subsequently, the first two years of the project were devoted to clearing the fallen trees and scrub. A resistivity survey carried out on the main island (fig 3) indicated the location of two areas of possible building activity, both of which correlated well with finds of roof tile present in molehills. Areas of lower readings both on the island and immediately opposite on the ‘mainland’ hinted at a possible site for the original medieval access bridge. The conjectural reconstruction drawing (fig 4) is largely based on the results of this survey and shows the main island, viewed from the north-east, as it may have appeared in the mid-14th century.

After consultations with English Heritage, it was decided that the best way to present the site to the public was to allow access to the island by means of a new bridge, to remove silt from the shallower western half of the moat ditches and to build a new sluice, in order to raise the water level to something approaching its original state (fig 3).

THE DITCHES

Auger sampling in the western half of the moat revealed a depth of just over 1m of undifferentiated silt lying directly on natural grey clay. No medieval deposits were encountered

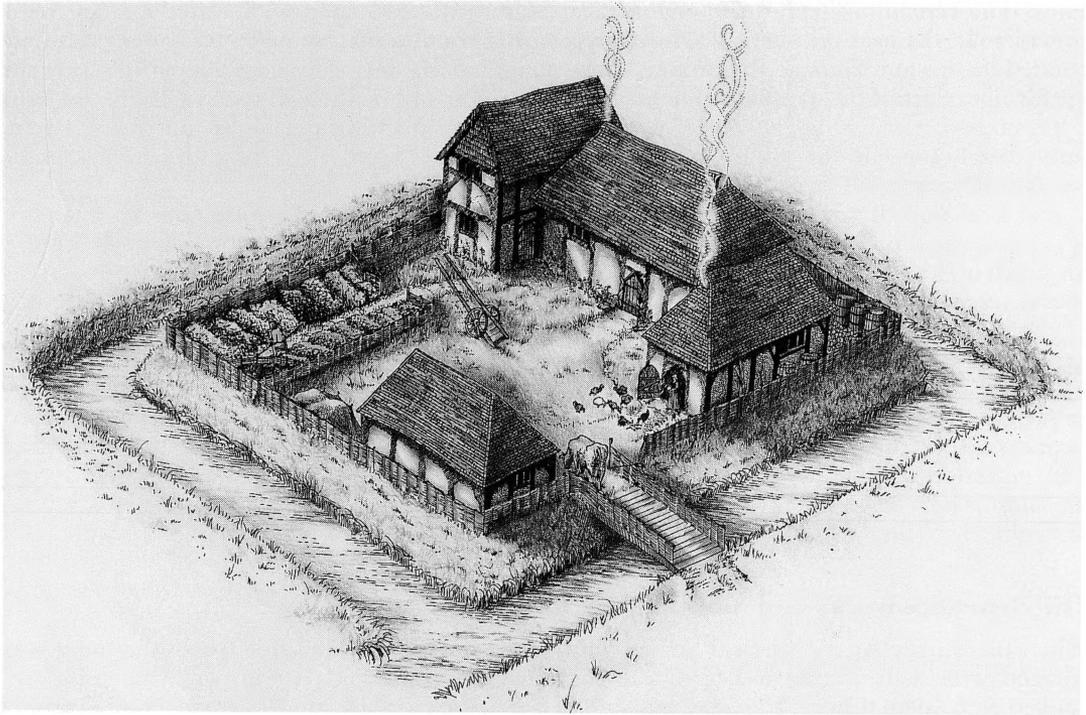


Fig 4 South Park Moat: reconstruction drawing showing the moat as it may have appeared in the mid-14th century. (Drawing by Giles Pattison)

and it therefore seems likely that any such material was removed by the dredging work, thought to have been carried out in the 19th century (Mrs D Fedoruk, pers comm). Though the actual depth of silt varied, being shallowest to the west, it was felt safe to remove a depth of 50cm from part of the moat (fig 3). This work was carried out by a special 'light footprint' earthmoving machine that operated on coir mats, again to avoid damage to the earthworks: Careful examination of the silt, which was spread in the field immediately to the west of the moat, failed to produce any medieval material whatever, with the possible exception of one crucible fragment (see report below). There were, however, a number of 19th century finds, which included a carriage brake shoe made by the well-known firm of May and Jacobs. This company operated from 1880 to 1928, was located at Upper High Street, Guildford and claimed to be 'Carriage builders to the Royalty and Nobility' (Matthew Alexander, pers comm). The machine also removed several decayed railway sleepers, complete with bolt holes, from the silt, again perhaps left over from earlier dredging activities. The moat appeared to be relatively flat bottomed with the recent undifferentiated silt lying directly on natural grey clay. The middle of each arm of the moat had however, been cut by deep holes that were not investigated, so as to minimize disturbance. Such 'holes' would be consistent with the 19th century dredging having been carried out with a bucket on a dragline. All the works were agreed with English Heritage in advance and all were carefully supervised.

THE BRIDGE FOOTINGS

Given the results of the geophysical survey, the new bridge to the island was located to avoid the site of the possible medieval buildings and was also designed to minimize the extent of the necessary footings. Nevertheless the only direct archaeological evidence found during the course of the project came from these footings, which consisted of two rectangular concrete pads, 1m x

2m, set into the ground opposite each other, one on the mainland and the other on the island (fig 3). The pad pits were excavated to a depth of 50cm and revealed a similar stratigraphy in both cases. That on the mainland, the northern bridge footing, showed a 10cm layer of topsoil overlying a 30cm thick band of sandy soil which contained a substantial scatter of pegged roof tile. This appeared to lie at random within the layer, as did the eight sherds of Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery that were recovered from the level (see below). Underlying this was a clay/sand mix that contained quantities of sandstone. This appears to form the natural drift geology on the site, since similar material has been exposed all along the length of the stream downhill of the moat itself. No attempt was made to cut any deeper than the 50cm required to accommodate the bridge pad.

The southern bridge footing, on the island, was stratigraphically identical, with the sole exception that no pottery was recovered from the sand/tile layer.

Given the random distribution of the roof tile within the sandy layer and the fact that some of the earlier abraded Saxo-Norman sherds were found physically above the later medieval pottery (see report below), it seems probable that this material had been redeposited. It perhaps represents the dumping of ditch fill from the construction of the moat or more probably from the apparent 19th century recut. As described under the topography of the site, there is a slight bank along the northern outer edge of the ditch, which may represent a continuation of this layer. In any event the discovery of 14th/15th century pottery gives the first definite indication that the moat is indeed of genuine medieval date and the discovery of Saxo-Norman sherds seems to indicate that the site may have been occupied even before the construction of the moat.

THE SLUICE

The new stone sluice was constructed within the confines of a decayed 1950s clay and timber sluice, itself built at a point where the stream had completely eroded through the original bank, forming the natural outflow from the ditches. Because of the re-use of the cut, it was possible to avoid disturbing any original deposits and accordingly no archaeological features were encountered during the works.

The stream had also eroded a second cut through the bank, at the south-east corner of the moat, which may originally have been the site of a second sluice. This cut was much shallower and was merely filled with a layer of clay to reconstruct the original profile of the bank in order to prevent further outflows at this point.

OTHER WORKS

The only other works carried out on the site were the construction of a path leading to the bridge, which consisted of bark laid directly on the ground surface, the erection of fencing around the scheduled area and the placing of a display board by the entrance gate. The 19th century brick sluice was extended slightly to block the flow of the stream and a replacement culvert was inserted under the trackway. None of these works involved disturbance to any archaeological deposits.

The finds

THE POTTERY, by Dennis Turner

Nine sherds of pottery were recovered from the northernmost bridge footing trench, in a layer of sandy soil, underlying the topsoil. The early sherds (nos 2, 4, 5 and 6), small and much abraded, are likely to indicate pre-moat occupation of the site. The fragments of cooking pot (no 1) seem to belong to the period of the *floruit* of moated sites in the county. The pottery has been deposited at Haslemere Museum (acc nos HA.8.117-23, 126-34)

- 1 Two rim sherds and one body sherd from a single neckless, 'whiteware' mortar or cooking pot. Pinky-buff ware with fine sand temper. Splashes of green glaze on interior. The rim form is not precisely matched on whiteware cooking pots in the London series (Pearce and Vince 1988) but it has affinities with 'whiteware' vessel 13 from Ash (Holling 1968), vessels 52 and 55 from Moat Farm, Hookwood (Turner 1977) and vessel 41 from Woodlands Field, Earlswood (Ellaby 1984). The vessel was probably similar to Pearce and Vince 1988, no 391 (mortar), 469, 473 or 508 (cooking pots). It could have had a rounded base like *ibid* nos 391 or 508, but an angled base like *ibid* nos 465 to 470 is, perhaps, more likely.
Neckless whiteware cooking pots do not seem to be clearly dated in the London series but a date early in the 14th century would seem indicated by the associations of the Ash and Hookwood parallels. On the other hand, neckless whiteware jugs whose rims are closely similar, are usually dated to the mid 15th century. (fig 5, 1 and 2)
- 2 Thin wall sherd with edge of base angle. Grey, sand-tempered body with soft, brown internal surface. Much abraded. Saxo-Norman?
- 3 Thick, plain base angle fragment from flat-bottomed vessel. Pink surface to base, otherwise pale to medium grey ware with pinky-brown internal surface. Fine sand temper. Abraded. (fig 5, 3)
- 4 Fragment of slightly thickened and flat-topped rim from shallow dish or from everted neck of globular vessel. Pink ware with much fine sand temper. Much abraded. 12th century or earlier? (fig 5, 4)
- 5 Two plain body sherds related to the wares represented in fig 5, 1-3.
- 6 Thin sherd of plain everted rim. Hand-made vessel of indeterminate shape, possibly globular jar. Pink-surfaced grey ware with fine sand temper and corky appearance, possibly where fine-ground shell temper has leached out. Much abraded. Probably Saxo-Norman.

THE CRUCIBLE FRAGMENTS, by David F Williams

A small number of ceramic crucible fragments used for glassmaking were found on the surface the islands by members of the Haslemere Archaeological Group in the 1980s and also from the ditch silt in 1993. All the crucible fragments have varying amounts of green glass adhering to them. Three of the sherds (no 2) have a thick coating of glass present on both surfaces. No indication of a furnace at the site has yet been found, but the nature and condition of these fragments strongly suggest that this may have been located in the near vicinity.

Catalogue

- 1 Recovered from the ditch silt. Part of the base (2cm thick) and side wall (1.7cm thick) of a crucible of some 11cm diameter. It is in an extremely hard, smooth, fine sandy fabric, light grey inner surface and core (Munsell 5YR 7/1), darker grey outer surface (5YR 5/1). There are small scattered globules of greenish coloured glass adhering to the inner side and base of the sherd, usually in small vesicles in the fabric. More especially in a deep crack at one of the edges of the base, possibly through a fault fissure in the clay.
- 2 Recovered from the surface of the island by the Haslemere Group in 1980s. Three similar-looking fragments of thick-walled crucible (3-3.3cm thick), which probably belong to the same vessel. Two of these are clearly bodysherds, while the third may possibly be part of a base. These sherds are in a very hard, smoothish, fine sandy fabric, darkish grey surfaces (5YR 5/1) and a light grey core (10YR 7/2) with a thin grey central strip. All three sherds contain a thick layer of light to dark green glass on their surfaces, especially the outer surface.
- 3 Recovered from the surface of the island by the Haslemere Group in the 1980s:
 - a) Three bodysherds of crucible with small amounts of greenish glass adhering to both surfaces (1cm, 1.6cm and 1.7cm in thickness). All three sherds are in a very hard, rough, fine sandy fabric, light grey throughout (10YR 7/2). In the hand-specimen, this appears to be a similar fabric to nos 1 and 2. Perhaps because of greater use, the surface fabric seems to be more saturated with small globules of glass than the base sherd (no 1).
 - b) A large somewhat rounded clear, translucent, deep green coloured fragment of glass waste.

Petrology

Small samples from nos 1 and 2 were detached, thin-sectioned and then studied under the petrological microscope. In thin section both samples appear similar. They principally contain plentiful well-sorted angular to subangular grains of quartz, below 0.20mm in size, with a little mica and iron oxide, scattered throughout a dense, fine-grained, anisotropic clay matrix. Many of the quartz grains display cracking, no doubt reflecting the very high temperatures experienced in the glass furnace, followed by a cooling stage.

Given the presence of such common non-plastic inclusions in the South Park Moat sherds, it is difficult at this time to suggest to what extent, if any, local clays and quartz sand may have

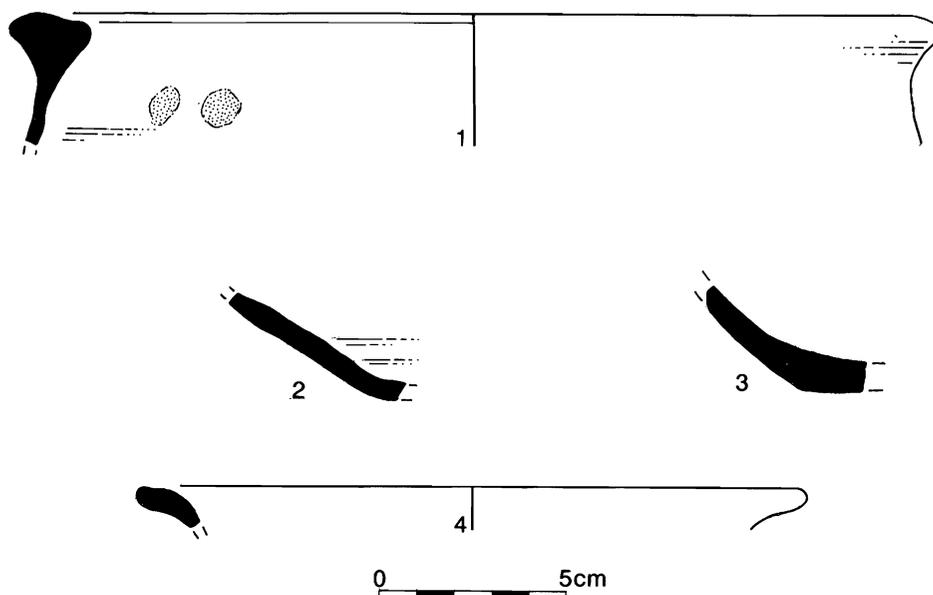


Fig 5 South Park Moat: the pottery. (Drawings by David W Williams)

been used to make these specialist refractory vessels, as opposed to imported materials or crucibles. Together with David Crossley, University of Sheffield, the writer is presently engaged on a research project to examine and try to locate the source of the clays and temper used for crucibles that were employed on Surrey glassmaking sites.

THE LEAD WEIGHT

Apart from the results of the survey described above, a single find of a lead weight (fig 6) was reported to the Society by a Mr Raymond Hardy. Mr Hardy made the find while still a schoolboy and described the findsite as being 'about 12m west of the footpath and 12m north of the northern moat fence' (ie *c*12m north-west of 'a' on fig 2). The weight itself carries a worn fleur-de-lis pattern on the obverse face, while the reverse is smooth and unmarked. It is circular with a diameter of 4.8cm, a thickness of 0.9cm and weighs 150g.

Similar weights have been reported from Winchester (Biddle 1990, 910, 918–19) where they are described as being 'pan weights' of medieval date and the South Park example would fall into the weight category of one third of a mercantile pound. A note on the weight has been published by Williams (1996). The object has been deposited in Haslemere Museum (acc no HA.9.1).

Historical background, by Greta Turner

The moat is situated at the extreme southern end of Witley parish. Evidence on the ground in the form of a park boundary bank or pale, park names and documentation indicates that Witley deer park in late medieval times occupied an area bounded by: Brook and Park Lane on the north, Hurt Hill on the west, Grayswood on the south and, on the eastern side, a line running a little west of the A286 (fig 1). The moat lay inside this area.

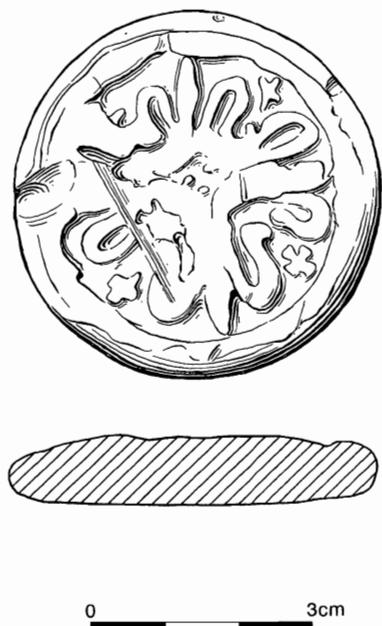


Fig 6 South Park Moat: lead weight. (Drawing by David W Williams)

The first reference to Witley Park is an order in 1271 for re-stocking it with deer from Alice Holt forest.¹ The Crown retained possession from 1313, when the manor and park were in the hands of Queen Margaret, wife of Edward I² until 1599, when Elizabeth I sold Witley manor and park to Elizabeth Egerton, sister of Sir George More of Loseley.³

There is also, however, a reference to the small seemingly nearby manor and park of Ashurst, also a Crown possession and initially described in 1312 as the tenement of Ashurst and Bonelith or Bovelythe, 130 acres, held of Queen Margaret of the manor of Wytle by Henry de Guldeford.⁴ (Bonelith, equated with Bowlhead Green a hamlet well to the north of Witley Park, was later severed from Ashurst.⁵) The separate existence of Ashurst Park may date from the grant in 1303 of free warren to Henry de Guldeford in his demesne lands of Chiddingfold⁶ but Ashurst Park was probably, at least partly, in Witley.

In 1353 Ashurst is referred to as the 'King's Park' Thomas Taillard of Godalming being appointed keeper⁷ and it, together with the manor, continued in Royal possession until late in the 16th century, from time to time during this period being granted to members of the Royal household. In 1363 the farmer of Witley manor stated in his account that the rent of 16s 8d due from the tenant of Ashurst had not been paid for more than eight years because it was held by the king.⁸ In 1377 the manor and park were granted to Adam Pynkhurst, one of the King's archers,⁹ and in 1378 to Philip Walwayn the Elder, usher of the chamber.¹⁰ By 1402 Philip

1 CCR 1268–72, 318.

2 CCR 1307–13, 507.

3 PRO: C66, 41 Eliz pt xxi, no 20; PRO: C54, 41 Eliz pt xxi.

4 PRO: C134, Series 1, Ed II, f 31.

5 BL: Add Charters 27720 & 27735.

6 PRO: C53, 31 Edw I, m 2.

7 PRO: C66, 27 Edw III, pt 3 m 8.

8 PRO: SC6, 1015, no 9.

9 PRO: C66, 44 Edw II, pt 3, m 12.

10 PRO: C66, 2 Rich II, pt 1, m 47.

Walwayn was dead and his wife Joan surrendered Ashurst in favour of John Courteney.¹¹ It then passed successively to Richard Dethe in 1406,¹² John Clipsham in 1413,¹³ Walter Bedell, yeoman of the ewery, in 1438,¹⁴ and finally in 1464 to the Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV.¹⁵

Although Witley and Ashurst manors were not in the same custody until the mid-15th century, there are several instances linking the keepership, collection of rents and maintenance of order in the two manors and parks, which suggest that they may have been adjacent, *vide* the 1363 reference above. Also in 1439 when an affray took place in the parish of Witley resulting in alleged waste having been done to the king's park of Ashurst during Walter Bedell's tenure, John Feriby, then in charge of Witley Park, was appointed to enquire into the matter.¹⁶

Accounts of damage sustained to the manor and park of Ashurst between 1379 and 1439 indicate that both a manor house and a deer park lodge were in existence. In 1379 there was a riot in which 'persons in no small numbers, both of horse and foot, assembled and broke the King's park of Asshehurst in the County of Surrey, hunted therein, killed and carried away deer and intimidated the parker in his lodge'.¹⁷ Later that same year Thomas Taillard was appointed to 'choose masons, carpenters and other workmen for the repair' of the manor house.¹⁸ The house appeared to be still (or again) in repair in 1385 when Philip Walwayn and William Taillard were appointed to 'take sufficient masons, carpenters and labourers for the repair of the King's manor of Asshehurst, stone, lime, timber and tiles and carriage thereof, at the King's charges, and to set the men to work, with power to imprison the disobedient'.¹⁹ The latter statement indicates that the manor house of Ashurst was a building of some substance. There is, however, nowhere amongst the Ashurst documentation, reference to the existence of a moat or to any activities that might be associated with its construction.

In 1464 Ashurst park and manor were granted for life to George, Duke of Clarence, of Malmsey repute.²⁰ The previous year Clarence had also been granted the manor and park of Witley.²¹ In 1475 Clarence conveyed Ashurst park and manor, with other lands, to trustees on 'going across the sea in the king's service'²² and in 1479, a year after the Duke's attainder, the same custodian, Thomas Wyntershulle, held both Witley and Ashurst manors, described in the singular as 'the manor'.²³ It was probably at around this time, therefore, that the manors and parks of Witley and Ashurst were amalgamated, with Ashurst in Witley fading from history.

Although the location of Ashurst cannot now be firmly identified, it is probable that it lay near the southern end of Witley Park, its lands eventually being split up between Witley Park and Fridinghurst, a little to the east. It may, therefore, have occupied the area around the moat. The Rev T S Cooper (the historian of Chiddingfold) was strongly inclined to this view.²⁴ This latter estate, based on a manor house situated in what is now called Frillinghurst Wood, became known as the manor of Fridinghurst and sometimes as the manor of Fridinghurst alias Ashurst. Manorial Courts were held at Fridinghurst from 1549 to 1877 (interrupted) and its descent during this period may be found in the Victoria County History.

Between 1369 and 1375, sundry accounts indicate that the king's manor and park of Ashurst comprised (or included) rents of tenements in Chiddingfold and the borough of Haslemere. Also

11 PRO: C66, 3 Hen IV, pt 2, m.15.

12 PRO: C66, 8 Hen IV, pt 1, m 27.

13 PRO: C66, 9 Hen IV, pt 2, m 12.

14 PRO: C66, 18 Hen IV, pt 1, m 25.

15 PRO: C66, 4 Edw IV, pt 1, m 14.

16 PRO: C66, 17 Hen IV, pt 1, m 13d.

17 PRO: C66, 2 Rich II, pt 2, m 19d.

18 PRO: C66, 3 Rich II, pt 1, m 17.

19 PRO: C66, 8 Rich II, pt 2, m 1.

20 CPR 1461-7, p 328.

21 PRO: C66, 2 Edw IV, pt 2, m 6.

22 CPR 1467-77, pp 457, 829.

23 CPR 1467-77, pp 87, 381.

24 GM: Woods MSS, vol 15, T S Cooper, letter dated 8 March 1908 [text ref 23].

included were a fishery in Frithinghurst, a meadow called Frithinghurstmead and a pasture called Blackstrode, although these latter two were described as being outside the manor proper.²⁵

In 1542 a family named Wyndsore is found holding lands in Asshehurst and Frydinghurst, presumably the manor, and in 1549 they conveyed the manor of Frydinghurst (with no alias) comprising lands in Chiddingfold and the borough of Haslemere as above, also in Wytley and Ashurst, and also, significantly, in Hascombe, Hamulden, Shalford and Putnam.²⁶ Referring back to the affray concerning Ashurst in 1439 when Walter Bedell had the custody of the manor and park, the appointment of Bedell²⁷ had been immediately opposed by the Hussey family who owned the lordship of Hascombe. Various Husseys, actually or by legal fiction, met Walter Bedell in the parish of Witley, and by force of arms, swords and stave, bows and arrows, prevented him from collecting the revenues of Ashurst, including the rents in Chiddingfold and Haslemere.²⁸ Walter Bedell took proceedings in the Exchequer Court against the Husseys, but a blank in the records leaves the result in doubt.²⁹ It is possible, therefore, that Fridinghurst was carved out from part of Ashurst, by a successful intrusion of the Husseys of Hascombe, already under way by 1483.

Cooper relates that in 1570 the Lord of Fridinghurst alias Ashurst, sold part of Fridinghurstmead, and in 1610, the manor of Frydinghurst alias Ashurst was conveyed, together with lands called Blackstrowdes, in both instances the mead and Blackstrowdes being described as 'reputed to be part of the said Manor'. Cooper points out that the alias Ashurst was not applied to the Manor of Frydinghurst until the mead and Blackstrowdes had passed out of the hands of the owner of Ashurst or Witley Park and into the possession of the Lord of Frydinghurst. He is of the opinion that this took place sometime around the middle of the 16th century.³⁰ The present lands of Stroud are to be found immediately to the east of the A286 and 500 yards due east of the moat. An attempt to find some trace on the ground of the pale of Ashurst park in this locality was made and note was taken of a short stretch of bank lying immediately to the west of the A286 at SU 918 353 and running NE towards Stroud. However, this area has suffered much disturbance from the construction of the A286, the Portsmouth railway line and housing development, so that a firm view is not possible.

The moat may well, therefore, have been the site of the manor house of Ashurst or its deer park lodge. However, the fact that the moat is sited in a hollow does not encourage the idea that the moated homestead was originally constructed as a park lodge, as these were usually situated so as to have a good overall view of the surrounding land. The sheltered site is more suited to the location of a manor house.

THE LATER HISTORY OF WITLEY PARK AFTER ITS ABSORPTION OF ASHURST

The history of Witley Park from the 16th century on shows, from a number of surveys, a deer park which, like many others, was steadily shrinking in size and complement of deer. Medieval deer parks became progressively more expensive to maintain and from the 15th century onwards, the general picture is one of decline and encroachment by farms.

In a survey of Witley Manor in 1548,³¹ Witley Park, in the keepership of Thomas Jones, is described as having a circuit of six miles and being full of deer.

25 PRO: SC6, 1010, nos 5-7.

26 Cooper 1900, 65-9.

27 PRO: C66, 16 Hen VI, pt 2, m 31.

28 PRO: E13, 18 Hen VI, m 45.

29 An expanded account of this can be found in Swanton & Woods, 1914.

30 Cooper 1900.

31 PRO: LR2, 190, f 134.

32 SHC: LM 660.

33 SHC: LM 1081/36.

34 GM: Woods Hundred, vol 15, p 8a-b.

In *c* 1560 the park is described as being only four miles around,³² and in *c*1566 it is described as containing 674 acres, but with only 200 deer, fewer than in Queen Mary's time.³³ By 1596, it contained only about 100 deer in 400 acres.³⁴

The map of the bounds of Witley deer park in the 16th century (fig 1) was constructed partly from surviving field traces of the pale along Park Lane on the northern side and along Hurt Hill to the west, and partly from descriptions of property boundaries contained in the large number of deeds pertaining to Witley, in the Surrey History Centre. Of these, the bounds noted from deeds for Herneland³⁵ and for Combeswold³⁶ leave little doubt as to the east and west locations of the boundary respectively. Little indication of the southern boundaries was obtained.

In 1596 the park was granted in farm to Elizabeth Egerton and her brother Sir George More of Loseley³⁷ and finally sold to them with the manor with which it descended until 1613. In 1614 Witley Manor and park were sold off separately by Sir George More, the park going to his brother in law, Sir Edward More.³⁸ This document gives details of the park and the houses in it. The park is described as being much larger than would appear from the above survey of 1596, being said to contain 1050 acres, 6 houses, 6 cottages and 6 barns. It is possible that, for the purposes of the sale, an attempt was made to describe the original extent of the park, but it is also evident that 'the park' at this date included additional land and properties in Thursley parish. This acreage and number of farms agrees very well with the 'park' owned by the Chandler family in the mid-19th century as shown on the Witley Tithe Map of 1840.

In 1656 Edward More, grandson of the Sir Edward above, sold Witley Park to Thomas Russell.³⁹ Thomas Russell was probably trustee to the Bennett family and a moiety of the estate passed to the Salisburys of Hatfield, through the marriage of Frances Bennett to the 4th Earl of Salisbury and the remainder passing to them by inheritance from Frances's sister Grace.

It is obvious from the references to Witley Park in the Hatfield Estate Records⁴⁰ that Witley Park was, during this period, almost entirely broken up into farms and no longer functioned as a deer park. An additional factor, probably affecting its decline, was the presence of an iron furnace at the north end of the park on the Wareham stream. No documentation relating to the construction or operation of this furnace has been found, but the two cottages adjacent to the bay have been dated by the Domestic Buildings Research Group to *c* 1600. Throughout the entire northern half of the park, as far south as the present Witley Farm, there remain signs of ore extraction. Thomas Cox, writing in 1730, although probably basing his comments on Aubrey who carried out his survey in 1673, confirms that at that time Witley Park had had ironworks but no deer.⁴¹ It is possible, therefore, that in the latter stage of its existence, and when described in 1596 as having an extent of only 400 acres, the deer park comprised only its southern part around the moat.

In 1791 the Salisburys sold 'Witley Park' — by this time a large and diverse landholding in both Witley and Thursley parishes — to William Smith of Godalming.⁴² From William Smith the estate passed to his brother Richard and then to his niece Mary, widow of George Chandler.⁴³ From Mary Chandler, Witley Park passed to her son Allen who sold it in 1876 to

32 SHC: LM 660.

33 SHC: LM 1081/36.

34 GM: Woods Hundred, vol 15, p 8a-b.

35 SHC: acc 1799 (formerly RB 1834 Bdle 1, 1510); SHC: G5/2/159 and G5/2/280.

36 GM: Woods Hundred, vol 16, p 471.

37 PRO: C66, 38 Eliz pt xii.

38 SHC: LM 349/99.

39 PRO: CP25, Surrey, Feet of Fines Mich. 1656 pt 1.

40 HH: Accounts 72/6, 80/15, 77/3, 82/12, 104/1, 103/3, 99/10, 106/2, 106/8, 1695-1788

41 Cox 1730, 401.

42 PRO: C54, 31 Geo III, pt 3 no 7.

43 *VCH*, 3, 64.

the Earl of Derby.⁴⁴ Towards the end of the 19th century the estate was acquired by Whitaker Wright. Witley Park as understood above was, at the time of this acquisition, only part of a much larger estate of *c* 3000 acres. This extended to the north of Park Lane part of which, including Lea House (SU 926 396), he surrounded with a stone wall four miles long and re-named 'Witley Park'.

In 1909 the estate was bought from Wright's executors by Viscount Pirrie, head of the Belfast shipbuilding firm of Harland and Wolff.⁴⁵ Pirrie enclosed a large part of the southern portion of his estate — more or less corresponding with the area of the medieval deer park — with an iron fence into which enclosure he re-introduced red deer. The remains of this fence can still be seen.⁴⁶

According to Mrs Fedoruk, the present owner of South Park Farm (a post-1840 building), the earl of Derby added a small ballroom on to the house, which he used to accommodate his weekend shooting guests. It is possible that the 19th century brick structures evident at the moat, all of which are concerned with water management, also date to this period.⁴⁷

Comparison with other moated sites, by Dennis Turner

As a result of the work of the Moated Site Research Group (now subsumed into the Medieval Settlement Research Group), approximately 6000 moats have been recorded in England (including a high proportion of destroyed examples). It seems likely that this number is a fair estimate of what actually once existed of this class of site, making them numerically one of the largest classes of medieval monument. As a class, they have been well studied, but the best overall review is still the CBA Research Report of 1978 (Aberg, 1978). A brief bibliography of key works printed by Darvill eleven years later (Darvill *et al* 1987, 408) contained only the 'Shire' booklet (Wilson 1985) of more recent date.

As Mrs Le Patourel demonstrated (1972), the morphological classification of moated sites is particularly difficult because both during their 'lifetime' and after abandonment they undergo modifications drastic enough to change their classification. Under Christopher Taylor's often-used classificatory system (RCHME 1968), the site at South Park can be seen as either two superimposed Class A1 (single-island) sites or a Class A3 (single island with additional ponds and ditches) site. Earlier views of the site would have placed it in Class A2 (double island sites). Such morphological uncertainty throws doubt on the value of classification on these lines and few students of moated sites pay much attention to such exercises today. Brian Roberts' much neglected threefold division based on situation (1962) would appear to be potentially more useful: South Park would be classed as a valley moat.

The number of moated sites that once existed in Surrey cannot be stated with any precision (Turner 1987, 230–4, 244–6). Several possible sites are evidenced only from 19th century maps and have now been damaged to the point where their true nature can only be determined, if at all, by excavation but the total for the historic county is thought to be in the region of 150. Like other monuments, except where 'Scheduled', moats are at risk of severe damage or even destruction by such forces as road building, housing development and agriculture. Nine Surrey sites are known by the writer to have been severely damaged or destroyed since 1950 (three by agriculture; three by housing; two by road construction; one by golf-course construction).

One advantage of isolated moated sites is that they identify the position of medieval settlement. Abandoned isolated medieval settlements that lack moatiform or other earthworks tend only to be discovered through the process of destruction — for example, by ploughing (Ellaby 1984). The isolated site at South Park, probably abandoned before or soon after the end of the medieval

44 *ibid.*

45 Jefferson 1948, 217.

46 Swanton 1926, 120.

47 The Derby papers in the Lancashire Record Office, Preston, which may contain relevant material, are uncatalogued and unindexed and this line of research has not been pursued.

period, is clearly of high potential for studying medieval evidence. There is a chance that some of the water channels have remained wet — or at least moist — throughout the post-medieval period, leaving the possibility of preservation of environmental material. The presence of accompanying earthworks, albeit undated; the possibility of two distinct phases of moat-building; and the discovery of pottery from the period before moat building, raises the potential archaeological value of the site (*cf* Darvill *et al* 1987).

The special conditions at South Park place this moated site high in the archaeological pecking order of Surrey moats. Less than 20% of Surrey's moated sites are preserved in a condition that leaves them clearly of moderate or high archaeological potential.

The field survey, by Steve Dyer

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

As part of the overall study of the environs of the moated site at South Park, the ploughed land immediately adjoining the site to the north (fig 1; NGR centred SU 916 357) was the subject of a fieldwalking exercise. The footpath running northwards through the centre of the field was used as a base-line and transects, every 10m, taken off this in an east and west direction. Each 10m strip was walked, in two 5m bands and all of the collected material was placed in individually numbered, sealed, bags on completion of each transect.

As a matter of policy it was agreed that pottery of 19th and 20th century date would not be collected. Only one or two pieces of roofing tile were retained to show that it was present within the individual strips, the majority being later discarded, as no significant data could be ascertained from this material: it is also known that a barn of 18th century date had stood on one part of the field and much of the roofing tile was probably derived from this source. Where calcined (burnt) flint was present it was again decided that only one or two pieces would be retained from individual lines.

Once washed and sorted, the material retained from the fieldwalking exercise was classified according to procedures developed from similar projects in Surrey; the material was recorded onto forms, each line walked having a separate entry, and the finds listed according to type and purpose. Sixteen sherds of pre-19th century pottery were recovered, these comprised three Romano-British sherds; six medieval sherds (generally 14/15th century); six post-medieval sherds (mostly 17/18th century) and one 20th century ink well.

Struck flint represented the major part of the assemblage, with a total of 75 pieces being recovered: the majority of this was knapping material with two primary flakes; eleven secondary flakes; 57 pieces of waste and one spall. Tool production was represented by one possible axe trimming flake; one broken segment probably of a burin and a fabricator (used in the fine finishing work on the rough tool forms). Only one definite tool was recovered, this being a blade. None of the recovered flint is diagnostic to a particular period, although the presence of the probable burin fragment and blade may indicate the working of flint in the Mesolithic period.

Other material recovered from this exercise comprised one piece of medieval tile inscribed with a number of lines, made prior to firing; one piece of glass frit; three pieces of burnt greensand and one pierced pipe-clay object (possibly part of a kiln), these latter possibly indicating a small industry in the near vicinity.

CONCLUSIONS

The small amount of material recovered from this fieldwalking exercise does not allow for a detailed discussion and does not appear to indicate any large-scale activities within this area at any one period in the past. The general scatter of struck flint is reasonably normal in this part of Surrey, giving indications of limited use of the land during prehistoric eras; probably no more than forming usable tools during summer hunting forays.

The pottery recovered is again within the usual scope of material expected during fieldwalking, some possibly being introduced to the land during manuring of the fields.

Discussion

While the restoration works involved an absolute minimum of disturbance to the area of the scheduled monument, the results of recording such little archaeology as was exposed, linked to the other research carried out, has suggested a possible sequence of occupation at South Park.

Not surprisingly, the earliest such evidence comes in the form of the general scatter of prehistoric flintwork recovered during the fieldwalking exercise and perhaps more particularly from the discovery of an apparent Mesolithic knapping site. This latter was found by the Haslemere Archaeological Group during the 1980s and lay near the base of Hurt Hill several hundred metres to the west of the moat (Greta Turner, pers comm).

The few sherds of Romano-British pottery recovered from the field to the north of the moat hint at some form of presence during that period, probably agricultural, but give no indication of the existence of any sites, as such, in the area.

Perhaps the first indication of occupation on or near the site comes with the discovery of Saxo-Norman pottery from the bridge pad footing trenches. While this appeared to be unstratified, it seems unlikely that such small trenches would have produced this material unless it was fairly ubiquitous on the site. However, there are no features that can, at present, be assigned to this period, so the nature of the occupation, if it existed at all, must remain speculative. The find of a lead 'pan-weight' within a few metres of the moat also hints at some form of activity in the area — this time during the 'early medieval period'.

The first incontrovertible evidence for direct occupation of the site comes with the construction of the moat itself at some stage in the medieval period. While, short of excavation, there is no certainty as to the dating and phasing of the earthworks, several experts have suggested that there appear to be at least two phases of moat present on the site, the second partially overlying the first.

It is therefore tentatively suggested that the primary or phase 1 moat (fig 7, phase 1) consisted of a rectangular platform with rounded corners and measuring some 13m x 45m. This was constructed north-south across the valley, the sides of which slope sufficiently gently to allow the entire circuit of the ditches to be filled with water; the drop north-south being only 60cm. The remains of the phase 1 moat have been partially obscured by recent rubbish dumping, but in general the course of the ditches can be followed with reasonable certainty. It, however, must have been abandoned at some stage during the medieval period and was replaced by a second, or phase 2 moat, which utilized the earlier western arm of the phase 1 moat, but in the main lay upstream of it.

The phase 2 moat consisted of a roughly square island some 22m x 24m giving an area very similar to that of the phase 1 island. The ditches are again of similar dimensions to those of the phase 1 moat, but it is the phase 2 moat that now dominates the site with its well-preserved island and water-filled ditches.

The geophysical survey, together with the discovery of pegged roof tile, both from the bridge footing trenches and from molehills, indicate the existence of substantial buildings on the island during this phase. Again, the few sherds of pottery recovered from the bridge footing, hint at a possible date in the 14th or 15th centuries for the phase 2 moat. This would, of course, make the phase 1 moat earlier in date, though how much so is impossible to say.

In any event, the main outflow from the phase 2 moat seems to have been cut across the phase 1 island, leaving the curious depression (fig 3, m) which has been partially obscured by dumping of material (fig 3, k) from a later cleaning of the moat. This phase 2 outflow would then have led into the, now dry, stream course (fig 3, s), which at one stage carried the main flow down the valley.

It is arguable that the wide ditch that now carries the stream from the modern sluice of the square moat to the culvert under the trackway, forms part of the remains of yet another phase of medieval works. If so, this would either have cut the phase 1 island in half, forming two small platforms or, in conjunction with the other ditches, have formed a large rectangular east west

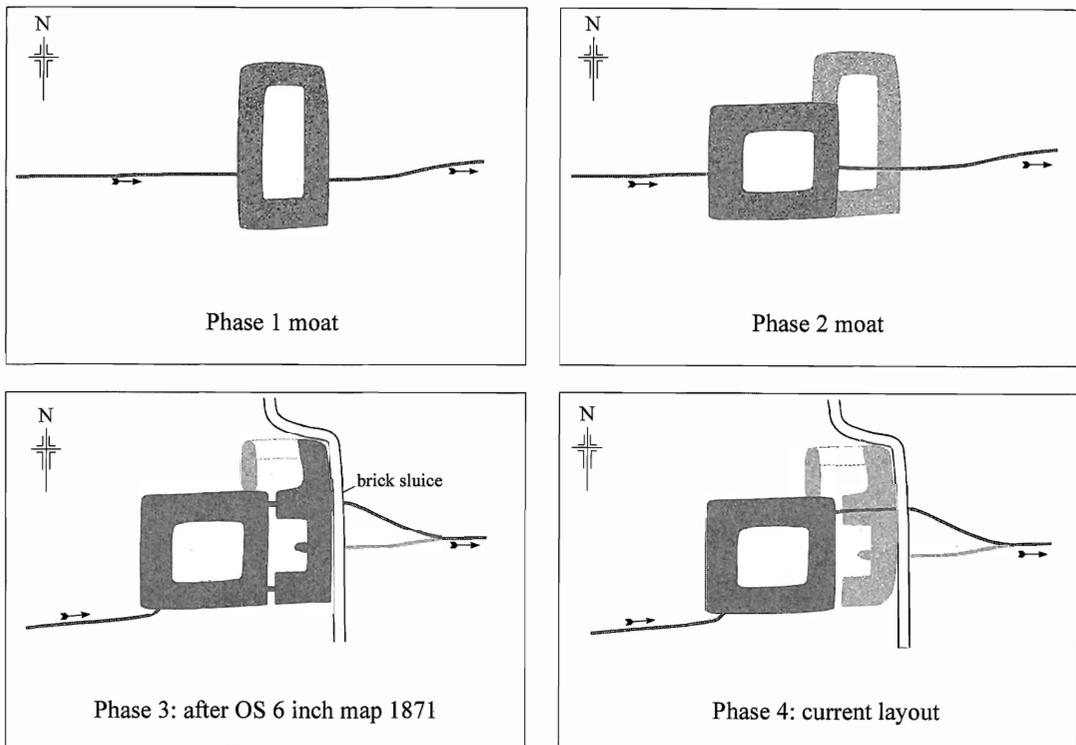


Fig 7 South Park Moat: phases 1 to 4

moat along the line of the valley. This would later have been effectively halved in area by the construction of the north–south cross ditch that now forms the eastern arm of the square moat.

This hypothesis, however, seems unlikely — though not completely impossible — given the downstream slope of the valley. The topography would have required the construction of a very substantial lower dam if a sufficient level of water was to have been maintained throughout the circuit of such a moat. The existing dam, parallel to the track, would not have been adequate to perform this function. Accordingly, for the purposes of this discussion, it will be assumed that the wide ditch now carrying the stream, as mentioned above, is the result of work in the 19th century and is linked with the brick sluice — both being intended to form a second water feature below the main moat.

While the historical evidence does not directly refer to the moat at South Park it does seem possible that, at least during the later phase, the moat was the site of the manor house of Ashurst or alternatively, though less likely, the lodge for the royal deer park of Witley.

The only other indication as to a possible use for the site comes with the discovery of the ceramic crucible fragments used for glassmaking. These were found in rabbit scrapes from the surface of both islands, but a single example also came from the recent clearance of the phase 2 ditch and frit and possible kiln furniture was recovered during the fieldwalking exercise. All this hints at glass production in the vicinity and may perhaps be linked with anomalies found by the late Dr A J Clark during a geophysical survey carried out downstream of the moated area (fig 3, u and v). The significance of the features is unclear, but Dr Clark was of the opinion that they might represent firing associated with a kiln. Whether this activity was contemporary with either phase of the moat is uncertain but the general area is well known for glassmaking in the medieval and Tudor periods (Kenyon 1967).

Whilst it is unknown when the phase 2 moat was finally abandoned, what does seem clear is that the next obvious phase of activity on the site came in the mid to late 19th century, with the construction of the present trackway that passes through the site. This skirts around the eastern ditch of the phase 1 moat and was intended to link Witley Park to the north with the then newly completed house at South Park. This latter, which still stands, is assumed to have been built to provide accommodation for weekend guests, as South Park now formed part of a large sporting estate owned at various times by people such as the Earl of Derby and Viscount Pirrie. Presumably at the same time, the ditches of the phase 2 moat were cleaned out and a brick sluice (fig 3, r) was constructed across the eroded outflow from the phase 1 ditch and sited to obtain the maximum depth of water in relation to the size of the sluice. This enabled both moats to be largely refilled with water as is shown on the OS map of 1871 (fig 7, phase 3). It is uncertain whether the terracing works to the north of the moats and the probable ponding features downstream of them were carried out at this time (fig 3, w). It is possible that the general area was used for the raising of game birds, as is hinted at by the name 'Duckhouse Moor' used on the tithe map to describe the area to the east of the track.

More recently, and since the sporting estate was broken up, the site has been used for small-scale agricultural outbuildings and for commercial dumping of building rubble (fig 3: q, n, t). As previously described, the site has now been cleared of overgrowth, is open to the public and its current state is shown in figure 7, phase 4.

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The finds referred to in the report have been deposited at Haslemere Museum (acc nos HA.8.117–23, HA.8.126–34 and HA.9.1) with the exception of the May and Jacobs brake shoe which is deposited at Guildford Museum (RB3942).

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 CP25: Court of Common Pleas, Feet of fines
 E13: Exchequer Rolls
 LR2: Land revenue, Miscellaneous books
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