

Sheffield Museum Excavations 1972-4



Excavation of Area B in 1972

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for the University of Sheffield
Department of Archaeology

Note on sources

The following report is based on the unpublished interim reports for 1972-4 in the Manor Lodge archive at Museums Sheffield. Also consulted were the published summary reports (Cherry 1973, 1974; Moorhouse 1973; Thorp 1975) listed in References at the end of the report. These sources are also available in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

The site record notebooks (volumes 6-12) in the Manor Lodge archive provided further detailed information.

Additional information came from the 1972 report on the resistivity survey by D.J.B. George and the faunal report written by J.M. Maltby *c.* 1977, both in the Manor Lodge Archive. The faunal report was read and re-evaluated in 2010 by Umberto Albarella of the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield.

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Acknowledgements

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I. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

With Sheffield Estates Department's proposal for landscaping the outer courtyard, excavation plans in that area were brought forward. This constitutes Phase III in the overall excavation plan, originally outlined prior to the first season of excavation in 1968 (see *Sheffield Museum Excavations 1968-70*).

A geophysical survey was conducted by the Estates Department prior to any archaeological investigation (see section **II. RESISTIVITY SURVEY**). On the basis of their results, four areas were selected as potential locations of sub-surface features. The 1972-4 seasons were designed to investigate three of these areas:

- Area "A" immediately in front of the Turret House
- Area "B" to the north of Manor Lane
- Area "C" close to the north end of the Long Gallery where Edward Blore in 1819 represented several farm structures in an illustration (Fig. 1)

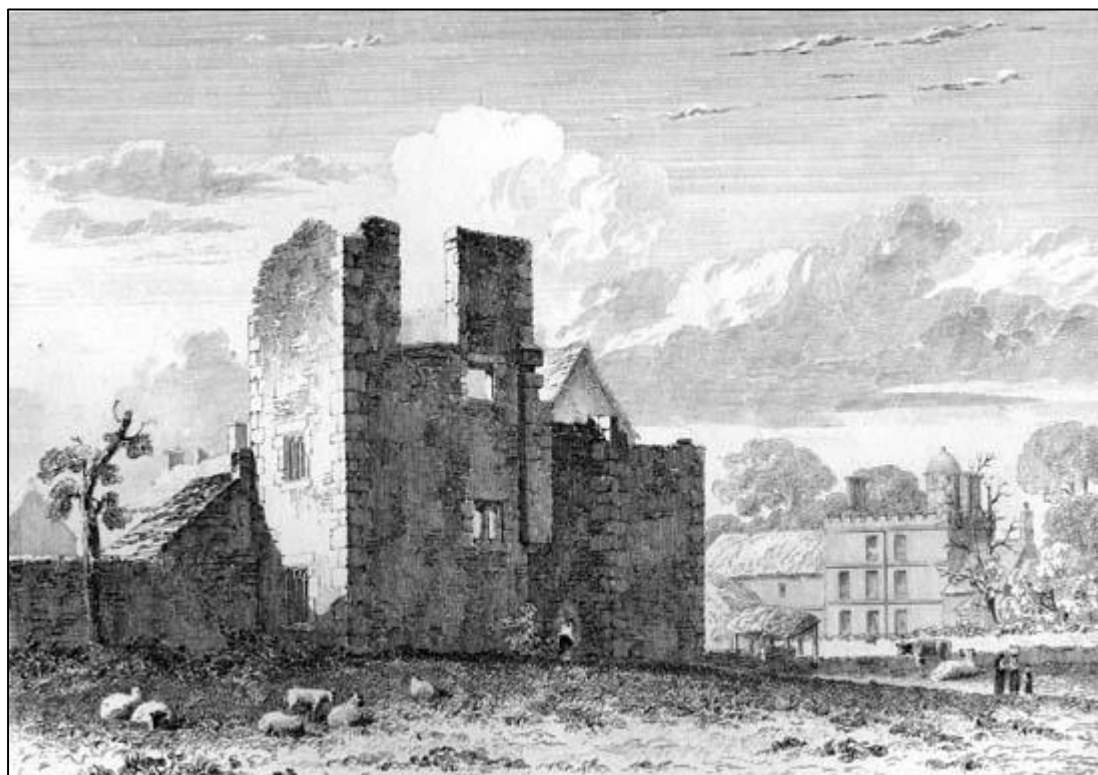


Fig. 1. Steel Engraving by Edward Blore (Hunter 1819, 191).

Several trenches were opened in these areas in 1972 (Fig. 2). Switching to a grid system, work continued in 1973 and 1974 to complete the investigation of the features discovered.

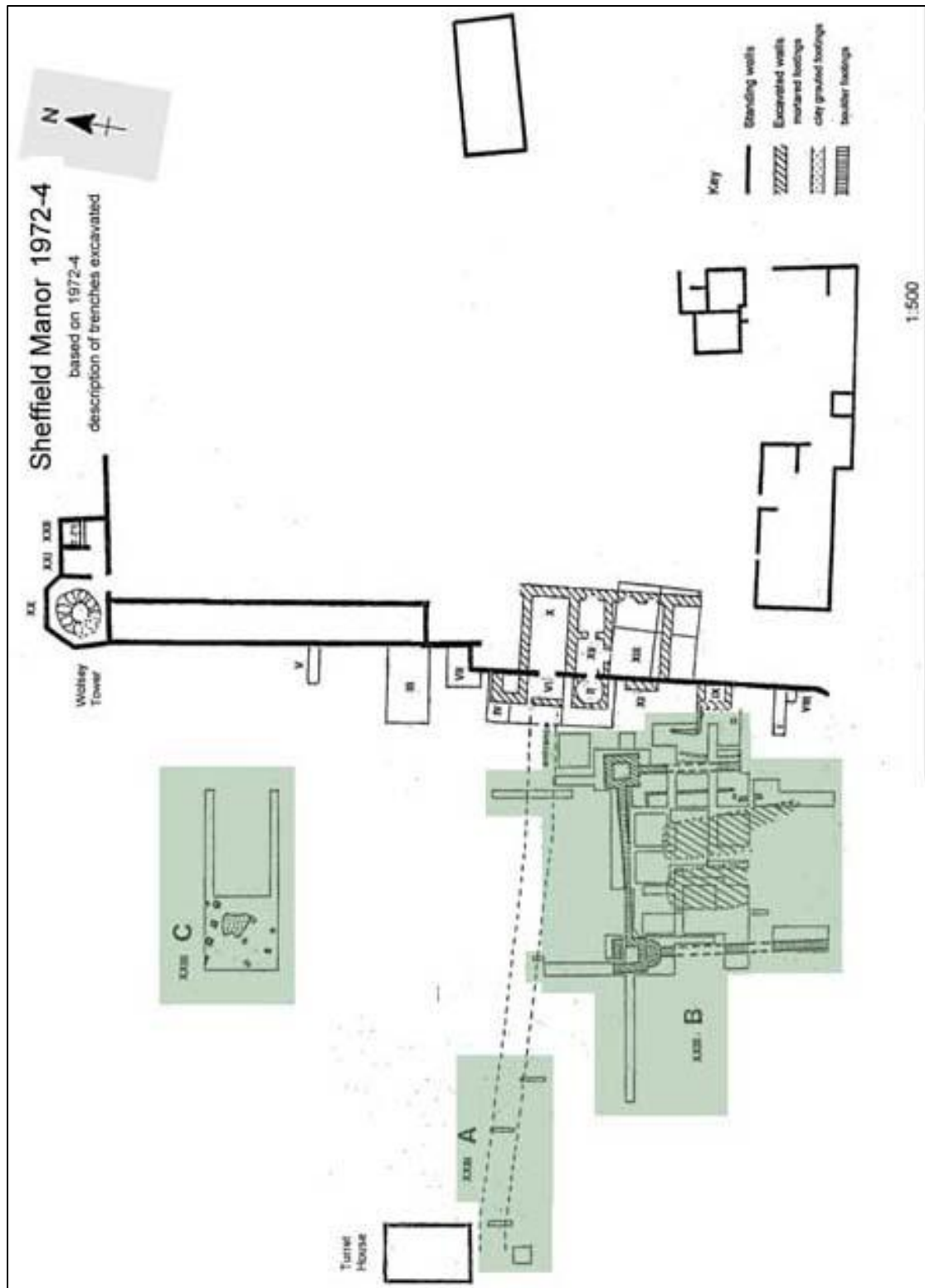


Fig. 2. Plan of Trenches 1972-4 (highlighted in green)

II. RESISTIVITY SURVEY

In the winter of 1971/72, the Sheffield Estates Surveyor's Department conducted a resistivity survey of the outer courtyard in advance of a landscaping proposal. The aim was to detect subsurface anomalies that might prove worthy of further investigation by excavation.

A total of 22, roughly north-south, traverses (or "lines") were walked, beginning in the west and moving to the east (see Fig. 4). A standard 2 feet electrode separation employed by the Wenner configuration was used. The resulting variations in apparent resistivity were presented in graphic form for each traverse (fig. 3). Peaks and troughs in the graph indicated marked irregularities.

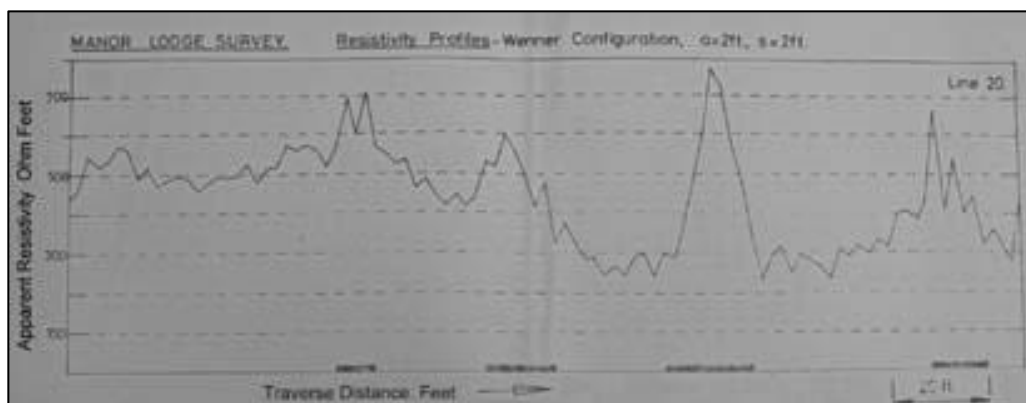
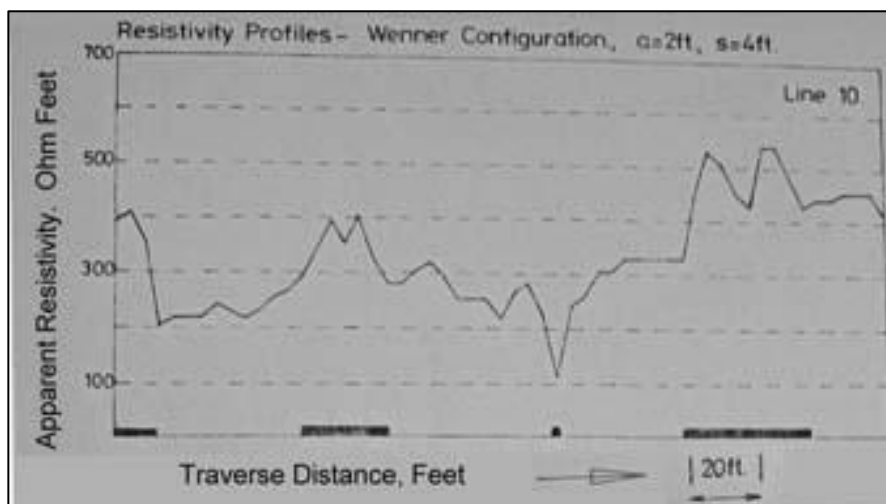


Fig. 3. Graphic representation of the resistivity along lines 10 (top) and 20 (bottom)

The observed profiles were then mapped to the site, showing them *in situ*. Where anomalies were grouped together, they were bounded into "areas". Four areas (A-D) were defined (Fig. 4).

Within these areas, at least 13 subsurface features were detected. The resistivity survey, therefore, recommended further investigation in the form of excavation.

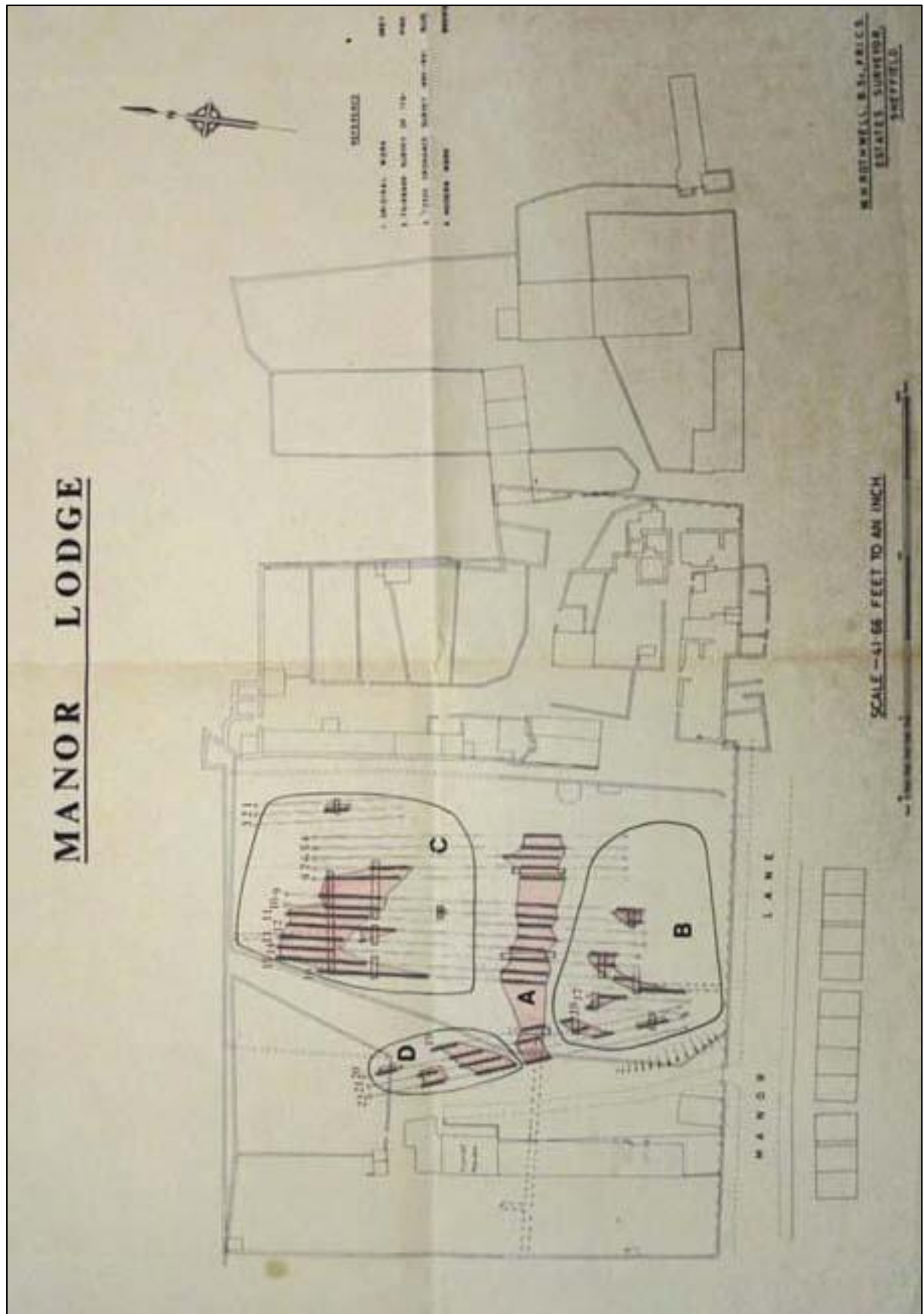


Fig. 4 Resistivity results and areas (A-D) defined with anomalies.
 The plan by the surveyor, D.J.B. George, of the Manor is based on the 1781 Fairbank survey..

III. 1972 SEASON

The fifth season of excavation took place in the outer courtyard between 26 June and 9 July 1972. The director was P. Beswick. Summary reports for the season were published in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* (Cherry 1973) and the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* (Moorhouse 1973).

The outer courtyard was termed "Site XXIII", following on from the sequence begun in 1971 with excavations in Wolsey's Tower at the north end of the Long Gallery. Three of the areas of anomalies detected by resistivity were investigated, each of which was sub-divided by trenches.

III.1 AREA LIST (See plan Fig. 2)

Area A

One test trench was set directly over an anomaly in line with the entrance to the Manor that had been excavated in 1969 (see *Sheffield Museum Excavations 1968-70*). The original paved road surface, 2.5m wide, was located. It had edging stones, making the total width of the causeway 4.5m wide with a drainage channel on the south side. Above this was evidence for possible re-surfacing in the late 18th century, using 18th-century kiln debris for the foundations. The road, however, does not appear in the 1781 survey by Fairbank (see Fig. 4) and it is presumed to have gone out of use by this time.

Area B

Four trenches were laid out in this area through a group of anomalies immediately south of the entrance road (see cover illustration). Numerous masonry wall footings and flagged floor of two square structures were uncovered.



Fig 5. Footing for a semi-circular tower

At the west end, the footing of one of the square structures, a presumed tower, was located with traces of walls extending both south (parallel to the present Manor) and east. The wall running to the east terminated in a second square structure, which had a semi-circular addition to its south end (Fig. 5). The footings for a masonry wall extended from this eastern “tower” to the south. Finds consisted of window glass and pottery of the 16th and 17th century. The structure is not in alignment with the main Manor building and, thus, thought to have been constructed earlier.

An excavation trench on the west end of Area B revealed the wall bounding the farm track that is shown in the 1781 survey. One of the programmes for the 1973 season was to explore further both this area and the remains of what may be the original 16th-century Manor house.

Area C

Three trenches were laid out in the area of a large anomaly to the east of the northern end of the Long Gallery. This consisted of two long trenches with a cutting (Trench C3) laid out in between (Fig. 6). A number of padstones and a cobbled floor were uncovered in C3 and adjacent parts of trenches C1 and C2. Four built squares of bricks with central sockets were located in a line, 2.2m apart. The line of brick settings may be associated with the same buildings as the floor. The structure seems to have been aligned along the farm track recorded in the Fairbank survey of 1781 (see Fig. 4). Finds indicate that the structure was probably the remains of an 18th-century farm building.



Fig. 6. Trenches in Area C

IV. 1973 SEASON

Work continued in the outer courtyard for the sixth season of excavation, from 2 July until 25 July with several days break due to extensive rain and subsequent flooding. Pauline Beswick directed the excavation. Summary reports appeared in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* (Cherry 1974) and the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* (Thorpe 1974).

In 1973 there was a switch to a 10m square grid system. Fig. 7 shows the key for the outer courtyard area. The trench reference number now employed the scheme of SM[year]/XXIII/[square number]. For multiple trenches in a single square, the prefix A, B, C etc. was added to the square number.

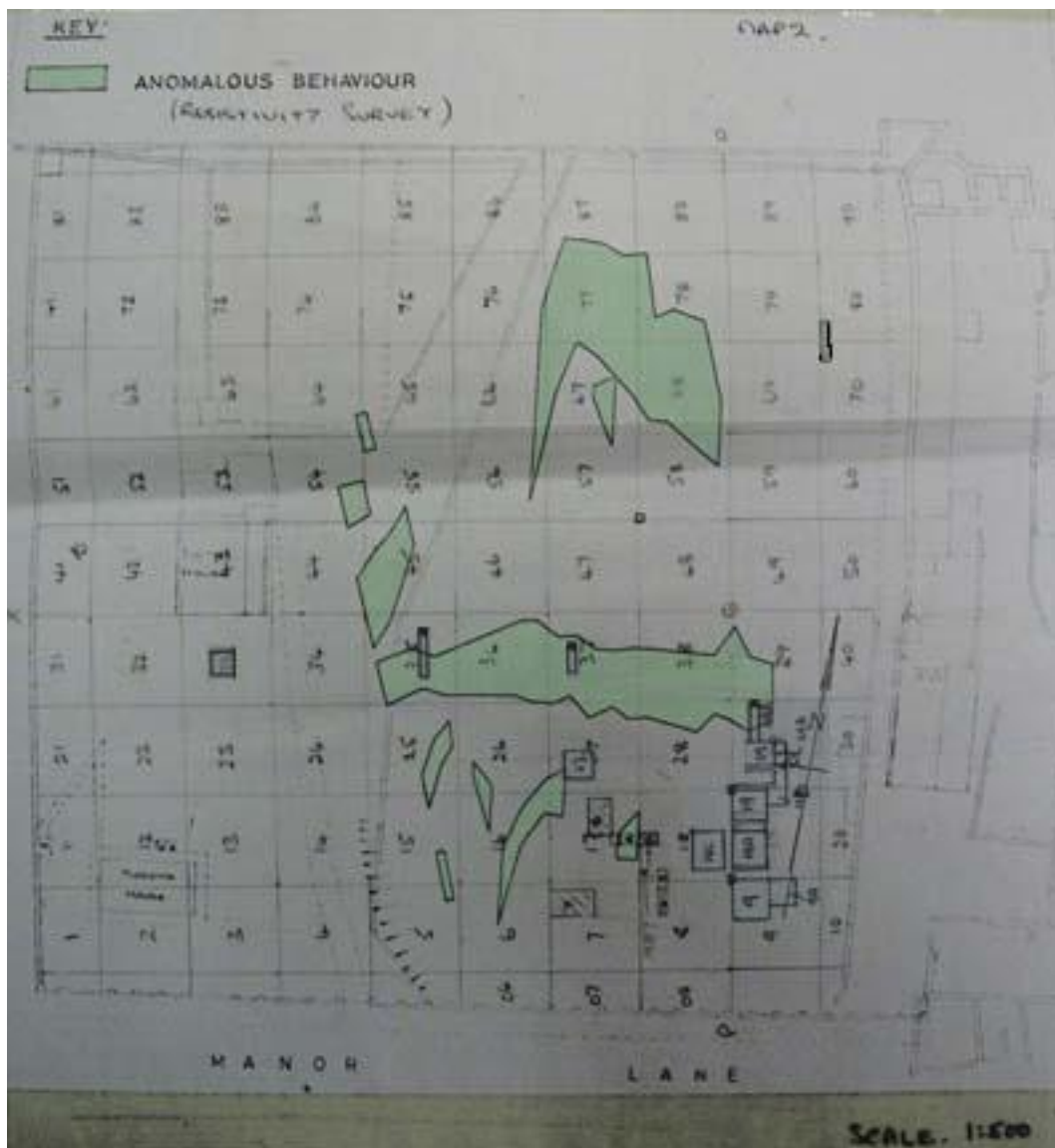


Fig. 7. Plan showing the grid system over the resistivity survey's areas of anomalous behaviour and the series of trenches laid in the grid in 1973 (compiled from Site Record 1973 vol. 8, map 2 and vol. 10, map 2).

IV. AREA LIST (See plan Fig. 2)

Area A

In Area A, the aim was to establish the route of the entrance road. A series of test trenches were laid out to confirm the line of the road in grid squares SM73/XXIII/33, 35 and 37 (see Fig. 7). Despite considerable disturbance from 18th- and 19th-century building activity near the Turret House that cut into the road surface, it was established that the road ran along side the south wall of the house. In the south wall of the Turret House there were slots up to the level of the first string course that suggest a gate was positioned across the road here. This, perhaps, suggested that the Turret House served as a gatehouse.

Area B

In Area B the structures partly uncovered were to be further explored. A series of trenches were laid out in the grid to establish the character of the stone footings of the three walls and the two corner towers. Work concentrated in grid squares SM/XXIII/7-9 and SM/XXIII/17-19 with additional trenches in grid squares 27 and 29 (bordering on Area A – see Fig. 7).

The northwest 4m-square tower was found to be associated with a complex series of drains, the main one probably related to a garderobe. Secondary drains and pipe channels, which ran inside the structure from the tower, may have been for distributing rainwater that fell from the roof. The tower's semi-circular attachment was shown to be a later addition.

The towers and the west wall only have two to three courses of stonework, suggesting a careful and systematic demolition of the building. In addition, the other two walls consisted of mortar-filled robber trenches. Roof slates associated with the demolition material and an exterior "drip" channel along the southern portion of the east wall demonstrate that the structure was at one time roofed. Window glass, Cistercian ware and Midlands Yellow-ware and other finds were also found in the demolition material. The finds indicate that the structure had been demolished in the mid- to late-19th century, in use in the early part of the 16th century, but no evidence was found from its building and early occupation.

The interior of the structure displayed few features. A timber sill slot, parallel and 2.5m distant from the east wall, was possibly the remains of an interior partition wall. Another possible interior partition consisting of a narrow stone wall was found near the south end of the timber slot. A large pit dug into the clay subsoil was also discovered in the west end of the structure, possibly dug to extract clay. The fill of the pit contained large amounts of brick – differing from the demolition fill. Associated finds from the pit suggest that it was dug only shortly after demolition and that it served as a depository for builder's rubble when the later Tudor structure was being constructed.

Area C

Although it had been recommended at the end of the previous season that a test trench be laid in this area, to test the resistivity survey results and to locate the full extent of the farm structures, no work was carried out in this area in 1973.

V. 1974 SEASON

The seventh season of excavation took place between 1 July and 21 July 1974, directed by Pauline Beswick. The work concentrated on three locations in Area B in order to complete the investigations of the new building discovered there. A Summary of the 1974 season was published in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* (Thorp 1975).

V.1 AREA LIST (See plan Fig. 2)

Area B

The south wall of the building was not discovered in either of the previous seasons' work and was presumed to be under Manor Lane. Therefore, two trenches were cut into the high modern banking along Manor Lane. Footings of the west wall were discovered to continue uninterrupted under Manor Lane, indicating that the building was rectangular (over 25m long, N-S) and not square. No traces of the southern wall were detected nor were any interior features.

The interior of the structure was further investigated. A second pit (5 x 12m and 1.5m deep) was discovered 1.5m away from the one found in 1973. The fill was similar to that of the first pit – primarily building debris and 16th-century pottery. This indicates that both pits were deliberately (and probably quickly) filled. In addition, the presence of the second pit suggests that these may have been more than simply pits excavated for clay. It has been suggested that they were large “soakaways” or possibly trenches for ornamental watercourses.

Trenches were opened in the area between the east wall of the new structure and the west front of the existing main house to establish the relationship between the two buildings. Trenches joined up with the 1969 Trench IX. It was shown that a small rectangular structure (3.5m x 2.5m) had been added to the main house in the middle of the 16th century. Associated with this were sockets of a post and close-set timber fence. A damaged stone covering was found in between the “fence” and the main house and a gap in the west front at this point suggests a porch with steps to an entrance and a fenced pathway. The “drip channel” discovered in 1973 was demonstrated to be associated with this entrance of the main manor house and not the new structure.

VI. FAUNAL REPORT

The following section is based on J.M. Maltby's unpublished report of the animal bones from the 1971-1974 excavations written c. 1977-80. With the exception of a small amount of material from a sealed deposit in the garderobe shaft associated with 18th-century domestic waste connected with the pottery kiln (group 10), the remainder of the material examined (groups 1-9) is from the southern half of the outer courtyard, Area B excavated from 1972-4.

Of the 1972-4 material, only three deposits from Area B were from sealed, uncontaminated, deposits (deposit groups 5, 8 and 9). Deposit 5 was from the two large pits dug into the clay and probably filled in the late 16th century. Deposit 8 was a large bone deposit in the northwest corner of the structure that

may be associated with the early 16th-century hunting lodge. Deposit 9 consisted of material from individual features throughout the structure, from postholes, pipe channels, drains, floor deposits, etc. dating to the early and mid 16th century with one feature from the 17th century. Deposit 7 may also be associated with the early 16th-century hunting lodge, but some contamination was possibly due to site levelling. Most of remaining deposits (1-4 and 6) were in disturbed levels; dates ranged from the 16th to 19th century.

Maltby broke these deposits down into sample groups, according to date:

- (i) Early 16th century; deposit groups 7, 8, 9 (B, E, G, J., K and L)
- (ii) Mid- to Late 16th century; deposit groups 6, 9 (A, C, D and H)
- (iii) Late 16th century; deposit group 5
- (iv) Mostly 17th century; deposits 4, 9F
- (v) Mostly 18th-19th century; deposits 2, 3
- (vi) Early 18th century; deposit 10

Over five thousand bone fragments were studied in the report, of which about 90 were badly burnt. However, bone preservation was generally good. None of the areas had been sieved, eliminating the possible recovery of smaller bones or bones of small animals such as birds and fish. It was pointed out that the excavation technique favoured the recovery of the bones of larger mammals. In addition, the overall sample – for the range of dates – is small, limiting the conclusions that can be drawn from this material.

Two quantitative analysis methods were used: 1) count of each individual fragment, 2) calculation of the minimum number of individuals represented by the fragments of each species. The first method favours large mammals as their butchered remains result in a larger number of fragments than smaller animals. The second method, minimum numbers, is not as effective with small samples. Several of the deposits were quite small, thus limiting the effectiveness of this method.

Altogether a total number of twelve species of mammals were identified. Sheep and goat being difficult to separate were categorized as caprine, although it is unlikely that there were many goat bones. Unidentifiable ribs and vertebrae were separated into large and small categories. The large category comprised cattle, horse, red deer and the small comprised pig, caprine, fallow and roe deer. Cattle and caprine dominated the identifiable mammal groups and most of the unidentifiable large and small category bones might well have belonged to one of these two mammal groups. Using the largest deposits – (i) early 16th century and (v) mostly 18th century – chronological comparisons between the samples showed that there was a higher proportion of caprine in the later deposits and fewer cattle than the earlier deposits, perhaps reflecting a change in dietary preference. Similarly, a cultural rather than a taphonomic explanation may account for the very low percentage of pig bones, in that people were choosing to have less pig in the diet. Other domestic animals – horse, dog and cat – were also poorly preserved.

Of the wild mammals, fallow and red deer represented between (approximately) 7.5 and 20% of the mammal fragments in 16th-century deposits, but were completely absent in the later deposits. A high percentage of the deer bones were hind limb fragments, typical of a manor assemblage, representing the highest status meat cut. Other wild animals – roe deer, rabbit and pine marten – were found in small numbers deposits dating from the 16th to 19th centuries.

A total number of 153 fragments of bird bones were recovered during the 1971-1974 excavations. Domestic fowl predominated although a number of game birds were also identified. The fish bones were not analysed.

Maltby finished his report with a caution that any conclusions drawn from such a small sample may be unreliable. However, the contrast between the 16th-century deposits of the hunting lodge in Area B and the later deposits illustrate the diverse nature of the faunal samples. Also, he points out that the assemblage from a high-status manor may not have been typical of domestic deposits in the surrounding area and, therefore, do not provide a good indication of general husbandry practices. The proportion of deer in the deposits was quite high, however, which was an expected phenomenon for an active hunting lodge.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of the outer courtyard yielded a number of significant results. The following are conclusions drawn from the 1972-4 investigations:

- Comparison of excavated features with resistivity results showed that geophysics only indicated archaeological features in Area A, the area of the entrance road to the Manor located only 0.2m below ground surface above the surface of clay. The clay surface, which retains water, in Area B overlay the significant archaeological features – most of which had not been detected by the resistivity. The large anomaly in Area C was accounted for by a thin layer of topsoil with the large amounts of ash and clinker in the level below. It was concluded that the resistivity survey could not be used reliably as an indicator of archaeological activity.
- The most significant find of the excavations in the outer courtyard was the discovery of a towered structure in Area B. This may be the hunting lodge built in Sheffield Park around 1480 (Potter and Walton 1944-50, 21). This structure was in use in the early 16th century and presumed to be the predecessor to the main Manor building that was constructed in 1525. Dating evidence from the finds confirm that it pre-dated the main Manor building. The dimensions of the Area B structure were too large to be a hall type building and it was suggested that the type of building would have been arranged around a courtyard or was a tower house.
- The demolition of the outer courtyard structure seems to have taken place in the late 16th century, at the time when the southern end of the west wing of the main house was rebuilt (i.e. 1580s).

- Evidence from the faunal report was inconclusive, although the assemblage highlighted a number of possible points. There may have been a change in dietary preference between the 16th and the 17th century – from cattle to caprine. Additionally, a high proportion of deer bones were present in deposits, reflecting the use of the site as a high-status hunting lodge.
- The entrance road to the Manor (Area A) was traced, and the Turret House possibly acted as a gatehouse.
- In Area C 18th-century farm structures were located in alignment with the farm track shown on the 1781 Fairbank survey.

VIII. REFERENCES

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