

EXCAVATIONS IN THE MOATED AREA NEAR TUDOR COURT, HANWORTH, MIDDLESEX

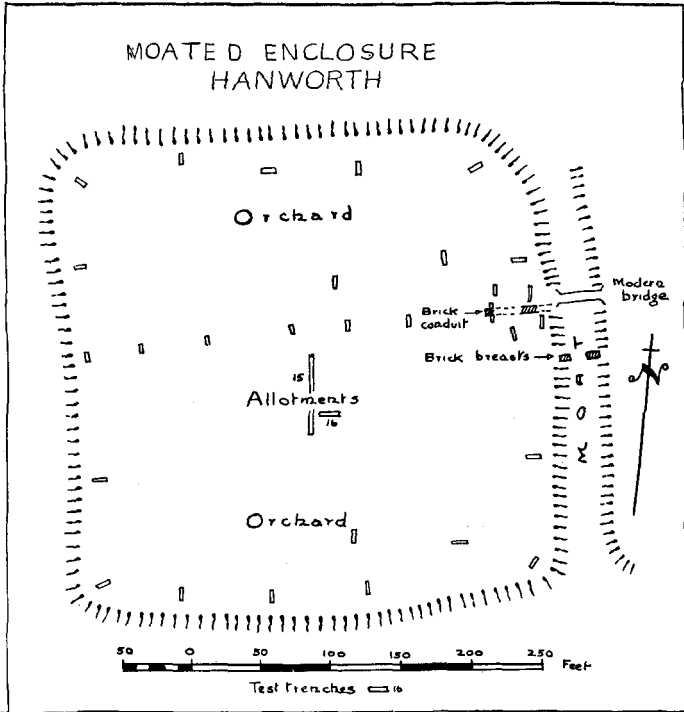
By GROUP CAPTAIN G. M. KNOCKER

The village of Hanworth, now a built-up area, lies some four miles west-north-west of Hampton Court. Close to the rebuilt 14th century church stands Tudor Court, a modern building constructed on the remains of the new wing of the Manor built by Sir Francis Cottington in 1629. About 200 yards west of Tudor Court is a nearly square area of some $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres enclosed by a water filled moat. This "island" was planted with fruit trees, the centre being open and used as allotment gardens and pig sties. Consequent upon the sale of the property by Mrs. B. Mackenzie to the General Housing Coy., Ltd., for development as a housing estate, the writer was instructed in March, 1955, by the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Works, to carry out excavations with the object of discovering whether there were any remains of buildings on the "island" and, if possible, of dating it. The site has now been largely built over.

It is thought that no manor or other substantial building stood within the moat. A brick conduit runs at angle for a distance of 56 feet or slightly more from the bridge. The bricks composing this structure were red in colour, measuring 9 in. x $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. x 2 in. It is understood that bricks of this size were in use from late Tudor times until the middle of the 19th century. Little or no pottery was found other than fragments of modern white or coloured ware, on or near the surface.

Small finds were limited to an iron hook, perhaps a flesh hook and a disc of thin bronze about the size of a halfpenny bearing traces of dotted linear decoration. Both of these were surface finds. An earlier bridge may have spanned the moat 40 feet south of the present bridge but careful probing to a depth of 4 feet west of this area showed no indication of there having been a building or gatehouse associated with it. There are no literary references which can be said with assurance to refer to the moat or the island. It is conceivable that this large moat, 48 feet across, was dug in order to enclose a fortified building which for some reason was never erected and that the island was subsequently used as a stud farm by Henry VIII and as a game enclosure by Sir Francis Cottington in the 17th century. It would seem unlikely that such a large moat would

have been dug for this purpose alone. It is remarkable that there remains no trace of a bank on either side of the moat, so that the disposal of the considerable spoil from the latter must remain a matter for speculation.



Study of an air photograph, taken in the month of May, some years ago, failed to reveal any signs of buildings within the moat, other than possible lightly constructed huts, perhaps used as stables, or connected with Sir Francis Cottington's game establishment.