



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services

An Archaeological
Watching Brief
at Priory Cottage
Lewes
East Sussex

TQ 4126 0948

Project Number 2005/08/01

by
Chris Butler

November 2005

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out in August 2005 during the construction of an extension at the side of Priory Cottage, Lewes, due to its location near the possible boundary wall of the demolished Medieval Cluniac Priory of St Pancras.

A number of Medieval features were located during the watching brief, including two walls, one still retaining a trace of a wooden sill beam, rubbish pits and the base of an oven or kiln. A large assemblage of Medieval pottery, building materials and animal bone was recovered. The evidence suggests that one or more buildings, probably of a domestic nature, were located within the Priory precinct during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Chris Butler MIFA

Archaeological Services

Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Archaeological & Historical Background
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology
- 4.0 Results
- 5.0 Finds
- 6.0 Discussion
- 7.0 Acknowledgements
- 8.0 References

Figures:

- Fig. 1 Site Location Plan
- Fig. 2 Plan of the Priory
- Fig. 3 Site Plan
- Fig. 4 Plan of the Excavations
- Fig. 5 Sections

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr Ivan Griffiths to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of an extension to the rear of Priory Cottage, Lewes (TQ 4126 0948).
- 1.2** Priory Cottage is located in Cockshut Lane, Southover, Lewes (Fig. 1), and occupies a plot that was probably originally within the precinct of the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras. The cottage that currently occupies the plot was built in the 1850's, and is of sandstone block and flint construction with a tiled roof. Many of the sandstone blocks may have originally derived from the demolished Priory. A lean-to structure, of unknown date, against the north wall of the Cottage had been demolished, leaving a concrete floor and wall foundations.
- 1.3** A high wall occupies the west side of the plot and butts against the cottage (Fig. 2). This is constructed from flint nodules, some of which have been knapped, worked sandstone blocks, many probably re-used from the Priory, and occasional bricks, all bonded with a creamy coloured mortar with grit inclusions. Later repairs have been bonded with grey cement. This wall is on the line of the west boundary of the Priory, and its lower courses may be of Medieval date.
- 1.4** The north boundary wall of the plot is built of flint in regular courses, bonded in the same creamy mortar as the west wall. It has a brick built terminal buttress at its east end. A covered culvert runs along the south side of this wall and through a brick built arch in the west wall in the north-west corner. None of these features could be dated.
- 1.5** The British Geological Survey map (Sheet 319) indicate that the site lies on the alluvium of the Lower Ouse Valley, close to head deposits which lie immediately to the north of the site.
- 1.6** An application had been submitted for planning permission for the construction of a new extension, and the planning consent had been granted by Lewes District Council (being the local planning authority). However, given the archaeological sensitivity of the development site, an archaeological planning condition requiring a recording brief was attached to the consent, and therefore the County Archaeologist requested that a watching brief be undertaken.
- 1.7** The fieldwork took place on the 9th and 10th August 2005, and was undertaken by Chris Butler, assisted by Liza Stewart on the first day.

2. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 2.1** The site is situated in the historic and archaeologically sensitive town of Lewes. Priory Cottage is located on the western edge and within the precinct of the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras, although it does not lie within the area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Fig. 1).
- 2.2** The Cluniac Priory of St Pancras was founded by William de Warenne between 1078 and 1082, and may have been located on the site of an earlier Saxon monastic complex (Lewis *et al.* 1987). The Priory featured prominently in the Battle of Lewes 1264 as the Kings army was encamped there before the battle (Fleming 1999). The Priory subsequently became one of the largest monastic centres in southern England by the time of the Dissolution (Fig. 2).
- 2.3** Commencing in 1538, the Priory was systematically demolished, however much of this task was left to nature and opportunist scavengers who removed the building stone for use elsewhere (Anderson 1989). In 1846 the Priory site was bisected by the Lewes-Brighton railway line, which prompted the first of numerous archaeological excavations (Salzman 1940).
- 2.4** The earliest excavation was carried out in advance of the construction of the railway line (Lower 1847). This was followed by unpublished excavations carried out by John Blaker at the western end of the church around 1850, followed by other sporadic excavations throughout the mid-19th century. William St John Hope (1886 and 1906) carried out excavations which finished in 1902, and in the same year Nicholas Brakspear discovered the remains of the circular lavatorium on the south side of the Cloister. Local archaeologist Richard Lewis carried out the most recent excavations on the Priory, between 1969 and 1982 (Lyne 1997).
- 2.5** In 1998 a watching brief was undertaken during the construction of an extension at the Southdown Club which is located immediately to the south of Priory Cottage. A number of walls, possibly of Medieval date, were discovered during this work (Griffin 2000).

3. Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** The ground surface over the whole site was reduced in spits using a 360° mini-digger under the direction of the author, and the spoil was temporarily dumped close to the site for later removal. On encountering archaeological features and deposits, sufficient time was allowed for them to be investigated and recorded.

- 3.2** Initially it was not possible to reduce the ground level in the south-west part of the site due to the presence of the wall foundations and floor of the lean-to structure. After recording, these features were removed and the ground reduced to the same level as the remainder of the site.
- 3.3** Deeper foundation trenches were required on the south side to underpin the wall foundations of Priory Cottage, and these were excavated with the mini-digger and by hand in the presence of the author. To allow the mini-digger access to this, an earthen ramp was constructed on the eastern side of the site using spoil. This was not due to be removed until a later date, when deeper foundation trenches would be excavated on the three remaining sides. It had already been determined that there were no additional features that could be disturbed on the west and north sides, but it was not possible to be certain that features would not be disturbed on the east side of the site as this part had not been fully exposed.
- 3.4** The excavation was carried out under the direction of the author, and wherever possible the soil was removed in spits. On encountering possible archaeological deposits, the surface was cleaned and subsequent soil was removed more carefully with a trowel. The spoil was sifted through prior to being removed offsite, and a metal detector was also used.
- 3.5** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.6** A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services and, after any further analysis, will be offered to Lewes Museum. A site reference of PCL05 has been allocated.

4. Results

- 4.1** The garden topsoil was a loose dark brown sandy loam with rare chalk fragments, charcoal pieces and flecks, roots and occasional pieces of building material and flint (Context **1**). This formed a consistent layer across the whole of the site normally to a depth of 350mm, but extending to a maximum depth of 700mm in places. This layer contained a few pieces of residual Medieval pottery, some Post Medieval pottery and a range of other artefacts.
- 4.2** Below Context **1** was a firm dark grey-brown stiff sandy loam and ash layer (Context **2**), which included brick and tile fragments (5%), mortar and slate pieces, and charcoal flecks. This layer was c.200mm in depth, with most of the building material lying at its base and immediately on top of the underlying Context **3**. Context **2** contained a few sherds of mid 13th to mid 14th century pottery, together with some animal bone fragments and pieces of building material.

- 4.3** Context **3** was a thin firm mid grey-brown silty clay loam deposit approximately 30mm thick containing chalk and charcoal pieces and flecks, and brick and tile fragments, which covered most of the western part of the site. It contained numerous oyster shells, animal bone and sherds of mid 13th to mid 14th century pottery. A similar layer of soil in the south-east part of the site was given a separate context number (Context **9**).
- 4.4** In the south-west part of the site, the foundation wall (Context **6**) for the lean-to structure was still extant. This was 350mm wide and 500mm high, and comprised predominantly sandstone blocks (square cut to approximately 300mm) mixed with smaller quantities of flint nodules to 200mm, brick fragments to 100mm and chalk pieces to 150mm, the latter mainly being used as in-fill. These were bonded with a yellow mortar with small rounded grit inclusions. At ground level the structure was capped with a mid grey concrete layer. This structure cut through Contexts **2**, **3** and **8**, but was above Contexts **4**, **5**, **9** and **17**.
- 4.5** The lean-to foundation wall butted up to, but was not bonded to, the foundation wall of Priory Cottage. The cottage foundations were exposed along its north wall, and were constructed of irregular and square-cut sandstone blocks bonded with a mid grey mortar with small rounded pebble inclusions (Context **7**). At the east end of the cottage the footings were deeper, but on a slightly different alignment to the cottage wall. The deeper footings stop some 4.5 metres from the west end of the cottage, and from here to the west end are much more shallow. As a result of this the west end of the cottage has suffered from subsidence. A single sherd of Post Medieval stoneware pottery was found in the cottage footings.
- 4.6** Below Context **3** was an irregular shaped patch of stiff yellow-brown silty clay (Context **4**) approximately 2.5m by 2m in size, with orange-red fired clay patches, containing charcoal and chalk flecks. After further cleaning, this turned out to be the upper surface of the underlying oven/kiln structure (Context **17**). No artefacts were recovered from Context **4**.
- 4.7** Context **17** was a crescent-shaped orange-red fired clay structure approximately 1 x 1m in size and 80mm high, with pieces of sandstone (up to 150mm in size) and smaller flint pieces bonded into its structure (Figs. 4 and 5). Surrounding the structure and partly underlying and bonded to it was less well-fired yellow-brown clay with patches of more highly fired orange-red clay within it. The entire area covered by this structure measured some 1.5 x 1.5m, and was likely to have been an oven or kiln. The structure lay directly on top of the chalk floor (Context **19**). A single sherd of 13th to mid 14th century pottery and some fragments of tile were found in Context **17**.
- 4.8** Below Context **3** and partly enclosing Contexts **4** and **17** on the north side was a firm mid grey to olive-brown silty clay, containing charcoal pieces and flecks, chalk flecks and burnt clay fragments (Context **5**). A similar mid grey layer, which also included irregular flint pieces and small flint pebbles (Context **23**), was found around the west side of Context **17**, where it extended below Context **24**. Four sherds of 13th to mid 14th century pottery and two fragments of animal bone were found in Context **23**, while no artefacts were found in Context **5**.

- 4.9** On the east side of the oven/kiln structure (Context **17**) was a linear feature 300mm wide orientated north-south comprising a firm light yellow to buff sandy mortar with a few chalk pieces to 50mm, and a few chalk and fired clay flecks (Context **8**). This feature butts against Wall **18** at its south end and then extends northwards for some two metres before petering out. At 900mm from its south end, a 350mm wide linear adjunct extends westwards and then curves to the north where it continues as a linear feature comprising small chalk pieces bonded in an olive-brown silty clay (Context **25**) which then curves back enclosing the oven/kiln on the north side, before butting up against Context **24** on the west side (Fig. 4). These two features are likely to be the remnant of a wall footing that enclosed the oven/kiln.
- 4.10** Context **24** comprised an area of buff coloured chalky mortar with chalk pieces (10%) up to 80mm in size, which extends from Wall **18** on the south side to Context **25** on the north side, and continues outside the trench on the west side. It butts against the oven/kiln structure (Context **17**) on its east side, and overlies Context **23** (Fig. 4). It is not clear whether this is a remnant of a floor, or the footing for a wall or other structure.
- 4.11** Once the lean-to foundation wall (Context **6**) had been removed, it was possible to excavate the area between this and the north wall of Priory Cottage. Contexts **2** and **3** were removed by machine, and below Context **3** an east-west orientated wall (Wall **18**) was uncovered (Fig. 4). This wall was 750mm wide, and was constructed from cut pieces of sandstone, the largest of which were on its north edge, whilst smaller pieces were used for the rest of its construction. A few flint nodules had also been incorporated into its structure. The stones and flints were bonded with an off-white chalky mortar with chalk and fired clay inclusions. A single course of the wall had survived and it appeared to be sitting on top of a base of mortar and smaller sandstone pieces (Fig. 5). The wall survives for a length of 1.25m at the west end of the trench, and appears to extend further west beyond the edge of the trench to meet the boundary wall, although this could not be confirmed. To the east the wall has been largely robbed-out, although a few isolated pieces of cut sandstone were still present in-situ. However, its projected course could be seen as both the oven/kiln structure and Context **8** butted against its north edge.
- 4.12** Wall **18** was sitting partly on top of the chalk floor (Context **19**). This floor comprised a compact layer of chalk pieces (ranging in size between 50mm and 120mm), with occasional flecks of fired clay, bonded in a mid grey silty clay. The floor extended northwards from below Wall **18** (it was not present on the south side of Wall **18**) with the oven/kiln and structures **8/25** above it. Below Wall **18** on its south side, and extending east and south, was a loose dark grey-brown sandy clay loam containing fragments of building material (tile, sandstone pieces, slate and flint) together with occasional chalk flecks (Context **15**). This layer contained numerous sherds of mid 13th to mid 14th century pottery and animal bone fragments.
- 4.13** Context **15** was above and around a second east-west aligned wall, although this was at a much lower level, and therefore stratigraphically earlier, than Wall **18** (Fig. 5). This earlier wall (Wall **16**) comprised a footing of cut sandstone blocks (varying from 200 to 400mm in length and 200mm wide), one course high and a single block width. Towards the west end of this wall there were small pieces of sandstone instead of the larger blocks, and occasional

gaps. The sandstone footing stones had no bonding apart from the dark grey-brown silty clay loam that had filled the small gaps between the stones. Above the sandstone blocks were the fragmentary remains of a wooden beam. Where it survived at the west end, and from the void left by its decay, the wooden beam could be estimated as having originally been *c.*200x200mm square. This wall could not be followed for its entire length into the south-west corner of the site, and it extended outside the area excavated on the east side of the site. A sample of wood was retained for further analysis.

- 4.14** Below Context **3** on the east side of the site was a shallow feature (Cut **12**). This feature had a gradually sloping west side that begins on the east side of Context **8**, and may also cut into the east edge of Context **19** (Fig. 4). Its profile changes into a flattish bottom with an overall depth of 400mm and the cut extends outside the trench on the east and north-east sides of the site, so it was not possible to determine its full extent. A narrow section was excavated through it (Fig. 5), and it was found to have an upper fill of a loose mid-grey sandy loam containing frequent gritty mortar pieces, together with tile fragments, chalk mortar flecks, and charcoal flecks (Context **13**). Below this was a primary fill of a firm dark grey to black sandy loam with tile pieces, together with small fired-clay pieces, charcoal and chalk flecks (Context **14**). This lower layer extends to the surface of the feature at the west end, where it directly underlies Context **3**. The fills of Cut **12** included numerous sherds of mid 13th to mid 14th century pottery and animal bone fragments, and a single lead token was found in the bottom of the cut.
- 4.15** This cut feature continued south where a further section was excavated through it (Cut **10**). It was found to be much deeper and had steeper sides here; its south edge was unclear, but may have been formed by Wall **16**. The main fill was a loose dark grey-black sandy loam with tile fragments, occasional flint and chalk pieces, together with charcoal and chalk mortar flecks (Context **11**). This fill was similar to Context **14**, and was partly overlain by Context **13** on the northern edge of the excavated section. Context **11** produced numerous sherds of mid 13th to mid 14th century pottery and animal bone fragments, together with a small number of residual earlier 13th century pottery sherds.
- 4.16** In the north-west corner of the trench a pit (Cut **20**) had been cut through the floor Context **19** (Fig. 4). The pit had steep, almost vertical, sides that rounded into a flattish bottom with an overall depth of 550mm (Fig. 5). The pit extended outside the trench on the west and north sides so its full extent could not be determined. It had a single fill of a loose mid grey sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles, occasional irregular flint and chalk pieces, together with tile and slate fragments, and chalk and charcoal flecks (Context **22**). Sherds of late 13th to late 14th century pottery were recovered from the fill, together with animal bone and a fallow deer antler. A small shallow dish-shaped tree root hollow filled with a mid red-brown loose sandy loam was cut into the top of the pit (Cut **21**).
- 4.17** There were no other features noted during the watching brief.

5. Finds

5.1 The excavation produced a large assemblage of finds, which are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1

| Context | Pottery | CBM | Stone | Animal bone | Other | Spot date |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| Spoil | 1/26g | - | - | - | Glass 1/10g Metal 3/64g Flint 1/38g | m C14th – e 15th |
| U/s Possibly 3 | - | - | Horsham stone 1/1,528g | - | Glass 5/721g | - |
| 1 | 33/433g Clay pipe 2/5g | Peg tile 5/182g | Horsham stone 2/31g West Country slate 1/12g | Bone 9/63g | Iron 2/107g Flint 2/36g | Mixed. m C13th – 19th |
| 2 | 4/31g | Peg tile 9/817g Floor tile 1/326g | - | Bone 3/31g Oyster 4/110g | Iron 3/12g Flint 1/7g | m C13th – m 14th |
| 3 | 28/405g | Peg tile 8/314g | Horsham stone 1/3g West Country slate 1/10g | Bone 14/229g Oyster 12/339g | Iron 2/33g Flint 4/169g FF flint 1/10g Stone 1/27g | m C13th – m 14 th |
| 9 | 13/173g | Peg tile 12/259g Brick 1/575g | - | Bone 12/66g Oyster 2/176g | Iron 2/13g FF flint 1/23g | m C13th – m 14 th |
| 11 | 144/1,423g | Peg tile 67/2,431g Floor tile 9/998g | West Country slate 4/96g | Bone 36/160g Oyster 4/214g | Iron 14/30g Flint 1/58g | m C13th –m 14 th (resid. earlier C13th) |
| 13 | 51/648g | Peg tile 1/33g | West Country slate 1/15g Wealden sst 1/148g | Bone 19/304g Oyster 5/368g | Iron 1/5g Copper-alloy 1/5g Token 1/8.2g Flint 2/58g | m C13th – m 14 th |
| 14 | 31/577g | Peg tile 12/793g Floor tile 3/446g | West Country slate 1/12g | Bone 16/179g Oyster 2/231g | Iron 3/9g | m C13th – m 14 th |
| 15 | 46/872g | Peg tile 12/994g Floor tile 1/131g Brick 2/645g | West Country slate 5/223g | Bone 14/344g Oyster 2/97g | Iron 5/41g | m C13th – m 14 th |
| 17 | 1/11g | Peg tile 3/171g Floor tile 1/205g | - | | | C13th – m 14th |
| 22 | 16/201g | Peg tile 12/1,147g Ridge tile 1/142g | Horsham stone 2/12g West Country slate 4/736g | Bone 11/202g Antler 1/583g Oyster 13/688g | Iron 7/53g Flint 4/222g FF flint 1/18g | l C13th – l 14th |
| 23 | 4/43g | - | - | Bone 2/115g Oyster 2/58g | Iron 1/6g Flint 1/10g | C13th – m 14th |

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1** The pottery from the site is generally in good condition. Although sherd size tends to range from small to medium (up to 60mm across) the majority do not show signs of abrasion to their edges suggesting little re-working has occurred. The assemblage is virtually exclusively of the mid 13th to early/mid 14th centuries though some pieces could be pushed into the late 14th century. A few residual earlier 13th- century sherds are also present along with a single hard-fired sand tempered sherd from the spoil, which is probably of the late 14th, or 15th, centuries and a painted ware sherd of similar period from Context **1**.
- 5.2.2** The Medieval assemblage is dominated by relatively hard-fired medium/coarse sand tempered wares, some of which have very occasional flint/shell inclusions. A range of cooking pots are present in these fabrics, usually with quite well developed club rims. Alongside the cooking pot sherds are a number of finer sand tempered glazed jug sherds though these are usually quite simple and never of a particular high standard. All of the material is of local manufacture, including a few sherds, which are almost certainly from the Ringmer industry. Interestingly no imported material was recovered.
- 5.2.3** Post-Medieval pottery was only recovered from Context **1**. This material consists of sherds of glazed redware and tin-glazed earthenware of 17th- to early 18th- century date and some 14 sherds of 19th- century porcelain and earthenware flower pot.
- 5.2.4** Two plain clay pipe stems were recovered from Context **1**. These are in fresh condition and probably date to the later 18th to 19th centuries.
- 5.2.5** The Medieval pottery assemblage at Priory Cottage has some potential for further study, and comprises a reasonable mid 13th to early/mid 14th century pottery group for Lewes. Up to 20 pieces of pottery will need to be illustrated.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.3.1** A large assemblage of ceramic building material was recovered from the site. This is primarily composed of quite hard-fired sand tempered peg tiles with round, or occasionally square, peg holes. The colour of the tiles is very variable and some show signs of overfiring, suggesting either 'seconds' were being used or some had been incorporated into hearths. These tiles are of a similar period to the majority of the pottery. One or two earlier fragments of peg tile in a sand and flint tempered fabric are also present.
- 5.3.2** In addition to the peg tile are a number of fragments of floor tile, many of which have sparse green/orange glaze on their upper surfaces (average tile thickness is 20mm). These are all in sand tempered fabrics and probably date to between the mid 13th to mid/late 14th centuries.
- 5.3.3** A few examples of 'Flemish'/yellow bricks were recovered from sealed medieval deposits. These are in excess of 146mm long (no complete lengths are present) with widths between 85-95mm and heights between 38-45mm. Bricks are not usually common until the later 14th to 15th centuries though late 13th-/early 14th- century examples are known of from Winchelsea (Martin and Martin 2004, 156). As such their presence at the current site is interesting as the pottery dating would suggest a date before the mid 14th century.

5.4 Animal Bone by Pat Stevens

- 5.4.1** A total of 136 pieces of bone, and one antler were found during the excavation (Table 1). Most contexts produced a broad range of animal and bird bones, with some fish bones also being recovered.
- 5.4.2** The animals found were cattle (21%), sheep (33.8%) and pig (11%), with a broad range of different bones being represented from adult and juvenile animals. A large proportion of the bones have butchery cut marks, and many have been gnawed by dogs.
- 5.4.3** A single shed antler from a fallow deer was found in the upper fill of Pit **20**.
- 5.4.4** Birds make up 12.5% of the bone assemblage, and include goose, domestic fowl, bantam, pigeon and possibly crow and snipe.
- 5.4.5** Fish bones were recovered from a small number of contexts and make up 8% of the bone assemblage. The only species that could be positively identified was the conger eel.
- 5.4.6** The bone assemblage from the 1969-82 excavations at Lewes Priory came from a Pit (Stevens, P. in Lyne 1997), and comprised predominantly fish (98%), with just a handful of animal bones (sheep, pig and porpoise) and bird bones (domestic fowl and swan).
- 5.4.7** This bone assemblage is of some importance, as it is the first bone assemblage with a reasonable mix of different species associated with the Priory. Further analysis of this assemblage will allow comparisons with other Medieval bone assemblages from Lewes, and therefore indications of differences in diet between monastic and ordinary communities.

5.5 Marine Shell

- 5.5.1** 46 oyster shells were recovered during the excavation, comprising both complete valves and fragments. They were found in most of the Medieval contexts on the site (Table 1), with the greatest quantities from Context **3** and Pit **20**.
- 5.5.2** The excavations at Lewes Priory between 1969 and 1982 produced quantities of oyster shell from numerous Medieval and Post Medieval contexts (Somerville, E. in Lyne 1997). It was concluded that they were of reasonable quality for consumption.
- 5.5.3** Further analysis of this marine shell assemblage will allow comparison with the other assemblages from the Priory and elsewhere in Lewes.

5.6 Stone by Luke Barber

- 5.6.1** A small assemblage of stone was recovered. This consists virtually exclusively of roofing material – both West Country slate and Horsham stone are present. The latter material's presence is, like the brick, interesting in that generally it is not common until the later 14th to 15th centuries. In addition there is a single fragment of fine-grained Wealden sandstone, presumably used in wall construction.
- 5.6.2** Two pieces of worked stone, one of Greensand, and the other being Quarr limestone were recovered during the machine excavation. Both of these stone types were utilised as building stone in the Priory (Lyne 1997). It is very likely that these two pieces were robbed from the Priory buildings and had been reused.
- 5.6.3** A small fragment of a schist sharpening stone (27g) was recovered from Context 3. This piece should be illustrated.

5.7 Worked Flint

- 5.7.1** This small assemblage of worked flint comprised 12 flakes, three fragments and a chip. There were also three un-worked pieces of fire-fractured flint.
- 5.7.2** Only one of the pieces appeared to be of prehistoric origin. This was a soft hammer-struck flake with evidence of platform preparation, and is likely to date to the Mesolithic period.
- 5.7.3** The remainder of the flint was very fresh and unabraded, and is likely to have come from the knapping of flint nodules that were utilised in the Medieval wall construction. Most of the flakes had been struck with a hard hammer, and had broad platforms, large bulbs and also frequently had hinge terminations. A single exception may have been struck with a softer hammer or punch.
- 5.7.4** Half of the flakes have cortical dorsal sides indicating that they were removed from the outer face of the nodule, perhaps when squaring-off the nodule prior to fitting it into the wall. The presence of flakes with multiple removal scars shows that the knapping was systematic and taking place during construction rather than due to accidental damage during demolition.
- 5.7.5** It is only during the later 13th century and into the 14th century that flints tended to be laid in more regular courses and roughly squared-off, before then unmodified flint nodules were used in irregular courses (Lodge *et al.* 2000).
- 5.7.6** A more detailed analysis of this small assemblage is required and comparison with other similar assemblages of Medieval wall-knapped flint.

5.8 Lead Tokens by David Rudling

- 5.8.1** Two lead tokens were submitted for identification purposes. The first was a lead or pewter uniface token or ?jeton. 24 mm in diameter; weight: 8.2g., found in Context **13** (Fill of Pit **12**, which has been dated on ceramic evidence to the mid 13th to mid 14th centuries). The pattern on this token is in the form of an 8-pointed star in the centre with a pennanular ornament with inturned pellet ends and encircling a pellet in each angle; pellet/wedge in each outer angle between adjacent pennanular ornaments. This unusual token (in terms of size, weight and decoration) is a type not recorded by Fletcher (2005). It is however similar in size, but not design, to contemporary copper-alloy jetons.
- 5.8.2** Lead uniface token. 16 mm in diameter weight: 5.2g. Probably 17th century. Pitted surfaces. Pattern in the form of a petalled flower with central pellet and five petals. *Cf.*: Baylis Type 17 (Fletcher 2005, 105); Mitchiner and Skinner (1985 Plate 22: 48). Context: was a surface find in the garden area adjacent to the spoil heap.

5.9 Metal objects

- 5.9.1** Iron nail fragments were recovered from many Medieval contexts. These were mostly small shaft fragments, but also included a number of different shaped heads. They were all likely to have been used in building construction. A single piece of iron may have been part of a building fitting.
- 5.9.2** A thin piece of copper-alloy was recovered from Context **13**, It has a small fragment of carbonised wood attached to it, and may therefore have been a fitting from a wooden artefact.
- 5.9.3** A single small un-dated piece of lead sheet was recovered from the spoilheap.

5.10 Wood by Rowena Gale

- 5.10.1** The wood consisted of a radial section from wide roundwood from the probable sill beam from Wall **16**. The bark was absent and the outer wood surface abraded. The wood was firm and well preserved. The sample was prepared using standard methods (Gale and Cutler 2000). Anatomical structures were examined using transmitted light on a Nikon Labophot-2 compound microscope at magnifications up to x400 and matched to prepared reference slides of modern wood.
- 5.10.2** The sample consisted of an incomplete radial wedge measuring 80mm of oak (*Quercus* sp.), heartwood. There was no evidence of sapwood – presumably this had rotted away leaving the durable heartwood. A total of 36 growth rings were present in the wood examined.
- 5.10.3** Although impossible to verify, it is probable that the timber was not much more than 50 or so years old when felled, and therefore suitable for C14 dating.

5.11 Environmental samples

- 5.11.1** Two environmental samples (both 8 litres) were taken during the watching brief, one each from Contexts **11** and **22**. Both samples were processed using bucket flotation. The flot from each sample was caught in a 500 micron mesh, with the residue being retained in a 1mm sieve. The dry residues and flots were initially scanned and sorted by eye to extract material of archaeological and environmental interest.
- 5.11.2** The sample from Context **11** contained numerous fragments of pottery, animal and fish bone, and building material together with charcoal and a few land molluscs. The sample from Context **22** contained building material including slate, fire-fractured flint, and occasional pieces of pottery and bone, some nails, charcoal and land molluscs.
- 5.11.3** Both of these samples have been retained in their entirety, and should be further sorted with the artefacts and environmental remains analysed.

6. Discussion

- 6.1** The watching brief at Priory Cottage has produced some interesting and very important remains. The location of the site at the western edge of the Priory precinct, adjacent to the precinct boundary wall, has shown that during the 13th and early 14th century buildings were located here.
- 6.2** It is likely that there were at least two phases of buildings on the site. The earliest (Wall **16**) was of timber frame construction, with a narrow stone foundation supporting a wooden sill beam, upon which the timber frame construction stood. Unfortunately only the one wall of this building was located, and it is not clear whether the building extended south below Priory Cottage, or north under the new extension. As this wall was only located due to the excavation of a deeper trench at this point, it is likely that any further remains of this building remain undisturbed. None of the other features were associated with the use of this building, and as it was covered with demolition material and pottery of mid 13th to mid 14th century date, it is likely that it dated to the early 13th century or earlier.
- 6.3** The second phase building comprised Wall **18**; a more substantial stone built foundation, perhaps for a building of stone construction rather than timber framed. Again it is not clear whether this building extended south or north. However, the floor (Context **19**) and remnant of wall foundation (Context **8**) that extend northwards, suggest that part of the building, or perhaps an annex, containing the oven/kiln (Context **17**) was located here. A single sherd of 13th to mid 14th century pottery was found in Context **17** may provide the dating for this activity.
- 6.4** Pit **10/12** located on the east side of the second building, and dating to the mid 13th to mid 14th century may be from the same phase. The artefacts in this pit comprising predominantly pottery and bone suggest it may have been a domestic rubbish pit, although the quantity of roof and floor tile, slate and nails found in it could associate it with a demolition phase towards the end of this period.

- 6.5** Pit **20** cut through the floor (Context **19**) of the second phase building has a slightly later date (late 13th to late 14th century). Its fill contains large quantities of building material (roofing tile and slate) and nails, whilst the quantity of domestic material (pottery and bone) is much smaller. This would probably connect this feature with a demolition phase possibly in the latter half of the 14th century. Context **3**, which overlies most of the features also resembles a deposit of demolition material, although the pottery found in this layer has a mid 13th to mid 14th century date.
- 6.6** The pottery assemblage comprised predominantly cooking pots with just a few jugs, all of local manufacture, whilst the remainder of the non-building material artefacts were predominantly bone and oyster shell. The nature of this material suggests that the activity in this part of the Priory precinct during the 13th and 14th centuries was probably domestic, as there is no obvious waste from industrial activities.
- 6.7** There were no other features or deposits of a later date within the area of the watching brief, so it appears that all activity ceased in this part of the Priory precinct towards the end of the 14th century.
- 6.8** The period covered by the remains encountered in this watching brief was one of decline and debt for the Priory (Poole 2000). Damage and destruction may have been caused around the time of the Battle of Lewes, and the archaeological evidence from the Priory itself suggests that there was no new building work carried out during this period (Lyne 1997).
- 6.9** This watching brief has established the presence of surviving Medieval remains within the Priory precinct. The potential for surviving archaeology in this area has been recognised for some time (Clarke 1984, 98), and these discoveries have now emphasised the potential importance of the remains in this area. Any future proposed development in this area should be preceded by detailed archaeological investigations.

7. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Liza Stewart who helped with the watching brief, and the various specialists who have contributed to this report. I would also like to thank the owner Ivan Griffiths for his co-operation and assistance during the project. Greg Chuter of ESCC provided information from the H.E.R. and visited the site during the watching brief.

8. References

- Anderson, F. 1989 Two Romanesque Capitals from Lewes Priory, *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.* **127**, 49-60.
- Clarke, H. 1984 *The Archaeology of Medieval England*, British Museum Publications Ltd, London.
- Fletcher, E. 2005. *Leaden Tokens & Tallies, Roman to Victorian*. Witham: Greenlight Publishing.

- Fleming, B. 1999 *The Battle of Lewes 1264*, J&KH Publishing, Hailsham.
- Gale, R. and Cutler, D. 2000 *Plants in Archaeology*. Otley/London: Westbury Publishing and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Griffin, N. 2000 *An Archaeological Watching brief at the Southdown Club, Cockshut Road, Lewes, East Sussex*, Archaeology South-East, Ditchling.
- Lewis, R.A. & Allen, M.J. 1987 'The Priory of St. Pancras, Southover', *Aspects of Archaeology in the Lewes Area*, Lewes Archaeological Group.
- Lodge, D. & Wright, A. 2000 *Care and Repair of Flint Walls*, SPAB Technical Pamphlet **16**.
- Lower, M.A. 1847 Further report on discoveries at Lewes, *Journal of British Archaeological Associations* **2**, 104-108.
- Lyne, M. 1997 *Lewes Priory: Excavations by Richard Lewes, 1969-82*, Lewes Priory Trust.
- Martin, D and Martin, B. 2004 *New Winchelsea, Sussex. A Medieval Port Town*, UCLFAU Monograph No. **2** Heritage Marketing, King's Lynn.
- Mitchiner, M. and Skinner, A. 1985. English Tokens, c. 1425-1672, *British Numismatic Journal* **54**, 86-163.
- Poole, H. 2000 *Lewes Priory: The Site and its History*, Lewes Priory Trust.
- St John Hope, H.W. 1886 The archaeological history of the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras at Lewes, *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.* **34**, 71-106.
- St John Hope, H.W. 1906 The Cluniac Priory of St Pancras at Lewes, *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.* **49**, 66-88.
- Salzman, L.F. 1940 *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. **7**, Oxford University Press.

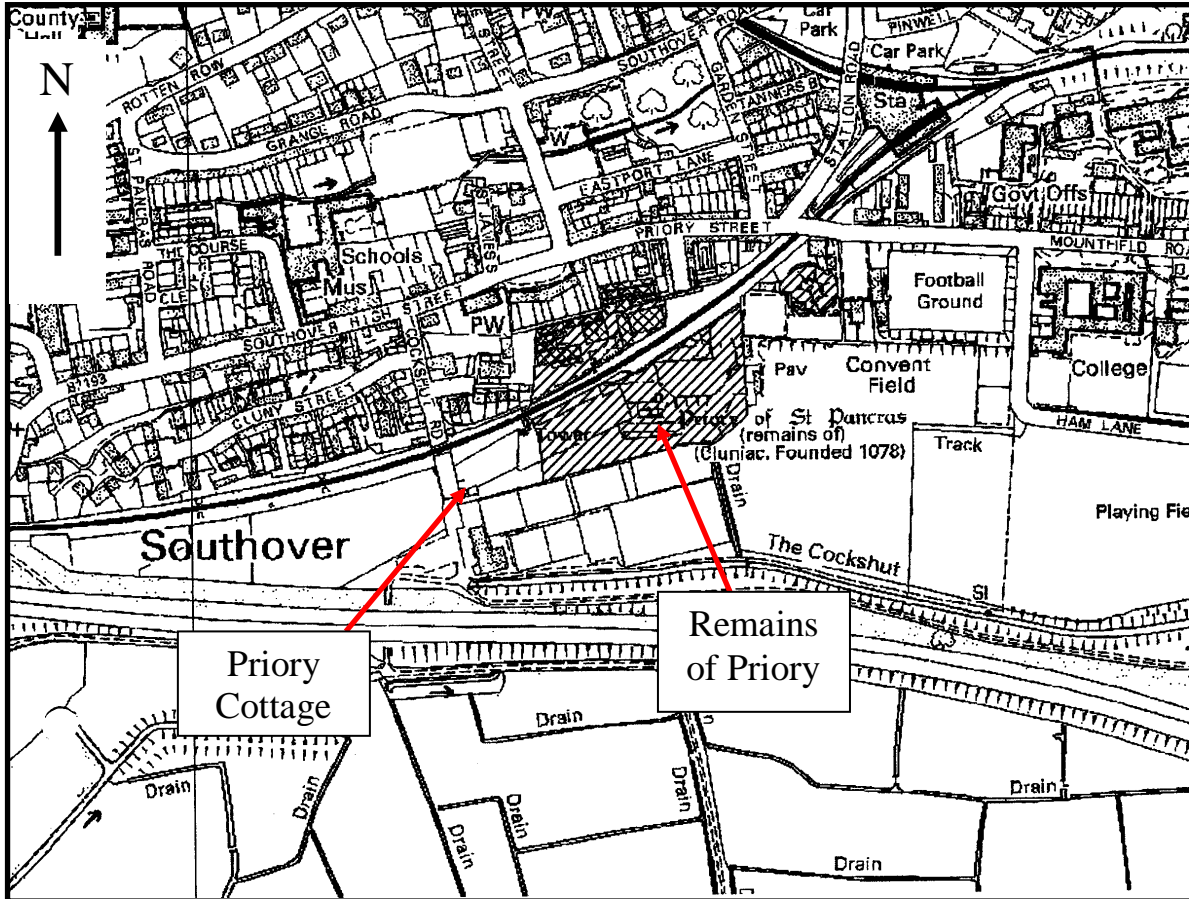


Fig. 1: Priory Cottage, Lewes: Location of Priory Cottage and the remains of the Cluniac Priory

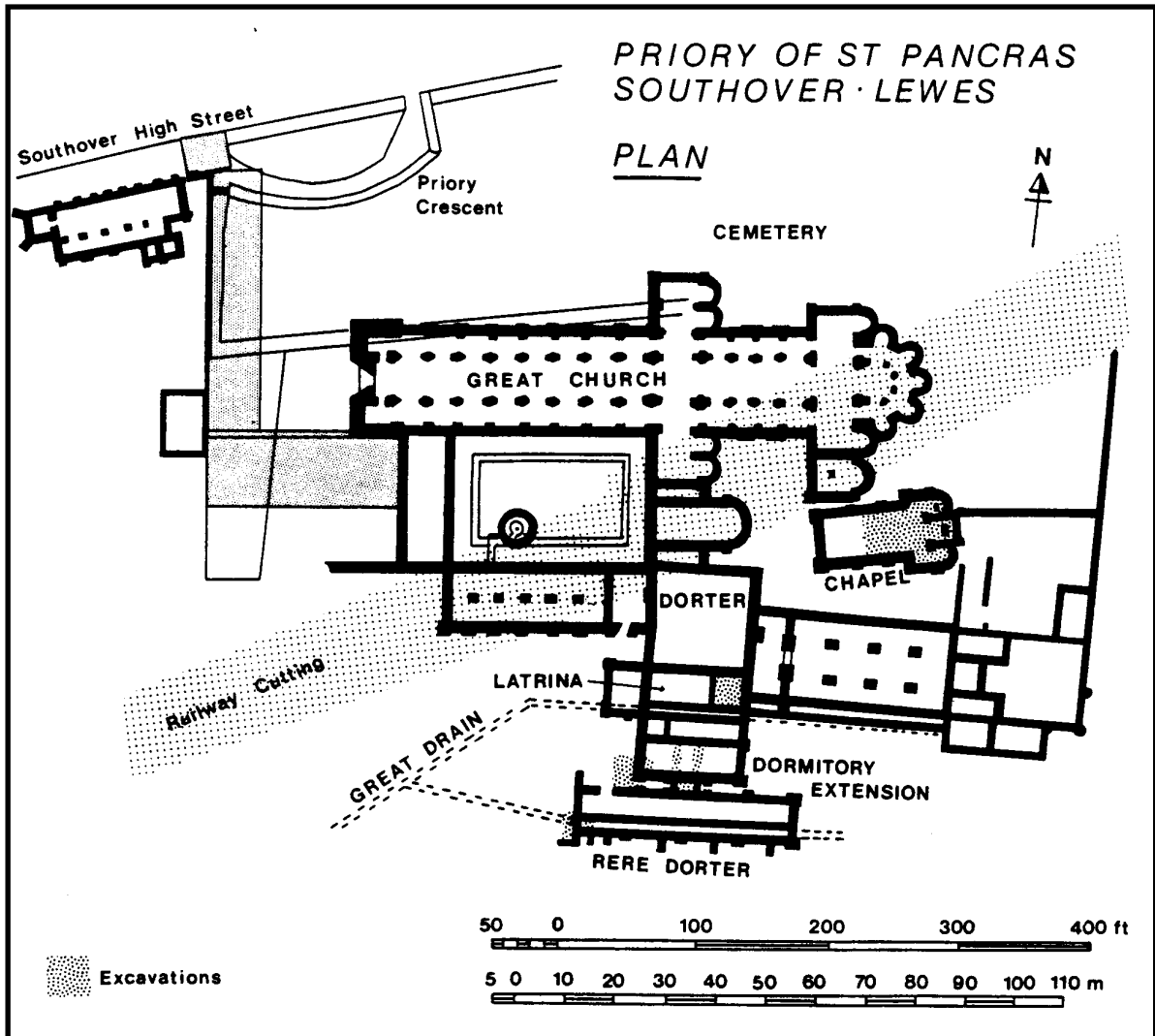


Fig. 2: Priory Cottage, Lewes: Plan of the Priory (Lewis *et al.* 1987)

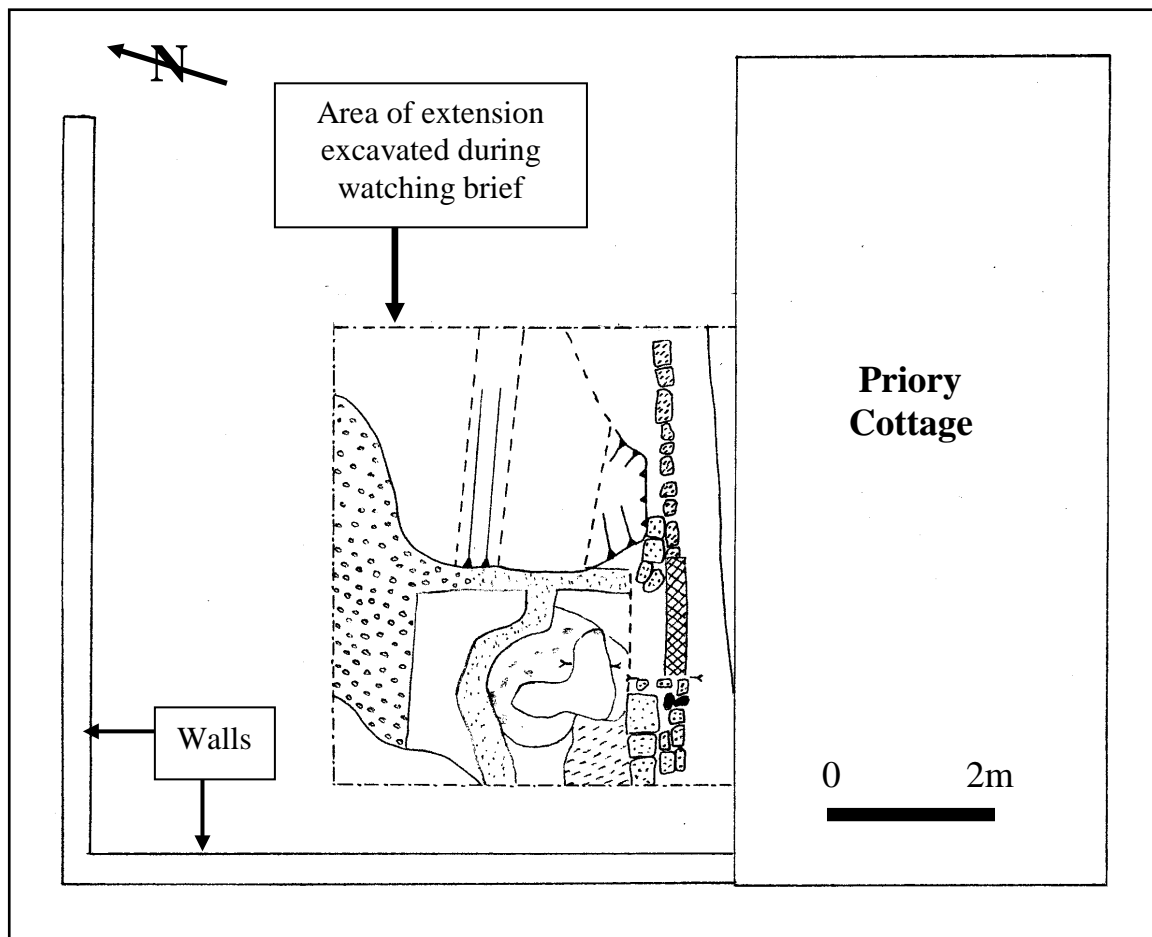


Fig. 3: Priory Cottage, Lewes: Plan of the site, showing the location of the extension excavated during watching brief

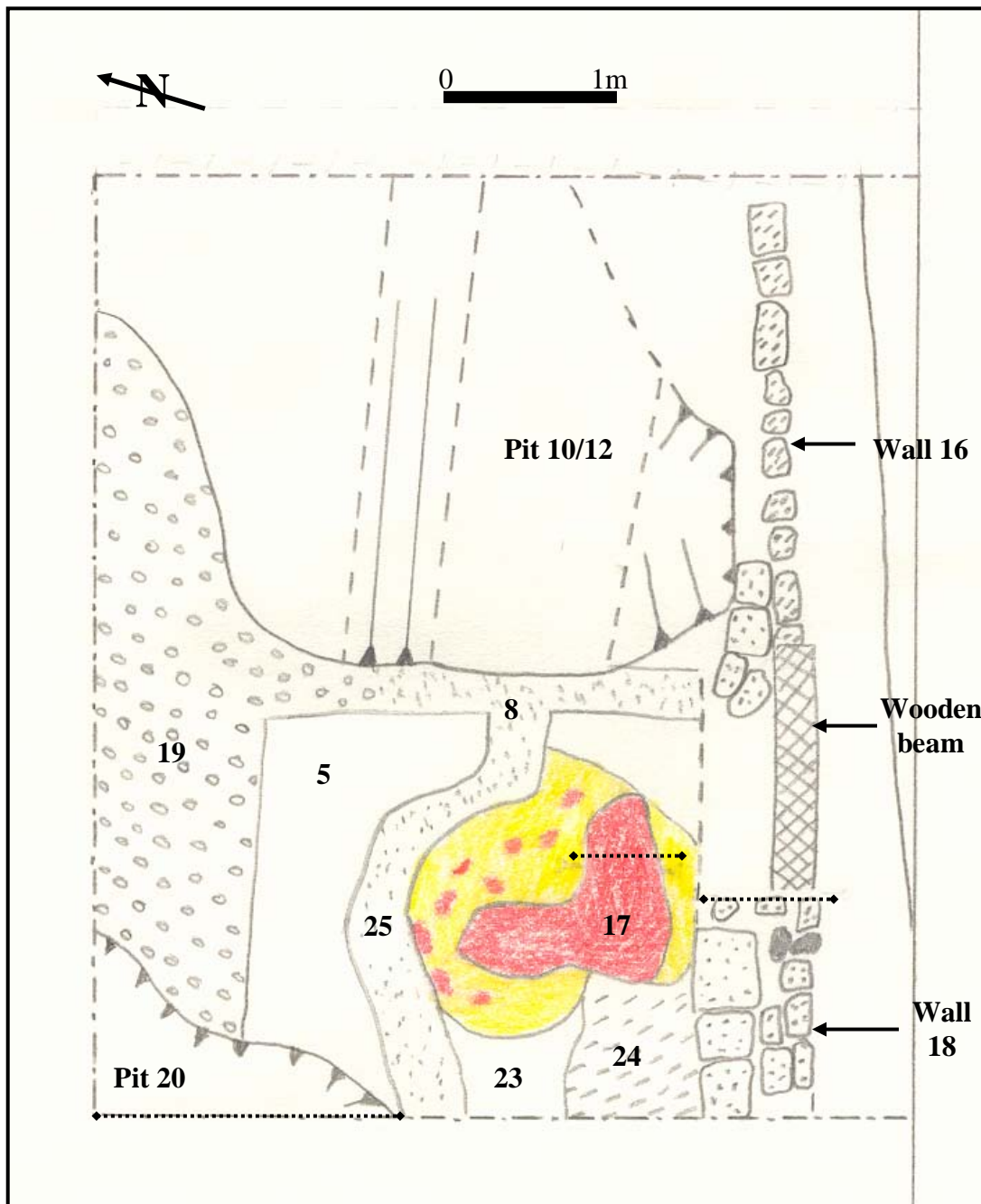


Fig. 4: Priory Cottage, Lewes: Plan of the Excavations

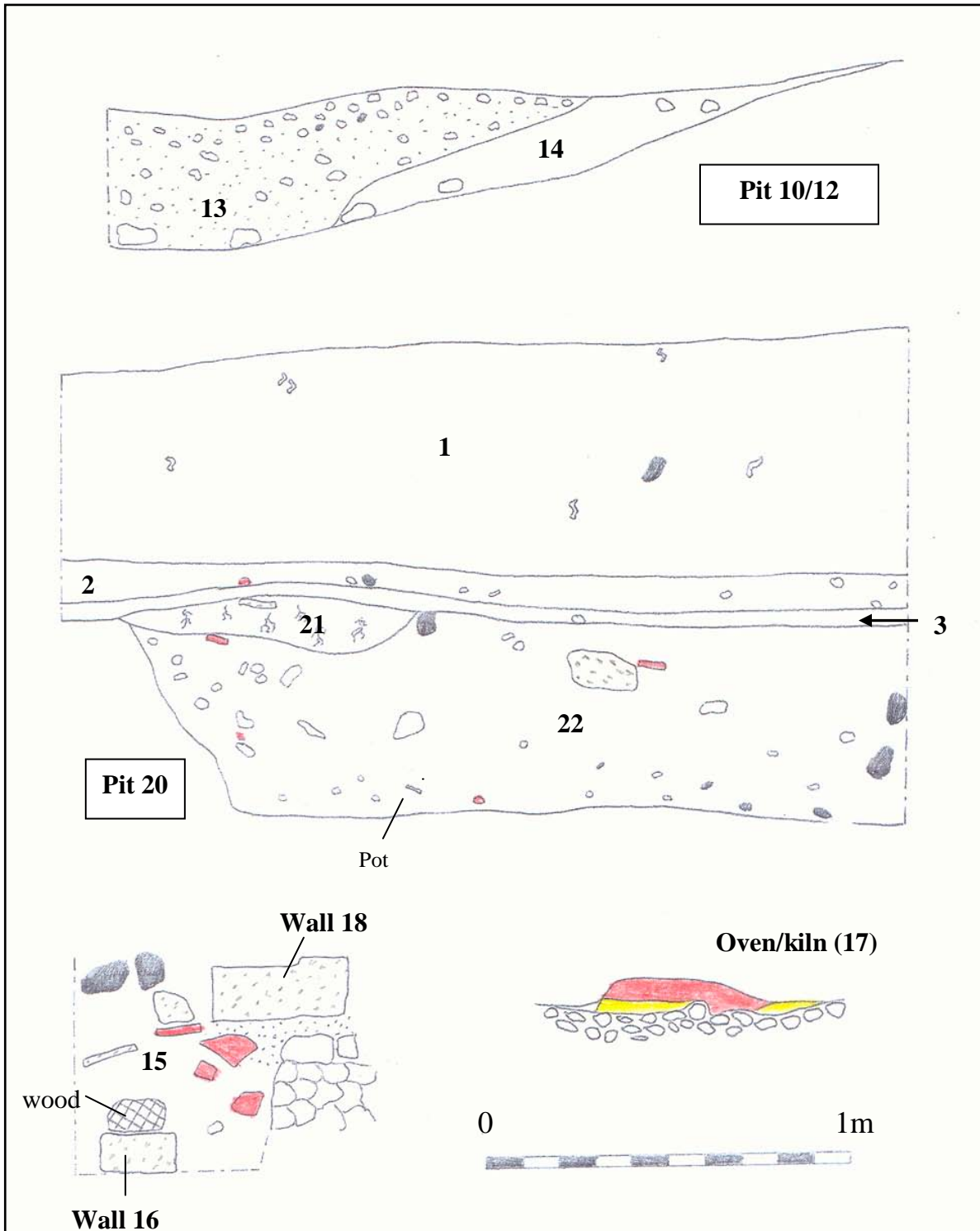


Fig. 5: Priory Cottage, Lewes: Sections of Pit 10/12 and Pit 20; Section showing the relationship between Wall 16 and Wall 18; Section through Oven/kiln.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk