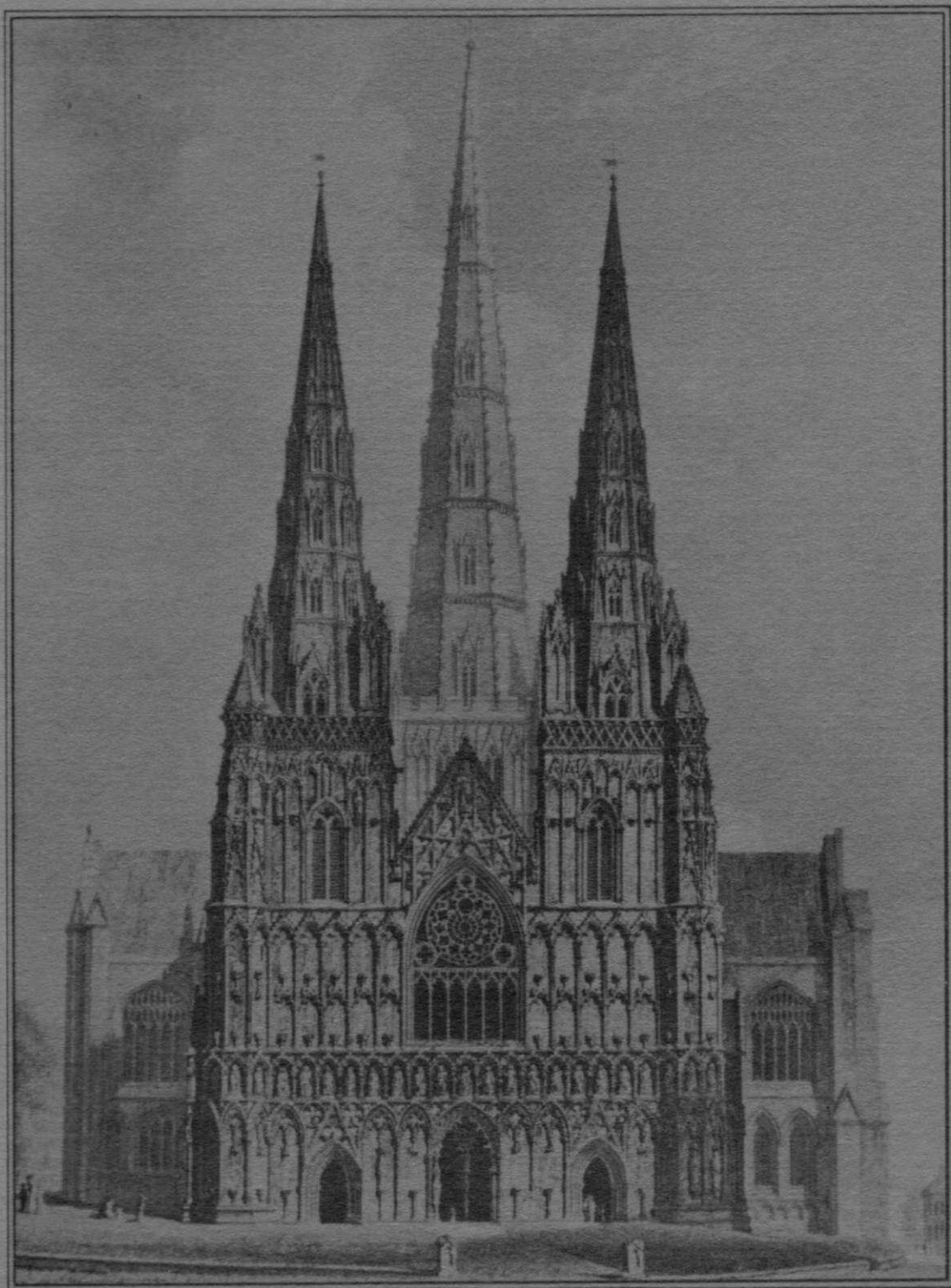




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FURTHER THOUGHTS ON *LETOCETUM*

JIM GOULD, F.S.A.

There are various matters concerning *Letocetwn* that are in urgent need of clarification, especially in view of Mr. Round's report in volume xxxii of our *Transactions*. This note is an attempt to deal very briefly with some of them. Where it involves a measure of disagreement with Mr. Round's views, the reasons are given for consideration by the reader. When Sir Mortimer Wheeler was once asked whether archaeology is an art or a science, he replied - 'Neither, it's a vendetta.' It is hoped that this note will not be seen as justifying Sir Mortimer's comment, but I do believe the matters to be of importance and sincerely hope that should Mr. Round wish to reply he will be given space in which to do so.

Firstly, there is the matter of the alleged life-size statue of Minerva and her temple below Wall church. The earliest account I can find of the finding of the statue is in volume iv of the *Transactions* of the Birmingham Archaeological Society (1874), at p. 39. The entry reads as follows:

The following extract from Mr. Lomax's *Guide to the City of Lichfield etc.* (p. 58) is of interest... 'Sometime since a man much employed in draining lands in the neighbourhood of Wall was asked if he ever found coins or other curiosities there. He replied that he had often met with pieces of money looking very old, but had given them to his children to play with; 'but once', he said, 'I found a figure of earthenware, as big as a man, but it was not man' (here he described with his hands the shape of a female bust); 'but it was not a woman, for it had a queer dress and a man's cap like a soldier's helmet; and we broke it in pieces to mend the bank of the drain.'

This account has been frequently quoted in other publications which give Lomax as the authority, but often without stating a page number. However, a search of all the copies of Lomax's *Guide* in the Stafford, Lichfield, and Birmingham libraries has failed to find any trace of the passage. Furthermore, the making of a life-size statue in earthenware would have posed insuperable difficulties for a Roman potter. It could not have been done. The story, then, is from an unknown source, of the finding of an impossible statue, by an un-named man, at an unknown spot and date, and so must be discarded. If the recorded conversation had said 'like a man' instead of 'as big as a man', the reference could have been to a small pipe-clay statuette, such as have been found on a number of Roman sites. I know of no grounds, save the alleged finding of the life-size statue, to suggest a temple to Minerva at *Letocetum*, although in the 18th century some local inhabitants did refer to the remains of the *mansio* as those of a temple.

The carved stones from the *mansio* certainly indicate some form of earlier Romano-Celtic shrine. There is one stone, covered with large chevrons (plate 1), that has not been previously published. It was photographed in 1976 by the present writer, but was not measured or properly recorded, as it was assumed that it would be dealt with in the eventual excavations report. A coloured print of the photograph was sent to the excavations director on 15 December 1987, at his request. The stone is important for it must have been part of a border or frieze, yet only one such stone was observed. It suggests that there may have been many more carved and inscribed stones than are known at present. The foundations in which the stones were found have been largely rebuilt, following the removal of the carved stones and the consolidation measures taken by the Department of the Environment to preserve the foundations. This makes it impossible now to trace the precise spot where the chevron stone was seen. The point also needs to be made that the foundations that held the carved stones seem to have been earlier than the rest of the *mansio*: all the adjoining walls butt on to it and are not bonded in, and in addition the angle of the stone at the south end is peculiar.

The date of the *mansio* is very important. In any discussion of this topic it must be remembered that much was removed by the 1912 excavators. This can best be seen from plate 9 in volume xlvii of the *Journal* of the North Staffordshire Field Club (1913). That photograph appears a little more plainly in the 1912 guide to the site, issued by the excavator, Roger Mott of Wall House. (Spoil, which was dumped on the land immediately surrounding the excavated site, has recently been removed by the Department of the Environment.) The 1912 excavators, despite digging with 'picks and spades', recovered a number of 4th-century coins (*NSFC* xlix (1915), p. 146 f; 1 (1916), pp. 120-22), but unfortunately they did not distinguish between those found at the villa (*mansio*) and those found at the adjoining baths. No attempt was made to use the pottery to date the building. The excavators described the stonework which they uncovered as rough foundations, with no trace of upper dressed



Plate I The Chevron stone

stone. In such a situation the recent excavations could have held little hope of determining the date when the *mansio* was destroyed. Nevertheless, the recent report (*TSSAHS* xxxii (1992), p. 75) suggests a late Antonine date for its destruction. The source for this date is not clearly given, but it appears to be from household rubbish dumped in an open trench outside a side-door (pp. 14, 74) and from finds in the colonnade (pp. 14, 75). It is difficult to accept the existence of an open, robbed-out trench immediately in front of a door whilst the building was occupied. The finds in the colonnade also pose difficulties. In referring to two voids surviving in the top course of the colonnade wall, it is said (p. 14) that 'the walls ... were only foundations ... and the voids may have been sealed.' Section S-T across the colonnade (fig. 4 on p. 8) shows two possible floors from which the dating evidence was secured. Neither reaches from wall to wall, though there are intrusions, and both are indicated in the Section as being well below the level of the top of the foundations of the surviving wall. Such floors cannot be those of the colonnade, and they must relate to an earlier feature. All this means an Antonine or later date for the construction of the *mansio*, and not for its destruction. The plan (at p. 8) of the heated room (no. 12) and the plan of the same room in *Archaeological Journal* lxxi (1914), p. 361, plainly indicate an inserted corn-dryer. Such are often encountered in buildings of the 3rd and 4th centuries (see S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (1967), p. 278 f.) Moreover, the system of *mansiones* in Britain is believed to have continued virtually unchanged right up to the end of the Roman period.

Finally, one must protest at Mr. Round's dismissal of a Claudian phase at Wall. A granary and a barrack-block have been found outside the area of the three hill-top forts. These were the first buildings on sites K and S (*TSSAHS* v (1964), p. 8). (Coloured slides of these foundation trenches have been deposited in Keele University Library.) As there were foundations only of these first buildings, no pottery could be expected in them, although in actual fact a little stratified pottery was associated with the barrack-block. A number of Claudian sherds - samian and coarse ware - are to be found as residual in other layers and in unstratified deposits. One need only glance the earlier reports on the site at Wall to find plenty of examples. The most significant, however, is the coin-list (*TSSAHS* viii (1968), p. 13), which begins:

Republican		7 silver
Imperial		
Augustus		1 silver
Augustus <i>or</i> Tiberius		1 silver
Tiberius	2 copper	
Claudius	13 copper	
Nero	5 copper	1 silver

To these should be added the coins from Mr. Round's own reports in *TSSAHS* xi (1971) and xxiii (1983). These include

British		
Durotrigian	1 copper	
Republican		5 silver
Imperial		
Claudius I	12 copper	
Antonia	3 copper	
Nero	3 copper	

The Claudian phase may have been short-lived, but the evidence for it is there.

A RESPONSE

from A. A. ROUND, F.S.A.

I much appreciate being given the opportunity to deal with the points raised by Jim Gould. The most important, perhaps, concerns the present state of knowledge regarding the date of the earliest occupation of *Letocetum*. It is useful to start with an up-to-date coin list, based on reports in *TSSAHS* viii (1968), p. 13; xi (1971), p. 24; xv (1974), p. 23; xxiii (1983), pp. 15-16; and xxxii (1992), pp. 20-21:

Republican		10 silver
Imperial		
Augustus		1 silver
Augustus <i>or</i> Tiberius		1 silver
Tiberius	2 copper	
Claudius I	32 copper (16 copies)	1 silver
Nero	9 copper	1 silver
Galba		2 silver
Vespasian	17 copper	
Vespasian <i>or</i> Titus	2 copper	
Domitian	16 copper	1 silver
Trajan	10 copper	
Hadrian	10 copper	2 silver
Antoninus Pius	5 copper	
Marcus Aurelius	2 copper	
Faustina	1 copper	
Geta	1 copper	
Elagabalus		1 silver
Severus Alexander		4 silver
Philip I	1 copper	
Gallienus	1 copper	

Postumus	2 copper	1 silver
Victorinus	5 copper	
Tetricus	12 copper(1 copy)	
Claudius II	6 copper	
Diocletian	1 copper	
Maximian	1 copper	
Carausius	3 copper	
3rd-Cent. radiates	3 copper	
Constantine I	1 copper	
Helena	1 copper	
House of Constantine	1 copper	
Constantin (?)	1 copper	
Constantius II	1 copper	
Valentinian	1 copper	
Valens	1 copper	
House of Valentinian	1 copper	
Gratian	1 copper	

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No copper coins were issued by Nero for the first 10 years of his reign, and Claudian coins continued to circulate until A.D. 63, shortages being made up by copies of varying quality. Such coins are characteristic finds on sites associated with Neronian military activity, but they are also found on civil sites (see *TSSAHS* xxiii. 13; P. J. Casey, *Roman Coinage in Britain* (1980), 32). The coin evidence, therefore, suggests the early occupation of *Letocetum* to be either Claudian or Neronian.

It is interesting to examine earlier reports on excavations at *Letocetum* in the light of more recent studies, notably M. R. Hull, *The Roman Potters' Kilns of Colchester*, Society of Antiquaries Research Report no. 21 (1963), which re-assesses the coarse pottery datings in his (and C. F. C. Hawkes's) 1947 *Camulodunum* report, and K. Greene, *Report on the excavations at Usk, 1965-76: the pre-Flavian fine wares* (1979). The first suggestion of a Claudian phase at *Letocetum* appears in an article by Jim Gould and F. H. Lyon in *TBAS* lxxix (1964), 11-23. The evidence adduced there is that of six fragments of coarse pottery and five of samian. The dating of three of the coarse pottery fragments (nos. 3-5) are revised by Hull (1963) as 'up to A.D. 100' and 'Claudius-Nero'; no. 2 is described as Claudian-Neronian in K. Kenyon, *Excavations at the Jewry Wall site, Leicester*, Society of Antiquaries Research Report no. 15 (1948); no. 1 is a small sherd with a pattern similar to that on 'Claudian bowls and jars from Margidunum'; no. 6 is undated. Of the five samian fragments, no. 46 is described (in B. R. Hartley's specialist report) as 'probably a Ritterling 1 variant, but in thick ware ... If the proposed identification is correct, a Claudian date is probable'; nos. 47 and 48 (joining) are given a probable date of c. A.D. 50-65 (i.e. Claudian-Neronian); no. 49 is described as 'normal in pre-Flavian contexts'; and no. 50 as 'by one of the most prolific pre-Flavian potters'. A samian dish (no. 81), from the original ground level below the rampart of Period II, is described as follows: 'The pale fabric and dark brown glaze suggest a Claudian date and the shape is an early one'; but the assigned date is c. A.D. 45-65 (i.e. Claudian-Neronian).

Evidence for Claudian occupation at *Letocetum* is also given in *TSSAHS* \ (1964), at p. 7 (on site K). For the Claudian sherd no. 116, the reader is referred to the 1947 *Camulodunum* report, but Hull's 1963 revision dates it as 'Claudian-Neronian'. Similarly, 'the further Claudian sherds' nos. 117-19 in the *TSSAHS* report, when revised by Hull become Claudian (no. 117) and Claudian-Neronian (nos. 118-19). On site S, the earliest stratified coarse pottery fragment (no. 120) is described as 'Claudius-Nero' in the 1947 *Camulodunum* report. Fragments nos. 122 and 123, from the construction trenches of the first building, are illustrated and identified as 'Spanish Colour-coated Ware' in Greene's 1979 *Usk* report, where they are dated to c. A.D. 40-80. On site R, sherds nos. 137, 138, and 140, from 'trampled sand on top of undisturbed subsoil', are dated 'Claudian-Neronian' in Hull's 1963 revision. On site T, samian sherd no. 73, from 'the occupation layer immediately above the natural subsoil, is Neronian or early Flavian, and coarse pottery sherd no. 149, from 'trampled sand on top of undisturbed subsoil', is dated 'mid-first century' by Hull (1963). On site N.O.P., four samian sherds from early construction

trenches are pre-Flavian or early Flavian (nos. 15, 17) and probably Neronian (nos. 16, 18). From the same trenches came three coarse pottery sherds: no. 159 is unreferenced; no. 160 is described as pre-Boudiccan (i.e. before A.D. 60) in Hull's 1963 report; and no. 161, absent in Hull's 1963 revision, appears in the original *Camulodunum* (1947) as A.D. 43-c. 65 (i.e. Claudian-Neronian).

Moving on to the excavations described in *TSSAHS* viii (1968), reference is made at p. 8 to 'a great number of Neronian and earlier sherds'. This would appear to be a misprint, as the date range for the samian is given a few lines later as between A.D. 50 and 65. There is no certain Claudian, samian, or coarse pottery in the report, where coarse pottery sherd no. 30 ('St. Remy Ware') is dated by Greene (1979) to c. A.D. 43-70 in Britain. (Such a dating also applies to Lyon and Gould, *TEAS* lxxix (1964), no. 10 at p. 16.)

In my own report on the excavations of 1966-67 in *TSSAHS* xi (1971), the earliest occupation was attributed to the Claudian period on the evidence of occasional sherds of 'varnished rough-cast ware'. After the publication of Greene's 1979 report, it was recognised that the sherds were 'Lyon Ware' and ought to be dated to A.D. 40-70; this revision was noted in *TSSAHS* xxiii (1983), at p. 14.

To summarise, the only stratified evidence up to the present time for Claudian occupation at *Letocetum* is:

- (a) the small sherd with a pattern similar to that on 'Claudian bowls and jars from Margidunum'
- (b) the samian fragment which is 'probably a Ritterling 1 variant, but in thick ware ... If the proposed identification is correct, a Claudian date is probable.'
- (c) a single 'base of a pedestal beaker' (no. 117, in *TSSAHS* v), ascribed to the Claudian period

It is, perhaps, worth while re-assessing the reports on sites K and S in *TSSAHS* v, in the light of our present knowledge of the forts at *Letocetum*. The parallel trenches on site K are certainly reminiscent of those found at Richborough, where they were identified as the construction trenches of a granary. There, however, post-holes were found in the trenches, presumably for posts to carry the raised floor necessary to protect the grain from dampness. No post-holes were reported on site K. Rather the trenches appear to resemble the phase 1 trenches shown in the north-east corner of the *mansio* excavation (*TSSAHS* xxxii, fig. 2 on p. 4); what was there first believed to be a military granary, was later interpreted as a stores building. In the present state of our knowledge, it would appear that the buildings on sites K and S, and that found in the *mansio* excavation, all lie outside the area of the known forts and are more likely to have been within the civilian settlement, which in the early years of occupation lay outside the defended area.

The dates of the construction and destruction of the stone *mansio* are indeed important, as Jim Gould states. It needs to be emphasised, therefore, that the trench outside its side-door does not relate to the *mansio's* destruction, but rather to its construction (*TSSAHS* xxxii. 13-14, and *TSSAHS* xxi. 1). The stone screen of phase 2 was conveniently at hand as material for the *mansio*, which was constructed only a few feet away. It seems likely that its robber trench was a repository for ash and food rubbish from the construction gang working on the *mansio* and possibly on the last phase of the nearby baths, which seem to have been built at the same time (*TSSAHS* xv. 20). The trench was then sealed with a layer of clay and brown sand up to 0.30 m. thick, over which more domestic rubbish was later dumped. In addition to pottery dating from the fill of the robber trench, further evidence on this matter comes from the foundation trenches, the hearths in phase 2 of the destruction, the well-filling, and other areas, all described in *TSSAHS* xxxii.

The evidence for the date of the *mansio's* destruction is found mainly in the colonnade. Section S-T (*TSSAHS* xxxii. 8) clearly shows the destruction level (with its many fragments of roof-tile) having been cut through on each side by the exploratory trenches of the 1912 excavator, who followed the walls. Immediately below, is the *mansio* occupation layer, where the gravel is about 2" thick above the foundation trenches of the *mansio*. Below the gravel is a dirty sand layer representing the disturbed phase 2 level and the *mansio* construction level; there are, however, no distinguishable features there. Further down is a layer of fallen wall plaster, keyed on the back and extending between the phase 3 foundation trenches; it covers the phase 1 occupation level, from which was taken the foundation timber shown in the plan of phase 1 (*TSSAHS* xxxii, fig. 2 on p. 4). If there was a later building on the site, it has left no trace. For further discussion on the matter see *TSSAHS* xxxii, at p. 75.

Mr. Gould argues that the inserted feature in room 12 suggests a corn dryer, of a type frequently found in the 3rd and 4th centuries. But that seems somewhat unlikely in view of the effort required to cut the south channel some 9" into the south inserted wall, and also the need to cut the stoke-hole through both the outer and the inserted north walls. The feature is more likely to have been a hypocaust, which would not have been out of place in what was the largest room in the building.

I am indebted to Jim Gould for his photograph of the chevron stone (fig. 1 in Mr. Gould's article, above). My own copy was unfortunately mislaid when I moved back to the Midlands. The stone was situated on the corridor side of the wall between the corridor and room 11. The photograph also shows one course of the better finished stones above the *mansio* floor in this area. There may be other carved stones in the east wall or elsewhere, hidden by room-dividing walls, or perhaps facing into the walls. It would be impossible to discover them without demolition. The east and west walls appear to have been built before the rest of the building, and the joins indicate the sequence of construction. The plinths at the front corners of the building are described in *TSSAHS* xxxii, at p. 14.

The account of discovery of the life-size statue, recorded in 1874, is indeed puzzling. On the matter of a possible temple at *Letocetum*, the report in *TSSAHS* xxxii is deliberately speculative — 'if indeed it existed'. It should be borne in mind, however, that Mr. Gould in his original section of the defences of the forts on the south-east side cited two ditches in period 5 (probably 4 'A ft. wide and 5 ft. deep), cut after the phase 1 ditch had been filled, and commented that their purpose 'could not be determined' (*TBAS* lxxix. 14). Two similar ditches, in a similar position, were found in my own section of the defences in the north-east (*TSSAHS* xi. 14, phase 5A); they were contemporary with two nearby cobbled floors and associated with many BB1 sherds and two face urns (*TSSAHS* xxiii. 65), often thought to be indicative of religious sites.

It is certain that in the future, as in the past, some conclusions regarding the history of *Letocetum* will need modification in the light of new discoveries. There are still many questions to be answered, and it is good to know that work continues by a team under the able leadership of Steven Campbell-Kelly.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>NSFC</i>	<i>Journal of the North Staffordshire Field Club</i>
<i>TBAS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society</i>
<i>TSSAHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the South Staffordshire (formerly Lichfield and South Staffordshire) Archaeological and Historical Society</i>

EDITORIAL NOTE

Although the Society is happy to publish the preceding exchange of views, which it hopes will be of interest to members, it is mindful that much still awaits archaeological discovery at the Wall site and would prefer not to encourage further interpretative articles in the near future.

CAER LWYTGOED: ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL DOCUMENTS

JIM GOULD, F.S.A.

Lwythgoed has long been recognized as the Welsh name for the Roman settlement known as *Letocetum* (the present Wall, Staffordshire), and that the name means 'grey wood'.¹ Etymologists assign the same meaning to the name *Letocetum*, which is itself the Latinized form of the Celtic *Leitocaiton*.² The name is a fitting one, for the area was wooded with plenty of birch, alder, and elm. There are two possible ways by which the name may have been given to the Roman settlement. Firstly, it may have been the Celtic name for extensive woodland before the Roman troops arrived, and some would say that it was perhaps the name of an Iron Age estate. Alternatively, the Romans may have coined the name. Many soldiers came from continental Celtic areas, and Rivet and Smith have pointed out that Roman troops taking over uninhabited places often gave them a Celtic name.³ As the Celtic language was still unwritten during the Roman period, Celtic place-names had to be made capable of being written in Latin for army reports or other documents. It may be of little moment which explanation is accepted, so long as it is remembered that the name 'grey wood' does not of itself indicate the existence of an Iron Age habitation, and that no trace of one has been revealed by excavation at *Letocetum*. The single Durotrigian coin that has been found at the site was almost certainly brought by a Roman soldier,⁴ whilst the Celtic shrine suggested by carved stones discovered in the foundation of the *mansio* can be seen from inscriptions on the stones to be Romano-Celtic and not British-Celtic.⁵ There is, however, a hill-fort (now known as Castle-Old-Fort) at Stonnall, 5 km. south-west of *Letocetum* and plainly visible from there.⁶ Whether the fort was occupied when the Roman army arrived or not is unknown, as the site has not been excavated. When it was occupied, however, the fort could have dominated the 'grey wood'. Consideration also needs to be given to an unexcavated native-type farm to the east of *Letocetum*, which has been dated only tentatively to the 1st century A.D.⁷

The main concern of this article, however, is not whether the name *Lwythgoed* is pre-Roman or not, but rather what the Welsh name indicates when used in early medieval documents. *Lwythgoed* (in a variety of spellings) is found in a number of documents of that period, including the *Historia Brittonum* usually (but erroneously) attributed to Nennius, genealogical tracts,⁸ and Welsh saga poetry such as *Marwnad Cynddylan*. When a translation of these documents is proffered, *Lwythgoed* is usually rendered 'Lichfield'. Where the reference is simply to a vague area this may not matter, but in cases where the writer definitely intended *Letocetum* that fact should be made plain. In cases where *Lwythgoed* is preceded by *Caer* (the Welsh word for fort), a place with defences is meant. Such a description cannot refer to Lichfield before St. Chad, for all the defences there are post-Conquest. Taylor, Bassett, and Slater in their articles on the medieval town suggest that the early civil settlement was a scatter of hamlets.⁹ Even the earliest form of the name for Lichfield - *Lyccidfelth* - does not indicate habitation, and etymologists consider that the name originated only about the middle of the 7th century.¹⁰ The situation was very different at *Letocetum* where from the 4th century a 9-ft. thick wall, backed by a turf rampart and fronted by three ditches, enclosed an area of approximately 5 a. astride the Watling Street.¹¹ At least part of the ditch system was still open in the later middle ages, as a fragment of late medieval pottery has

1 Henry Bradley, 'Etocetum or Letocetum', *Academy*, no. 756 (30 Oct. 1886), 296; 'Etymology of Lichfield', *Academy*, no. 914 (9 Nov. 1889), 545 f. I am indebted to the editor of the transactions for helpful suggestions on the presentation of this paper.

2 A. L. F. Rivet and C. Smith, *Place-Names of Roman Britain* (1979), 387.

3 *Ibid.* 22.

4 M. Archibald, 'The Coins', *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society* [hereafter *TSSAHS*] xxiii (1983), p. 15, no. 8.

5 A. Ross, 'A Pagan Celtic Shrine at Wall, Staffordshire', *TSSAHS* xxi (1980), 3-8.

6 *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, i (1908), 341 f.

7 J. Gould, 'Romano-British farming near Letocetum', *TSSAHS* xiii (1972), 3 f.

8 P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (1966).

9 C. C. Taylor, 'The origins of Lichfield', *TSSAHS* x (1969), 43-52; S. R. Bassett, 'Medieval Lichfield: a topographical review', *TSSAHS* xxii (1982), 93-121; T. R. Slater, 'The topography and planning of medieval Lichfield: a critique', *7SS/4/Sxxvi* (1986), 11-35.

10 K. H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (1953), 332-35.

11 J. Gould, 'Excavations at Wall, 1961-63', *TSSAHS* v (1964), 1-50.

been found in the secondary silt of one ditch.¹² Part of the wall itself was still standing in the 18th century.¹³ *Caer Lwytgoed*, therefore, should always be taken as indicating *Letocetum*, unless a very good reason can be given for not doing so. This can be of considerable importance for understanding the post-Roman period, and may even affect our understanding of the rise of Mercia.

A case can be made for *Letocetum* having been an important centre of local administration. The *Historia Brittonum* has a list of 28 (or 33, according to the recension used) towns of Roman Britain, which concludes with *Cair Luit Coit*, now generally accepted as indicating *Caer Lwytgoed*. Both Rivet¹⁴ and Bradley¹⁵ have suggested that *Letocetum* may have been one of the small *civitates* that were sometimes detached in the 4th century from larger, tribal areas. Alternatively, it may have been the centre of a *pagus*, a word used to describe a large, rural administrative area. There was also a *mansio* at *Letocetum*, as is shown by the Antonine Itinerary. A *mansio* was an official stopping-place, used in the postal service (*cursus publicus*) and generally in the maintenance of good communications in the Empire. As such, it needed an inn with horses and stabling. Procopius, referring to the Empire in general, wrote that at each *mansio* there had to be as many as 40 horses. This may be an exaggeration, for in 382 A.D. a rule was made that no station was to forward more than 6 horses and one cart (pulled by oxen) in any one day, save for the bearers of warrants endorsed 'urgent'.¹⁶ One needs to remember the importance of Watling Street in linking London to both Chester and Wroxeter. At *Letocetum* the baths, too, had to be managed (they required attendants, fuel etc.), and there must have been a market, for other towns were too distant to have served local farmers. Moreover, if the *annona* (a corn tax for the maintenance of troops) was collected at *mansiones*, the collection and storage of corn from an area of several hundred square miles had to be organized. In the troubled times of the 4th century administrative officials at *Letocetum* must surely have been based within the defended area, even though the baths and the *mansio* lay outside it.

The defended area is sometimes referred to as a *burgus*, like similar defences at *Tripontium*, *Manduessedum*, and *Pennocrucium*.¹⁷ It was built by high authority, presumably the late-Roman field army: part of the wall was constructed over a deep well,¹⁸ and on its eastern side the ditches cut the stone foundations of a large building where there were a window grille and also window-glass.¹⁹ If the word *burgus* refers simply the defended area astride a road, then *Letocetum* was one, albeit very different from some continental *burgi*, as described by Laur-Belart, which were very much smaller and often included a signal tower.²⁰ *Letocetum*, however, could not have been used for signalling along the Watling Street because much higher land lies 2 km. to the west and 6 km. to the east. In the troubled 4th century, when many troops and all the field army were eventually moved to the continent, the defended area at *Letocetum* was probably manned by local men, styled *burgarii*,²¹ or just possibly *limitanei*, the name for regular troops who were stationed with their families and who were supposedly not available for posting elsewhere. The defended area could have served as a refuge for people living along the intermittent ribbon that stretched along the road who would otherwise have had no protection in those dangerous times, and it would also deny the use of the road to raiders.

We have little archaeological evidence of activity within the defended area. Only very limited excavation has been allowed within the defended area adjacent to the narrow road that was the A5 prior to the recent construction of the Wall by-pass, and even that has been bedevilled by the removal, probably in the 17th century, of the crest of the Roman road. The date of removal is suggested by the Roman road being partly overlaid by a 17th-century timber-framed house, the back-to-back hearths of which were stupidly interpreted by the excavator (who was misled by the dirt floor) as a foddering crib in a small yard! In order to avoid having to deal with the very solid metalling within the defended area,

12 Ibid. 3.

13 Ibid. 1.

14 A. L. F. Rivet, 'Some Historical Aspects of the *Civitates* of Roman Britain', in *Civitates Capitales*, ed. J. Wachter (1966), at p. 109.

15 His articles given in note 1.

16 A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (1986 reprint), II, 832.

17 G. Webster, 'Roman System of Fortified Posts along Watling Street, Britain', in *Roman Frontier Studies* (1967), 38-45.

18 J. Gould, 'Excavations at Wall, 1961-63', *TSSAHS* v (1964), 6 f.

19 E. Greenfield, 'Wall', *West Midlands Archaeological News Sheet* vii (1964), 9.

20 R. Laur-Belart, 'Late Limes from Basel to the Lake of Constance', in *Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, ed. E. Birley (1949), 55-98.

21 Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, I, 651; II, 1271 n. 102.

a short stretch of new road was then made parallel and adjacent to the earlier one, and the former A5 lies over that stretch. The clearance for that stretch, however, was wider than that of the present road, which meant that much of the small area available for excavation north of the modern road was occupied by the earlier Roman road.²² Moreover, the headland of the cultivated field to the south, where excavation was also permitted, had been cut into by clearance for the present road.²³ All this means that there has been very little excavation of the undisturbed interior of the defended area and, accordingly, virtually no light can be thrown on events of the 4th century or later. Nevertheless, to the north of the Roman road, a small part of a side road was encountered, on which were charcoal and small pieces of flue tile, *tegulae*, *imbrices*, window-glass, and roofing slate, together with 4th-century pottery and a coin of Carausius.²⁴ These finds suggest that a substantial building had stood near by, within the defended area. The whole of the defended area (save where there are modern buildings) has now been ploughed and upper levels have probably been destroyed. There has, however, been a big movement of soil in the past and in one place the defensive wall still stands 5 ft. high above its foundations but below the ploughsoil.²⁵ It is possible, therefore, that in places some late strata may be preserved, but it is very difficult to envisage the original land surface. The latest coin to be found at *Letocetum*, one of Gratian 381 A.D., came from the defended area.²⁶ That does not mean that occupation ended soon after 381, because the distribution in Britain of late 4th- and early 5th-century coins is strangely erratic. In any case, as has been noted, only a tiny part of the defended area has been examined. Even if a larger area of undisturbed land had been excavated, imports of late or post-Roman pottery from the Mediterranean area cannot be expected to have reached inland *Letocetum* to provide the Dark Age dating that is possible for sites much further to the west. In the 5th and 6th centuries Western potentates often turned to hill-forts for use as strongholds,²⁷ but would whoever held *Caer Lwytgoed* during the 6th and 7th centuries have preferred to renew the defences of Castle-Old-Fort, rather than occupy the good, strong defences that were available at *Letocetum*?

Of all the documents relevant to our discussion the most revealing is the *Marwnad Cynddylan*, an elegy for a prince of Powys named Cynddylan, who fought on the side of the Mercian king, Penda, at Maesbury (near Oswestry) in 642.²⁸ Professor Wendy Davies has pointed out that Cynddylan and his family were associated with eastern Powys, especially the area covered by the later Shropshire.²⁹ *Letocetum* is only 15 miles from the modern county boundary with Shropshire, and it is thought, like Shropshire, to have lain within the *civitas* of the tribal people called the *Cornovii*, whose capital was at Wroxeter. A reconstruction of the text of *Marwnad Cynddylan*, together with a translation, has been published recently by Dr. Jenny Rowland in her definitive study, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry* (1990; at pp. 174-9).³⁰ The poem, which dates from the 9th century but refers to Powys in the 7th century, tells how Cynddylan's brother Morfael (and presumably Cynddylan himself) lead a successful raid on *Caer Luitgoed*. That place is mentioned twice in the poem, and on each occasion Miss Rowland translates it as 'Lichfield' rather than *Letocetum* or Wall. When referring to the historical background, she assumes that Cynddylan was one of the supporting princes who died with Penda at the battle of *Winwaed* in 655. Although this is only an assumption, it is treated as a fact and lands Miss Rowland in some difficulty. She has to assume that Cynddylan was loyal to Penda until their deaths, and this means that Morfael's raid cannot have been against the Mercians, to whom (on her analysis) Morfael would still have been allied. Miss Rowland, therefore, has to envisage a battle (rather just a raid) at *Caer Luitgoed* sometime before 655, with Cynddylan fighting on the side of the Mercians against their enemies the Northumbrians, emerging victorious, and carrying away (as the poem relates) loot which included 1,500 cattle and 80 horses back to Powys. There is no historical basis for any such battle, and the loot makes sense only if taken from local farmers, not from a Northumbrian army. An explanation which avoids these difficulties, however, can be offered if the assumption that Cynddylan remained loyal to Penda until his death at *Winwaed* is abandoned.

22 J. Gould, 'Excavations at Wall, 1961-63', *TSSAUS* v (1964), site NOP.

23 Ibid, sites R, S, and T.

24 Ibid. p. 13.

25 Ibid. p. 4, site L, fig. 3.

26 Ibid. p. 19, no. 29.

27 L. Allcock, 'Dark Side of the Moon', in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. M. Carver (1992), 205-16.

28 M. Gelling, *West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (1992), 74.

29 W. Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (1982), 99-102.

30 An earlier translation of the poem was printed in *TSSA/S* v (1964), 52^4.

It is known from the Tribal Hidage, a tax list of perhaps the late 7th century, that at this time Mercia was consolidating into a strong kingdom based on the Lichfield-Tamworth district.³¹ This development must have meant a reduction in the influence of any British rulers in the locality. Prince Morfael of Powys is said in one genealogy to have come from *Lwythgoed*, the place he raided.³² It is possible, then, that Morfael was a local British ruler who had been dislodged either by Penda or by his son, Wulfhere, as they consolidated Mercia, and that the raid commemorated in *Marwnad Cynddylan* was in retaliation for that act. This hypothesis cannot be proved, but it avoids the historical difficulties which have been noted and accords with what is known about the area. If the suggestion is accepted, it means that *Caer Lwythgoed* continued from Roman times into the 7th century as the seat of a British ruler. By the latter date pagan Saxons had settled at Wednesbury, Wednesfield, and possibly Weeford, as is shown by the etymology of their names,³³ and archaeology has identified a Saxon settlement at Catholme, on the bank of the river Trent east of Wychnor.³⁴ Did these new arrivals support the removal of Morfael? That would not have entailed driving out all the British, but it would in effect have ended *Caer Lwythgoed* as the seat of local power and led to its replacement by Tamworth, where there was a royal *tun* before the end of the 7th century.³⁵

31 W. Davies and H. Vick, 'Contents of Tribal Hidage', *Fruhmittelalterliche Studien*, viii (Berlin, 1974), 223-93.

32 Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, in note 8, p. 12, no. 25.

33 M. Gelling, 'Further thoughts on pagan place-names', in *Otium et Negotium: Studies in Onomatology and Library Science presented to Olof von Feilitzen* (Stockholm, 1973), 109-28.

34 S. Losco-Bradley and H. M. Wheeler, 'Anglo-Saxon Settlements in the Trent Valley', in *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Settlement*, ed. M. Faull (1984), 103-11.

35 F. M. Stenton, 'Medeshamsted and its Colonies', in *Essays in Honour of James Tail*, ed. E. Edwards and others (1933), 313-26.

A STAFFORDSHIRE MAN OF AFFAIRS: RALPH OF NEWBOROUGH (d. 1294) AND HIS WILL

NIGEL J. TRINGHAM

The Harpur Crewe collection of documents on deposit in the Derbyshire Record Office at Matlock includes the original of one of the earliest surviving Staffordshire wills, that made in 1294 by Ralph of Newborough. It contains an impressive range of bequests, befitting his career as a 'man of affairs' in the county. A translation of the text is given below.¹

Styled Ralph 'de Burgo' in his will, the testator may be identified as in fact coming from Newborough, near Burton-upon-Trent.² In 1267 he was recorded as the bailiff of Lichfield, a town under episcopal control.³ He was again associated with the bishop in 1278, when he witnessed a charter by which the church of Wybunbury (Ches.) was quitclaimed to the bishop,⁴ and in 1288 he appeared as the bishop's bailiff before royal justices sitting at Lichfield.⁵ By 1275 Ralph was also associated with the Benedictine abbey of Burton, acting that year on the abbey's behalf in the settlement of a dispute relating to one of its estates.⁶ In 1280 he was active on the abbey's business at Finderne (Derb.),⁷ and in 1284, 1292, and 1293 he witnessed charters involving the abbey.⁸ On three other occasions he witnessed undated charters as the abbey's steward.⁹ Ralph also appears to have offered his services to the priory of Augustinian canons of St. Thomas near Stafford. In 1281 and on several undated occasions he witnessed charters relating to the priory,¹⁰ and his close personal ties with that house are revealed in his will. Ralph also had a lay clientele: in 1275 and 1276 he acted as an attorney in England for the noble Theobald de Verdun, then in Ireland.¹¹

The evidence suggests that Ralph was a skilled administrator, who may have had some legal training. Evidently a man of some importance in the county, he appears to have used his position to his own financial advantage. In 1263, or possibly 1265, he was arrested by the sheriff of Staffordshire, Hamo le Strange, and imprisoned in Stafford gaol for over a month; during custody he suffered 'outrages' at the hands of Hamo's servants.¹² The cause of his arrest is unknown, but it may have been connected with his misuse of authority. In 1269 he paid a fine of 10 marks to the Crown on account of the 'withdrawal of writs' during his term of office as under-sheriff of Staffordshire.¹³ In January 1292/3 the royal judges conducting the *Quo Warranto* investigations in the county heard accusations that Ralph, together with several other men, had extracted money from both parties in law-suits and had procured false witnesses; he was fined 40*s*.¹⁴ He was also temporarily imprisoned on a charge of extorting 5 marks from the vill of Wolstanton in north-west Staffordshire.¹⁵ The experience may have been too much for an old man: he died in late January or early February 1293/4.

Ralph's first wife Felice had predeceased him, and it was next to her body that he wished to be buried. He married again, however, and so left a widow, Agnes.¹⁶ His marriage to her may have eased him up the social scale. It had been her second marriage too; her first husband was Roger de Ridware,

1 Derbyshire Record Office, D. 2375M/130/94 (from the Harpur Crewe papers deposited in D.R.O. and reproduced by permission of the National Trust). I am grateful to Robert Swanson and Douglas Johnson for comments on the article in draft.

2 *Staffordshire Historical Collections* (Staffs. Record Society) [hereafter *SHC*], 1937, no. 321 (p. 99), where the witness styled Ralph 'de Novo Burgo' is evidently the same man as the Ralph 'de Burgo' who witnesses other charters in that edition. In two of his own charters Ralph styled himself 'de Nova Villa': *SHC* xvi. 276-7.

3 *SHC* 1924, no. 741 (p. 352).

4 *Ibid.* no. 541 (p. 258).

5 *SHC* vi(1), 177.

6 *SHC* v (1), 81.

7 *Ibid.* 82.

8 *Ibid.* 59; *SHC* 1937, nos. 249, 263 (pp. 83, 87).

9 *SHC* 1937, nos. 287, 329, 370 (pp. 92, 100, 109).

10 *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1279-88, 134; *SHC* viii (1), 141, 159, 165.

11 *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1272-79, 235; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1272-81, 164.

12 *SHC* vi(1), 120. Hamo le Strange was sheriff in August 1263, and possibly again in 1265: *SHC* 1912, 276.

13 *SHC* vi(1), 177.

14 *SHC* vi(1), 281-2.

15 *Ibid.* 278.

16 In the summer of 1294 she sued William Griffin and his wife Eleanor for her dower in Walton-upon-Trent: *SHC* vii (1), 17.

lord of Mavesyn Ridware (d. 1281).¹⁷ It was presumably by his first wife that Ralph had a son, also called Ralph. The latter is styled Master Ralph in the will, which may indicate that he had attended a university.

Strictly, Ralph's will is a 'testament', as it deals with the distribution of moveables rather than real property, for which the term 'will' ought to be reserved.¹⁸ Indeed, the document calls itself a *testamentum*, and it conforms to the style of such documents in the late 13th century. It opens with a religious invocation and deals first with the disposal of the testator's mortal remains: they are to be laid to rest in the priory church of St. Thomas near Stafford, next to those of his wife Felice. As a mortuary, or burial fee, Ralph left the priory his two best horses, which on the day of his internment were to precede his body in the funeral procession. Mortuaries were also assigned to the church of each parish in which Ralph had a house. The moderately large sum of £10 was left for funeral expenses and for the disbursement of alms to the poor. Arrangements were also made for a priest to sing masses for Ralph's soul for two years.

Conventionally, Ralph left money to Lichfield cathedral, Burton abbey, St. John's hospital at Lichfield, houses of Franciscan and Dominican friars,¹⁹ and churches with which he evidently had a special connection: Walton-on-Trent (Derb.), Nether Seal (Leics. *later* Derb.), Tatenhill, and Mavesyn Ridware (both Staffs.). He also left money, apparently to St. Thomas's priory, to assist in financing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Bequests of a secular nature included those for the maintenance of bridges over the River Dove at Eggington, the River Trent at Parva Ridware, Wychnor, and Burton, and over the River Tame at Salters Bridge (east of Alrewas). Personal bequests were made to servants and to the children of his son Master Ralph and of people who were either relatives or friends.

Four men were named as executors²⁰ and, in addition, Ralph named his friend Ralph of Sheepy as a counsellor.²¹ The document was folded and sealed close with five seals appended on tags.²² The seals belonged presumably to the testator himself and the executors. The will was proved, less than a month after it had been made, before the official of the archdeacon of Leicester, possibly because Ralph had died in the archdeaconry. In addition, that proof was confirmed by the official of the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. The seal of one of the officials (possibly that of the bishop) was applied to the dorse of the document; it no longer survives, but a vesica-shaped mark indicates its position.

TRANSLATION OF TEXT

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. I, Ralph de Burgo, being of sound mind (*in bona prosperitate mentis constitutus*) by the grace of the Saviour, make (*condo*) my testament in the underwritten form:

Firstly, I commend my soul to God and Blessed Mary and all the saints, then my body for burial in the priory of St. Thomas next to Stafford before the altar of St. Augustine next to the tomb (*sepulcuram*) of my wife Felice, and my two best (*meliores*) horses accompanying my body (*coram corpore meo*) wherever it is buried.

Item, to each parish church where I have a house (*mansionem*) the best ox of those I have there, as a mortuary (*nomine principalis*).

Item, for my exequies and for giving alms £10.

Item, to the fabric of the church of Lichefeld' 6s. &d.

17 *SHC*xvi. 248.

18 On the subject see M. M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts 6, Toronto, 1963).

19 The Lichfield Franciscans were also to get money (possibly a debt owed to the testator) by the hand of Master John of Craven. Craven was a canon of Lichfield cathedral: *SHC* 1924, no. 26 (p. 12).

20 One of them, Bro. Nicholas, is described as subprior of St. Thomas's, although elsewhere in March and November 1293 a man of the same name was styled prior: Staffordshire Record Office 938, no. 119, 274.

21 Either Magna Sheepy or Parva Sheepy (Leics.).

22 Traces of wax survive on three of the tags.

- Item, to the church of Waleton 2*.
- Item, to the church of TatenhulF 12d.
- Item, to the church of Scheyle 12d.
- Item, to the church of Rideware 1 Id.
- Item, to the friars minor [Franciscans] of Lichefeld' the 40y. which they shall receive from *magister* John of Crave[n].
- Item, to the friars minor of Stafford 2s.
- Item, to the friars preacher [Dominicans] of Newcastle (*Novo Castro*) 3s. *Ad.*
- Item, to the friars preacher of Derby 3s. *Ad.*
- Item, for maintaining the clapper (*batello*) [of the church bell] of Walton 12d.
- Item, to a certain chaplain for celebrating for two years divine services for my soul where my body is buried and [for the souls] of my benefactors and of everyone from whom I have taken goods and not paid them back 8 marks.
- Item, to the parish chaplains of Scheyle, Walton, Tatenhull', [and] Rideware 12d. each.
- Item, to Agnes daughter of Nicholas of Finderne 6s. &d.
- Item, to the children (*pueris*) of William of Doneston the elder 6s. 8d.
- Item, in support of the Holy Land when [one of] the community shall go there 6s. &d.
- Item, to the bridge of Burton 12d.
- Item, to the bridges of Eginton, Whichenouere, Salteresbrige, and Parva Rideware 6d. each.
- Item, to the house of St. John of Lichefeld' 25.
- Item, to the fabric of the church of Burton 6*. 8d.
- Item, to the boys of William of Colton 6s. &d.
- Item, to the boys of John Griffin 6s. 8d.
- Item, to dominus Thomas of Walton chaplain for his service 13s. *Ad.*
- Item, to Margery of Rideware for her service 13s. *Ad.*
- Item, to Robert of Finderne 5 marks.
- Item, I leave from the 18 marks owed to me by William Griffin and his wife Eleanor (*Alienoram*) and payable (*soluendis*) in three years, 4 marks to the friars minor of Lichefeld.
- Item, to Robert of Finderne 6 marks.
- Item, to the children of my son *magister* Ralph 40[^]., and the residue for distribution at the discretion of my executors both to the said boys and to other friends and the poor, to the extent my goods will allow (*secundum quod bona mea poterunt sufficere*).
- For ordaining, executing, [and] distributing all these things, I make, name, and constitute as my executors Brother Nicholas, subprior of St. Thomas next to Stafford, *dominus* Richard Walran chaplain, Walter of Stretton, [and] Robert of Finderne.
- I also wish that all the ordinance and distribution of goods of my present testament shall be done with the advice (*per consilium*) of my dear friend Ralph of Schepe clerk.
- This testament of mine was made on Friday on the feast of St. Vincent the martyr A.D. 1293 [22 January 1293/4].

Dorse

This testament was proved before us, the official of the lord archdeacon of Leyc', on the morrow of [the feast of] St. Scholastica the virgin A.D. 1293 [11 February 1293/4], and we commit to the named executors, namely Walter of Stretton' and Robert of Finderne, the administration of goods of the same deceased man in the customary form. To this same testament [we *struck through*] legitimately proved, we, the official of the venerable father lord R. by grace of God bishop of Coventr' and Lych', affix our seal.

MASTER JOHN OF BURCESTRE AND THE CASTLES OF STAFFORD AND MAXSTOKE

M. J. B. HISLOP (with A. M. Hislop)

In the sphere of medieval castle design, whilst it may seem axiomatic that both military effectiveness and domestic convenience should have taken precedence over aesthetic considerations, it is nevertheless true that from the later 13th century onwards, the builders of some English castles were very much concerned with symmetry and architectural effect. Few of these castle architects have been studied in depth. Exceptions are Master James of St. George, who superintended Edward I's castle-building programme in Wales,¹ and John Lewyn, master mason to the bishop and priory of Durham during the later 14th century.² These studies were facilitated by the fact that documentary references survived in unusually large numbers; more often than not, our glimpse of these men is tantalizingly brief. A case in point is the subject of this paper, the master mason John of Burcestre, whose former existence is known to us from a single reference, but whose work suggests an architect of note, worthy of further consideration.

THE INDENTURE

On 13 January 1348 an indenture was drawn up at Stafford Castle between Master John of Burcestre and Ralph, Lord Stafford, in which the former agreed to build 'a castle on the motte'.³ It was to have towers, halls, chambers, a chapel, garderobes, chimneys, vices, windows, doors, gates, and vaults, and these items, together with the length, width, and height, were to be built according to the 'device and ordinance' of Lord Stafford. This document, which clearly refers to the great tower known as the 'Keep' on top of the Norman motte, has been described as 'hardly a contract so much as a vague and jejune note',⁴ and indeed, few clues as to the nature of the proposed building can be gleaned from it. The only precise specifications are that the towers were to rise 10 ft. above the main building, and that the wall was to be 7 ft. thick at the base. In contrast to the paucity of information about the building, however, the stipulations concerning the rates of payment, and the provision and transport of materials and equipment, are surprisingly detailed. Thus, John of Burcestre was to receive 5 marks for each perch of 24 ft. In addition, Lord Stafford was to provide building materials and equipment, and have them transported to the foot of the motte; he also undertook to supply Burcestre and his men with domestic fuel, as well as hay for Burcestre's horse. John of Burcestre, on the other hand, was to be responsible for transporting the materials and equipment to the building site on top of the motte.

The anomalous treatment of these two aspects of the indenture is explicable if one accepts that the principal purpose of the document was to define the obligations of the two parties insofar as they would have affected the financial side of the undertaking. In this light, the inclusion of the measurements relating to the thickness of the walls and the heights of the towers no longer seems arbitrary. Both items probably relate to cost, and without them the master mason would have been unable to produce an accurate estimate for the job. The stipulated wall-thickness provides additional information about the size of each 24-ft. perch, and the amount by which the towers were to rise above the main building was presumably given to clarify that payment for them was to be included in the general piece-work rate. However, if the intention was that only those specifications which might elucidate the rate of payment were to be included in the indenture, we must account for the omission of the intended height of the building, for without knowing that John of Burcestre would have been very much in the dark as to what he was taking on. We must, therefore, assume that this item, which was

1 A. J. Taylor, 'Master James of St. George', *English Historical Review* lxxv (1950), 433-47; idem, 'The Castle of St. Georges-D'Esperanche', *Antiquaries Journal* xxxiii (1953), 33-47.

2 Malcolm J. B. Hislop, 'John Lewyn and the Architecture of the Northern Counties, 1360-1400', unpublished University of Nottingham Ph.D. thesis, 1989.

3 The indenture, which is written in French, survives in the form of a 16th-century copy: Staffordshire Record Office, D. (W.) 1721/1/11, p. 207. For a transcript see L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (1952), 438-9. A translation is provided at the end of this article.

4 Salzman, *Building in England*, 438.

one of those to be determined according to the 'device and ordinance' of Lord Stafford, had already been fixed. It is possible that if the number of storeys had been determined, that would have provided enough information for an experienced master mason to make an accurate estimation of height. As to the absence of further specifications pertaining to the design of the building, the indenture suggests that Lord Stafford was to have determined these, but an examination of the Keep itself leads to a quite different conclusion.

THE DESIGN OF STAFFORD CASTLE KEEP

The tower erected for Ralph, Lord Stafford, under the indenture of 1348 was demolished by Parliamentary order in 1643-4,⁵ and although it was partially reconstructed by the Jerningham family in the early 19th century,⁶ subsequent neglect led to demolition again in the 1960s and consolidation of the building as a ruin. Fortunately, a plan was made *c.* 1806 prior to the Jerningham restoration,⁷ and recent archaeological work has confirmed that substantial amounts of medieval stonework remain *in situ*, so that much of the 14th-century layout at ground level can be reconstructed with accuracy.⁸

The plan shows a rectangular building divided into three rooms by two transverse partition walls. There are octagonal corner towers, and a semi-octagonal tower in the centre of one of the long sides.⁹ One is immediately impressed by the regularity of the lay-out, for although dimensions taken from the plan of *c.* 1806, and measurement of the Keep itself, reveal some minor deviations from the symmetry of the building, they do little to detract from the theory advanced in this paper that the Keep was laid out according to a proportional system based on two separate units of measurement.

The Keep is aligned roughly east-west.¹⁰ Including the towers, it has an overall length of 145 ft. The south-east and the south-west towers are each 29 ft. wide. The destruction, above ground level, of the tower that formerly stood in the centre of the south front means that it cannot be measured accurately, but reference to the plan of *c.* 1806 shows that it was virtually equal in width to the other two southern towers, so that the south front must have comprised five equal bays.¹¹ The north-east tower is 28 '4 ft. wide, and like the two surviving southern towers was a regular octagon in plan. Only the north-west tower deviates from such regularity: whereas the sides of the other three towers range in length from 11 ft. 10 ins. to 12 ft. '4 in., the north-west side of the north-west tower is 13 ft. 5 ins. long and its north and north-east sides each 12 ft. 3 ins.

Both internal partition walls have been destroyed, but the distance from the east face of the east wall of the main block to the west face of the eastern partition wall appears from the plan to have been approximately 29 ft. The distances from the east face of the eastern towers to the east face of the eastern partition wall, and from the west face of the western towers to the west face of the western partition wall, appear to have been calculated using the proportion of 1 to the square root of 2, a formula widely used in church design during the Middle Ages and based on the relationship of the side of a square to its diagonal.¹² Each of the two measurements seems to have been equal to the diagonal of a 29 ft. square (i.e. 41 ft.).

The other principal measurements, however, were not based on a 29-ft. unit. The overall width of the Keep, including the towers, is 80 ft., and the main block is 112 ft. long and 46 '4 ft. wide; none of these dimensions bear an obvious relationship to the widths of the towers. This is because a different unit of measurement was used to calculate those distances. According to the plan of *c.* 1806, the width of the

5 *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, v. 85.

6 *Ibid.* 85-6.

7 *Ibid.*, plate facing p. 86. It is redrawn in this article as fig. 1.

8 *Inf.* from Stafford Borough Council.

9 There is no good reason to suppose that the central tower is a later addition to the Keep, as suggested by Charles and Merry Hill, *Stafford Castle, the Medieval Keep - a Discussion Paper* (Stafford Borough Council, n.d.). The authors base their theory on the fact that the entrance to the tower was staggered in order to avoid the fireplace in the centre of the south wall of the Keep. Given the vagaries to which medieval architecture was sometimes subject, this is a somewhat puzzling observation to make.

10 The orientation given in *V.C.H. Staffs.* [see n. 7 above] is back to front: 'north' should read 'south', 'west' should read 'east' etc.

11 Excavations have revealed remnants of the foundations of the central tower, but these are fragmentary and offer no greater accuracy than the plan of *c.* 1806 (*inf.* from Stafford Borough Council).

12 E. Fernie, 'The Ground Plan of Norwich Cathedral and the Square Root of Two', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* exxix (1976), 75-86.

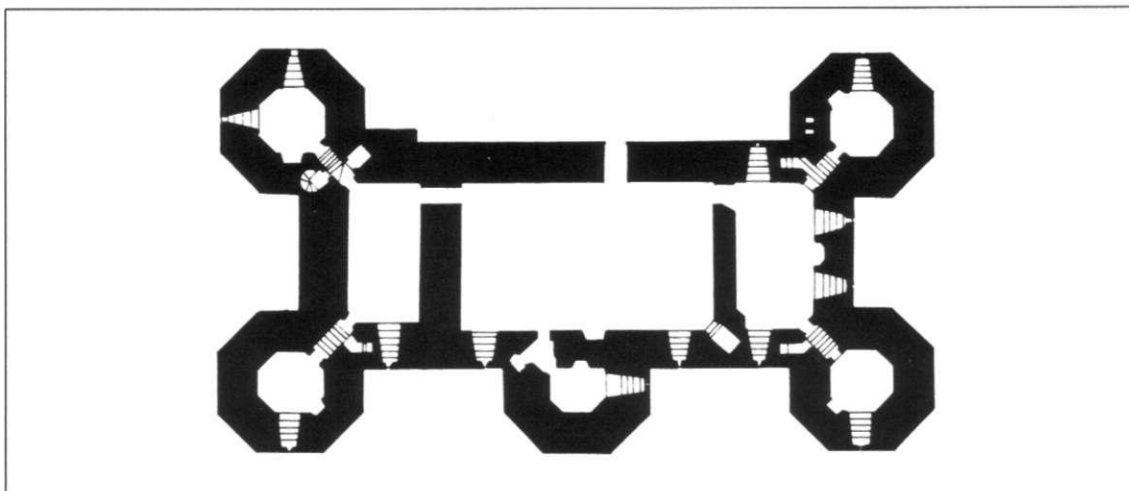


Fig. 1 Stafford Castle: ground plan of the keep c. 1806

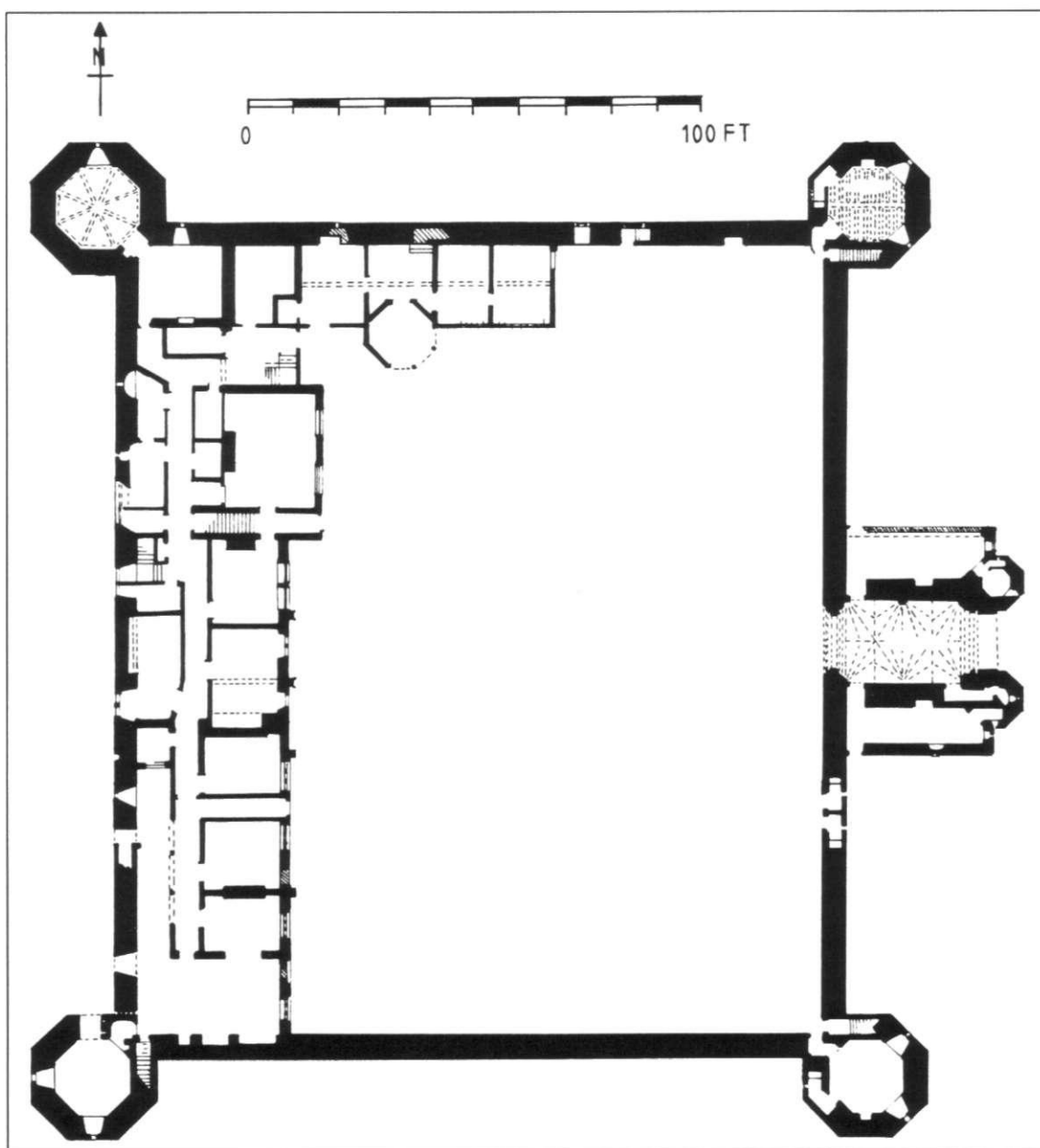


Fig. 2 Maxstoke Castle: ground plan (after Alcock *et al.*)

main block at its west end was 48 ft., slightly wider than the rest of the building. Indeed, the north wall is stepped at the position of the western partition wall, and all the outer walls of the western room are noticeably thicker than elsewhere. It has been suggested that this phenomenon may be the result of the incorporation of an earlier tower into the 14th-century Keep.¹³ Now, 48 ft. is divisible by three units of 16 ft., and 16 ft. multiplied by seven equals 112 ft., which is the length of the main block. The eastern room was 16 ft. wide, according to a note on the plan of c. 1806, and 16 ft. is the amount by which the towers project from the main block, so that at 80 ft. the overall width of the Keep is equal to 16 ft. multiplied by 5. Thus, the overall width of the Keep and the length of the main block are in the proportion of 1 to the square root of 2. Now, 16 ft. multiplied by the square root of 2 equals 22 ¹/₄ ft., which is the distance between the two eastern towers; the distance between the two western towers is only slightly greater at 23 ft., a discrepancy that may be related to the irregularity of the north-west tower compared with the rest of the building.

The use of proportional systems of measurement probably accounts for the lack of detail concerning the Keep in the indenture: it simply wasn't necessary. Consequently, it must have been the master mason, John of Burcestre, who determined the lay-out, even though Ralph, Lord Stafford, may have outlined the accommodation he required and pointed out models for Burcestre to emulate. The very architectural approach to design encountered in the plan was echoed in the treatment of the south front with its arrangement of five equal bays articulated by three towers, which must have produced a formal facade intended to achieve monumental effect. This theory is borne out by the orientation of the south front towards the oncoming traffic of the main road from the west. The dominating position of the Keep at the summit of the motte would have ensured that it was clearly visible to all travellers approaching Stafford along this thoroughfare.

The plan of c. 1806 suggests that the internal planning was a product of the same disciplined approach that characterized the outward appearance of the Keep. In questioning the accuracy of the plan, Cameron Moffett states 'It is unlikely ... that the towers were not each provided with their own spire [*sic*], whereas in the c. 1806 plan there is one staircase (in the angle of the north-west tower) to serve the entire building'. This is to misunderstand the exact and exclusive nature of the accommodation.¹⁴ The large central room was undoubtedly a hall, and it served as a focus for what were probably bed chambers in the central southern tower and the two western towers. The hall also gave access to the suite of rooms at the east end of the building, which itself consisted of a well-lit private hall and two bed chambers (one in each of the two towers). Access from there to the upper stories would have compromised the private character of both this suite and its socially more important counterpart, which presumably occupied a similar position on the first floor.

Judging by its lack of facilities, the chamber at the west end of the main block was probably a guardroom and service area, acting as a place of transit for those seeking access to the more important rooms on the first floor *via* the staircase in the north-west tower, or for servants bearing eatables from the kitchen, which probably occupied the first floor of one of the western towers. The staircase would also have communicated with the west end of the main block at first floor level, where one might expect an arrangement similar to that of the ground plan. A second staircase at this end of the building would have been superfluous.

THE AFFINITIES OF THE DESIGN

This analysis of the design of the Keep reveals that it was an important piece of medieval domestic architecture, and that its designer, who is otherwise unrecorded, was an architect of considerable skill.

13 C. Hill and M. Hill, *Stafford Castle*, 2. Cameron Moffett has challenged this theory in *Stafford Castle Keep Survey: Stafford Castle Archive Report* (Stafford Borough Council, June 1992). She states there that 'the offsets in the external face of the north wall and the internal face of the south wall, on which Hill has based his thesis do not exist in the surviving structure', and that the 'main west wall, which is shown on the c. 1806 plan as being substantially thicker than the main east wall is only 100 mm. thicker than its eastern counterpart on the 1983 survey'. Given that the north wall was entirely rebuilt in the 19th century, and that the area immediately outside it has not been excavated, there seems to be no justification for contending that the plan of c. 1806 is inaccurate in respect of the off-set in its north face. Regarding the thickness of the west wall, two points need to be made: firstly, the statement that the wall is only 100 mm. thicker than the east wall is contradicted by reference to the 1983 plan, which shows a west wall between 1 and 1 ¹/₄ ft. thicker than both the east and south walls; secondly, the thickness of the 14th-century east wall has not been established with accuracy.

14 See P. A. Faulkner, 'Castle Planning in the Fourteenth Century', *Archaeological Journal* exx (1963), 215-35.

It is therefore doubly regrettable that the work of the demolition gangs should have been carried out to such devastating effect, so that we have been left with only a limited understanding of John of Burcestre's only known work. Any building, therefore, which may be conjectured to have been a product of the same school of masoncraft, even if not of the same master mason, is of great interest, as it could prove invaluable in contributing to a more detailed reconstruction of the Keep and to a greater comprehension of Master John of Burcestre's career.

As a type, the Keep belongs to the group of fortified hall houses with four corner towers and elevated principal chambers, which were a characteristic development of 13th- and 14th-century Northumberland.¹⁵ The house that formed the nucleus of Edlingham Castle, some 5 miles south-west of Alnwick, probably bore the greatest superficial resemblance to Stafford, owing to the fact that it was provided with octagonal corner towers. The building was almost certainly in existence in 1332,¹⁶ when Ralph, Lord Stafford, made his way north to take part in Balliol's expedition in Scotland, a country in which he saw further service in 1336 and 1337.¹⁷ Perhaps buildings like Edlingham were in his mind when he stipulated that the Stafford Keep was to be built according to his 'device and ordinance'.

Though the broad concept may have been Lord Stafford's, the technical approach was undoubtedly John of Burcestre's. For this reason, a more local structure, even though it is a quite different building type, probably provides a more exact analogue. Maxstoke Castle in Warwickshire, for which William Clinton, earl of Huntingdon, obtained a licence to crenellate in 1345,¹⁸ lies 30 miles south-east of Stafford. It is a quadrangular courtyard castle, but the two most striking aspects of its design - the octagonal towers which project boldly from the four corners of the building, and the regularity of the plan - are exactly those elements that make the greatest contribution to the character of the Stafford Keep. In addition, there are clear signs that a proportional system of measurement was employed in the formulation of the plan, as the dimensions of the corner towers are related to those of the main body of the castle. The latter measures 184/2 ft. from north to south and 160 Vi ft. from east to west. The north-east, south-east, and south-west towers are each 26 ft. 9 ins. wide, but the north-west tower is larger at 30 ft. 9 ins.¹⁹ Now, 26 ft. 9 ins. multiplied by 6 equals 160'A ft. (the width of the castle), and 30 ft. 9 ins. multiplied by 6 equals 184 'A ft. (the length of the castle). Another indication that symmetry was intended is that the gatehouse (excluding the octagonal turrets that augment its outer corners) projects from the centre of the east curtain by 34 ft., a measurement that is equalled by the width of the west range.

Such correlations are symptomatic of the scrupulous architectural approach to the planning of Maxstoke, in which N. W. Alcock and others have discerned 'the hand of a master architect, working with the highest possible skill'.²⁰ A quality such as this is rare in castle building, but it is one that is shared by the Stafford Keep. When viewed in the knowledge that the two castles are only 30 miles apart, and that they were begun within three years of one another,²¹ it is difficult to conclude that they were designed in isolation. Serious consideration must be given to the theory that Master John of Burcestre was the designer of both castles, as it is reasonable to believe that the two patrons, Ralph, Lord Stafford, and the earl of Huntingdon, were known to each other. Apart from their being close neighbours and contemporaries, both had successful careers in the king's service, and their presence at Court certainly overlapped in 1337. Both fought at the battle of Sluys in 1340, and both took part in the Crecy campaign of 1346.²² It is, therefore, possible that Master John of Burcestre entered Lord Stafford's employ as a result of a personal recommendation from Huntingdon.

15 e.g. Dally (1237), Tarsset (1267), Edlingham (c. 1300), Haughton (13th cent., remodelled in the 14th cent.), and Langley (13th cent., remodelled in the 14th cent.).

16 G. Fairclough, 'Edlingham Castle, Northumberland: an interim account of excavations, 1978-82', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, n.s. xxviii (1984), 40-60.

17 *D.N.B.*; G. E. R. Cross, *The Complete Peerage*, xii (1), 174.

18 *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1343-45, 444.

19 It is also greater in height than the other three towers, giving rise to a suspicion that the intention of the builder was to suggest a great tower or keep.

20 N. W. Alcock, P. A. Faulkner, and S. R. Jones, with a contribution by G. M. D. Booth, 'Maxstoke Castle, Warwickshire', *Archaeological Journal*, cxxxv (1978), 195.

21 There is no good reason for the suggestion of Alcock *et al.* (*ibid.* 196) that the 'castle was probably substantially complete by 1344'. The wording of the licence to crenellate indicates otherwise: 'Licence for William de Clynton, earl of Huntingdon, to crenellate a dwelling place to be built in Maxstok ...'

22 For the career of Ralph, Lord Stafford, see *D.N.B.* and *The Complete Peerage*. The latter also treats the earl of Huntingdon.

At Maxstoke, the architect took a balanced approach in which the military and domestic aspects of the castle formed integral parts of a unified composition. Alcock and others have emphasized the very ordered and specific domestic planning,²³ but there can be no doubt that Maxstoke was also intended to fulfil a martial role. It is surrounded by a water-filled moat; meurtrières and a portcullis protected the entrance to the gate passage, and the crenellated parapets and projecting towers provided strategic fortified vantage points from which the defenders could direct fusillades against assailants. These aspects, however, are tempered visually by an unusually high level of decoration. The stellar vault over the gate passage incorporates carved bosses at the intersections of the ribs; the castle is liberally provided with cusped ogee-headed windows; and the great six-light window has an up-to-date tracery pattern, essentially Decorated but showing an awareness of the nascent Perpendicular style. Even the battlemented parapet is given a less bellicose appearance by the moulded parapet band and merlon copings, and by the carved drainage spouts that are found along its length.

All this is in keeping with the aesthetic considerations that influenced the plan, and it is possible that the Stafford Keep had similar detailing. Both buildings were erected with an eye to outward display: prestige was no doubt an important motive in the Age of Chivalry. In their military careers under Edward III, the men who caused Maxstoke and Stafford to be built had both lived up to the spirit of the age; it was appropriate that their houses should live up to their names.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are owed to Stafford Borough Council for providing unpublished material pertaining to their archaeological investigation of the Keep, and for access to those parts of the Keep itself which are not generally open to the public; to Mr. and Mrs. M. Featherstone-Dilke for permission to visit and measure Maxstoke; and to Mrs. P. Thomson of the William Salt Library, Stafford, for her helpful suggestions concerning the documentary sources.

TRANSLATION OF THE INDENTURE

(by A. M. Hislop)

This indenture is made between Monsieur Ralph, baron of Stafford, on the one hand and Master John of Burcestre, mason, on the other. Witness that it is settled between them that the said Master John will build a castle on the motte in the manner (*deinz la maniere*)²⁴ of length and breadth and height, with towers, halls, chambers, chapel, garderobes, chimneys, vices, windows, doors, and gates, together with vaults, according to the device and ordinance of the said Monsieur Ralph, and that all the towers should be 10 ft. higher than the hall and chambers, and that the base (*comencement*)²⁵ of the wall should be 7 royal ft. wide without plinths and string-courses, taking 5 marks for each perch of royal feet, and the perch is 24 ft.; and that the vices, vaults, windows, chimneys, and doors should be measured by all the surfaces inside the walls (*totz lours planes de deinz le miure*).²⁶ And that the said Monsieur Ralph will transport stone, sand, and lime as far as the foot of the motte, and the said Monsieur Ralph will find scaffolding, ladders, hurdles, barrows, buckets, gins, cables, and vessels necessary for the work, fuel for his [Master John's] lodging and that of his people, and hay for his

23 Alcock *et al.*, 'Maxstoke Castle'.

24 Salzman misread this phrase as *deinz la maniere*, from which he derived 'in the manor' and assumed that the additional words *de Stafford* had been omitted in the transcript. A comparable phraseology is used in the contract for Bolton Castle: 'the said John will make the works at Bolton in Wensleydale in the following manner (*en menere quensuit*): Salzman, *Building in England*, 454-6.

25 T. J. de Mazinghi translated the word *comencement* as 'top (crowning)', having presumably misread it as *couronnement* (i.e. crowning): 'Hist. of the Manor and Parish of Castre' or Castle Church', in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* (William Salt Archaeological Society), viii (2), 81. This misreading may be the origin of Salter's belief that the indenture provided for a machicolated parapet: M. Salter, *The Castles and Moated Mansions of Staffordshire and the West Midlands County* (Wolverhampton, 1989), 28.

26 This ambiguous phrase appears to qualify the rate of payment, by recognizing that these items ('all the surfaces inside the walls') are at supplementary cost to the rate mentioned.

horse. And the said Master [John] will transport the stone, sand, and all other things necessary pertaining to the work, from the foot of the motte to the summit at his own cost until the work of the said castle is complete. In witness of which, the aforesaid parties have interchangeably put their seals to these indentures. And because the seal of Monsieur Ralph is not at hand, the seals of Master William of Colton and of John of Pikstoke are affixed. Written at the castle of Stafford on St. Hilary's day 21 Edward III [13 January 1347/8].

POST-MEDIEVAL GLAZED COARSEWARE FROM WEST BROMWICH MANOR HOUSE

M. A HODDER

INTRODUCTION

Post-medieval glazed coarseware is the most common pottery type in the assemblage of objects found in the moat of West Bromwich Manor House (Nat. Grid Ref. SP 005943) during its restoration in the 1950s and 1960s. The assemblage also contains medieval pottery and other post-medieval types, including Blackwares, Yellow Wares, and tin-glazed (Hodder 1990). Most of the pottery and other objects are stored in Wednesbury Art Gallery and Museum; a sample is on display at the Manor House itself.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The fabric is a buff or orange colour and contains a few quartz grains, many small soft red and black inclusions, and some angular large white inclusions. All of the sherds have an exterior and interior maroon slip, and an interior brown or black glaze. Analysis was restricted to sherds which included parts of rims or bases, and to vessels reconstructed by joining sherds. Vessel forms were identified from sherds, the size ranges of each vessel form were measured, and the relative quantities of different form types in the assemblage were assessed by sherd weight and number. Complete or near-complete vessels constructed from joining sherds were not included in the weight or numerical quantification. Table 1 shows that the assemblage consists predominantly of sherds of jars and pancheon-type bowls or dishes. Other forms are represented by a few sherds only.

TABLE 1

<i>Vessel form</i>	<i>No. of sherds</i>	<i>Wt. of sherds (g.)</i>
Jar	222	50710
Bowl	222	62700
Dish	16	1900
Others	16	1950
	480	117260

JARS (fig. 1, no. 1)

These are thick-walled slightly globular vessels with a carinated neck and expanded rim. Complete vessels are c. 300 mm. high and have a rim diameter of 190 to 220 mm. and a base diameter of 230 to 260 mm. Rim sherds are from vessels 160 to 220 mm. in diameter, and base sherds are mainly from vessels 180 to 220 mm. in diameter, suggesting the presence of smaller vessels of this form.

BOWLS (fig. 1, nos. 2 and 3)

These are pancheon-type bowls with everted rims and flaring sides, occurring in two sizes. The larger vessels (e.g. no. 2) are up to 170 mm. high and have a rim diameter of up to 490 mm. and a base diameter of up to 240 mm. There is a sharp angle between the rim and body on the inside of the vessel, but on the outside the profile is often unbroken. Both complete vessels and rim sherds are often misshapen. The smaller vessels (e.g. no. 3) are about 80 mm. high and have a rim diameter of 310 mm. and a base diameter of 200 mm. There is a horizontal handle on the side of the vessel. The smaller

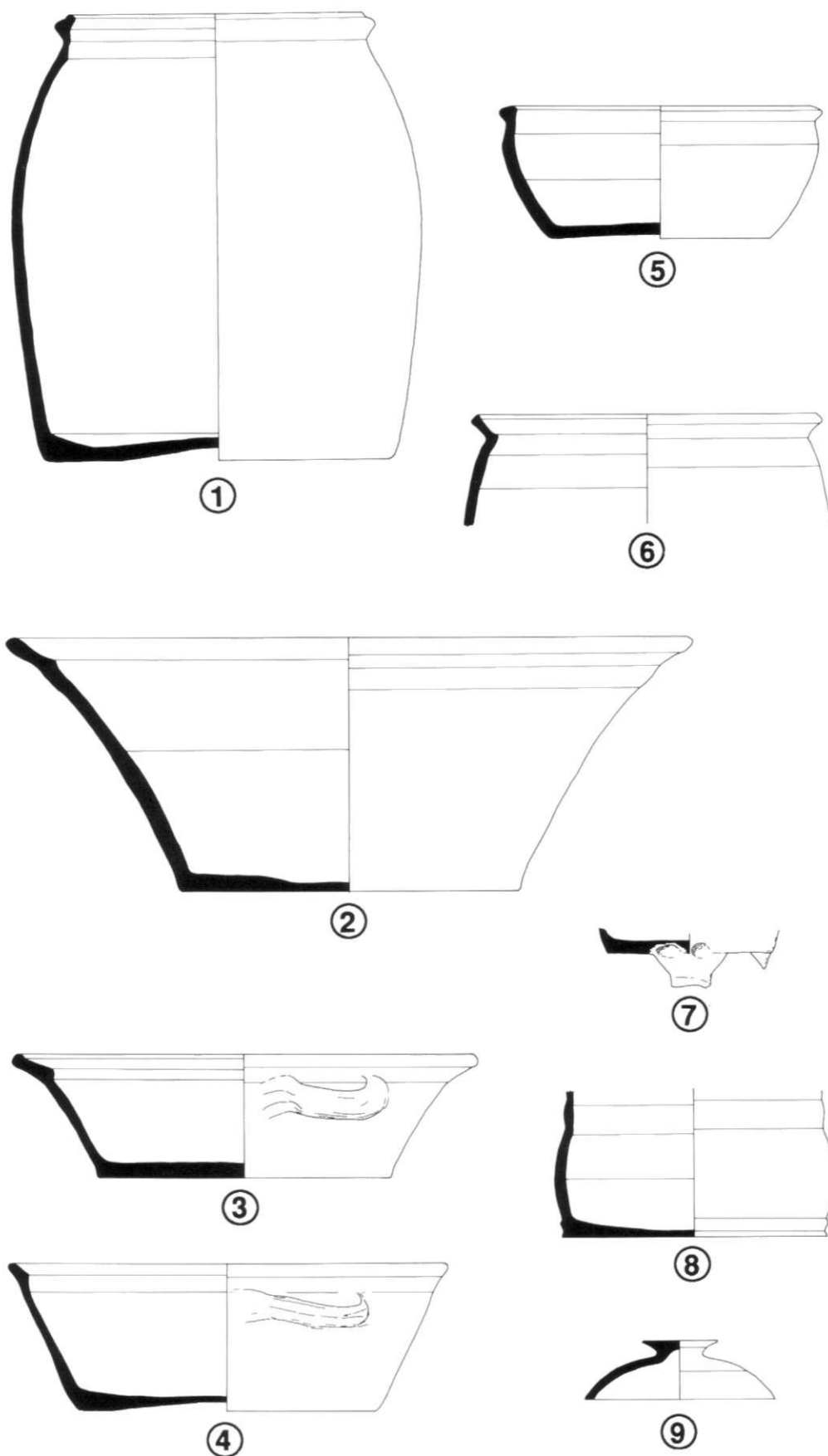


Fig. 1 Post-medieval glazed coarseware from West Bromwich Manor House

bowls are better made than the larger, and they have smaller, more sharply formed rims. Rim sherds from bowls are from vessels 210 mm. to over 360 mm. in diameter, the larger being more common. Base sherds of bowls are mainly from vessels 200 mm. to 240 mm. in diameter.

OTHERS (fig. 1, nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9)

Other than jars or bowls, the most common vessel is a shallow dish with slightly flaring sides and an expanded angular or beaded rim. One example has a horizontal handle (no. 4). Sherds are from vessels with rim diameters ranging from 190 to 320 mm. and a base diameter of 180 to 200 mm. There are two large joining sherds of a shallow dish with near slightly bowed sides, and a rounded rim (no. 5). It is 90 mm. high and has a rim diameter of 180 mm. and a base diameter of 150 mm. Sherds of a jar which is everted and slightly curving are most commonly from vessels with a rim diameter of 160 mm., but up to 230 mm. (no. 6). There are single sherds of three rims: a slightly everted and incurving rim from a bowl, with a rim diameter of greater than 370 mm.; an angular expanded rim from a jar; and an angular expanded rim from a vessel with flaring sides. No measures of diameter could be made on the last two. The assemblage also includes a biconical handled lid, a strainer base, and a tripod base (respectively nos. 7, 8, and 9). All three are unglazed and therefore are not strictly 'glazed coarseware' as defined above. The lid may be 'orange ware' (Hodder 1990, 37).

DISCUSSION

Although it has yet to be proved petrologically, the glazed coarseware vessels from West Bromwich Manor House were almost certainly made at Wednesbury, only a mile away. Glazed coarseware was the predominant type among the wasters overlying the kiln excavated at Market Place there (Hodder 1992), which also included Blackware and Midlands Yellow Ware. Pancheon-type bowls were the most common glazed coarseware form. Bowl rim diameters at Market Place ranged from 320 to 420 mm., suggesting that both sizes of bowl were manufactured. Jars at Market Place had rim diameters of 160 to 210 mm. The Market Place assemblage also included handled cordoned bowls, which are absent from the Manor House. At Dudley Castle, mid 17th-century deposits contained large quantities of glazed coarseware (Ratkai 1987). Pancheon-type bowls occurred in both of the rim forms identified at the Manor House, and their rim diameters ranged from 270 to 560 mm. Jars at Dudley Castle had rim diameters of 170 to 180 mm. At Sandwell Priory in West Bromwich there was much glazed coarseware, particularly in a 17th-century midden deposit. In addition to pancheon-type bowls with the two rim forms identified at the Manor House, there were also vessels with rarer rim forms, such as the angular jar rim (Hodder 1991, particularly fig. 51, type 20/21). The Oakeswell Hall site in Wednesbury produced, in addition to bowl and jar forms, a strainer base (Hodder and Glazebrook 1987, fig. 7).

The associations of the glazed coarseware bowls and jars at Wednesbury, Dudley Castle, and Sandwell Priory suggest that they are predominantly 17th-century in date. Pancheon-type bowls and jars are consistently the most common vessel forms. The bowls could be used for separating or mixing, or for washing (Brown 1979, 92), and the jars for storage. The rim form of the jars facilitated a tied cover, and some jar rims could have accommodated a lid like that found at the Manor House. Both vessel forms could have been used in a kitchen, for mixing and storing foodstuffs, or in a dairy, where curds and whey would have been separated in a bowl and milk, butter, or cheese stored in a jar. The strainer from the Manor House could also have been used in cheese making. The handled cordoned bowls which occur at the Market Place kiln site and at Oakeswell Hall were probably chamber pots; at the Manor House their place is taken by tin-glazed handled bowls made outside the region, reflecting the social status of the site's owners.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to Rebecca Hodgetts for her assistance in sorting and quantifying the pottery.

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POST-MEDIEVAL GLASS FROM WEST BROMWICH MANOR HOUSE

W. D. COCROFT

SUMMARY

This report forms part of a continuing series on the finds recovered during the restoration of West Bromwich Manor House in the late 1950s and 1960s. The majority of the glass dates from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, providing a vivid insight into the material and social aspirations of the local gentry in Staffordshire. The glass, along with a more detailed archive report, is deposited at Wednesbury Art Gallery and Museum (site code WBMH).

THE MANOR HOUSE

West Bromwich Manor House, a timber-framed building set on a moated platform, has been shown to originate in the late 13th century (Jones 1977, 1-63; Hodder 1990, 35-8). By the early 16th century the manor and the house were in the possession of the Stanley family, and they remained so until 1626, when the manor was bought by William Stanley's cousin Sir Richard Shelton. Sir Richard, a prominent member of a Birmingham mercantile family, had studied law at the Inner Temple and rose through the patronage of the duke of Buckingham to become solicitor general; he was later elected a M.P. Subsequent to his resignation in 1634, he retired to his house at West Bromwich, where he remained in residence until his death in 1647 (DNB 1938,42-3). The manor and the house then passed to his nephew John Shelton, and a year later to John's son, also called John. By the beginning of the 18th century the family's fortunes had declined to such an extent that the sale of the manor and the house were forced under a Chancery decree. They were sold in 1720 to Sir Samuel Clarke, a London merchant. The house remained in the Clarke family for about a century. After the house was sold in 1823, it fell into decline and was split into multiple occupancy later in the century (Willet 1882,20). The house was purchased by West Bromwich Corporation in 1950 and the work of restoration began in 1957. It was during this restoration work, described by Jones (1977,1-63), and the re-excavation of the moat, that the glass described below was recovered.

THE GLASS

Introduction

In common with the other finds from the Manor House, the majority of the glass was recovered when the moat was re-excavated. Unfortunately no records appear to have been made on the stratigraphic positions of the glass within the moat, nor on the methods used in its recovery. The glass is discussed here by type and a representative group of sherds are illustrated.

Wine bottles (fig. 1)

The majority of the wine bottle fragments recovered represent parts of shaft and globe bottles, the earliest form of wine bottle found in England. Some authors have claimed that the shaft and globe bottle may be found from at least the 1630s and 1640s (Dumbrell 1992,44; Godfrey 1975,228-32), but the evidence from archaeological excavations, notably in Oxford, suggest an appearance for the form a few years before 1650 (Haslam 1984,235). The evidence from dated seals would also seem to point to a date around 1650 for the introduction of this type of wine bottle. The earliest securely dated bottle seals do not appear until the 1650s (Biddle 1988, 344), although earlier examples have been claimed to exist in private collections (Dumbrell 1992, 44).

From the West Bromwich assemblage the earliest form of wine bottle is represented by G023 and G014/G022. The body and shoulder of this early form is typically rounded, while the neck is relatively short and tapering slightly towards its base. The lip of the bottle is simply cracked off, and the string rim is similarly treated crudely as a thick applied trail. Also characteristic of this early date is the thick base with a relatively small rest point diameter and shallow pushup with a well formed pontil mark. These bottles are similar to the earliest bottles found in Oxford dated to the mid 17th century (Haslam 1984, fig. 41, no. 1).

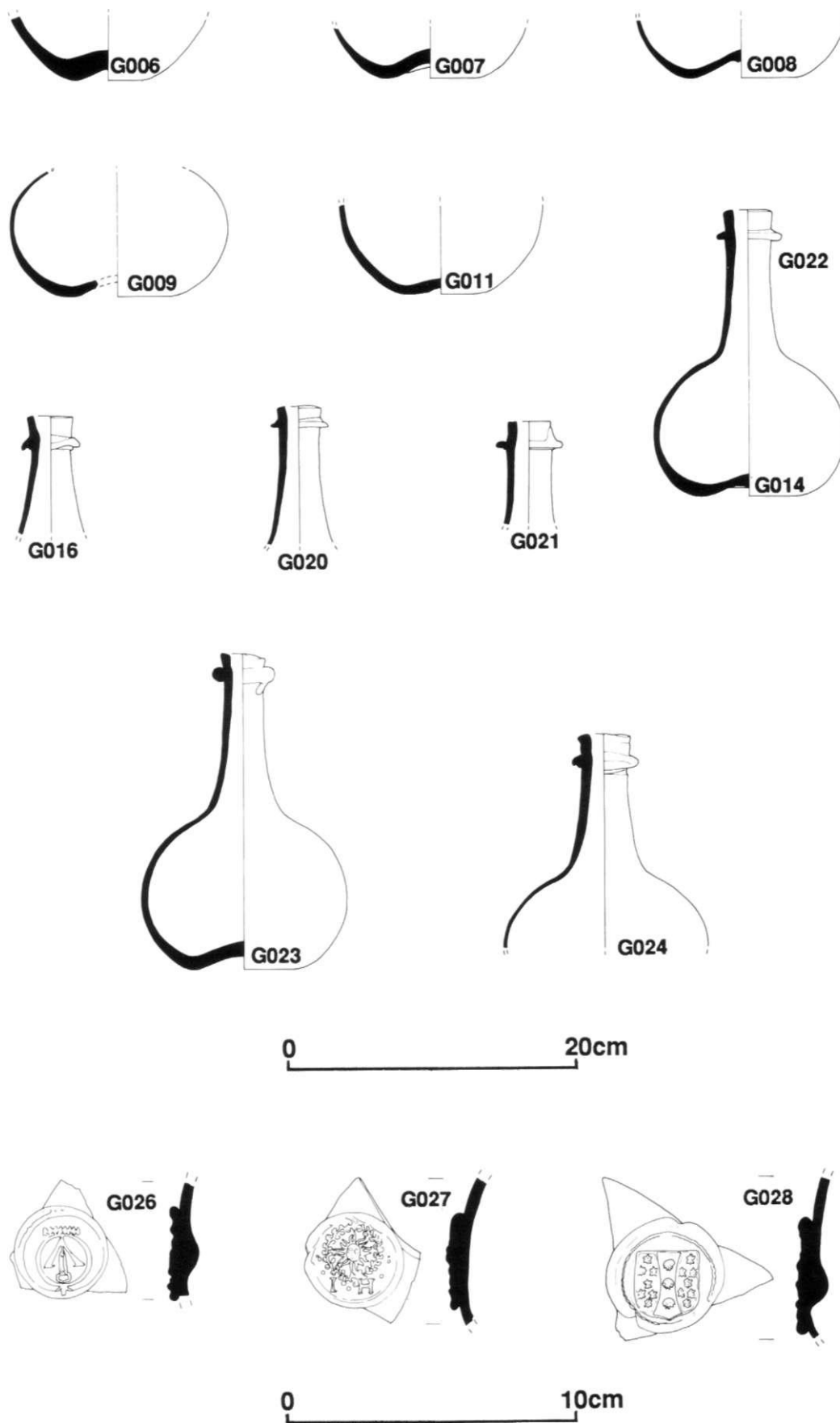


Fig. 1 West Bromwich Manor House: wine bottles and bottle seals

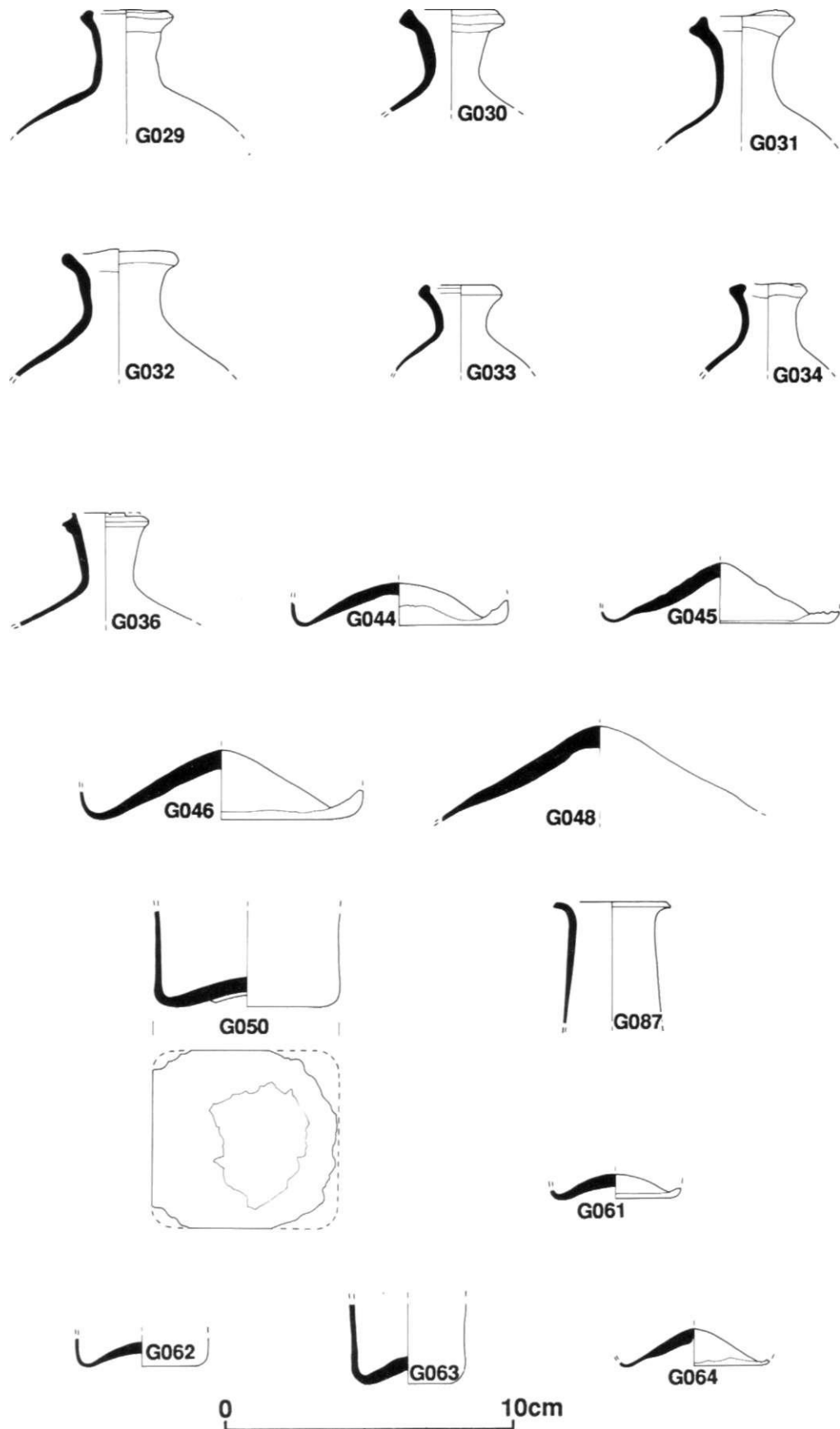


Fig. 2 West Bromwich Manor House: small bottles and phials

Other early wine bottles are more fragmentary. One of the larger pieces, G024, has a squatter neck than the two preceding examples, but it is again distinguished by a cracked off lip and crudely applied trail relatively low down on its neck. The remaining fragments, G020 and G021, display similar characteristics, whilst illustrating variations in the style of the trail. Further variations in the form of the base of these early bottles are illustrated by a small number of base fragments: G006, G007, G008, G009, and G011.

The tapering neck of G016, although still exhibiting a cracked off lip and crudely applied trail, may post-date the earlier examples described above by a couple of decades.

Three bottle seals, G026, G027, and G028, were also recovered (fig. 1). Despite the good preservation of the seals, an insufficient amount of the body was attached to allow an assessment of the shape of the bottles from which they were derived. One of the seals, G026, has a broad arrowhead or harpoon head, which may be a merchant's mark. The other two seals, G027 which has a radiating sun head with the initials T H' and the heraldic seal G028, are probably personal seals.

Small bottles (fig. 2)

Small bottles were blown in metals indicative of both the forest glasshouse tradition and the later houses fired by mineral fuels. These vessels are generally poorly preserved, the majority having lost their upper surface through weathering.

The products of the forest glasshouses are represented by a small number of the more robust neck and base fragments. Forms that were recognised included a tall sea green bottle neck, G087, and small fragments with slightly everted rims, none of which are illustrated.

The other group of small bottles are distinguished from the products of the forest glasshouses by their generally darker green colour and short necks with simple flared lips. Within this group four neck types were recognised. The first group has a flared lip and a short tapering neck with rounded shoulders: G030, G032, and G036. The second group has a flared lip with a short straight neck and the indication of rounded shoulders: G029 and G031. The third type is represented by two necks, G033 and G034, which have thickened flared lips and a short straight neck with rounded shoulders. The fourth type, not illustrated, has an applied down-turned lip with a short neck.

The base fragments derived from small bottles are badly smashed with little indication of the shape of the bottle sides. The pushups, G045, G046, and G048, have the shape of a flattened cone with well formed pontil marks. Another form, illustrated by a single example G044, has a flattened dome shaped pushup and a distinct pontil mark. A single bottle, G050, is square in shape.

The fragments described above represent a group of bottles with a variety of body forms (round, square, or hexagonal) that appeared at the end of the 16th century. Bottles with simple (albeit larger) flared necks were recovered from the Woodchester glasshouse (Glos.) and are dated 159(M615 (Daniels 1950, plate V). Similar forms are also illustrated from Clavells glasshouse at Kimmeridge (Dorset), where they are dated 1618-23 (Crossley 1987, fig. 6). Finds from other excavations, however, suggest that the form was relatively long lived. A group of square bottles with simple flared necks was recovered from the lower fill of a latrine pit dug around 1639 at Waltham Abbey (Charleston 1969, fig. 31). Excavations within Oxford have suggested a date range from c. 1600 to 1675 (Haslam 1984, 237). Larger case bottles were represented by a single fragment, G005 (not illustrated), a type that has been shown to have been in circulation from the beginning of the 17th century (Hume 1961, 106).

Phials (fig. 2)

It is difficult to make a strict separation between bottles which may be classified as phials as opposed to the small bottles described above. Four vessels, however, G061, G062, G063, and G064, may be counted as phials on account of their small basal diameters and, in two cases, the occurrence of near vertical sides. Two have flattened dome shaped pushups, and two have a conical shaped pushups. All four bottles are green.

Jar (fig. 3)

A single example of this relatively unusual form was recovered: G041. This example has a short vertical neck with a slightly splayed well-formed V-shaped rim.

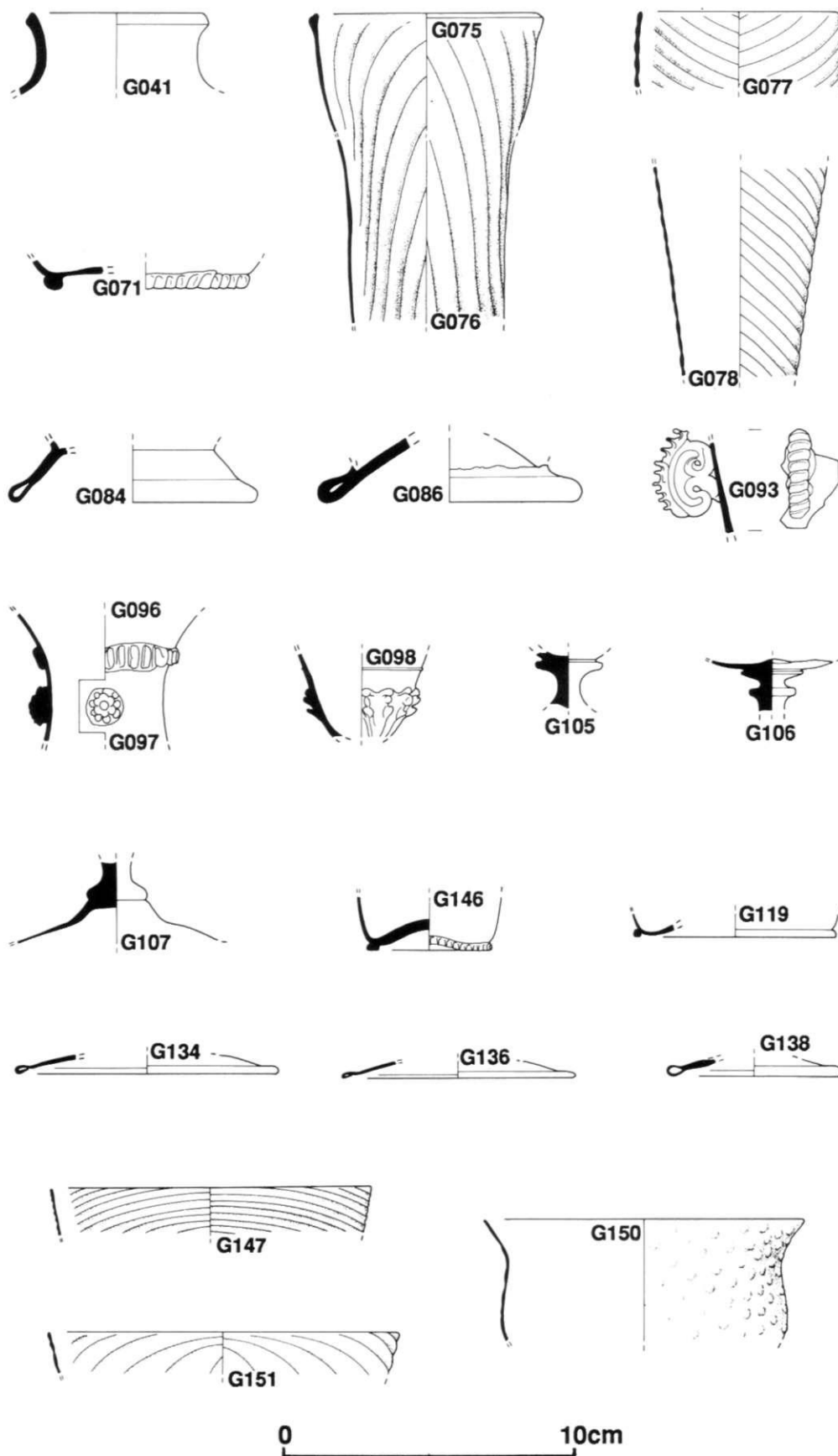


Fig. 3 West Bromwich Manor House: jar and drinking vessels

Drinking Vessels (figs. 3 and 4)

Drinking vessels occur both in forest glass products and finer cristallo glasses. The former are represented by tall ale glasses and the latter principally by various forms of stemwares. Comparatively few forest glass products were recovered from West Bromwich Manor House.

Fragments of tall ale glasses in forest glass are represented by two fragments of relatively robust folded feet with the characteristic pushed up base: G084 and G086. The upper parts of these vessels are relatively straight sided and would have exhibited a form similar to the wrythen decorated body sherd G078 and the wrythen decorated rim fragment G077. A variation in this form is represented by fragments G075 and G076. These sherds are decorated with vertical mould blown ribs. The metal is dark green, lightly bubbled with a hard surface shine. A further form is illustrated by a single base fragment, G071, with a notched cordon decoration. This form is relatively well known from later 16th-century deposits (Hume 1962, 269) and from excavations on late 16th-century glasshouses (Daniels 1950, plates VI and VII; Charleston 1972, figs. 64 and 66).

A number of sherds of cylindrical beakers or ale glasses were also present amongst the finer glass wares. The most complete example is a base, G146, blown in a lightly bubbled clear greyish glass with a relatively small diameter of 43.0 mm. It has a well formed conical pushup with a distinct pontil mark. The base is both strengthened and decorated by an applied milled trail. Cylindrical beakers in a similar metal and with a similar decorated trail have been found at Exeter; they were thought there to be either Dutch or English in origin, dating from around the turn of the 17th century (Charleston 1984, 270-1, nos. 75- 6). A further beaker fragment, G1 19, was blown in a clear colourless glass with a simple rounded trail at the base.

A further variant on the tall ale glass is the Roemer style glass, a type popular on the Continent from the late 16th century and on into the 17th century. Two fragments, G096 and G097, may be identified as parts of the straight sided stem of such a glass, and they are decorated with an applied raspberry prunt and milled trail. The lightness and crizzled appearance of the glass may be indicative of a mid 17th-century English origin, before the perfection of lead crystal by Ravenscroft later in the century.

The majority of the drinking vessels, however, were blown from fine crystal glass, and owing to their fragility are generally badly smashed. No complete forms could be reconstructed from the surviving fragments. Precise dating is therefore difficult. The majority of the sherds, however, may be dated between the end of the 16th century and slightly after the middle of the 17th century.

Amongst the earliest stemwares are a group of vessels decorated with mereses mimicking the form of silver cups of the early 17th century (Moorhouse 1971, 64). G016 has a double merese, while G105 has a single merese with perhaps the remains of another; a single merese remains attached to the fragment of a vessel foot, G107.

Another variant in stem form included a fragment of a mould blown stem, G098, which is similar in form to the more well known lion masks current in many European glasshouses from the late 16th until the mid 17th century. Also dating from this period in the facon de Venise style are the elaborate handles and wings found on the finer wine glasses represented by G093. The remaining fragments of feet, G134, G136, and G138, had folded feet, a common finish during the period. A more unusual foot form is G176, a mould blown polygonal foot with low raised ribs in a lightly bubbled smokey brown metal.

Drinking vessel bowls may be divided into two forms: those with mould blown decoration and plain bowls. The mould blown forms G147 and G151 are decorated with wrythen mould blown ribbing, G150 with dots, and G155 with a mesh design. The plain forms include two straight sided glasses, G190 and G200 in a lightly bubbled clear metal, derived either from goblets or later wine glass forms. G198 is straight sided in a brown translucent lightly bubbled glass. Other more decorative forms include tulip shaped bowls G214 and G218, and a conical bowl G185.

Bowls (figs. 4 and 5)

Glass bowls are a relatively unusual find archaeologically. The assemblage from West Bromwich is, therefore, notable in the number of bowl fragments recovered. The fragments from the assemblage represented the remains of at least twenty bowls. All the fragments were mould blown, apparently in clear crystal glass.

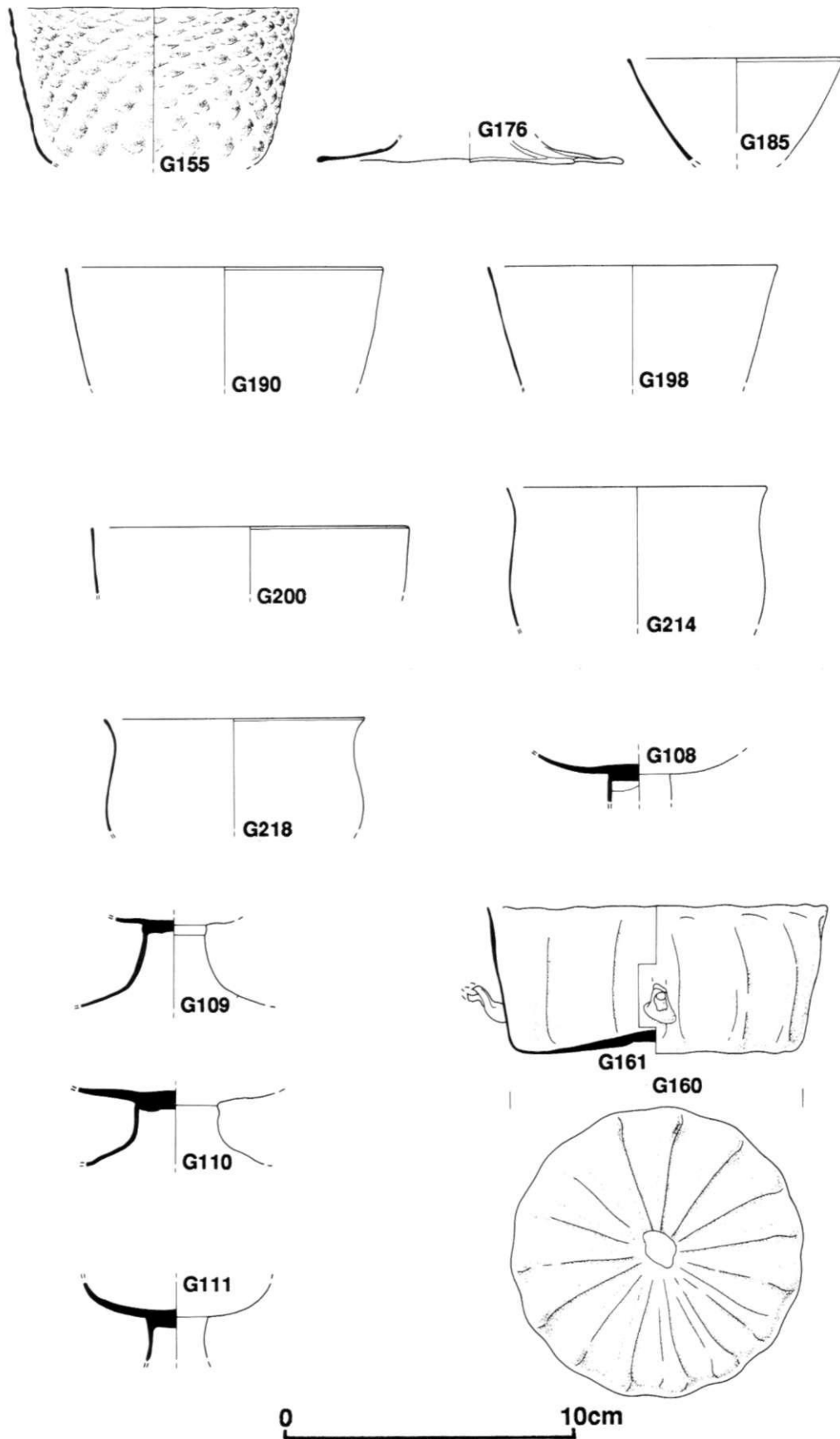


Fig. 4 West Bromwich Manor House: drinking vessels and bowls

The most common form of bowl is exemplified by G169. This has an upwardly dished base with a small pontil mark on the underside. Unfortunately, the upper part of this form could not be reconstructed. Base diameters of this bowl form varied between 122.0 mm. and 160.0 mm.

A number of folded foot rings with diameters of around 160 mm. were probably also derived from bowls, possibly with pedestal bases. None of these sherds is illustrated. Possibly associated with these feet were two bowl necks representing the junction between the foot and the bowl, G109 and G110. Although the bases differ in form, they both share a similar constructional technique, with a pontil mark on the underside and a flattened top which has then had the body of the bowl applied to it. These bowls are similar in form to two smaller pieces: G108 in a clear glass and G111 possibly originally purple in colour. The smaller size of these two pieces, however, indicate that they represent the remains of goblets rather than small bowls.

The most complete bowl recovered, G160/161, was mould blown in fine crystal glass, now unfortunately iridescent. The bowl has twelve sides with a slight curving rib on each angle and a distinct pontil mark on the base.

Urinals (fig. 5)

Such was the reliance that medieval physicians placed on the conclusions drawn from the study of urine, the characteristic flask carried by the physician became a symbol of their profession (Gunther 1925, 25). Urinals were of necessity thin walled for the inspection of their contents. They generally exhibited the shape of an elongated bell with a long neck, often with flanged rims and an external pontil mark on the base. During use these fragile vessels were protected by a cylindrical wicker basket. Glass urinals were certainly in use by the reign of Edward I (Charleston 1975, 213-14). The form appears to have been conservative in its development, forming a relatively common find from the 13th century onwards (see Charleston 1984, fig. 146) and persisting into the later 17th century (ibid. 214).

Fragments of urinals were recognised in forest glass products and amongst the fragments of cristallo glass. The majority of the fragments from the forest glass products were derived from the sturdier flattened everted rims. Only one fragment, G070, exhibited the characteristic slight upturn to the rim, while the other pieces, G065 and G069, have plain rims. A single urinal base, G091, is of a thin glass and has a convex base with a pontil mark on the exterior.

The fragments of urinals in cristallo glass were either in clear or a transparent brown glass, the latter possibly the result of post-depositional weathering. The vessels were similarly recognised by their distinctive form with flattened everted rims. Only one vessel fragment, G199, retained sufficient of its neck to illustrate the beginning of the characteristic long narrow neck. A variant form, G157, has an almost horizontal rim and an unusually wide neck opening which gives way to the characteristic vertical neck and thin body sides.

Window Glass (fig. 5)

Relatively little window glass was preserved within the assemblage, perhaps indicating a policy of selective collection. Of the pieces that were retained, G222, G225, and G226, are relatively complete and may be reconstructed as diamond shaped quarries displaying an obtuse angle of c. 104 degrees and acute angles of c. 75 degrees. Fifteen of these quarries would be required to glaze a square foot. The best preserved of these sherds, G226, has a scratched name on its surface: 'Anlin Chell Inguores'. A further shape, a trapezium represented by G224, is almost complete except for one corner. All the pieces are light green in colour.

Discussion

The majority of the glassware may be shown to date from the late 16th to the mid 17th century. This may be explained partly by the increasing availability of glasswares during the period, but may also, as with the clay pipes, leather, and pottery recovered from the moat (Whiston *et al.* 1980, 29-40; Hodder 1991, 38; Hodder 1993), coincide with a period of increased prosperity at the manor house. Some of the earliest forest glass was probably purchased during the Stanley family's occupation of the house. It is perhaps to the occupancy of Sir Richard Shelton that we should look for the purchase of many of the

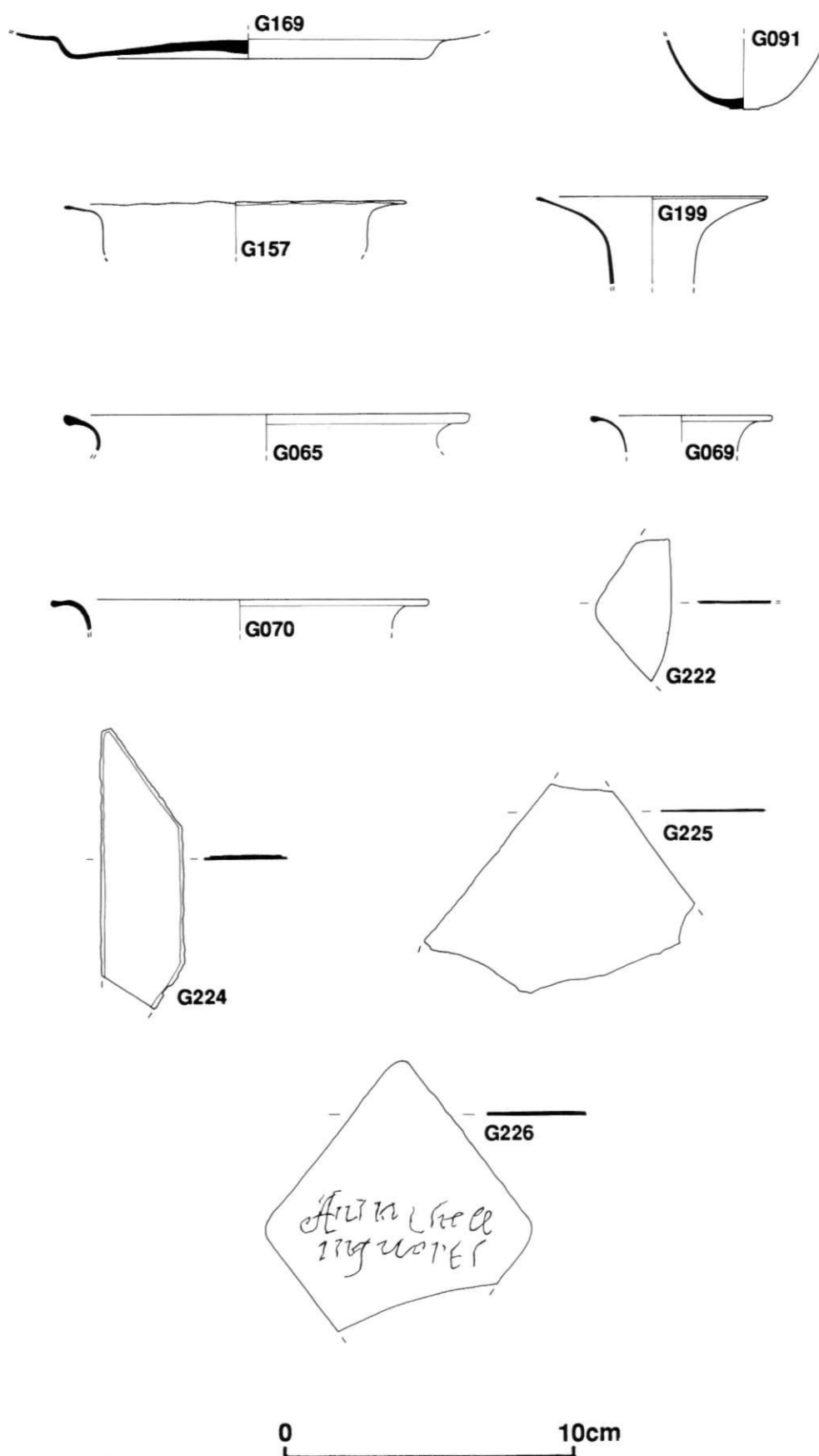


Fig. 5 West Bromwich Manor House: bowls, urinals, and window glass

fine pieces within the assemblage. Sir Richard moved in courtly circles, where he would have been exposed to the latest styles in glasswares. The acquisition of fine glass would have presented few problems, as his family had mercantile connections and he travelled frequently to London. It is also probably significant that little of the glass may be shown clearly to post-date Sir Richard's death in the middle of the 17th century.

The dating evidence derived from the glass assemblage, combined with the evidence from the groups of other finds, would suggest that the moat was filled in the mid to late 17th century. An alternative interpretation is that there was a lower level of consumption of goods at the manor house after the mid 17th century, perhaps associated with the declining fortunes of the Shelton family.

Unfortunately the uncontrolled method of recovery has not allowed any statistical exploration of the relative proportion of fine wares and utilitarian wares in use at the house. The assemblage, however, is distinguished by the high proportion of fine wares. Even the groups that may be regarded as utilitarian, such as the phials and small bottles, probably originally contained substances of high value such as medicines. Wine bottles were also a valuable commodity in the 17th century and may have appeared on the table, as well as being used for the transit and storage of wine.

The manufacturing sources of the glass were varied. The forest glass vessels may be derived from local, late 16th-century industries. Other vessels may represent early attempts by English glassmakers to produce clear glass vessels, while many of the finer wares in *facon de Venise* style may be derived from Continental glasshouses in the Netherlands or further afield.

Despite the unstratified nature of this assemblage, it nevertheless forms an important group for the study of glass usage in the West Midlands. The glass is the first extensive early 17th-century group to be published in the region. It will provide a valuable corpus against which other, as yet unpublished, material from different social contexts and better stratified assemblages may be compared, notably the post-medieval assemblages recovered from Dudley Castle (Ratkai 1985,41-2) and Eccleshall Castle (J. Fisher, pers. comm.).

Glossary

<i>facon de Venise</i>	in the style of the Venetian glasshouses, typically applied to fine crystal glasses of northern European origin
knop	ornamental knob, especially those on drinking vessels
merese	ornamental ring, typically seen between the bowl and stem and the stem and foot of a goblet
pontil mark	mark left by the pontil, a metal rod used during manufacture of the vessel
quarries	diamond-shaped pieces used in glazing
prunt	decorative additions of glass, often small moulded circular blobs of glass

Acknowledgement

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CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED GLASS

Each fragment of glass has been identified by a separate number with a prefix 'G', and the number is followed by a brief description.

Wine Bottles (fig. 1)

- G006 bottle base, small rounded indent, rounded lower profile, green, 317 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 49.2 mm.
indent height: 11.2 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 36.8 mm.
- G007 bottle base in two pieces, small rounded indent, rounded lower profile, well formed pontil mark, green flaked surface, 179 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 62.3 mm.
indent height: 8.0 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 29.4 mm.

- G008 fragment of base, small rounded indent, rounded lower profile, well formed pontil mark, green, 108 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 66.0 mm.
indent height: 12.2 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 20.6 mm.
- G009 fragment of base, rounded profile, iridescent, 68 g. Conjoins to G004. English, mid 17th-cent.
- G011 fragment of base, low rounded indent, rounded lower profile, well formed pontil mark, iridescent, 109 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
rest point diameter: 56.4 mm.
indent height: 5.1 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 16.5 mm.
- G014 reconstructed rounded bottle body with shallow, rounded pushup, green, 393 g. Part of Shaft and Globe bottle, loose fragments conjoin with neck G022. English, mid 17th-cent.
body height: 91.0 mm.
body diameter: 127.0 mm.
rest point diameter: 54.2 mm.
indent height: 5.0 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 17.5 mm.
- G016 neck fragment, tapering, rounded trail with flattened bottom, dark green, 29 g. English, ? late 17th-cent.
lip to string rim height: 12.6 mm.
string rim height: 6.8 mm.
finish height: 19.4 mm.
rest point diameter: 49.2 mm.
indent height: 11.2 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 36.8 mm.
- G020 neck, cracked off lip, thin rounded trail with flattened top and bottom, green, 63 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 18.0 mm.
lip to string rim height: 8.0 mm.
string rim height: 4.3 mm.
finish height: 12.3 mm.
neck diameter 1: 28.1 mm.
neck diameter 2: 31.0 mm.
neck diameter 3: 45.0 mm.
neck height: 96.0 mm.
- G021 neck fragment, cracked off lip, thin rounded trail with flattened top and bottom, green, 41 g. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 19.0 mm.
lip to string rim height: 12.5 mm.
string rim height: 4.5 mm.
finish height: 17.0 mm.
neck diameter 1: 29.0 mm.
- G022 neck, tapering towards base, thin rounded trail with cracked off lip, light green, 118 g. Conjoins with loose fragments from body G014. English, mid 17th-cent.
bore diameter: 19.2 mm.
lip to string rim height: 13.3 mm.
string rim height: 4.5 mm.
finish height: 17.8 mm.

neck diameter 1: 31.3 mm.
 neck diameter 2: 33.0 mm.
 neck diameter 3: 44.0 mm.
 neck height: 100.0 mm.

- G023 reconstructed Shaft and Globe bottle (about 60% of body missing), thick rounded trail, flat topped cracked off lip, slightly tapering neck with rounded shoulder and body, shallow rounded pushup with well formed pontil mark, green, 491 g. English, mid 17th-cent.

bottle height: 216.0 mm.
 bore diameter: 17.8 mm.
 lip to string rim height: 9.0 mm.
 string rim height: 9.0 mm.
 finish height: 18.0 mm.
 neck diameter 1: 27.0 mm.
 neck diameter 2: 33.3 mm.
 neck diameter 3: 45.0 mm.
 neck height: 111.0 mm.
 body diameter: 145.0 mm.
 body height: 105.0 mm.
 rest point diameter: 69.5 mm.
 indent height: 10.8 mm.
 pontil mark diameter: 29.0 mm.

- G024 neck and part of body, thick trail with flattened bottom, flat topped cracked off lip, squat neck, green badly weathered surface, 188 g. English, mid 17th-cent.

bore diameter: 19.8 mm.
 lip to string rim height: 13.0 mm.
 string rim height: 7.5 mm.
 finish height: 20.0 mm.
 neck diameter 1: 35.2 mm.
 neck diameter 2: 37.2 mm.
 neck diameter 3: 45.0 mm.
 neck height: 90.0 mm.

Wine Bottle Seals (fig. 1)

- G026 complete seal, with central arrow/harpoon head design, dark green, 11 g. Merchant's mark ?
 diameter: 28.0 mm.
- G027 complete seal, Sun in Splendour with cherubic face surrounded by a wreath, letters 'I H' beneath, green, 14 g.
 diameter: 29.0 mm.
- G028 complete seal, shield with central flaunch with three escallops placed vertically and bordered by seven stars on either side, the shield is surrounded by a cordon, dark green, 21 g.
 diameter: 34.0 mm.

Small Bottles (fig. 2)

- G029 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, 19 g.
 bore diameter: 16.2 mm.
 lip diameter: 24.2 mm.
 neck diameter: 22.0 mm.
 neck height: 25.8 mm.

- G030 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, trail of glass added to form lip, 12 g.
bore diameter: 14.2 mm.
lip diameter: 27.5 mm.
neck diameter: 19.8 mm.
neck height: 24.8 mm.
- G031 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, trail of glass added to form Hp, 20 g.
bore diameter: 14.0 mm.
lip diameter: 24.5 mm.
neck diameter: 20.2 mm.
neck height: 30.0 mm.
- G032 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, 33 g.
bore diameter: 18.6 mm.
lip diameter: 34.0 mm.
neck diameter: 26.8 mm.
neck height: 21.8 mm.
- G033 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, glass added to form lip, 10 g.
bore diameter: 11.5 mm.
lip diameter: 18.9 mm.
neck diameter: 17.8 mm.
neck height: 17.5 mm.
- G034 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, glass added to form lip, 11 g.
bore diameter: 13.8 mm.
lip diameter: 17.3 mm.
neck diameter: 19.0 mm.
neck height: 17.8 mm.
- G036 neck and part of shoulder, diameter at lip wider than bore, green, heavily weathered, 19 g.
lip diameter: 13.8 mm.
neck diameter: 23.5 mm.
neck height: 21.5 mm.
bore diameter: 22.2 mm.
- G044 base fragment, green, shallow rounded pushup, 28 g.
indent height: 10.8 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 13.1 mm.
- G045 base fragment, green, conical pushup, 29 g.
indent height: 14.9 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 16.2 mm.
- G046 base, green, conical pushup, 61 g.
rest pontil diameter: 83.5 mm.
indent height: 16.1 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 17.2 mm.
- G048 base fragment, green, sharp cracked off pontil mark, conical pushup, 49 g.
pontil mark diameter: 21.0 mm.

- G050 base of square bottle, green, heavily weathered, shallow pushup with pontil mark, 38 g.
base rest point: 54.0 mm. x 53.0 mm.
indent height: 4.8 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 18.1 mm.
- G087 fragment of bottle neck with everted flattened rim, sea green, heavily weathered surface, 3 g.

Phials (fig. 2)

- G061 base, green, shallow, pushup, poorly formed cracked off pontil mark, 10 g.
indent height: 3.5 mm.
- G062 base, green, shallow rounded pushup, cracked off pontil mark, 10 g.
rest pontil diameter: 38.0 mm.
indent height: 5.5 mm.
pontil mark diameter: 13.0 mm.
- G063 base, heavily weathered surface, green, conical pushup, pontil mark unclear due to weathering, 18 g.
rest pontil diameter: 28.7 mm.
indent height: 4.7 mm.
diameter of body: 37.6 mm.
- G064 base, green, conical pushup, 10 g.
rest point diameter: 48.00 mm.
indent height: 7.0 mm.

Jar (fig. 3)

- G041 neck fragment, green, diameter at lip greater than bore, 11 g. Preserve bottle/jar.

Drinking Vessels (figs. 3 and 4)

- G071 fragment of forest glass drinking vessel with notched cordon decoration, 3 g.
- G075 fragment of beaker rim with raised rib decoration, dark green, 2 g.
diameter: 82.0 mm.
- G076 fragment of beaker body with raised rib decoration, dark green, 3 g. G066 probably part of it.
- G077 fragment of beaker rim with wrythen mould blown ribbing, green with encrusted surface, 2 g.
diameter: 70.0 mm.
- G078 fragment of wrythen decorated body, probably a beaker, iridescent, 9 g.
- G084 fragment of folded foot, iridescent, 8 g.
diameter: 92.0 mm.
- G086 fragment of folded foot, type of vessel from which it came not clear, dark green, 11 g.
diameter: 100.0 mm.
- G093 handle decoration from goblet, clear, 5 g. Facon de Venise, early 17th-cent.
- G096 fragment of Roemer stem with applied milled trail and raspberry prunt, clear crizzled glass, 3 g. ? English, mid 17th-cent. Part of G097.

- G097 fragment of Roemer stem with applied milled trail, clear crizzled glass, 1.5 g. ? English, mid 17th-cent. Conjoins to G096.
- G098 fragment of mould blown knop, iridescent, 4 g. Facon de Venise, late 16th- to early 17th-cent.
- G105 fragment of bowl with merese, diameter 23.0 mm., surviving length 15.0 mm., clear, 9 g.
- G016 fragment of wine glass cup with double merese, diameter 10.0 mm., clear, 8 g. Early 17th-cent.
- G107 fragment of wine glass domed foot with merese, diameter 21.0 mm., clear, 15 g. Early 17th-cent.
- G146 beaker base with near vertical sides, conical pushup with a well marked pontil scar, applied milled trail around base, base diameter 43.0 mm., pushup height 7.5 mm., lightly bubbled clear greyish glass, 10 g. English, early 17th-cent.
- G119 fragment of beaker base with applied rounded thread around the base, diameter 70.0 mm., 1 g-
- G134 fragment of folded domed foot, diameter 90.0 mm., iridescent, 1 g. Drinking vessel.
- G136 fragment of folded domed foot, diameter 90.0 mm., clear, 1 g. Drinking vessel.
- G138 fragment of folded domed foot, diameter 60.0 mm., clear, 1 g. Drinking vessel.
- G147 fragment of mould blown goblet rim decorated with near horizontal ribs, rim diameter 110.0 mm., clear brownish glass with small near horizontal bubbles, 1 g.
- G150 fragment of drinking vessel rim with mould blown raised dot decoration, clear, 1 g.
- G151 fragment of drinking vessel bowl with wrythen mould blown ribbing, iridescent, rim diameter 118.0 mm., 0.1 g.
- G155 fragment of drinking vessel bowl with mould blown mesh design, rim diameter 100.0 mm., clear, 4 g.
- G160 fragment of mould blown bowl base, rest point diameter 81.5 mm., iridescent, 21 g.
- G161 fragment of mould blown base, rest point diameter 81.5 mm., iridescent, 9 g. Part of G160
- G169 two fragments of mould blown bowl base, diameter 122.0 mm., 51 g. G163, G164, and G167 form part of G169.
- G176 fragment of mould blown bowl base, rest point diameter 81.5 mm., iridescent, 9 g. Part of G160.
- G185 fragment of conical shaped wine glass bowl, iridescent, 1 g.
- G190 fragment of straight sided drinking vessel, diameter 100.0 mm., clear, 1 g.
- G198 fragment of straight sided drinking vessel bowl, diameter 100.0 mm., lightly bubbled smokey metal, 3 g. Conjoins to G188 and G194.
- G200 fragment of straight sided drinking vessel, diameter 110.0 mm., clear lightly bubbled glass, 1 g.
- G214 fragment of tulip shaped drinking vessel bowl rim, iridescent, 0.5 g.

- G128 fragment of tulip shaped drinking vessel bowl rim, diameter 90.0 mm., clear lightly bubbled glass, 0.5 g.

Bowls (figs. 4 and 5)

- G108 fragment of small bowl with part of attached hollow stem, underside of bowl retains a pontil mark, diameter of stem 21.8 mm., 9 g. Early 17th-cent.
- G109 fragment of foot joined to part of a drinking vessel bowl, underside of bowl retains a pontil mark, clear, 9 g.
- G110 fragment of foot joined to part of a bowl base, underside of bowl has a pontil mark, iridescent, 21 g.
- G111 fragment of small bowl with applied hollow stem with pontil mark retained at top of stem, diameter of stem 21.8 mm., iridescent but originally ? purple, 10 g.

Urinals (fig. 5)

- G091 fragment of urinal base with external pontil mark, green, 5 g.
- G157 fragment of everted flat rim, diameter 118.0 mm., clear, 0.5 g.
- G199 fragment of rim, diameter 82.0 mm., light bubbling concentric to the rim, clear, 2.5 g.
- G065 fragment of folded foot, sea green weathered surface, 2 g.
diameter: 140.0 mm.
- G069 fragment of everted flattened rim, green with heavily weathered surface, 1 g.
diameter: 68.0 mm.
- G070 fragment of ? bowl rim, dark green, 2 g.
diameter: 140.0 mm.

Window Glass (fig. 5)

- G222 fragment of quarrel, angle 104°, iridescent, 2 g.
- G224 almost complete quarrel, chipped edge, iridescent weathered surface, thickness 1.0 mm., width 28.0 mm., actual length 85.0 mm., angles 36°, 144°, 147°, 33°, reconstructed length 126.0 mm., green, 7 g.
- G225 part of ? diamond shaped quarrel, the mark of the lead came is visible along two sides although the weathering layer has spalled off, thickness 1.1 mm., angle 75°, pale green, 9 g.
- G226 almost complete (c. 75%) diamond shaped quarrel, name scratched onto glass ? Anlin Chell Inguores, thickness 1.0 mm., width 91.0 mm., actual length 83.0 mm., length of sides 3 1/16 inches, angles (clockwise from top) 76°, 104°, 75°, 105°, green, 10 g.

6, MARKET STREET, TAMWORTH: A TIMBER-FRAMED BUILDING OF 1695 AND ITS CONTEXT

R. A. MEESON AND A. KIRKHAM

The former ironmonger's shop known as 'Colemans', at 6, Market Street, Tamworth, was closed in 1988, bringing to an end a business which had continued on the premises from at least 1834. The building was refurbished in 1992; during the repairs and reconstruction the timber frame was surveyed and a number of the timbers were dendrochronologically dated. The use of the premises by ironmongers is summarised, but this paper concentrates on the structure and date of the building. It is partly timber-framed and partly of brick, constructed in or soon after 1695 and incorporating timbers which had been salvaged from an earlier structure. The late 17th-century building had been assembled during a major phase of reconstruction in the town, and at a time when other new buildings were being constructed in brick.

THE IRONMONGERY

No early deeds to the premises have been traced, so the trade or profession of the early occupants is not known. Trade Directories, however, provide numerous references to the 19th-century business. In 1818 John Butler carried out his trade as an ironmonger and whitesmith in Church Street, but in 1834 he was trading as an ironmonger, brazier, and tinner from premises in Market Street (Parsons and Bradshaw 1818, 244; White 1834, 392). He was still trading there in 1849-50, when he was mayor of Tamworth, but in 1861 the business was run by Mrs. Mary Butler - perhaps his widow (Post Office Directory 1850, 333; Harrison, Harrod, and Co. 1861, 238; T.C.M., list of Tamworth mayors since 1835). By 1892 the proprietor of the ironmongery at 6, Market Street was Miss Harriet Butler (Kelly 1892, 331). Eight years later the business was owned by John Thomas Lee, and his executors were listed as ironmongers at the same address from 1908 until 1924 (Kelly 1900, 375; 1908, 422; 1924, 442). Kelly's Directory for 1928 (at p. 435) lists Coleman Brothers as the owners, and that is the name under which the business traded in Market Street until it closed in 1988 (Tamworth Herald, 29 July 1988).

REBUILDING IN POST-MEDIEVAL TAMWORTH

In some areas of the country the construction of good quality timber-framed buildings continued in the 18th century, as exemplified in a cottage of 1764 at Holmes Chapel, Cheshire (Brunskill 1985, 222). From the late 17th century, however, there was an overall decline in the quality of timber-framed building construction, and this has been attributed to a number of factors. There was competition for timber due to its use for iron-smelting and ship-building, and builders found that they could use smaller and fewer structural timbers (Mercer 1975, 126). Generally, as brick-making became more established in some areas, the economic and practical advantages of brick as a building material began to outweigh those of timber. The price of bricks fell while that of timber rose, and people abandoned timber-framing as the fashion for brick gained momentum (Barley 1986, 179-91; Clifton-Taylor 1972, 210-30).

In Tamworth the swing from timber-framing to brick-building construction gained momentum towards the end of the 17th century, the time when 6, Market Street was constructed. Progressive rebuilding in brick left only a small number of medieval timber-framed buildings to be recorded in the 19th and 20th centuries. The late 14th- or mid 15th-century Paregaric Shop in Church Street was a building of considerable quality, having double jetties and twin gables to the street, and cusped braces on the first floor (Turner and Parker 1859, 235). The former 49, Church Street, at the north end of Middle Entry, had been built at a right-angle to the street, probably in the 15th century. The street facade was double-jettied, and the first and second floor walls had storey-high panels with curved braces; the tiebeam and single collar roof had raked struts and clasped purlins (T.C.M. watercolour by E. A. Phipson, 1903). The timber-framed buildings at 44-46, Church Street were recorded in 1968 prior to redevelopment. Though much altered, parts of nos. 45 and 46 may have survived from a general rebuilding after a fire of 1345, but no. 44 with its small square wall framing was probably of much later construction (Meeson 1971; 1979, 77 ff.). The remains of the rear range of a building in Market Street

stood adjacent to King Street until 1971; they belonged to a structure with storey-high wall panels, curved braces, and a clasped purlin roof of the 15th century (Meeson and Sheridan, 1974, 5-7).

When John Leland visited Tamworth in the 1540s the town was 'all built of timber', but in 1698 Celia Fiennes described it as 'a neat town built of brick and mostly new' (Smith 1908, 104; Morris 1949, 164). Nevertheless, at the end of the 18th century the town had again 'of late years been much improved' (Shaw 1798, 415). Some of the buildings constructed during those times were entirely new, but others were the result of a series of adaptations of timber-framed buildings (Meeson 1979, 83).

The records of Tamworth corporation offer several insights into the transformation of Tamworth from a town of timber-framed buildings to one of brick and tile. A meeting of the Common Hall (the town council) in 1667 agreed to the construction of a malt mill 'contayninge about a bay and a halfe' in Lichfield Street, and this terminology might imply that the structure was intended to be timber-framed (T.B.R. XII-1-10). Furthermore, on the south side of Market Street some timber-framing remains in buildings which were constructed over the 17th-century fill of the Tamworth Castle bailey ditch (Meeson 1979, 87). Nevertheless, the conversion from timber-frame to brick was to gain momentum during the late 17th and early 18th century, apparently encouraged by the corporation. In 1682 William Ashley proposed to 'pull down' his house in Church Street, and was commended for his intention to 'build it with brick, which will be an ornament to the Towne' (T.B.R. XII-34). In 1708 it was agreed that a tenant be admitted to a 'decayed house' on condition that he 'build the house anew [with] brick walls ... also to tile it', and in 1709 land was leased in Church Lane for a house to be built 'with brick and tile' (T.B.R. XII-1-182, 187).

The materials employed in new buildings were not the only consideration made by the corporation. Concern for proper siting and proportions is also expressed in official records. A new house in Lichfield Street for Richard Rushall had to line up with contiguous premises and be built 'full as high ... and as well' as the adjoining houses (T.B.R. XII-1-108), and John Wallis was advised that he should build his new house three storeys high (T.B.R. XII-1-176).

From the 1670s there was a clear preference for brick for the construction of public buildings in the town. The Free Grammar School, built in Lower Gungate in 1677, was of brick, with classical flat pilasters and stone dressings (Hamel 1829). In 1692 Thomas Guy provided for the erection of almshouses, and these were built of brick on land allocated for the purpose by the corporation (T.B.R. XII-1-56). An order was made in 1700 for the old town hall in Market Street to be pulled down 'to make way for a New Hall [provided by] our worthy benefactor Thomas Guy Esq.' (T.B.R. XII-1-106). The building is a Flemish-bonded, chequered brick hall with stone dressings standing over sandstone columns in Tuscan style. A 19th-century view of the hall also includes a number of buildings at the east end of Market Street; it shows that, although a considerable amount of rebuilding had taken place by that period, a number of timber-framed buildings remained, gables to the street and masked by stucco (Hamel 1829).

As will be shown below, no. 6, Market Street was constructed in 1695 or soon after, at a time when the better new buildings were being erected with brick. Either to conform with the growing taste for brick or comply with requirements generally specified by the corporation, it was built with a fashionable brick facade to the street. The other walls, however, were not built to the same standard as those in the front elevation, as the narrower walls to the rear were stiffened by timber frames. In this context 6, Market Street was simultaneously a concession to the growing fashion for brick, while relying for much of its structural stability on a more traditional frame.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING (fig. 1)

The brick facade was probably built near the end of the 17th century, but it now has four sash windows to the first floor and a wooden cornice, and raked dormers project through a tiled roof. The shop front is in late-Victorian style, with panelled and fluted composite pilasters; bracketed end blocks support a canopy with elaborate cast-iron cresting, and the central entrance is recessed, with an overlight above paired glazed doors. A right-end door-frame with overlight belongs to this composition, but the panelled and glazed door is more recent. The doorway gives access to a passage leading from the street to the rear of the front range; the passage probably belongs to the late 17th-century phase of construction discussed below. The ground floor facade has been described as 'a very fine example of a late nineteenth-century shop front' (DoE 1992). The symmetry of the first-floor

fenestration and the ironmonger's shop front in late-Victorian style present a polite and moderately prosperous image to the street, in marked contrast to the timber-framed building to the rear. The present shop front was probably installed by J. T. Lee just before the end of the 19th century (T.C.M., PHn. 630n). A photograph of the premises taken after 1892 shows unequal canted bay windows each side of an off-centre doorway with a rectangular overlight in early or mid 19th-century style.

The front range of two bays and the rear range of 1 'A' bays are contemporary. Particularly at ground-floor level, the original interior has been substantially altered in response to the changing demands made on 'High Street' retail premises. Indeed, so little remains of the original internal division that any discussion of plan form and room functions must be tentative; nevertheless, they are worth consideration in the light of more complete local parallels.

In addition to the entry at the east end, the front range was probably first built with two rooms to the ground floor. The half-bay in the rear range probably accommodated stairs from the outset, though the present staircase is Victorian and broadly contemporary with the shop front. The dropped rail and the very tall aperture through the framing in truss B-B1 suggest that originally a flight of steps turned from the main stairway to pass through the truss. This is unlikely to belong to a fully domestic arrangement; one or more of the rooms in the back range might have been intended for storage or some other non-domestic purpose. Possibly the polite brick facade belonged to a domestic front range, while at least part of the back range accommodated the business or trade of the householder. The side entry would have provided independent access to the rear of the house - a common plan form in Tamworth.

Medieval English town house sites generally had 'a fringe of small houses or shops in front, with the main house at the back'. Conversely, 'in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, when the process of infilling was going on, one will find the main house in front, with a row of cottages built in the courtyard or garden at the back' (Pantin 1964, 206). In Tamworth, even in commercially significant locations like Market Street, it was not only smaller houses that were to be found in the courts to the rear; 'shops' were located behind some of the domestic dwellings which looked directly onto the street. At that time a 'shop' may have been a retail outlet, a workshop, or a place of business.

In April 1726, Mr. Meacham, a 'surgeon', was allowed the lease of a house in Market Street for 99 years (T.B.R. X-27; XII-1-268). The title was made over to him in August 1727 upon payment of £100, and in September the purchase deeds were signed (T.B.R. XII-1-273,277). A plan attached to the deeds shows the room plans of six premises, the present nos. 26a-30, Market Street. Amongst these premises only one had a shop facing directly onto the street; all of them, however, had various combinations of shops, warehouses, brewhouses, stables, and hog sties to the rear (Meeson 1979, fig. 35). Meacham's house had a parlour overlooking the street on the ground floor; at the side of the parlour was an entry leading to the rear of the house, similar to that at no. 6. A side doorway still gives access from the entry to a small hall from which a stair with finely-turned balusters and moulded handrail rises to the second floor. On the first floor there is a fielded panel door at the entrance to a dining parlour, which overlooks the street and is fitted with a recessed buffet 'all framed with pilasters supporting an arched head' (Miller-Yardley 1967, 12). Even this finely-appointed house had a 'shop' to the rear, with independent access from the entry. Such an arrangement can be conjectured for no. 6, Market Street in its original form.

THE STRUCTURE (fig. 1)

All of the surviving wall framing comprises very small square panels; the ground-floor walls probably had two panels over a high sill and there were three panels to the first-floor walls. The small exterior panels were probably infilled with brick from the outset, but a few internal panels retain lathe and plaster.

Wall framing remains in the rear wall of the front range, the side walls of the rear range, and in some of the internal partitions. There is, however, no framing in the gable walls of either the front or the rear ranges. In the north wall A-A1 there is no evidence in the corner posts or in the tiebeam of redundant joints for studs, rails, or braces; the wall was built entirely of brick. In the west wall C-D the tiebeam is made of re-used timber and no posts survive, but again it is most likely that the wall was built of brick from the outset.

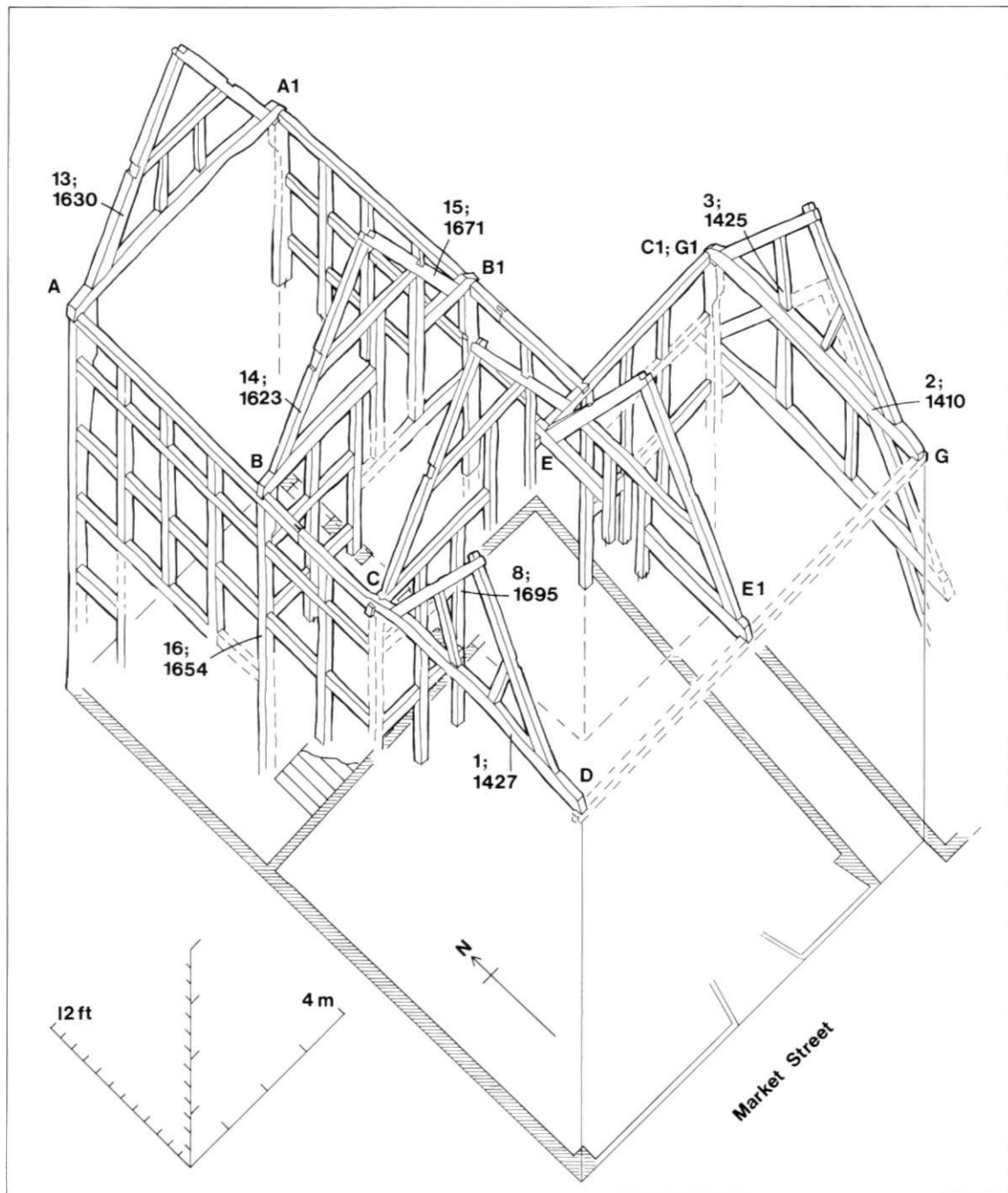


Fig. 1 Axonometric projection of 6, Market Street, Tamworth, with dendrochronological last measured ring dates

At the east end of the front range no new party wall was built against the gable wall of the adjoining 'Market Street Vaults' public house. The roof truss G-G1 has brick-filled panels but there is no evidence of framing or brickwork below the tiebeam. The lower portion of the roof truss belonging to the west gable of the public house remains visible inside 6, Market Street.

It appears, therefore, that walls A-A1 and C-D were built of brick from the outset, and at first-floor level the builder of 6, Market Street apparently relied entirely upon the earlier wall of the adjoining building to divide the two properties. There is no evidence that the front elevation was timber-framed; that too may have been built entirely of brick. Timber was used sparingly, and not at all in some of the walls.

Each gable roof truss on the front range comprises a tiebeam, raked struts, and principles with halved joints at the apex, whereas the gable truss to the rear range had queen struts and a collar. In each of the internal roof trusses the tiebeam is interrupted by a doorway.

The wall plate to the rear range is connected to the north wall plate of the front range by a bare-faced dovetail joint. The junction of the plates and the tiebeam at 'C' is not shown on figure 1 because it is now obscured by brickwork and it is not clear how it was assembled.

TABLE 1
Summary of dendrochronological survey dates

Sample number	Sample location	FMR. date	LHR date	LMR date
<i>The late 17th-century timber frame</i>				
TAM A08	stud in rear wall of front range	1615	1670	1695
TAMA13	principle in truss A-A1	1558		1630
TAM A14	west principle, truss B-B1	1585		1623
TAMA15	east principle, truss B-B1	1582	1670	1671
TAMA16	west post in truss B-B1	1568	1654	1654
<i>The re-used timbers</i>				
TAMA01	tiebeam in truss D-D1	1352	1407	1427
TAMA02	tiebeam in truss G-G1	1320	1410	1410
TAMA03	raked strut in truss G-G1	1362	1409	1425
TAMA05	principle in truss C-C1	1356	1403	1403

Abbreviations

FMR first measured ring date in sample

LHR last heartwood ring date in sample

LMR last measured ring date on sample

Source

Nottingham University Tree-ring Dating Laboratory dendro sample record and summary initial report, 25 November 1992. (Samples collected by R. Howard on 20 October, 1992.)

THE DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

At the time of the 1992 survey the pattern of the wall framing, together with the design of the roof trusses, suggested a date of construction late in the 17th century an interpretation which was reinforced by the use of brick in the front elevation and two other walls. A dendrochronological survey conducted by the Nottingham University Tree-ring Dating Laboratory provided confirmation of the

suspected construction date, and it also confirmed that the carpenters had used a number of timbers from a much earlier building. Seven timbers were sampled in the front range and nine in the rear range. Table 1, adapted from the Nottingham University report, lists the main dates of timbers which were reliably sampled, but omits the seven samples which failed to provide 'a last measured ring date'. The sample TAM A08, taken from the frame which divides the front and rear ranges, has complete sapwood, so the last measured ring date is the date of felling for that timber. Accordingly, the building was constructed in or shortly after 1695, that being the felling date of the sample TAM A08.

TIMBERS RE-USED FROM AN EARLIER BUILDING

During the survey a number of redundant joints were recorded, suggesting that extensive use had been made of salvaged timber. They comprised two tiebeams, an interrupted tiebeam, a principle, and two purlins, belonging to one or more earlier buildings.

The tiebeam and a raked strut in truss G-G1 had last measured ring dates (LMR) of 1410 and 1425. The core sample from the tiebeam in truss D had a LMR date of 1427; the LMR date of sample A05 from a principle in truss C was 1403. Three of the early tree-ring dates were taken from trusses D D I and G-G1, each of which formed a gable to the front range. As has been noted above, both of those trusses have raked struts to principles with halved joints at the apex. The pair of principles from which sample A05 was taken were also halved at the apex. These trusses, which are made of salvaged timbers, have a different form of apex from the others in the building. However, they cannot be remnants *in situ* of a medieval building, as they rely for their support upon the rear wall plate of the front range dated to 1695.

The interrupted tiebeam in truss B-B1 retains a substantial notched dovetail halving. Although this timber is not curved, the angle of the joint would be appropriate as a housing for a tiebeam in a cruck truss. The tiebeam in truss D-C is cranked; it has traces of a lapped halving, perhaps for a collar, and arguably this too might have come from a cruck-framed building. The re-used timbers employed in the 1695 structure could have been retrieved from an earlier building on or near the same site.

CONCLUSION

No. 6, Market Street is a remarkable survival of a structure erected in or soon after 1695 during the last stages of the timber-framed building tradition in Tamworth; moreover, it incorporates re-used timbers from an earlier building (or buildings) of c. 1427-30. Although the building presented a fashionable brick facade to the street, many of the walls were timber-framed. The advent of brick did not entirely supercede timber-framed construction; nevertheless, 6, Market Street may have been amongst the last buildings erected in Tamworth by a carpenter who looked back to more traditional forms of roof and wall construction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The building was surveyed for the Director of Planning and Economic Development, Staffordshire County Council. Tree-ring dates were obtained by the Tree-ring Dating Laboratory of Nottingham University, from cores obtained by R. Howard. The tree-ring dating survey was commissioned and funded by Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developments Ltd., and Mr. C. Smith is thanked for his initiative, help, and encouragement. Mr. R. Sulima provided valuable assistance at Tamworth Castle Museum, and Mrs. M. Swift located the article cited from the Tamworth Herald. Alan Taylor and Philip Heath read the first draft of this paper and recommended a number of improvements.

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EXCAVATIONS IN THE WALLED GARDEN, BESCOT HALL, WALSALL

MARTIN LOCOCK

INTRODUCTION

At present, much of the grounds of the now-demolished Bescot Hall form a municipal park, owned by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. As part of a programme of up-grading local parks, it was proposed that the walled kitchen garden area of the hall should be replanted as a Victorian garden. The Walsall Archaeology Society agreed to undertake work to recover the original layout of the garden, and the excavations produced evidence of the garden's structural sequence.

LOCATION AND HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site (fig. 1) lies on the northern bank of the River Tame, on the SW edge of modern Walsall (Nat. Grid. Ref. SO 997967; SMR 2641). The drift geology of the area is glacial clay deposit overlying limestone and coal measures. The area was known as Bescot by the time of Domesday Book, in which it was described as 'waste' (Wheatley 1971, 202-3). The site was occupied in the late 13th century by William Hillary. A moated manor house was built in the early 14th century and a licence to crenellate was given in 1345. In 1425 the manor became the property of the Mountfort family. The manor house was subsequently enlarged: in the hearth tax returns of 1666 the occupier was assessed on 14 hearths. The Mountfort family was succeeded in 1681 by Thomas Harris, who sold the property to Jonas Slaney in 1725.

The manor house was demolished in 1731 and replaced by Bescot Hall, on a site 100 m. to the north-east. A decorative bridge was also built across the moat. In 1794 Richard Aston, a wealthy coal-mine owner, bought the hall for £4000, extending it and laying out gardens. During the 19th century the hall was occupied by several owners and tenants, and in 1922 it was bought by Pitt Bonarjee for use as a private school. Later damaged by fire, it was demolished in 1929 (VCH Staffs, xvii. 157, 171-3; Willmore 1887, 280-6; McDevitt 1987, 6-11; Pearce 1989, 4, 61-2). The moat was filled in the 1930s and the site is now under grass within the public park. It has been investigated by aerial photography and geophysical survey (Locock 1989).

The present Pleck Park had originally been laid out as the parkland of Bescot Hall, including the walled garden to the NW of the house. The site of the hall itself lies under the gardens of a 1930s housing estate. The most recent change in the landscape has been the construction of the M6 motorway, which truncated the SW corner of the park. The area of the walled garden is known to have been a kitchen garden in the 1900s, and is shown as such in the sale prospectus of 1922 (McDevitt 1987, 9). From its proximity to the site of the hall, the area is likely to have been a kitchen garden for some time. The northern part of the walled garden was built over in the 1950s, the remaining area being used for storage by gardeners.

THE EXCAVATION

Walsall Archaeology Society started work on the Bescot Hall site in 1989. It was decided to carry out a contour survey of the grassed parts, in order to locate buried features, and to excavate a number of trenches to investigate anomalous aspects of the layout (fig. 2). At the time, there was no trace of the paths which are shown on maps up to 1970, the area having been grassed over. An outline plan was drawn up of the surviving walls and trees, and a site grid set up. This provided the basis for the contour survey, at 1 m. horizontal intervals, and the contours were plotted at 0.05 m. vertical intervals above Site Datum (118.64 m. above Ordnance Datum). Excavation was carried out stratigraphically and was recorded by written, photographic, and drawn archives, which have been deposited in Walsall Art Gallery and Museum.

DESCRIPTION (fig. 3)

Trench A

This EW trench, 3 m. x 1 m., was positioned to investigate the flat area running NS parallel to the

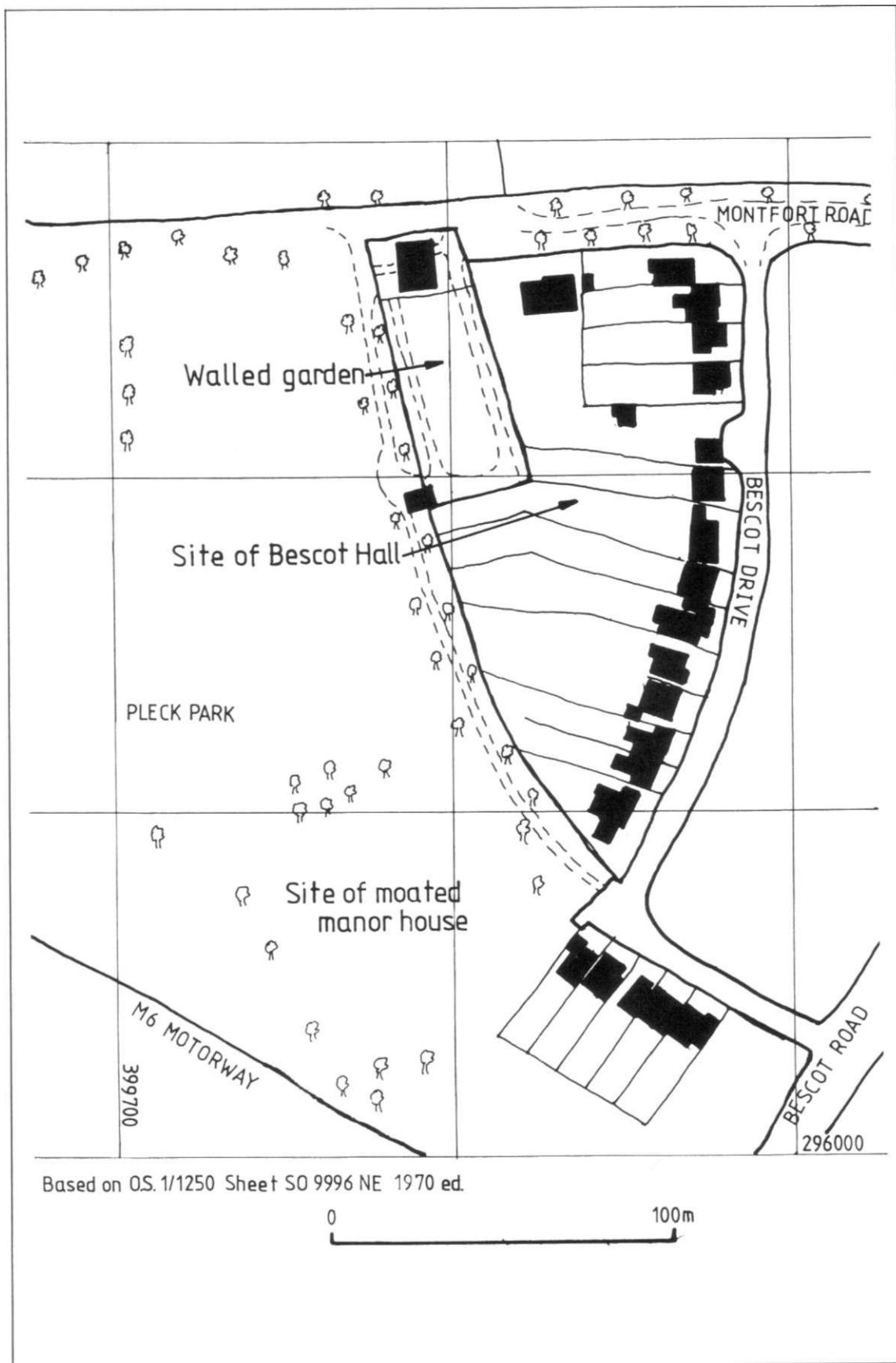


Fig. 1 Bescot Hall: location of site

east wall of the garden. It was assumed that there was an underlying path, of unknown form or date.

The earliest layer discovered was a patch of mortar crumbs (14), filling an irregular hole (15) in the natural clay, which was interpreted as the backfill of a small tree-root hole. This was sealed by cultivation soil (13), which was contemporary with a wide track (11), running NS and made up of bricks laid on edge. The full extent of the track was not discovered, but it was at least 2.5 m. wide. The bricks retained traces of previous mortar, indicating that they were re-used. The bricks were of dimensions of 23 x 11 x 7 cms., and only one example had a frog (depression) in its top surface. This phase was followed by a second, narrower path (01), of cinders on a substantial hard-core foundation (07). To the west lay another cultivation soil (02). Modern turf (03) covered all these features.

Trench B

This trench, 2 m. x 1 m., was oriented EW across the lowest part of the site. A sequence of paths was found. The earliest (10) was a path of compacted gravel, overlying a ceramic land-drain (18) with a deep trench (16), which was filled by sand and cinders (17). It seems probable that the drain was contemporary with the path: as the path runs along the bottom of a clay slope, drainage would have been a major problem. The early path became neglected and was buried by cultivation soil (09), spreading from the east. Subsequently, a new gravel path (08) was laid, in a shallow cut (20), and it was associated with cultivation soil to the east (06). A layer of grey sand (05) was later added to the top of the path, presumably because it was prone to waterlogging. Poorly-rooted turf (04) overlay the area of the trench.

Trench C

This NS trench, 3 m. x 1 m., was located over an anomalous area identified by the contour survey, and was considered likely to produce evidence of a cross-path running EW. The natural clay proved to lie 0.30 m. below the surface, and no traces of stratigraphy remained, save for the cultivation soil (12). It seemed that the irregularities in the surface of the turf (19) were not the result of any underlying structures, and it was concluded that the central area had never been crossed by paths.

DISCUSSION

Evidence for the pre-garden phases

No identified features pre-dated the garden, but the east wall, although built of brick for the most part, sits on an earlier limestone wall which may date from the occupation of the manor house on the moated site. The presence of residual 17th-century pottery also indicates activity relating to that period.

The early 19th-century garden

It is possible to create a detailed plan of the garden of Richard Aston's time (fig. 4). The walls followed the present-day boundaries, except to the north, where there would have been the driveway to the north of the 'Sons of Rest' building.

There were two main paths: a wide path running along the eastern wall, and a narrow one running parallel to the western wall. The eastern path seems to have been intended to take carts; a garden would have needed some access away from the house, and it is probable that the path ran up to the drive to the north, which connected with the home farm. This broad path was made of bricks, which (from their size) are likely to have been manufactured in the early 19th century. The western path was a narrow gravel path, with no trace of edging. The earlier path had a slight camber to assist drainage, and it overlay a land drain.

The paths are the main fixed points in the layout of the garden, and they are surrounded by beds. Between the eastern track and the east wall there was a bed 2 m. wide, with fruit trees planted at 5 m. intervals along the wall; the trees may have been those planted when the hall was built in the 18th century (McDevitt 1987, 10). The position of the surviving mulberry tree suggests that the track was flanked on its western side by a second row of fruit trees, planted alternately to those on the east wall. A bed ran along the west wall, but no trace of its planting survives. In the central area there was a large,

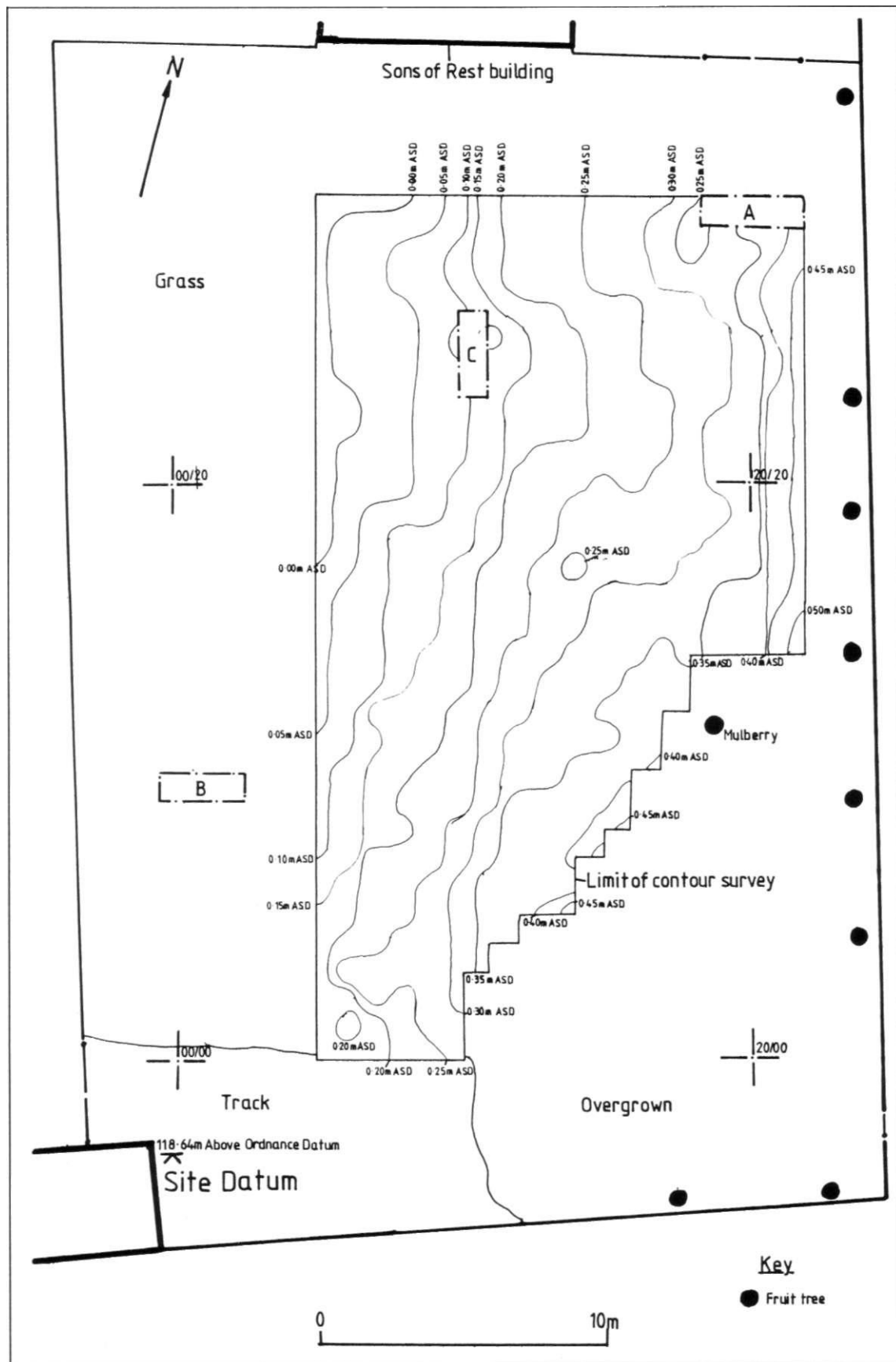


Fig. 2 The walled garden, showing location of excavations

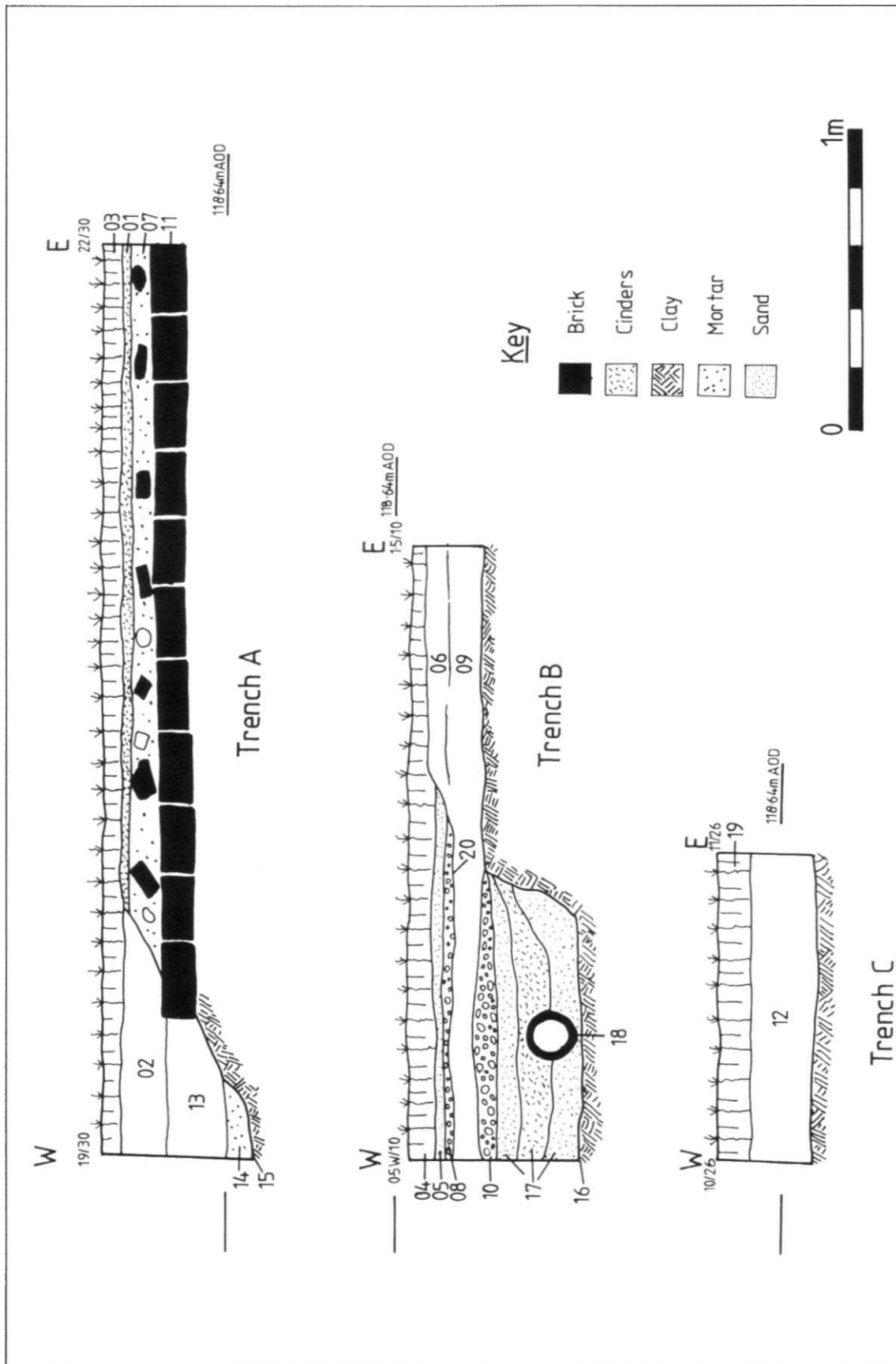


Fig. 3 Sections: Trenches A, B, and C

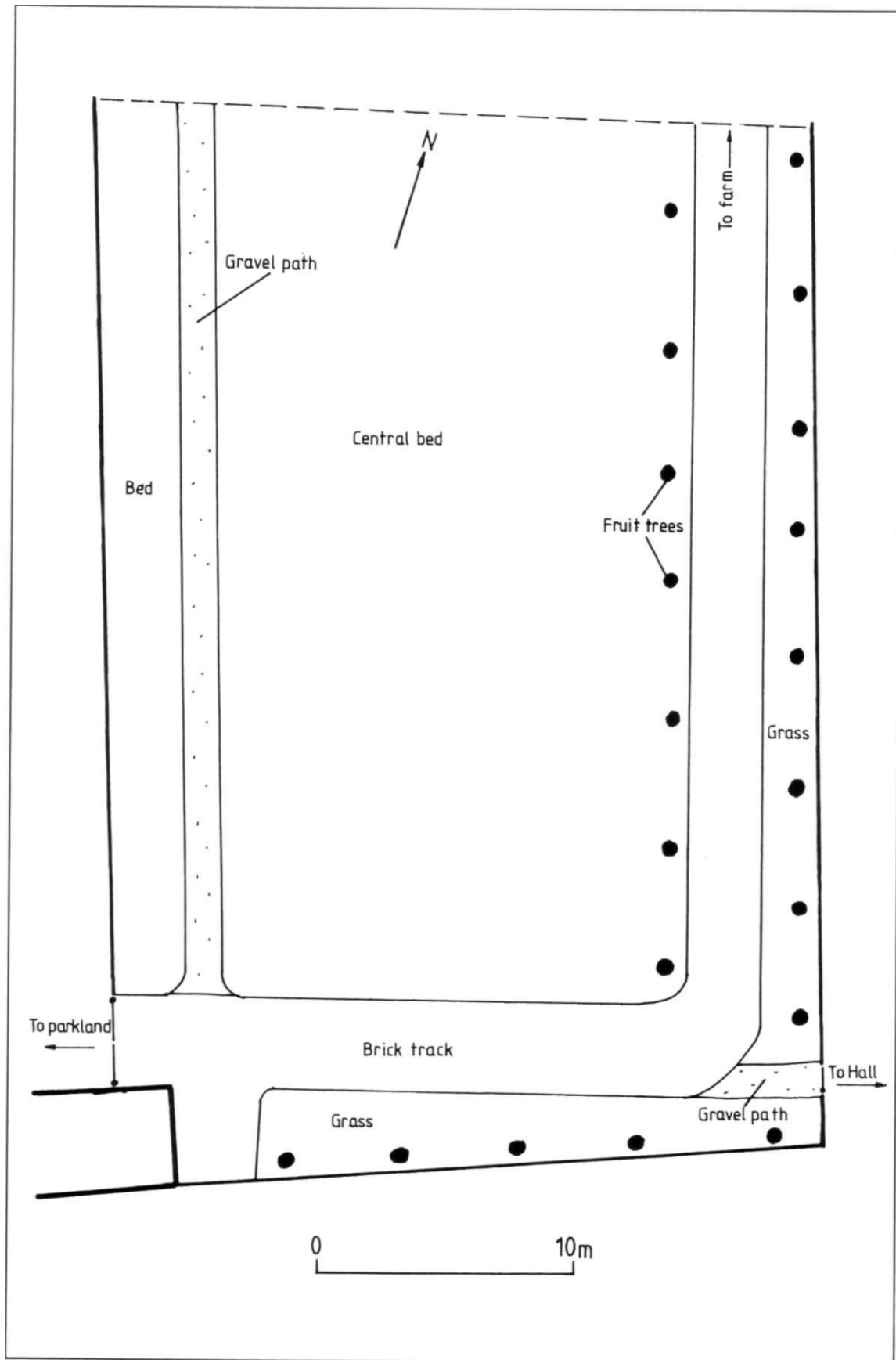


Fig. 4 Reconstruction of the early 19th-century garden

well-dug cultivated area without any permanent sub-divisions. The absence of division is probably not surprising, as any such feature would have hindered the digging-over and manuring necessary on such a poorly-drained site; it is assumed that boards and planks would have been laid as required.

The mid 19th-century garden

Evidence for this phase indicates a period of neglect, during which the western path was allowed to become buried in washed-down soil. The fact that the previous layout was left but not maintained suggests that the garden was not a priority with the hall's occupants. At this time they were tenants, and it has been noted elsewhere that such a situation often entails the running-down of gardens (Currie 1990).

The late 19th-century garden

The general layout must still have been discernible in the late 19th century, as the surfaces of the new paths are laid on the line of the earlier ones. Cinders on a hard-core base were used to re-surface the brick track, perhaps to create a better walking surface, while the western path was again laid as a narrow gravel path. The central area was again cultivated.

THE FINDS

There were a total of 93 sherds of pottery (see Table 1). The two largest deposits were from the path surfaces in Trench B, with 55 sherds from the early path (10) and 27 from the later path (07). Surrey White ware (dating from 1500 to 1700) was found in a residual context in Trench A (08).

TABLE 1

	<i>No. of sherds</i>	<i>Minimum no. of vessels</i>
White ware	69	6
Transfer-printed (black)	12	1
Mocha ware	4	2
Transfer-printed (blue)	2	
Bone China	2	
Unglazed stoneware	1	
Brown-glazed earthenware	1	
Black-glazed earthenware	1	
Surrey White ware	1	

Table of total pottery recovered

The types of pottery represented fall into three date-groups for their manufacture. The stoneware and glazed earthenware are of a type produced in Staffordshire between c. 1700 and 1850, becoming less common in the later period (Draper 1984, 43; Barker 1986, 62-3). They are probably residual, like the Surrey Ware (Jennings 1981, 129). There follows a characteristic group of early to mid 19th-century pottery, with white ware, mocha ware, bone china, and transfer-printed wares, again probably produced in Staffordshire. One sherd of white ware bore the stamp 'COPELA..' around a crown: it is the mark of W. T. Copeland of Stoke-on-Trent in the period 1847-67 (Godden 1964, 171). These wares were in production at the time of the garden being laid out, and may have ended up in the garden along with household waste used as compost. The later 19th century is represented by blue-on-white transfer printed ware.

Fragments were recovered from window glass, clear bottles, and a fine glass vessel; a clay pipe stem and iron and copper alloy objects were also found.

CONCLUSION

Although an increasing number of historic gardens are being investigated by excavation, work has usually concentrated on the more aesthetically appealing parts, such as flower-gardens and parkland. At Bescot Hall, however, it has proved possible to study the mechanics of a garden as a food production unit. Certainly to judge from the finds, there was a very strong link between the house and the garden, and it seems that the latter was considered as worthy of investment as the more visible parts of the site. The conservatism and simplicity of the plan is not something that would have been predicted from a study of surviving gardens of the same date or of contemporary literature, indicating the value of the excavation of such sites.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council Leisure Services Department for permission to excavate, and the staff of Pleck Park for their helpfulness. I am grateful to those members of Walsall Archaeology Society who worked on the site: David Evans, Gordon Evans, Andy Lewis, Kenneth Overton, Lesley Overton, Malcolm Overton, and Graham Sturt. C. K. Currie guided the pottery analysis. Finally, I thank Jenny Hall for help with surveying, processing of finds, and photographing.

ABBREVIATIONS

- | | | |
|-----------------|------|---|
| Barker, D. | 1986 | 'North Staffordshire Post-Medieval Ceramics: a Type series, part two: Blackware', <i>Staffordshire Archaeological Studies</i> (Stoke-on-Trent City Museum), new series 3, 58-75 |
| Currie, C. K. | 1990 | 'Excavation of an 18th-century garden pond: the West Pond, Castle Bromwich Hall', <i>Post-Medieval Archaeology</i> , 24, 93-123 |
| Draper, J. | 1984 | <i>Post-Medieval Pottery, 1650-1800</i> |
| Godden, G. A. | 1964 | <i>An encyclopaedia of British pottery and porcelain marks</i> |
| Jennings, S. | 1981 | <i>Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich</i> (East Anglian Archaeology Report, no. 13) |
| Locock, M. | 1989 | 'Walsall, Bescot Hall Moat' and 'Walsall, Pleck Park', <i>West Midlands Archaeology</i> , 32, 105-6 |
| McDevitt, M. | 1987 | 'Bescot Hall and Estate', <i>Walsall Chronicle</i> , 7, 6-11 |
| Pearce, T. | 1989 | <i>The History and Directory of Walsall, 1813</i> (reprinted 1989) |
| VCH Staffs. | | <i>Victoria County History of Staffordshire</i> |
| Wheatley, P. | 1971 | 'Staffordshire', in H. C. Darby and I. B. Tenett (eds.), <i>The Domesday Geography of Midland England</i> (1971), 163-216 |
| Willmore, F. W. | 1887 | <i>A History of Walsall and its neighbourhood</i> |

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NOTICE

The Society very much regrets the tragic death in a road accident in September 1992 of its committee member Mrs. Jane Hampartumian, archivist in charge of the Lichfield Joint Record Office. As Miss Isaac she succeeded Dr. David Robinson as archivist at Lichfield in 1970, having studied history and archaeology at the University of Birmingham and trained as an archivist at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. She soon became involved in the work of the Society, and between 1973 and 1981 was responsible for organising the Lichfield meetings. Her article on two medieval accounts for Lichfield was published in 1977 in volume xviii of our transactions. In 1979 she married Nubar Hampartumian, and they had two daughters, Amy and Sylvia. Her death was a severe blow to her many friends, both personal and professional, and the Society will miss her valuable contribution to its work.

PROGRAMME

1991

- 4 Oct. Annual General Meeting
 Ancient Buildings around the Mediterranean - Dr. Bill Cavanagh
- 18 Oct. The Wharram Research Project John Hurst
- 1 Nov. Excavations at Flag Fen - Janet Neve
- 15 Nov. The excavations at Rocester - Iain Ferris
- 13 Dec. Christmas Pastime

1992

- 7 Feb. The archaeological survey of medieval churches in Staffordshire Bob Meeson
- 21 Feb. Swaledale's Ancient Landscape - Andrew Fleming
- 6 Mar. Architectural aspects of the brewing industry - Sarah Elsom
- 20 Mar. Civic Evening
 Celts and the Classical World - Robin Livens
- 3 Apr. Excavations of an Iron Age settlement at Gamston,
 Nottinghamshire - Dr. David Knight