

Medieval Settlement Research Group

Annual Report 2 1987

OFFICERS FOR 1987-8

- PRESIDENT**
C. C. Taylor, Esq.,
Royal Commission on Historical Monuments
(England),
The Lodge, Anstey Hall,
Trumpington, Cambridge
- HON. VICE-PRESIDENTS**
- F. A. Aberg, Esq.,
29 Pine Walk, Liss,
Hampshire GU33 7AT
- Professor M. W. Beresford,
6 Claremont Avenue,
Woodhouse Square,
Leeds LS3 1AT
- J. G. Hurst, Esq.,
Historic Buildings and Monuments
Commission,
Fortress House,
23 Savile Row,
London W1X 2HE
- Mrs J. Le Patourel,
15 Northolme Avenue,
Leeds LS16 5HY
- SECRETARY**
Dr C. C. Dyer
School of History,
The University of Birmingham,
PO Box 363,
Birmingham B15 2TT
- TREASURER**
Dr R. E. Glasscock,
Department of Geography,
University of Cambridge,
Downing Place,
Cambridge CB2 3EN
- EDITOR**
D. Wilson, Esq.,
Department of Adult and Continuing Education,
University of Keele,
Keele,
Staffordshire ST5 5BG
- COMMITTEE**
- D. Austin
C. J. Bond
A. Brown
R. Croft
N. Higham
D. Hooke
D. Turner
T. Williamson
S. Wrathmell

Copyright 1988

Medieval Settlement Research Group,
National Monuments Record,
Fortress House,
23, Savile Row,
London.
W1X 2HE

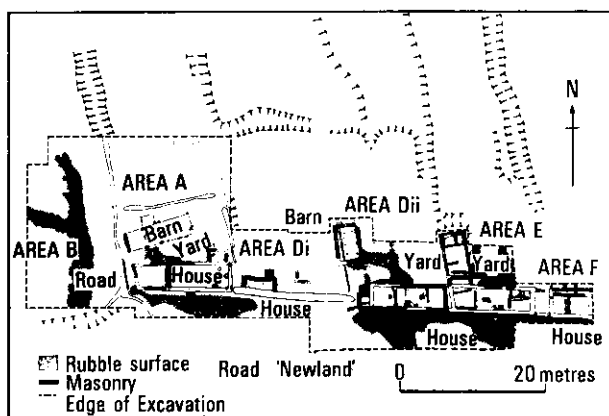


Fig. 13 Burton Dassett, Southend

with the market. Occupation on the properties continued until the depopulation with little evidence of decline.

Area A contained a substantial single-storey stone house (14m × 6.5m) with a roof of Nuneaton slate. This was later extended with the addition of a timber-framed room (6m long) to the west and a lean-to kitchen to the north. Behind the house was a four-bay timber barn (14m × 4.5m) presumably of cruck construction, supported on postbases except for its west wall which had rubble footings. The property was bounded by drainage ditches, the western one being frequently recut. The area behind the buildings was subdivided by a series of east-west gullies; it contained a number of pits, mostly shallow and irregular and probably the result of animals trampling.

To the east the earthworks indicated a double-width property (Area D) although excavation showed it had originally been divided. In Area Di there was a fragmentary building to its north-east, perhaps a barn. These were both demolished by the mid-fourteenth century when the property was amalgamated with that to the east. There were no further buildings here and the house was cut through by drainage ditches.

The original Area Dii house was stone and measured 11m × 5.6m. It was then extended with the addition of a room to the west and subdivided. In its final form it was 20m long with three rooms flanking a cross-passage and a probable upper room over the west end reached by a projecting staircase. Among the finds from the house was a door jamb inscribed with the owner's name, *Gormand*. Behind the house was a series of three barns, two of timber supported on earthfast posts, the third with stone footings (5.5m × 8.6m). The area between barn and house had rubble yard surfaces, one cut by a stone drain.

The original Area E house was two roomed (5.2m × 7.5m) and set at right-angles to the frontage. It was replaced by one parallel to the street (17.4m × 6m) with three rooms. The northern part of the old building was retained, possibly for a staircase to a room over the west end of the new one. The west wall may also have been retained with the addition of the upper storey. A short length of wall to the east suggests a porch giving access both to stairway and to the ground floor rooms. A final extension, filling in the frontage to the east, created an extra room, 3m long, over what had previously been a

rubble-surfaced access to the rear. Behind the frontage there was a stable/byre with stalls and a stone drain. The north end of this was later rebuilt to incorporate a malting kiln. The yard area behind the house was also paved with rubble.

The Area F house had three phases, all with subdivided ranges parallel to the street, varying in width from 5.2m to 6.2m. The two later ones had further rooms to the north. The density of buildings increased markedly to the east; on the three eastern properties the whole frontage was eventually built up giving the street a very urban air. This is enhanced by the areas of rubble paving that led down from each of the houses into the street.

To the west of the buildings (Area B) a north-south road was excavated; this was presumably a lane running between the two main east-west streets. Further west (Area B & C) trial trenches to investigate earthwork 'platforms' failed to locate buildings. Recording of the fabric of St. James's Chapel, the only surviving medieval building at Southend, now used as a cowshed, revealed a blocked thirteenth-century window opening.

Further excavation in 1988 will concentrate on the south side of *Newland* in the field known as 'Dovehouse Close', where fieldwalking has located further buildings on the motorway line. The pattern of settlement here appears to be less regular and more widely spaced than on the north side of the street. It also seems that occupation may have continued here after 1497; mid-sixteenth-century material came from one building group and late seventeenth/eighteenth-century material from another.

WEST MIDLANDS

Hobs Moat, Solihull (SP 147 826)

John McIlwaine reports on the Hobs Moat Community Project which was established in September, 1985. The aim of the project was to restore this enigmatic earthwork which, although a scheduled ancient monument for over half a century, had been allowed to deteriorate into a serious state of disrepair. The project is primarily a landscaping exercise although there is an archaeological component.

In the first phase of excavation three trenches were opened on the earthwork's central platform (Fig. 14). The first site, HM1, revealed the remains of a small shed-like structure of late/post-medieval date superimposed on earlier structures the only remains being a series of clay lines which may have acted as timber footing. The exact plan of the earlier building features is difficult to ascertain because of the restricted nature of the excavation. The excavation through the western internal rampart, HM2, uncovered an earlier earthwork which consisted of a low bank and a ditch. The earlier earthwork was used as a constructional feature for the later rampart, the early bank being used as a revetment. The third trench, HM3, yielded the foundations of a sandstone structure with a clay and cobble floor which had been selectively dismantled during the construction of the earthwork. The finds from these sites were chiefly local medieval coarse ware, clay pipe, post-medieval pottery, as well as a few

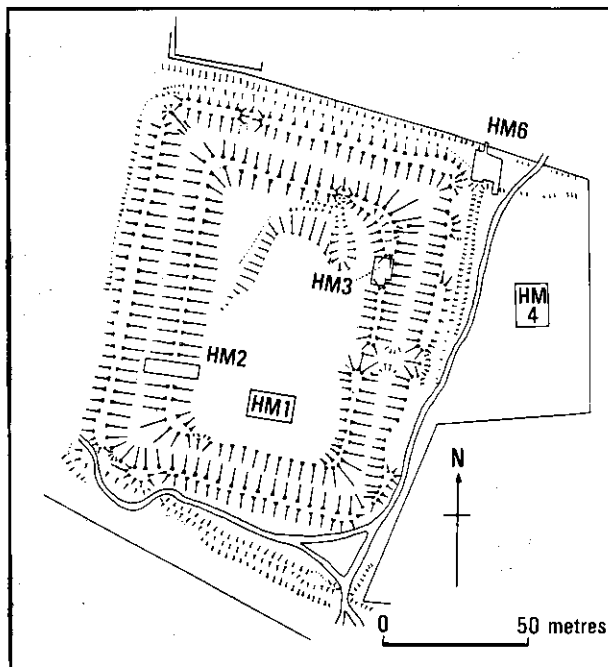


Fig. 14 Hobs Moat, Solihull

fragments of green-glazed pottery and medieval tile.

In the second phase of the project the emphasis of the excavation programme moved outside the monument, following suggestions from the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. The site, HM4, on the platform

to the east of the earthwork demonstrated that nineteenth-century ploughing had destroyed any evidence of archaeological activity. Two phases of ridge-and-furrow were apparent, and although the vast majority of finds were post-medieval, several sherds of local medieval coarse ware as well as a flint blade were recovered, hinting at earlier activity. HM6 proved that the green lane, and associated hedge, which run along the northern edge of the monument are not medieval in date, as suggested by Nichols *et al*, but are in fact nineteenth-century features.

A series of detailed surveys: physical, contour, resistivity and proton-magnetometer, have been undertaken. The resistivity survey suggests that the playing field area to the west of the monument is archaeologically sterile.

The final report on the first series of excavations will be published in the Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society in 1988/9. An interim report on these excavations is available and a second interim report will be produced by summer 1988.

References

- 1 Gathercole, W., 'An excavation at Hobs Moat, Olton, 1955' *Birmingham Archaeological Society, Transactions and Proceedings*, 73, (1957), 118-119.
- 2 Hobs Moat Archaeological Project, *Excavations 1985-1986*, Interim Report.
- 3 Nichols P.S., *et al*, 'Hobs Moat, Solihull' *Moated Sites Research Group Report*, 13, (1986), 21-23.