

PHAFPC Vol 23

Further Excavations at Basing House,

1964-1966

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A previous report described work on the Norman outer ditch and bank and also on a small ditch surrounding an adjacent rectangular enclosure. At site II, south of the Old House, a section through the Norman ditch and bank had provided evidence that there must be a Romano-British occupation site nearby.

In the work described here such a site was found and excavated in the open space immediately to the south of the Norman ditch and adjoining the old site II excavation (see Fig. 1 of the previous report.)

The work was carried out in three phases:

Phase 1. (1964) was the survey and sectioning of a system of Iron Age ditches.

Phase 2. (1965) was the excavation of an area of Belgic occupation with superimposed Romano-British occupation, all sealed beneath the Court of Guard, a semicircular defensive earthwork of Civil War date.

Phase 3. (1966) was a continuation and rounding-off of phase 2.

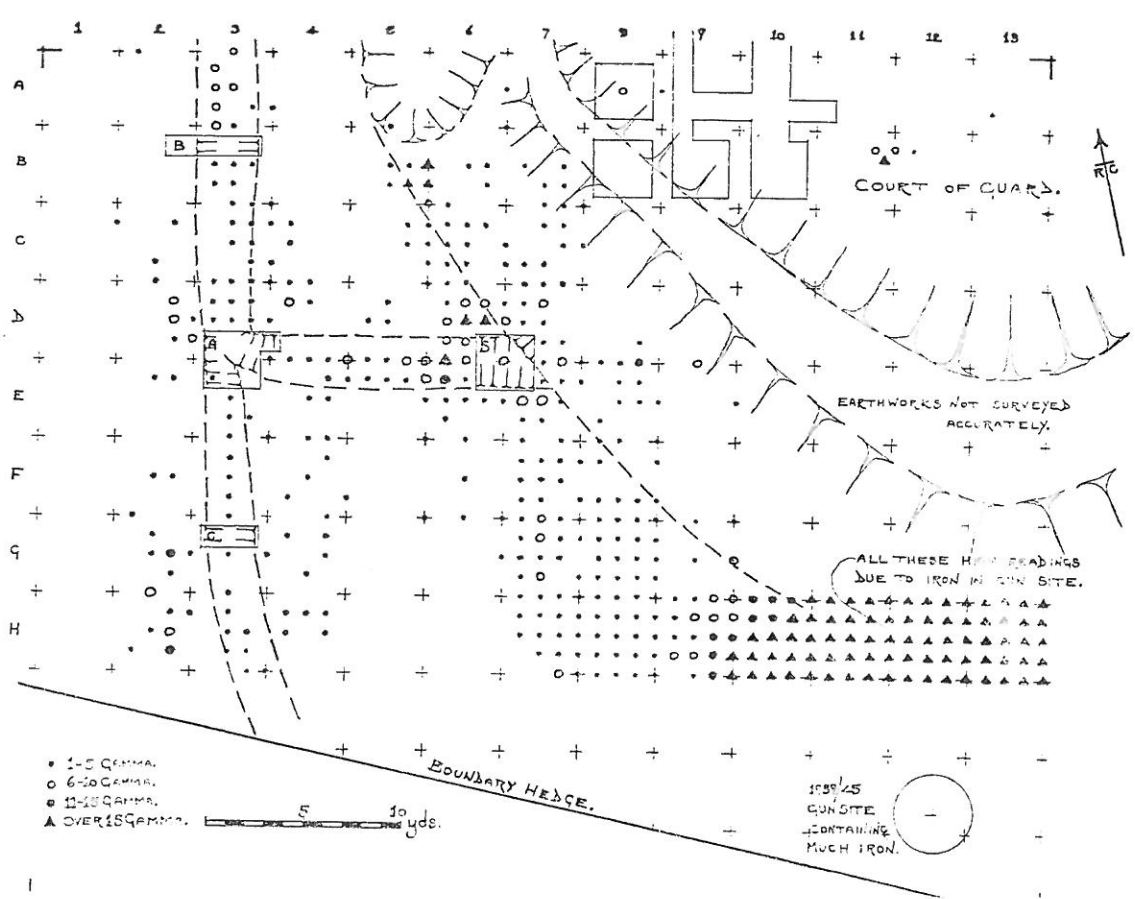
PHASE 1

A magnetometer survey on a one yard square grid of an area south of the Old House and outside the Norman outer ditch and bank was carried out in the Spring of 1964.

A number of magnetic anomalies were found, one series of which appeared to be in two continuous rows which met at a 'T' junction (Fig. 1). It seemed likely that these particular anomalies represented a ditch system, and sections were cut at A, B, C and S to test this theory. The section cut at A was to examine the junction of the two ditches. The ditch which ran West from section S to section A and then curved north to section B, was about nine feet wide at the lip and three feet six inches deep, with steep sides and a flat bottom (see sections S & B, Fig. 2). This was called ditch II. The smaller ditch, I, which ran south from section A to section C, was about eight feet wide at the lip and three feet three inches deep with a more rounded profile. The feature which showed that the two ditches were not contemporary was the sharp V shaped tongue of chalk which lay in the angle of the junction of ditches I and II (Fig. 3). Had the two ditches been cut at the same time a much more rounded intersection would have been produced, but the formation of this sharp tongue showed that ditch I was cut first and then allowed to silt up before ditch II was cut, excavating fresh ground to the east and recutting the old ditch to the north. At no point was any trace of bank found; this may well have been levelled in Roman times.

At section S another, later ditch was found cutting diagonally across the fill of ditch II, but was not sectioned. This was the ditch which surrounded the Civil War earthwork. The fill of ditch I at section S, where it was not disturbed by the Civil War ditch, consisted of brown earth and chalk in the top thirty inches (layers 2 & 3) containing much Belgic pottery (Fig. 2). The lower twelve inches (layer 4) was filled with dark soil with little pottery. A

FURTHER EXCAVATIONS AT BASING HOUSE, 1964-1966



FURTHER EXCAVATIONS AT BASING HOUSE, 1964-1966

quantity of animal bones was found in the primary silt on the floor of the ditch (see Appendix 1). The ditch at the remaining sections A, B and C was filled with cleaner soil than and much less pottery was found, suggesting that the centre of Belgic occupation was located near section S.

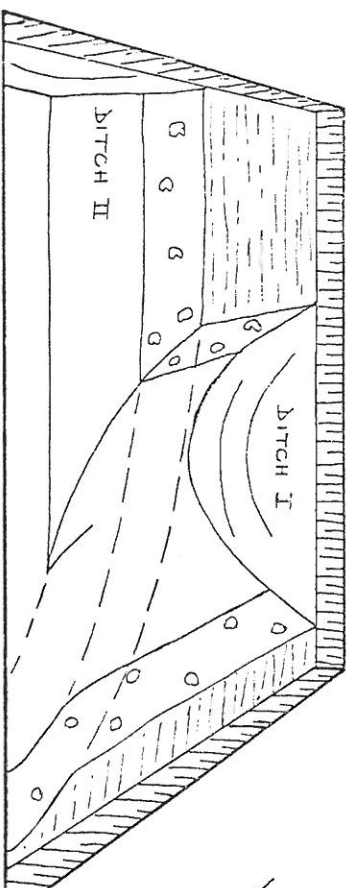
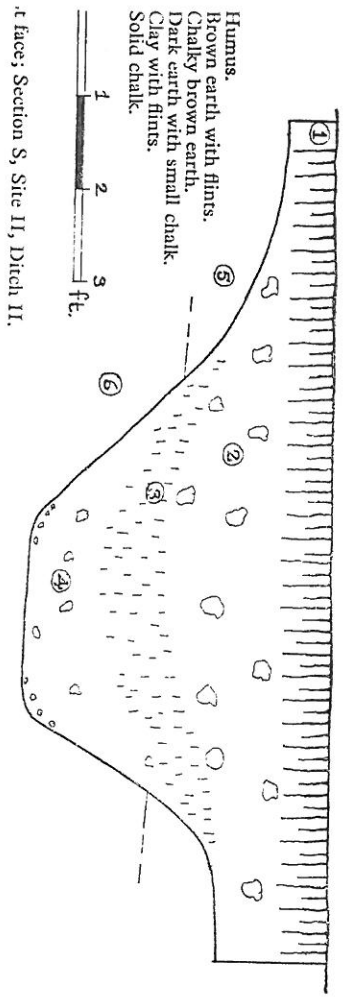


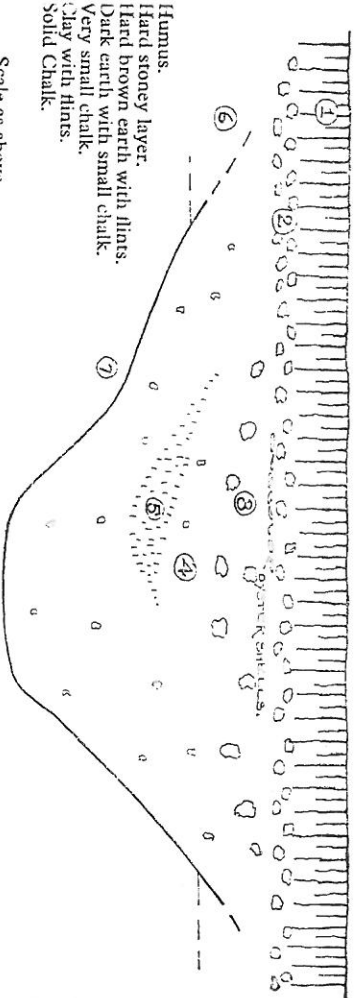
FIG. 3. The junction between Ditches I and II at Section A.

PHASE: 2

At the southern end of the section cut across the outer Norman bank and ditch in 1 'floor' yielding early pottery was found.³ A quantity of Roman pottery, tile and 4th century coins was found throughout this section. It was decided to extend the excavation in an attempt to find the source of the material and to this end a series of boxes was laid out (Fig. 5) in an area chosen as immediately beneath the 'Court of Guard', a Civil War earthwork 100 ft up by the Royalists in the winter of 1644/5. The Civil War bank was of simple dump construction. Beneath the pre-1644 turf line was a dense level layer of heavily-burnt flint on a surface of small chalk (Fig. 6). The greater part of the Roman pottery illustrated (Fig. 7) was found on the burnt flint 'floor'. A few pieces were found beneath the chalk layer but nothing was found actually in the burnt flint or chalk. Beneath the chalk was an earlier turf line which immediately above the natural yellow clay with flint. In boxes 8A, 8R, 9A and 9B there was a roughly circular depression was found cut some ten inches into the clay and filled with dark soil similar to the pre-Roman humus, containing only flint waste flakes, probably of neolithic origin. The floor of this depression was covered with small flint gravel. This well into the gravel was a quantity of pottery (Fig. 7) identical to that found in the ditch in the previous year, in fact one piece was part of the large storage jar found in section S (No. 17). Although specks of charcoal were found all over the gravel floor, no hearth was located. Part of the floor and the Roman layers above had been removed when a small channel (ditch III), running east and west had been dug. This channel was already silted to in when the earthwork of 1644/5 was constructed and a piece of Tudor tile of the type found in the building of Basing House (c. 1530) was found in the primary silt. No post hole was found in connection with the Belgic floor and apart from a few large flints around the edge of the depression no sign of any walls was seen.

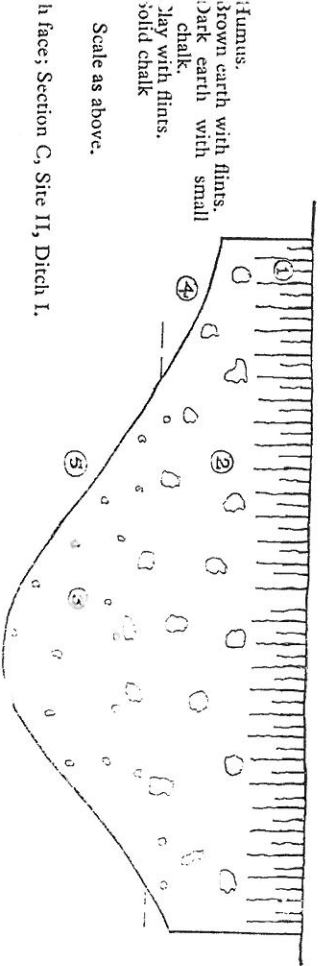


h face; Section S, Site II, Ditch II.



Scale as above.

h face; Section B, Site II, Ditch II.



Scale as above.

h face; Section C, Site II, Ditch I.

FIG. 2. Sections of Belgic Ditches.

In the 4th century A.D. the abandoned Belgic hut site appears to have been levelled by filling any hollows with chalk, taken perhaps, from the banks of the Belgic ditches. This provided a flat floor which must soon have become uneven due to the softness of the filling of the Belgic depression beneath. This unevenness appears to have been made good by patching with burnt flint since the burnt flint was thickest over the Belgic depression. The burnt flint does not appear to have been burnt on the spot, i.e., it must have been derived from some activity elsewhere. No evidence was found of the nature of the activity which produced so much burnt flint, (approx. 9 barrow loads in 12 sq. yds.) unless a single piece of cokey-looking slag weighing 4 oz., and containing 62 per cent iron can be taken as a clue. Two post holes were found in the Roman floor, but apart from several fragments of brick and tile, some with mortar still adhering, no other trace of a structure was found.

PHASE 3

In 1966 the area of excavation was extended. The whole of 10B and 11B together with parts of 10A, 11A, 11C, 7Z and 8Z were excavated (Fig. 5). This work revealed a second Belgic hut site, again covered by successive layers of clay, black earth, chalk and burnt flint. There was a considerable amount of charcoal on the Belgic floor at the southern end of 10B, but no hearth structure was identified. Two further post holes were found, again taken through the Romano-British floor. 11C was barren while 7Z and 8Z contained only the edge of the Norman ditch.

A small amount of pottery was found on each of the two levels and is illustrated in Fig. 8. One Romano-British piece not illustrated was a small sherd of Samian ware with raised leaf decoration.

In addition to a few bones of domestic animals on both levels, some bones of children under two years old (but not new born) were found scattered on the Romano-British floor. Those identified were:

- Three Tibia
- One Ulna
- One Rib
- One Scapula (deformed)
- One Lower Jaw with Teeth

ANIMAL BONES

Section S

Found resting on the chalk at the bottom of ditch II was the lower mandible of a horse of about six months, and the second phalange, cannon bone and splint bones of a horse of about eighteen months. The cannon bone was from an animal of medium size, perhaps a little larger than a Welsh hill pony. The mandible was broken in antiquity but the limb bones were not.

Section A

In addition to the second phalange of a horse and teeth of sheep this section also produced the incisor tooth and broken femur of a dog, about the size of an Airedale, and the molar of an Ox.

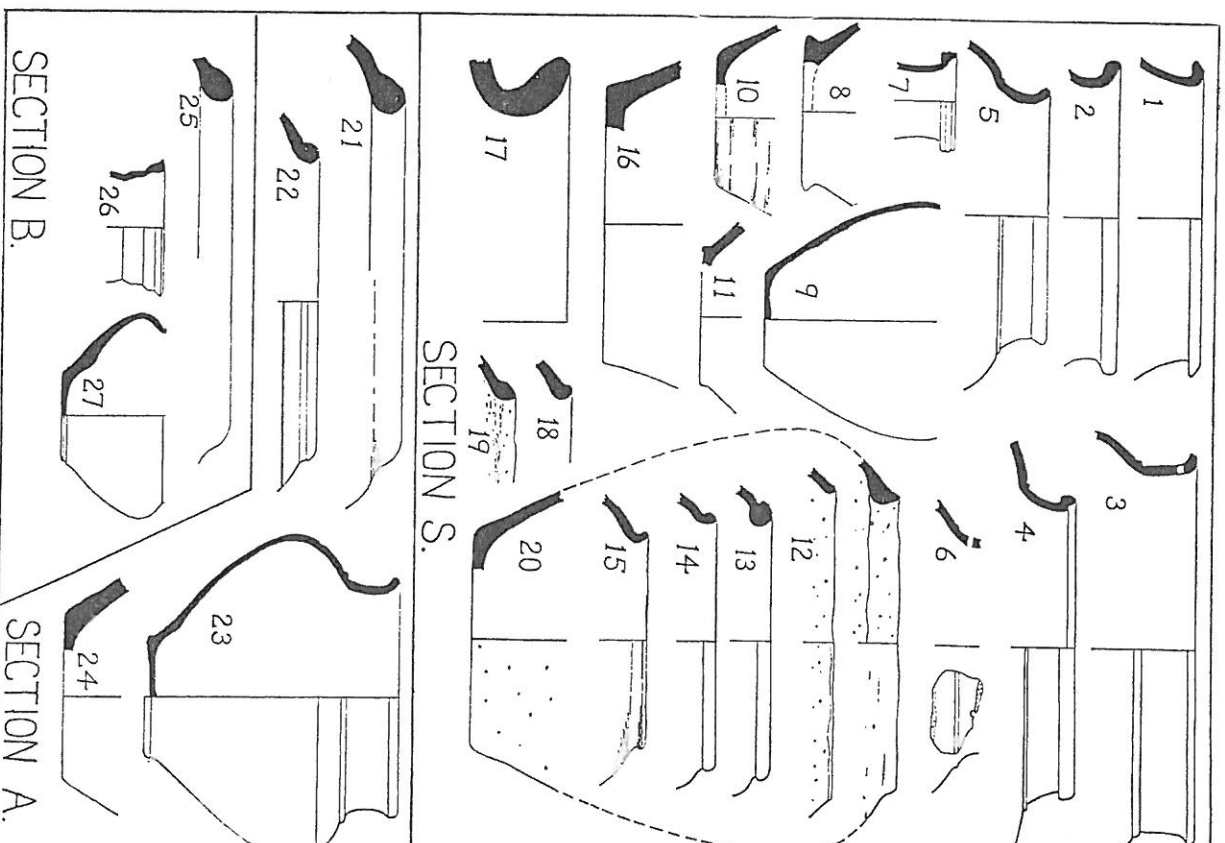


Fig. 4. Pottery from the Belgic ditches. Scale: 1/4-4.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

FURTHER EXCAVATIONS AT BASING HOUSE, 1964-1966

Section C

The only identifiable bone from this section was the splint bone of a horse, identical in size to the one from section S.

Belgic Hut (layer 7)

The range of animals represented by the bones from the four ditch sections was repeated on the hut floor. Horse (cannon bone, much the same size as the one from section S, and vertebra). Sheep and lamb (cannon bone, vertebra, scapula, pelvic girdle and teeth). Also found were the lower mandible and incisor teeth of pig, some bones from a bird about the size of a thrush, several oyster shells and the shell of a common garden snail. Another broken cannon bone of a horse was found in layer 6 immediately beneath the small chalk.

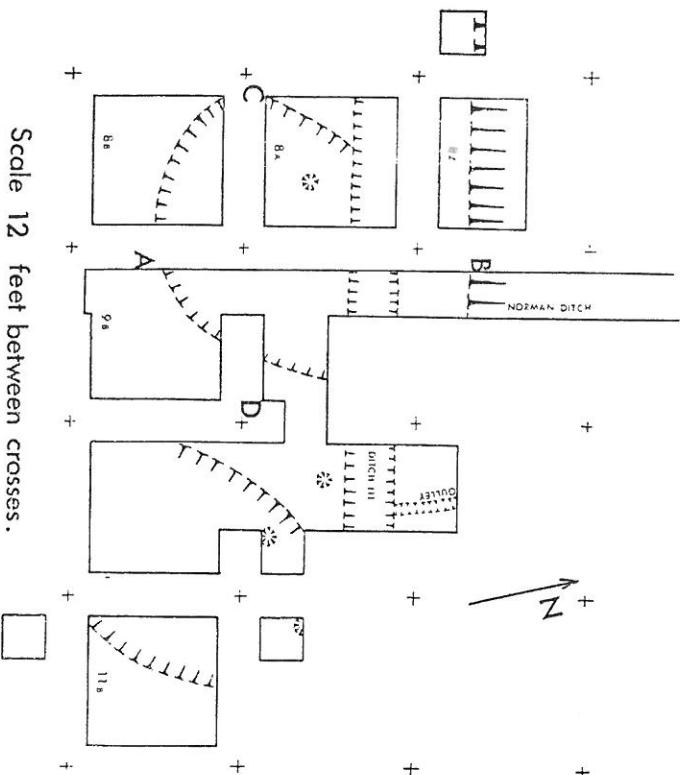


Fig. 5. Plan of main excavation, Site II.

Romano-British 'Floor' (layer 4)

This floor produced examples of all the animal bones found in the earlier layers. Horse (second phalange, second phalanx and a milk molar). Sheep (stragulas, humerus and nine molars). Pig (five incisors). Several oyster shells (smaller and flatter than those from the Belgic Hut). The only species found which was not represented in the earlier levels was the Celtic Ox (*Bos taurus longifrons*). This beast was represented by parts of a skull and horn core and one molar. Part of the skull of a fairly large dog was found in a post hole.

Another group of bones, found in the small channel (III) cut through the Romano-layer, seems to have been deposited all together, probably some time in the middle 16th century. Most of the bones were of sheep, probably all from the same animal. With the sheep bones were those of two rabbits and a pole cat.

POTTERY

The pottery can, with one exception, be divided into two groups, the Belgic wares from the ditch sections and the hut sites, and the Romano-British wares from the later occupation. Exception to these two groups is a small quantity of Samian ware, which represents four vessels of two types.

The Belgic wares fall into two types, coarse, gritted, handmade, bead rimmed, pebbles in fine thin sandy or soapy wares. Whilst the Belgic pottery from Basing House general resemblance to the mid 1st century Belgic pottery from Cannuludonum and minimum the most exact parallels are to be found at Silchester. Excavating in 1957 Boon a Belgic hut beneath an early Roman bank. The pottery which he found in this hut is identical to the Basing material both in style and ware. Boon dated the Silchester hut to c. 43 A.D. therefore it is probable that the Basing Belgic occupation is of the same period.

The Romano-British wares can be paralleled at several sites and seems to be more localised than the Belgic material. Their dates agree very well with the evidence of the pottery found on the site (all 4th century A.D.).

The Samian pottery appears from the ware and glaze to be early in the series, probably Claudian rather than Neronian. Unfortunately only one piece was stratified in its context, between the Belgic and the Romano-British layers, the rest had been disturbed.

The pottery illustrated in Figs. 4, 7 and 8 is described in detail in Appendix 1.

SMALL FINDS

The site has produced very few small finds. In the Civil War layers various pieces possibly from a soldier's equipment were found, but all too rusted and fragmentary to identify. In the pre-Civil War turf layers, a large key of typical late mediæval type iron ring and swivel, possibly of agricultural usage were the only finds. A number of smaller nails such as might be used in boots. The only 'Bronze' item from the 'button' (?) shown in Fig. 7, No. 34, which appears to have been cast and then finished by turning on a lathe. No small finds came from the Belgic deposits. The finds shown in Fig. 7 are listed in Appendix 2.

COINS

The three coins described below were all found in layer 3B, one inch above the bottom layer. They are all 4th century.

1. Diam. 17 mm. approx.
Obverse Head, diademed, of Emperor to right.
Reverse Winged figure holding wreath to left.
... D.A. PPAUG ...
? Standards in field to left.
? R in field to right.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

FURTHER EXCAVATIONS AT BASING HOUSE, 1964-1966

2. Diam. 17 mm. approx.
Obverse Trace of perhaps . . . T.A. . .
Reverse Trace of perhaps . . . A . . .
3. Diam. 17 mm. approx.
Obverse Head, diademed, of Emperor to right.
CONSTAN AUG
Reverse Two soldiers facing, a standard between.
GLORIA EXER. (Gloria Exercituum type).

CONCLUSION

The work described in this report and the previous one started with a request from the owner that the Society should find, if possible, some clear evidence for the widely-held belief that the site was lived on before Norman times. Our first attack, on the Norman ditch, produced no evidence that it was a re-use of an earlier ditch. However, it did produce strong evidence for a Romano-British site nearby. Our second attack, on a rectangular enclosure shown by an aerial photograph, proved that this was post-Norman.

Success came with the use of a proton magnetic gradiometer, which revealed a complex of ditches south of the Norman ditch. Excavation established some of these as Belgic and suggested that the habitation site must be near our original section through the Norman ditch. We then laid out and excavated the customary square grid, finding both Romano-British and Belgic occupation sites. These provided evidence that the site was lived on just before the Roman conquest and again in the 4th century A.D., but no evidence that this small area was lived on at any other period before the Norman conquest. The Society has now ceased work on the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the Honourable P. C. Orde Powlett for permission to dig at Basing House, and members of the Aldernaston Archaeological Society who carried out the work. They also wish to thank the staffs of Reading and Basingstoke Museums for their help and advice, and to Dr. Grace Simpson for information on the Samian ware.

The small finds and pottery from the excavations are housed in the Museum on the site and may be viewed by arrangement with the owner, the Honourable P. C. Orde Powlett, Basing House, Old Basing, Hants.

POTTERY

APPENDIX 1.

Section S, Fig. 4.

1. Dull pink, soapy ware.
2. Grey, hard, sandy, wheel-turned.
3. Pink, black core, soapy, wheel-turned. 4 mm. hole bored below lip after firing, c.f. Stichester³, Fig. 5, No. 12. Claudian.
4. Grey, hard, sandy, wheel-turned, cf. Verulamium⁵, Fig. 34, No. 53, c. 50 A.D. Same ware as Stichester, Fig. 5, No. 8.
5. Black, hard, sandy, wheel-turned, cf. Carnulodunum⁶ 221B. Claudian.
6. Black, smooth, soapy, wheel-turned. 3.5 mm. hole b after firing.

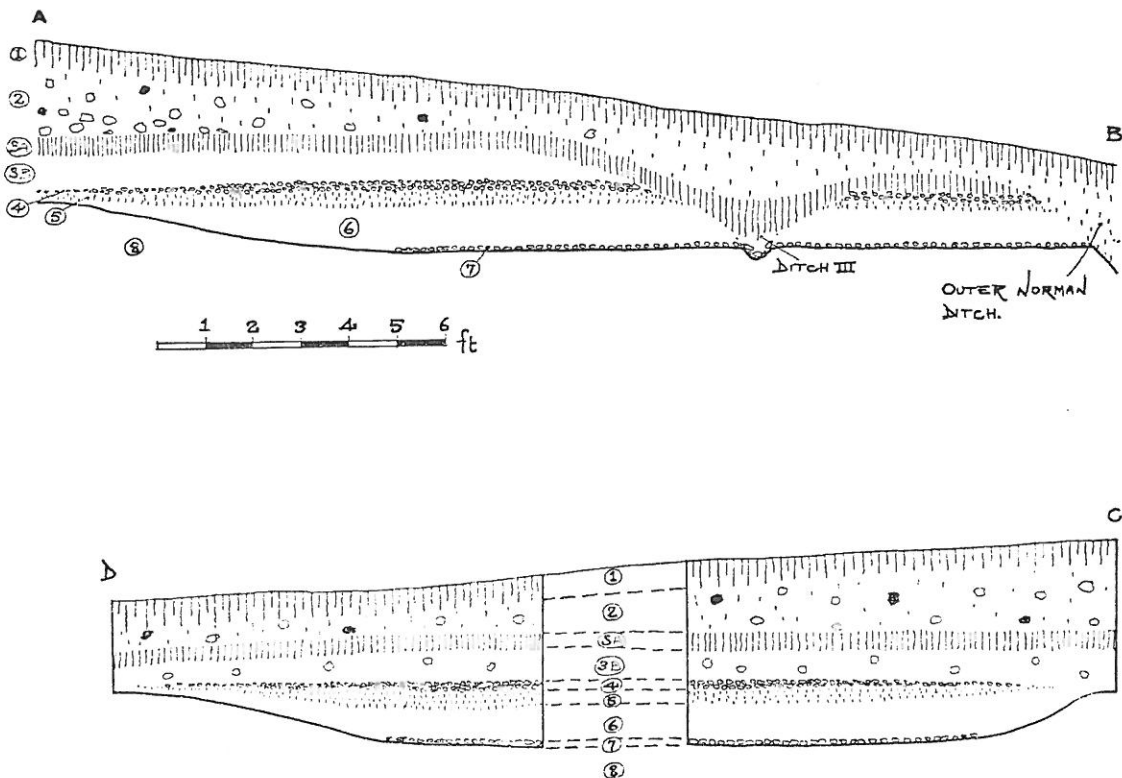


FIG. 6. Sections at Site II.

Layer 1: Humus, 2: Chalk rubble and flints, 3A: Pre-Civil War turf, 3B: Brown soil with stones, 4: Burnt flint (Romano-British), 5: Small chalk, 6: Black soil, 7: Partly cobbled floor

- From body of bank. Large bead rim bowl in coarse heavily gritted ware. Native, mid-1st century A.D.
- From 'strony floor'. Small globular bowl in fine pink paste, traces of yellow slip outside below rim. Native early 1st century A.D.
- From body of bank. Everted rim vessel with register for lid, in hard sandy ware. 2nd century A.D.
- From ancient land surface beneath bank. Everted rim vessel in hard sandy ware. 3rd century A.D.
- From body of bank. Small necked flask in hard sandy ware with black exterior. Late 4th century A.D.
- From ancient land surface beneath bank. Flanged rim bowl in hard black ware with white slip on flange. Late 4th to early 5th century A.D.
- From ancient land surface beneath bank. Heavy, flanged bowl in hard sandy ware, trace of white slip inside, trace of black on flange. Late 4th to early 5th century A.D.

All Finds

- All from the thick ashly layer beneath the spoil heap in the ditch.
- A forged iron socketed pike head. The blade is 'hollow ground' and the socket is decorated with eight equally spaced lateral grooves. The grooves do not extend along the mounting straps, one of which is missing.
- A forged iron pick head, the tip of which is missing.
- A small (lady's?) finger ring of brass. The band is roughly rectangular in section.
- The pattern, a lozenge of 36 hemispheres, has been raised by stamping.
- A clay pipe bowl with flat base, no trace of mould line.
- A clay pipe bowl with pointed base. The underside of the bowl shows the mould line clearly, on the upper side and on the stem the mould line appears to have been removed before firing by burnishing. Nos. 1 and 2 are illustrated in Fig. 4.

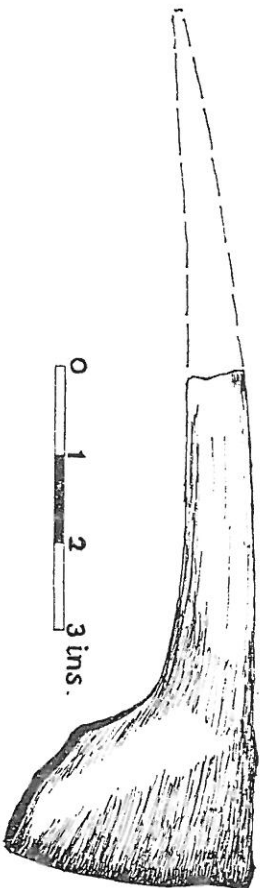


Fig. 4. Civil War pike and pick.

SITES III AND IV. THE RECTANGULAR ENCLOSURE ADJOINING BASING HOUSE

The aerial photograph reproduced in Plate IV shows a bank with ditch outside enclosing a rectangular area of about eight acres on the S.E. side of Basing House. (This bank and ditch envelops most of a paddock fronting on to Crown Lane and the N.L. side passes under the existing British Legion Hut). Where the S.W. side of the rectangle meets the outer ditch east of the Citadel, the latter turns sharply inwards and then turns through a right angle along the side of the New House to form the fourth side of the rectangle. This suggested that the rectangular enclosure was older than the outer ditch of the Citadel and that the latter ditch was deflected in this way to take advantage of an existing feature. It would therefore be of considerable interest to date the rectangular enclosure and for this purpose two sections were cut.

General description and results (Sites III and IV).

The first section (Site III) was taken across the N.E. side of the rectangle, between the paddock hedge and the canal. The bank is very clearly defined here but the ditch had been cut into by the canal and hence the section could only be taken through the bank and into the edge of the ditch. Later in the year, permission was obtained to dig in the clover field on the south and east sides of the paddock and a section (Site IV) was taken through the S.W. side of the rectangle about midway between the broad white track (this is the trace of a deep anti-tank ditch dug during the late war) shown on the aerial photograph and the boundary hedge of Basing House grounds.

At Site III the shape of the ditch could not be determined. Seven pieces of pottery were found, five under the bank which here was little more than one foot high, and two others two feet under the surface just inside the ditch. One piece of rim found under the bank is shown in Plate III (No. 2). The material is grey in colour and coarse in texture and contains glassy sand grains of up to one mm. diameter. The rim bears a typical thumb print and is medieval. It is this thumb print which has distorted the slight ridge on the inside of the rim shown in the plate. Four other pieces have much the same texture and colour and are probably of the same period. The two other pieces are of much finer texture. One of them, only 4 mm. thick with a grey interior and pinky brown surface, is probably Romano-British.

Four iron nails and two small pieces of iron plate were found but not identified.

At Site IV the bank was almost completely ploughed away but there was no difficulty in finding the ditch, which was some seven feet deep when excavated. The section is shown in Fig. 5. The subsoil on the N.E. side of the ditch, i.e. under the bank, was light and sandy down to a depth of at least four feet but on the outer side of the ditch was full of stones, i.e. the ditch at this point was cut through the very edge of a gravel deposit overlying the chalk and capping a slight hill.

The bottom three feet of the ditch were filled with soft silt which was completely sterile. In the upper half of the ditch and under the bank some 80 pieces of pottery, brick and tile were found, of which 17 plus one musket ball have been identified. Material of Romano-British or Iron Age, Medieval and Tudor date are marked R, M and T respectively on the section, while C denotes the musket ball which dates from the Civil War. The deepest buried of the pieces marked T was a piece of burnt brick identified as coming from the burnt-out gate house at the entrance to the Old House and hence dropped in the ditch after the Civil War. The same is probably true of the other Tudor artefacts.

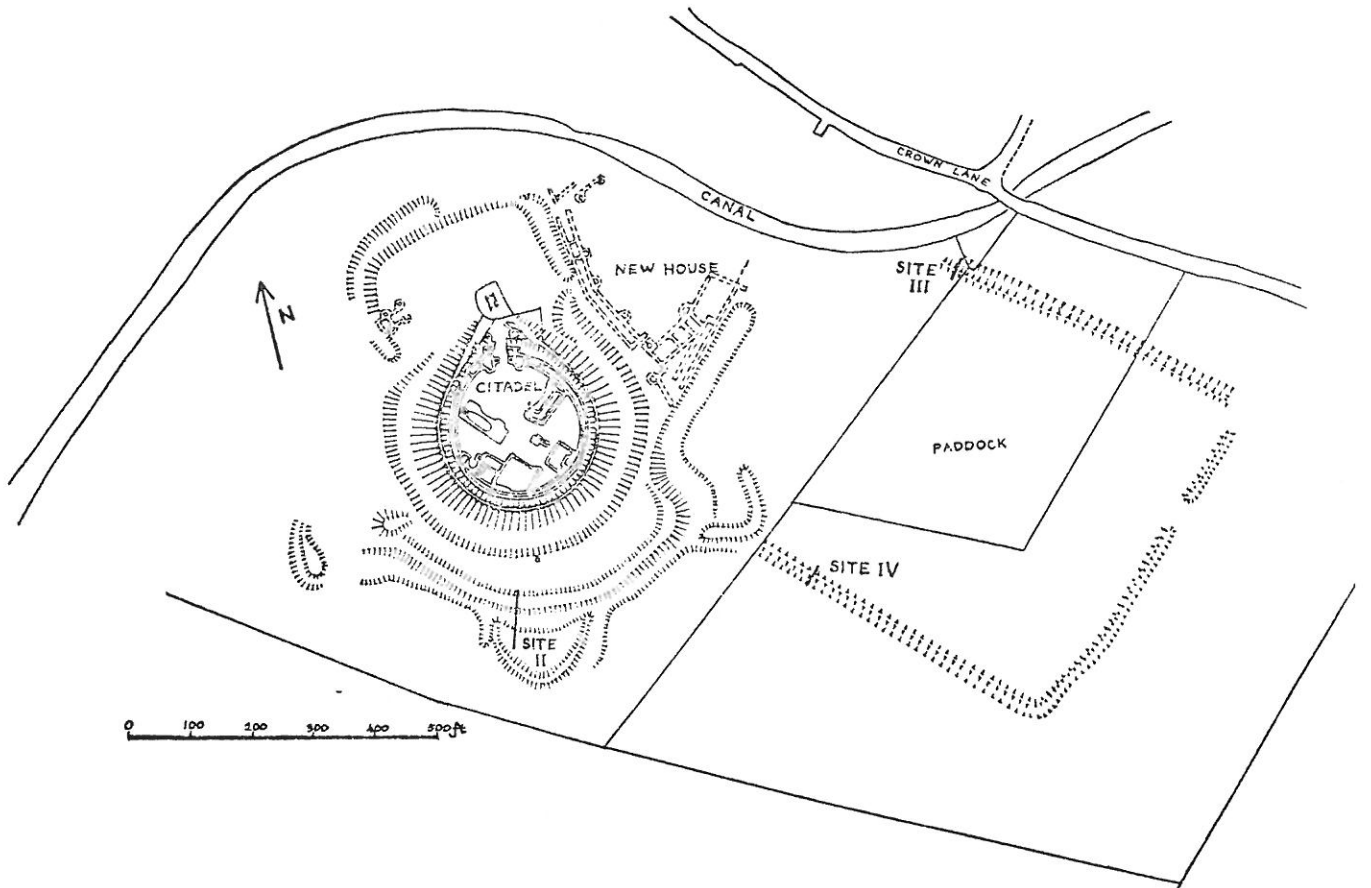


FIG. 1. Overall plan.

and red brick in the body of the bank. Beneath the bank was found the ancient land surf consisting of a layer of dark soil containing much pottery, brick and nails, and coins. Beneath this dark layer was undisturbed yellow clay with flints. Cut into the clay with flints and probably through the old turf line also, was a small V-shaped channel containing much broken flint and two fragmentary jawbones. The dark layer was also found on the outer edge of the ditch and beneath it here was an even layer of small hard packed gravel about 1½ inches thick; this 'floor' had much pottery lying on and pressed into it. Lying on the 'floor' of the bank was a layer of large, rough flint nodules, apparently selected from the material quarried from the ditch. The Section is shown in Fig. 2.

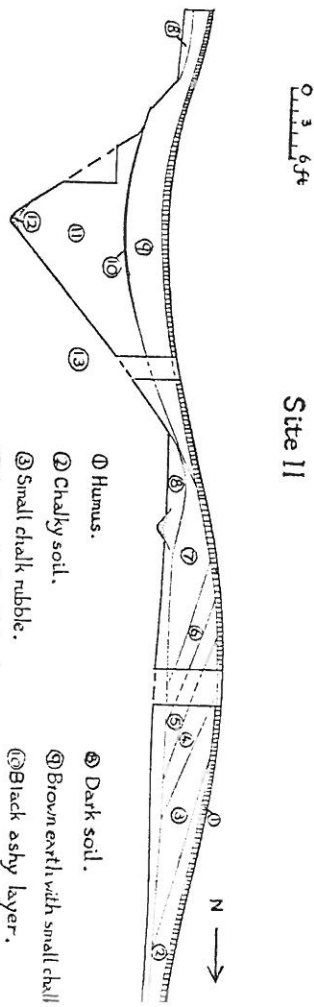


FIG. 2. Section of Site II.

Summary of phases of occupation

The dark layer beneath the bank yielded mostly Roman material. This layer also yielded two minute fragments of 'thumbed rim' medieval ware. (Plate III, nos. 3 and 4). The Roman pottery, some of which is shown in Fig. 3, covers the whole span of the Roman occupation in Britain, i.e. 1st to early 5th century A.D. The medieval pottery has been tentatively dated to the 11th-12th century A.D. Owing to the small size of the sherds a closer dating is not possible. The coins, all Roman, date to the 4th century A.D. The material immediately beneath the spoil heap in the ditch all dates to the mid-17th century A.D. The few finds beneath the 17th century layer, in the silt of the ditch, are probably all Roman.

Interpretation

Up to the time of the Roman occupation of Britain the site seems to have been light occupied, one fragment of possible Iron Age pottery was found in the bank, and several flint waste flakes were found throughout the section. Throughout Roman times the site was heavily occupied, the amount of roofing tile, wall tile and flue tile found suggesting a building in the near vicinity. During or later than the 11-12th century A.D. a large, very wide occupation layer, through the clay with flints beneath, and into the rock chalk. A proportionately large bank of dump construction was built on the northern side of the ditch.

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MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS

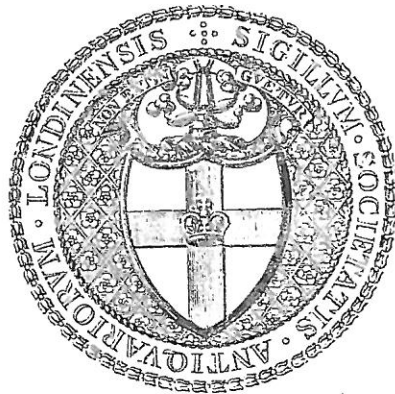
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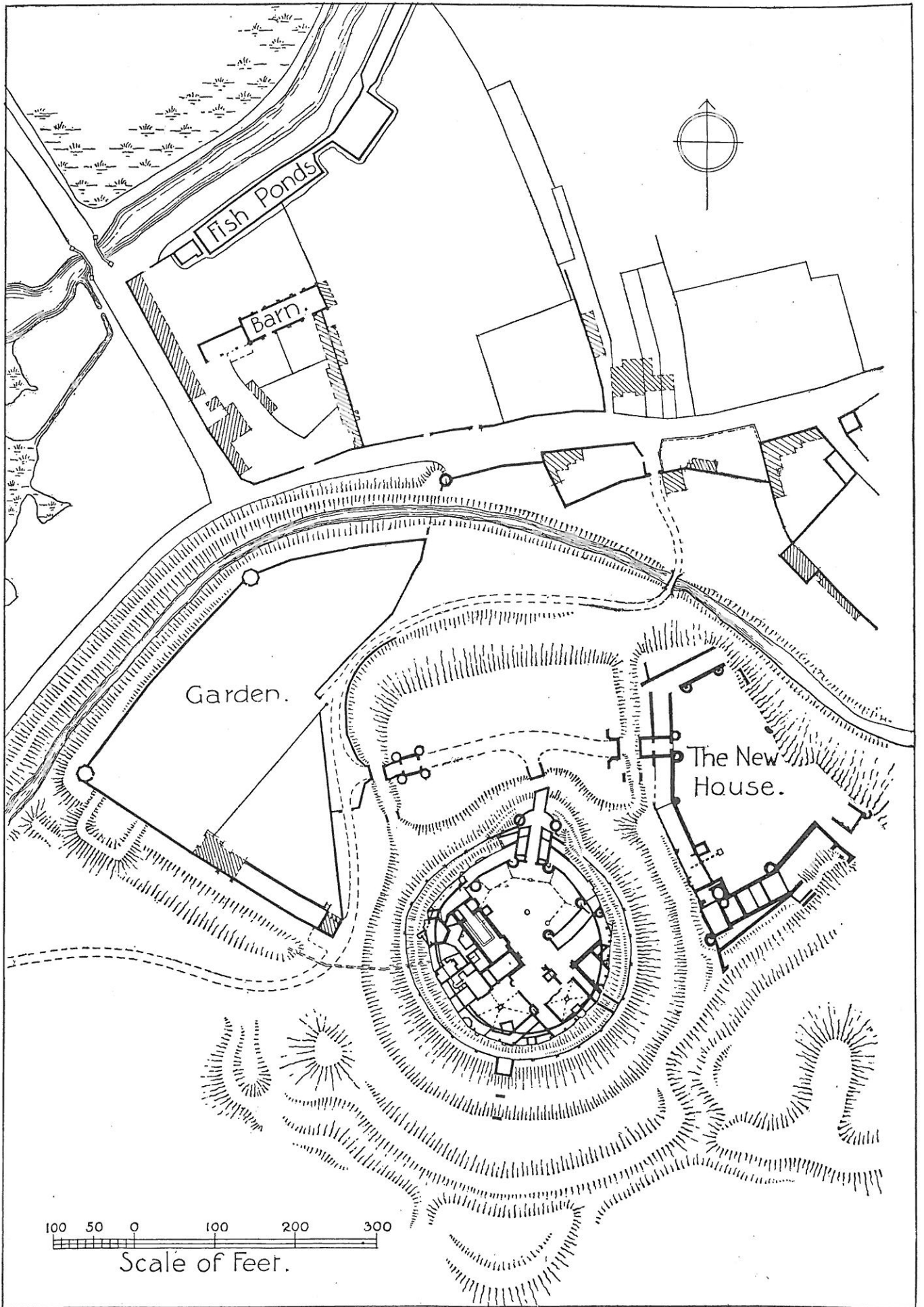


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BASING HOUSE, HAMPSHIRE. GENERAL PLAN.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, 1909.

XX.—*On the Excavation of the Site of Basing House, Hampshire.*
By C. R. PEERS, Esq., M.A., Secretary.

Read 18th March, 1909.

THE village of Basing lies in the upper Loddon Valley a mile and a half east of Basingstoke on the south bank of the river, which rises some four miles to the east, near Worting, and here runs in a flat and marshy channel. At either end of the village is a mill, the Lower Mill at the west end and Old Basing Mill at the east, near the church. A third mill mentioned in Domesday does not now exist. The ground rises gently southwards, the road running through the village along the base of the slope, and at the east end of the village is higher ground on which the church stands. At the south-west, about 500 yards from the church, are the earthworks marking the site of Basing House, and commanding at the same time the road and the approach to the bridge over the Loddon. In early days, when the river probably ran through a wider belt of marshy ground than at present, the position must have been one of great strategic importance, and in fact it continued to be so down to the time of the destruction of the house in the Civil Wars. Its strength is also witnessed to by the fact that it resisted attack after attack by the soldiers of the Parliament, and was only taken at length when the Royalist power was broken, and Cromwell himself could give all his energies to its reduction.

The early history of the site is obscure. The nearest Roman road, that running north-east from Winchester to Silchester, is 4 miles away, and although evidences of Roman dwellings have been found in Basingstoke, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles nearer, there is no trace of any Roman occupation of the site of Basing. It may be noted, however, that in the present year a copper coin struck by Tiberius in Gaul, with the inscription *DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER*, was found on the site of Basing House.

The place name in its present form is clearly of Saxon origin, and occurs in a charter of Ceadwalla, 688, as *Basingahearh*. In 871 Ethelred King of the West

Saxons, with his brother and successor Alfred, fought an unsuccessful battle "aet Basengum" against the Danes, having advanced thither after his victory at Ashdown on the Berkshire border a fortnight before. His line of march was doubtless through Newbury and Kingsclere, and the intention may have been to make an attack on the Danish base at Reading, but after the defeat the Saxon army retreated again westward, probably through Andover, fighting another losing battle with the Danes two months later at Meretune, which has been identified with Marden near Devizes. No other mention of Basing occurs in the Saxon chronicle, but in the *Liber de Hyda* is a grant of land at Basing by King Edmund to Ethelnod, dated 945.

Domesday records that Altei held Basing of King Edward, and there is nothing to suggest that the place was one of importance, but when after the Conquest it was granted to Hugh de Port, it became the chief manor of the fifty-five which he held in Hampshire, and it is probable that to his time we must assign the first fortification of the place. The de Ports held it till the end of the twelfth century, and the first record of the existence of a castle here is contained in a grant by John de Port, of about the middle of the twelfth century, to Sherborne Priory in Hampshire. After confirming gifts made by his father Henry de Port, he recites the grant of the chapel of St. Michael, with the land of the old castle of Basing, one acre of land, and the tithes of the village. This chapel is that of the castle, as may be proved from an entry in the Patent Rolls for 28th July, 1349, in which it is called the chapel of St. Michael of the Old Castle of Basing; and it is elsewhere referred to as the Free Chapel of Basing. The term "Old Castle" is curious, as seeming to imply that there was also a "New Castle" in John de Port's time, but from the entry of 1349 above quoted it is quite clear that the Old Castle was that whose remains exist to-day, and no evidence of any other is forthcoming. Adam de Port, great grandson of the Domesday owner, married Mabel de St. John at the end of the twelfth century, and took the name of St. John; and their great great grandson John became the first Baron St. John of Basing. The male line of the St. Johns died out in 1347 with Edmund, whose sister Margaret, married to John de St. Philibert, inherited Basing, but died in 1361, to be followed a month later by her infant son, and her sister Isabel succeeded her. Isabel's second husband was Sir Luke de Poynings, and at the death of her son Sir Thomas de Poynings in 1428 the barony fell into abeyance, and Basing came to his grand-daughter Constance, wife of John Paulet. The barony of St. John was revived in favour of the great grandson of John Paulet, Sir William Paulet, created Marquess of Winchester in 1551, the famous Lord Treasurer, and builder of the great house whose ruins are still to be seen.

After the Civil Wars the estates were sequestered and granted to Robert Wallop in 1650, but were restored in 1662, and are still owned by the Paulet family in the person of our Fellow, the present Lord Bolton.

The remains of buildings which have been brought to light by the careful and systematic excavations carried on for a series of years by Lord Bolton are for the greater part those of the house built by Sir William Paulet. A little of the work is later than his time, and a few walls older, but it is clear that the "most sumptuous house," as Camden calls it, which he built must have practically obliterated any earlier work on the site.

Certain foundations of flint underlie the sixteenth-century brickwork in the south-west part of the area within the circular earthwork, and must belong to the medieval castle, but are too fragmentary to give any idea of its arrangements. Their date is equally a matter of doubt. In 1261 Robert de St. John had license to strengthen his dwelling at Basing with a stockade, but no other light is thrown by documentary evidence on the buildings of his time. The excavations also have produced singularly few objects which belong to an earlier date than the sixteenth century, in spite of the scrupulous care with which everything found has been preserved. A little of the pottery is of the fifteenth century, and some floor-tiles are older, but only one piece of early stonework, a voussoir of a mid-twelfth century arch, is known to have been found on the site,^a and by itself it can hardly be taken as proof of the character of the older buildings.

With regard to the earthworks it is, however, possible to be more certain. The great circular citadel appears to belong to a type of which several examples exist in this country, notably Old Sarum and Castle Rising, and is to be considered as a more elaborate form of the earthen mount which is the chief feature of the mount and bailey castles of the time of the Norman Conquest. It is a ring of slightly irregular shape, nowhere less than 100 yards across from rampart to rampart, and was originally surrounded by a ditch which is in places 36 feet deep below the crest of the ramparts, and is still perfect on all sides except the north. The general level of the area within the ramparts is about 20 feet below their crest, and the main entrance is from the north-east; in the later history of the house there seems to have been a second entrance at the south-west, but this was over and not through the eastern bank.

In front of it to the north is a roughly triangular court or bailey, defended by a deep ditch cut in the slope, and probably stockaded in medieval times. To the

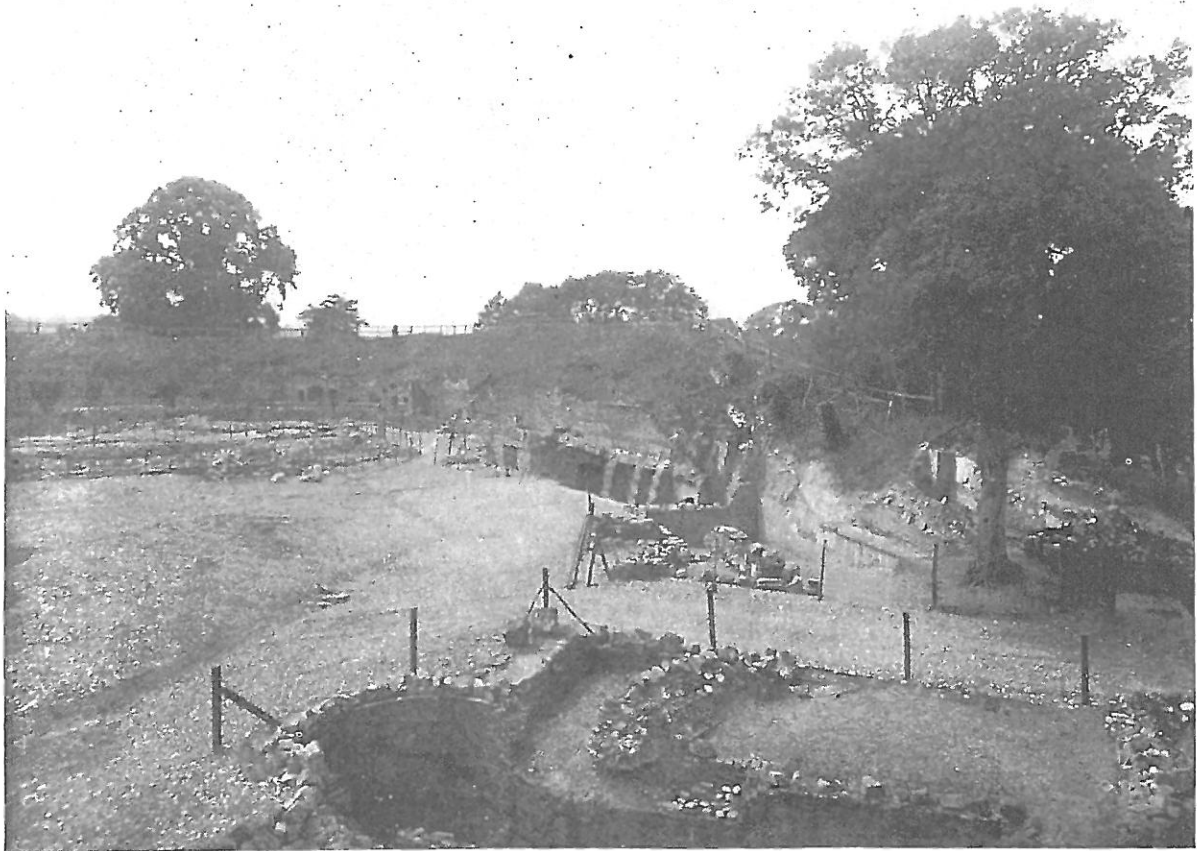
^a A piece of thirteenth-century carving in the museum at Basing came from the blocking of the roodstair in Basing Church and not from the House.

north-east is a second and larger bailey of oblong form, now containing the remains of what was known as the New House. Its east side is cut into by the Basingstoke Canal, and that part of its defences obliterated, but it doubtless had the same arrangement of ditch and stockade as the rest. It was probably approached from the other court, as now, at the north-west, where the foundations of a sixteenth-century gateway are to be seen, and had a second entrance at the south-east, though this was probably not an original arrangement.

The ditches seem to have been always dry, as indeed the nature of the site suggests, but a good supply of water for the use of the occupants is obtainable at some 40 feet below the ground level, and there are two wells in the citadel and one in the second court. Mr. Wilson, Lord Bolton's agent, has kindly sent me particulars of the supply to the well in the second court. The water level is 44 feet below the surface of the ground, and is maintained by strong springs all round the bottom of the well in the chalk, but chiefly from the south, the inflow being about 40 gallons a minute.

The historical interest of Basing, however, lies not so much in the earthworks thrown up by its first Norman lords, as in the house whose remains are now almost completely uncovered, and whose extent is shown on the plans here reproduced. The walls hatched diagonally are those which I take to be the work of the first Marquess, at various dates between 1530^a and his death in 1571. On account of the nature of the site, the buildings follow no recognized house plan of the time, but show none the less some evidence of the feeling for symmetry which was then coming into fashion. The citadel or Old House, as it was called in the Civil Wars, is entered from the north-east through a gatehouse which had round turrets at the four angles, "the loftie gatehouse with foure Turrets looking northwards," as the fifth Marquess of Winchester calls it in his *Description of the Siege of Basing Castle*, written at the end of 1644. The gatehouse opens to a fan-shaped court, with the great hall on the south-west, balanced on the south-east by a building with two projecting stair-turrets. At the south end of the hall is a block of buildings which may belong in part to the earlier medieval work, and probably contained the great chamber and the principal living rooms. To the south-west is a second court into which those rooms looked, and to the south a third, smaller than either, and there were evidently several smaller courts, the area of which is difficult to define owing to

^a Pat. 22 Hen. VIII. pt. 1, m. 34 (1530). Sir William Paulet is licensed to build walls and towers within and around, and to fortify the manor of Basing.



Remains of the citadel, or Old House, from the north-east.



Remains of the citadel, or Old House, from the south.

EXCAVATIONS ON THE SITE OF BASING HOUSE, HAMPSHIRE.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, 1909.

the entire destruction of some of the walls. The Marquess tells us that there were 16 in all in the two houses.

The chapel of St. Michael may have been in the south-east of the enclosure, where a heavy foundation running east and west is still visible, or it may have formed part of the range at the south end of the Hall.

The principal building of which remains now exist is the Hall, which must have been a fine room, measuring 60 feet by 25 feet, including the screens, which are at the north end. It was entered through a porch at the north-east, and had a bay window at the south-east. Beneath the Hall was a cellar with a brick vault, entered from the north by a flight of stone steps, and on either side of the steps were rooms occupying the customary position of the buttery and pantry, the eastern room, that towards the first court, having a projecting bay window. The cellars beneath the range forming the south-east side of the first court contain a number of paintings on the plaster of their walls, apparently of seventeenth-century date, and said to be the work of prisoners during the siege. They are of very poor quality, and represent ships, and in one case two human figures; all are now much faded.

North-west of the Hall is a hexagonal building 22 feet across, which can only be the kitchen, and has three fireplaces 10 feet wide, in adjacent sides; while to the east of it is a room with two more large fireplaces set against the rampart. It is evident that here, as all round the circuit of the house, the inner face of the earthen rampart has been cut into and masked with masonry, behind which in several places ovens have been excavated. The north-west part of the house contained the offices, kitchen, pantry, buttery, and the like, and the ranges adjoining the gate-house on either side, which have cellars beneath them, were no doubt the bake-houses, brewery, and other service rooms. More than this can hardly be said at the present day, so thorough has been the destruction of the upper works, but there are several interesting features which deserve mention. South-east of the Hall block is a large rectangular pit some 25 feet deep with walls of flint and stone, very well built, spanned near one end by a thin wall carried on a brick arch, and showing remains of another like wall parallel to it about a foot away, but at a slightly higher level. Half the area of the bottom of the pit has a stone-paved surface set at a considerable slant, while the rest is deeper and unpaved, and at first sight the whole looks like the pit of a very large garderobe. It must be recorded, however, that no dark soil was found in clearing it, and I should like to hazard the suggestion that the place was of the nature of a cold storage pit. A second pit, of much less depth, is set against the south side of the

enclosing wall of the citadel and is covered by an arched brick roof pierced by several openings, one close against the wall being long and narrow and the others more nearly square. The bottom is solid brickwork, and the only access is by a small doorway high up in one wall. This is probably the pit of a garderobe, and in the enclosing wall at this point is a large four-centred arch blocked with brickwork which seems contemporary with it, and forms one side of the pit. There can be no question of a passage through the rampart at this point, as has been suggested, and the arch probably serves to bridge an insecure piece of ground. There is, however, on the west of the citadel that *rara avis*, a genuine subterranean passage, in the shape of a culvert for rain water, tall enough for a man to pass through in a stooping position, and ending outside the lines of the fortifications. It seems to be unfinished at the outer end, which is some 10 feet below the surface of the ground, and was probably intended to come to light further down the slope.

It is worth noting that in an age when great houses were being built all over the country as pleasure houses, without much thought as to their capabilities for defence, this house of Basing must have been a strong place from the first, as the words of the license of 1530 imply. It was certainly strengthened in the seventeenth century, when the fifth marquess retired there at the outbreak of the Civil War, both in the masonry and earthworks, but the main strength must have been there from the first, and the wall which crowns the outer face of the circular rampart is certainly part of the sixteenth-century work. A description by one of the Parliament writers in 1643 gives a good idea of the place as it stood awaiting the first attack by Waller in November of that year.^a

“This place is very strongly fortified. The walls of the house are made thick and strongly to beare out cannon bullets, and the house built upright, so that no man can command the rooffe; the windowes thereof are guarded by the outer walles, and there is no place open in the house save only for certain Drakes upon the rooffe of the said house, wherewith they are able to play upon our Army, though we discern them not. The house is as large and spacious as the Tower of London, and strongly walled about, with earth raised against the wall, of such a thickestesse that it is able to dead the greatest cannon bullet, besides they have great store both of ammunition and victualls to serve for supply a long time, and in the wall divers pieces of ordnance about the house.”

In spite of this, the sixteenth-century lay out of the rest of the house and its surroundings shows that there was no idea of making it merely a fortress in the

^a *The Soldiers Report of Sir William Waller's Fight.*



Ditch of the citadel.



The outer gate.

BASING HOUSE, HAMPSHIRE.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, 1909.

mind of its builder, the first marquess. While retaining the ditches and ramparts of the medieval castle, he took advantage of them for purposes of show and stateliness rather than of defence. The approach from the street of Basing village, then called the Lane, led through a gateway which still exists (Plate LXXXIX.) and bears the arms of the first marquess, by a gently inclined road westward round the north face of the first court, between red brick walls of no particular strength, to a gateway, a simple arch in the wall, of which only the foundations now remain. Within this the road turned eastward and crossed the ditch of the first court, entering the court through a square gatehouse with angle turrets, and running on to the two other gatehouses which opened to the Old and New Houses. On the slope below the approach were, and still are, walled terraces and gardens overlooking the Loddon Valley, with a pretty octagonal pigeon-house at the north-west angle, and another octagonal building to match it further to the east. The track of the boundary wall can be traced from this point to the entrance gateway, and thence east and south beyond the line of the Basingstoke Canal, after which it is lost. It probably returned to join the south-east corner of the new building. On the site of the present museum there remain the lower parts of the walls of a sixteenth-century building of some size, vaguely called a banqueting house at the present day. It seems to have been a garden house at the end of a terrace. A wall from it to the citadel would complete the enclosure.

The new building, which was standing before Elizabeth's visit here in 1560, was divided into two courts, as we know from the description of the siege, but all that can be found of it is shown on the plan. It is said to have been a very magnificent building, finer than the Old House, and Camden tells us that the first marquess had made his house so splendid that part had to be pulled down again. This was probably done after Elizabeth's second visit in 1601, when she stayed thirteen days and evidently nearly ruined the then owner. The date may perhaps be fixed by the fact that in the 1600 edition of Camden's *Magna Britannia* nothing is said of pulling down, but in the 1607 edition it is mentioned for the first time.

The well is at the present day its most interesting feature; 50 feet deep, and slightly oval in shape (11 feet by 10 feet 6 inches); with brick walls 2 feet 6 inches thick, still resting on the oak template 15 inches wide on which they were built.

The question of the additions to or alterations of the buildings between 1530 and their final destruction in 1645 is of some interest. Several periods of work can be distinguished in the ruins, and it is reasonable to suppose that the chief alterations are connected with the preparations for the siege made by the fifth marquess. A news letter printed by the Parliament after the capture of the house

in 1645, *The Looking Glasse for the Popish Garrisons*, speaks of "those tall walls Bulwarkes and Forts that were cast up by the Subtill art of the forraign Engineers," and there is no doubt that the strengthening of the defences included masonry as well as earthwork. In the New House, unless the outer range of building on the south-east, partly buried by a bank of earth, be part of this work, it is difficult to point to anything of the date, but in the Old House thick walls, perhaps the bases of towers, have been set across the older cellars at a short distance on either side of the entrance gateway, and in several places within the

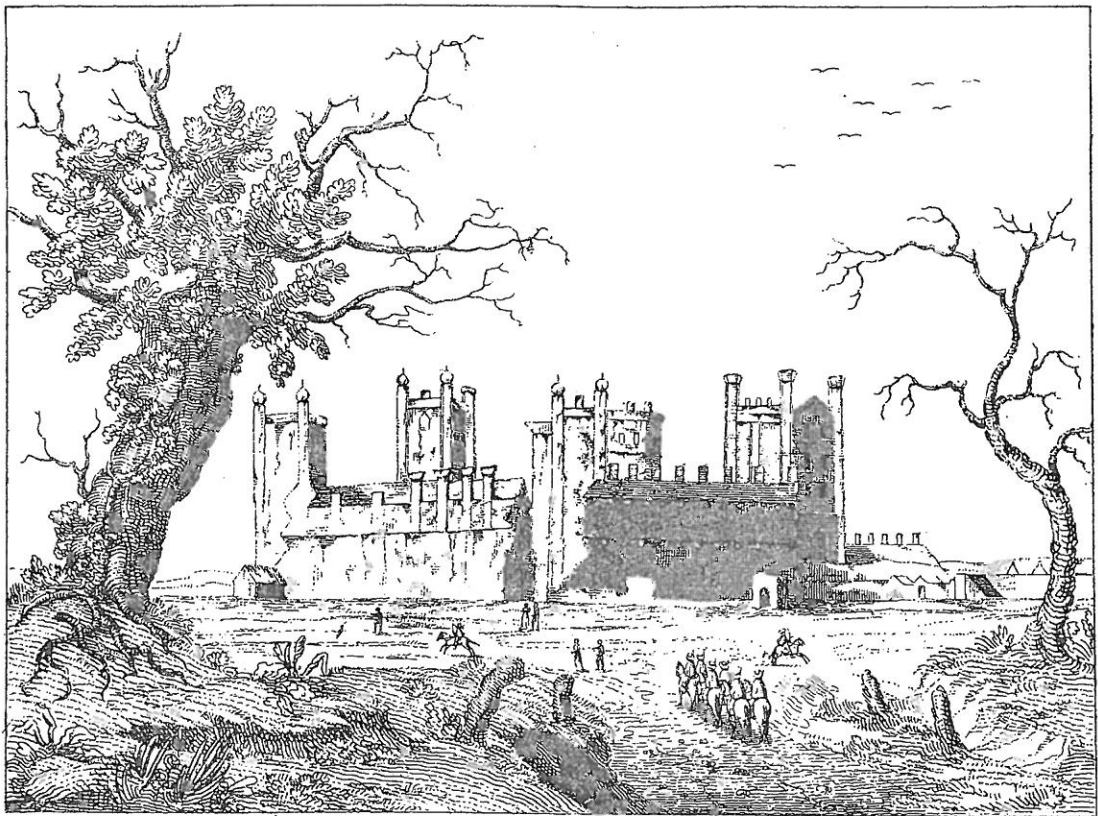
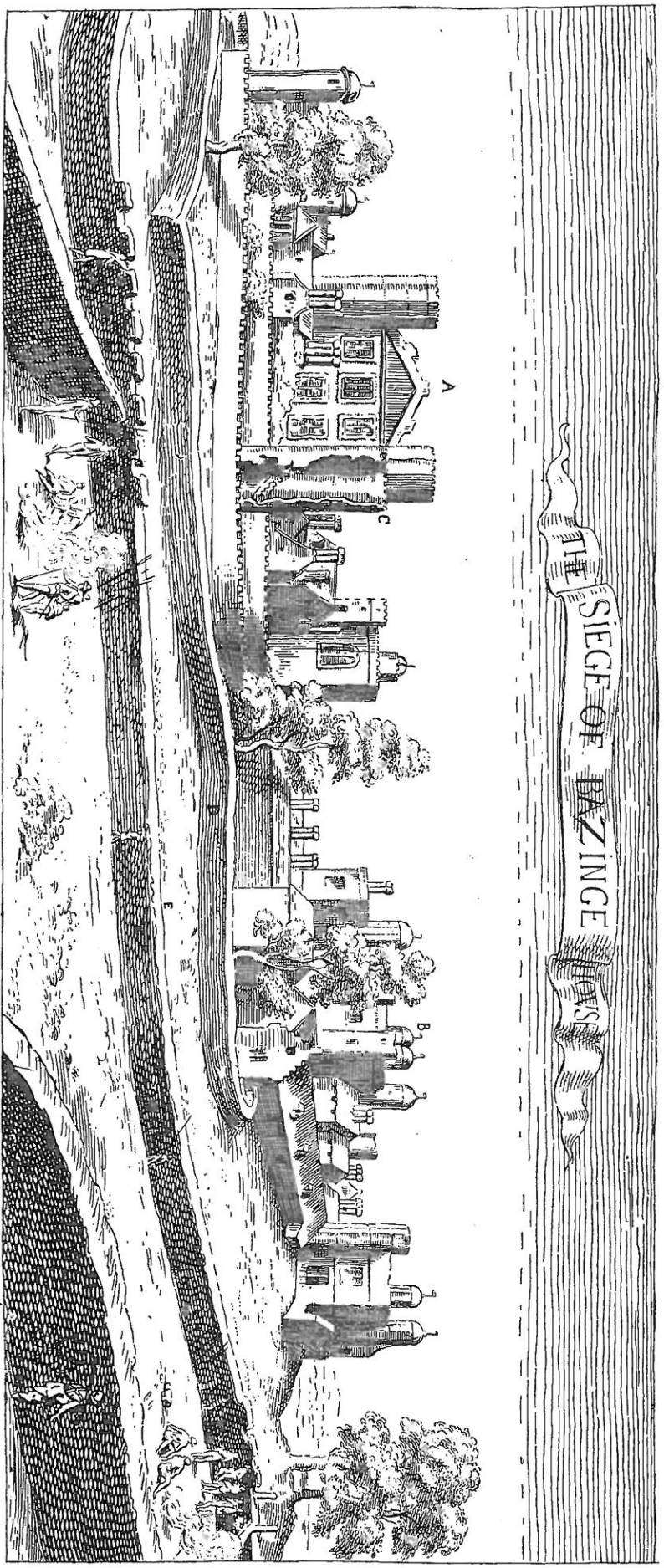


Fig. 1. Basing House from the east, 1645. Copy of a lost original drawing.

enclosure, specially at the west; the inner rampart walls are refaced and levelled up with later brickwork, and the base of a half-octagonal stair-turret is set against one of a series of shallow arched recesses of sixteenth-century date. Bricks of three different thicknesses are used, respectively $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and 2 inches, the thickest belonging to the earliest work, and many details of the stone-mullioned windows, crocketed stone cappings of the turrets, etc. remain to give some idea of the appearance of the buildings.

THE SIEGE OF BASING HOUSE



A. THE OLDE HOUSE . B. THE MEW . C. THE TOWER THAT IS HALFE BAII TEREDOWNE . D. THE KINGS BREAST WORKS . E. THE PARLIAMENTS BREAST WORKS .

HOLLAR'S VIEW OF BASING HOUSE, HAMPSHIRE, c. 1644.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London. 099.

Two views exist of the house, both taken just before its destruction. One is the well-known engraving by Hollar, taken from the south (Plate XC.), and dating probably from the end of 1644, in the short interval of peace which preceded the final siege of 1645; it is here reproduced from a specimen belonging to Lord Bolton. The other (fig. 1), which only exists in several misunderstood copies, as that in Warner's *Hampshire*, is evidently the view of the east side of the New House, taken just before the final assault in 1645, and showing the breach made by Cromwell's bombardment in October. A wide moat full of water, with a winding causeway across it, has been absurdly added by the copyist.

As might be expected, neither view can be brought into more than a general agreement with the plan lately revealed by excavation. The large gabled building (A) in Hollar's drawing, no doubt represents the block containing the hall and great chamber, etc., but is shown with octagonal turrets at its angles, for which no evidence exists on the plan. The tower (c) "that is halfe battered downe," and stands between the outer and inner ramparts, is shown as round, and is perhaps the round tower in the old castle which was "foundered" by the Parliament's shot in 1644, as recorded in the Marquess's diary. Remains of a building in the corresponding position have been found, but its base at least was rectangular and not rounded. The square belfry-like tower with a turret on its roof and a stair at its south-west angle may be one of those built, as I have suggested, in preparation for the siege, on either side of the gateway of the old house. The embattled rampart walls which surround the house look very insignificant in the drawing, and have perhaps been purposely lowered in order to show more of the buildings within them, for the description quoted above from the account of Sir William Waller's attack in 1643 gives a very different impression of their height and strength. The second drawing, representing part of the New House only, gives much more the idea of a defensive work, while corresponding in some points to Hollar's view, which of course shows the other side of the New House. Both show the conical capped turrets of the two gatehouses, parts of which have been found among the ruins, and both give the idea of a great and stately building, "a house fit for an emperor to dwell in, it was so spacious and beautiful."

The various contemporary accounts of the siege give a very clear picture of the general surroundings of the house, but add little to our knowledge of the various parts of the buildings.

The history of the siege is so well known and has been so often retold that it is quite unnecessary to repeat it here, except as far as it concerns the buildings themselves.

The first attack was in November, 1643, by Sir William Waller, from the low ground on the north-west, and was directed chiefly against the Grange, the walled farm buildings which still exist in part on the opposite side of the road to Basing House, running down to the river. The Grange was taken, and the loop-holed walls of the terraced gardens and the New House were fired at thence, till the garrison drove out the besiegers. The north-east of the house was next attacked, and a petard fastened to the gateway, probably that still existing, but the attempt failed, and the fighting afterwards centred round the pigeon-house at the north-west, which was called the Basingstoke Bulwark. The earthen bastion which still exists close by, set across the ditch, was probably now thrown up, and may be the site of a shelter of timber and earth called a Blind, from which the garrison annoyed their opponents who held the mill close by.

The earthworks to the south of the citadel are probably of this time, and evidently a great deal of such work was done hurriedly; the defences being said in a contemporary account to be slender and nowhere finished. Hollar's view is of great use in identifying the lines which still remain.

At the end of June a mortar was sent to bombard the house, but seems to have done little damage, and the siege was eventually raised in November.

In 1644 the house was besieged from June to November, and very considerably damaged, a mortar throwing "granadoes of 80 lbs." being used. It was posted to the east and battered a tower in the New Building, making a breach in it. A round tower in the Old House and a great brick tower, also apparently there, were "foundered" by the same battery, and on October 20th part of a ruined tower fell by tempest.

Finally in September, 1645, Colonel Dalbier began what was to be the final siege. He destroyed a great tower in the Old House, and fixing on what was evidently the weakest point, the east side of the New House, bombarded it till he cracked the wall in the midst of its length and brought down a high turret, perhaps the tower breached in 1644. The outer wall fell down in consequence, making a great breach, and the house was then considered in condition to be stormed.

In spite, however, of the severity of the siege, it seems that the house was not invested on the Basingstoke side, so that the garrison could get supplies thence, and Colonel Dalbier evidently considered his forces insufficient for a general attack. He tried to smoke out the place with burning straw, "just as they use to serve eeles in old walls," said the *Mercurius Britannicus*, but the attempt not unnaturally failed. Where 80 lb. shells had been ineffectual, smoke

was not likely to succeed. But the end was near at hand. Cromwell himself came to Basing on 7th October with a train of heavy guns and troops, which brought the number of the besieging force to 7,000 against a garrison which cannot have numbered more than 300.

The house was completely surrounded by 11th October, Saturday, was heavily bombarded on the following Sunday and Monday, and on Tuesday morning, 14th October, between 5 and 6 o'clock, the final storm began.

Dalbiac was posted on the north-east, Cromwell on the east, the mortar battery under Captain Deane on the south-east, and Colonel Montagu and Sir Hardress Waller on the south.

Cromwell seems to have broken in first into the New House at its south-east corner, and Dalbiac nearly at the same time on the east, through the breach in the east wall. The gatehouse leading to the first court was then taken, the first court occupied, and guns brought up to batter the gate of the citadel. The rest of the New House was then attacked and taken. In the meantime Montagu and Waller had stormed the half-moon earthwork south of the citadel, called the Court of Guard, scaled the citadel walls on the south, and broke in on that side almost at the same time as Cromwell's men burst through the north gate. The whole action was over in two hours, and Cromwell was able to send to London "a good account of Basing."

The house, which was full of treasure and provisions, was then plundered, and caught fire from a fireball. What was left of it was ordered by Parliament to be destroyed, on a resolution that "whosoever will fetch away any stone, brick, or other materials of Basing House shall have the same for his or her pains." Several of the houses in the village have a moulded stone plinth which shows how the permission was used.

No attempt was made after the Restoration to rebuild the house, but a house was built opposite to it on the north, on part of the land of the Grange; it was pulled down about 1740, only its gate piers, of beautiful fine jointed red brick, very like those at Place House, Titchfield, being now standing. Its materials are said to have been taken to Cannons, near Kingsclere.

The only masonry on the site of the Old House which is obviously later than the siege is a low retaining wall running all round the space within the ramparts, and cutting across the old walls in a way which shows that they were completely destroyed when it was built. Its object was doubtless to hold up a bank of earth continuing the line of the ramparts, but its actual date seems very hard to fix. A story that it is due to a "beautification" of the place by Capability Brown rests on

no authority, and indeed the only evidence of the treatment of the place in later days is to be found in a *History of Basing House*, printed in 1824, which mentions that in 1800 the then Lord Bolton intended to make alterations to the ruins, as he took great delight in the place. These alterations, whatever they may have portended, were never carried out, as the present Lord Bolton assures me, and until the systematic excavation of the site was undertaken the place remained untouched.

During the course of the excavations a large number of architectural fragments, pieces of pottery, iron, glass, etc. have been found, together with many evidences of the siege in the shape of bullets, swords, spurs, and fragments of the "granadoes of 80lbs," which were shells of no less than 13 inches diameter. These are all carefully collected and preserved in a museum on the site, and make an excellent object-lesson in the importance of preserving everything found in an excavation, however insignificant the several objects may in themselves be. The pottery makes a very good and instructive series of sixteenth and seventeenth-century household ware, mixed with a little older and some more modern pieces.^a There are a few medieval floor tiles, and several bearing the initials of the builder of the house, and consequently dating from *c.* 1530-40, and fragments of coloured glass from the windows with the famous motto *Ayez Loyaulté* recall Fuller's words that "the motto Love Loyaltie was often written in every window thereof."

Among the architectural fragments is a stone with part of an inscription recording the completion of a new building, no doubt part of the New House, in 1561, but the most interesting finds, architecturally, are the various pieces of early Renaissance detail. These consist of the flat arched heads of fireplaces in Caen stone, a beautifully carved piece of a large stone helmet, of the finest Italian work, and an equally fine terra-cotta roundel with the bust of a Roman emperor in high relief. It belongs to the same category as the terra-cotta roundels still in position at Hampton Court, made by Giovanni Maiano about 1520, and in execution is probably superior to them. The work of this period still existing in Hampshire here, at the Holy Ghost Chapel at Basingstoke (1524), and at the Vyne (*c.* 1520), is well worth a monograph, and might profitably be compared with the only too scanty remains of similar work to be found elsewhere in this country. The curious iron horseshoe (illustrated in *Proceedings*), to the back of which a handle has been fastened, has as yet received no satisfactory explanation.

^a Mr. R. L. Hobson has kindly promised to lay before the Society a detailed description of the pottery.