

# SOCIETY NEWS

THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



MARCH 1968

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21 April 1968	Field Excursion.
28 April 1968	Coach Excursion.

'Society News' is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The Editor is Mr. G. R. Gillam, 23, Merton Road, Enfield, Middx., to whom articles and notes for inclusion and correspondence regarding the Bulletin should be addressed. The Bulletin is free to members. Extra copies may be obtained from the Editor (9d post free).

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## E D I T O R I A L

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With a membership of nearly 300 we are looking for more members to help with the running of the Society. In particular, we require typists to prepare the stencils for the Bulletin and people who are willing to distribute the Bulletin in a given area. Members who would like to help are asked to write to the Editor, 23, Merton Road, Enfield.

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Our first Research Report - The Site of Elsynge Hall - has been well received; one comment worth quoting is "it is a beautiful example of the interconnection of archaeology and history". Sales are going well and we hope to publish more in this series on other subjects very soon. Further copies of the Elsynge Report can be obtained from the Editor 2/6d post free.

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We hear that the various Groups have held meetings and in some cases started work. The Group concerned with Industrial Archaeology has made considerable progress and it is hoped to publish a Research Report on the subject later in the year.

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A list of Officers and Committed elected at the Annual General Meeting is given on the previous page. There are few changes. Miss C. Blair fills one of the vacancies on the Committee as does Mr. P. Blakebrough who is the new Junior Representative. A word of thanks to Mr. P. Bishop who acted in the latter capacity for four years before he 'attained his majority' and had to stand down.

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Work will commence on 30th March and continue every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for a period of at least six weeks. People with special skills will be welcome but instruction will be given to beginners.

Refreshments will be available, at a small charge, during the working day and at the Centre on Sunday evenings when short informative talks will be given.

Further information can be obtained from Mrs. D. Pawson, Dore Cottage, 6, Palfrey Close, St. Albans, Herts.

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### Braughing Hundred Archaeological Group

Much Hadham, Herts; In 1964 and 1967 two Romano-British pottery kilns and a tile kiln were excavated near Much Hadham, Herts. Both the pottery kilns were of an unusual type, rarely found in Roman Britain, while the pottery found associated with the kilns is of some importance to the study of third and fourth century R.B. occupation in the area.

1968 - It is proposed that excavations will take place at weekends on a site close to the kilns, possibly that of a wooden structure associated with pottery manufacture, prior to mounting a further seasons excavation on the kilns. This may well take the form of a Ministry of Works rescue excavation directed by a leading professional archaeologist.

Any volunteer prepared to work at weekends and/or alternatively for a fortnight from about the middle of August is asked to contact Mr. W. B. Barr, 96, Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, Middx.

N.B. PERSONAL TRANSPORT IS ESSENTIAL AS THE SITE IS ISOLATED.

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### Highgate, London

The excavation of Roman pottery kilns at Highgate Wood will be continued from 1. 7. 68 to 31. 7. 68.

Further details from the director Mr. A. E. Brown, M.A., Dept. of Adult Education, University of Leicester, 104, Regent Road, Leicester.

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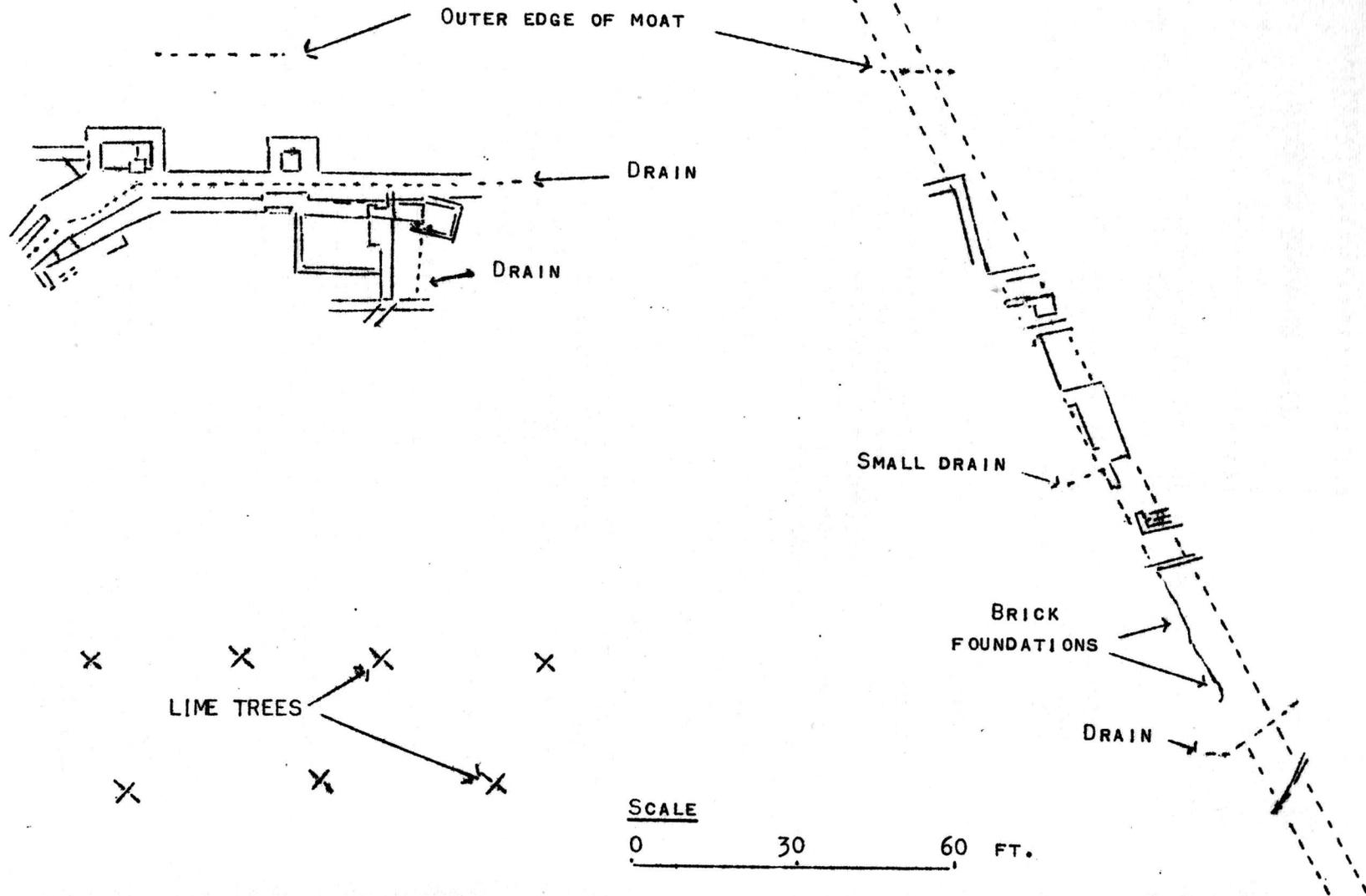
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# ELSYNGE HALL

STRUCTURES EXCAVATED 1963 - 65  
AND STRUCTURES REVEALED BY  
NORTH ORBITAL GAS MAIN TRENCH  
SEPTEMBER 1967.

GAS MAIN TRENCH  
(N.B. PLAN MAY NOT BE ABSOLUTELY  
ACCURATE BECAUSE PLOTTING OF THE  
TRENCH WAS DONE WITHOUT SURVEY  
EQUIPMENT AND IN A RACE AGAINST TIME -  
BUT IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THE OUTER  
EDGE OF THE MOAT IS IN ALIGNMENT WITH  
THAT REVEALED IN 1963.)



SCALE

0 30 60 FT.



Although, as stated above, there were walls crossing the trench, including two showing signs of plaster, the extent of external walling revealed suggests that the structures were the northernmost extent of the main buildings of the palace. Adding this new evidence to that obtained from the Society's excavations, the principal part of the Phase II complex of buildings (Henry VIII's palace) seems to have measured some 150 ft. from N.W. to S.E. and 200 ft. N.E. to S.W. plus outlying walls presumably leading to other buildings. I now have a much better idea of the type of house to be studied before the report on the excavations is written.

I should like to express my thanks to all those members of the Society who came along at such short notice and did a magnificent job in cleaning up and helping to record all the features. Much of that part of the trench in which we were working was several inches deep in water - nearly knee deep in places - and in all the circumstances I think the Society is to be congratulated on the excellent effort it put into this rescue work.

IVY W. DRAYTON.

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: THE MOATED HOMESTEADS OF HERTFORDSHIRE: A PRELIMINARY REPORT. :  
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A year ago it was projected, in this journal, to carry out a survey of the moated homesteads in Hertfordshire. It is now possible to give a brief summary of some of the results of that survey, and their bearing on knowledge of these earthworks in general. It has also made abundantly clear where research must take place, and has thus fulfilled one of the major purposes of field archaeology (1).

Excavations throughout the country have shown that moated homesteads are the product of the period c. 1200 - 1400 A.D. and that they belong to the social group of the lesser landowners, and not the higher aristocracy. They have also shown that they tend to go out of use c. 1600 with the big rebuilding era of the late 16th and early 17th. Further, not all moated enclosures are homesteads. The earthwork was used, in the Middle Ages, and right up to the end of the 18th century as stock enclosures, fish-ponds and orchards. It is vital to remember this, and that not every site listed as a "moat", is necessarily a medieval homestead.

## 1. Excavated sites.

Analysis of the results of Hertfordshire sites which have yielded archaeological material emphasises even more than the national statistics a period c. 1250 to 1350 for moat construction:-

Table a. Sites where actual construction of the moat is dateable.

1250 - 1300: 2 (Rickmansworth (2) and Scales Park (3))

1300 - 1350: 2 (Ashwell (4) and Pancake Hall (5))

1300 - 1400: 1 (Coldharbour (6))

Table b. Sites whose occupation evidence implies earliest date for use of site (though only a terminus post quem for moat construction).

1200 - 1300: 3 (Batlers Green (7), Monk's Wood (8) and Perriers (1250 - 1300) (9))

'Medieval': 1 (Well Wood, Watton (10))

'Later Medieval': 1 (Sutes Wood (11))

## 2. Distribution.

160 sites have so far been recorded, and not proved to be other than moated homesteads. Their distribution is extremely striking. The vast majority fall to the north east of a line drawn roughly from Hitchin to Harlow. This corresponds to the area of early settlement and little forest as revealed in Domesday Book. There is a sprinkling of them in the south of the county (12), but only one occurs on the Chilterns. These last two areas are those of dense woodland and sparse population in 1086.

## 3. Situation.

Their relationship to geology seems to be even more relevant. The north east of the county is basically an area of boulder clay drift over the chalk substratum, and an area, therefore, which abounds in springs. It was found that the Hertfordshire moats were usually fed by springs, or by natural seepage. It was far more rare for them to have streams running into them, though obviously moats had streams or gullies running out.

Table c. Boulder clay:	90
Other clays, brickearth and alluvium:	22
Sands, gravels or pebble:	21
Clay plus gravel, mixed:	5
Chalk or chalk marl:	4
<u>Total:</u>	<u>142</u>

The above table clearly shows that moats are a phenomenon of impervious soils. As to situation, about half are what are called 'perched', that is, on valley sides, usually with their outlet stream flowing down to the bottom. Another quarter are situated right on top of hill plateaux, frequently the area of springs.

#### 4. Construction.

In most cases the width from bank to bank was between 25ft. and 35 ft. and the depth 3 ft. to 6 ft. the moat being flat bottomed. Most enclosures were roughly rectangular. However, further analysis is needed in terms of the acreage and number of enclosures per site, on the lines of a survey currently being undertaken in West Cambridgeshire.

Statistics on construction are defective on two scores. First, a large number have had to be rejected either because they have not yet been visited or because of their state of preservation. Second, observation on present structure obviously may not equal original construction, which only excavation could indicate.

Table d. Platform:	59
Outer rampart:	17
Inner rampart:	6
Earth equally on both sides:	2
Earth providing windmill mound:	1
<u>Total:</u>	<u>85</u>

Despite the sample being only about half of the total, platform moats (that is where the earth is piled on the inside and levelled) are the basic form for construction. Not only does this produce the required moat, but also raises the enclosure above the surrounding area. Those with outer ramparts usually had wide, low ones, and these may well be due to successive scourings-out of the moat. The inner ramparts were equally low, and only two reached a reasonable height (5 ft. 6 ins. at Roxford and 9 ft. - 10 ft. at Ardlebury), yet in both cases the rampart only existed on one side of the enclosure. In construction, none so far surveyed can be thought of as militarily defensible.

#### 5. Interpretation.

A survey of Warwickshire moated homesteads associated them with the move to colonisation of the forest in the 13th century. There, distribution coincided with the late - developed area of the forest of Arden, and hardly any examples occurred in the open-field area of the Feldon. Moats frequently coincided with the distribution of 'colonising' place-names, and with the sites of the houses of freeholders who had broken away from the village and manorial set-up. (13). Now it may be admitted that most Hertfordshire sites are similarly outside villages, and also deserted medieval villages, and that there are indications of internal colonisation. Numbers occur on parish boundaries or in the more remote areas. There is the Cistercian grange at Bradfield, often called 'fildenwode', or the wood conspicuous amongst the open-fields, a typical place for those monkish 'colonisers of the waste'. Or there is the group of moats identifiable with manors

emerging in the 13th century, in the late-divided parishes of the Pelhams, one with that indicative prefix of 'Brent'. Yet, in general, the Hertfordshire distribution stands the Warwickshire situation on its head, and it is hard to make a case for colonisation as the causal factor behind moats.

It is submitted, here, that the prime motive, at least in Hertfordshire, was drainage. The sites are mainly on soils which would need drainage, and their design suits such a use. The explanation is fortified by the fact that the period of moat construction, the 13th and 14th centuries was a time of increasingly wet climate. This is indicated by the account rolls of the Winchester manors (14), and endorsed by the results of dendrochronology (15).

Though the Chilterns are covered by clay-with-flints, this cover in depth and porosity is variable and uncertain. It is significant that in one place, where 50 ft. of clay-with-flints was recorded, there is the one moated site of the Hertfordshire Chilterns (Marlin Chapel Farm). It seems likely that the Chilterns being more just basic chalk had no need for drainage moats.

There are, indeed, many other factors behind moat construction, such as fashion, and ancillary functions like service as fish-ponds (16), but space prohibits a full discussion here.

In conclusion, two areas of further work may be indicated;

1. A distribution map immediately reveals that all excavation has been round the fringes of the main area of moat density. A research excavation, by a well-qualified archaeologist, should be called for in the north-east of the county, if possible on a site known to be the capital messuage of a Domesday manor.
2. The field survey is as yet unfinished, and a full card-index needs to be compiled giving details on present construction and size, situation and any dating evidence (e.g. pottery, present buildings, documentary)

TANIA BRISCOE.

#### NOTES

1. I am deeply indebted to the Enfield Archaeological Society for both its encouragement and material assistance in this project. In particular to Mr. G. Gillam and Mr. J. Sykes; and to Miss D. Hex, Mr. J. Flower and Mr. R. Brown who assisted in the actual field work; also to Oxford University Archaeological Society for financial aid.
2. Biddle et al.: Archaeological Journal 1959.
3. Williams: Antiquaries Journal 1946.
4. Hurst: Journal of the British Archaeological Association 1967.
5. Kent: Transactions of the East Herts. Archaeological Society 1951.
6. Rutherford Davis: " " " " 1940.

7. Rawlins: Watford & S.W. Herts. Archaeological Society.  
April and October 1966.
8. Medieval Archaeology VI. (Excavations in Britain for 1961).
9. I am very grateful to Dr. J. P. C. Kent who allowed me to use his unpublished material on Perriers.
10. O.S. Card 1955 (finds in the Stevenage Museum).
11. Medieval Archaeology IV. (Excavations in Britain for 1959).
12. Due to the vagaries of the county boundary in the Enfield area, 5 Middlesex sites have been included for convenience.
13. Roberts: Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society 1962. Amateur Historian 1962. Med. Arch. VIII.
14. Titow: Economic History Review 1959.
15. Schove and Lowther: Medieval Archaeology I.
16. For example, the moat to the east of Perriers, in Hell Wood, seems to be a post medieval fish-pond, in view of its relation to the water-system and Perriers itself, and the fact that only post-medieval material has been found there. (This idea was suggested by Dr. Kent, and I can see no reason at the moment, for disagreeing.).

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