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Old Bowling Green site, Tewkesbury: Salvage Observations, 1983

by T. Courtney and E. Linnell
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much higher than its present 1 m thickness of dumped rubble, a profile noted in the excavation of the Cutham Lane dyke (cf. Clifford 1961, 8). Little bank rubble had found its way into the ditch, and the collapsed 'tail' on its inner (northern) edge was negligible in breadth and bulk.

A wide berm of *c.* 5 m lay between the bank and the ditch. 1.5–2 m of this area consisted of a level belt on the south side of the putative front revetment of the bank; to the south of this the berm sloped at *c.* 45 degrees to the vertical cut of the lower part of the ditch. The slope was covered with a 0.1–0.3 m thick layer of small and medium-sized rubble scree (F10) from the bank.

The near-vertical sides of the lower ditch had been cut through the limestone in three steps to a possible bottom in jointed bedrock, at about 2.5 m below the top of the ditch-fill, and at about 3.5 m below the original ground level.

The ditch-fill resembled that found by Clifford at Cutham Lane (1961, Fig. 3) although the profiles differed. It cannot be stated with certainty that the present machine-dug trench plumbed the bottom of the ditch. The large basal blocks of limestone seemed to be weathered, fractured bedrock rather than tumble from the bank (cf. Clifford 1961, Fig. 3, Layer 4). The silt (Layer 5) found in the Cutham Lane ditch bottom had no equivalent in the present ditch-excavation.

The ditch-fill contained few of the large slabs found at the southern side of the bank, and was also notably free of the medium-sized bank rubble. The lower part of the ditch was filled with layers of washed and tumbled small stones in limestone soil. A considerable thickness of soil had accumulated in the upper part of the ditch.

No dating evidence was recovered from the excavations. Two unstratified flints were found on the surface of the northern slope of the bank. The darker of the two was a residual multi-platform core, and the other a damaged retouched flake. No finds were found in the ditch, other than faint traces of daub in the section (F4), and the Perrott's Brook Dyke seems to have been a one-period monument that was not subjected to later modification or disturbance of any kind.

Note

Copies of the site records of this watching brief are lodged with the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. The flints are deposited with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester.

Reference

Clifford, E.M. 1961. *Bagendon, a Belgic oppidum*. Cambridge.

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T. COURTNEY AND M. HALL

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OLD BOWLING GREEN SITE, TEWKESBURY: SALVAGE OBSERVATIONS, 1983

Salvage recording at the site of the Old Bowling Green, Tewkesbury, was carried out by Western Archaeological Trust with a grant from the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society during foundation trenching for a new housing development in July 1983. The site lies on the west side of Church Street, immediately to the south of the Library. It formerly lay within

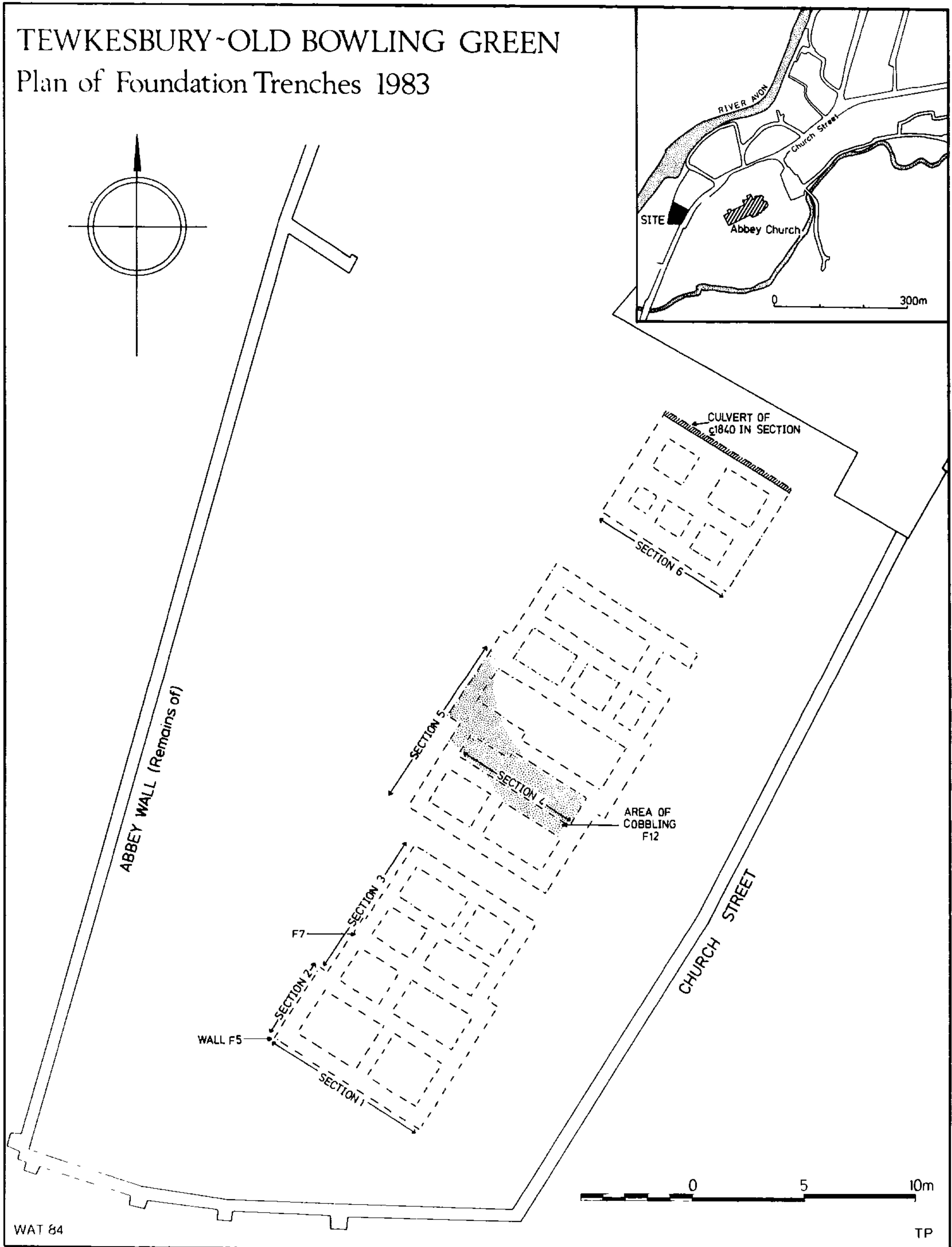


FIG. 1 Location map and plan of the foundation trenches.

the precinct of the Abbey of St Mary, and its north-western boundary is the substantial stone wall which is the only monastic structure surviving. The wall is listed Grade II, and below it ran the former High Road to Gloucester. The river bank was at one time closer (the infill being of modern date).

Initial engineers' test-pits were followed by machined trenches with almost immediate concreting, resulting in an unsatisfactory level of archaeological recording. The house foundation trenches were excavated as six 'units' within a rectangular area approximately in the centre of the site. The four trial pits had been sunk just outside this area.

A thickness of *c.* 0.5 m to 0.85 m of alluvial and archaeological deposits overlay the red Keuper marl. A widespread layer of pebbly red clay covered the marl over much of the excavated area, and this proved difficult to distinguish from man-made cobbling, which was also present over part of the site. Six sections were drawn (see site archive), but no archaeological hand-excavation was possible. Some archaeological features were visible in the trench sections, although no plan could be pieced together.

The archaeological features are described according to their location within the new housing 'units'.

Walls (Sections 1, 2, 3, Units 1, 2)

At the south-western corner of the development area the stone foundations (F5) of a structure were exposed at the junction of the western and southern sections (S1, S2 respectively). Three courses of large blocks of sandstone and oolitic and liassic limestone were recorded, with very little mortar bonding. The foundations had been cut 0.5 m into the widespread layer of gingery, pebbly sand (F10) that overlay the marl. It was not possible to identify the foundation as that of a wall or of a pier. If the former, no alignment was traceable from other trench sections. Traces of a second stone foundation (F7) were exposed in Section 3, *c.* 4.5 m to the north-east of F5, again cutting into the pebbly sand layer F10. This shallow wall foundation of limestone blocks had been bonded with a yellow mortar.

Cobbling (Sections 4, 5, Unit 3)

A horizon of tightly-packed pebbles and cobbles, F12, extended over the 7 m length of Section 4 from north-west to south-east. A stretch of at least 5.5 m of this layer was recorded in Section 5, extending north-east to south-west, albeit in a more ragged form. Occasional fragments of tile and grey/green lias limestone were embedded in this layer, which may be interpreted as a cobbled yard set upon a tightly-packed raft of smaller pebbles. Although the latter gave the appearance of being a natural bed, the occurrence of bone fragments within it indicated that it was not.

Other features

A loose mass of limestone rubble (F15) further to the north in Section 4 (Unit 3) may represent the remains of a demolished wall in that area. A post-hole (F16) and a timber-slot (F3) were seen in sections 5 and 1 (Unit 3, 1) respectively; both were sealed by post-medieval levels F11 and F2. Three hollows or pits were observed: F8 and F9 in section 3 (Unit 2) and F14 in section 5 (Unit 3); all were post-medieval. Machine excavation of the northern (south-facing) section of Unit 6 revealed a brick conduit with re-used old dressed stone in an offset. The top of the natural marl was much deeper at this northern end of the site.

Discussion

The salvage observations demonstrated that prior to its use as a bowling green this south-western corner of the precinct of St Mary's Abbey had been occupied by at least one structure with stone foundations. No dating evidence was recovered for these, but it is reasonable to assume that the building was monastic. To the north of this structure had lain a cobbled yard, again undatable, although a *terminus ante quem* was provided by the overlying loamy layers F2 and F11: these probably formed the subsoil for the post-medieval bowling green. The latest structural feature revealed on the site was the brick conduit in Unit 6: this may be assumed to have been one of the town's drain culverts built between 1824 and 1840.

THE FINDS

by C.E. Goudge and P. Isaac

Unstratified finds from the site include the following material:

Pottery

A total of 443 sherds was found, ranging from the 16th century to the 19th century in date, although two sherds were Roman (Severn Valley ware). 17th- and 18th-century glazed domestic earthenwares make up about 60% of the total, the main source being the Malvern Chase potteries based at Hanley Castle, Worcestershire. Other sources were the small industries at Glasshouse, Newent; Ashton Keynes (near Cirencester); and Barnstaple, North Devon. About 30% of the sherds found comprises Staffordshire wares, slipware plates and iron-glazed wares being the most common. Small amounts of tin-glazed ware, 'Cistercian ware', black-glazed tygs, and German stonewares were also found.

Medieval floor tile

Thirty-two fragments of medieval glazed floor tile were found, mostly in sand-tempered fabrics, probably manufactured at Droitwich (Gloucester Excavation Unit Type Fabric 86). Two pieces are of Malvern Chase fabric (TF111). Four fragments, in a sand-tempered fabric, are decorated. The date range is probably 14th to late 15th century.

Roof tile

Fragments of ceramic glazed roof tile, both flat and curved, in Malvern Chase fabric, were found. Also, a larger quantity of 17th-century or later flat ceramic tile fragments, and some of Cotswold stone.

Clay tobacco pipe

Fragments of clay pipe ranging in date from the early 17th to mid 19th century were found, including 15 makers' stamps, all of Broseley, Warwickshire, origin.

Post-medieval glass

18th- and 19th-century glass vessels, including wine bottles, medicine phials, and one fragment of diamond-faceted Irish Blue glass, 1770–1810. Also two fragments of ?late medieval window glass, one decorated.

Other finds

A few architectural stone fragments, and some animal bone were also found.

Note

The full catalogue of finds will be deposited with the site archive.

Acknowledgements

The assistance of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in funding the watching brief is acknowledged, as is the on-site help of Jane Dineen, Rosamund Southwood, and Bernard Willoughby. The finds are deposited with Tewkesbury Museum. Copies of the site records are lodged with the County Sites and Monuments Record. The plan was drawn by Trevor Pearson.

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EARTHWORKS AT BISHTON FARM, TIDENHAM (FIG. 1)

During a watching brief on a water pipeline in 1978 an earthwork site was noted to the south of Bishton Farm (ST 545953), 1 km from Offa's Dyke to the west. The underlying geology is Keuper Marl, and the ground slopes from north to south, levelling out at the southern limit of earthworks. The area of earthworks is confined to the south side of the road though the fields to the north have been regularly ploughed. Banks define the limits of the site to the south, while to the east the two rectangular platforms beyond the bank are reported to have been tennis courts. Features within the boundary banks are ill-defined except for the rectangular platform at A, where there is a suggestion of stone walling along the top of the south side of the platform. A map of the Duke of Beaufort's estate in 1769 (G.R.O. photocopy 840) shows a small farmhouse and outbuildings at this point on the south side of the road junction. The farmhouse was described as ruined in 1813 (Elrington 1972, 59). Bishton Farm to the north appears to be 18th century in date. Twenty-three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the ground disturbed by the pipe trench. Three fabrics were distinguishable by eye. None were glazed and all appeared to derive from 12th- to 14th-century cooking pots. Post-medieval pottery was also present. The recorded earthworks indicate medieval linear settlement along the road west of Bishton farm with a possible nucleus at the farm itself.

I am grateful to Anthony Clemence for assisting with the planning of the site, and to Dr N. Herbert for his comments on this note.

Reference

Elrington, C.R. 1972. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire. Vol. X.*

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PETER ELLIS

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