7

EXCAVATIONS AT DENTON HALL

VA and SR Bryant

Denton Hall was a timber-framed manor house, dating originally to the late 15th or early 16th century which stood at Windmill Lane, Denton (SJ 9139 9470). All of the building has now either been removed or destroyed. The west wing of the main hall complex was demolished in 1895 and the rest was destroyed by fire in 1930, leaving only the detached east wing. This was demolished in 1979 to the level of its sandstone footings, and the surviving timber framing was removed and re-erected at Hough Lane, Wilmslow by Mr F Smith.

THE BUILDINGS (Fig 1)

The Main Hall

This was a hall of 'double-ended' type (Brunskill 1978, 120), comprising a central hall open to the roof, flanked by two two-storey wings: an arrangement commonly found in the North West (Price 1985, 76). The hall was 10.7m long by 7.6m wide, with a small square bay to the south-east. Originally it would have been heated by an open hearth, as there was no provision for a fire-place or chimney. There was little decoration of the principal timbers, and the roof was of plain kingpost type with carved windbraces. (VCH 4 1911, 314). The high table stood at the east end of the hall, and was lighted by a window in the bay and two windows high up on the west end of the north side. The north side of the hall did not originally appear to have had any windows, which suggests that the main entrance to the hall was from the south (Smith 1970, 159). To the west of the hall was a plain spere truss with a semicircular arch and chamfered posts, which divided the main hall from the screens passage. Originally a moveable screen would have been present below the arch to block off the service quarters from the main hall (Crossley 1951, 131-2, fig 157). The screens passage also had a gallery at first floor level, open to the hall.

The service quarters and kitchen were housed in the west wing, which projected northwards from the hall, and was jettied at first floor level. The timber framing of this and the main hall was of closely-set studs with midrails set on sandstone footings. In addition, the west wing had a row of quatrefoil panels at first floor level. To the east of the hall was a small wing with a hall that probably served as a parlour or withdrawing room, and which had a bed chamber or 'solar' above.

Later in the 16th century, a large brick fireplace 3.9m wide by 1.5m deep was inserted at the west end of the hall. It had elaborate brick ornamentation of herring-bone panels and embattled cornices up to roof level. A similar fireplace is also said to have existed in the west wing (VCH 4 1911, 314; Taylor 1884, 111). All but the north and south elevations of the hall and the north elevation of the west wing was later refaced in brick, as was the west elevation of the hall, when the west wing was demolished. The hall was later divided into two storeys, and from the 19th century the whole building served as a farmhouse.

The East Wing

Six metres to the north of the main hall complex was a detached east wing, also dating from the late 15th or early 16th century. This was the site of the 1980 excavations (Figs 1 and 2). The following brief description is based on a report on the building prepared in January 1979 by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and a series of observations made by RB Wood-Jones and RW Brunskill, of the University of Manchester School of Architecture, in February 1979.

The east wing was timber-framed on sandstone footings, and was built from the first with two rooms of unequal size on each floor. The principal timbers of the larger rooms on each floor were decorated with mouldings and panels of high quality. In contrast, the other roof timbers were plain and of poorer quality, suggesting that the first floor originally had a timber ceiling. The smaller, undecorated rooms on each floor were located at opposite ends of the building, and probably served as service areas.

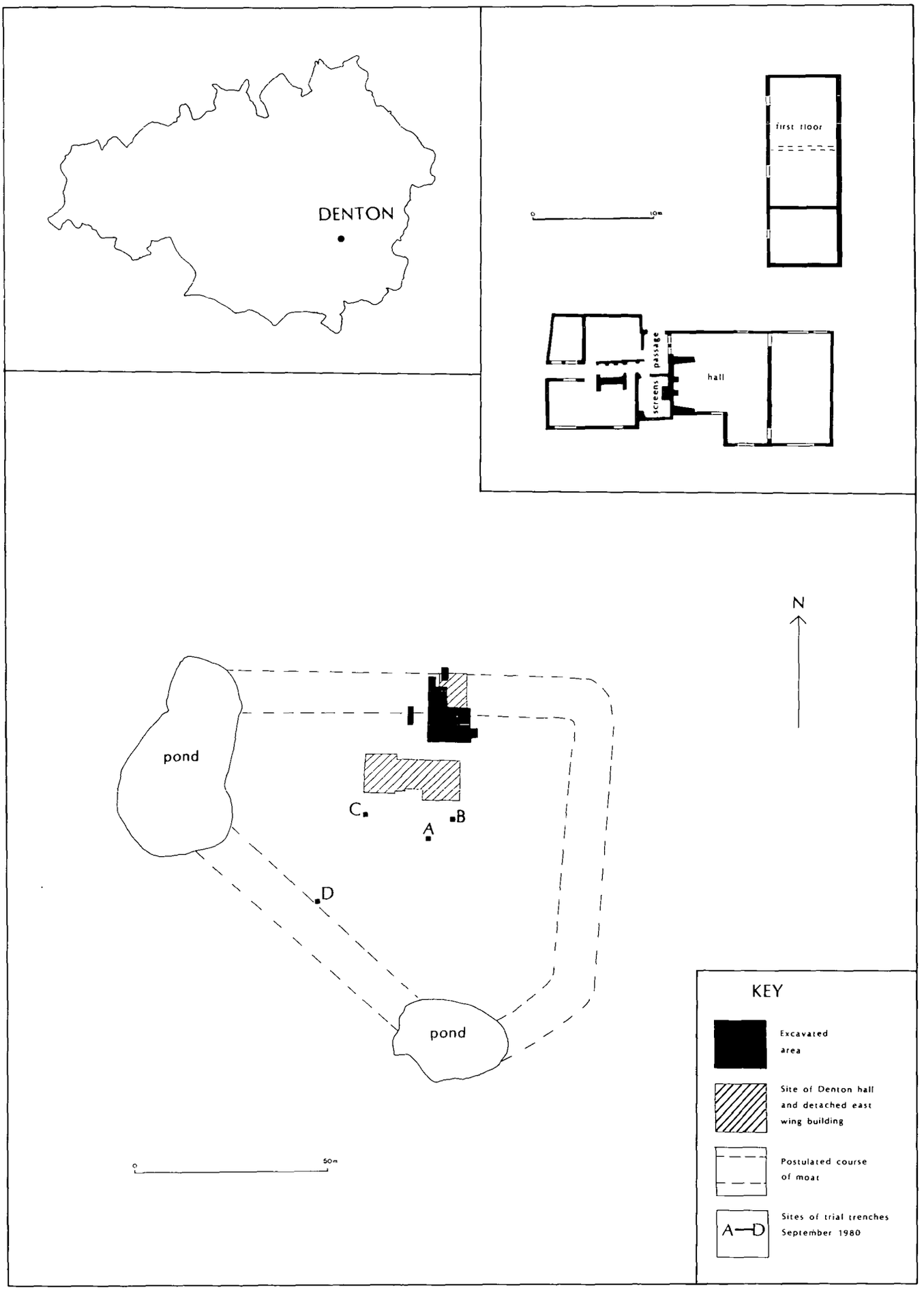

Fig 1 Denton Hall : site location (top left), plan of hall (top right), and excavation trenches (bottom)

All but the north elevation was refaced in brick during the 19th century, when the building was converted to be used as a barn and shippon, but peg holes in the wall-plates indicate that the walls were originally timber-framed. The north gable remained timber-framed, and incorporated quatrefoil panelling similar to that of the west wing of the main building, and probably dating to the late 16th century. This suggests that the panels at least were a later addition, as the decorated timbers inside the building (which include long straight-tailed mouchettes framing a central shield, and spandrels with iron masks) almost certainly date to the early 16th century.

The original function of the building is uncertain. There is no trace of any essential domestic features such as smoke-bays or chimneys, which makes the suggestion made by J T Smith (1970, 160) that it may have been an autonomous dwelling or unit house seem unlikely. It is possible that the detached east wing was a regular meeting place of status such as the manorial court-house. Whatever their function, the large decorated rooms could clearly have accommodated large numbers of people: and the quality of the decoration suggests that such people were worth impressing.

THE DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND

by J Young

Denton, 'the farmstead of the valley', was a township in the Hundred of Salford, lying about 6 miles south-east of Manchester, and bordered by Haughton, Ashton-under-Lyne, Audenshaw, Gorton, Reddish and the River Tame. The outer areas of each township were waste, or moor. Until the 17th century when ties of allegiance loosened, Denton was a detached part of the manor of Withington, a sub-manor of the manor of Manchester.

No reference was made to Denton in Domesday. A deed of 1273 (Towneley MSS, 2968) mentions Denton, and in the reign of Richard I, the eight oxgangs of Denton were held by Matthew de Reddish, as of the fee of Wythington (Irvine 1902, 19). Documents suggest the clearing of land for arable purposes, and include references to flatts (LRO DDHu/12), slotts (LRO DRM/1/37) and acres (LRO DRM/1/37). The Extent of Manchester of 1322, alludes to "arable land of old time, not of new clearing" in reference to Denton. However land here was held by a number of people and it is therefore not easy to identify early references to land or messuages with specific locations, nor can one with certainty make complete family trees for the 13th century. By the 14th century, connections are more definite. In 1316 Adam de Rycroft, vicar of Huyton, granted to Alexander Schoresworth and the heirs male of his body, all lands, tenements, houses and gardens in Denton, remainder to Thirstan, son of Margaret Schoresworth by Sir William Holland, knight (Irvine 1902, 97). The land at Denton Hall was to remain in the Holland family until 1684, when it passed by marriage to the Egerton family who were later to become the Earls of Wilton. The Hollands of Denton were minor gentry, attaining recognition and prestige in the county. A deed of no given date, but of approximately 1300, mentions the Denecroft (VCH 4 1911, 316). In 1305 William le Norreys de Heton speaks of his curtilage in Denton (Towneley MSS, 3551), and in 1308, a similar deed gives Alexander de Schoresworth all his lands, holdings and buildings in Denton (Towneley MSS, 3552). The Extent of Manchester of 1322 refers to one messuage in Denton. In 1330 Thurstan de Holland granted to Alexander de Schoresworth all his messuages except the chamber in which his goods were contained in Denton (Irvine 1902, 98). It can therefore be assumed that there was a dwelling on or near the site of Denton Hall by the early 14th century. Denton Hall was mentioned by name in the evidence for the suit concerning the enclosing of Denton More, c1597 (GMRO). In the Hearth Tax returns of 1664 Mrs Anne Holland was responsible for ten hearths (PRO).

The land was held by services due and accustomed (Irvine 1902, 99), by knight's service from Nicholas Longford, lord of the Manor of Manchester in 1402 (Irvine 1902, 104) and was worth £10 yearly. In 1430, Denton was held in tail male and fee simple (Irvine 1902, 107). The Subsidy Roll for Salford Hundred for 1541 gives Richard Holland paying fifty shillings for fifty pounds in lands (RSLC 1885). In 1597 Richard Holland was said to be a freeholder who paid chief rent (GMRO).

A pedigree can therefore be established for Denton Hall, at least back to the early years of the 14th century. Continuous settlement can be inferred, at first by the Hollands or people of their choice, and from the late 17th century onwards by various tenant farmers until the final sale of the property and livestock in 1977, and the subsequent abandonment of the site.

Plate 1 Denton Hall, 1879

THE EXCAVATIONS

In 1979 the land at Denton Hall Farm was acquired by Kethcombe Properties Ltd of Skelmersdale, who planned to erect industrial warehousing on the site. Due to this impending threat and to constant vandalism of the deserted buildings on the site, permission was given for the Grade II* Listed east wing building to be dismantled and re-erected at Hough Lane, Wilmslow.

Following the removal of the east wing, Denton Local History Society was granted permission to excavate the site of the building, with a view to

determining its original function, and to see if there was any evidence of occupation before its construction, probably in the early 16th century. It was not possible to excavate the site of the main hall complex, as the modern farm buildings which stood over part of the original site were in a dangerous condition.

The excavations took place from April to August 1980, and were directed by VA and SR Bryant for Denton Local History Society. This was before the establishment of the GMAU, and the excavations were therefore almost entirely dependent upon volunteer labour working at weekends and in school holidays, and upon the limited resources of Denton Local History Society. Subsequently, the GMAU and the Manchester Museum provided specialist help with the writing of the small-finds reports, conservation facilities for the finds, and the publication of the report.

Restrictions were placed upon the excavations by constant vandalism and the accidental spillage of several hundred gallons of diesel oil on the site in August 1980, which brought the excavations to a premature halt. The discovery of substantial quantities of waterlogged material also posed problems of conservation.

The excavations (Figs 1 and 2) consisted initially of a trench, 10m by 8.7m, in the southern half of the detached east wing. This was subsequently extended to the south-east for a further 3m by 1.5m upon the discovery of the small foundation-walls F65 and F66, and for a further 8m by 4m to the north upon the discovery of the large feature F94 (T1). Two additional trenches, T2 and T3, were also opened to the north and west of T1, to locate respectively the northern edge of F94 and its southern edge beyond the west baulk of T1. T2 was 3.5m by 2m, and T3 was 5m by 1.25m.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following: Kethcombe Properties Ltd for allowing the site to be excavated, Denton Local History Society, Cheadle Hulme High School and Bredbury Comprehensive School for supplying the workforce, and GMAU for help with post-excavation work. We would like to thank especially Jill Cronin and Joy Young of Denton Local History Society for their support during the course of the excavation and for their expertise on the historical background of the site, and Beryl Taylor for her work on the pottery and her support throughout the excavation.

PERIOD 1

Description

Period 1 is represented by the cutting of a large negative feature (F94) which was located in the excavated area to the north of the site of the main hall (Figs 1 and 2). It ran in an east-west direction, and was cut into the natural yellow clay subsoil. It had an observed width of 11.5m, but because of waterlogging its depth could not be observed below the water table, 1.5m below present ground level. The southern edge of F94 was identified for a distance of 15.5m between the east

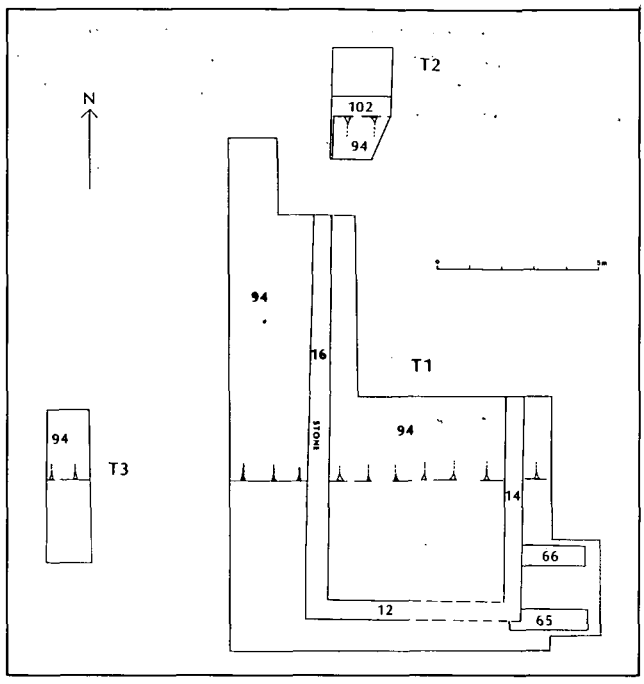

Fig 2 Denton Hall : schematic plan of features

baulk of trench T1 and the west baulk of trench T3, and was approximately 10.5m north of the site of the old hall.

The structure of the southern edge of F94 was visible in cross-section in trench T1 (Figs 3 and 4). It consisted of a steep profile, interrupted by a horizontal ledge 800mm below ground level. Above the ledge was a revettment consisting of large blocks of yellow sandstone, held in place by reused oak timbers laid along the ledge. Much of the sandstone had either been removed or displaced during the backfilling of F94 and the construction of the east wing, and it is likely that some of it was used in the construction of the building foundations. Nevertheless enough of the original stones survived in situ, or close to their original position (Fig 4) to make it possible to understand the method of construction.

The timbers which held the revettment in place were well preserved due to waterlogging, and contained evidence of timber framing in the form of mortices and wooden pegs. An additional feature observed

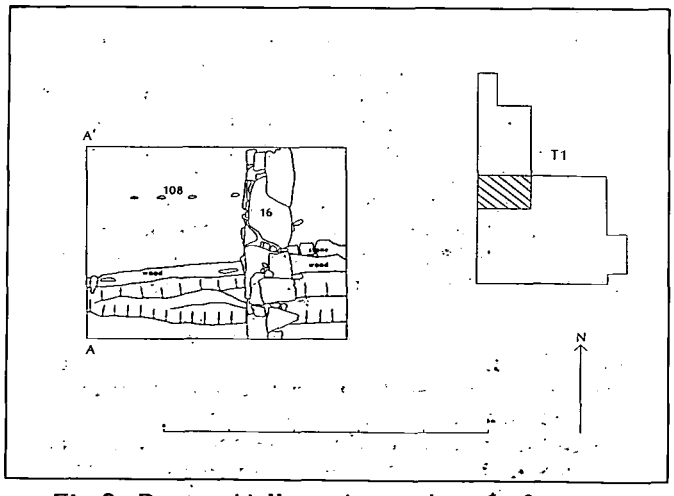

Fig 3 Denton Hall : excavated area of moat

close to the southern edge of F94 was a row of wooden stakes F108, spaced 400-800mm apart and all leaning noticeably toward the southern edge of F94. It was not possible to determine whether a similar arrangement existed at the northern edge of F94 in trench T2, as the spillage of diesel oil took place before it was possible to excavate trench 2 below a depth of 250mm.

Discussion

It is likely that F94 formed part of a moat surrounding the living platform on which the manor house stood. The observed width of 11.5m is larger than the national average of 3-6m, (Taylor 1978, 8), but falls within the range of 8-12m for moats within the county (Tindall 1985, 67). The straight course of the southern edge of F94 between trench T1 and trench T3, and the care taken with the revettment, would also indicate that it was a moat rather than the only other likely interpretation, a fishpond: particularly so, since two partially-backfilled ponds are present close to the manor house (Fig 1). Fishponds are commonly found in association with moats (Taylor 1978, 5) and it is possible that the two ponds at Denton may have been incorporated within the moat system, in a similar way to the example at Brome, Suffolk (Le Patourel 1978, 43).

The revettment on the southern edge of F94 could have been a costly and time-consuming feature to build and maintain; it is therefore likely that its construction was partly for decoration, particularly since the clay subsoil would have been relatively stable. Stone and brick revettments are known from a number of moated sites in East Anglia (Rigold 1978, 30) and these include fine examples in flint and brickwork which, like the revettment at Denton, were obviously intended to be partly decorative features. The position of the four stakes, close to and pointing towards the southern edge of F94, suggests that their function may have been to prevent stock kept on the living platform from straying across the moat.

A postulated course for the moat at Denton, based on the excavated feature F94 and the two fishponds, is shown in Fig 1. Although this would seem to be the most likely course for the moat, several others running inside the fishponds could also be feasible. The example shown would provide an internal area of c4500sqm for the living platform, with the main hall located close to its northern edge. The moat was nowhere visible on the ground, but to the east of the main hall its postulated course was covered by a fenced waste-disposal plant, and much of the area to the west had been considerably lowered to accommodate 19th and 20th century farm buildings. In addition, the presence of nettle beds to the south of the platform would suggest that this area too had been disturbed.

Several small sondages were excavated by the GMAU in September 1980 (Fig 1, A-D) in order to identify the course of the moat and to see if any stratified medieval deposits were present on the living platform. None of the trenches provided any evidence of the moat or any other medieval features, but the extent of post-medieval disturbance and the small size of the trenches would make any attempt to draw conclusions conjectural.

No evidence was found in the excavated area of deposits or structures which might have been contemporary with the moat, or which might have indicated the date of its construction. However, occupation at Denton Hall can be inferred with reasonable certainty from the early 14th century (above, The Documentary Background), and what documentary and archaeological evidence exists for moat construction in the North West suggests that most were built from the late 13th to the late 14th century (Tindall 1985, 67-72). It is therefore probable that the moat at Denton dates to sometime within this period. The location of Denton Hall, on boulder clay subsoil in the Tame Valley, also conforms to the distribution of medieval moated sites in the county, 73% of which are on clay subsoil and 79% of which are located below the 79m contour (Tindall 1985, 62).

PERIOD 2

Description

Period 2 is represented by a series of three events; the construction of the foundations of the east wing, the backfilling of feature F94, and the laying of a clay floor F47 inside the east wing.

The foundations of the east wing comprised six wall elements (Figs 2 and 5). The south foundation-wall F12 was located in trench T1, 6m north of the site of the old hall. It was 600mm wide and survived to a maximum height of 500mm. Only 2.8m of the original length of 6.2m survived, the rest having been removed during the dismantling of the east wing in 1979. It was a dry-stone wall of large undressed blocks of yellow sandstone. A construction-trench, 1.7m wide and 370mm deep, was dug into the clay subsoil to receive the wall. It was also backfilled with clay.

The north foundation-wall F102 was observed in trench T2 for a distance of 1.8m, and was located on the north lip of F94. It was 600mm wide and survived to a height of 650mm, and its construction was similar to that of the south foundation-wall F12. A step 300mm deep was cut into the north lip of F94 to receive the wall.

The west foundation-wall F16 was located in trench T1 for a distance of 12.75m, but only the most

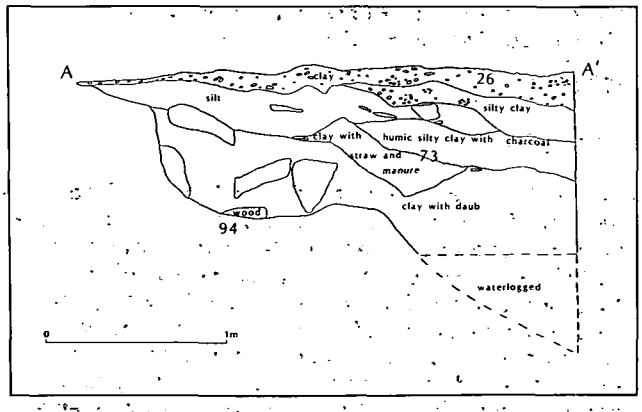

Fig.4. Denton Hall : moat section

southerly 7m was recorded in detail. It varied between 600 and 800mm wide, and survived to a maximum height of 800mm above the old ground surface. Greater care appears to have been taken with the construction of F16 than with the other walls. It consisted of intricate dry-stone walling, using neatly-interlocking pieces of sandstone varying from 30 to 800mm in size, with the largest stones forming the upper courses. To the south of feature F94, F16 occupied a construction-trench 1.6m wide and 250mm deep which, like the construction-trench of F12, was backfilled with clay. Further north, where it overlay F94, F16 was observed to a maximum depth of 1.8m, although no construction-trench was apparent (Fig 3).

The east foundation-wall F14 was observed in trench T2 for a distance of 7m. It was 500mm wide and survived to a maximum height of 850mm. It was of similar construction to F16, although many of the larger stones were dressed on the outside, and like F16 was built across F94. No construction-trench was apparent to the south of F94.

At the south-east corner of the east wing, two short parallel foundation-walls, F65 and F66, were observed. They were 1.4m apart, at right angles to F14, and were built of undressed sandstone in a similar fashion to F14 and F16. Both F65 and F66 were bonded to F14, and neither of them had a construction trench. The more southerly of the two (F65) overlapped the junction of foundation-walls F12 and F14 by 300mm to the west and 250mm to the south. It was 2.5m long by 700mm wide, and survived to a maximum height of 800mm. The northerly wall F66 was 1.05m long by 600mm wide and survived to a maximum height of 1m.

Following the construction of the foundation-walls of the east wing, feature F94 was backfilled around them (Fig 4). Due to waterlogging it was only possible to examine the deposits in detail to a depth of 1m. The filling (F73) varied in texture from clay to silty-clay and in colour from mid-brown to dark grey. The anaerobic conditions caused by the waterlogging of the deposits also led to the preservation of much of their original organic content, as inclusions within the silt and clay matrix. The distribution of organic inclusions varied, forming reasonably distinct layers within F73. These fell into two broad types: those with high concentrations of straw and manure and those with high concentrations of animal bone, charcoal, wood (including staves), and daub. The former probably represent refuse from farm buildings, and the latter domestic rubbish and/or the debris from the demolition of a timber building. Also, some of the bone at least may have been redeposited from domestic pits on the living platform (below, Appendix 4). A number of small-finds were recovered from F73, and these were also in a fine state of preservation. They included gilded bronze pins, an iron knife and catch-plate, and a lathe-turned wooden bowl (below, Appendices 2-3).

Feature F73 was sealed within the east wing by a deposit of yellow clay (F47), probably derived from the natural subsoil (Fig 5). It had a maximum

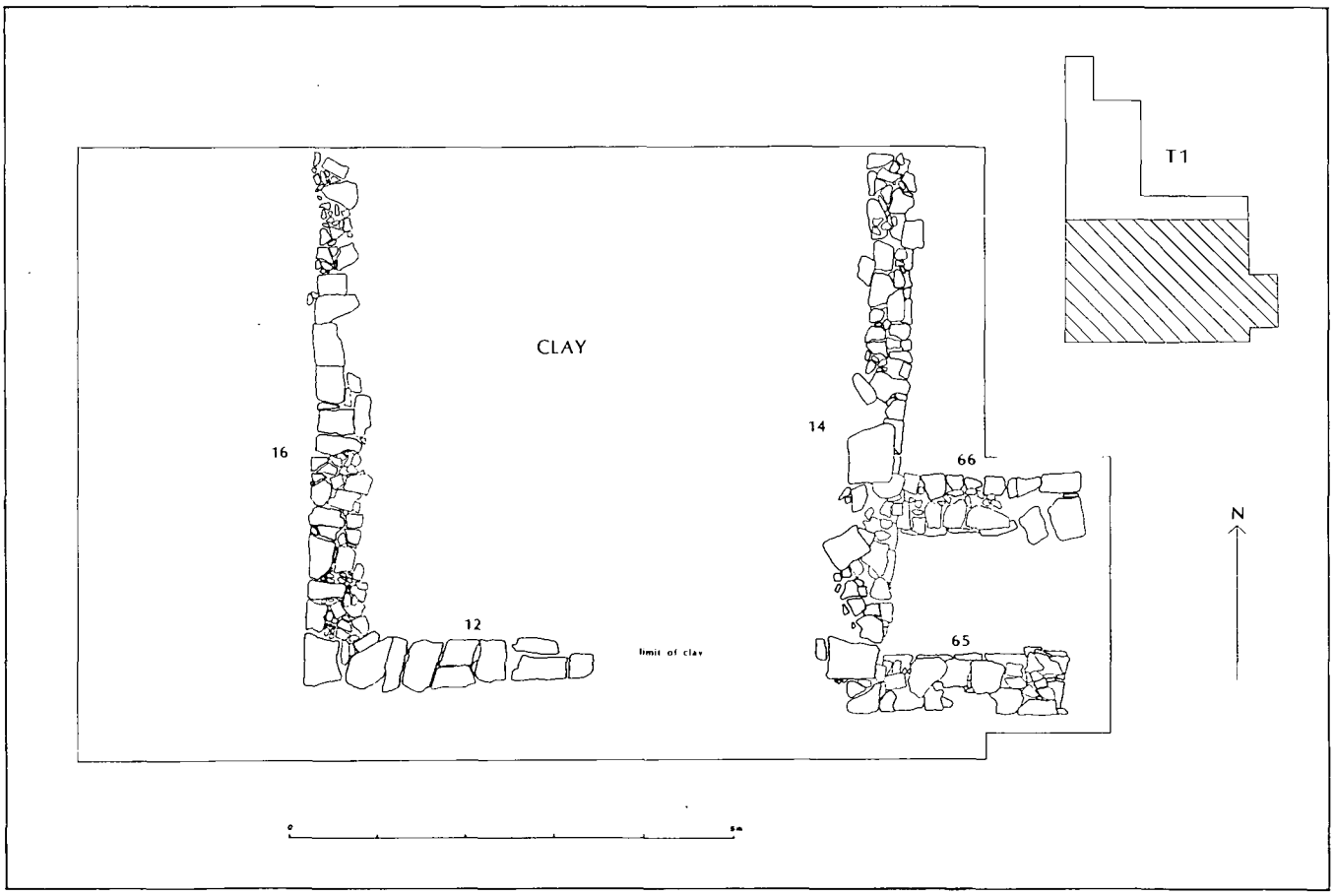

Fig 5 Denton Hall : wall foundations

thickness of 200mm, but disturbance by heavy plant during the removal of the east wing had removed some of the surface, and had also compacted a large quantity of builders' rubble into the clay. To the west of the east wing, F94 was sealed by a deposit of yellow clay with small pebbles (F26), with a maximum thickness of 300mm, which also extended to the south of F94. F26 was less affected by machine disturbance than clay floor F47, and was observed to increase in thickness over the filling of F94 (Fig 4).

Discussion

The greater care taken with the construction of the east and west foundation-walls F14 and F16 was presumably due to the necessity of providing a secure foundation for the building across the moat. Also, the presence of dressed stones in the east foundation wall F16 suggests that this side may originally have been the principal entrance to the east wing.

The most likely function of the two small walls F65 and F66 was as foundations for an external staircase providing access to the upper floor of the east wing. Such projecting 'turret'-type staircases appear to have been a relatively common feature of dwellings in the early post-medieval period in the North West (Brunskill 1978 120). The continuation of the east foundation-wall between F65 and F66, and the absence of a corresponding foundation-wall at their opposite ends, indicates that access to the stairs was probably from the outside (Fig 5). It is difficult to understand why this should be the case, unless the stairs gave access only to the service quarters of the first floor, in which case another staircase would have been necessary for the principal room of that floor.

The location of the north wall F102 on the northern lip of the moat F94 suggests that it was considered structurally-unsound to position a third foundation-wall over the moat. This may also explain why the east wing was separated from the main hall complex, as physically joining the two buildings would have entailed constructing the north wall of the east wing in the middle of the moat. Even so, it is not easy to explain why it was considered necessary to construct it across the moat at all, as there was almost certainly sufficient space to accommodate it on the living platform (Fig 1). In the absence of any further information, the only feasible explanation is that it was considered to be more important to maintain an open aspect to the front of the main hall than to avoid incurring the extra cost necessary to construct the east wing building across the moat.

The excavations did not provide any further clues as to the original function of the east wing building. There was no evidence of foundations for a chimney or smoke-bay, which would have been necessary to heat domestic quarters, although they may have been destroyed during removal of the east wing or have been located in the unexcavated part of the building.

The small group of Cistercian-type pottery and the unglazed purple jug-base recovered from the moat fill (below, Appendix 1) suggest a terminus post quem of c1500 for the backfilling of the moat and the construction of the east wing. This would concur with the late 15th-early 16th century date ascribed to the east wing on the basis of the type and decoration of its timber framing (above, The Buildings). As the main hall is also ascribed to the late 15th-early 16th century it would seem highly probable, on the basis of the moat, the documentary evidence, the small-finds and the reused timbers, that a medieval building was present on the living platform before the construction of the 16th century manor house. It is possible that the moat filling, particularly the wooden staves and the daub, may represent part of the demolition debris of the medieval hall and associated buildings. However, it was not possible to excavate a large enough area of the moat to recover the quantity of building debris necessary to confirm this suggestion.

The backfilling of the moat, and the construction of the relatively high-status east wing building at Denton, conforms to the regional and national picture after 1500. This period saw the widespread abandonment of moats, due probably to changes in fashion and to the increasing wealth of the Tudor gentry, who required larger and more elaborate accommodation, and who were often forced to abandon the restricted confines of the moated site (Le Patourel and Roberts 1978; Tindall 1985). The quality of the small-finds from the moat filling, particularly the gilded bronze pins and tags, is in keeping with the relatively high social status of the occupants of the hall.

PERIOD 3

A series of deposits observed to the west and south of the east wing in trench T1 were laid down during the lifetime of the building. The clay layer F26 was re-surfaced with gravel several times to the south of F94, and several sherds of 17th century pottery were recovered from this level (below, Appendix 1). Above F26 were the remnants of a cobble-and-brick yard surface, which had been almost completely removed by machine disturbance. A more complete brick yard surface was observed to the south of the east wing. The bricks were hand-made and unmortared, and set in a matrix of yellow gravel which lay directly over the natural subsoil. They probably date to the 19th century.

APPENDIX 1: CERAMIC OBJECTS (Fig 6)

by B R Taylor

Tile

1 Part of a medieval roof-tile in hard orange fabric, with grey core and abundant fine rounded quartz inclusions. The unglazed inner surface is rough and sandy, the smooth outer surface appears dark green under the lead glaze, which has failed to cover a narrow channel across the tile (stippled), perhaps as a result of kiln stacking. Three thumbmarks and a scar (also stippled) indicate that some attachment has broken away, perhaps a decorative feature. 14th century. F73.

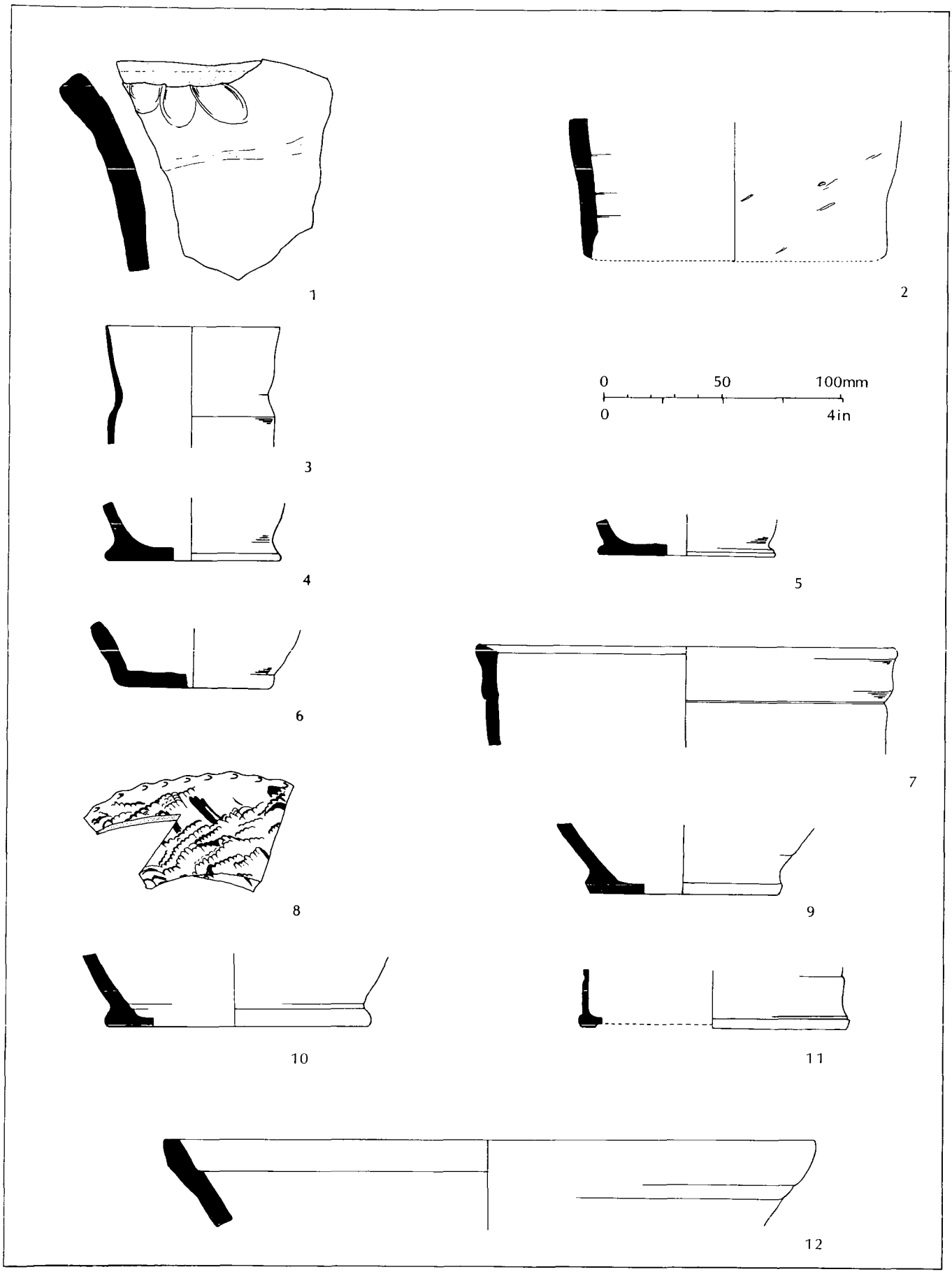

Fig 6 Denton Hall : pottery

Pottery

As Denton Hall had been in occupation until very recently and the surrounding land used for rubbish tipping, a large amount of pottery of very recent date recovered from the surface layers was discounted. Fig 6 represents pottery from archaeological contexts, of which the Cistercian ware is perhaps the most interesting. This ware is so called because it was first recognized in monastic excavations, but has now been found to have a wider distribution, particularly in Yorkshire where kiln sites have been excavated and a Type Series established by Brears (1971). It has an approximate date range of 1500-1600.

2 Base of jug in hard, purple fabric with abundant fine inclusions, a purple/grey core and dark grey rilled inner surface. The pot is unglazed and has been roughly finished and wiped externally, producing small diagonal striations in the clay. Possibly early 16th century. **F73.**

3 Cistercian ware rim of Brears Type 4 cup in hard smooth purple fabric, with thin glaze also appearing purple with some internal 'bubbling'. **F73.**

4 Cistercian ware cup base in hard smooth purple fabric with lead glaze internally and externally. Cheesewire marks under base show the method used for removal from the wheel. **F73.**

5 Cistercian ware cup base in hard red/purple smooth fabric with brown/black glaze having some silvery streaks. **F73.**

6 Cistercian ware cup base in hard red/purple smooth fabric with brown/black glaze and cheesewire marks under base. **F73.**

7 Rim of Midland Purple-type bowl, in well-fired very hard smooth fabric near to stoneware. Probably 16th century. **F26.**

8 Rim of Slipware dish of type very popular from the fourth quarter of the 17th century onwards, and made in large numbers in Staffordshire. This one had a diameter of 125mm, though many were much larger. The fabric is smooth buff colour with pastry-type thumbed edge. It is decorated on the upper surface only with trailed and feathered brown slip design on yellow background. **F26.**

9 Base of mug in smooth buff fabric with streaked (manganese) brown glaze, Staffordshire, c1700-1750. **F26.**

10 Similar vessel to 9. **F26.**

11 Tankard base in smooth buff fabric, also from Staffordshire but of finer form, with row of reeding above the footring suggesting further reeding present on the body. This belongs to a class of pottery known as Midland Blackware, though the glaze on this base appears plain brown. **F26.**

12 Bowl in smooth very hard red fabric with unglazed external surface and brown glaze internally. Probably c1640-1680. **F26.**

APPENDIX 2: METAL OBJECTS (Fig 7)

by P E Holdsworth

Bronze

The objects were recovered from one archaeological context, **F73:** the filling of the moat surrounding Denton Hall. This event provides a terminus ante quem for the objects. However, they could have been manufactured considerably earlier as the pins, for example, are of a type common from the 13th century onwards. All the objects were gilded and in an extremely fine state of preservation, exhibiting few corrosion products.

35 and 45 Pin. Head formed of two cast halves, each of pyramid shape and welded together at their bases. The upper half has three vertical lines crossed by one diagonal line, incised into each of its four faces. The lower half has a circular hole pierced through two adjacent faces. The shaft is made from a piece of rolled sheet, and tapers toward the end. It was pushed through both halves of the head and then flattened and smoothed at the top. Length 58.2mm Width of head 10.9mm.

39 Pin. Short and very slender. Head formed by passing a length of wire round the head of the shaft and then rounding and smoothing it over. Length 25.1mm. Not illustrated.

40 Buckle plate. A narrow piece of sheet folded over with recesses cut for buckle sides and pin. Two rivet holes with rivets. Length 45mm Breadth 8mm.

43 Pin. Head formed by passing the same wire round the shaft. Length 22.1mm. Not illustrated.

44 Pin. Head formed by passing a length of wire twice round the shaft, the end of which is flattened to prevent the head slipping off. Length 40mm.

51 Pin. Short and very slender. Head formed by passing the same wire round the shaft. Length 18.4mm. Not illustrated.

54 Lace tag. Made from a piece of rolled sheet; rounded end whithout eye. Length 41mm.

64 Pin. Long and slender with cylindrical head. Length 41mm. Not illustrated.

69 Pin. Head formed by passing a length of wire round the head of the shaft and then rounding and smoothing it over. Length 28.1mm. Not illustrated.

72 Lace tag. Made from a piece of rolled sheet. Broken at both ends and split down

one side. Length 19.6mm. Not illustrated.

85 Pin. Head a flattened sphere formed of two cast halves with shaft of pin pushed through lower half. Length 50.8mm Diameter of head 6.3mm.

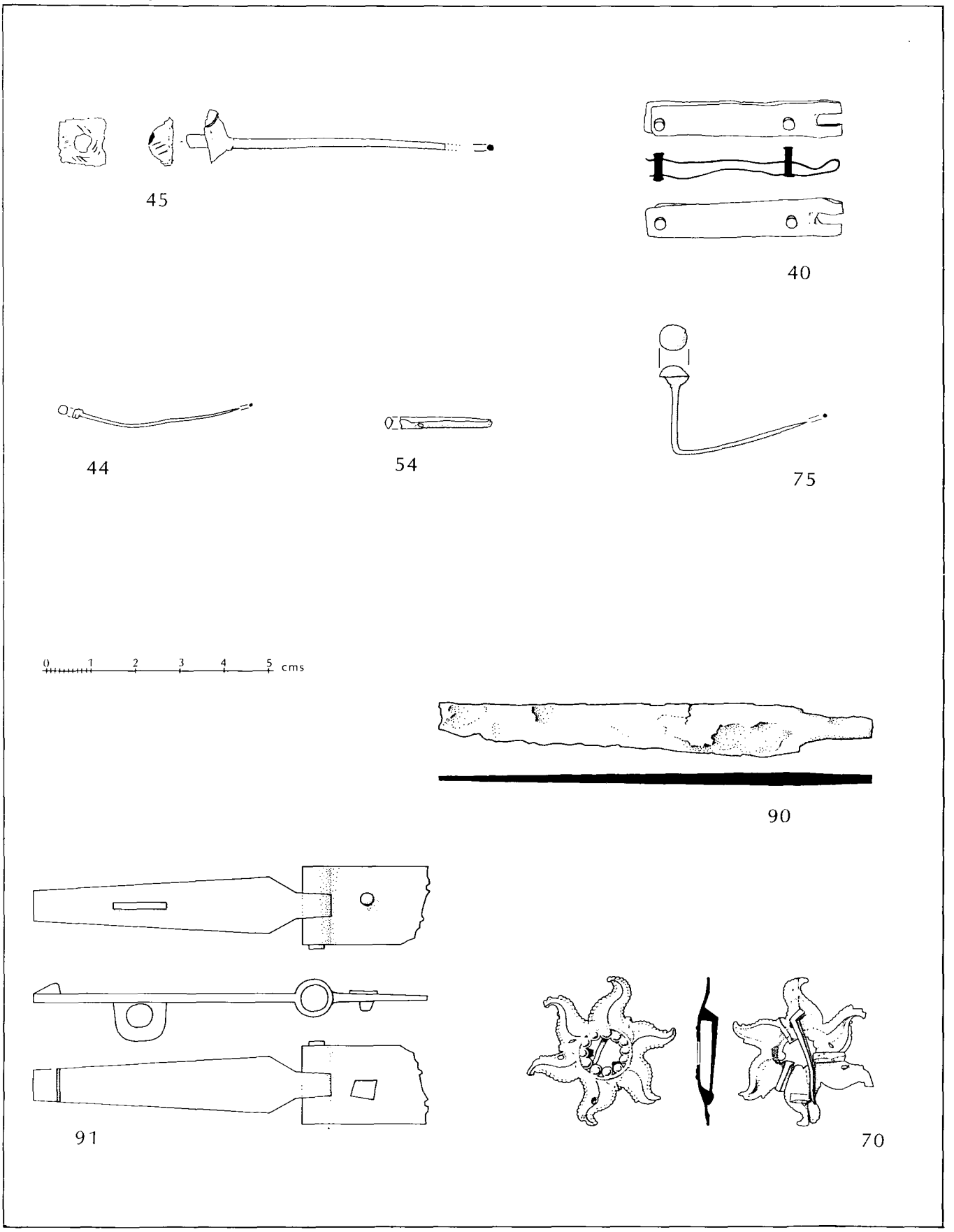

Fig 7 Denton Hall : metalwork

Iron

The main objects, like those of bronze, were recovered from the filling of the moat, **F73.** They were all in a good state of preservation and were identified and described without having been x-rayed or surface-cleaned. All the objects are compatible with a late medieval or an early post-medieval date for the infilling of the moat. Nos 92-8 are not illustrated.

90 Knife. Triangular in section, broken at point, with sloping shoulders. Tang rectangular in section, in one piece with the blade. Length 96.1mm Width of blade (at shoulders) 11mm.

91 Catch plate. Hinged catch plate, possibly for a chest. The varvelt plate has rounded shoulders and is folded back at the narrow end; on the back is a 'd'-shaped plate with a circular hole to receive the locking mechanism. Overall length 87.8mm Width of upper plate 18.2mm Width of lower plate (at the shoulder) 13.3mm.

92 Nail. Irregulary-shaped circular head, slightly domed. Shaft rectangular in section, broken at point. Length 44mm Diameter of head 16.9mm.

93 Nail. Irregularly-shaped circular head. Shaft rectangular in section and broken just below the head. Length 24.1mm Diameter of head 15.9mm.

94 Nail. Flat, irregularly-shaped circular head. Shaft rectangular in section, broken at point. Length 31mm Diameter of head 13mm.

95 Nail. Flat, irregularly-shaped circular head. Shaft rectangular in section, tapering to a flattened and blunt point. Length 31.8mm Diameter of head 11mm.

96 Fiddlekey. Rectangular shaft tapering to a blunt point. Used with horse-shoes. Length 28.7mm.

97 Fiddlekey. Rectangular shaft tapering to a blunt point. Length 30mm.

98 Two rectangular shafts without heads. Length 36mm and 21mm.

Lead

One lead alloy object was found - a pilgrim sign. Such signs were very popular throughout the medieval period (Spencer 1968) and were prominently displayed on a traveller's clothing to announce the shrines he had visited. The commonest pilgrim sign found in this country records the martyrdom of St Thomas of Canterbury. The large majority of surviving signs are of lead or poor quality pewter, although some are of bronze.

The Denton Hall pilgrim sign takes the form of a Catherine wheel, and may record the visit of a pilgrim to the shrine of St Catherine at Mont Ste Catherine, near Rouen (Spencer 1968, 143 and plate III). It could, however, be a Canterbury sign, for a badge is known depicting St Thomas as the central motif surrounded by a Catherine wheel (British Museum 1924, Fig 180); it has been dated to the 14th century.

70 Pilgrim sign. The sign takes the form of a Catherine wheel, and has six tendrils of unequal length; each tendril is edged with beading. The central motif of the sign, surrounded by 12 pellets, is missing although the three catch plates which held such a motif in position survive unbroken on the reverse side. Also on the reverse side is a pin and clasp. Diameter 33mm. **Unstratified.**

APPENDIX 3: WOODEN OBJECTS (Fig 8)

by P E Holdsworth

73 Bowl. A lathe-turned bowl with a flat base and steeply-curving side. Probably oak, it is finely-turned and smooth on all surfaces; turning lines on base. **73.**

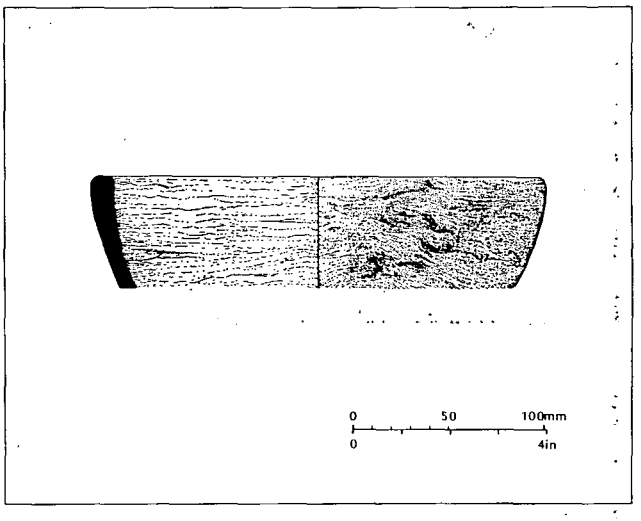

Fig 8 Denton Hall : wooden bowl

APPENDIX 4: THE ANIMAL BONE

by R Hillman

Twenty-eight fragments of animal bone from the moat filling F73 were analysed. Of these, 17 fragments were not identifiable to species. Most of the identifiable fragments were from 'cattle-sized' or 'sheep-sized' animals: probably the common domestics, cow, sheep, pig and perhaps horse and goat. The 'cattle-sized' fragments are very likely to be from cattle, since the plausible alternatives (horse and red deer) are not otherwise represented.

The assemblage is so small as to render numerical analysis invalid or even misleading. Any conclusions drawn from the material must be general and qualitative and must be viewed in that light.

Most of the fragments may be assigned to one of two groups: butchery waste, or refuse associated with

the kitchen or table. The mandibles, vertebrae, pelvis and distal tibia are butchery waste, the bird bones and cow femur will have been discarded at some stage after the butchery. It is worthy of note that in comparison with the other bones, the fragments of cow femur are very indifferently preserved. The outer layer of each fragment has degenerated and is flaking, and the fractures sustained during butchery have been smoothed off. One of the fragments is split longitudinally on one side. All this is consistent with the softening action of prolonged cooking.

The only bone representing a non-domesticated animal is a proximal humerus which has been identified as that of snipe or moorhen. Both are birds which thrive in damp conditions, especially amongst reeds, and no doubt would have provided welcome variety to the diet.

These bones, then, represent at least two activities: butchery and the preparation and consumption of food. It is likely that they were carried out in different places and so the refuse would be deposited in different pits, only to be redeposited together when the moat was filled in.

In conclusion, therefore, the bones contain no obvious anomalies. They reflect perhaps some aspects of the occupation of the farm, but because of their small numbers there is a limited amount of information to be gained from them.

	COW	SHEEP/ GOAT	FOWL	?SNIPE	'CATTLE SIZED'	'SHEEP SIZED'	'FOWL SIZED'
Mandible	2						
Molar	2						
Scapula	1						
Humerus				1			
Vertebra	1						
Pelvis		1					
Femur	2		1				
Tibia	1						
Rib *					5		1
Longbone *					1	5	1
Axial *					1	2	

*Fragments

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary

GMRO DDeg Slater Heelis, Greater Manchester Record Office.

LRO Hu/12 Hulton Papers, Lancashire Record Office.

LRO DRM/1/37 Tithe Award, Lancashire Record Office.

PRO 179/250/11 PT6, Public Record Office.

Towneley MSS L1/47/1/6, Manchester Central Reference Library.

Secondary

Aberg, F A (ed) 1978 Medieval Moated Sites Counc Brit Archaeol Res Rep 17.

Brears, P C D 1971 'The Pottery' in K S Bartlett 'Excavations at Potovens, near Wakefield, 1968' Post-Medieval Archaeol 5, 1-34.

British Museum 1924 A Guide to the Medieval Antiquities and Objects of Later Date in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities.

Brunskill, R W 1978 Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture.

Crossley, F H 1951 Timber Buildings in England.

Irvine, W F 1902 A History of the Family of Holland of Mobberley and Knutsford.

Le Patourel, H E J 1978 'The excavation of moated sites' in F A Aberg Medieval Moated Sites, 36-45.

Le Patourel, H E J and Roberts, B K 1978 'The significance of moated sites' in F A Aberg Medieval Moated Sites, 46-55.

Price, J V 1985 'The Development of the Country House' in J S F Walker and A S Tindall Country Houses of Greater Manchester, 73-84.

Some problems of architectural and social history' Archaeol J 127, 156-81.

Rigold, S E 1978 'Structures within English moated sites' in F A Aberg Medieval Moated Sites, 29-36.

RSLC 1885 'Miscellanies I' Records Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 12.

Smith, J T 1970 'Lancashire and Cheshire Houses:

Spencer, B W 1968 'Medieval pilgrim badges' in J G N Renaud Rotterdam Papers. A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology, 137-53.

Taylor, C C 1978 'Moated sites: Their definition form and classification' in F A Aberg Medieval Moated Sites, 5-13.

Taylor, H 1884 Old Halls in Lancashire and Cheshire.

Tindall, A S 1985 'The Moated House' in J S F Walker and A S Tindall Country Houses of Greater Manchester, 57-72.

VCH 4 1911 The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Lancashire, IV.