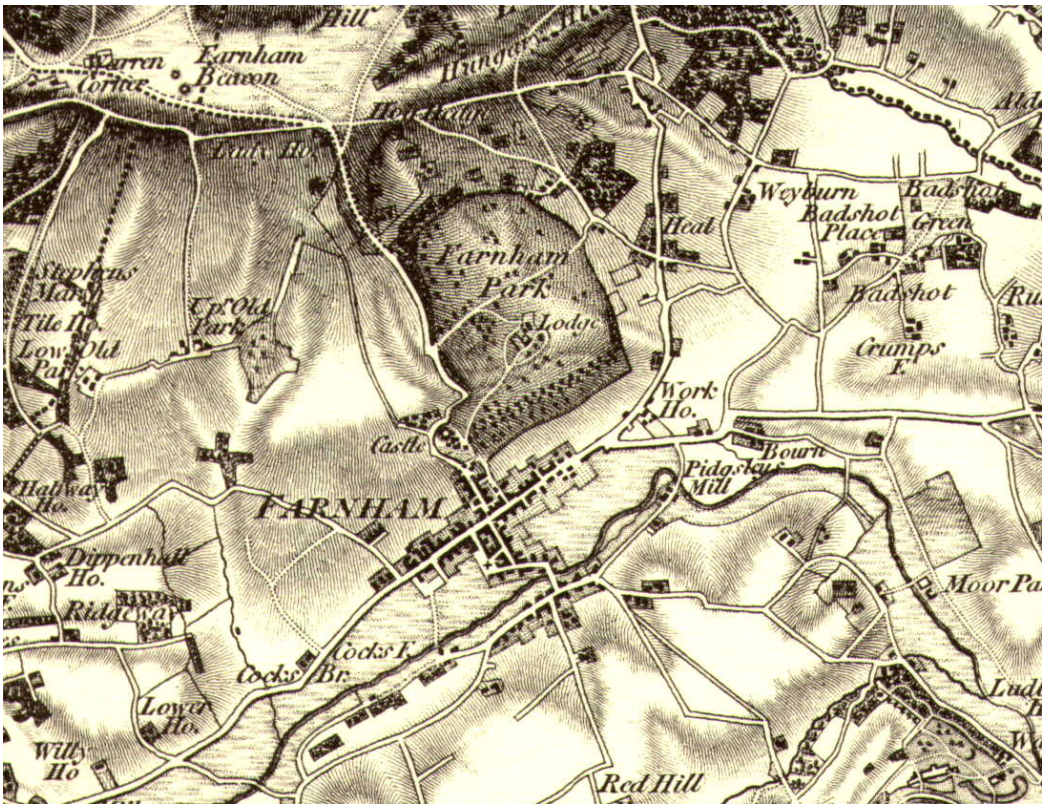
FARNHAM PARK

Landscape survey and archaeological excavations 1998

by David Graham



for

Waverley Borough Council

Farnham Park
Landscape survey and archaeological excavations 1998: interim report

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COVER

EXTRACT FROM THE OLD SERIES ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP, 1 INCH TO 1 MILE, 1816

1 INTRODUCTION

In 1997 Waverley Borough Council, the landowner, commissioned a preliminary survey into the historical and archaeological background of the land that forms the New or Little Park (now Farnham Park), just to the north east of the town of Farnham, in Surrey. The Park, which is a public open space, has been the site of a number of finds of important antiquities in recent years. As a result the Council felt that, for management purposes, it would be prudent to establish the range and degree of survival of historic landscape features and of archaeological sites within the boundaries.

To this end the author, under the supervision of Dr D G Bird, Principal Archaeologist for Surrey County Council, was asked to organise a multi-disciplinary programme of research. The first element of the project involved locating and listing the historical documents relating to the Park; the second comprised mapping of features visible on aerial photographs and the third involved a landscape survey linked to a very limited series of trial excavations.

At the time of writing, October 1998, Mrs Pat Heather, a local historian, has completed the document survey, while the air photographic survey, to be carried out by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, is still awaited. This report covers the results of the landscape survey and archaeological excavation programme.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location, topography and geology

Farnham Park (centred at SU 842 481) covers an area of 130 ha, lies immediately to the north east of Farnham Castle and forms the last remaining area of open countryside between the town of Farnham and the housing estates of Upper Hale. The boundaries were originally laid out in the medieval period to form a deer park immediately adjacent to the episcopal palace at Farnham Castle.

The Park lies on the northern slope of the Wey valley, faces south and rises, via a chalk ridge from about 90m OD at Farnham to a height of 135m OD at Upper Hale. The slope is cut by a number of small watercourses, some now dry, which run west-east across the Park. These empty into a slightly larger north-south stream that meanders down the slope approximately parallel to and slightly in from the eastern boundary of the Park. This stream, known as the Hale Stream or Nadder, flows all year round and has cut a small valley from its entry into the Park at Hog Hatch in the north to its exit at the Park's south-east corner. To the west of the Nadder, the central area of the Park is relatively level, forming a slight terrace in the general north-south fall of the land.

The geology is complex, consisting of a series of parallel deposits running in east-west bands across the Park - a fact that has greatly influenced land use patterns. To the south, the Park overlies a chalk ridge (largely Upper Chalk) on which the castle is sited, dominating the town of Farnham itself. To the west the ridge is capped by river gravels and to the north is bounded by a band of Reading Beds deposits. To the north of this again, and forming the top half of the Park, is an extensive deposit of London Clay. At the centre of the Park, the southern part of this heavy clay deposit is exposed at the surface and contains flint nodules, while to the north the clay is overlain by a lighter brickearth.

The greater part of the Park consists of open grassland or scrub, with areas of woodland along the northern boundary, down the main stream valley and elsewhere in the form of isolated clumps of trees.

To the south and north, in the areas closest to the adjacent housing developments, the grass is kept closely mown, but elsewhere is cropped once a year for hay or is grazed by cattle as well as by the local deer.

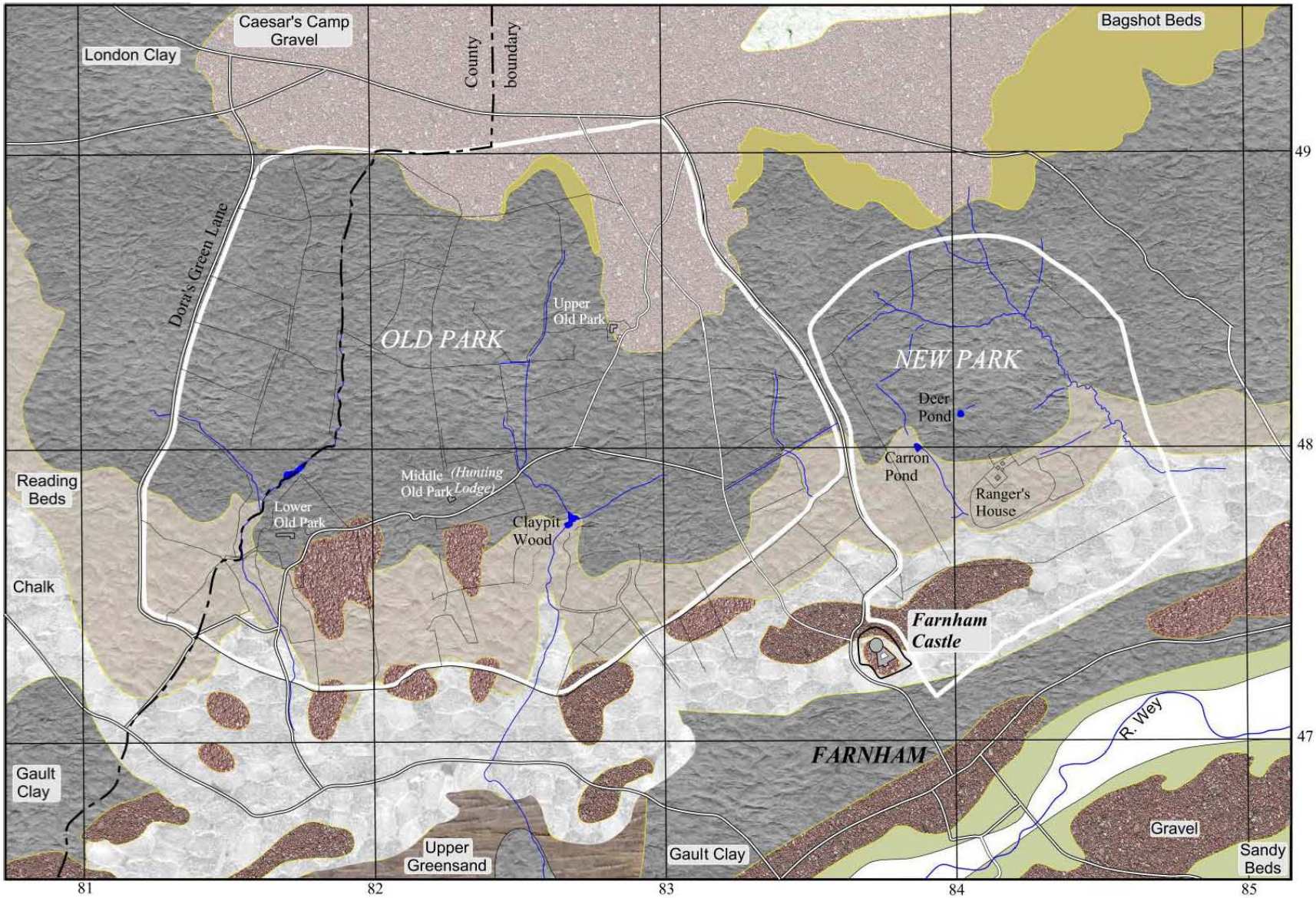


Fig 1 Geology (simplified) of Farnham Old and New Parks

2.2 Summary of previous work

A number of finds of antiquities and archaeological sites have been recorded within the Park and are listed in Appendix 1 and shown on figure 2. In essence, they can be divided into those that relate to the period before the land was emparked in 1376/7 - mainly Iron Age and medieval in date - and those that relate to the period after the Park came into existence. Self evidently the latter are late and post-medieval in date and, in part, came about because of the specialist type of land use resulting from emparkment.

3 THE RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND EXCAVATIONS IN 1998

3.1 The landscape survey

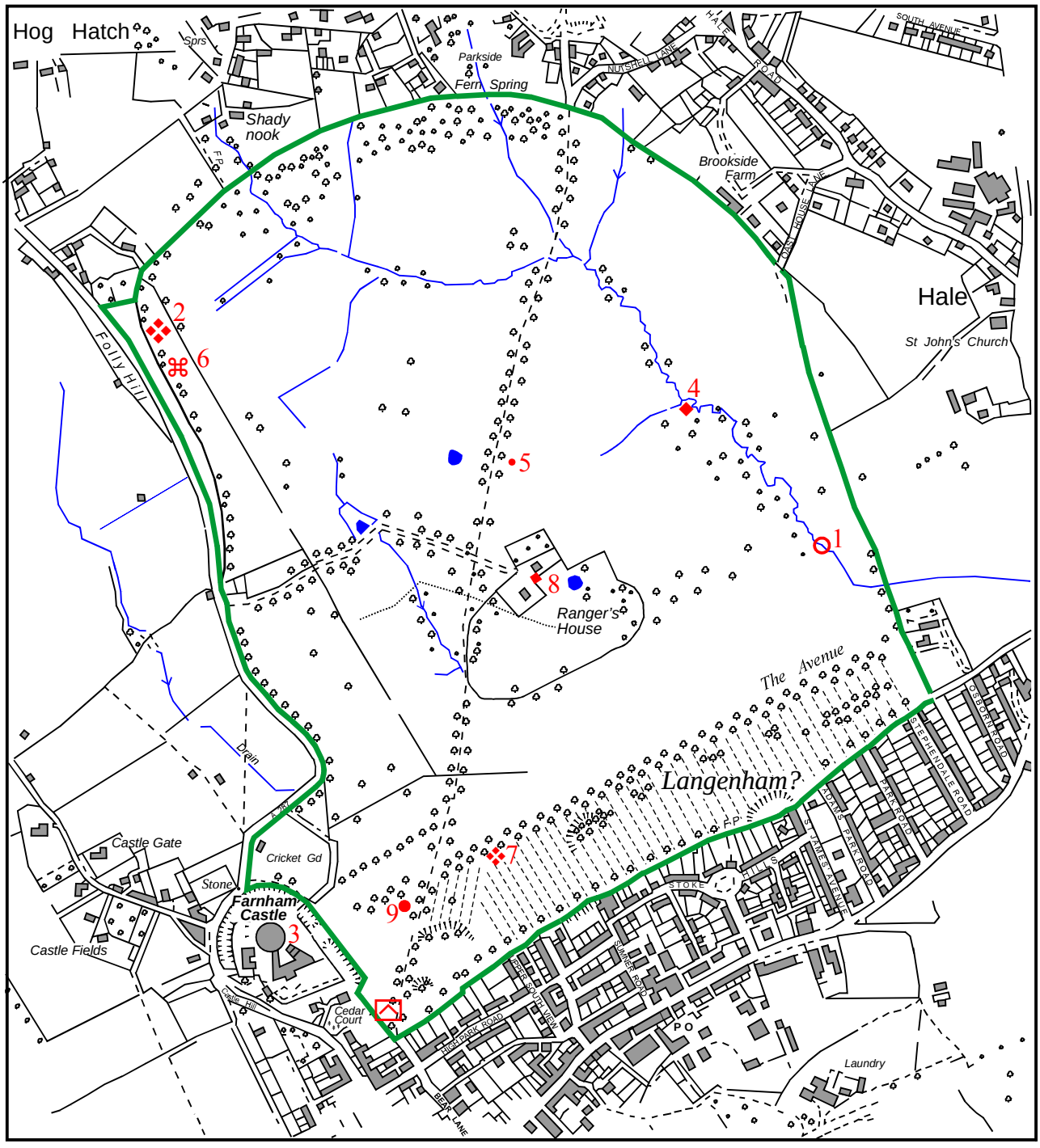
During the winter of 1997/8 a small team carried out a ground survey of the Park. This aimed to record, in outline, those landscape features which were likely to have resulted from human activity. While a full report must await the results of the Royal Commission's aerial photographic mapping work, this note forms an initial review of the results.

The most obvious earthwork features are the remains of open field systems that are visible in a number of locations within the Park. These can still be seen on the ground in the form of a series of ridge-and-furrow strips divided, in places, by low field boundaries (figs 2 and 3). The system is most clearly visible on the south side of the Avenue, though other sections appear to continue in a more degraded form to the north as well. The Winchester Pipe Rolls (medieval bishopric accounts) contain references to the fields such as 'Estaduna', 'Langenham' and 'Wynerde', the latter presumably being the site of Bishop Pontissara's vineyard in the late 13th century. The exact location of each field is uncertain, but there is no doubt that some lay close to the Castle and probably within the area that was later to become the New Park.

A second area of open fields lies along the northern edge of the Park and can again be seen on the ground in the form of low ridge-and-furrow strips. These are, however, substantially covered by woodland and are not therefore as easily traced as those at the southern end of the Park. The central section of this field system appears to respect a straight bank and ditch earthwork that still serves to mark the southern edge of the existing woodland. The majority of this land was worked by tenants living in Hale, some of whom are recorded as paying fines for fields with names such as 'Hemeway' or described as being e.g. 'once of Alice of Hale' (see Appendix 2).

The field systems consist of ridges, with an average height of 12-15cm and which, in some areas, have a width between furrows of *c* 3.5m, whilst elsewhere are 5m or more across. The systems appear to have little in common with the well-known examples from the Midlands and consequently, at the time of the survey, there was no absolute certainty as to their date. It was however, interesting to note that the Park boundary (AD 1376-7) appeared to overlie at least one such system, which continues into the private gardens to the north. This perhaps gives some indication as to the latest date for this field, though it might be worth noting that no visible medieval earthwork or pale survives and the Park boundary is merely marked by a modern fence.

There is also good evidence for industrial activity within the area during the medieval period, in the form of a number of small clay diggings. In particular, in the New Park, these occur along the stream valley close to the site of the medieval tile kiln (fig 2, no 4) listed in Appendix 1. A number of small quarries also exist along the southern side of the chalk slope below the Avenue. In the past these have been assumed to be of relatively recent date, probably dug in connection with marling activities (Manning 1984, 7) or to provide material for local limekilns. It is, however, worth noting that in at least one case, the strip field system continues undisturbed up to the edge of the quarry itself. This seems to indicate that, at least in that case, the diggings are earlier than the field systems. Since, as will be seen under the excavation section of this report, the fields can now be dated with some confidence to the 13th century, some of the quarries are likely to be earlier than that in date. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that they belong to the 12th or early 13th centuries and were dug to obtain building material, perhaps for the rubble core of ashlar walls, for some phase of the construction of Farnham Castle.



Field system

Coin hoard

Iron Age occupation site

Gold pin

Medieval tile kiln

Mound

Steel 'pin'

Fig 2 Location of previously known sites and finds
(for details of numbered features and finds see Appendix 1)

Scale 1:10,000

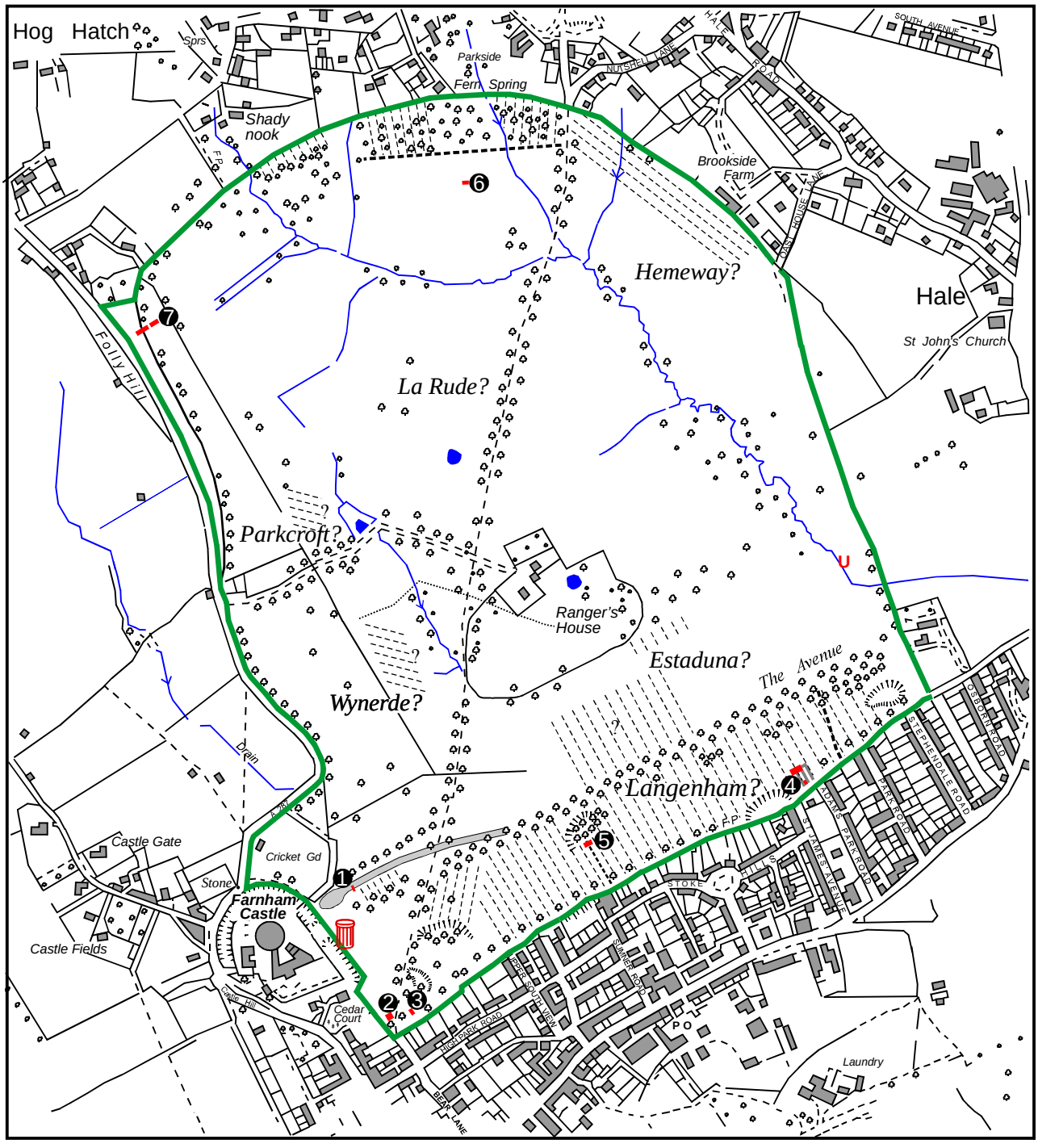


Fig 3 Results of the 1998 landscape survey and location of excavations Scale 1:10,000

For the later period, the main surviving historic landscape features relate to the 'pleasure grounds' phase of the Park, in the form of the very fine Ranger's House and the various tree plantings, such as the Avenue.

A search of the banks along the length of the main stream failed to produce any new sites, except at one point approximately 30m in from the point where the Nadder leaves the Park, at its south east corner. About 15cm below the ground surface the remains of a 10m length of thick red 'U' section tiles were noted running parallel to the watercourse. While these were in a fragmentary state, a local resident, Mr Keith Varney, reported that 30 years ago he had observed them as an intact line and had removed a single tile and deposited it at Farnham Museum. At the time they were thought to be Roman and to have been the remains of an aqueduct to supply a known villa, which lies just to the south east. However, the recent site visit makes it seem more likely that the tiles are of 17th or 18th century date, especially as pottery of that period was found with the tile fragments in the stream bed. The row may have formed part of a land drain or more probably, since the open end of the 'U' faced upwards and the row ran exactly parallel to the modern course of the stream, to have acted as a water supply to some point outside the Park.

A number of additional sites were noted elsewhere in the Park, mainly along and below the Avenue. The first of these was a low, but clearly visible bank running along the line of the chalk ridge and ending at the Castle (figs 2 and 3). The bank more or less follows the line of the Avenue, though it has been overlain by it, in the eastern half of the Park. It is *c* 13.5m wide, approximately 0.5m high and, from the air, is apparently flanked by ditches. The bank terminates in a low oval platform *c* 17m x 35m close to the walls of the castle. At the time of the survey the feature was undated, but as a result of the excavation programme it is now thought to be 17th century in date.

Other features included two possible building footings on the southern edge of the Park, both of which were trial trenched and an earthwork platform, close to the postern gate of the Castle. This did not form part of the 1998 test excavation programme, but may well be connected with a defensive system associated with the postern gate itself (fig 10). Finally, Mr Ron Hills, the Park Ranger pointed out a solid steel 'pin' protruding from the ground at the south-west corner of the Park, close to the Bear Lane entrance. The area was excavated and the feature found to be the top of a WWII Home Guard spigot mortar position, which is more fully described in section 3.2.6 of this report.

3.2 Excavation results

3.2.1 Prehistoric site

At the centre of the top end of the Park, a promontory extends south from the edge of the existing woodland. It is cut to the east, south and west by three watercourses, which have resulted in the formation of fairly steep slopes. About halfway up the eastern slope a section of a 10m wide bank and possible ditch runs on a north/south alignment out of the woodland and continues south for a short distance before apparently disappearing. It probably, though not certainly, is an erosion boundary, formed by ploughing in the medieval period.

As it was impossible to section the earthwork within the time and budget available, it was decided to open a small trench just behind the bank, in the hope of finding some evidence that might help date the feature (fig 3, no 6). In the event no such dating evidence was recovered and neither were there any signs of archaeologically significant features. However the topsoil, which was about 40cm thick at this point, did contain a random scatter of flint wasters, a flint core and several examples of fire cracked flints. Given the small size of the trench, the number of flints present would seem to indicate that a prehistoric, probably Mesolithic, site lies close by, at the top of the slope. This would not be surprising, as the site commands extensive views to the south and a number of other Mesolithic sites have been recorded just to the north of the Park in the general area of Bricksbury Hill.

3.2.2 Iron Age find

As part of the test excavation programme, two trenches were cut across the line of the boundary, just below the Park's north-west corner (fig 3, no 7), where the modern fence runs roughly parallel to Folly

Hill. The main object of the exercise was to try to locate the medieval park pale, even though no earthwork is visible on the surface. Since, however, the immediate area had produced a small Iron Age coin hoard in the early 1980s (see Appendix 1), the secondary objective was to see whether any further coins could be recovered.

In the event, a single coin was found close to the base of a concrete fence post, which had probably protected it from the attention of treasure hunters. The coin lay at a depth of 23cm, in the brickearth that forms the topsoil in this part of the Park. As was the case with the earlier finds, the coin was not associated with any other objects or features and it appears that the hoard has been scattered, probably by ploughing, from a single point of deposition higher up the slope. Given the relatively small size of the main trench, some 6m x 1.5m, and the secondary trench, 3m x 1m, it seems very probable that further coins remain in the area.

Fig 4 Atrebatic type B coin

The coin is of an Atrebatic abstract type (Van Arsdell 1989, 113), dating to 55-45 BC and is specifically classified as an 'Atrebatic B' coin. It is of gold, has a standard weight of 5.9gm and a diameter of 18mm. The obverse shows an abstracted head of Apollo facing right and the reverse shows a disjointed horse over an eight-spoked wheel.

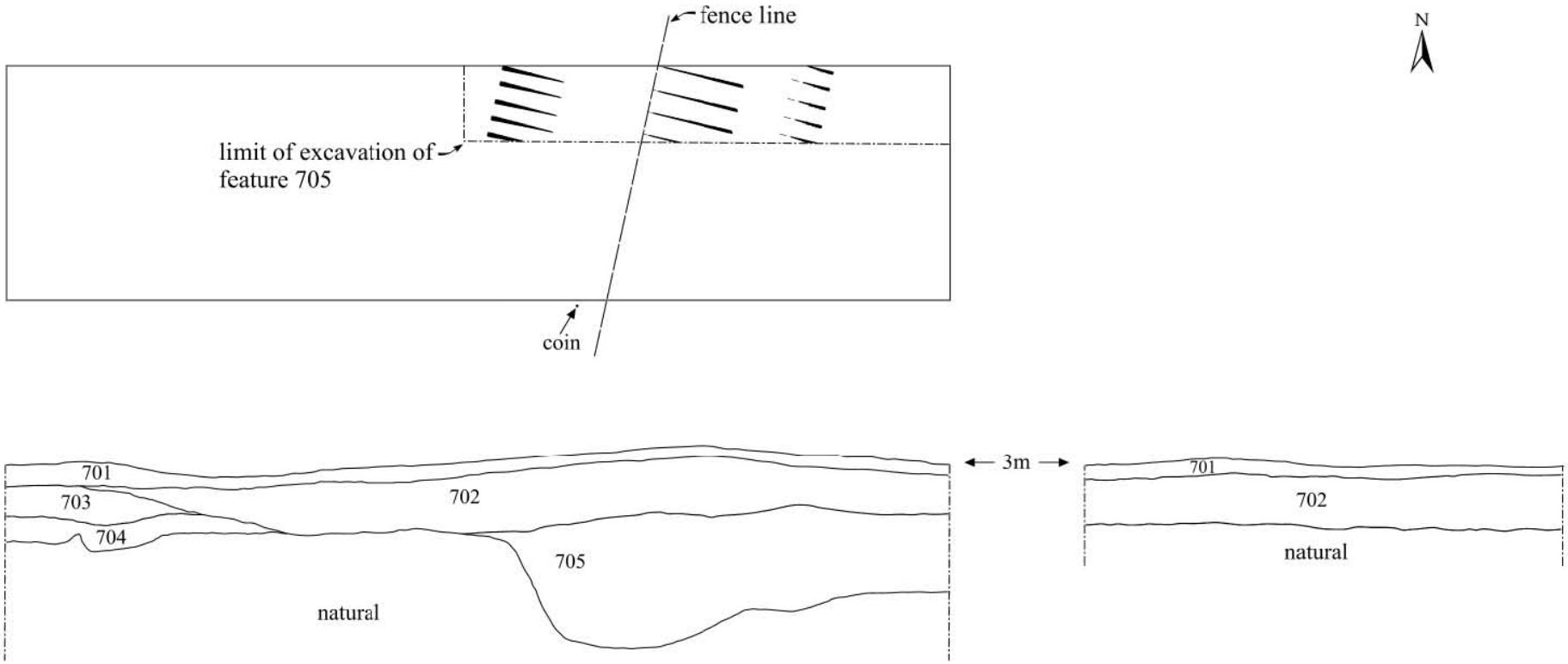
The hoard found in the early 1980s, consists of four similar Atrebatic B coins and five examples of a closely related type of coin, classified as Gallo-Belgic E. This means that the hoard is now known to have consisted of at least ten coins, split equally between the two types. It is, of course, unknown how many other coins have been lost to treasure hunters or even remain to be found under the brambles that now cover the site.

3.2.3 Medieval sites

As described above, the main object of the trenches, which produced the Iron Age coin, was in fact to try to locate the park pale - the stock-proof bank, ditch and fence line that would normally have enclosed a medieval deer park. While other of the Bishop's deer parks in Hampshire, have substantial and in some cases, very substantial, boundary banks with internal ditches (Roberts 1988), no such features are visible in the New Park. Two trenches were excavated - the first, 6m x 1.5m, was laid out across the modern fence line and the second smaller trench, 3m x 1m, some 3m to the east of the first.

The principal and most obvious feature visible within the main trench was the difference in topsoil between that part of the trench that lay to the west, ie theoretically outside the Park, and that which lay to the east, inside the Park. To the west the topsoil beneath the turf level (701) consisted of a dark layer approximately 44cm thick, which lay on the natural clay. The layer exhibited three rather indistinct sub-divisions (702, 703, 704) which are shown on the section. These almost certainly relate to different episodes of ploughing, manuring and, given the presence of small fragments of chalk, of marling. No medieval material was recovered and the small quantity of pottery and glass, including in the latter category the base of a globular wine bottle, mostly appear to date to the 18th and 19th centuries. On the other hand, the eastern half of the trench, showed a rather different profile, below 701, consisting as it did of a single, 30cm thick, undifferentiated layer of reddish brickearth (702) containing fragments of tile and ash. The two contrasting soil profiles must result from different management regimes in the past. Presumably the soil 'within' the Park has not been ploughed for a considerable time (except briefly during WWII), while the field outside the fence line seems to have been ploughed on a number of occasions, probably from the 18th century onwards.

Below the plough/topsoil level the contrast between the two ends of the trench continued. At the western end of the main trench, the ploughsoil lay directly on the natural undisturbed clay at a depth of about 44cm, while to the east the clay had been disturbed to a maximum depth of about 1.5m, becoming shallower in this direction. The cut (705) resembled a ditch or pit, but was very indistinct and showed no signs of any fill layers nor of any primary deposit at its base. Only the presence of the occasional piece of



701 topsoil
702 brickearth with tile fragments
703 soil with signs of chalk marling
704 clay/soil with tile fragments
705 disturbed clay with fragments of tile and ash

Fig 5 Trench 7 (park boundary) - plan and north section

tile and speck of ash differentiated the deposit from the natural clay into which it had been cut. If the cut really does represent a ditch rather than a pit, it may be post-medieval in date and can only have been open for a very short period before being backfilled. The section in the smaller eastern trench showed no signs of any deeper features as the brickearth (702) rested directly on natural undisturbed clay.

One very tentative explanation for this feature, assuming it to be a ditch, is that the boundary here runs between the Old and New Parks, both originally owned by the Bishops. The boundary may originally have been internal, as depicted on Saxton's map of 1542 (fig 6) and only became external after the sale of the Great Park at the end of the 17th century. It may therefore be that the ditch formed a very temporary boundary at that period and was rapidly replaced by a hedgeline, which is now represented by the line of oak trees that mark the modern boundary. Certainly the difference in soils either side of the fenceline and the probable dating for the ploughing outside the New Park, would fit this theory. A second possibility is that the original boundary runs down the side of the Folly Hill road, as appears to be shown on Senex's map of 1729 (fig 7). However later maps, from 1806 onwards (see cover) show the boundary much as it is today, so the situation remains unclear. Only further trenching elsewhere across the external boundary of the Park, will establish whether and in what form the medieval park pale survives.

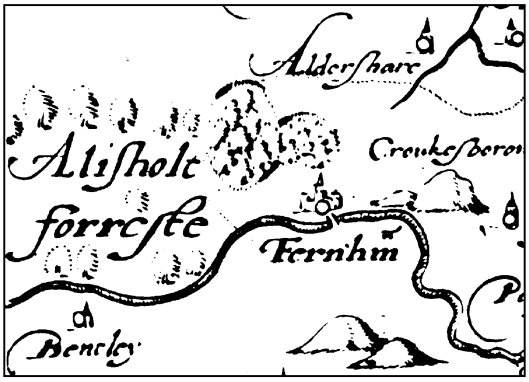


Fig 6 Extract from Saxton's map of *c* 1542

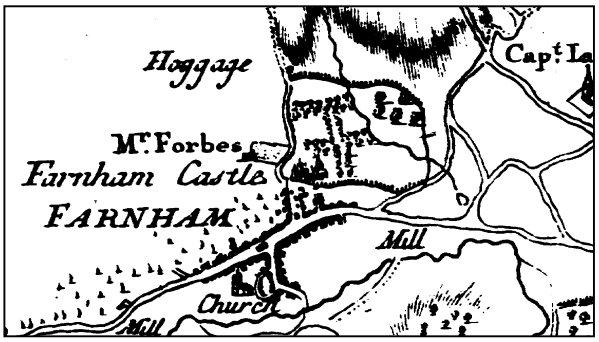
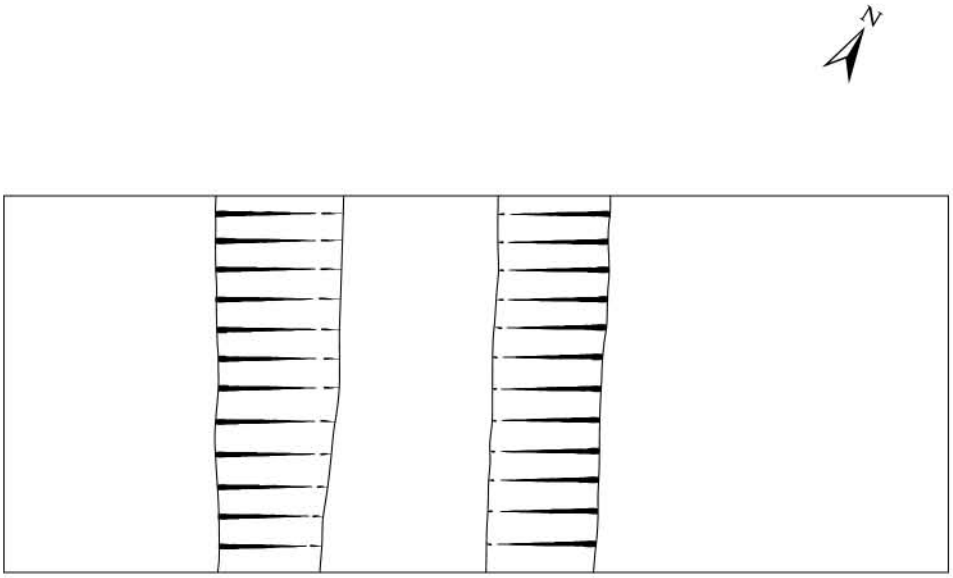


Fig 7 Extract from John Senex's map of 1729

A second feature, potentially medieval in date, was examined at the lower end of the Park, roughly half way along the slope, to the south of the Avenue. At this point (fig 3, no 5) the field system is divided by a shallow boundary ditch, apparently flanked by two slight banks, which run parallel to the strips and more or less straight down the slope. It marks the division between the narrower ridge and furrow to the west and the slightly wider strips to the east and therefore appears to be directly connected with them and not to be some later, superimposed feature.

The trench (figs 8 and 9), which was 2.5m long and 1m wide, was sited across the ditch at a point where it appears to enter or be cut by one of the quarries along the lower slope of the park. Below the topsoil (501) and a chalky soil deposit (502) the section showed that the ditch had originally been dug into the chalk to a depth of about 50cm below the modern ground surface, that it was approximately 1.04m wide at its upper level and 40cm wide at its base. It had a flat bottom and the main fill (503) consisted of a mix of clay and gravel that contained one sherd of medieval pottery. A second sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from a clay/soil deposit (504) at the very base of the ditch. Both sherds are small, the larger has a light biscuit fabric with a thin external green glaze, while the smaller sherd is a coarsely gritted white ware with a fire blackened exterior. Both are most probably early 13th century in date and, given the sealed nature of the deposit, provide a good indication of the date of the boundary ditch and therefore, of the associated field systems. This is a most important discovery - previously there had been no certainty as to the period to which the field systems belonged.

A second tentative conclusion can be drawn from the trench section. Given that the ditch survived to within 13cm of the modern ground surface, at least this part of the slope is unlikely to have been ploughed since the field system was abandoned, possibly in the 15th century. The visible survival of the strips themselves, tends to confirm this, and it may be that arable farming ceased on the slope, either as a direct result of the emparkment of 1376/7 or perhaps, more likely, slightly earlier, as a result of the effects of the Black Death. In any event, no later pottery or evidence for manuring scatter was found in



Trench 5 - plan

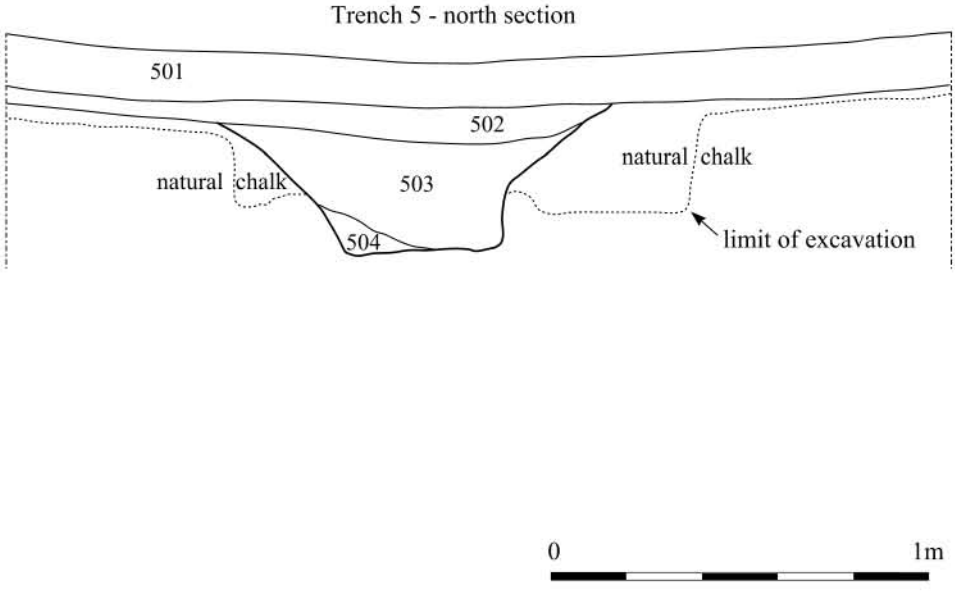


Fig 8 Trench 5 (boundary ditch) - plan and section

Fig 9 Photograph of the boundary ditch during excavation.

the topsoil level, though it should be remembered that the trench itself was very small and may not have produced a statistically significant result.

3.2.4 17th century site

Reference was made in the section on the landscape survey (3.1 above) to the discovery of a low bank, which appears to run from the south east corner of the Park, along the summit of the chalk ridge and to terminate in an oval platform below the walls of the castle, just north of the postern gate. The only indication as to a possible date for the feature is that, while it ran more or less parallel to the Avenue on the west of the park, it had been overlain by it, to the east. Since the Avenue is thought to have been planted in the late 17th century (Manning 1974) and was certainly in existence by 1723, when it is shown on Stukeley's map, it seems to follow that the bank had to have been constructed at some period earlier than the beginning of the 18th century.

It was therefore decided to section half of the bank and to extend the trench far enough to include one of the possible side ditches that were visible from the air. In the event this involved opening a trench 7.5m long and 2m wide, across the southern half of the bank at the western end, near to the point where it joined the oval platform (fig 3, no 1; fig 10, no 1). Beneath the 18cm-thick layer of topsoil (101) the bank was found to consist of a layer of gravel (102), again about 18cm thick, which produced a few fragments of tile and a number of broken pieces of claypipe stem. The gravel had been laid directly on the gravelly clay that forms the natural drift geology in this part of the Park. At the southern end of the trench, the side ditch was revealed, running parallel to and approximately 2m away from the edge of the gravel. This had been cut into the gravel/clay deposit to a depth of about 35cm and the fill levels (103, 104) both contained fragments of tile.

The layer of gravel (102) almost certainly represents road metalling and it seems highly likely that the ditch found to the south is mirrored by a second to the north. The bank therefore appears to be a road flanked by ditches, constructed in the period between the beginning of the 17th century, given the presence of claypipe stems, and the end of the century, when the Avenue was planted. As previously mentioned, the road appears to run on relatively level ground from the east of the Park and to terminate in an oval platform, roughly 35m x 17m, close to the walls of the Castle. While it may not be significant, the overlying topsoil layer (101) did produce the base of a claypipe bowl with the letters 'I D', probably made by John Denyer in the first half of the 18th century (Higgins 1981, 243.11).

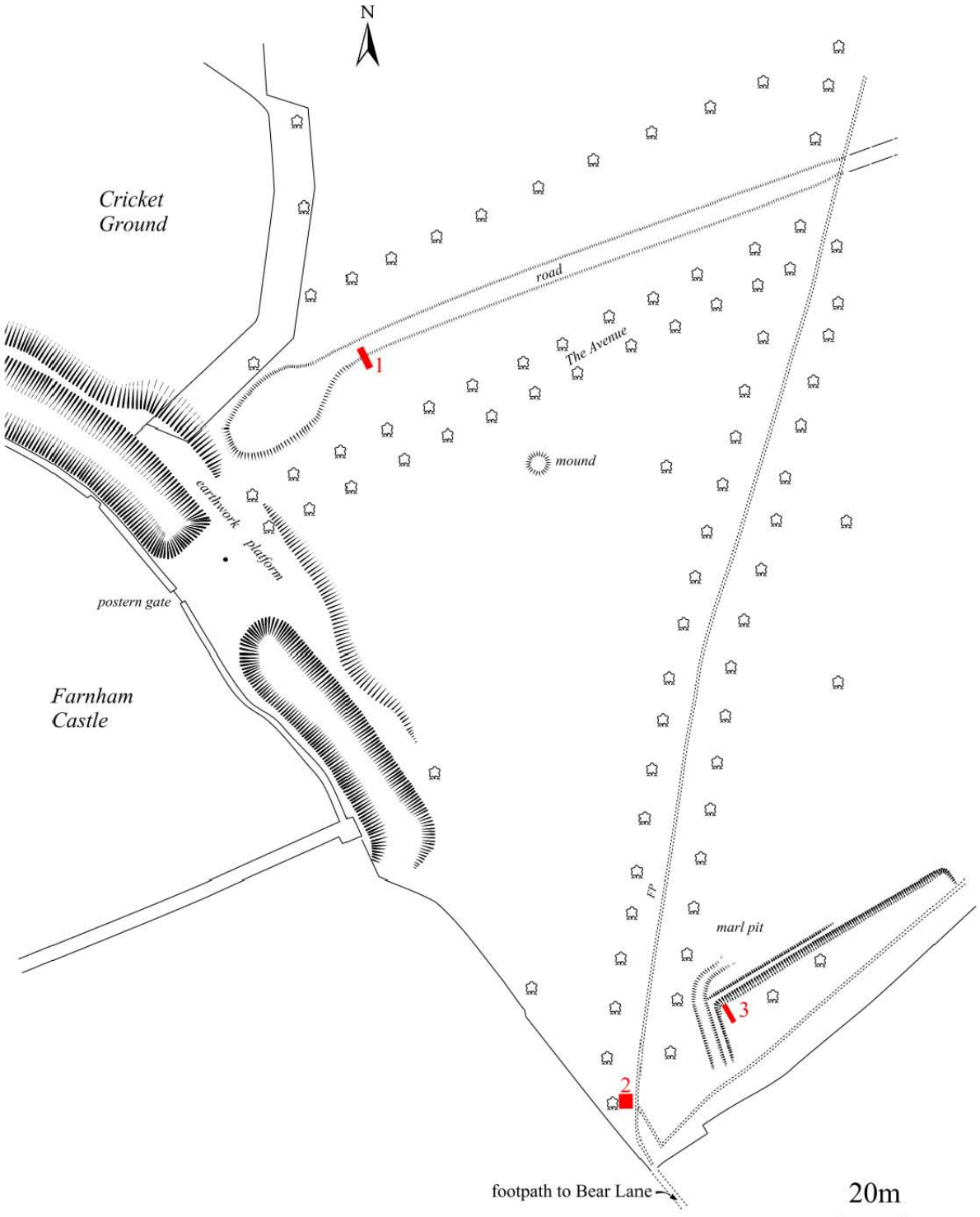
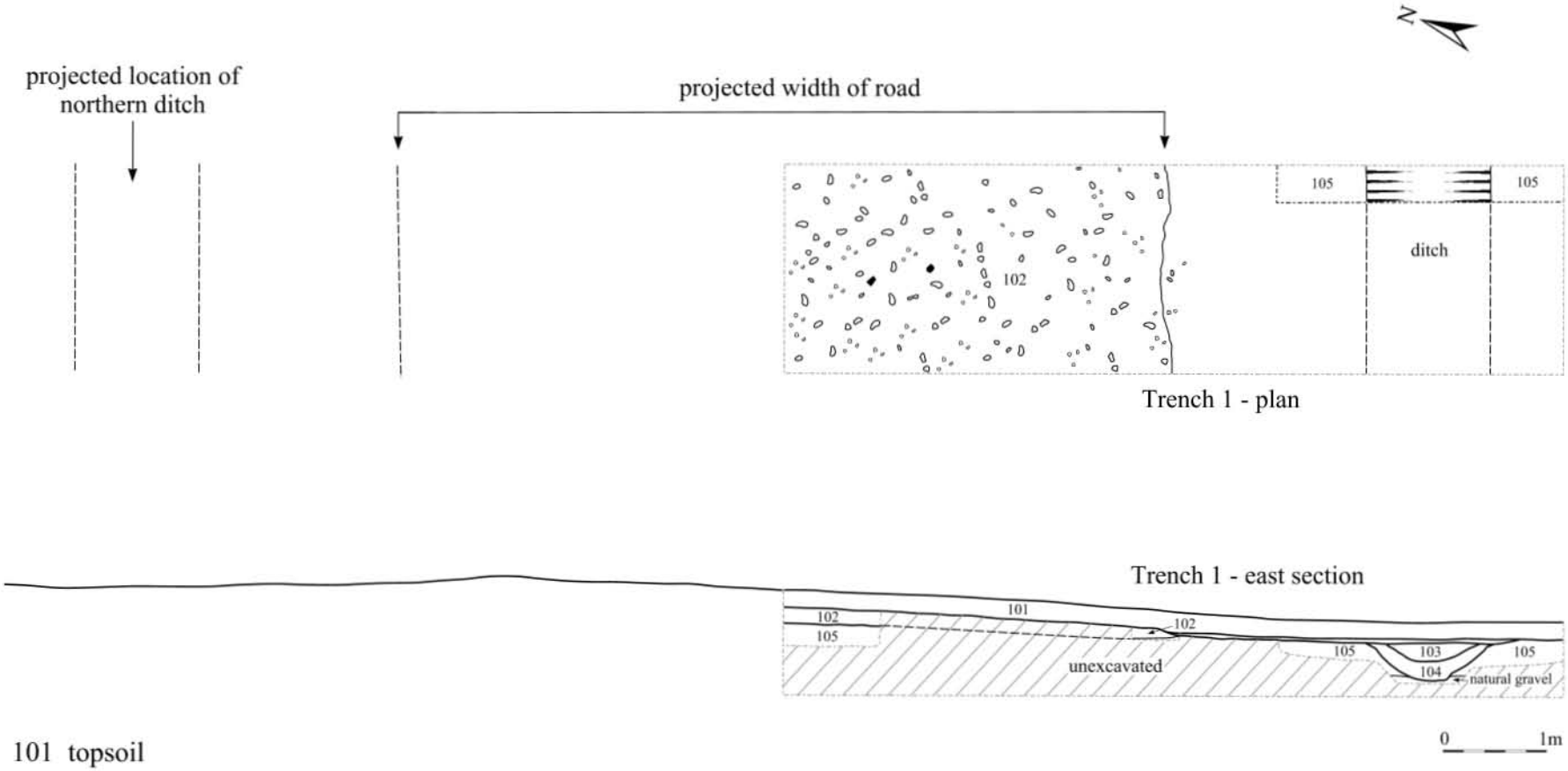


Fig 10 Detailed location plan of trenches 1 - 3



101 topsoil
102 gravel metalling
103 buff-yellow clay
104 grey/brown soil
105 disturbed gravel

Fig 11 Trench 1 (road) - plan and section

While it is impossible to put an exact date on the road and platform, it is interesting to note that Farnham Park was the site of considerable activity during the Civil War. In particular it was the location of a large supply base for the Parliamentary Army, during several of the campaigns and in particular during the various sieges of Basing House. There are a number of references to artillery being brought from London to Farnham at this period (Hall & Hall 1973) and it may be that the platform was constructed as a cannon park close under the walls of the Castle. The gravelled road would then give reasonably level access to this platform from the direction of London, being far less steep than the approach up Castle Street. In any event the flat ground to the east of the Castle, now used as a football pitch, is generally considered to be the most likely site of the Parliamentary camp and this interpretation of the function of the road and platform must at least be a possibility.

3.2.5 18th/19th century site

During the course of one of the excavations, a local resident, Mr Keith Varney, mentioned that he remembered playing as a boy in the outer ditch of the castle and finding the entrance of a brick tunnel obscured by vegetation. At the time, in the 1940s, the entrance was open and he described the passage as being 'short' and leading to a circular 12ft deep brick lined shaft into which he was lowered on rope.

Mr Varney, accompanied by a member of the archaeological team, managed with some difficulty to relocate the tunnel entrance, which is now very heavily covered by undergrowth. At some period since the 1940s the entrance has been blocked with brick rubble and concrete, but is still marked by two low parallel brick walls, about 60cm apart, which are visible about two thirds of the way up the outer face of the castle ditch (fig 3).

The structure described by Mr Varney is almost certainly an icehouse of 18th or 19th century date. Given that an icehouse is known to exist inside the grounds of the castle itself, the example found by Mr Varney may have been constructed to serve one or more of the large houses at the top of Castle Street.

3.2.6 WWII sites

The Spigot Mortar Pit

Following the removal of a diseased tree near the Bear Lane entrance, at the south-west corner of the Park, the Ranger noticed a heavy stainless steel pin sticking a few centimetres out of the ground (fig 2). Since all attempts to pull it out failed and since its presence made grass cutting difficult, it was decided to excavate the site (fig 3, no 2; fig 10, no 2) and try to identify the function of the 'pin'.

Very soon after starting work it became clear that the 'pin' was not an isolated feature, but was partially surrounded by four rectangular concrete slabs to its east, south east, south west and west sides. Two of these concrete surfaces had had graffiti drawn on them while the concrete was still wet. The first, that on the west, consisted of a swastika and a hammer-and-sickle while its neighbour sported a cross of St George within a 'G' shape and, separately, a crude arrowhead (fig 12).

The trench was extended to include these features and, at least in the southern half of the structure, was excavated to a depth of just over 1.2m below modern soil level, where a concrete floor was encountered. By now it was clear that the 'pin' formed the top of a very well preserved Home Guard spigot mortar pit, sited to fire down Bear Lane and into South Street in Farnham. Indeed Mr Varney, who had previously reported the icehouse, said that he remembered the mortar pit being constructed in 1941 or 1942 and being filled in during the 1950s.

The pit itself consisted of a polygonal hole, originally about 1.01m deep and 2.5m in diameter, floored with concrete and partially lined by four brick-walled and concrete-capped ammunition lockers. At the centre of the pit was a circular concrete pipe filled with concrete reinforced with chicken wire. It had a diameter of 1.17m and at its apex, it extended about 18cm above the tops of the surrounding lockers (figs 13 and 14). The centre of the pipe (known as a 'thimble') was capped by a, now rusted, circular iron plate, which acted as a base around the 10cm high steel 'pin', which had originally supported the firing mechanism (fig 16).

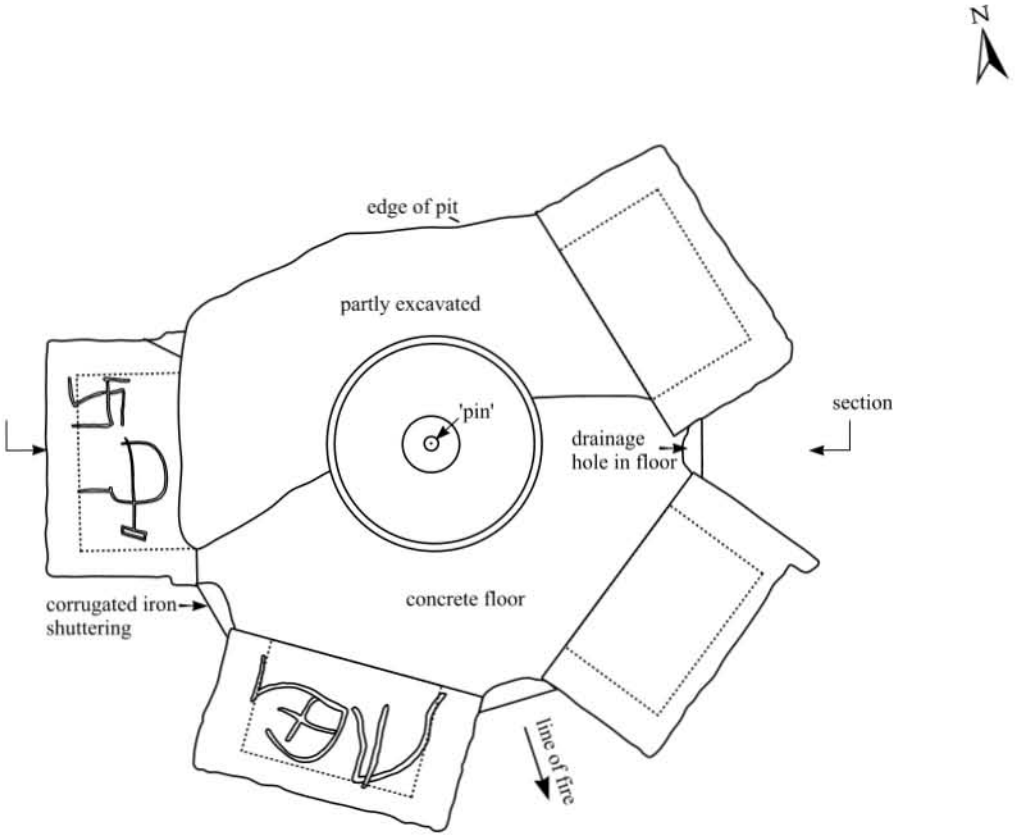


Fig 12 Spigot mortar - plan

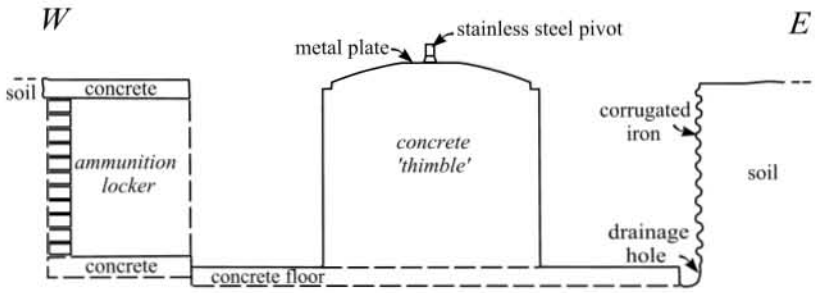


Fig 13 Spigot mortar - section

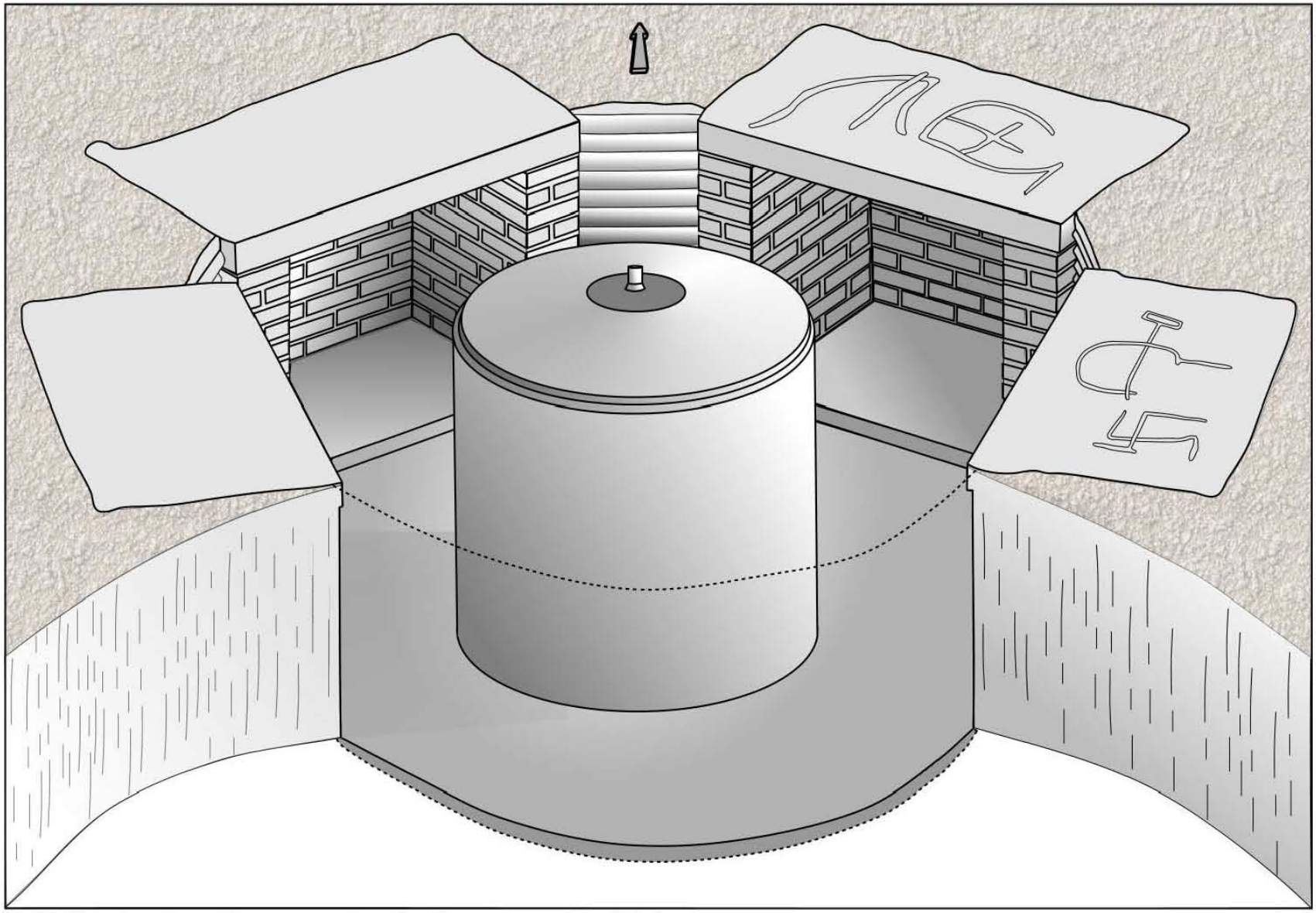


Fig 14 Spigot mortar position - perspective view (arrow shows line of fire)

The four, 60cm deep, ammunition lockers had concrete floors, slightly proud of the main floor, brick walls and concrete roofs. Each side wall was built of a double layer of bricks and had been butted onto the back wall, which appeared to be only a single brick thick. The gaps between the lockers had been revetted with corrugated iron apparently supported by posts, which had been set into the concrete floor. The rear, northern face, of the pit, however, showed no signs of any revetting and it may be that the original construction had involved digging a sub circular pit, leaving the rear as dug but constructing the lockers around the front and then backfilling between them.

The pit appeared to be positioned to have a line of fire at about 170°, though there is now no clear line of sight down this bearing (but see note below). The only find, possibly associated with the use of the mortar pit itself, came from the soil fill next to one of the ammunition lockers. It consisted of a cylindrical clear glass container sealed at one end with a metal screw cap and containing a solid white rubber washer (fig 15 - photograph to right). Apparently, this was a standard Home Guard issue 'Molotov cocktail', originally containing two chemicals separated by a white washer (Chris Shepheard, pers comm). The example in question had lost its contents and was entirely harmless.

The WWII defensive system in the Park will form a major part of the air photographic survey, shortly to be carried out by the Royal Commission team in Swindon.

NOTE BY CHRIS SHEPHEARD:
The spigot mortar was one of the 'last ditch' Home Guard weapons devised when the war situation seemed at its bleakest. Somewhat unusually, this one was based on sound principles, was later developed to be a very successful weapon and has very strong local connections.

It was the invention of Lt Col L V S Blacker, a TA artillery officer from 'Coldhayes' at Steep Marsh near Petersfield. The original design dated back to 1939 when the War Office rejected it in favour of the standard two-inch mortar. In the summer of 1940 it was resurrected as the 'Blacker Bombard' to be a dual role weapon - anti-tank and bombardment. In the former role it would have the same power as a two-pounder gun, with almost the range of the three-inch mortar. Unfortunately it did not eventually come up to these expectations, but nonetheless by the beginning of 1943 some 18,691 had been issued to Home Guard units.

The mobile version of the weapon needed a crew of five to move it, though only three to operate it in action. Originally the projector was designed to sit on an easily transportable, collapsible, low level, four legged mounting which required the crew to lie in a prone position to operate it.

The spigot mortar was a 29mm weapon in which the barrel was actually part of the projectile round. The round was a 20lb anti-tank or 14lb anti-personnel bomb with a long, hollow tail, which fitted over a long pin, the spigot, in the projector. The round was propelled by cartridge located in the tail just below the warhead. This was detonated by a spring-loaded firing pin activated by a bicycle brake like handle on the projector. This charge gave the anti-tank round a maximum range of the order of 450 yards; but with a muzzle velocity of only 245 feet per second the effective range was only around 75 to 100 yards. The 14lb round had a maximum range of 785 yards.

Because of this, a much firmer mounting was designed and it is one of the latter that was found in the corner of the park. In order to afford the crew more protection, this consisted of a pit with the mounting for the projector on a concrete 'thimble' in the centre.

The real puzzle about the Farnham mortar pit is its positioning. It was generally assumed that the invading Germans would progress generally northwards from initial landings on the south coast. For this reason the GHQ Line was constructed across southern Britain stretching from the Bristol Channel to the Thames Estuary. This line, of which the spigot mortar pit is a part, faced south to the expected direction

of attack. The line followed any natural defensive features that were available, so the exact direction faced depended on the lie of the land.

The park pit lay at the foot of the slope below the Avenue. At first sight this seems to be a senseless position as the most commanding point would obviously have been at the top of the slope. An additional point is that, from the positioning of the ammunition lockers, the most obvious direction of fire from the pit is today only some 10-15m to the end of the footpath up from the junction of Park Row, Bear Lane and High Park Road. The path itself is located between high walls for its full length. These factors combine to make a very short field of fire for the mounted weapon. Obviously the position would have been untenable if it had come under fire from the slope above, so it is unlikely that this was the intended direction of use.

On closer examination, however, the eastern wall alongside the footpath is constructed in rat-trap bond (i.e. bricks on edge). This is a typical type of construction during a period of brick shortage such as occurred after the Second World War. The base of the wall is composed of stonework, which would indicate that it has been rebuilt at least once.

If the wall had been demolished when the mortar pit was built, it would have revealed a clear but narrow line of sight from the pit through to the junction of South Street and The Borough. The distance involved is just within the effective range of the weapon installed. Thus, this could have been a very effective position from which an enemy could have been held at the junction for quite some time. At the same time, the pit would have provided a very difficult target for return fire because of the narrow field of vision. Farnham town centre could well have become the scene for some very bitter street fighting.

Fig 16 Photograph of a spigot mortar in use during WWII

The Air Raid Shelter

During the course of the landscape survey an odd low trident-shaped earthwork had been noted at the base of the slope on the southern edge of the Park, more or less opposite the end of Adams Park Road (fig 3, no 4). The earthwork consisted of banks forming three sides of a rectangle, about 22m x 10m, with an additional bank, forming a central longitudinal spine, which extended slightly beyond the two side banks (fig 17). A low cross bank was set slightly back from the lower ends of the longitudinal banks. The feature looked like the footings of a building and, at the time, it was thought that it might have been the base of an 18th/19th century byre, for feeding hay to the deer.

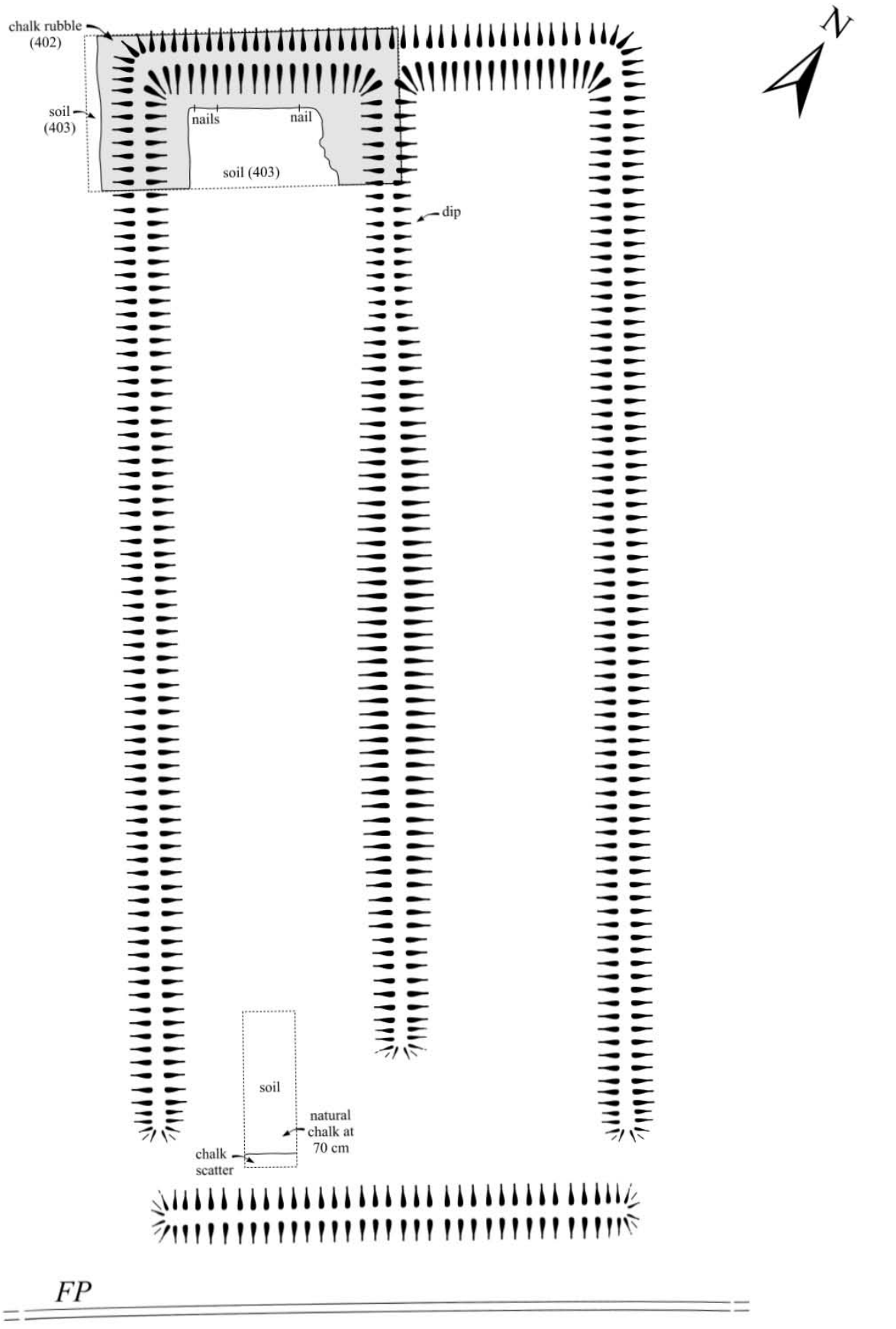


Fig 17 Air raid shelter - plan

Fig 18

Photograph of the air raid shelter during excavation

It was therefore decided to open a small, 6m x 3m, trench at the north west corner of the structure (figs 17 and 18), in order to try to define its date and purpose. The banks turned out to consist of a band of compacted chalk rubble (402), which lay immediately below the turf line. The interior of the earthwork consisted of a soil fill (403), which was excavated to a maximum depth of about 40cm, though the deposit continued on below this level. A number of nails were recorded lying horizontally, along the edge of and set into the upper chalk 'wall'. These nails must have held a wooden or mesh lining to the inside of the structure, which, from augering, was clearly set deep into the slope of the ridge.

It was now clear that the structure was in fact a WWII air raid shelter. Indeed a number of passers-by said that they could remember the shelter being open shortly after the war. As a precaution a second trench was opened at the lower end of the shelter and this established that the floor, consisting of the natural chalk, lay at a depth of 70cm below the modern ground surface and that a chalk step appeared to lead down to this level. Assuming the floor of the shelter to have been reasonably flat, this would mean that it would have been about 2.6m below modern ground level at the upslope end.

The fact that the central spine extends below the two side walls implies side entrances and the detached cross bank must be the remains of the blast wall shielding the lower end of the shelter. A very slight dip in a short section of the upslope end of the central spine wall may indicate the site of a cross door linking the two sections of the structure. Very few finds were made, virtually the only one being a toy pistol in a rusted condition.

NOTE BY CHRIS SHEPHEARD:
From its size this would obviously have been designed as a communal shelter, but it is uncertain as to whom it was intended to serve. Most eyewitnesses agree, however, that it was never actually used and in any event apparently the local schools had their own shelters.

While the excavation indicated that the shelter was lined with wood or wire mesh, in other examples the lining could be of curved sheets of corrugated iron as used in the 'Anderson' shelter, or precast curved concrete panels as in the 'Stanton' shelter (fig 19). The latter at least was, when buried, usually characterised by a square section chimney-like structure at the closed end to form an emergency escape route.

Nearby, to the west below the current playground is a small rectangular brick building, which is thought to have been an ARP (Air Raid Precautions) post.

Fig 19

Photograph of a 'Stanton' semi-sunken shelter

3.2.7 Undated site

The only totally inconclusive result obtained during the course of the archaeological project came from a long earthwork feature that had been cut into the bottom of the hillslope, slightly to the east of the spigot mortar in the south west corner of the Park. This appeared to form a platform starting just to the east of a slight sunken track that leads towards a marl pit. The cut runs eastwards for 80m parallel to the Park boundary, with an uphill bank along its western half, before ending in a slight return bank. A 6m x 1.5m trench was opened across the upper edge of the feature just in from its western end (fig 10, no 3). No structural features were recovered and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil (301) lying on gravelly clay hillwash (302), overlying the natural brown clay (303). There were no finds other than two pieces of claypipe stem from layer 302. The trench was therefore backfilled as time did not allow for any large extensions.

The purpose and date of this 'platform' therefore remains uncertain, but it may be that it is of relatively recent construction. It either respects the sunken track, which appears to lead to the marl pit or the track respects it. Either way a date in the 18th or 19th century seems possible, perhaps connected with a temporary wooden structure for feeding the deer.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Taken as a whole, the 1998 programme of archaeological research in the Park has produced a surprisingly wide and important range of results. These vary from indications of prehistoric activity, to the discovery of one of the best-preserved spigot mortar pits yet recorded and, in terms of finds, from an Iron Age gold coin to a 'Molotov cocktail'. But, perhaps the most important results are the dating of the strip field systems and the discovery of the 17th century road with its possibly military origins.

Given that, where archaeological sites and landscape features exist, they are reasonably well preserved, a number of further small excavations could usefully be undertaken. These could be linked to geophysical survey work, particularly along the Park boundary and around the likely site of the Civil War encampment, but perhaps this should wait until the results of the air photographic mapping programme is available for study. It would also be helpful to await the results of any further documentary research, should this be undertaken.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Waverley Borough Council for commissioning and funding the survey work, and in particular Mrs Diane Stamp, the Council's Countryside Officer and Mr Ron Hills the Park Ranger, both

of whom have been extremely helpful. Thanks are also due to Dr David Bird, Principal Archaeologist with Surrey County Council, who provided advice throughout the course of the project. I am also grateful to Mr Chris Shepheard for his notes on the WWII features and Mrs Pat Heather for her paper on the medieval field systems.

The actual work was carried out by a number of volunteers and in particular by Dave Attryde, Colin Brash, Mike Green, Ivor Guy, Nicola Guy, Julie Hodges, Pauline Hulse, Brian Jenner, Tracy Jenner, Dick Martin, Joan Martin, Ian Medsted, John Tholstrup and Liz Whitbourn. Without their help it would not have been possible to undertake the work.

Finally a particular thanks to Audrey Graham, who helped on site and who is responsible for the illustrations in the report.

David Graham, FSA
October 1998

APPENDIX 1: PREVIOUSLY RECORDED SITES AND FINDS

Map ref	Period	Detail
SU 8463 4835	IRON AGE	Two pits about three feet in diameter were exposed in the right bank of the Hale Stream, when it shifted its course westwards in the Park. The pits contained EIA pottery, charcoal, calcined potboilers and a few roughly worked flints. (fig 2, no 1) (Oakley *et al* 1939, 171).
SU 8355 4835	IRON AGE	A scattered hoard of nine Gallo-Belgic gold staters, the first two of which were found by a metal detector user and the remainder during an archaeological investigation. Two coin types are represented - Gallo-Belgic 'E' *c* 65 BC and Atrebatic 'B' *c* 55 - 45BC. Two undated pits were also found together with a light scatter of IA and Roman pottery. Unpublished for security reasons but details on County SMR and on the register of Celtic Coins. Coins held by Waverley Borough Council. (fig 2, no 2).
SU 837 473	MEDIEVAL	Farnham Castle. In origin a motte and bailey castle with a later shell keep and curtain wall. The buildings of the bailey have been in continuous occupation since the Norman period and consequently are multi period in character, while still retaining the basic outline of the original layout. A Scheduled Ancient Monument, part of which is open to the public. Grade 1 listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. (fig 2, no 3).
SU 8451 4808	MEDIEVAL	Sub-rectangular tile kiln 10 x 4m with two flues originally overlain by a floor of specially made tiles. Kiln was noted when the flue became exposed in the bank of the Hale Stream and subsequently excavated. (fig 2, no 4) (Riall 1997).
SU 842 482	MEDIEVAL	Bronze belt buckle found by a metal detector user (Mr J Lyness) in 1992. In possession of finder. No report. (fig 2, no 5)
SU 8359 4828	POST-MEDIEVAL	Gold and sapphire pin of late 15th/16th century date, found in 1992 by a metal detector user. Pin weighs 16.20 grams and consists of two elements, an S-shaped pin to which is attached a

		circular back plate which holds the elements of a central flower. The jewel is unique and probably functioned as a hat badge similar to those shown in portraits of Henry VIII. (fig 2, no 6) (Cherry 1997)
SU 842 475	POST-MEDIEVAL	Hoard of silver coin clippings found by a metal detector user in 1976. Find consisted of clippings from Edward VI (2); Philip and Mary (1); Elizabeth I (9); 5-Charles I (5); Charles II; James I (1). Clippings are in Museum of Farnham. (fig 2, no 7) (British Numismatic Journal 1979, 127-8).
SU 841 479	POST-MEDIEVAL	Ranger's House. A square brick built house on two floors and of five bays. It is plain, has no gutters but with a hipped roof, a massive oak staircase and five ogee-headed windows with lead glazing on the rear upper floor. Probably built in the late 17th century by Bishop Morley. A Grade 2* listed building. (fig 2, no 8) (Temple 1973, 229)
SU 839 473	POST-MEDIEVAL	Small mound visible just to the south of the Avenue, a few hundred metres east of the Castle. Mound was excavated in 1971 and found to contain nothing but 19th century material. It was either a spoil heap or a deliberately constructed 'romantic' landscape feature. (fig 2, no. 9; fig 10)

APPENDIX 2: HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE LOCATION OF MEDIEVAL FIELDS

THE NEW PARK, A NOTE BY PAT HEATHER

Farnham Park is the successor to the New Park, the enclosure of which is referred to in the pipe roll of 1376. As the Park formed the northern boundary of Dogflud tithing, and in view of the awkwardness of that boundary, it seems relevant to investigate what lands may have been incorporated in the present Park.

Within the area that was made into the New Park were the demesne fields[1] to the east of the castle: Langenham, Wynerde and la Dune. It has been said that Langenham was to the south of the Avenue, and la Dune was to the north; la Dune later being divided into two parts with Wynerde on the west and East Dune [*Estaduna* or East Down] on the East. The scanty evidence[2] could be interpreted in reverse with Langenham to the north etc. In the 14th century other smaller fields are mentioned as being farmed by the demesne, all of which were regularly sown with the same crop as Langenham, suggestive of the siting to the east of the castle and therefore inclusion within the boundaries of the present Park. These smaller fields were: Parkcroft, Holecroft, Hyde, Wythefogels and Hemeway; of these the latter three are the most likely to have been within the boundaries of what became the New Park.

Parkcroft or rather the croft near the Park may have been to the west or east of Folly Hill. Holecroft was first mentioned in the pipe roll of 1374 when it was in default, described as 8 acres of Thomas tyler. That year five and a half acres of Holecroft are sown with oats as part of the demesne. There are entries in the pipe rolls from 1287 to 1310 regarding Thomas le tyler who may be the heir of Walter le tyler for whom there are entries from 1256 to 1271. The tylers had half a virgate of land in Badshot tithing in the 14th century.

[1] 'field' is not the correct term but used for ease of explanation - the name was of the area, the sown sections of which were temporarily enclosed by thorny brushwood.
[2] Pipe roll entries: 1284 hedge between la Duna and the castle; 1297 hedge between Wynerde and Langenham; 1346 enclosing of ditch of the castle and ditch adjoining Wynerde.

The exact site of the lands called Hemeway is difficult to locate. Hemeway was generally thought to have been in the Old Park. However, there is an entry in the 1257 pipe roll regarding a ditch at Hem' next to the ditch of East', and in the 14th century Hemeway was on occasion sown with the same crop as East Dune. 'de Hemeway' was the name of some of the bishop's tenants whose lands were in the tithing of Badshot. The name of Hemeway appears first in the pipe rolls as an entry of 1231 when William Hemeway pays 12d for permission to enclose some pasture. The pipe roll of 1331 states that the lands of Geoffrey de Hemeway are in default and have been transferred into the demesne and the Park. This entry only states what has been the case for some time for in 1314 the 13 acres of Geoffrey de Hemeway (with nine acres of Langenham) was sown with oats as part of the demesne farm. Other land, which the de Hemeways held in the 13th century, came into the hands of the bishop in 1348, the year of the Black Death; heriots were taken on the death of Alice Kosher the then holder of the land, and of her son and heir. The roll states that this half virgate in the tithing of Badshot was taken into the demesne because it was 'near' the castle. The land is in fact likely to be towards the upper eastern boundary of the Park, adjoining the tithing of Badshot.

Langenham is perhaps the most interesting of the old demesne fields; its name, the meaning of which is the extended, or lengthened ham or hamme, is difficult understand without knowledge of its actual location. The name first occurs in the pipe rolls in 1271, a late comer compared to la Dune which occurs as early as the 1232 roll. It is the only demesne field which was not totally separate from the lands of others. There are entries in the roles which could be interpreted as meaning that Peter de Snayleslynche once had land in this field; that William Wythelefoghel had land in this field is certain. In 1285 half a virgate 'once held by William Wythelefogel' was described as being in the demesne at Langenham. These details come from a charter of the grant by the bishop to Walter de Brudeford. At a later date John Bydon at Compton was using this land. By 1374 it is in default and has been sown with barley as part of the demesne.

Thirteen acres of purpresture land and heath that had been held by the de Hale family in the tithing of Badshot as tenants of the bishop went into default in 1367 and it seems that part of this too was enclosed into the New Park. The likely the position of this land would be in the north-east area of the park, near to la Rude. The northern part of the park comprised what was generally referred to as la Rude, which was cleared land that had once been part of Oteringwode. In 1381 the pipe roll entry states that there was no grazing in the New Park in la Rude.

Although it has been suggested that the present Park boundaries were established in 1376 when lengths of ditching, fencing etc. for the new park were detailed in the pipe rolls, these lengths were insufficient to enclose the present area. The explanation of this may be that the work was done without payment, that some lengths of ditching and hedge were already in place e.g. the boundary of la Rude, or alternatively the whole of the present Park was not enclosed at that time[3]. In this connection farming of the demesne fields did not cease in 1376 and continued into the 15th century.

In view of the severity of the Black Death in Farnham in 1348, it had been generally assumed that most of the land that was enclosed into the park was land that had been deserted and left on the hands of the bishop. The acquisition of Alice Kosher's half virgate, certainly was a direct result of the Black Death, and the purprestre of the de Hales, and Holecroft could be said to be as a result of the knock on effect. However, as the greater part of the land was already being farmed by the demesne either as arable or pasture before the Black Death, enclosure of the Park seems more do with the opportunism and desires of the then Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, than with solving the problem of a surplus of land.

[3] Pipe roll entry: 1371 ditch made at Langenham next to the park.

APPENDIX 3: FINDS LISTS
(Finds have been deposited in the Museum of Farnham, Accession No A998.24)

CATALOGUE OF POTTERY

Trench	Context	Description
1	104	2 sherds, 5g, whiteware, 1 sherd green glazed
3	302	25 sherds, 146g. 6 'flower pot'; 1 sherd brown glazed red fabric; 4 sherds 'willow pattern'; 2 sherds stoneware; 4 sherds 'white china'; 8 sherds with olive green glaze
4	402	4 sherds; 12g. 2 sherds green glazed whiteware, 2 sherds whiteware
	403	2 sherds: 1 green glazed with linear decoration; 1 plain buff fabric.
5	502	1 sherd, 6g, green glazed ware
	504	1 sherd; 2g, Surrey whiteware, fire blackened on one side
7	701	2 sherds, 8g, green glazed whiteware; 1 sherd buff ware, 8g; 1 sherd coarse border ware, 8g; 3 sherds, 54g, white 'china'
	702	2 sherds, 12g, pink-buff ware, including 1 base fragment; 1 sherd, 6g, brown glazed ware; 1 sherd, 4g, stoneware; 1 sherd, 12g, 'flower pot'; 1 sherd, 2g, white 'china'
	705	1 sherd, 2g, prehistoric (Iron Age ?); 1 sherd, 6g, green glazed ware

CATALOGUE OF TILE AND BRICK

Trench	Context	Description
1	101	7 fragments, 156g. Roof tile, average 13 - 15mm thick. 1 piece with green/brown glaze
	102	3 fragments; 22g. Roof tile, 12mm thick
	104	5 fragments; 126 g. Roof tile. 1 fragment 17mm thick with peg hole
3	302	22 fragments, 392g. Roof tile, 11-14m thick. Including 1 fragment RB? 1 fragment, 94g, brick
4	401	6 fragments, 206g. Roof tile, 11mm - 17 thick.
	402	1 fragment; 20g. Roof tile, 10mm thick
5	502	3 fragments, 74g. Roof tile, average 12mm thick.
7	701	11 fragments, 506g. Roof tile, 13 - 15mm thick 2 fragments, 188g, brick
	702	5 fragments, 130g. Roof tile 13 - 15mm thick
	705	1 fragment, 6g. Roof tile

CATALOGUE OF CLAY TOBACCO PIPES

Trench	Context	Description
1	101	Total weight 46g. 5 bowl fragments, 1 with letters I and D on foot (probably John Denyer, *c* 1717 - 1745). 29 stem fragments: stem fragments varied from diam 9mm, bore diam 2mm to diam 5mm, bore diam 1.2mm.
	102	4 stem fragments: diam 9mm, bore diam 3mm; diam 6mm, bore diam 1.5 mm; diam 7mm, bore diam 1.2mm; diam 5mm, bore diam 1.5mm
3	301	stem fragment, 2g, diam 6mm, bore diam 1.2mm
	302	fragment of stem attached to base of bowl, 4g, stem diam 6 mm, bore diam 1.2mm, foot stamped W on left and S on right. 4 fragments of bowl, 10g - 1 with D on foot and flat inside base of bowl; 20 fragments of stem, 48g, varying from stem diam 9mm, bore diam 2mm to stem diam 6mm, bore diam 1.8mm.

7	701	2 stem fragments, 4g: diam 6mm, bore diam 1.5mm; diam 7mm, bore diam 1.2mm

CATALOGUE OF METAL OBJECTS

Trench	Context	Description
1	101	5p coin, 1970
3	302	1 iron object, 10g. Unidentified.
4	402	copper alloy button, 4 holes, inscription 'ne plus ultra'
	403	child's toy 'pistol' of moulded sheet metal - date uncertain but earlier than WW2
5	502	child's toy - iron 5-pointed 'sheriff's star'
7	701	3 coins: 2 halfpennies - 1899 and 1904; 2p coin, 1975 iron ring, 40g, 57mm diam. 1 piece D-shaped pipe, 64g. 1 fragment of pony shoe, 8g. 5 iron nails, 54g. 3 pieces of iron, 84g, unidentified 1 Minie bullet, 16g and 1 cartridge case, 2g; 1 metal base of a 12 bore shotgun cartridge child's toy - mobile multiple rocket launcher copper alloy stud, 4g
	702	1 pewter medical spatula/tongue depresser, 26g 1 fragment of iron pipe, 44g
	705	1 fragment of iron, 4g, unidentified

CATALOGUE OF FLINT

Trench	Context	Description
6	601	3 pieces of fire-cracked flint, 8g 1 small core, 16g 2 waste flakes, 8g
7	701	9 pieces, 322g, fire-cracked flint
	702	3 pieces, 50g, fire-cracked flint

CATALOGUE OF GLASS

Trench	Context	Description
2		1 'Molotov cocktail'
3	302	13 sherds, 94g, bottle glass 8 sherds 10g, window glass
4	401	1 sherd, 6g, bottle glass 1 glass marble
7	701	6 sherds, 110g, bottle glass 1 sherd, 6g, window glass
	702	2 sherds, 124g, bottle glass - including 1 fragment of a globular wine bottle

CATALOGUE OF OTHER FINDS

Trench	Context	Description
3	302	1 fragment of shoe leather
4	401	1 piece of oyster shell; 1 fragment of slate
7	701	1 piece of clinker, 14g 1 fragment of shoe leather

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