

BRADWELL ABBEY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RESEARCH AND EXCAVATION, 1968 TO 1987

D.C. MYNARD, P. WOODFIELD AND R. J. ZEEPVAT

Mr. Mynard was the head of the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit until it was disbanded early in 1994. He and two colleagues here review all the evidence for the layout and function of the conventual buildings of Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes and assemble a complete reconstruction and structural history. A surprisingly large proportion of the standing buildings turns out to be medieval, or have medieval elements. The once prevalent view that the chapel on the site is a seventeenth-century structure built with old materials is finally laid to rest, and the chapel is shown to have been the centre of the healing cult of Our Lady of Bradwell. Its important wall paintings are fully described.

The Benedictine Priory of Bradwell was the only religious house in the area designated for the new city of Milton Keynes, and its site contains the standing remains of several medieval buildings, in particular the Chapel of St Mary, a medieval healing shrine with unique wall paintings of pilgrims (Rouse 1973), which is of national importance.

Bradwell Priory, later known as Bradwell Abbey, was situated (Fig. 1) to the west of Bradwell village, on the west bank of the Loughton Brook. Land there was granted c. 1154 for the establishment of a Benedictine monastery to the monks of Luffield Abbey, Buckinghamshire, by Meinfelin Lord of Wolverton (VCH 1905, 206).

The land given in the twelfth century was presumably the same as that which formed the post-dissolution manor of Bradwell Abbey, and remained unchanged until recent times. This consisted of a rectangular area of some 181 ha. rising westwards from the Loughton Brook, the boundary with Bradwell parish, to the Watling street. The western boundary was marked by Watling Street itself, the northern boundary with Wolverton parish followed Stacey Brook as it ran eastward to Loughton Brook, and the southern boundary with Loughton parish formed an almost straight line

from Watling Street to Loughton Brook.

The underlying geology of the parish is largely a mixture of Oxford clay and Kellaway Beds, a fine grey sand which overlies blueish grey clay. The western end of the parish is overlain with Boulder clay and other glacial deposits. In the area of the Priory buildings and just to the north-west of it is an area of Cornbrash limestone, Blisworth clay and Blisworth limestone, which has been cut into by Loughton Brook.

The Bradwell Abbey land was considered extra-parochial, but became the civil parish of Bradwell Abbey in the nineteenth century, by which time the post-dissolution manor had become a tenanted farm with an absentee landlord. This situation continued until 1950 when the farm was purchased by Mr G. Field, who lived and farmed there for just over twenty years until it was compulsorily purchased by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation for development as part of the new town of Milton Keynes. The farm as purchased by the Development Corporation (Fig. 2) contained a farmhouse with a wide range of farm buildings, set within the surviving earthworks of the medieval priory, within a compact site on the west side of the main London to Birmingham railway.



Fig. 1 Location map of Milton Keynes and Bradwell Abbey.

The Development Corporation were unable to develop the Abbey site, which contained all the redundant farm buildings and a small area of land around them, as it was a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Therefore they made the farmhouse the headquarters of their Archaeology Unit and the base for their Ecological department. They also established the site as a Field Centre, the base of Bradwell Abbey Field Centre Trust, a voluntary body com-

posed of local archaeological, environmental and historical societies.

While based at Bradwell, the Archaeology Unit carried out considerable research into the history of the site, and a series of limited excavations and watching briefs. This report brings together the results of excavations on the site of Bradwell Priory in 1968–1969, 1972–1973 (Mynard 1974), 1983

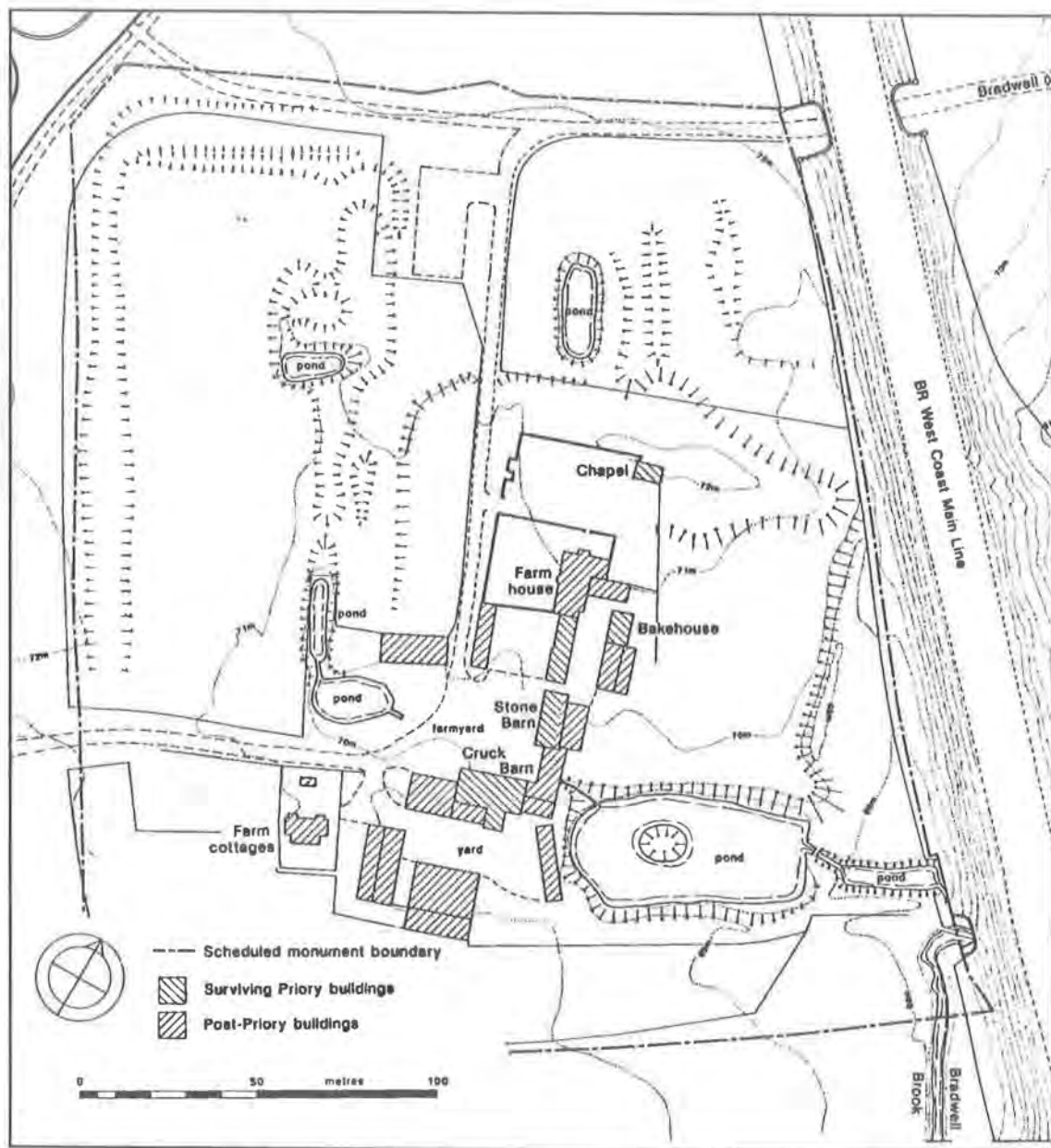


Fig. 2 Bradwell Abbey Farm in 1971 showing the surviving earthworks.

and 1987. The information obtained from these works is combined with a study of the existing buildings and earthworks to produce a tentative plan of the Priory which compares interestingly with the details given in the post-Dissolution Survey of 1526 (PRO.E. 36, 165).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authorship of this report is the work of D.C. Mynard, apart from the Architectural analysis of the buildings by Paul Woodfield and the report on the 1987 evaluation in Barn Close and Dove House Close by Bob Zeepvat. Bob also drew the plans and

maps, apart from those related to the building survey, which were the work of Paul Woodfield. The finds illustrations are by June Burbidge.

We are indebted to all the people, too numerous to mention individually, that were involved with the work at Bradwell Abbey. In particular, however, we are grateful to the members of the Punter family that have visited the site over the years and given information about the farm as it was in the early years of this century. Mention must also be made of Ms M.E. Baines who helped with transcription of the post-Dissolution survey in 1973, and later produced a draft text for a popular booklet about the Abbey which was based largely on the history of the site published by D.C.Mynard in 1974. That draft has been partly incorporated into this present paper.

Finally we are indebted to the former Milton Keynes Development Corporation for financing all the work on the site and the publication of this report. The fourteenth century began a period of decline for St Mary's. The prior, William de Loughton, died from the Black Death in the summer of 1349, and was succeeded by John de Wylline (Hamilton Thompson 1911, 301-360). No death roll is available for the Priory, but the close-confined atmosphere must have helped the plague bacillus to spread rapidly, for there were not sufficient monks left with qualifications suitable for promotion to higher office, and a Papal dispensation was given to a monk of illegitimate birth, who would normally have been barred from rising up the clerical ladder (VCH 1905, 291).

HISTORY OF THE PRIORY

The Benedictine Priory of St Mary was founded at Bradwell c.1154 by Meinfelin, Baron of Wolverton (VCH 1905, 350), who gave land for its establishment to the monks of Luffield Priory. Whether this land was part of Wolverton or of Meinfelin's holding at Little Loughton is unknown.

The Priory buildings were established at the western end of the given land on a relatively flat site, well above the flood plain of and adjacent to the brook. This location was probably chosen because of its proximity to both the Wolverton to

Bradwell road and Bradwell village itself. On the south side of the priory complex a minor road ran to Loughton and the Shenleys beyond.

At first St Mary's was dependent upon Luffield, but obtained its independence in 1189-90 (Westminster Abbey Muniments, Index B.2, Deed 2813). The grant of an additional quarry in the latter part of the century (*ibid*, Deed 2416) provides evidence of building which is also confirmed by the large amount of late thirteenth to fourteenth-century floor tiles from the church site. Architectural detail of the same date in the surviving parts of the church reinforces this date.

The Priory was endowed with financial interests in several parish churches including that of Wolverton. A dispute over the advowson to Padbury Church arose in 1201 (Feet of Fines (Record Commission) 3 John, 200), and another centred on Chalfont St Giles in 1218 (*ibid*, 3 Henry III, 2 and 6). The latter was ceded to the cathedral at Lincoln in 1259 (Fitzwilliam Mus. Lib., Dd x 28, fol. 74). At the end of the thirteenth century the secular interests of the Priory came to £10-19-10 per year (VCH 1905, 351) a very respectable amount in comparison with a local landowner of the time.

The fourteenth century began a period of decline for St Mary's. The prior, William de Loughton, died from the Black Death in the summer of 1349, and was succeeded by John de Wylline (Hamilton Thompson 1911, 301-360). No death roll is available for the Priory, but the close-confined atmosphere must have helped the plague bacillus to spread rapidly, for there were insufficient monks left with qualifications suitable for promotion to higher office, and a Papal dispensation was given to a monk of illegitimate birth, who would normally have been barred from rising up the clerical ladder (VCH 1905, 350).

In 1361 Prior John de Wylline was sequestered for allowing the conventual buildings to become dilapidated (Lipscomb 1847, 40). For a period there was no prior at St Mary's, and the Church set up commissions to take charge of its affairs in both 1376 and 1381 (VCH 1905, 350).

The Priory church, dedicated to St Mary, would

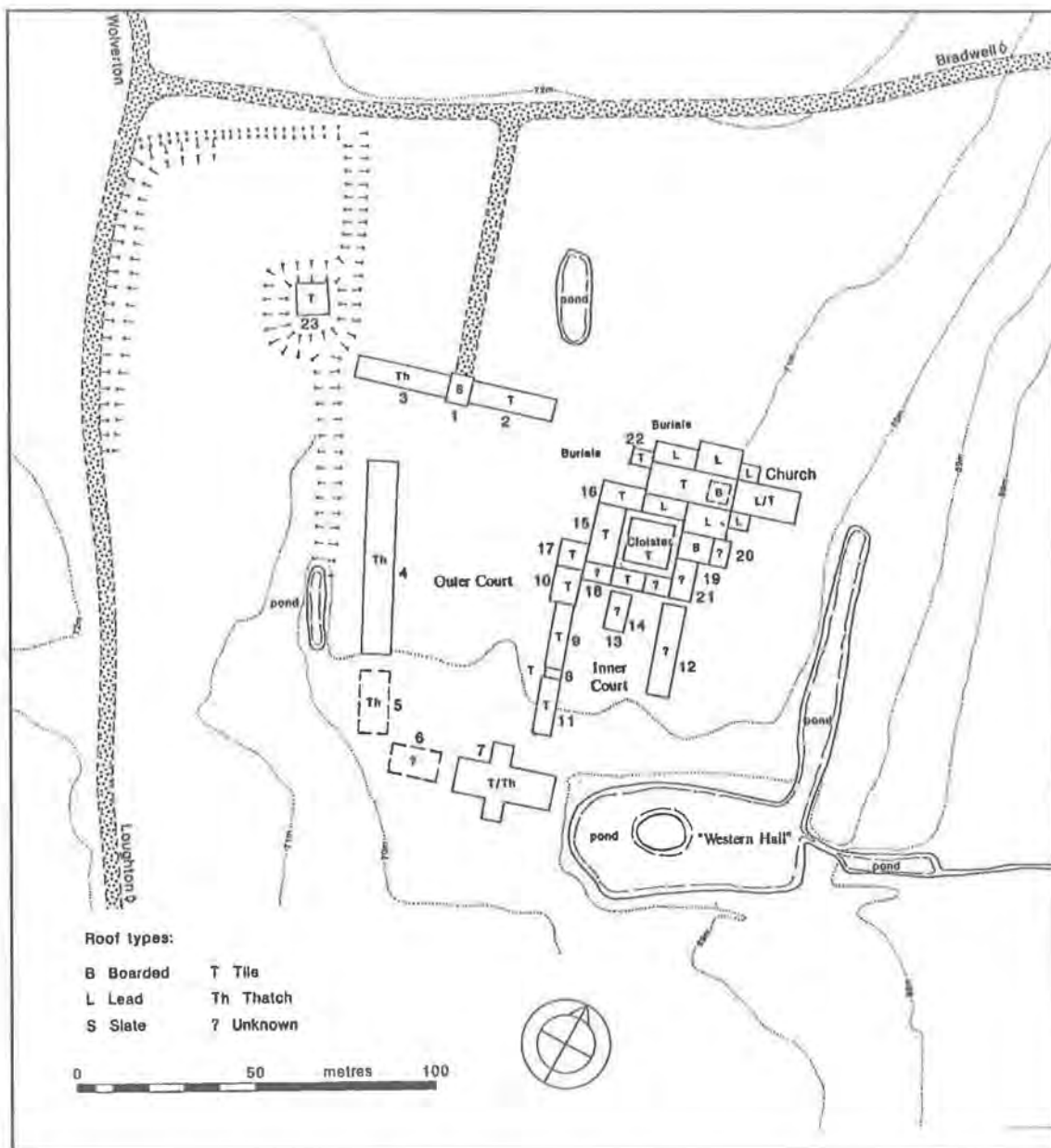


Fig. 3 Reconstruction of the plan of Bradwell Abbey based on the post-Dissolution survey, excavations and the surviving buildings.

have contained statuary and paintings of the saints, and may also have had architectural niches holding images of the saints externally. One such niche, surviving in the remaining part of the west wall of the church, which now forms the east wall of the chapel, held a statue of the Virgin which presum-

ably attracted popularity as a medium of healing. This shrine was soon enclosed within a chapel abutting the church. An altar was set up beside the niche at the east end of the building, and that part of the floor not covered by the altar was paved with decorated floor tiles. On the south wall of the

chapel were paintings of pilgrims kneeling to St Mary. Each carried a staff, showing that they were travellers, and displayed an effigy of that part of their body which required to be healed. The monks may have sold pilgrims' badges as souvenirs and holy charms, following the lead of the great centres of pilgrimage, Our Lady of Walsingham and Thomas à Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. Two small lead ampullae or holy water flasks having the stamped design of the crown of St Mary on one side have been recorded locally. One was found within a few hundred yards of the Priory, on the site of the manor house of Bradwell (Spencer 1994) and the other was recovered during excavations at the medieval village of Great Linford (Spencer 1992), four miles distant. Whether these came from Bradwell or from another shrine is uncertain.

However, the shrine could not have produced enough income to help the Priory, which remained a small establishment with dwindling numbers of monks. During the year 1380–81 the sum collected by the Priory from its tenants was £32–7–2, an increase over the figure of ninety years earlier, but in real terms not a great deal because of the inflation which occurred in the latter part of the century (Lipscomb 1847, 41). By 1458 the amount had risen slightly: from the larger holdings in Padbury, Stratford and Shenley the rent was £30–5–1 with two flagons of wine and 14 capons (*ibid.* 41), whilst smaller rents from Billing, Northampton, Wicken, Claydon, Woburn, Stoke, Linford and Luffield were together worth only £3–5–2.

Bishop Gray of Lincoln visited the brethren twice, between 1431 and 1436, and found no fault with them, encouraging them to maintain the office of the mass in spite of their diminished numbers (VCH 1905, 351). Nothing is known of how the monks survived in the later part of the fifteenth century. In 1455 a petition suggested the suppression of Padbury vicarage (VCH 1905, 351), probably as a result of St Mary's inability to maintain it, but the Priory still held it at the end of the century (Calendar of Close Rolls Henry VII, 2, 902).

The reduction in the number of brethren at St Mary's at this time is evident from the need for the Bishop of Lincoln to collate a new prior in 1504, after the resignation of Thomas Wright, because there were not enough monks there to hold an

election (Lipscomb 1847, 40).

The decline of the Priory of St. Mary's at Bradwell was paralleled elsewhere in the country in other small religious establishments. The winds of change, bringing an increasingly secular outlook to ecclesiastical matters, had begun in the later fifteenth century, and by the 1520s it was possible to contemplate the closure of many of these minor, inefficient and demoralized religious houses.

The suppression of the Priory took place under the Act for the Suppression of Minor Houses, on the twenty-seventh of July 1524, when Sir John Longville, patron of the Priory, granted the Priory to Cardinal Wolsey (Letters and State Papers, Henry VIII, IV, (1) 536). This early date is of particular interest as an instance of suppression by Papal consent, prior to the main Acts of Suppression, and because the assets were converted to educational use. This was part of a process of rationalisation and cutting back within the monastic machine itself, which had started in the later fourteenth century as a result of the greater interest in education then emerging. Wolsey converted some twenty-nine houses in this way for the benefit of colleges in Oxford and Ipswich.

Under the agreement for the suppression of the Priory, Wolsey promised to find a chaplain to sing mass continually for the souls of Sir John and his ancestors in the Priory church, or else to have them prayed for in the College he intended to found at Oxford. Sir John reserved the patronage of the vicarage at Wolverton, and it was agreed that the Priory was to be dissolved. It is a remarkable fact that the Seal of the Priory (Fig. 19, 3) was found in 1990 within a few hundred yards of the site of Sir John's house, and has been acquired for an eventual Milton Keynes museum.

THE POST-DISSOLUTION SURVEY

The survey of the Priory (PRO. E.165) is first mentioned in 1526 (Letters and State Papers Henry VIII, IV, II, 2217). The surveyor was William Brabazon, who later that year (*ibid.* 3537) sent Wolsey drafts and copies of charters, etc., relating to the Priory. The survey gives a valuable picture of the Priory complex. The description of the ruined

state of the buildings confirms the general decline that had taken place since the late fourteenth century. Transcriptions of the survey have been published by Lipscomb (1847, 41-44) and Mynard (1974, 32-35), and a modern version is given here. Numbers inserted in the text in parenthesis refer to Fig. 3, the reconstructed plan of the Abbey.

THE MANOR OF BRADWELL

The Outer Estate

First the Gatehouse (1) otherwise called a Garret with a stone slated roof, the building is partly in decay for lack of pointing.

Item on the east side of the Gatehouse two houses (2) tiled containing in length 78 feet, in decay for lack of tiling.

Item on the west side of the Gatehouse diverse houses (3) that containeth in length 87 feet, decayed for lack of thatching.

Item diverse old houses (4) containing in length 180 feet, utterly decayed for lack of thatching. The most part of the timber remaining there could be saved.

Item a barn of five bays (5) greatly in decay for lack of walling and thatching. Item a barn of four bays (6) with the timber standing uncovered.

These aforesaid houses may well be spared (dispensed with).

Item a barn containing nine bays (7), in length 106 feet and in breadth 27 feet, which is covered with tile and in some places with straw, partly in decay for lack of tiling, which barn may not be spared.

The Inner Court

First over the gate is a tiled chamber, Item on the north side of the gate (8) four houses under one roof (9), containing in length 66 feet, with chambers over them and covered with tile. Item a low parlour (10) in length 30 feet, with a chamber over, tiled and adjoining to the said houses.

Item on the south side of the gate a malt house and a kiln house (11) covered with tile which have need of mending.

Item there be diverse houses (12) in a row in length 86 feet, clearly in decay and some timber standing and some lying on the ground there. Marginal note in original "these houses may well be spared".

Item the walls of a house (13) standing without timber which house contained in length 35 feet, this house is utterly decayed.

Item the kitchen (14) is in decay for lack of tiling.

Item a lead in the kitchen, (the text does not say what the lead is).

Item the hall (15) in length 55 feet and in breadth 24 feet, which is covered with tile and is somewhat ruinous for lack of tiling.

Item at the north end of the hall is a chamber called the King's Chamber (16) with a chimney and a chamber over the said King's Chamber which is covered with tile.

Item on the west side of the hall is a chamber called the Prior's chamber (17) and a chimney therein and covered with tile.

Item two low parlours under the said chamber.

Item a butte (18) going forth of the hall. The cloister is covered with tile and guttered with lead which is ruinous and may well be spared.

Item the chapter house (19) with another house (20) nigh adjoining.

Item over the chapter house is the dormer, in length 30 feet and in breadth 24 feet and there are five cells in it which are boarded.

Item a low parlour (21) going forth of the cloister.

The chancel containeth in length 61 feet and in breadth 24 feet and the roof has very evil timber. On

one side it is covered with lead for 36 feet, and all the rest is tiled and all falling down.

In the chancel there is an altar stone nigh 4 yards long and there is also some old lead that was blown down beside the chancel.

There is a chapel 17 feet in length and 16 feet in breadth adjoining to the chancel, this chapel is greatly in decay but is covered with lead.

There is also a chapel on the south side of the chancel utterly decayed with some lead thereupon.

Item the south aisle of the church, in length 36 feet and in breadth 24 feet, newly built with very slender timber and covered with tile.

Item the north aisle of the church, in length 36 feet and in breadth 24 feet, newly built with slender timber and covered with tile.

The church containeth in length 72 feet and in breadth 24 feet which is covered with tile and the timber thereof is very evil which it is right necessary shortly to be taken down.

Item two aisles nigh to the church door one on the north side and the other on the south side. Each of these aisles containeth in length 38 feet and in breadth 12 feet, these aisles are covered with lead.

Item the vestry is decayed.

Item the steeple is lately built with boards thereupon uncovered.

Item 6 Altar stones.

Item in the church are two bells which be worth.....

Item in the church and chancel is old glass which could be taken down and saved for the mending of diverse chancels etc.

The church, chancel and all other aisles may well be spared and right necessary it is that shortly to be done for the salvation of the tile and timber.

Item there is a little chapel (22) without the

Church which may not well be spared. The offering at our Lady of Bradwell in the same chapel is worth yearly.....

Item the tile, timber and iron that may be spared is worth.....

There is a dovehouse (23) without the Outer Court in decay for lack of tiling.

Item a sheep house

The said Manor Place of Bradwell is compassed round about with enclosures which closes contain about 340 acres, which said Manor place with the closes one Thomas Rowse Gent. now holds of the lord and pays yearly for the same £24.

The Pools There

First a pool called Western hall with a little narrow pool going forth of the same. There have been diverse other pools which now be wasted with little or no fish therein.

The Wood There

Item 340 Elm and Ash trees which are worth on average 12 pence a piece.

Item there are many small elms, apples, willows and roots of ash etc. There may be made of the Wood there £10, and sufficient trees can be left to be more in profit both for the lord and the tenant.

Sir John Longville knight had of his own freeground within the said closes a house called the farm house containing in length 24 feet standing within a close of 1 acre with no other buildings thereunto.

Sir John also has 24 acres of ley and arable ground within the same closes. Of these, 20 acres are in one close called Stony hill which is as coarse pasture as can be and in manner beareth no grass, and 7 leys are in a close called Stubbornehill Close, which farm ground now lying in pasture is not worth 24 shillings a year.

For the same farm John Longville has in exchange of the late Prior there diverse possessions to

the yearly value of £13 6s 8d as listed below:

First a mill called the Maide Mill worth by year	£4 6s 8d
Item of Gcorge Reve of Wolverton by year	£1 13s 4d
Item of Thomas Hall of the same Town	17s 0d
Item of Richard Hall of the same	3s 4d
Item of Richard Buckingham of the same	3s 4d
Item John Longville also holds and occupies by the same exchange all such lands meadows and pastures as lately belonged to Bradwell which lands lie in Wolverton field and be worth yearly	£4.

The exchange was made about such time as the house was suppressed.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PRIORY PLAN

In 1974 a reconstruction of the Priory plan (Mynard 1974, 35-37 and fig. 1; Croft and Mynard 1993, fig. 29) was produced, based on the post-dissolution survey, the results of limited excavation, a survey of the remaining earthworks on the site (Fig. 2), and a preliminary study of the standing buildings. The following discussion and revised plan (Fig. 3) is largely based on this work, but has the benefit of the detailed study of the standing buildings by Paul Woodfield (pp. 30-42) and suggestions from Bob Zeepvat.

Examination of the existing buildings caused Mynard to believe that many of them were medieval in origin, having been modified for secular use after the Dissolution. It would have been foolish and expensive completely to demolish the Priory complex at this time, and the new owner and tenant would have been satisfied with the retention, repair and modification of those buildings that were required for farming and domestic needs. Part would have been used or rebuilt as the farmhouse, some barns saved and the Chapel of St Mary retained for the use of the family of the house.

The topography of the site has changed since the mid-sixteenth century, but the sites of several buildings can be seen as slight earthworks and the fishponds remain. The examination of the existing buildings, together with the evidence from the limited amount of excavation which had taken place up to 1973, enabled Mynard to pinpoint the following buildings: the great barn, the gateway to the Inner

Court, and the Church itself. With these few fixed points the survey became easy to follow, and subsequently other buildings were identified, mainly by their dimensions.

The survey commences with the Gatehouse (1) and two ranges of buildings (2) and (3); one on the east, the other on the west, suggesting an east-west alignment for the Gatehouse range as shown. The positioning of this range at the north-west corner of the site on the access route from Bradwell and Wolverton seems logical. The range of buildings (3) on the west side can be seen on the ground as a slight earthwork.

The survey next describes a range of diverse old houses (4) 180 feet long. This is approximately the same length as the present house and barns (8-11, 17), suggesting that the diverse old houses were a row opposite these forming the west side of the outer court of the priory. The position of these houses is marked by a slightly raised platform (earthwork survey Fig. 2), visible in the field and on the line of the building located in the 1968 excavation (Fig. 14, Trench 1).

The next building (5) is a five-bay barn, and this has been positioned with building (6), a barn of four bays, in the south-west corner of the Outer Court. At the southern end of this suggested outer court was the great barn of nine bays (7), for which Brabazon gives us exact dimensions 106 feet long and 27 feet wide. This survives as the Cruck Barn, and is discussed in detail below (p. 34).

The survey deals next with the Inner Court and the gateway into it, the site of which survives as the opening between the present workshop and barn, Buildings 9 and 11 on the plan. The chamber over the gate (8) was taken down in 1910 by the farmer (pers. comm. A.W. Punter). On the north side of the gate the four houses under a roof (9) 66 feet in length are of the same length as the present workshops and kitchen. Adjoining (9) was a low parlour (10) 30 feet long. This is almost the same length as the rest of the present north-south range up to 17, the north range of the farmhouse. This north-south range is partly of medieval origin; 9 is of typical medieval rubble construction, whilst most of 10, particularly the upper courses, is built with reused stone. In 1973 Mynard suggested that a useful indi-

cator of the date of the existing buildings on the site was that the medieval ones are rubble built, whilst those constructed after the Dissolution contained much reused stone. During the conversion from Farm house to Field Centre in 1972 many of the larger stones in the upper courses of 10 were seen to be reused mouldings, etc., which had been put into the wall decorated side first.

On the south side of the gate the present barn (11) is partly of medieval construction. Originally of the same width as 9, it must be the malt house and kiln house.

The survey next describes a row of houses (12) in a row 86 feet long. We have no evidence for the position of these, apart from a robber trench in the 1969 trial trench (Fig.12, Cutting 2) which may have been the east wall of this range. The "*walls of a house standing without tymber which house conteyned in length 35 feet uttelie dekaid*" are the next building described by Brabazon, and this may be the old 'Bakehouse', the medieval origin of which was confirmed by excavation in 1973. The excavation showed that it had been shortened in length by half a bay, and that its original length was approximately 35 feet. The proximity of this building to the post-dissolution farmhouse and its usefulness as a bakehouse were perhaps the reasons for its retention. The survey next describes the kitchen (14) which was perhaps part of the range which extended to the south from the bakehouse, or may have been on the south side of the cloister.

The hall (15) has been placed on the west side of the cloister, and the butte (buttery) "*going forth of the hall*" has been placed to the south (18). To the north of the hall is the King's chamber (16) with a chimney and a chamber over it. This is considered to be the building located by excavation to the south of the chapel, and which has been placed in the north-west corner of the cloister. West of the hall was the Prior's chamber (17) with a chimney, presumably a first floor chamber, as the survey describes two low parlours under it. This has been placed over the west part of the north range of the farmhouse.

The Chapter house (19) is presumed to be of the same size (30 x 24 feet) as the Dorter which was above it. This has been placed in the usual position

on the east side of the Cloister, while the "*other howse nygh adjoyning*" is positioned tentatively (20) near the Chapter house.

The low parlour (21) going forth of the cloister has been placed to the south of the Chapter house, nearer to the kitchen.

The survey deals next with the Church, the position of which was confirmed by the location of its north-west corner during the 1972 excavation, when it was shown that the Chapel (22) had been built against the west wall of the Church. From this firm point has been projected a typical church plan reconstructed from the dimensions given by Brabazon. This tentative plan can of course only be proved by excavation. All the dimensions quoted, apart from the Chapel, are in multiples of approximately 12 feet, the standard medieval bay. The survey describes the Chancel, 61 x 24 feet, then a chapel 17 x 12 feet which is presumably on the north side, as the next chapel described is on the south side. The next items are the south and north aisles respectively, each measuring 36 x 24 feet, and between them the church (nave), measuring 72 x 24 feet. Two more aisles are then described, each 38 x 12 feet, on the north and south sides. Both of these are said to be "*nyghe to the Church dore*", which must refer to the west door of the church. The total length of the aisles on each side of the church is 74 feet, similar to the length of the church (nave) given by Brabazon as 72 feet. The survey includes the steeple, shown as being above the central crossing, and a "revestre" (vestry), not shown as its position is uncertain.

Brabazon then mentions "*a little Chapell withoute the Church which may not well be spared*". It is clear that this chapel (22) was saved and has survived to the present day.

The Dovehouse (23) is described as being "*withowte the Outter Court*". This dovecote or a later successor to it is shown on the 1797 Estate Map (Fig. 4), and the field to the west of the chapel and house was called *Dovehouse Close* at that time. The grass-covered site of the dovecote was still visible as a stony mound when the field was last ploughed in the early 1970s. The position of the Sheephouse mentioned is uncertain, and is not defined on the plan.

It may be noted that the use of lead as a roofing material was restricted to the more important sections of the church, while tile covered the nave and all major buildings. Thatch was used only on the buildings on the west side of the outer court.

Of the surviving fishponds shown on the plan, two can be identified. It seems beyond doubt that the "*Poole called Western Hall with the little narrow Poole goyng forth of the same*" are the ponds on the south side of the Priory complex.

The name Western Hall is unusual for a pond and its derivation is unknown.

The survey tells us that some buildings were to be retained and that others could well be spared. In some cases the fate of the building was not given. The buildings to be retained were the great barn of nine bays (7) and the Chapel (22), both of which survive and are still in use. Of the buildings for which no decision was made at the time of the survey, many appear to have survived. The west range of the Inner Court, comprising the malt house and kiln house (11), four houses north of the gate (9) and the low parlour (10) are certainly of medieval origin. No decision was made as to the fate of the Hall (15) and Prior's chamber (17) but it seems most likely that these were retained or rebuilt as the post-dissolution farmhouse.

THE POST-DISSOLUTION MANOR

The post-dissolution survey (PRO. E. 36, vol. 165, 37-43) undertaken in 1526 for Cardinal Wolsey recorded the state of the buildings and the value of the materials that could be obtained by the demolition of those that were no longer required. The surveyor William Brabazon referred to the buildings and lands formerly owned by the Priory as "*The Manor of Bradwell*". In February 1528 the King formally granted the site and precincts of the former Priory with its lands to Cardinal Wolsey, who then conveyed them to his college at Oxford (Letters and State Papers, Henry VIII, IV[2], 4001; 27 February and 1 March respectively).

Brabazon visited Bradwell again in 1529 (*ibid.*, III, 5835) and then went to Tickford Abbey, Newport Pagnell, from where he wrote to Thomas

Cromwell saying that he had finished the lands of the late monastery there and the Priory of Bradwell (*ibid.*, 6033). The letter was despatched by a personal bearer, the former Prior of Tickford, who desired to be recommended to Cromwell for promotion.

The first tenant of the Priory site and the closes around it was Thomas Rowse, whose tenure, at an annual rent of £24, is listed in the survey above. The next tenant was William Wogan, who in 1526 obtained a lease of "*The site of the Manor or Lordship of Bradwell and all the demesne lands within the enclosures, excepting the rent of the tenant's court and all other royalties to the said Manor*" from Cardinal's College in Oxford for an annual rent of two pounds, and agreed to collect the college's other rents from former monastic properties in the area (BAS Muniments, 85/50). This lease was renewed several times, and in 1534 (*ibid.*) a ninety three year lease was granted to Wogan, who in 1546 was described as a "*farmer and collector*" (*ibid.*). It is likely that Wogan converted part of the Priory buildings into a farmhouse. He must have lived or spent much of his time at Bradwell, since he retained the chapel as a place of worship for his household (BL. Add. Mss 5839, 438). No doubt the wall paintings were lime-washed over, and the statue of Our Lady of Bradwell removed from the niche at the time of the Dissolution. Wogan would also have been responsible for the repair or conversion of the redundant priory buildings "*that could not well be spared*" into an efficient farm unit and would have overseen the demolition of those that were "spared" and the disposal of the materials from them.

Cardinal Wolsey died in 1530, and his estates and possessions were confiscated by the Crown. Wolsey was replaced as Chancellor by Sir Thomas More; and his private secretary, Thomas Cromwell, was a man whose influential position enabled him to grant his own favours to lesser men. In 1531 Cromwell asked Wogan whether he was minded to leave his interest in the farm at Bradwell, and fearful that he might lose it Wogan wrote "*I have married an aged gentlewoman, and the living I have by her is only for the term of her life, and I have no other place except there (Bradwell) where is the best part of my living. I beg I may keep it still, as you helped me to it*" (Letters and State Papers

Henry VIII, V, 385). Having obtained many small properties from Wolsey's estate, Henry VIII began to exchange some of them for land which would be of more use to him. Bradwell Manor (the former Priory) was given in 1531 to the Carthusian Priory of Jesus of Bethlehem at Sheen in Surrey (Letters and State Papers Henry VIII, V/ 403). With the estate went the land the Priory had held in Bradwell, Wolverton, Loughton, Shenley, Stony Stratford and other parishes. Wogan remained at Bradwell, paying an annual rent of £20 for the buildings and land and a further £20 for the right of presentation to the Rectory at Wolverton (BL. Cotton Julius C.II, fol. 282).

A rental of the property held at Bradwell by Sheen Priory in 1532 (ibid.) listed Wogan as the tenant, paying an annual rent of £20 for the site of the Manor of Bradwell with its appurtenances, containing seven great closes. These were called *Bear Close*, *Stubborn Hill* alias *Furzen Close*, *Bush Close*, *Lyme Close*, *Square Close*, *Furzen Close next Loughton Meadows*, and *Close le Grove*, while there were various other smaller closes. Several of these closes had the same names on the Estate Map of 1797 (Fig. 4). Wogan also had the first fruits of the priests and the gardens, with appurtenances. From this rental it appears that some of the monks may have remained at Bradwell, perhaps as farm-workers or tenants of some of the land.

Despite his plea of poverty to Cromwell, William Wogan was no provincial farmer living quietly in Bradwell. He was in fact a gentleman and a courtier who travelled extensively, with income from several sources. In 1550 he was made one of the Commissioners in Buckinghamshire for the collecting of a relief granted by Parliament, indicating his position and the trust placed in him by Edward VI's government (Cal. Pat. Rolls Edward VI, 5, 351). He was a member of a family of some renown from Weston, Pembrokeshire, and his cousin John and nephew Maurice were gentlemen ushers of the King's chamber (Letters and State Papers Henry VIII, IV [1] 612, 1049).

Wogan had estates in Cardiganshire, royal manors which he sublet to local men (Lewis and Conway Davies, 1954). His nephew Maurice, who lived at Bloxham in Oxfordshire, also leased land from him in Cardiganshire, and on his death in 1557

Maurice left his uncle the life interest in a farm in Shenley (PRO. Probate Registry, Wrastley 49).

William died in 1558, and in his will of the same year (BuCRO D/A/We/12/132) he directed that he should be buried in Bradwell Church, in Mr Stafford's chapel (presumably the south aisle), and that a brass should be set over him with the following inscription:

"Of your charity pray for the soul of William Wogan whose body lieth buried under this stone; also for the souls of Elinor and Jane his wives".

He gave to the parishioners of Bradwell a goblet with a cover to make a chalice to serve in the church in the time of Divine Service, this to be inscribed "*Pray for the soules of William Wogan Esq. and Elinor and Jane his wifes*". He also left a legacy to the Vicar of Bradwell to pray for his soul. The witnesses to his will were John Rawlinson and James Shaw, the Vicars of Wolverton and Bradwell respectively. As the Bradwell parish registers do not commence until 1577, we have no record of William's burial. There is no record of his monument either, since it was not recorded by Willis when he visited the church in the early eighteenth century.

Wogan appears to have been what would nowadays be called 'a high church' Protestant at his death. The commendation in his will of his soul to "*our lady sainte Mary and al the company of heaven*", and the request that others pray for his soul and the souls of his late wives, is indicative of Catholic doctrine. If he were of this persuasion, he would have been a conforming Catholic, who fulfilled the legal obligations whilst remaining in the old faith. Certainly the chapel would have been sufficiently distant from the parish church at Wolverton to be used for Catholic masses during the Edwardian interlude, but its close proximity to Bradwell village presupposes the knowledge and consent of the vicar of St Lawrence, James Shaw, who was also a witness to Wogan's will. Wogan's lease on the estate still had some years to run when he died in 1558. He was childless, and as no heir is mentioned in his will (BuCRO D/A/We/12/132) it is not clear who succeeded him.

On the dissolution of Sheen Priory in 1539, St

Mary's Bradwell had reverted to the Crown, to be granted to Arthur Longville of Wolverton four years later (Letters and State Papers Henry VIII, XIV [2], 73). It seems that a cadet branch of the family, headed by Arthur's second son, also named Arthur, took up residence at Bradwell Priory following William Wogan's death in 1558 (VCH 1927, 286).

Under his will made in May 1594, Arthur Longville left the premises at Bradwell Priory to his son Thomas, who was still a minor, but the use of the mansion house and "*all the rooms above the long parlour*" were to remain to his widow Judith (PRO, Probate Registry, 52 Dixy). Judith's will of a month later makes it clear that he had been in debt for £113, although she was still in a position to leave a large number of luxury goods to her children: a silver salt cellar and pepper box, virginals, table cloths and sheets of damask and diaper, and silver spoons (PRO, Probate Registry, 55 Dixy). This branch of the Longville family was plagued by hereditary insanity. Thomas was certified a lunatic in 1599, and died a few months later (PRO. Chan. Inq. P. M. [Series 2] 261, 39 and 65). His son Arthur, a minor, did not come into the lordship of Bradwell until 1616 (VCH 1927, 286), by which time he had a son, also called Thomas, by his wife Elizabeth. Arthur also suffered from periods of insanity. The chapel may have been restored at this time, since the royal arms, probably of James I, are painted on the east wall. Arthur's children were baptized in the estate chapel, the vicar of St Lawrence's Church, Bradwell officiating. The chapel had no register of its own, these events being recorded in the register of Bradwell parish church (BuCRO PPR22/1-10).

Arthur's first wife Elizabeth presumably died in childbirth, as her burial on the 15th August 1621 in the chancel of St Lawrence's immediately preceded the baptism on the 17th of her daughter Elizabeth. Arthur seems to have been greatly affected by this event, and may have ordered that no further use was to be made of the chapel for baptisms. An estate worker or family servant, John Brooke, took his son to be christened at Bradwell parish church in 1627 as a result of Longville's action. The curate Richard Wynn refused to officiate, but "*for fear less some mischievous quarrel should thereupon ensue*", he eventually undertook the service (BuCRO PR22/

1-10). Subsequently servants from Bradwell Abbey were married in Bradwell parish church.

In 1628 a subsidy assessment for Bradwell parish showed that Arthur Longville was by far the wealthiest person in the village, his land being valued at £10 p.a., on which he paid £4 tax (BuCRO D/X/398). The lord of the manor of Bradwell, John Fuller, was valued at £3 in land. It cannot be shown whether the amount for Longville is based purely on the land he owned within the parish itself, or if it included the Bradwell Abbey estate as well. Arthur settled the estate on his second wife Alice, and his mother Nightingale Windsor who held a third of the estate as her dower shortly before his death in 1631 (VCH, 1927, 286). It is interesting to note that the initials "AL" and the date "1632" were recorded as being on the gatehouse at Bradwell in the early eighteenth century (BL Dept of Add. Ms. Cole 5839, 439). Whether this represents a retrospective acknowledgement of work commenced by Arthur Longville is uncertain.

Arthur's son Thomas inherited the estate in 1639 when he was twenty-five years old. A royalist, he was taken prisoner in December 1643 at Grafton House by Parliamentary soldiers. Having paid a fine of £330 for his delinquency in supporting the king, he "*lived conformably to all ordinances of Parliament at his house, within three miles of Newport*" (Cal. Ctte Comm. Comp. 187, 957). During the Civil War, however, life was not as comfortable as he would have liked. A letter of October 1644 tells of the king's forces marching with all speed towards Newport Pagnell, intent on garrisoning Bradwell and Wolverton amongst other villages (BL. Ms Egerton, 785 fol. 93). That year Bradwell was described by Parliamentarians as "*ill-affected and very able for the refreshing of our soldiers*" (BL. Ms Stowe, 190 fol. 78). Thomas, having heard that the County Committee for Compounding intended to sequester his estate, went to Aylesbury to protest, but a soldier from the garrison there shot him in the throat. He survived, and in July 1645 petitioned the committee for the three counties of Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire that the Aylesbury men should certify the truth of his claims. Immediately afterwards he was arrested, and this delayed his actions so much that the Three Counties Committee had lost its authority before he could obtain the certificate (Cal. Ctte. Comp. 187,



Fig. 5 The Elm avenue on the west side of the house, *c.* 1900

957). In February 1645 the house at Bradwell was used as a Parliamentary rendezvous, and it is probable that troops were quartered there at this time (BL. MS Stowe, 190 fol. 184).

During the next year Thomas was knighted, but the problems of sequestration were not over, and he was fined a total of £800 for the Bradwell Abbey estate. These large sums were difficult to raise, and in 1650, it is clear, he was forced to sell his property (PRO. Recovery Rolls Michaelmas 1650, 113).

Thomas sold the estate to John Lawrence and Abraham Cullen, who sold it in 1666 to Joseph Alston of Chelsea (VCH 1927, 286). Alston, who had married the daughter and heiress of a Mr Crookenberg, a Dutch merchant of Bergen-op-Zoom, was a shrewd businessman who prospered during both the Commonwealth and the Restoration. In 1682 he was created Baronet of Chelsea and

Bradwell Abbey by Charles II (VCH 1927, 287). He may have used his country house little, as his world revolved around the metropolis, and when he died in 1688 he was buried in Chelsea.

His son Sir Joseph had married Elizabeth Thompson in 1662, and two years later her father bought Haversham Manor for himself and his heir John. The proximity of Haversham to Bradwell may have influenced the elder Alston in his choice of a country seat, particularly as he appears to have given it to Sir Joseph and his wife as their residence. Frequent references in the Bradwell parish registers (BuCR0 PR22/1–10) to members of the Alston family at baptisms and burials indicate that the parish church and not the estate chapel was being used for these purposes. However, normal family services must have been held there, since further restoration of the chapel, including the painting of the ceiling, was carried out probably in the third

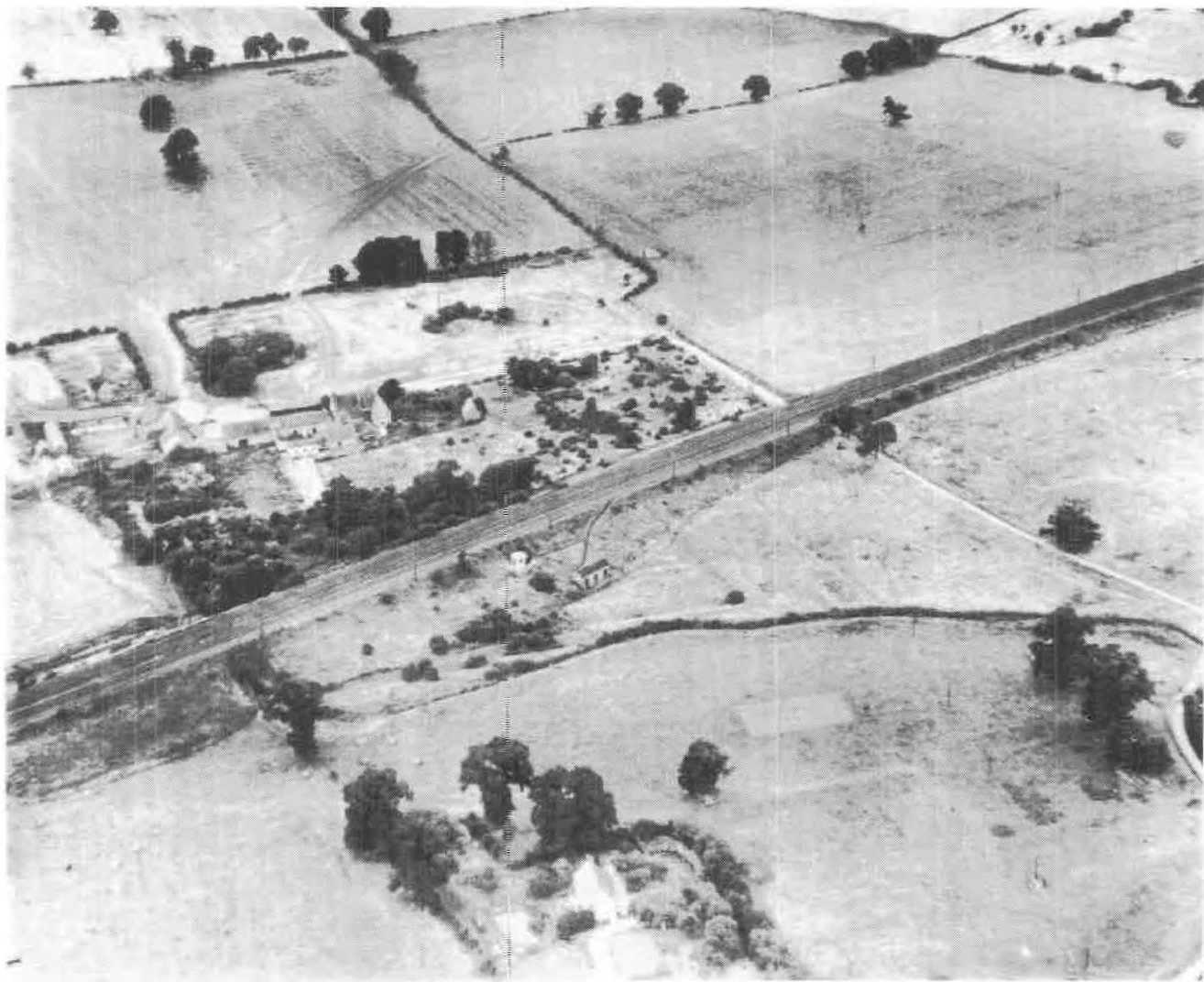


Fig. 6 Aerial view of the Priory Site looking to the west, August 1950. Copyright Cambridge University Collection.

quarter of the seventeenth century. Perhaps it was also at this time that the north and south windows and south door were blocked and a new brick floor was laid on the old medieval tiles.

Joseph Alston was Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1670 (PRO. List of Sheriffs, 9) and succeeded to the baronetcy on his father's death in 1688 but died in March of the following year aged 49 and was buried in the parish church at Bradwell. He was succeeded by his son Sir Joseph, the third baronet, who married Penelope the daughter of Sir Edward Evelyn in the following year and was Sheriff of the county in 1702. Sir Joseph and his wife may have spent much of their time at her home in Long Ditton in Surrey, where she was buried in 1714 aged forty-two, having borne him seventeen children, though only seven of these survived beyond childhood. Although he married again Sir Joseph was buried with his first wife on his death in 1716.

In the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century the Alstons were responsible for the restoration and enlargement of the house, rebuilding the north-south range to create an impressive 'L' shaped block. The new west front of the house had an attractive facade with eight windows, of which only two remain, but traces of the others can be seen in the stonework. To the west of the house they created a park through which ran a fine avenue of elms.

Little trace remains of the park created by the Alstons, but an estate map of 1797 (Fig. 4), based on an earlier one of 1744, shows the avenue of elms leading into the *Great Meadow* with the *Park Meadow* to the south. A photograph of the avenue (Fig. 5) taken c. 1900, shows the avenue and the west front of the house. No other photographs of the avenue are known to have survived, but an air photograph (Fig. 6) taken in 1950 shows the site just after the removal of the trees. The 1797 map shows a rectangular building in *Dovehouse Close*, immediately to the west of the house, which must be the dovecote which gave the field its name.

Having remained with the Alston family for forty years, the Bradwell Abbey estate was sold by Sir Joseph, the fourth baronet, as soon as he inherited the property in 1716. It passed from Henry Owen, a London broker, to John Fuller of London

who was Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1723 (PRO. List of Sheriffs, 10), and who may have been related to the Fullers of Bradwell and Loughton. At a poll taken in 1722 he was described as having freehold at Bradwell Abbey, but his abode was in St James's Clerkenwell (BuCRO PB/1/5). In the next year Fuller conveyed the estate to a certain Edward Owen, and it was purchased about 1730 by Sir Charles Gounter Nicholl, lord of the manor of Olney. From then onwards the ownership of Bradwell Abbey estate descended with that of Olney and the other manors in the possession of the Nicholl family, until it was acquired in about 1755 by William Legge, the second Earl of Dartmouth.

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FARM

It was during the first half of the eighteenth century that the estate changed from being the country seat of minor gentry into the working farm of a tenant of an absentee landlord. In 1798 the return of the *Posse Comitatus* for Bradwell Abbey indicated that six men were present: Robert Battams, presumably the tenant farmer, who had 8 horses, 3 waggons and 3 carts; John Leatch, Daniel Cox and James Duick, servants; and Charles West and Matthew Hanlee, labourers. By this time, the chapel was being used variously as a store and a workshop.

When William Earl of Dartmouth sold the estate in 1822 it was described as "*All that messuage, Abbey or farmhouse and farm called Bradwell Abbey Farm with the old farm house or cottage also called Upper Farm near to the Watling Street turnpike*". The tenant farmer was Mason Bennett, and his predecessor John Parcouste (BuCRO D/X/320). The purchaser was the Warden and Poor Men of Trinity Hospital, East Greenwich, a corporate body under the auspices of the Mercer's Company, which continued to let the estate as a farm.

In 1838 the construction of the London and Birmingham Railway disturbed the eastern flank of the estate, near to the old priory site and the farm buildings. A map of about this time (Fig. 7) shows that a small area of the meadows adjacent to Bradwell Brook had been cut off from the rest of the land, access to them and to Bradwell village being by a tunnel (still remaining) allowing the old road

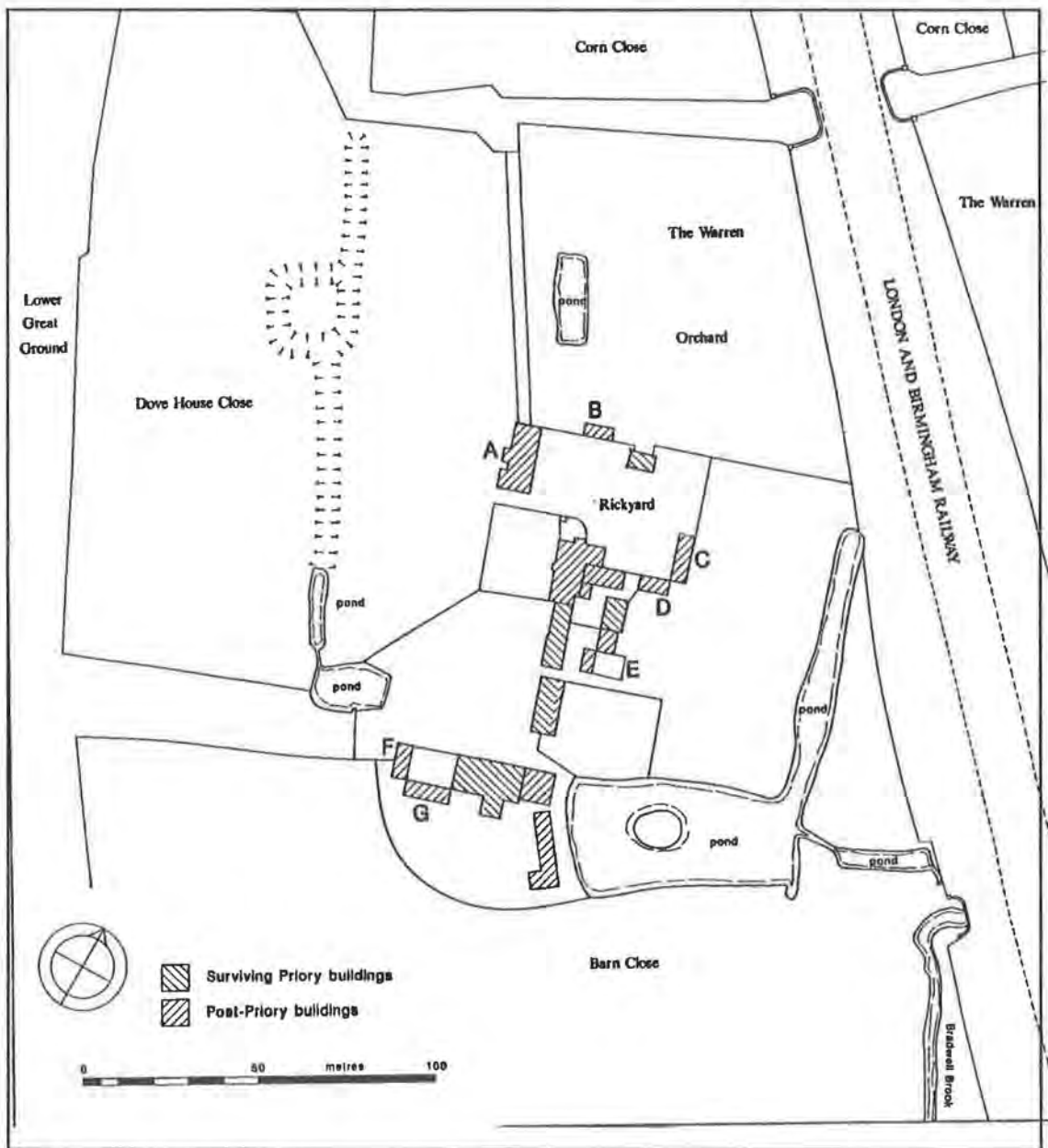


Fig. 7 Bradwell Abbey Farm in 1851 based on the Tithe Award map.

to pass under the railway. South of the Priory site and the large fishpond a culvert was constructed to allow the brook to flow under the railway embankment. This culvert, also still in use, had a footbridge within it's tunnel allowing quicker access to the

village. From ground level the effect of the railway was dramatic, the embankment blocking the view from the village to the farmhouse and vice versa, making the abbey precincts appear quite isolated.

The map which accompanied the Tithe Award of 1851 (BuCRO 1/68) was based on one of earlier date which in turn had been based on the 1797 estate map (Fig.4). The layout of the farm as shown on the 1851 map can be seen in Fig. 7 Several buildings have not survived; these were:

- A A five-bay barn which apart from its north and west walls was demolished c. 1950.
- B A hovel built against the garden wall running from the above barn to the Chapel.
- C & D Both described as 'Wooden hovels for the animals' by the Misses Punter. The footings of both buildings were of stone and quite substantial, according to Mr. W. Harris who first ploughed the old orchard c. 1960.
- E A pigsty, now demolished and rebuilt in line with the building on the north side. The east wall was retained as the west wall of a pigsty until 1975.
- F & G Two small hovels now partly demolished; the north wall of G and east wall of F survive as the present barn.

The date of these demolished buildings is uncertain. A was constructed largely of re-used stone and is most likely to be post-Dissolution in date, B– E were not shown on the 1797 map and are presumably later than it, and F and G were probably built against the west end of and are later than the medieval cruck barn at the south end of the Outer Court.

Of the boundary walls shown on the 1851 map, the northern boundary wall of the *Rickyard*, running east to west from Barn A to the chapel still survives. It is built of re-used stone and even contains fragments of floor tile and window glass. East of the chapel this wall continued towards the railway embankment along the line of the north wall of the Priory church, which must have served as a post-dissolution boundary.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In 1919 Bradwell Abbey was again offered for sale. At that time it was described as "*a particularly Choice Historical Agricultural Estate*" with 436

acres including "*an excellent site of a Gentleman's Residence amid park like surroundings and commanding extensive views*". The farm was purchased by the Wolverton Industrial and Provident Society Ltd (BuCRO D/X/320) who owned it from 1919 to 1950, during which period the house and buildings were not well maintained and were allowed to fall into disrepair. The farm was purchased in 1950 by Mr G. Field, who introduced modern farming techniques which resulted in the destruction of many landscape features around the Abbey. In particular, the avenue of elms was cut down, and the barn (Fig. 7. A) was demolished. The stone wall which ran from that barn around to the railway bridge, forming the west and north boundary of the old orchard, and which contained much reused decorated stone (pers. comm. Mr W. Harris, one of the farmworkers that carried out the work) was thrown down as hardcore for the concrete road constructed in 1961 alongside the line of the wall. Early in Mr Field's period of ownership an area of tiles slipped from the chapel roof, allowing water to enter the building, which in turn caused part of the ceiling to collapse. However, water also ran down the south wall exposing traces of the medieval paintings. The discovery of the paintings soon came to the notice of the authorities, and Clive Rouse was commissioned to uncover and record them. At this time Mr Field repaired the roof and covered the west window with perspex, thus saving the Chapel from further deterioration and ensuring its survival.

In 1971 the farm was purchased by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, shortly after which the site of the Priory was scheduled as an Ancient Monument by the Department of the Environment; previously only the Chapel had been scheduled. The Corporation subsequently carried out a thorough restoration of the Chapel, commencing in 1972 with the repair of the exterior stonework; subsequently the building was reroofed, the ceiling secured and the wall paintings carefully restored.

The Development Corporation, appreciating the archaeological potential of the site, restored the farmhouse as the headquarters of its archaeological staff and as the home of the newly established Bradwell Abbey Field Centre. In 1987 the Archaeology Unit, as it had then become, was moved to other accommodation, and the Abbey subsequently

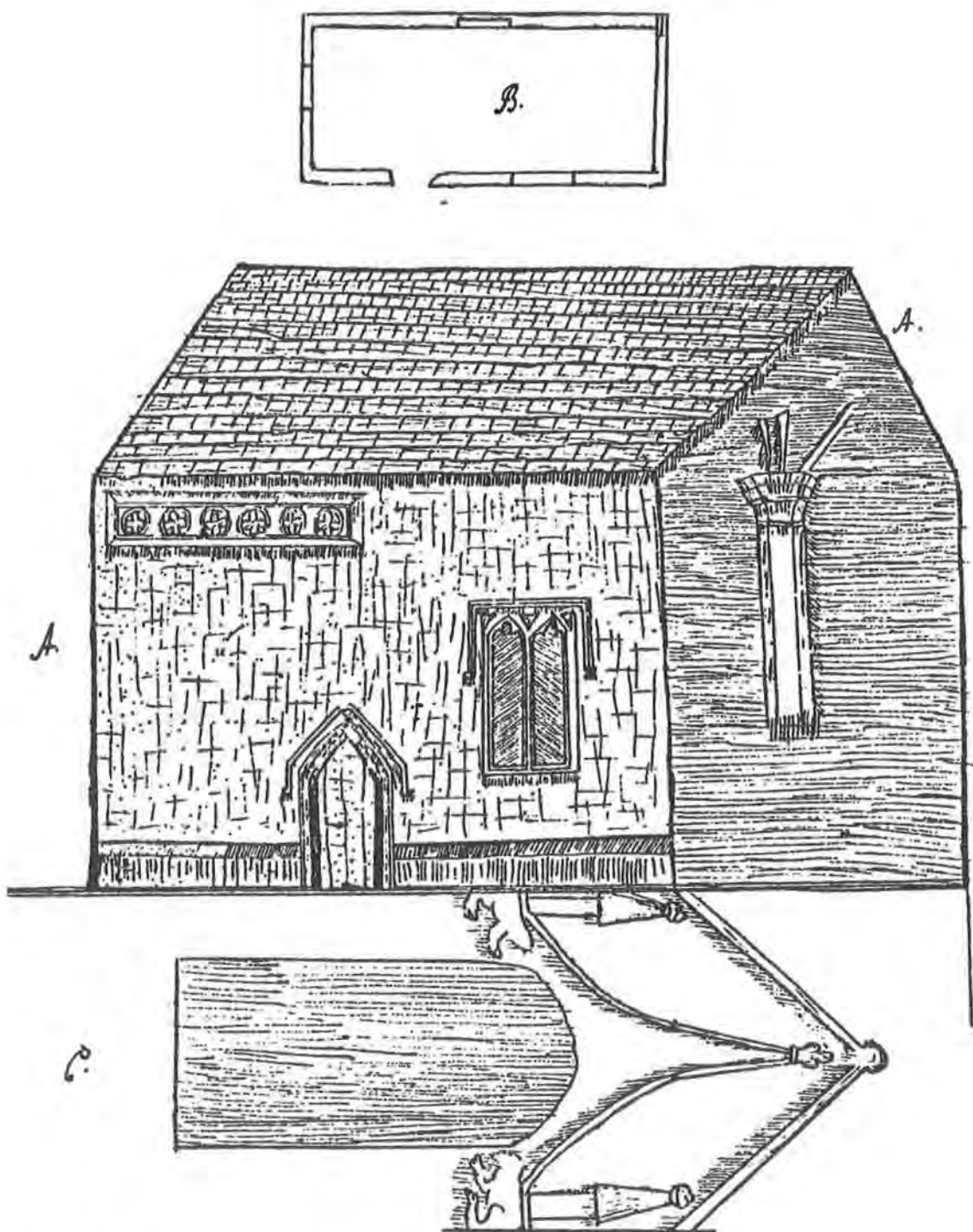


Fig. 8 The Browne Willis drawing of Bradwell Abbey chapel circa 1730.

became the base for the City Discovery Centre.

EARLY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SITE

We are fortunate that the site was visited in the early eighteenth century by Browne Willis, the renowned local antiquary, and a century or so later by another antiquary, John Virtue. Both of these men left accounts of their visits.

Browne Willis

When Browne Willis visited the site (Willis 1719, 15) he recorded that *"the only ancient building that is now standing here is a small chapel built out of the old materials of this monastery soon after the Dissolution, by Licence granted to the then Proprietor, under pretext that it was two miles distant from the Parish Church"*. However, among Willis' unpublished manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (fol. XI) is a sketch (Fig. 8), of the chapel with the following footnote:

"The South West prospect of an Oratorie or Chappell that adjoynd to Bradwell Abbey being the only Part whatsoever remaining of the ancient Building, which seems to have extended itself Eastward, where there is now a Terrass raised of Stone and Rubbish. The Cloysters and other offices in all probability intervening between the Abbey Church and the Present Mannor House, which has been new built within these 50 years from the old Materials."

Willis also drew the niche in the east wall and a plan of the building, the latter suggesting that the south door was then in use, and that the south window had not yet been blocked.

However, in his history of Newport Hundred, transcribed by the Revd William Cole (BL Dept of Add. Ms. Cole 5839), Willis gives a different and more correct account of the Chapel and other buildings remaining on the site. He refers to William Wogan, the post-Dissolution tenant of the Priory, stating that Wogan *"obtained leave on account of its great distance, viz. being two miles from the parish church of Wolverton, to keep for the use of his family a small aisle of the Priory Church, which is, except a barn, the only part remaining of the*

Monastical structure, all other parts having been altered and new edified by the owners of this place which hath since the sale of it by the Longeville family passed to several other proprietors who have, for the most part, resided here and made it their principal habitation and frequently had Divine Service celebrated in the aforesaid Chapel and given the Vicar of Bradwell a stipend for officiating in it".

Willis also mentioned a gatehouse which had a datestone with the initials and date "May 9, 1632 AL.". These must be the initials of Arthur Longville, who died in 1631 but may have begun the restoration of this building.

John Virtue

Our next description of the site is the account of a visit by John Virtue, placed before the Society of Antiquaries of London by John Arthur Cahusac on 6th June 1844 (Cahusac 1846, 479–481). Virtue wrote the following description of the chapel and correctly identified it with the little chapel without the church, listed in the post-Dissolution survey:

"This chapel, the size of which sufficiently justifies the appellation 'small', is only about eighteen feet in length and nine in width, and appears to be an early English structure. It is situated on the north side of what is now used as a rickyard. It is built of freestone laid in rubble, the interior being faced with masonry, which has received a coating of plaster. The walls are about two feet in thickness; a coved ceiling hides the timbers of the roof. That the floor has been considerably raised is evident from the piscina being now only about six inches from the ground. A niche, in excellent preservation, is sunk on the north of the east wall, which I should think contained formerly the statue of 'Our Ladie of Bradwell' as from the following entry which occurs in a survey taken at the time of the Dissolution; 'Item there is a little chapel without the Church; which may not well be spared. The offering at our Lady of Bradwell in the same chapel is worth yearly. . .'

This entry, together with the circumstance of its containing a piscina, appears to me to afford a very strong evidence to what I have above set forth. A doorway on the south side, as shown in a sketch which I have made, is now bricked up,

with the windows, namely the west window (with the exception of the tracery) a range of six quatrefoils on the south side, a window on the north, and another on the south side, which are both of a later style of architecture; the iron bars remain to that on the north side. There appears to be the remains of an inscription cut in the east wall where the plaster has fallen off but much obliterated. There is a corner buttress at the north-west and also at the south-west corner. The west doorway is about four feet wide the hinge staples are remaining. I was informed that within the last few years the west window contained stained glass, which is now entirely destroyed. The roof is covered with tiles.

Against the east wall of the chapel is an octagonal pillar and part of an arch, which I should think belonged to the Cloisters; it is most probable they were situated about this spot, as human bones have been found in the rickyard in great abundance; tiles painted with scriptural subjects, resembling the well-known Dutch tiles, have likewise been found here. The stone basin, which I sent for inspection, I rescued from the more than probable fate of being broken up to mend the road; I found it lying outside the Chapel; it may have been a benetura. The bells which belonged here, together with the communion plate, are in the parish church. Nearly the whole of the ancient boundary walls exist, inclosing about four acres. The old buildings now remaining comprise I should imagine not more than one-sixth of the original structure, at least so I should judge from those enumerated in the survey; many of them are in almost their original state, of which I may mention a very fine old barn, and the bakehouse; the room which is now used as a dining hall I should think possible to have been the refectory; when the present occupiers first came there the windows were above eight feet from the ground, they are now modernised; there are two rooms at the north end of the house which are bricked up, and have not been opened since the present occupiers lived there.

A once fine avenue of trees leads to the Priory on the west side, there are several ponds in the vicinity; the Birmingham Railway runs within

a few yards of it. This still beautiful Priory is now occupied as a farmhouse and, disgraceful to say, modern barbarism has turned the Chapel into a stable, the manger being the niche before mentioned. I am sorry that my short stay of only a few hours prevented me from making several sketches, but I hope the one I send will give you some idea of the Chapel."

We are fortunate that *Virtue* produced such a comprehensive record of his visit to the site. The sketches he drew are preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries (Buckinghamshire Brown Fol. p.68). One shows the chapel much as it is today; the other is a detail of the niche and the piscina, of which this is our only record.

Virtue's account contains useful information from the tenant farmer, similar indeed to that given to me by members of the Punter family who farmed the site from 1869 to 1921. The discovery of human bones in the rickyard is supplemented by their discovery in the orchard to the east of the Chapel, and a skull was found when the pond north of the house was cleared out in the 1930s. Whether this pond is of medieval origin or is a product of seventeenth or eighteenth-century landscape gardening is uncertain.

The stone basin which was sent to the Society of Antiquaries for inspection may have been used as the font for baptisms, or it may have been from the piscina, the bowl of which was missing in 1912 when the RCHM architect surveyed the building. Attempts to trace it produced two stone basins, both preserved at the Society's Library and both unprovenanced nineteenth-century acquisitions, either of which could be from Bradwell.

In 1844 the farmer told *Virtue* that stained glass had recently fallen from the west window of the chapel, and glass was recovered from the topsoil outside the chapel during the excavation of 1972.

One cannot be certain about the fate of the bell and communion plate, said to have been taken to the parish church. The post-Dissolution survey mentions two bells in the Priory church, and there are in the parish church two of the oldest bells in Buckinghamshire (Heneage Cocks 1897, 323). The tower of the parish church is dated by the windows of the

bellchamber to the mid sixteenth century, and was either added or rebuilt at that time. Internally, particularly in the upper stages, one can see many fragments of reused stone mouldings and others with chamfered edges. The tower arch is also reused, and was clearly intended originally for a

wider opening.

The tower may well have been constructed or rebuilt with materials from the demolished Priory church to house the redundant bells from the Priory. The vicar of Bradwell at this time was William

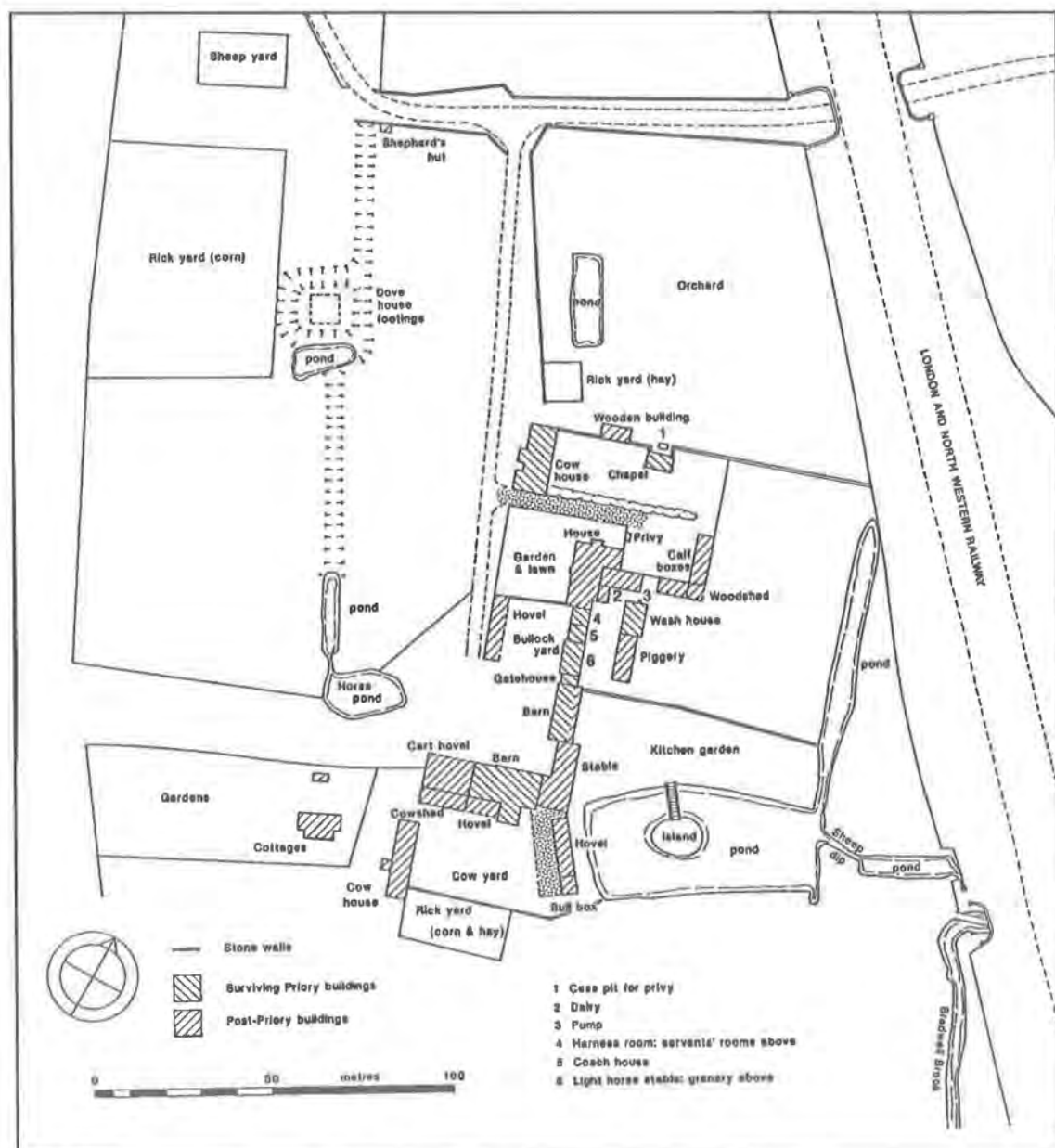


Fig. 9 Bradwell Abbey Farm circa 1908 based on information from Mr A.W.Punter.

Forster, who held office from 1509 until 1551. He was succeeded by James Shaw, a personal friend of William Wogan of Bradwell Abbey, who may have been instrumental in passing redundant materials to the church. Wogan died in 1558, and by his will left "*to them that ring the belles vjd (6 pence)*". This and the slightly earlier reference in the will of a Bradwell farmer, John Newman, who died in 1556 "*Item I will towards the meytenance of the belles iij.s.iij.d.s (3 shillings and 4 pence)*", suggests that at this time the bells were prominent in the thoughts of those who cared for the church.

Of the boundary walls seen by Virtue, nothing survives. There was a stone wall which ran on the left hand side of the road after coming under the railway. This wall, which enclosed the field called the Warren and ran round to the barn (Fig.5, A) was demolished c. 1950, and most of it thrown down as hardcore for the present road from the village. The water main trench excavated in 1973 followed the line of this wall, and its footings were clearly visible here and there along the line.

The Twentieth Century

In July 1912 J.W. Bloe, an investigator for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, visited the site and recorded the standing buildings. Bloe considered (RCHM surveyor's notes) that the chapel was of seventeenth-century date, apart perhaps from the east wall. However, he described the piscina: "*under the window ledge of the south window, a piscina with plain ogee head, no basin, probably fourteenth century*". An examination of the wall at this point in 1973 showed that it had been roughly rebuilt, probably as a result of the collapse of the piscina. Close examination and the removal of a small area of mortar revealed that the bottom left hand corner of the piscina was still *in situ*. During subsequent restoration of the interior stone work the wall was partly dismantled at this point but no more of the piscina was found. Furthermore during the restoration work no trace of an inscription on the east wall was located.

Much useful information about the site was gained in discussions with members of the Punter family, who lived and farmed here from 1869 to 1919. Mr A.W. Punter, who was living in Canada in 1980, wrote to me and sent a sketch plan of the farm as it was in 1908 (Fig. 9). Mr Punter's letter which

follows is our principal record of the Abbey as a farm in the early twentieth century.

"Since the New Year I have taken up residence with my son in Canada and have recently been looking through the offprint, from Milton Keynes Journal No.3 (1974) of your paper about Bradwell Abbey. I thought I would send you a description as I first remember it about 1908 which differs somewhat from the text.

The buildings between the house and barn consisted on the ground floor of next the house a harness Room leading on to a coach-house and then a stable with boxes or standings for four light horses. Between the stable and barn was the gate-house with two large barn-type doors closing the entrance. Above the coach house and harness room were two servants bedrooms approached from the back stairs leading from the servants hall. Above the stable was the granary which extended over the gate house to the barn.

The servants bedrooms and granary floor and roof were in poor shape and about 1910 the upper storey of this area including the bedrooms was rebuilt except the part over the gatehouse which was left disconnected from the barn and open to the sky.

A stable of brickwork capable of taking seven or eight heavy horses was present between the two barns.

The bakehouse we called the *Wash House* because at that time the only activity there was concerned with clothes washing with the copper, mangle, etc., the two ovens were quite intact then but had not been used for some years. The place had previously been used for butter making as there was a very large churn which had been operated by a horse turning an apparatus like that used for working an elevator. The spindle outside the east wall was still there. There were also two or three hand churns, the larger on a brick floor near the west wall.

The hard water supply came from a pump against the north wall of this building, just east of the door. About 1911 or 1912 the London and North Western Railway co. put down a deeper bore on the east side of the railway and this lowered the general water table so that our well went dry. It was only about fifteen feet deep so it was necessary to put a bore through the bottom of it. The cores from the bore were a hard blue limestone.

The sanitary arrangements consisted, as was customary, of a cesspit privy against the wall from the north-east corner of the house to the wall between the garden and the gravel drive. Half containing two seats was approached from the garden by the front doors the other half was approached from outside and had a small seat for children and a normal size for servants. The pit was emptied periodically by scoop and cart and deposited in a hole behind the chapel.

The site of the Dove House was quite a mound of stone and masonry which had become a rabbit warren. The ditches round it were about a yard or more deep. There was a depression from the site south to the pond and north to the wall by the bridleway. The ditch on the south side formed a pond always having water in it.

West of the dove house was the main rickyard for corn. It must have been used for this purpose for many years as it originally was enclosed by a pine fence of post and rail but this had mostly disappeared with only an odd post left.

The Sheep Yard was at the north end, the enclosure being built with posts about ten inches in diameter and had a roof of thatch. It had not been used recently and was in considerable disrepair. There was a stone built hut for the shepherd a short distance along the wall complete with fireplace but this also was out of use and deteriorating.

The front door was approached by a wide gravel drive for carriages enclosed by a shrubbery of yew, box and laurel and between this and the chapel was just grass. There was a small plantation of Scots firs east of the chapel.

The orchard was fairly complete in those days, the whole area being planted with fruit trees spaced wide apart. By the road was a row of damsons followed by a row of prune plums then a row of pears of various sorts and keeping qualities including Williams and some stewing sorts then there were cherries and plums including Orleans and Victorias and Greengages. Then the apples, the best eaters were the Blenheim Oranges and there were Russets and various sorts of Codlins. My father told me when the trees were planted bones were frequently found and he thought this was a burial ground.

Virtue in 1844 wrote "A once fine avenue of trees leads to the Priory on the west side", indicating that even then it was past its prime. The picture you show of circa 1900, gives the impression that the

avenue was then fairly intact when in fact it only shows the part in the lower half of the Lower Great ground which was in good condition. I have a photo taken from the same position. In the west half of the Lower Great Ground few trees remained not more than three or four and in the Upper Great Ground here were not more than a dozen left of which most were near the west end. The North West part of the Lower Great Ground was in very deep ridge and furrow but both fields were then in grass of rather poor quality lots of Yellow Rattle.

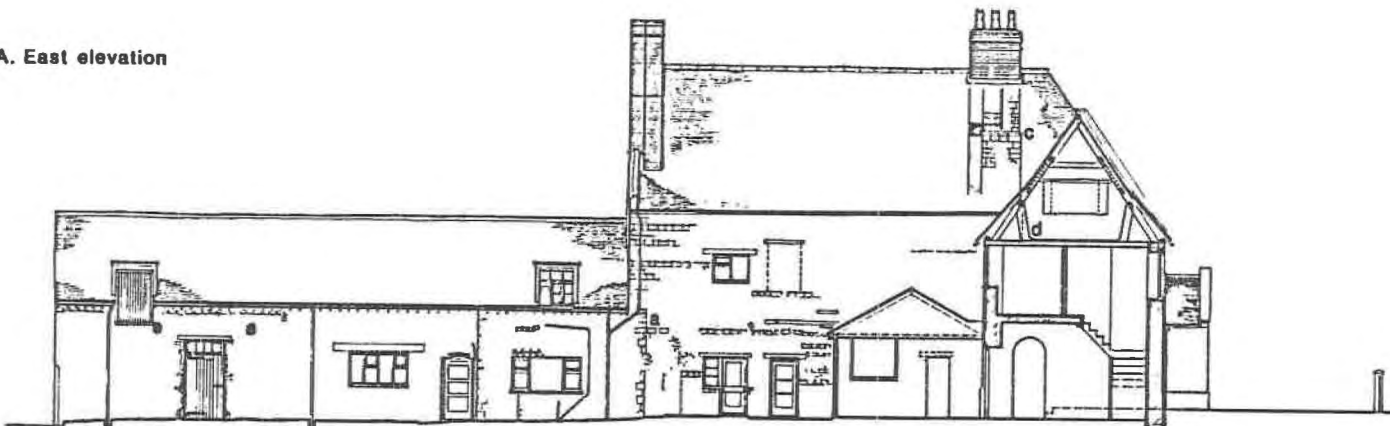
The Chapel was used as a carpenter's shop and place to keep small tools. The floor was several inches deep in wood chips and shavings. The niche had a manger and there was a iron ring in the wall for tying up a horse. I kept rabbits in there when I was a boy.

The buildings shown on the 1851 Tithe Map (Fig. 5) were as follows:

- A was a substantial stone built cow shed with thatched roof. There was a feeding passage the length of the east wall at the end of which was a door into the rick-yard which always had one or two ricks of hay. It was in very good condition then. The sections jutting out were places to put calves which were allowed to suckle the cows after most of the milk had been taken.
- B was a well made wooden structure on stone footings with a door on the north side opening into the orchard and another on the south. The west half above the eaves was floored and made into a pigeon loft. The roof was thatch but it and all four sides were in good condition.
- C had a substantial stone wall on the west side and north with wooden east side and the whole thatched, it provided three boxes for calves.
- D was a wooden building on stone footings with low eaves and a thatched roof with no window at all and only one door. It was about 20 x 12 feet and was used as a F wood shed for firewood.
- F There was no buildings here only the wall of the open fronted cart shed and G was a cow shed backing on the cart shed.

The kitchen garden ran the whole length of the moat (fishpond) and was enclosed on the north side by a dry stone wall. There was a plank bridge across to the island in the moat which held several quince trees. I think I have given you some of this information before but perhaps not all."

A. East elevation



B. West elevation



Fig. 10 The east and west elevations of the Farmhouse.



Fig. 11 A: The west elevation of the Stone Barn. B: The west elevation of the Bakehouse range. C: The north elevation Cruck Barn range.

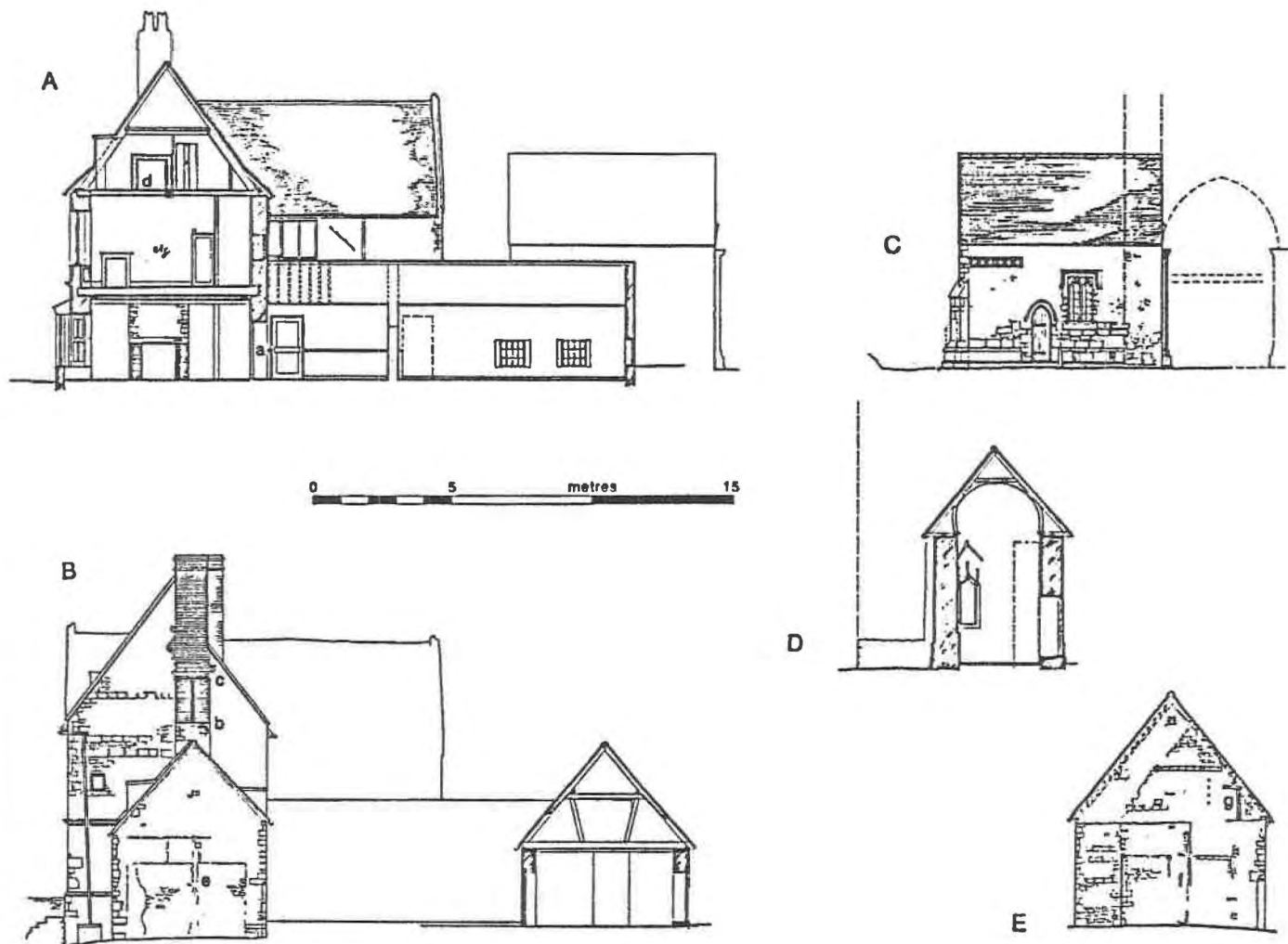


Fig. 12 A: Section through the Farmhouse. B: The south elevation of the Farmhouse and a section through the Bakehouse. C: The south elevation of the Chapel. D: Section through the chapel facing east. E: The north elevation of the Stone Barn.

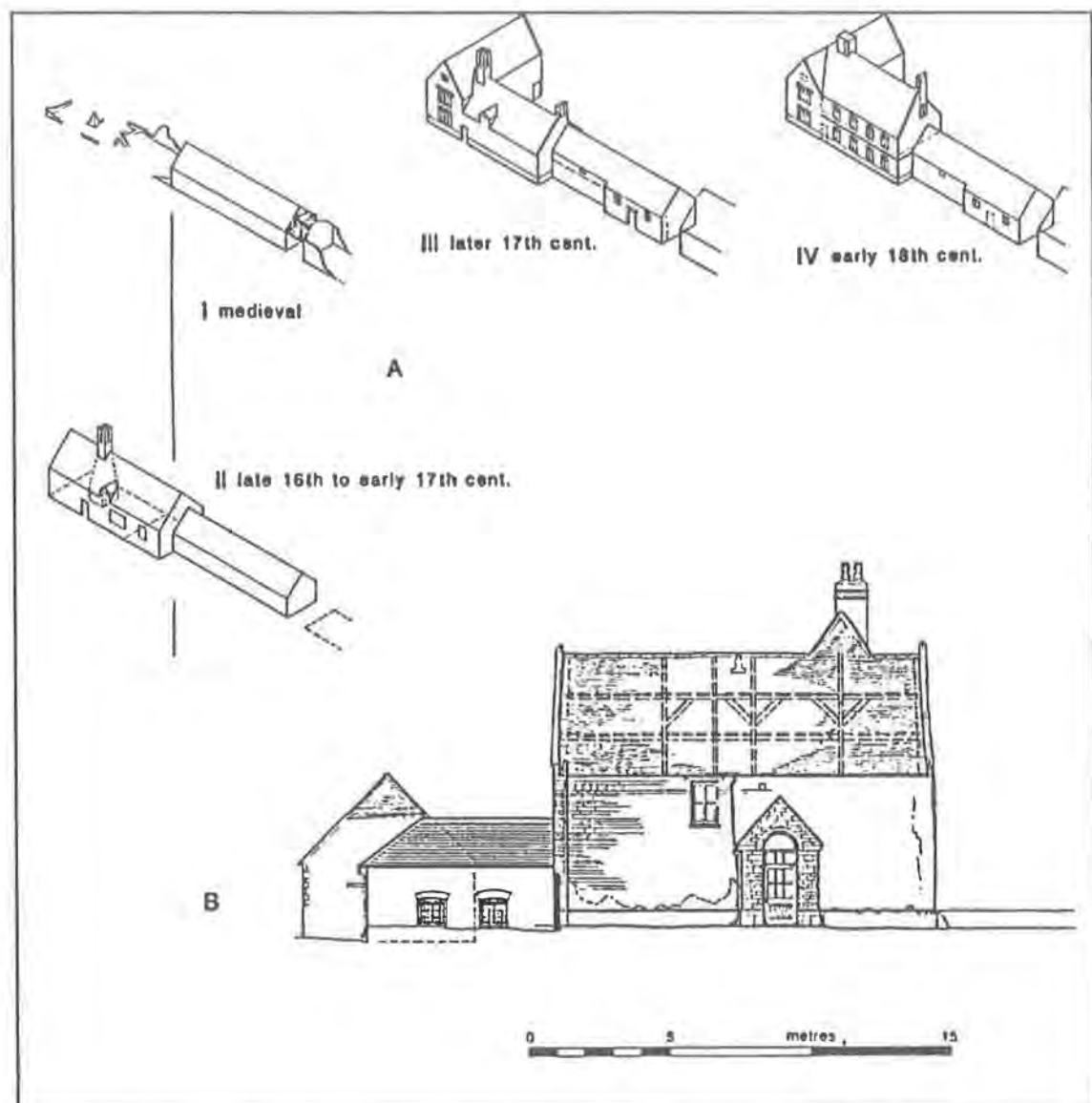


Fig. 13 A: The phases of development. B: The north elevation of the Farmhouse.

Some of the older people in the village, particularly those who worked at the farm, have also given valuable information. One story many have told is of a 'tunnel' which they believed ran from the Chapel to the old church at Stanton Low. My first visit to the Chapel was in 1947 when my mother, a native of Old Bradwell, showed me a disturbed area of the floor near the blocked south door. As a girl my mother had been told that this was where the

Vicar of Bradwell, the Revd Newman Guest, had dug and found the entrance to the tunnel. When the interior of the Chapel was excavated in 1972, it was evident that the cobble floor had been cut through at this point and that a hole had been dug down to the seventeenth-century brick floor, but no evidence of a tunnel was found. The Punters were able to tell us that the hole was dug c.1918 by Albert W. Punter, who found a brass candlestick on the brick floor,

They very kindly gave the candlestick, which was of seventeenth to eighteenth-century date (Mynard 1974, 53 and fig.13.AE16) to Bradwell Abbey Field Centre.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE STANDING BUILDINGS

1. THE FARMHOUSE Figs 10, 12A, 12B and 13B.

The house itself is built of locally derived limestone rubble and squared rubble and has plain clay tiled roofs. There are no cellars, but there was until 1972 a dairy at the east end of the north wing, which had a lowered floor. It also had an external access door and steps down. The house comprises a main block aligned north-south, with a three-bay cross wing at its northern end, set to end flush on the west, extending to the east to make an 'L' plan. Attached to the south gable is a lower range which is discussed separately below.

The date of the construction of the building is not recorded. It is however sited approximately in the expected position of the prior's dwelling and visitor's lodgings, if the small priory were to conform to the standard monastic plan. This standard plan can be projected from the one certainly known point, the west front of the priory church, incorporated in and forming the east wall of the chapel. In the later middle ages, the prior or abbot of many religious houses tended to withdraw more and more from the communal life, largely due to added administrative burdens and the need to receive important guests. Therefore monastic plans not uncommonly show an elaboration of the superior's dwelling. Where this happened, the dwelling could be deemed, at the Dissolution, to be a secular structure and may have been allowed to survive the demolition of the church and claustral buildings. Brabazon's dimension for the width of the 'somewhat ruinous Hall' is 24 feet wide, which closely corresponds to the present building, although the length is dissimilar.

Given this pattern, the standing buildings at Bradwell must be viewed in the light of the possibility that some medieval work survives.

Both the north wing and main range have coped gable ends and plinth mouldings characteristic of post-Reformation work; the main anomaly lies with

the eastern wall of the main north-south block (Fig. 10A) which is of more irregular masonry without a plinth-offset moulding, and against which the north wing's south wall butts. At the south end of the main range this same wall abuts, and appears later than, the east wall of the first building of the lower range. Above door height, this wall has irregular levelling courses of squared rubble, a feature characteristic of sixteenth to seventeenth-century masonry. At the junction of the builds, but clearly belonging to the main north-south range, is the only surviving inscribed stone, which reads 'P(F?) H VANCASELE/ A(nno) 1650' (Fig. 10A, a). Although crudely worked, it is more than a graffito and above the reach of a casual addition. It may well relate to someone of low-countries extraction, perhaps connected with the short tenancy of John Lawrence, which began with his purchase of the estate in that year, but it could simply commemorate a date significant to a later occupant, perhaps the Dutch wife of Joseph Alston of Chelsea. Unfortunately this elevation has been considerably altered in later times, principally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the extent that little original work could have survived. The lowest courses of this wall are thus the only possible remains, even in a fragmented state, of the west claustral range of the priory, a hypothesis slightly reinforced by the strictly north-south alignment.

The principal west elevation provided evidence of a later phase of building. The features of this build are the moulded copings on the south gable, identical with the gables of the north wing, together with the high plinth. The coping mouldings are characteristic of late sixteenth and seventeenth-century work.

The problem arises of similar details used in association with the better quality squared and tooled rubble masonry of the north front of the cross wing, which, on the evidence of two points, suggests that this wing is of a later date, although likely to have been built on the site of the 'King's Chamber', and probably an earlier post-medieval wing. These points are; firstly, the north range has insufficient accommodation to stand alone as a self-contained dwelling, and secondly, the main stack is located outside and asymmetrically to the line of the walls of the north wing. In addition, the roofs of the two ranges differ in constructional detail, (Figs

10A and 12A) which would be unlikely if they were contemporary. However, the foot of the south slope of the west gable (Fig. 10B, b) of the north wing is built into the masonry of the main north-south block. This has been taken previously to indicate that the north cross wing is earlier in build. The stack also exhibits a stone offset chamfer at the base of the shafts, now enclosed well below the ridge line of the north-south range, clearly demonstrating that the four-flue stack is earlier than the main roof. The reason for this appears to be the rebuilding and heightening of the north south range.

The solution to this conflicting evidence appears to lie in the nature of the main stack. From this axial position in the north-south range, the stack originally rose to four freestanding flues serving two rooms of each floor of a bay at the northern end. It is this northern bay that has apparently been rebuilt or refaced, and extended to the east to form the present north wing as seen today.

The remodelling of the north bay of the north-south range to form a more commodious north wing, no doubt containing a main withdrawing room and probably a stair in the present position, is seen therefore to be a third phase of development. It is probably this phase (Phase III) to which the moulded coped gables belong, and that it was decided at the same time that to re-gable the south end of the main block would provide visual uniformity. This may well be the phase that inserted, for the first time, a stack in the south gable end for a service room and for a chamber above. A stack at this stage would explain the low projecting string course in the south gable (Fig. 12B, b).

With this information we can return to the hypothetical plan of Phase II, the three-bay north-south house with a probable north wing. With a stack in a position between the north and centre bays, it may be assumed that the centre bay constituted the main living room, the successor of the medieval hall, while the north bay, having a stack, was probably a heated parlour. The entrance must therefore have been from the west side, opening into a lobby in front of the stack. This so-called lobby-entrance or baffle entry plan is well known through much of the country, and is first recorded in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, continuing its increasing popularity through the seventeenth century. With

this plan a small vice stair might well be expected in the eastern lobby behind the stack.

If the three-bay house dates from c.1575–1600, Phase III is likely to be the building campaign proceeding in the reign of Charles I. There is the date of 1632 mentioned by Browne Willis on a gatehouse, and the date 1650 mentioned above. Although the gatehouse has not survived, and there is some doubt as to where it was, it demonstrates that the then owner Arthur Longueville, whose initials these must be, was engaged in building in the third decade of the century. This is not an improbable date for the gable coping section, nor for the raked queenstruts to the lower purlin of the north cross-wing (Fig. 10A, d). The purlins are jointed by pegged seated scarf joints, and the wall plates, where visible, have chisel-cut numbers. The timbers surrounding the central space of this north roof are chamfered with run-out stops, consistent with their originally having been visible in attic accommodation.

Phase IV is a further remodelling of the main north-south range, probably by Sir Joseph and Elizabeth Alston. Its aim appears to be not only to extend the accommodation but also to provide a fashionable western elevation. The west front, south of the northern cross wing gable, was given four bays, probably of cross windows, on two main floors, divided by a well-moulded mid-wall cornice of stone. To achieve the desired proportions it seems the whole roof was raised, clasping the southern end of the cross-wing gable, engulfing the chamfered offset at the base of the divided flues, and necessitating the raising of the south gable. This involved the observed extension upwards of the stack in brickwork to a second offset string (Fig. 12B, c), and the resetting of the original gable copings. This heightening provided more roomy attic accommodation, so the original pokey north wing attics were removed, and their gable windows blocked with similar brickwork. As to date, we have the following evidence, some stylistically in slight conflict.

In the new attic there is, added to the original axial stack, a new fireplace with a timber bolection moulded surround (Fig. 12A, d). This shape could be as early as the Civil War, but is more likely to be late into the seventeenth century or even early

eighteenth. Its flue in the roof space is in a similar early brickwork, added on to the back of the original four-flue stack. There are also two moulded three-plank doors with iron strap hinges, and a third one in the partition of the north range roof. The brickwork used throughout, including the stack heightening, the gable window blockings and the new fireplace flue, appears very similar, and as far as can be judged is late seventeenth century in date, while the moulded stone cornice on the facade is familiar in later seventeenth-century contexts. More irreconcilable is the form of the window lintels, which consist of two square stones abutted near the centre, bearing incised pseudo-joints representing ashlar voussoirs. This is rather inferior work of a type more associated with the mid and late eighteenth century. There is also a further such lintel built into the west gable of the north wing, in a position suggestive of a stair window having been removed (Fig. 10B, e), but as the two halves of the lintel are set upside down to one another, this is taken to be of no more than the re-use of redundant stones as facings. The accuracy of the refacing work is also shown by the blocked attic windows of the north range, which were faced in stone and are now undetectable externally. Added to this evidence is the roof truss detail, for if it is a new roof at this stage at a higher level this would explain why it differs in some essential aspects from that of the north cross-wing. It has one truss only, supporting a single tier of clasped purlins, above which the principals are diminished. The apex is halved. Diminished rafters are a surprise here, as they are normally associated with Midlands work of the late medieval period and not later, but the absence of windbraces and the general economy of construction leaves little doubt that this is of a considerably later date. It is just possible that the rafters alone remain from a Phase II building and were re-used in the new heightened roof.

Internally, below the roof, the only surviving detail of a late seventeenth to early eighteenth-century building phase is to be found on the ground floor in the present library. This room has a fine moulded plaster ceiling cornice, breaking and returning into the new window openings. It has lost a central door to the southern end bay, the Phase II kitchen.

If the major alterations described are all of one

phase, and there is insufficient clear evidence to postulate more, then the balance of the evidence suggests that this took place c.1680–1700. Browne Willis, writing before 1719 and probably as early as 1710 (Bodleian, Willis Ms. fol. XI), described “*the present Mannor House, which has been new built within these 50 years from old materials*”. This suggests that the work of renewing the house took place c.1660–70. This seems stylistically too early, and one may perhaps allow Browne Willis to have been misinformed, although one historical occasion for such aggrandisement is the appointment of Sir Joseph Alston II to the position of County Sheriff in 1671. Given the other evidence, it may be that the anomalous stone lintels are indeed of that time.

Phase V of the farmhouse’s evolution covers a series of alterations and additions made through the course of the nineteenth century. We have in the early 1800’s a re-windowing of the main west front with double hung sashes in the earlier openings, followed some thirty years (one generation) later by internal alterations apparently requiring a re-positioning of most windows on both ground and first floors, and one new sixteen-pane sash to be inserted in the first floor. The external tops of the stacks were apparently rebuilt, the south gable stack bearing the inscription ‘A.B. 1829’. In the internal angle formed by the two ranges a two-storey bay was also added, with access through a door from the main block at first-floor level, the lintel of which survives. This bay was apparently extended eastward at this time, or at least before 1851, in single-storey brickwork as a dairy with a pitched slated roof, now the meeting room. Later, probably around 1870, came the addition or rebuild of the north porch, and a standard canted bay window was added to the west front.

The two-storey section was demolished in 1972 when the building was converted by MKDC for its present use.

2. THE WORKSHOP RANGE Figs 10A, 10B and 12B

This range, built of limestone rubble with plain clay tile roofs, is on the same axis and is attached to the south gable of the north-south range of the

farmhouse. It contains one storey with attics. A fireplace stands at the north end against the farmhouse, its flue entering the main stack in the south gable.

This has always been a range of service rooms, probably adjuncts to the adjacent kitchen, perhaps at one time a workshop, brewhouse and dairy.

The western front of this range is the more instructive. It is divided into two sections of approximately equal length. The north section, that nearest the farmhouse, is built in two stages, the lower stage of the wall being built of very roughly coursed small limestone rubble, with no features except three filled putlog holes. The upper stage is in more varied stonework and has, at its approximate centre, a small three-light timber window, rebated internally to take leaded glazing, but now without it and partially covered by rough planks nailed as blockings. The timber mullions are simply chamfered, and the sill and head both square in section. Only one putlog hole can be discerned in this upper section. The junction with the main building shows some disjointing, suggesting that the wall preceded the gable end of the house, but was insufficiently substantial in itself for the gable to simply abut, so that the wall was partly demolished to carry the new Phase II-III gable wall through, and the resulting gap was filled by building the disjointed masonry up to the new gable wall. This indicates that it is likely to date earlier than Phase III, and is probably of Phase II date. It is likely therefore to be a single storey structure surviving from the medieval period.

The south gable of the whole range (Fig. 12B) clearly clasps earlier masonry, the top of which aligns well with the upper courses of the postulated medieval work, and is not unlike it in character despite recent clumsy pointing. Thus the medieval structure appears to have extended for 18.7m, the full length of this range. The extra thickness of the gable wall, and particularly the west wall, tends to confirm this. On the west face there is no explanation for a short course of gritstones at low level (Fig. 10B, f) which may, like some of the brick at ground level, represent repairs. The upper stage with the timber window then appears to be a post-medieval heightening of the range to provide a loft. Unfortunately the eastern elevation cannot cor-

roborate this theory, there being a straight joint and slight change of alignment on the north jamb of the kitchen doorway. The masonry this side is much altered by the insertion of windows, and also varies in thickness along its length.

The southern half of this range was clearly widened to the west in the seventeenth century to increase the floor area. It is provided with windows with simple moulded label heads and a central door, the whole doorcase of which has subsequently been removed, leaving only the timber lintel. The spacing of the windows confirms the door as an original feature, and their setting high in the wall internally in a room without a fireplace suggests that this section was adapted to form the farm dairy. The south gable wall clearly shows the widening with its attendant heightening of the roof, although the south-west corner was rebuilt in the 1950s. Central to this gable wall is an impression of a full-height vertically embedded timber, extended to above the wall top of the early masonry (Fig. 12B, e). This corresponds to a similar feature on the north-facing end gable of the stone barn (Fig. 12E, f). These features have been generally interpreted as gate posts existing when the gables were erected, but the fact that they are not directly opposite one another, and extend far higher than would be necessary for gates, suggests that although this explanation is probably correct there is more to it. As they were embedded in masonry of suggested medieval date, it seems they represent timber supports for a tie beam of the medieval gatehouse bridging the opening between the two buildings. Indeed, the cut-off end of such a tie beam survives in the north gable of the barn.

On the south-east external corner, the wall is rebuilt with a splay, corbelled back to the square above a height vulnerable to damage by cornering animals and farm vehicles. There is a similar corner, also with a simple moulded corbel block, on the north-west corner of the stone barn. As both these corners are in work shown to be post-medieval in date, it is likely that they were inserted as part of the adaptation of the monastic range to farm use in the seventeenth century.

Internally, little of the construction remains visible, although both east and west walls are considerably battered. The northern section has an end

fireplace with a rough timber fire lintel, appropriate to service room use. If the earlier arguments are accepted, this fireplace must be a seventeenth-century insertion. The floor of this range is lower than that of the farmhouse and is flagged, the connection being a narrow passage on the west side of the stack almost beneath the vice stair, which was probably inserted at the same time as the raising of the walls and roof of the main farmhouse range to provide access at this end. The southern section, the dairy/workshop, is divided from the north section by a wall of similar thickness to its external walls, suggesting the range was always divided at this point.

3. THE STONE BARN Figs 11A and 12E

This barn is also built of coursed limestone rubble, but has cut quoins and a patterned clay tile roof. It is directly in line with the north-south range, and forms the east side of the large farm yard. Attached to its rear is a twentieth-century lean-to blockwork extension with a sheeted roof. Butting its southern gable is a nineteenth-century brick and slated cowhouse.

Unlike the farmhouse and its attached service range, the barn is relatively straightforward in build. It is clearly of late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century construction, a date based on the roof and south window detail and the use of large leveling courses in the wall.

The one complication is demonstrated on the north gable end. Here the appearance of a straight joint and the lack of vertical and horizontal alignment show that this wall alone encompasses the gable end of a smaller, lower building, set in line with and of the same width as the gable of the earlier build of the service range to the north, and thus probably of medieval date. This wall incorporates an offset at the base of a pitched gable, suggesting that it was originally internal to a building, and the stoned-in vertical slot, the opposing gatepost already discussed, extends up into the gable itself. Here also are the fragmentary remains of timber framing, the end of a collar and a supporting strut, now not articulated (Fig. 12 E, g). This seems to confirm that the gable was timber framed above wall head and tie level, and could well be internal to the suggested gatehouse chamber above the passage to the internal yard. The line of the original gable can just be discerned. The western corner of

the gable would coincide approximately with the west front on the barn, but as discussed above, this corner was rebuilt with a splay in the seventeenth century. This early building was patently too small to be the barn that was needed, so it was widened considerably to the east and a new structure was built incorporating the old wall. This building was well built, and has survived comparatively unaltered. It is of four bays with double cart doors with timber lintels in the third bay from the north. The first, second and fourth bays have slit vents on the east side, splayed internally, but there are surprisingly no corresponding vents on the west. Putlog holes are difficult to discern. A high asymmetrical opening in the south gable, blocked until the 1980s, was found to have a square oak sill and head, and diagonally set oak bars. It was not intended to be glazed. Owl holes occur in both gables. The roof trusses have straight tie beams with raking struts to low-set collars and threaded purlins, and a further collar to an upper tier of purlins. There is no carpenter's numbering system. The building was probably tiled from its date of erection, but the tiling with zig-zag patterns of lighter tiles probably dates from the early nineteenth century. This was carefully retained when the building was reroofed in 1983.

4. THE GREAT BARN Figs 11A and 11C

The barn forming the south side of the large farmyard is now known as the 'Cruck Barn' from its original roof construction. As with other buildings, it is constructed of limestone rubble and has a plain clay tiled roof. It is now of four bays, with a midstrey on the south side of the second bay to the east.

It was described in Brabazon's post-reformation survey as:

"Itm a barn' contaynyng ix baies in length Cvj ffote & in brede xxvij ffote which is cou'd with tyle & in su' plac's wit' straw p' tlelie in decay for lack of tyling which barn' may not be spared"

From this it may be taken that it was originally thatched, and despite the decay could still be of use.

The walls today exhibit a complex variety of alterations and rebuilding. The medieval structure can be identified by roughly coursed rubble walls 900 mm or more in thickness, without ashlar dress-

ings. The span between the medieval walls is 8.4 m (27ft 7in, compared with Brabazon's 27ft). On these walls the lower ends of a pair of raised crucks are set, and when the truss position is related to the one surviving wall of the south midstrey or porch, a notional bay spacing of 4.35 m (14ft 3½in) is ascertained. Brabazon's quoted length of 106ft then only admits of seven bays. This at 4.35 m, gives a length of 30.45 m (100ft) which, when the thickness of the gable walls is added, comes to approximately 106ft. It must have been easier to measure the width internally and the length externally! His description of nine bays cannot be reconciled unless the two bays of the porch are included. The length is to some extent confirmed by the very substantial stone end wall of the later brick building on the edge of the fishpond directly to the east (Fig. 11C, a), and by the continuation of the south wall of the barn for 12.1 m (Fig. 11C, b), almost a further bay westwards of the present gable. This now forms the spine wall for two nineteenth-century hovels, an open fronted cart shed on the north, and a corrugated iron store or stable on the south.

The cruck blades between Bays 5 and 6 from the east are seated within the wall 1.2 m to 1.4 m from the floor. The precise detail of the seating cannot be seen. The blades measure 500 × 275 mm, and rise in a smooth curve to the point at which they are both cut off. Thus it cannot be established whether they are simple crucks or technically raised base crucks. Apart from a small peg hole near the visible foot of each blade, all further helpful details such as mortices for braces or ties would lie above this point and are lost to us. Timber core sections of the blades were submitted to Portsmouth Polytechnic for dendrochronological dating, and provided a consistent date of 1084–1280 where $t=5.12$, giving an estimated felling date of c.1320, allowing for sapwood of 23–40 years (Fletcher 1981, List 5 12.30). It would have been possible to span the 8.4 m with a simple cruck couple although, in the fourteenth century, particularly in a lowland area, it would not be unusual to have employed base crucks.

The central truss of the two-bay porch also has a cruck blade reused as a tie beam (Fig. 11A, c). This timber has had its ends recut for a secondary use, but it retains mortices for a collar and for a knee-brace, and a much weathered trench for a purlin or

outrider carrying a purlin. The inner face of the elbow is very well cut, and there is one peg hole on the face. The fact that both collar and brace were tenoned into the blade is an indication of a degree of sophistication of workmanship which belies the quality of the wall construction. A core was also taken from this timber, and provided a very similar date of 1300–1320. A reconstruction of this truss from the one blade, using the angles of the mortices, suggests that the span of this frame must fall within the bracket of 5.3 to 5.8 m (approximately 18ft). It cannot therefore have belonged to the main span of the barn, but probably to another of the conventual buildings which, in Brabazon's terms "may not be spared".

Many medieval barns of stone exist with crucks of similar span to that of Bradwell. They date from c.1300 to past 1500, for example Frocester (1284–1306) and Ashleworth (1481–1515). Of these, by far the larger number fall within the first half of the fourteenth century, for example Adderbury, Dorchester and Church Enstone in Oxfordshire, Brockworth Court, Postlip, and Siddington in Gloucestershire and Doultling and Pilton in Somerset. In many of these the trusses are raised base crucks, 8.23 m (27ft) being an average span for base crucks (Alcock and Barley 1972, 142).

Given that the crucks must bear on original walling, the north face of the building can be shown to consist of medieval work from the cruck seating east almost as far as the rebuilt piers of the present cartway (Fig. 11C, d). Within this length there is one change of thickness, the significance of which cannot now be guessed at. On the south side, walling of a similar thickness exists for the same bay, also supporting the opposite cruck. This wall has spread seriously in the past, necessitating a raking buttress of inferior workmanship to be erected against it (Fig. 11A, e). Here the wall has fractured under the weight of the truss, not for want of buttressing, and it seems unlikely that there were original buttresses either side. Immediately west of this position on the north side there is a vertical joint, beyond which the stonework is thinner, composed of reused squared stone set in red clay loam mortar. This continues to the present small doorway, beyond which the stonework reverts to a medieval character for about one metre until it meets the

corner of the rebuilt west wall. The door and its adjacent walling thus occupies approximately a two metre run, which may be a blocked medieval entrance in the original second bay from the west. Opposite, on the south side, there is a break in the early wall, not exactly opposite but perhaps indicating a similar arrangement.

The west gable end of the existing barn is seen to be a post-medieval shortening by one bay of the medieval barn, and the short thicker section of the spine wall of the hovels is all that survives of the south wall of the original west end bay.

In the north face, east of the main cartway doors, the wall of the present single bay beyond the rebuilt jamb appears to be one build, returning as the present east wall at 550–700 mm, thinner than medieval work. It contains one slit vent on the north side, and one clear putlog hole. This seems to be a rebuild of the fourteenth-century structure, but the absence of features precludes any more precise dating. The same build returns on the south side, where it appears to butt up against the east wall of the midstrey. This east midstrey wall is again thicker, at 900 mm, and ends with a curious substantial thickening, which can only be for stability where the door is hinged. Its corresponding wall on the west side of the porch is only 700 mm thick, containing re-used dressed stone, and thus looks to have been rebuilt after the Suppression. An indication of a joint with the main medieval south wall can just be detected internally.

The brick cowhouse attached at the east end of the barn has its eastern brick gable end raised on a substantial low stone wall, approximately 1.0 m thick at floor level. It seems very probable that this is all there is left of the east gable of the medieval priory barn, completing the seven bays of Brabazon's survey mentioned above. Externally this wall steps out to a wide foundation, necessary in that it is built hard up against the medieval fish pond.

The medieval barn may therefore be reconstructed with a central two-bay midstrey opening on to the fields in the usual way on the south side (a single porch of two bays also occurs at Church Enstone, dated 1382), and having regard to various obscuring alterations to the stonework of the north

wall, probably two further unpierced openings to the even numbered bays on the north, the *basse-court*, of the Priory. A parallel barn to that at Bradwell is the late fourteenth century barn at Stanway, Gloucs. (Cordingley 1961, plates 7, 9 and 10) a grange of Tewkesbury Abbey, with base crucks spanning 8.9 m (29ft 4in), also of seven bays or 29.25 m (96ft) in length, with a two-bay porch at the centre. With but one cartway the carry distance would be rather impractical, and it does raise the question as to whether the barn served more purposes than purely the storage and threshing of grain.

5. THE BAKEHOUSE RANGE Figs 11B and 11B

This range of buildings lies parallel to and east of the main north-south range of the farmhouse and its service wing, separated from it by a narrow yard. At the north end is a one-storey single-cell building of 2 bays, built of coursed limestone rubble, and having a patterned plain clay tile roof. Attached to its south gable is a single range of outbuildings, at one time a garage and pigsties. This is also of stone, but with a Welsh slate roof.

The floor of the bakehouse was investigated archaeologically prior to the laying of a new concrete floor in 1973. This suggested (Mynard 1974, 47–48) that the building was constructed in the thirteenth century with ovens at the south end, continuing in use to the sixteenth. After a period of disuse, it was converted to domestic use in the later part of that century by the insertion of a large fireplace and stack at its southern end. In the nineteenth century, new ovens were built into this fireplace when it became a bakehouse, and at the turn of the century, a dairy.

The standing building is of small-scale rubble walling, similar to that identified as medieval in the workshop range. There were two door openings, one on each longer face, the east opening now reduced in size and made into a window. The north wall can be seen to be a later build, using larger stonework for the quoining. The roof has two trusses consisting of straight tie beams and collars, with queen struts and clasped purlins. Straight wind braces morticed to the principals lap the purlins, which have splayed trenched scarfs. The rafters are pegged to the purlins. This construction is consistent with an early post-medieval date, the seated

purlin scarfs being similar to those of the roof of the north range. The presence of windbraces to the northern half bay corroborates the archaeological evidence that the building was originally three bays, and was reduced by half a bay. The proximity of the brick range immediately to the north, and the half-hipped roof suggest that the reduction in length may have taken place as late as the nineteenth century.

Internally the fire lintel is rough, but has in part a poorly formed chamfer with an ogee stop. Two drilled holes for fire equipment are to be seen. The use of an ogee or lamb's tongue stop in this situation is more characteristic of the seventeenth or even eighteenth century than of earlier work.

The conclusion from the architectural survey confirms a medieval date for the basic structure, to which a new roof was put in the seventeenth century, probably at the same time as a domestic hearth with much reused stone was inserted at its southern end. The building was subsequently shortened by half a bay. The roof covering, like the stone barn, has zig-zag patterns of lighter tiles, probably early nineteenth century in date, relayed on roofing felt in 1983.

Attached and running to the south is the series of stone-fronted outbuildings, apparently of a single build of indeterminate date. The range originally ended in a cross-wing, appearing somewhat displaced on the 1851 tithe map. This accounts for the insubstantial weatherboarded south gable. The roof of this section is of late nineteenth-century date, and was reslated in 1983.

6. THE CHAPEL Figs 11C and 11D

The identification of the small rectangular building to the north of the farmhouse is confirmed by Brabazon as a "*little Chapell withowte the Church which may not welbe spared*" with "*the offering at our ladie of Bradwell in the same Chapell is worth yerlie....*". An indication of its construction as seen in 1526 is indicated by the following comment "*Item - the Tile tymer & Irene that may be spared is worth....*"

Exterior

The building is constructed of local limestone, uncoursed, with ashlar quoins and dressings. It is

rectangular, 5.0 × 2.72 m (approx 16ft 4" × 9ft) in plan, slightly wider at the west end, aligned approximately east-west, with angle buttresses at the western corners. It has a main central door arch at the west, with a three-quarter roll and lobed inner moulding, and a small subsidiary door in the south wall with keeled shafts and two orders of devolved ballflower enrichments in the head. The chapel was well lit, primarily by the large 3-light window with reticulated tracery in the western gable over the door, its stained glass lost shortly before John Virtue's visit in 1844, and by two two-light windows with cusped rectilinear tracery in the side walls; the south window was displaced eastward by the small door and has a high sill. Both windows and the small door were blocked by eighteenth-century brickwork until the south window was reopened in 1985. The windows, including the mullions, have Morris type 2 large wave mouldings (Morris 1978). The walls have an exterior chamfered plinth. The east wall, at 1.37 m, is considerably thicker than the side walls (880 mm) and west wall (940 mm). On the exterior face of the east wall there is an attached half-octagonal pier respond with a raised base carrying the springing of the north arcade of the church, and, above a simple chamfered string, the quoining of the jamb of a small high-level window. There are also two groups of three blind quatrefoils set under the eaves of the south wall of the chapel, towards the west end.

Interior

The floor, remarkably, still retains some medieval encaustic tiles of Little Brickhill origin (Mynard 1975), set to a diagonal pattern between a plain dark green tile border five tiles wide. As these tiles were not produced before the late fifteenth century, they suggest that improvements to the building continued through the medieval period. The tiling stops 2.25 m short of the east end, indicating that there was either a change to flagging or that there may have been a raised sanctuary area with the altar.

The tiled roof covers the west wall without a coped gable, and is supported on its original roof structure.

Internally, the most significant visible feature remaining is a high niche set asymmetrically in the east wall, with an ogee moulded head springing off

crouching beast terminals and rising to a fleur. Simplified pinnacles rise from the ends. Above, a rather crude triangular hood moulding terminates in a simple disk. The walls of the chapel were plastered and much survives, rising 3.4 m (11 ft 2 in) to the moulded timber inner wall plate. The roof is composed of eleven pairs of trussed rafters with straight braces to the collars, and curved ashlar rising from the inner plate to form a rough barrel vault of slightly horseshoe form, and was underdrawn with plaster. John Virtue sketched the piscina set below the south window on his visit in June 1844, but after part of the wall collapsed and was rebuilt in the 1950s only the bottom left hand corner of it remains. A small moulded bell capital, probably from an early to mid thirteenth-century nook shaft, is built into the wall below the position of the piscina.

The presence of the reset quatrefoils, which in an earlier existence had been glazed, the rather crude setting of the heads of the side windows, and the late seventeenth-century vault paintings, have led others (RCHM 1913, 69) to believe that the building was a post-Reformation structure, using materials from the church. The discovery of wall paintings throughout, *inter alia*, demonstrates that the building is indeed of the mid fourteenth century, a date confirmed both by the tracery and the form of the roof structure. The roof was carried over the east wall on the demolition of the church.

Problems of construction

As with all buildings, even this simple structure presents some anomalies. Much can be explained by the understanding that the thick east wall is in fact a section of the west wall of the church, demolished after the Dissolution. Thus there is no east window, the external south wall plinth chamfer does not extend to the east end of the chapel or cross the east wall, and a clear straight joint can be seen on the south wall. Excavations have shown that the east wall extended further to the north, returning as the outer wall of the north aisle. Thus the evidence places the chapel asymmetrical to the west front of the church, allowing a hypothetical central west door to remain in use. It could not however be placed further to the north, owing to the presence of an earlier medieval building revealed in the 1972 excavations. Excavations within the chapel, also in 1972 in the untiled area in the eastern half of the

chapel, located the base of an external buttress to the west church wall, later enclosed by the chapel. The loam-mortar bedding of the stonework internally, only in this position, confirmed that it was demolished after the chapel was built and plastered over, thus explaining the apparent anomaly of the placing of the niche, which must have been located between the buttresses. The subsequent demolition of this buttress probably also explains the presence of what appears to be half of the head of a niche in the square eastern jamb of the south window, for its opposite half may well have been on the buttress.

One unexplained feature is the presence of small drillings all round the engaged demi-column on the exterior of the east wall, and continuing around the springing of the arcade. These are likely to be a medieval feature, in that there is no cause for them to be drilled at any later time. They suggest fixings for hangings, and could relate to what appears to be the post-medieval use of this end of the north aisle.

Dating

S.E. Rigold, who in 1972 was the first to look at the building from an architectural historian's point of view (Rigold and Woodfield 1974), formed the opinion that the building was erected c.1350, based on the mouldings and the rather half-hearted ballflower ornament. Subsequent work, including the opening up of the roof during works of repair by the writer, tended to confirm a date in the first half of the fourteenth century, probably before the onset of the more serious plagues of the mid century. This again is confirmed by Morris' dating of the large wave moulding, which he states is not commonly used in this area before c.1320. This is independently corroborated by Dr Rouse's learned opinion on the date of the wall paintings.

The church to which the chapel was attached was therefore already standing in c.1320–30. The north-east corner of the aisle is without external buttresses, and is very substantial. The high, simply chamfered string course with the quoining of a small single-light window upon it suggests a date of construction for this part of the church not later than early in the thirteenth century, and possibly in the twelfth century.

Wall Paintings

The existence of a fine series of wall paintings

was revealed by the decay of the roof allowing water to wash down the interior wall surfaces. These were originally investigated by Dr. E. Clive Rouse FSA. A programme of cleaning and consolidation was subsequently instigated, the work being undertaken in the first instance by Anne Ballentine, and later by Madeleine Katkov and Claus Oldenbourg under Mr Rouse's guidance.

Three recognisable periods of wall painting have been identified. The earliest appear to be painted shortly after the erection of the building, consisting of a diaper of 'M's, followed in thirty years or so by the main series of historiated paintings of high quality, which survive on the north and south walls, and some much less well preserved on the east wall. The second period is that of the Stuart royal arms in the tympanum of the east wall, and the third period consists of the painting of the vault, probably in the later seventeenth century. No plaster survives on the west wall, and no painting is to be seen in the west-window reveals.

The medieval paintings use the standard medieval palette of red and yellow ochres and carbon black, mixed to give some variety of tones. The north and south walls are covered with a diaper of stencilled lombardic 'M's for Maria in red, amplified by a floral motif in the window reveals and over the stonework of the windows.

The total medieval schema is not fully understood, nor whether one cycle permeated the whole chapel, as might be expected. Most interestingly they appear to have a didactic intent related to the chapel's purpose. The south wall illustrates a series of four secular figures in costume, carrying the pilgrims' staff, approaching a place of healing, two at least bearing a symbol of their affliction. As they approach so they set down their staffs and kneel in supplication. The foremost has his arms uplifted imploringly, the second is not clear, the third carries a suspended model head, whilst the fourth, a gentleman with his fashionable hat in hand, carries a small naked figure of a kneeling child before him. The object of their veneration is unfortunately missing, but there is some evidence of a cross. This might be merely background, as the pilgrims may well be seen as approaching the figure in the chapel niche itself. Above the south window St Michael appears, weighing souls; the standing Virgin on the

left gently intercedes by placing the end of her rosary in the scale pan, whilst the devil hangs on to the opposite side.

The iconography of the north wall is much obscured by damage, and the painting at the west end is extremely fragmentary. It appears to be a scene of large draped figures with bare feet, and with feathered wings and clouds. Given the dedication of the chapel it is probably an Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Over the window are three paired couples holding hands and making gestures as if to imply discourse. They are dressed alternately in dark and light robes. The second figure from the right is certainly female and wears a white gown and has a halo. Each side of her are men in fashionable hats. The fourth figure from the right also appears to be wearing a hat. East of the window is a large figure in a loin cloth with his hands bound. A finger of accusation points to his head. This is probably part of a Flagellation. Below this, two small female figures with halos greet each other, perhaps a Visitation. The splayed window reveals contain the most outstanding paintings. That on the east shows an Annunciation. The Archangel appears to fly in through the window (his right foot survives on the window jamb) bearing a scroll with the salutation "*Ave Maria (gratia plena)*". A lily stands between him and the Virgin, and above them a dove emerges from the clouds and between stars. It is significant that the painting makes direct reference to the architecture. On the west splay there is a lady in a wimple with a child. This has usually been referred to as St Anne teaching the Virgin to read, although there is no trace of a book, and neither figure has a halo. Within the west-window reveal there is a very faint female figure with hands clasped in prayer.

Of the east wall, only the northern half beyond the buttress was available to the original painter. Here was placed Christ on the Cross, with the Virgin and St John, their conventional positions adjusted probably because of the buttress. Below were several small figures, one with hands raised in prayer. In the spandrel above the niche and below the hood mould is the head of Christ with a nimbed halo and two censing angels either side. The niche retains isolated fragments of architectural polychrome in oil paint, red, green, blue, black, yellow and gold. A single coat of coarse limewash had

been applied over the painting, presumably at the Reformation, and a scheme of painting using a purplish-red had been applied.

Above, in the spandrel of the vault, is the mantled Stuart coat of arms, with facing grated helm and lion and unicorn supporters. The royal arms, demonstrating royal supremacy of the church, were commonly displayed on an east wall in churches from the mid sixteenth century, and from an early date were often painted on plaster in the spandrel over the chancel arch. They became compulsory under Charles II. It is not clear whether the chapel arms are those of James I or a subsequent monarch. In North Buckinghamshire examples on plaster include those of Charles II, surviving above the vault at Great Linford, while at Thornton there appear to be three, presumably repainted at the change of monarch, the last being of William III.

The ceiling vault is painted with clouds and cherubs blowing trumpets, all rather crudely executed, leaving clear sky at the east and west ends. This work was probably carried out before c.1700 for the Alston family, who were the last lords of the manor to use the building as a private chapel. After 1702 they spent much of their life in Surrey.

Discussion

The purpose of the chapel appears to have been to provide permanent shelter to a figure in a pre-existing niche on the west front of the church. In view of the dedication recorded by Brabazon and the subject of the paintings, it may be presumed that the figure was of the Virgin herself, and that during the course of exposure it had acquired healing properties whose fame had been broadcast, making her the object of devotion, especially for those with ailments requiring her intervention for a cure. Further, it may be argued that the niche with its figure did not require shelter until the cult was established and her shrine had both sufficient devotional offerings and a sufficiency of funds to provide a permanent shelter. The width of the building was determined by the width available between the west door of the church and a medieval building hard up the north-west corner of the aisle. The pilgrims would see the Virgin through the opened double west doors, and the shrine would have been at-

tended by the priest entering by the small south door. It seems less likely that pilgrims would circulate through the chapel itself.

The cult may have been of long standing, for the parish church of St Lawrence in Bradwell has inscribed on a fillet band around the imposts of the chancel arch a very unusual inscription in early thirteenth-century minuscules confirming the church's dedication on one side, and "VIGINTI : DIES : RELAXIONIS" on the other, clearly an offer of twenty days' remission of sins. This would normally be the award either for essential goodly works or for particular acts of piety. It is possible that the act of piety was a visit to the Shrine of St Mary of Bradwell, the church acting in the role of a slipper chapel.

CONSERVATION OF THE CHAPEL AND WALLPAINTINGS

The chapel had been used as a farm outbuilding and stable, probably from the early eighteenth century until the 1920s, and is recorded by the Royal Commission as being a fowl house and lumber shed. The internal level had risen by about one metre of accumulated detritus. This was removed in the 1972 and the building fabric underwent initial repair and consolidation, including the repair and reglazing of the west window. A further programme of repairs, co-ordinated with work on the paintings, was inaugurated to bring the building up to the required standard. This involved stripping the roof tiles and reroofing, when the extrados of the vault was cleaned of many decayed battens and the plaster re-suspended from the timbers on brass wire, dental plaster and scrim. A large hole at the west end was repaired and a hatch inserted to provide access to the roof for the first time. New oak two-leaf doors were provided, hung on low-carbon iron hinges forged by P. Sullivan, bearing the 'M' monogram. Some essential stonework repairs were also carried out. Internally the medieval floor tiles could not be lifted without unacceptable loss, so were cleaned and pointed with lime mortar, and the unpaved areas were made up with hand-made bricks from Little Woolstone church.

In 1975 some conservation work on the paintings was carried out by W. Turner, an archaeologi-

cal restorer from the National Museum of Wales, assisted by a restorer from the Verulamium Museum. The walls were cleaned down and consolidated with Paraloid B 72 spray, and then retouched. In 1979–80 a more extensive programme of consolidation was inaugurated under the direction of Dr. E.C. Rouse, with financial assistance from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. In 1977 the synthetic resin and retouches were removed by Ann Ballantyne and Anna Hulbert, and in late 1979 the ceiling and Royal Arms restored by Madeleine Katkov. The programme was taken over by M. Katkov and C. Oldenbourg in 1981 following Dr. Rouse's retirement, and completed in March 1984.

Original Painting Techniques

The wall fabric is of loose stone rubble covered with a layer of fairly coarse mortar, up to one inch thick (a wide range of sand grain sizes up to 0.25", with numerous small inclusions; many broken mussel shells and lumps of clay) with a smoothed-off surface. This was covered with two coats of limewash, the first of which probably dates from when the chapel was built c.1330–40, and the second from when the paintings were executed, towards the end of the fourteenth century. The pigments used are red and yellow ochre and carbon black; the medium is lime.

In 1979, the condition of the interior was reviewed. There was algal growth on the walls from dampness and lack of air circulation, extending up a height of approximately 2.0 m. Uncovering of the paintings on the north and east walls was incomplete. The top of the south wall had been treated in 1979 and was sound, but had a considerable deposit of loose surface grime. Elsewhere the plaster was detached from the support in many places. There were numerous plaster losses. The base of the walls was stripped of plaster up to approximately three feet. The royal arms were laid on a plaster base separated from that of the east wall below by a band of haired plaster some 100 mm wide, probably filled in when an extension of the wall plate mouldings was removed.

Earth pigments and carbon black had been used for the royal arms, similar to the medieval colours, but much more coarsely ground and less well bound than the medieval. No post-medieval painting survived further down the walls; probably there had

never been later paintings.

The 1983–84 Restoration

The aims of the final conservation session were threefold: to continue Dr Rouse's programme and complete the conservation of the medieval paintings, to treat the unpainted walls, and to present the interior as a balanced and unified whole.

There were two covering layers of limewash on the north wall and up to five on the east wall. These were removed mechanically. The clay inclosures in the base plaster had 'blown', causing the surface to be covered with small craters. Loose paint flakes were re-fixed with lime, PVA emulsion or a combination of both, used at discretion depending on the type of flaking. Powdery areas were consolidated with lime water. This work often had to be carried out at the same time as the uncovering.

Detached plaster was refixed to the backing fabric by injecting a thin grout of lime slurry with the addition of approximately 10% PVA emulsion. In some cases silt was added to give bulk. For pitted plaster a 1:3 mix of silver sand with different coloured sands was added to a lime slurry. This was used like a thick coloured limewash. The sand was washed into the crevices, cracks and shallow surface losses, bringing losses up to the original painted surface, and then toning these areas to blend with the original surfaces. The sands were adjusted for each different section of wall. Previously treated areas were recleaned to match the recently restored paintings.

Apart from the gown of St Anne in the west splay of the north window, no colour was added to the medieval paintings.

At low level the areas affected by algae were treated with repeated applications of formaldehyde. A mortar composed of 1:4 slaked lime and sand was prepared, matched to the original plaster in colour and texture, keeping it lean to improve the evaporation. This mortar was applied thinly, continuing the level of the original plaster, and following as much as possible the contours of the stone walls. Three small areas were left uncovered where there were graffiti of particularly interest, and also the corner of the missing piscina.

Presentation

It was recognised that the most remarkable feature of the chapel is that it retains an almost complete and artistically accomplished medieval cycle of decoration. Thus it was considered that the chapel interior should act as a foil for this cycle; no incongruous features or blemishes should distract from it. It is hoped that this has been achieved without retouching or reinforcing the medieval paint in any way.

After discussion with the architect it was decided to replaster the lower part of the walls primarily on technical grounds, because the chapel was found to be quite damp: larger areas of plaster on the base of the walls increase the surface that can evaporate in the event of rising damp and so protect the vulnerable areas of original plaster higher up from excess humidity. It was also agreed that as the chapel would have been originally fully plastered, it was aesthetically unacceptable to leave large areas of unplastered stone in such a small space.

With both side windows blocked, the balance of natural light was grossly incorrect. Thus it was agreed to reglaze the south window in simulated thirteenth-century glass and saddle bars. This was undertaken by G. Wigley of Shutlanger. Unfortunately the north window was felt to be too vulnerable, being on the unsupervised side.

After repair to the ceiling holes, using oak laths and matching haired plaster, the rather crude ceiling paintings were repaired where essential and the new plaster toned down. Worn and patchy paint was colour washed to even it out.

7. THE DEMOLISHED BARN

A stone barn (Fig. 7, A) stood until c.1950 at the western end of the paddock north of the house. Only its western wall now stands, reduced to a height of not more than a metre, and thus all the architectural features are lost. It apparently contained five bays, its central bay facing out to the west, and it had an extension to the west from its southernmost bay. Both bays are well bonded in and appear to be an integral part of the construction, although the central bay has been divided off from the main nave by a later slender stone wall. There is some evidence for a second entrance north of the central bay.

The stonework is of well coursed limestone blocks, elsewhere on site identified as being stone re-used at a post-medieval date. It has two blocked doorways, the blockings being effected with re-used ashlar. This suggests that there was a change of function at the same time as a well-constructed building was being demolished, perhaps, in this position, part of the standing monastic buildings. Therefore it seems probable that this building is late medieval in date, or built shortly after the Dissolution, and was altered to farm use in the early seventeenth century. Only archaeological investigation can now establish the original date of erection, but it does form an interesting historical element of the site.

From the north end, the paddock wall extends eastward for 35.5 m to the chapel. Close to the position of the lost east wall of the building is another doorway, blocked with re-used masonry. Beyond this, the wall has been partly rebuilt, the eastern 10 m being on the line of another demolished farm building.

8. BRICK OPEN-FRONTED STORE

To the south of the brick store east of the Cruck Barn there is an open cattle hovel of seven bays, with a substantial brick back (east) wall, on offset plinth and pilaster buttresses, and a brick return end. The detail of the framing of the roof indicates that the date of construction was probably around the middle of the nineteenth century.

9. THE STOREHOUSE

This is another good quality mid nineteenth-century building of brick, with a slate roof. It lies south-west of the Cruck Barn and has double doors at the north end for farm vehicles. The upper sections of the walls are constructed of honeycomb brickwork to ventilate the interior. It was presumably built to store threshed grain.

EXCAVATIONS AND WATCHING BRIEFS

INTRODUCTION

In 1968 the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the then Ministry of Public Building and Works was considering scheduling the site and requested that limited excavation should be undertaken to ascertain the quality of the underlying archaeologi-

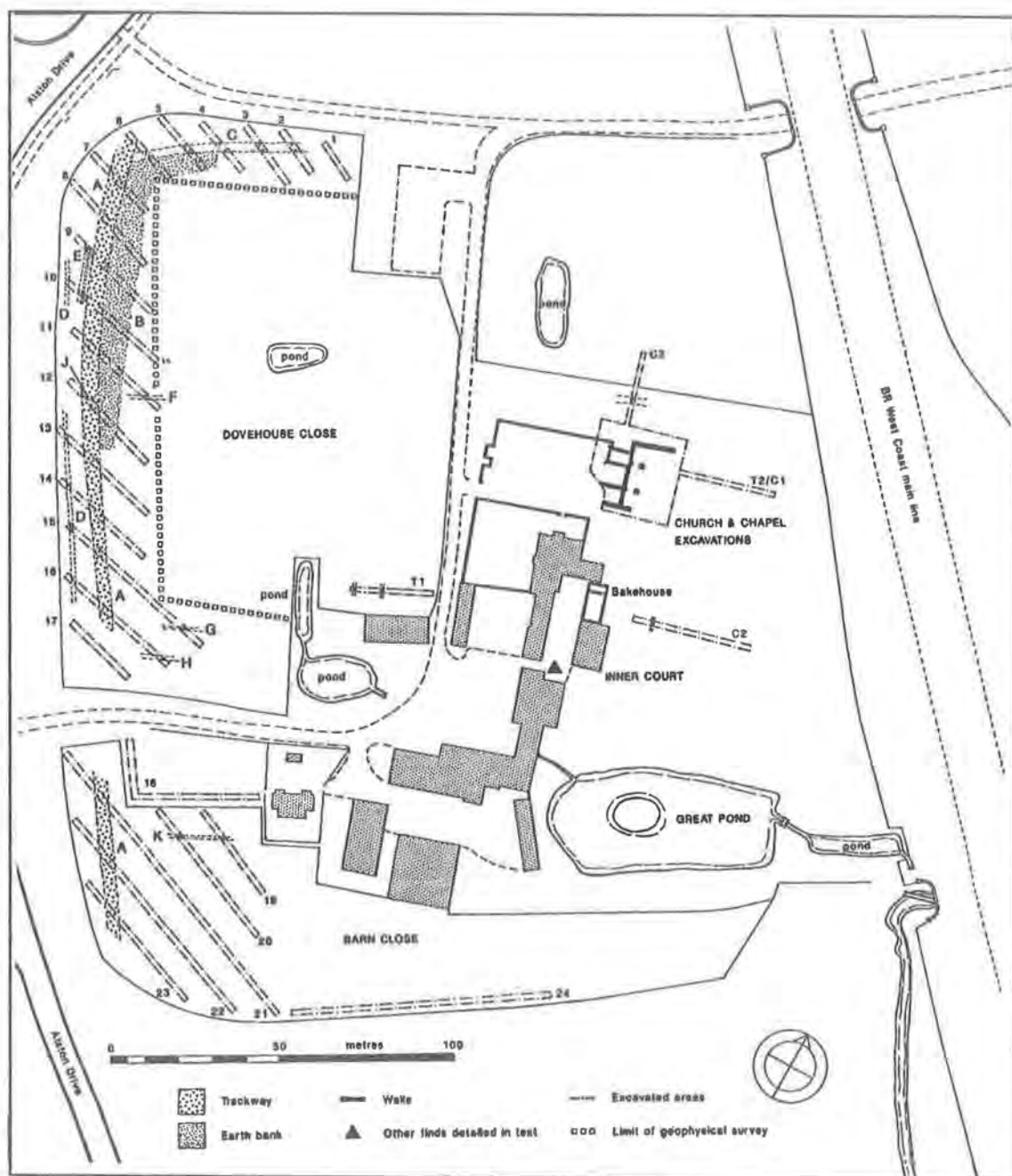


Fig. 14 Overall Site plan showing the excavated areas.

cal remains. Two small exploratory trenches were excavated in that year and four other trenches in the following year by the Buckinghamshire County Museum on behalf of the Milton Keynes Research

Committee.

In 1971 the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit carried out more extensive trial trenching and

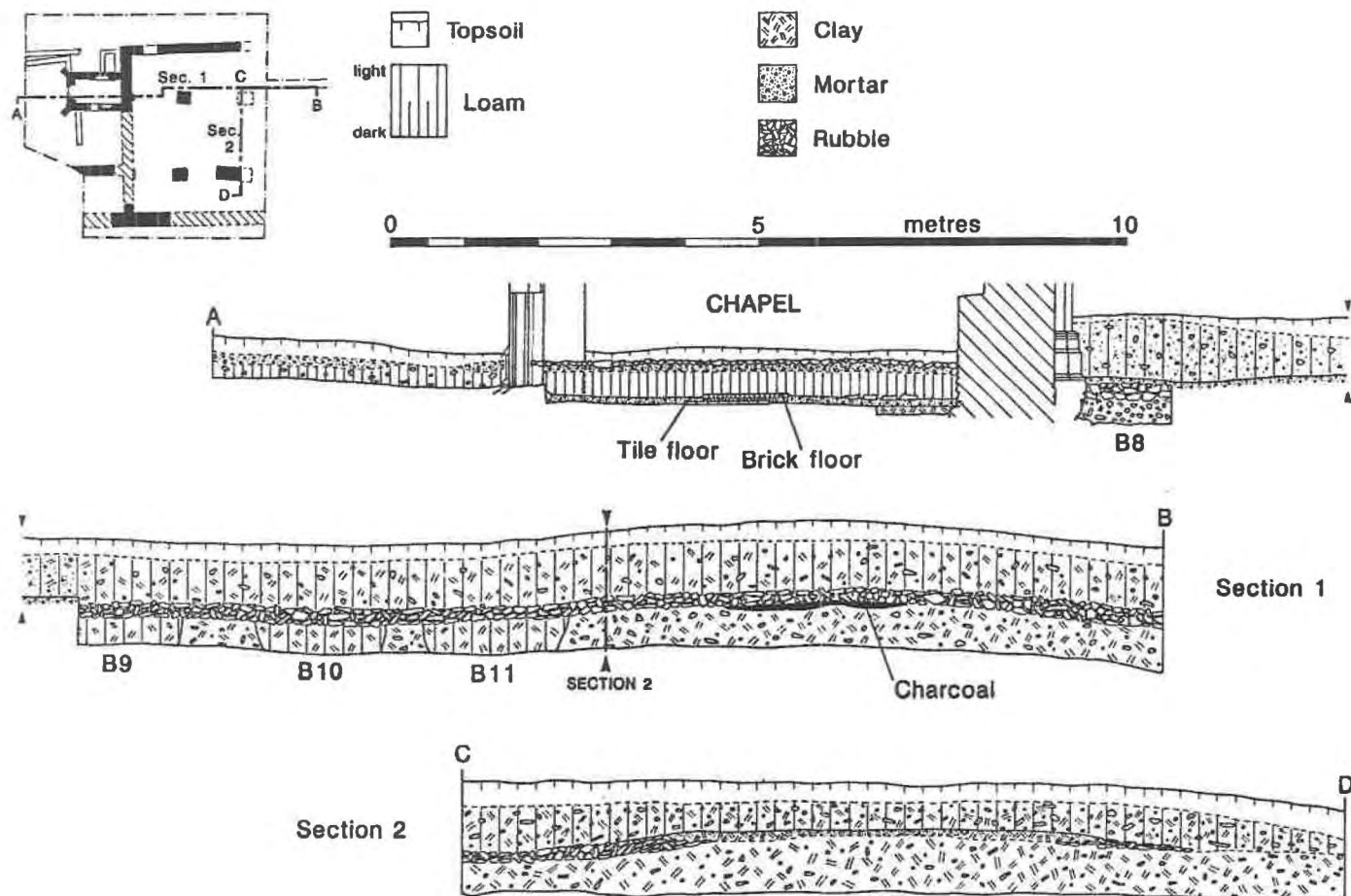


Fig. 15 Sections 1 and 2 through the Chapel and the west end of the Priory Church.

evaluation in the eastern part of the site beyond the railway, and along the western boundary of the site in 1987 following a geophysical survey undertaken the previous year.

Excavations were undertaken by the Unit in 1972 in advance of the restoration of the chapel, and in 1973 in advance of the conversion of the bakehouse into a workshop. The growth of Milton Keynes led to a substantial public awareness of Bradwell Abbey, and a subsequent increase during the late 1970s in the number of visitors to the site. At the time it was considered important to excavate, consolidate and display the remains of the Priory to

the general public, thus increasing the visitor potential of the site. The Unit's resources were however largely directed to rescue excavation on sites being destroyed by development, and little was available to cover such work at Bradwell Abbey. Priority was given to the small area excavated around the chapel, and to examining the west end of the Priory church. This work took place over two seasons in 1981-2. The Unit provided direction, supervision and equipment whilst the labour force consisted of several experienced diggers, and local school children who were involved through an 'Activities for Schoolchildren' programme organised by Development Corporation's Recreation Unit.

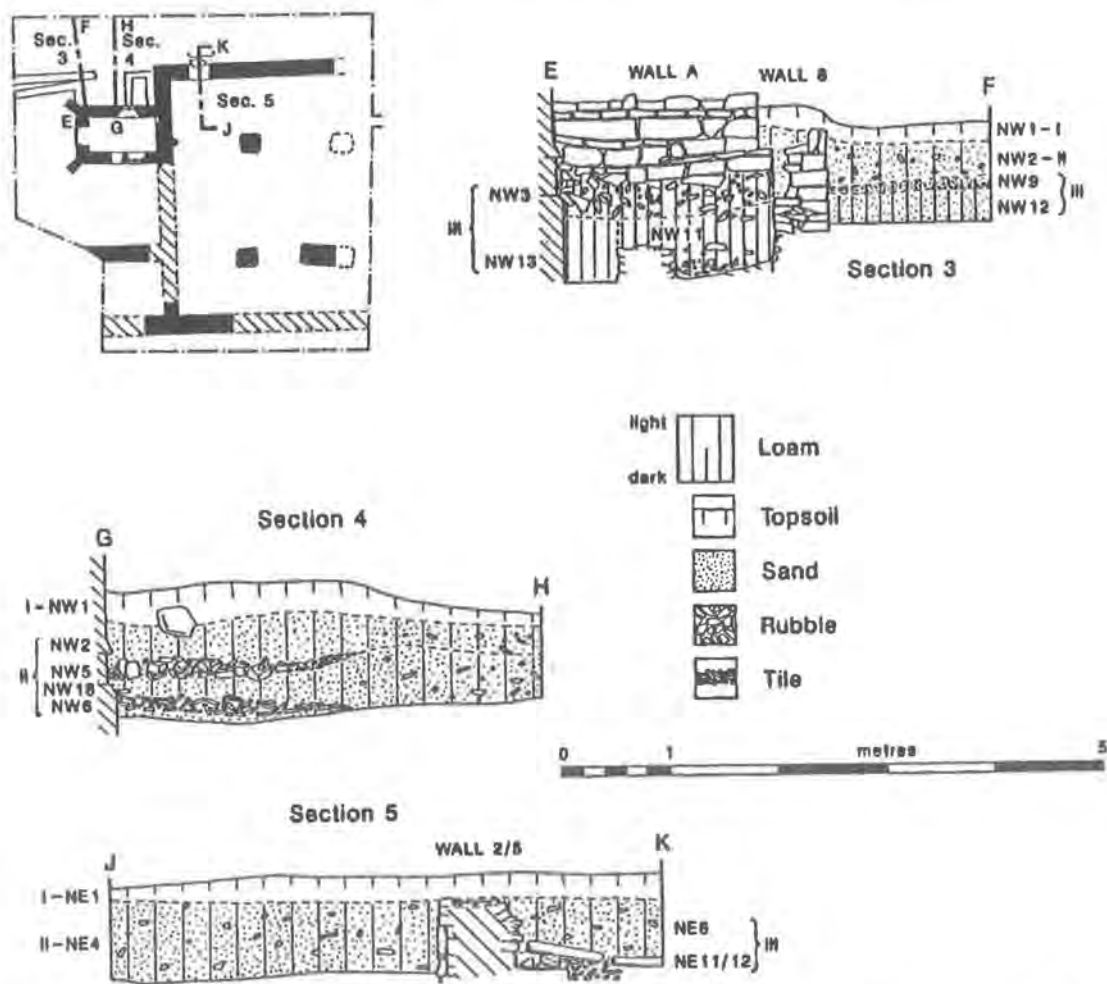


Fig. 16 Sections 3 and 4 on the north side of the Chapel and Section 5 in the north aisle of the Priory Church.

Watching briefs were also undertaken by the Unit between 1973 and 1983, during various development works mainly related to the provision of services.

All this work (Fig. 14) is described below, according to the area of the site in which it took place. Plans and sections of the 1968, 1969 and 1971 trial trenches have previously been published (Mynard 1974), hence the results from these excavations are only summarised below.

THE CHURCH AND CHAPEL EXCAVATIONS

The Chapel Environs

In 1968 a trench (Fig. 14, T2/C1) was excavated east from the centre of the east wall of the chapel. In 1969 it was extended (Fig. 15, Section 1) to a distance of 43 m from the chapel. The 1.0 m-wide trench cut through a mortar layer 50 mm in thickness which represented the floor of the north aisle of the Priory church. Beneath the floor was a stony layer over the pre-church soil level, on which were traces of charcoal, and in which four graves (B8-B11) were found but not excavated. The mortar floor survived for a distance of 4.6 m from the east wall of the chapel, beyond which a layer of stone rubble extended for 19.7 m. The mortar floor of the church continued for a further 1.6 m beyond this. From the eastern limit of the floor and extending to the east end of the trench was a layer of rubble, including stone and tile fragments, some faced stones, mortar spreads, roof tiles, and both decorated and undecorated paving tiles.

Cutting 1A, 12 m in length (Fig. 15, Section 2), was excavated south from Cutting 1 at a point 12 m from the chapel. This trench revealed a mortar floor level at a depth of 650 mm below the ground surface. Only 2.5 m of the floor survived, but level with it was a clay floor and a spread of stone rubble.

The evidence from these trenches suggested that the floors of the church had been substantially robbed away.

Another trench, 26 m long (Fig. 14, C3), was excavated on the north side of the chapel, commencing midway along the building at a distance of 4 m from the north wall. Two ditches were located

within this trench. The first, at a distance of 13.6 m from the chapel, was 2.1 m wide and over 1.4 m deep. Its fill contained a human humerus, possibly confirming the existence of the Priory burial ground in this area, although no other skeletal remains were found. The second, only partly recorded, was at least 1.1 m deep, and was recorded as follows: mt man man m24 m24 mm mm map m.

In 1972, in advance of the restoration of the chapel, excavations were undertaken in and around the building. An area four metres wide on each side of the chapel was excavated down to the medieval ground surface. A detailed account of this work has been published (Mynard 1974, 44-46); the following is a summary of the results.

The area around the chapel was divided into four quadrants, NE, NW, SE and SW, each separated by a baulk one metre wide. Each quadrant was excavated by hand and its stratification recorded individually, after which the baulks were removed. The stratigraphy around the chapel comprised three levels:

- I Topsoil and nineteenth-century rubbish deposits.
- II Post-Dissolution to eighteenth-century build-up and disturbances.
- III Late medieval surfaces and the post-Dissolution destruction level.

Owing to the continued occupation of the site there was much disturbance, and seventeenth to eighteenth-century finds were found on the Level III surfaces, having filtered down as a result of the removal of tree roots, gardening activities and random digging. In fact no sealed medieval or late medieval contexts were excavated, apart from a small area of the old ground surface on the north side of the church (Fig. 16, Section 3, NW12).

Also on the north side of the chapel (Fig. 16, Section 3, Wall 8) the south wall of a medieval building running on an east-west axis was found. This wall was 550 mm wide, constructed of rubble, and survived to a height of 1150 mm above the natural cornbrash on which it was built. NW12, the old ground surface, was sealed by NW9, the floor of this building, on which was a layer of small stone and tile fragments. NW12, which consisted of dark

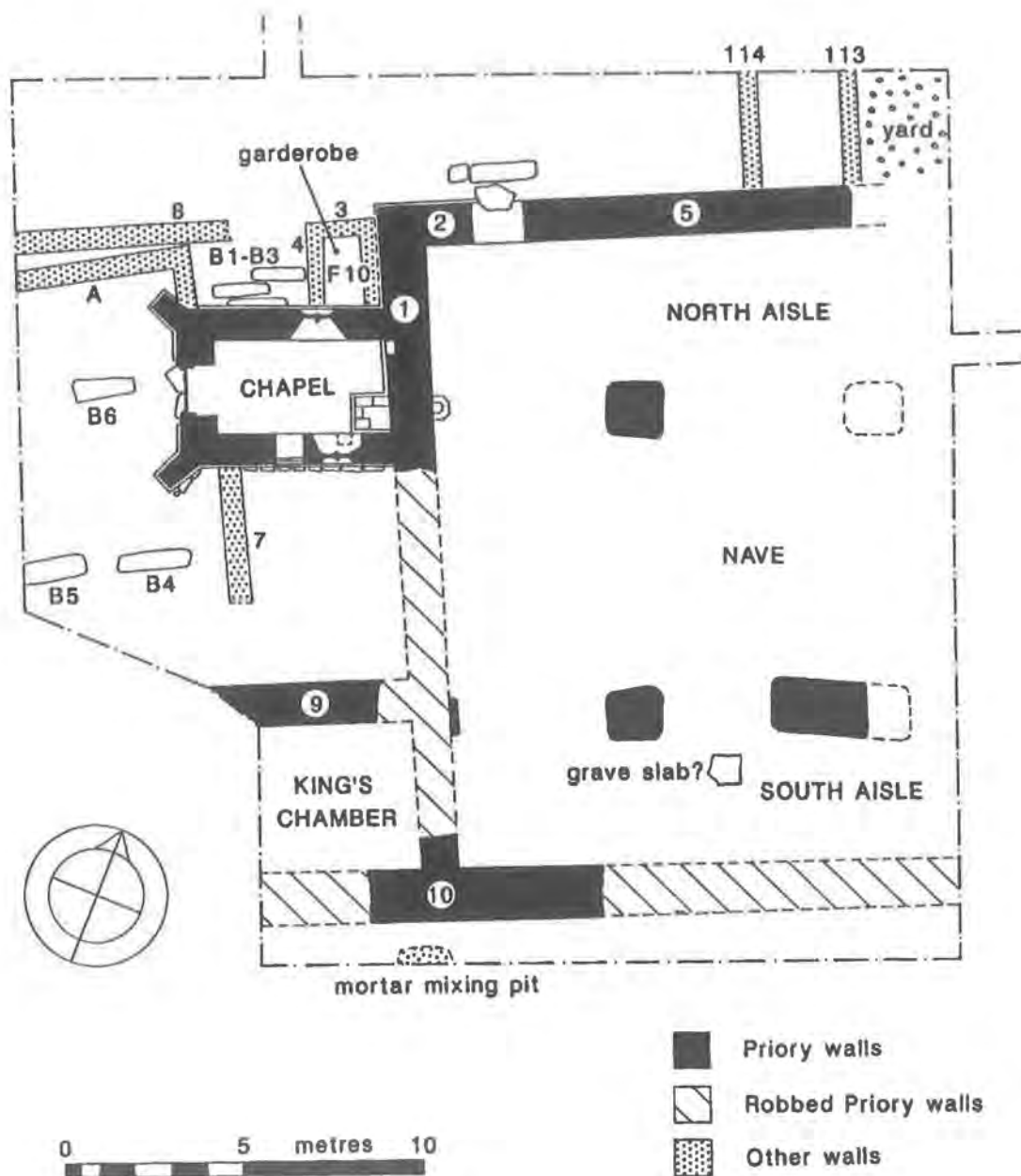


Fig. 17 Plan of the Chapel and Church excavations.

brown earth and small stones, was removed to a depth of 200 mm. The floor (NW9) consisted of brown earth and stones, which contained in its make-up an Edward III pre-Treaty penny of 1351-61.

The old ground surface was cut by the construction trench of the chapel (NW13), which was cut into the underlying cornbrash in order to provide a firm base for its foundation. The medieval builders of the chapel might have preferred to erect it so that

the niche containing the image of St Mary would have been in a central position in the east wall. However, they were thwarted by the existence of the building to the north, and the need to leave a space between it and the chapel. Thus the position of the chapel was dictated by the presence of the medieval building.

Three burials (Fig.17, B1–B3) were found on the north side of the chapel. Two had been buried in the old ground surface (NW12), and the third in the construction trench of the north wall of the chapel (NW13). The occupation level associated with the chapel was represented by NW3, a 300 mm layer of brown earth, stone and tile, above which a thin layer of tile and stone fragments marked the post-Dissolution destruction horizon.

Excavation confirmed that the east wall of the chapel was in fact the west wall of the Priory church. The rubble and soil level within the church was removed down to the mortar floor of the nave and north aisle, neither of which bore any evidence of the impressions of floor tiles. On the floor in the north-east corner of the church was part of a circular post-dissolution hearth (not shown on plan) approximately 875 mm in diameter, which contained fragments of melted lead.

On the south and west sides of the chapel the lowest level encountered was the sixteenth-century ground surface, 600 mm below the present ground level. This surface was covered by the post-Dissolution destruction level, which contained stone and tile rubble together with fragments of window glass, pottery and ironwork.

Three graves (B4–B6) were found on the west side of the chapel; none of these were excavated. B6 was covered by a reused Purbeck marble coffin lid, and B4 and B5 were identified by the stony content of their fill. All three had been dug from the medieval ground surface immediately beneath the destruction level. The coffin lid was removed as a precaution against frost damage and beneath it was a simple grave, with no stone cist or coffin visible. The position of this grave immediately outside the west door of the chapel could suggest the burial of an important person connected with the shrine.

The post-Dissolution Level II deposits around

the chapel consisted of a general build-up of brown mortary soil containing stone and tile rubble, varying in thickness from 150 to 300 mm. Within the church these deposits were up to 750 mm in depth, forming a low mound running eastward from the chapel to the end of the church. This mound covered only the north aisle and north side of the nave, not the entire width of the church. This may suggest that the south side of the church was more intensely robbed.

On the north side of the chapel a garderobe shaft (Fig.17, F10) had been cut through Level III down to the natural combrash, its bottom being at a depth of 1.2 m below the highest offset on the chapel wall. The east wall of the garderobe had been built on to the already demolished west wall of the north aisle of the church, confirming a post-Dissolution date for this feature. This and several other factors suggest a re-use of the north aisle of the church. The walls of the aisle had been taken down carefully, the top of the remaining parts being perfectly level, as if to take the sill beam of a timber-framed building. In addition, a hole in the west wall of the church against the north-east corner of the chapel may have been a socket for an upright post. Finally, the springing of the first arch of the north arcade has a slot cut into it which could have taken a brace from a horizontal timber resting on the projecting top of the column. However, no late floor levels that might have been associated with re-use of the north aisle were found.

On the north side of the chapel, west of the garderobe, a dump of tile fragments (Fig.16, Section 4, NW6) was found below a mortary build-up (NW18) covered in turn by a layer of stone rubble (NW5) which sealed the garderobe F10. NW5 was itself covered and sealed by NW2, an orange-brown sandy soil containing decomposed mortar and stone and tile fragments. The tile level NW6 probably marks a dump of broken tiles associated with reroofing the Chapel in the immediate post-Dissolution period. Fragments of tile from NW6 joined fragments from NW2, suggesting that all these deposits were probably contemporary.

The more recent Level I deposits consisted of topsoil containing mostly redeposited material. The area on the south and west of the chapel, used as a rickyard during the early nineteenth century, was

later overgrown with bushes and trees, and was finally cultivated as a garden. The northern boundary of the area to the west of the chapel was a stone wall which contained much re-used stone. This wall turned south, linking to the north-west corner of the chapel (Fig. 16, Section 3, Wall A). The angle of this garden wall by the corner of the chapel was used as a dump for domestic refuse, and contained an interesting accumulation of earthenware and china of c.1840 date.

The Chapel Interior

Excavation inside the chapel was limited to the removal of the accumulated build-up over the medieval floor level. A section through the chapel floor is incorporated in Fig. 15, Section 1. At the east end of the chapel, where the medieval floor had been removed in antiquity, a pre-chapel clay surface was exposed. The chapel floor originally had two levels, the main one being a pavement of Little Brickhill floor tiles set on a mortar bed laid directly on the underlying soil. The pavement covered the west end of the chapel, ending on a straight line 2.25 m from the east wall, beyond which the mortar bed continued without any evidence of tile impressions. It seems likely that the east end of the floor was raised and paved with flagstones, and that these were removed and the level reduced to create a continuous floor within the chapel when the later brick floor was laid.

The pavement consisted of a border of plain tiles, five tiles wide, set square to the chapel walls. Within the border decorated tiles, laid at an angle of forty-five degrees to the border, created a continuous pattern of squares and circles. The remaining tiles were very fragmentary as a result of continuous wear, and have been left *in situ*. The chapel was built in the mid fourteenth century, and the pavement appears to be the earliest floor in the building. However, it is unlikely that the pavement was laid at that time, as the earliest recorded date for the use of Little Brickhill tiles comes from a late fifteenth-century pavement in Great Linford church (Mynard 1992).

Above the tiled pavement was a brick floor, laid on a very thin mortar bed covering the interior of the chapel. Under the mortar bed was a thin black silty layer overlying the tile pavement, suggesting a period of disuse of the chapel. The bricks were of

the same type and size as those used in the blocking of the north and south windows and the south door, implying that all these works were contemporary. The most likely date for this was the late seventeenth century, when the chapel was restored by the Alston family.

Above the brick floor a 500 mm-thick deposit of dark soil containing tile and stone fragments had built up before the cobble floor was laid, c.1844. This build up contained a sixteenth-century jetton and a candlestick (Mynard 1974, 53 and Fig. 13, Ae16) of late seventeenth to eighteenth-century date. The cobble floor was exposed until the early part of this century, but in turn had become covered by soil and rubbish which had accumulated in recent years.

The excavation confirmed that the east wall of the chapel was the west wall of the Priory church. The chamfered offset running around the north and west wall of the church was found to continue along the west wall through the chapel, and to run around a buttress which had been taken down to below the level of the chapel floor. The east wall had been pointed up with a reddish mortar where the buttress had been removed, and there were no wall paintings at this point. This suggests that the buttress was left as an internal feature within the chapel until the Priory church was demolished after the Dissolution, when it would have been safe to remove it.

The West End of the Priory Church

In 1979 members of the Milton Keynes and District Archaeological Society carried out some tidying up and limited excavation on the south side of the chapel. After clearing the site of grass and weeds, the area was retrawelled, revealing the robber trench of the west wall of the church in more detail, and also the north wall of another building, running west from it at a distance of 6 m from the chapel.

The 1981 excavation (Figs 14 and 17) covered an area of 240 sq. m. In view of the fact that the site of the church had been ploughed during Mr Field's ownership of the farm, the upper 150 mm of topsoil was mechanically removed by a Massey Ferguson MF50B, using a toothless bucket. The site was then cleaned manually, revealing the trial trenches excavated in 1968 and 1969.

The most recent features discovered were related to modern agricultural and garden activities. A number of post holes and small pits were discovered confirming the existence of two fence lines adjacent to the chapel. One ran due east from the south-east corner of the chapel and the other due south from the same corner. Slight evidence for a nineteenth-century building to the south of the chapel, not shown on the 1797 Estate map or the 1851 Tithe map (Figs 4 and 7), was recovered. This was a substantial structure at least 4.6×4.2 m with timber framework set upon brick supports. The bricks were all of a standard size (220×110 mm) and were set upon a thin bed of lime-based mortar. No floor surfaces were found, but a patchy yard surface of pebbles and gravel extended for 6 m on the west side of the building.

The north wall of the church, located in 1972, was found to continue for a length of 13 m from the north-west corner, after which it had been robbed away. The remaining part stood to a height of approximately 750 mm above the church floor. Fragmentary patches of lime mortar indicated the floor levels within the church. On and above these was a 600–800 mm-thick layer of brown sandy loam containing few stones larger than 100 mm, suggesting that it was the product of deliberate sorting of the stone from the church for re-use elsewhere. The sandy nature of this deposit suggested that it derived in part from decayed mortar. Finds from this layer included tile fragments, lead comes, mortar and plaster lumps, medieval window glass and oyster shells, consistent with those from the post-Dissolution levels around the chapel. The destruction of the church was evidenced by large quantities of melted lead and window comes found on and above the floor level.

A pit in the church floor, 160×160 mm and 340 mm deep, was filled with a fairly stone-free light-brown loamy soil, containing several fragments of post-medieval pottery and a sixteenth-century token. This feature went down to the underlying limestone bedrock and was interpreted as the robbed-out pit of the westernmost column base of the south arcade, its position being 4.4 m east of the west wall of the church. East of this feature, at a distance of 6 m centre to centre, was another pit, 3.5×1.5 m and 940 mm deep, slightly cut into the natural bedrock. This pit which had a similar fill to

the aforementioned pit and was presumably the robber pit of another column base which had been cut by the 1969 trench (Cutting 1A) but was not recognised at that time.

The position of the north arcade of the nave was confirmed by the discovery of the robber pits of two column-bases in line with the fourteenth-century respond visible on the east wall of the chapel. The fill of these pits was similar, suggesting that the soil layers within the church were contemporary with the robbing of the columns.

A slab of limestone 1.0×0.8 m, probably a grave slab laid on or contemporary with the patchy mortar floor, was discovered in the south aisle of the church, 7 m from the west end of the church.

The footings of the south-west corner of the church wall were located and it was noted that the south wall of the church continued to the west, forming the south wall of the building of which the north wall had been found in 1979. This structure is thought to be the King's Chamber (Fig. 3, 16) listed by Brabazon in the post-Dissolution survey. Apart from the south-west corner, the south wall of the church had been extensively robbed.

On the southern edge of the excavated area a thick layer of lime mortar *in situ* within a rectangular hole in the ground was tentatively interpreted as the remains of a lime-mortar mixing pit of post-medieval date.

In order to protect the site during the winter of 1981–2 it was covered with soil and polythene sheets. In the spring of 1982 the central part of the nave was covered with a thin layer of soil and seeded with grass as part of the site presentation. At this time the positions of the column bases of the north and south arcades were marked out as patches of gravel.

The 1982 excavation ran for six weeks through August into September. On the north side of the church an area of 78 sq. m was excavated down to the post-Dissolution levels. Below the topsoil the main deposit, on average 400 mm in thickness, consisted of limestone rubble with many fragments of roof tile within a light brown sandy loam matrix. Within this deposit were occasional patches of ashy

soil with charcoal flecks. The rubble layers sealed a post-Dissolution surface of limestone fragments, probably a yard level. A quantity of fragments of worked stone including the carved semi-grotesque head (Fig. 20, 4) of fourteenth-century style were found on this surface.

In the north-eastern corner of the excavated area several large pieces of worked stone and an extensive layer of roof tile fragments were found. Above the tile layer was the remains of the medieval leaded-glass window panel (Fig. 19, 1) with an attached glazing bar. The tile layer was removed, and below it were found the remains of a small post-Dissolution lean-to building, dated to the fifteenth to sixteenth-century by the finds from its floor. This building, which had been constructed against the north wall of the church, was 3 m wide and of uncertain length. The east and west walls (114 and 115) were both limestone sill walls. On the east side of this building a well-laid yard surface continued beyond the excavation limits. Traces of two other fragmentary sill walls of rough limestone blocks noted north west of the north door of the church were not examined in detail.

On the south side of the church the excavation of the mortar mixing pit located in the previous year was completed. The pit, 1.5 x 0.8 m across and 300 mm deep, had been cut from the level of an eighteenth or nineteenth-century yard surface. It had been used as a mixing pit into which burnt lime, limestone and charcoal fragments had been tipped, mixed with water and left to stand. A skin of lime up to 80 mm thick remained in the pit. Evidence of separation within the mix was very clear. The lower part of the pit contained a darker lime mixture with many charcoal flecks, while the upper layer was much whiter. The remaining mixture had impressions of animal hoof marks, suggesting that the pit had remained open with the mixture in a pliable state after its last use. The yard north of the farmhouse consisted of fine gravel and had eighteenth and nineteenth-century finds on its surface.

The Inner Court

In 1969 a single east-west trench (Fig. 14, C2) was excavated. This began 10 m from the east wall of the bakehouse, was 34.8 m long and was dug

down to the subsoil, at a depth of 700 mm at the west end and 1.0 m at the east end. The only recorded feature was a possible robber trench 1.0 m wide, which was located at 5.1 m from the west end of the trench and contained a darker less stony soil than the rest of the section. This may have marked the line of the west wall of Building 12 (Fig. 3).

The Bakehouse

In 1973 The Bakehouse was repaired and converted into a workshop for the use of the Field Centre. This involved digging out the old floors and the laying of a new damp-proof floor, work which necessitated prior archaeological examination of the building's interior. The excavation, which confirmed the medieval date of the building, has been published in detail (Mynard 1974, 47-48 and fig 8). The results are summarised below.

The present building is of two and a half bays (8.3 m internally) aligned north to south, the half bay being at the north end. Examination of the north wall in 1973 confirmed that it had been rebuilt, and that the Bakehouse had, at some time, been reduced in length. If the building were originally three bays long it would have been of similar size to the house described in the post-Dissolution survey with which it has been tentatively identified (Fig. 3, 13). The walls of the Bakehouse are 0.64 m thick, constructed of rubble, with larger stones on the corners. A chimney stack was inserted, probably in the sixteenth century, and beneath it was a large inglenook fireplace with an oven on either side of it. One oven was removed during the conversion and the other, the western oven which had collapsed in 1971, had been replaced with a brick pier, which was necessary to support the stack above.

The modern floor consisted of thin bricks of seventeenth or eighteenth-century date, flagstones and an area of concrete. On removal of the floor a loose bed of sandy mortar was revealed, containing eighteenth and nineteenth-century pottery sherds and clay pipe fragments. Below this was a hard-packed floor of sandy clay, into which had been inserted nineteenth-century farm machinery bases a large pit and several post holes. Limited excavation was carried out to examine these features, and to date the construction of the north wall.

In the south-east corner of the building was a

post-pit 1.0 m deep which had been dug before the construction of the eastern oven. The fill of the pit consisted of soft black earth containing mid nineteenth-century pottery and finds. The north-west corner of the building was excavated to examine the relationship of the footings of the north and west walls. A series of floor levels were found above the natural cornbrash, which was encountered at a depth of 300 mm. Above the latest floor was a thin soil layer containing fragments of roof tile and sherds of pottery, none of which were later than the sixteenth century. The earliest floor was 50 mm thick, and was made up of dirty sandy clay which contained pottery (Mynard 1974, fig. 9.1-5) of thirteenth-century date, limestone fragments and a piece of window lead. The west wall was constructed on the natural cornbrash and had a slight offset, level with the lowest floor. The bottom of the footings of the north wall did not go down as far as the early floor, confirming that it was later than the thirteenth century.

In the south-west corner of the building the remains of the western oven were examined. The base was of limestone rubble and brick fragments and contained finds of nineteenth-century date. Beneath the base was evidence of an earlier oven, the limestone rubble base of which had been subjected to considerable heat. This oven was of medieval date; its base went down to the cornbrash and contained sherds of thirteenth-century pottery, and the thirteenth-century floor level appeared to have built up against it.

The chimney stack above the ovens contains a lot of reused stone, and was inserted into the building at some time after the Dissolution. The insertion of the stack may have been part of a general restoration of the building, including the laying of a new floor and perhaps the rebuilding of the north wall. The flagstones that remained in the north-west corner were laid on the thin tile and stone destruction layer over the medieval floor, and it is likely that they date from the early post-Dissolution period, when the building became a bakehouse serving the new farmhouse. This use continued, the brick floor being laid in the late seventeenth or eighteenth century and the ovens being rebuilt in the nineteenth century or later. More recently, the building was a dairy, with a large butter churn standing on the brick base near the east wall, but it

was used mainly as a washhouse by the Punter family in the early part of the present century.

The excavation evidence suggests that the building was constructed during the thirteenth century, and that it has remained in continuous use since then.

The Services Manhole

In 1982, when the farmhouse was connected to the main services, a manhole was dug to locate the sewer pipes at the southern end of the courtyard on the east side of the house. The pipes were then connected to the main drainage by another trench which ran through the gap between the stone barn and the workshop and across the farmyard. In the manhole a stone wall running north-south was noted. From its depth this wall was likely to be of medieval date, but the nature of the work precluded further investigation.

Dovehouse Close

In 1968 a single trench, (Fig. 14 T1) was excavated in the southern end of *Dovehouse Close*, west of the farmhouse. The trench was 1.0 m wide and 13.7 m in length, aligned east to west, and cut across a medieval building, presumably part of the west range of the Outer Court. The site of the building survives as a slightly raised platform (Fig. 2), and can be identified as Building 4 in the reconstruction drawing of the priory (Fig. 3). The east wall of the building was of limestone, 610 mm wide, and survived to a height of 355 mm above the natural cornbrash. The upper courses were only 100 mm below the modern ground surface. The width of the building, 7.62 m, was confirmed by the discovery of the robber trench of the west wall. The floor in the eastern half of the building was of gravel, whilst the west part was of packed small stones. Above the floor was a destruction level of stone rubble and tile fragments, which extended as a yard surface for 7.0 m on the east side of the building.

The building was clearly of medieval date, as a reasonable quantity of fourteenth-century pottery and a fragment of floor tile were found on the floor and on the east yard. Fragments of flat roof tiles, stone slates and a ridge tile of Potterspurty manufac-

ture were also recovered. The use of the building is uncertain; it may have been at one stage industrial, since iron slag was found in the robber trench of the west wall and in the destruction level, though none was found on the floor levels.

In 1987, prior to the construction of a new access road and horse-riding trail along the north and west sides of the Abbey grounds, a series of trial trenches were excavated across the affected area in Dovehouse Close (Fig. 14, 1–17). The earthworks survey carried out in 1976 (Fig. 2) shows a broad sunken linear feature, possibly a hollow-way, aligned NNW-SSE along the west side of the close, and further features along the present northern boundary. Though slight, these features are still visible on the ground today. The results of a geophysical survey carried out by Bradford University prior to excavation showed a number of probable ditches, and a broad linear anomaly (Fig. 14, A) shown by excavation to be a metallated hollow-way.

Machine trial trenching was carried out on the site over a three-week period in April 1987. A JCB 3CX excavator was used, with a broad toothless bucket cutting trenches 1.5 m wide. These were set out at approximately 10 m intervals, aligned north-west to south-east so as to be at about 45 degrees to any of the linear features suggested by the earthworks or geophysical surveys. Following machining, the trenches were cleared by hand, and any features excavated and recorded. A detailed report of the investigations undertaken is held in the Unit's archive; what follows is a brief summary.

Feature A

A metallated trackway, aligned NNW-SSE, following the present western boundary of the Abbey grounds. It followed the linear feature noted on the earthworks survey and corresponded to an area of high resistance shown on the geophysical survey. Its width averaged 5.0 m and its edges, which were generally well-defined, were covered by silt spreads extending up to 2.0 m beyond the edge of the metallating. The materials used in the metallating varied greatly from section to section, from coarse gravel and glacial pebbles to limestone rubble, sometimes mixed with tile. The surface was loose, and not heavily worn. Removal of the silt deposits and trowelling of the surface produced quantities of

medieval or post-medieval tile, clay tobacco pipe-fragments, two post-medieval horseshoes, three musket balls, and a very worn *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius, dating from the second century AD.

Although this trackway does not appear on any surviving maps or documents relating to the area, it appears to have formed part of a route linking Loughton to the road from Wolverton to Old Bradwell, bypassing Bradwell village and the Abbey. The finds from its surface suggest that it remained in use until the eighteenth century.

Feature B

This was identified in Trenches 5–12. It consisted of a shallow bank 8–10 m wide, on the east side of the trackway, and turning between Trenches 6 and 7 to run north-eastward alongside Feature C. This was the point at which it had survived best. It was composed of redeposited subsoil, an orange-brown clay-loam, mixed with fragments of cornbrash limestone, which forms much of the underlying geological strata on the site, and appears close to the surface on its north edge. No finds were recovered from this bank. It most probably formed the western and northern boundaries of the medieval priory precincts.

Feature C

This was a ditch, aligned north-east to south-west, running almost parallel to the north boundary of the site, on the north side of Feature B. Its width varied between 2.0 and 3.0 m, and it was cut about 300 mm deep into the underlying cornbrash limestone. In section it had sloping sides and a rounded bottom. Its fill consisted entirely of a dark brown sandy soil with limestone fragments, though in Trench 3 this was overlain by orange-yellow clay with limestone rubble. Few finds were recovered from this feature, though the upper layer produced the cap from a twelve-bore shotgun cartridge, and the lower layer a small quantity of slag. The function of this ditch remains uncertain.

Feature D

This shallow ditch was parallel to the west side of the trackway and 5.0 m from it. Its width was 600–700 mm, and its depth 150–200 mm. Its profile varied from a 'V' section to a flat bottom with sloping sides. Its fill also varied. Finds included a

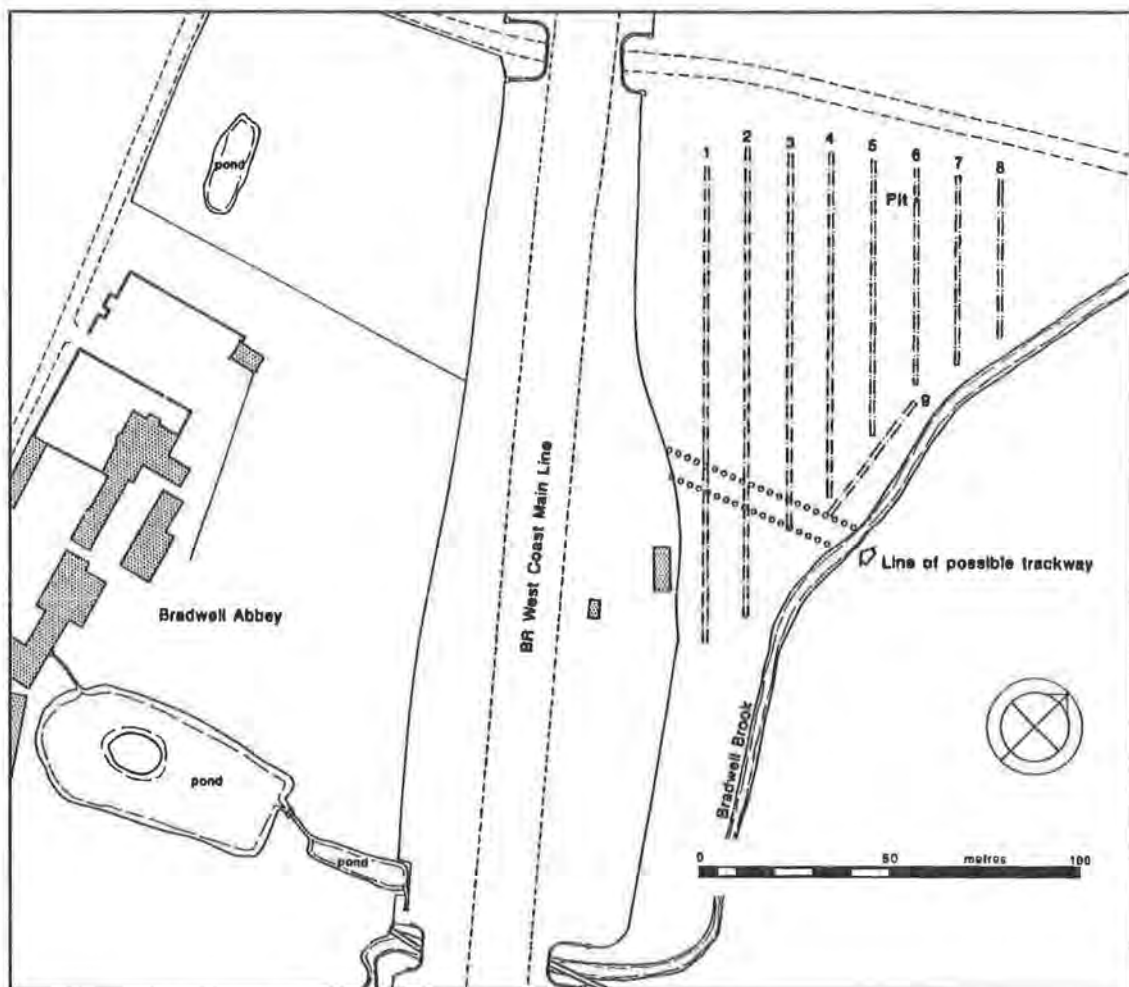


Fig. 18 The trial trenches in the Warren 1971.

few tile and clay tobacco pipe-fragments. From aerial photographs and plans of the site dating back to the early twentieth century it is clear that this feature was the original western boundary of the paddock, and it may well have been in existence at a much earlier date.

Feature E

This shallow double ditch was noted in Trenches 9 and 10 running along the west side of the trackway. Its western section was 1.6 m wide, and its eastern section measured 0.6 m. Both sections were about 180 mm deep, with sloping sides and uneven, flattish bottoms. The western section was filled with a mid to dark brown sandy loam, and the eastern section with a hard dark brown sandy silt.

No finds were recovered from either section. From its location, this feature could be a trackside ditch, the eastern section possibly being a recut, though why it was not noted in the other trenches crossing the trackway is unclear.

Feature F

This north-west to south-east ditch was located in Trench 11, to the east of the trackway. It was 1.3 m wide and 200 mm deep, with a rounded section. The fill was a dark brown sandy silt, which contained no finds.

Though not shown on the earthworks survey or registered by the geophysical survey, this feature could be seen as a line of differential grass growth

running across the field to the nearby pond. It has been identified as the south boundary of the rickyard which stood on this part of the paddock in the early twentieth century (Fig. 9).

Features G and H

These two parallel ditches, following a north-west to south-east alignment to the east of the trackway, were noted in Trenches 15 and 16. Both had rounded 'V' section profiles; G was 900 mm wide, and H measured 500 mm. Both contained tile fragments, but no other finds. While the function of G remains uncertain, H appears to have been the original southern boundary of the paddock.

Feature J

This feature, possibly a pit, was dug into the surface of the trackway in Trench 12. It was 120 mm deep, with shallow sloping sides. Its relationship to the projected alignment of Feature F suggests that it may have been associated with the latter. No finds were recovered from it.

Barn Close

As with the western part of Dovehouse Close, this field, forming the south side of the site, was archaeologically examined by geophysical survey and trial trenching in 1987, prior to the construction of a car park and horse-trail. The techniques used were similar to those described for Dovehouse Close.

Feature A

This also appeared in the Trenches 21–23, following the western boundary of the close and continuing the alignment established in Dovehouse Close.

Feature K

This ditch, aligned south-west to north-east, was located in Trenches 19 and 20. Because of its alignment with the south boundary of the gardens of the nearby cottages, it was identified at an early stage from cartographic evidence (Fig. 9) as the boundary of the former allotments connected with the cottages, and therefore was not excavated.

The Warren

In advance of the construction of Bradwell Balancing Lake, Bradwell Brook was re-routed

through the eastern part of the scheduled area of the site. The threatened area, a field called *the Warren*, on the west side of the Brook, had been cut off from the Priory site by the construction of the London to Birmingham Railway in 1838.

When ploughed, the field produced limestone fragments and medieval sherds, and a noticeable feature, particularly visible from a passing train, was a line of stone fragments in the ploughsoil, possibly the line of a medieval road from the village to the Priory.

Nine trial trenches (Fig. 18) were dug with a mechanical excavator during a period of two days. No evidence for the assumed road was found. The only feature located was a rubbish pit, 1.11 × 0.9 m and 650 mm deep, which was dated to the fourteenth century by pottery recovered from it (Mynard 1974, fig. 9.6–10). This feature also contained several pieces of iron slag and a few bones.

The Water-Main Trench

In August 1973 the Field Centre was connected to the main water supply. The new pipe was laid in a trench 800 mm deep which ran along the left-hand side of the road from the railway bridge around to the Abbey, where it crossed the yard and entered the workshop at the southern end of the main building.

The excavation of the trench was carefully watched and proved a useful exercise, the negative results tending to confirm the suggested reconstruction of the Priory plan. The trench ran along the north side of the field called *the Warren*, on the line of a stone wall removed by the farmer c.1950. The footings of the wall were located, and at a distance of 41 m from the railway a 6 m gap in the wall marked the site of a gateway into *the Warren*. The trench then ran south down the west side of the field and along the side of Building A (Fig. 7) and the garden wall, in effect running through the outer court of the Priory. The layers noted in this area were topsoil down to a depth of 150 mm, then broken limestone rubble similar to cornbrash limestone and containing no finds down to 600 mm, beneath which was a layer of orange-brown clay on average 200 mm thick, with natural limestone beneath. The upper limestone rubble layer ended abruptly 6 m north of the south-west corner of the wall of the garden on the west front of the house.

South of this point the levels above the clay were disturbed and contained nineteenth-century pottery and bricks. The trench then ran east across the yard to the workshop, the stratigraphy remaining much the same. The footings of the workshop went down to the orange-brown clay, and were bonded with sandy clay or decomposed mortar. Just below the present ground level the footings of the wall increased in width, with a 150 mm offset.

Throughout the entire trench nothing of date earlier than nineteenth-century was found. The trench ran through the outer court, and should have passed through the buildings on the east side of the gatehouse (Fig. 3, Building 2) but no evidence of this structure was found.

The Great Fishpond

In the spring of 1975 the Unit obtained permission from the Department of the Environment to clean out the large fishpond. The Co-operative Society and the last farmer had used the pond as a refuse tip, and the east end in particular was filled in with old milk churns, bales of straw, chaff from harvesting operations and general agricultural rubbish. The contractors (Monks) who were at the time building the H3 grid road kindly provided a dragline excavator and several lorries to remove the rubbish, much of which was tipped alongside the H3 road embankment on the east side of the A5/H3 roundabout. The average depth of the pond was 1.5 m and it appeared to be lined with clay, while its lower fill was black and silty. A careful watch was kept on the work, but little of archaeological interest was found.

The pond was supplied with water from a spring which fed the pond on the west side of the farmyard. From this pond a conduit ran eastward into the fishpond passing under the yard and the building linking the stone barn with the cruck barn. The level of water in the fishpond was controlled by a small weir at the east end which led into a narrow channel, formerly used for sheep dipping (Fig. 9). The weir had been removed by the farmer to drain the pond and was rebuilt by the Milton Keynes Conservation Corps, after which the pond filled with water over a period of several weeks. Beyond the weir the narrow channel led to a smaller fishpond which drained into Bradwell Brook. The relationship of the two ponds is described in the post-Dissolution

survey as "*first a poole called Western Hall with a little narrow poole going forth of the same.*"

When plans for the industrial estate on the west side of Alston Drive and the Abbey complex were being drawn up the engineers realised that the natural drainage which fed the Abbey ponds would be reduced. To alleviate this problem the surface water from one block of factory units was piped through the site to feed the ponds.

The Access Road and Services Trench

In 1978 an access road was constructed from Alston Drive to the Abbey. The line of the road was watched, but the only finds of interest were fragments of dressed limestone associated with a scatter of stone immediately to the north of the farm cottages. During 1982 and 1983 a new service trench was dug from Alston Drive alongside the access road, across the former farmyard to the south end of the main farmhouse and workshop range. The only finds were a few sherds of post-medieval pottery and several fragments of dressed stone from the farmyard. The sewers from the house, which had previously run into a septic tank located to the west of the main fishpond, were connected to the main drainage.

LANDSCAPING

After the 1982 excavation the west end of the church was covered with a thin layer of topsoil, raked and seeded with grass; the edges of the site were graded at a gentle angle of about 30 degrees to facilitate subsequent mowing. The line of the south wall of the church was laid out as a gravel path, and within the nave the positions of the column bases of the aisles were also marked in gravel. In addition, the projected lines of the walls of the rest of the Church, Chapter House and Cloister, based on the reconstruction of the Priory plan, were also marked out as gravel paths.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the 1982 excavation it was clear that further work at Bradwell Abbey would require substantial resources, not only for excavation but also for the conservation and regular maintenance

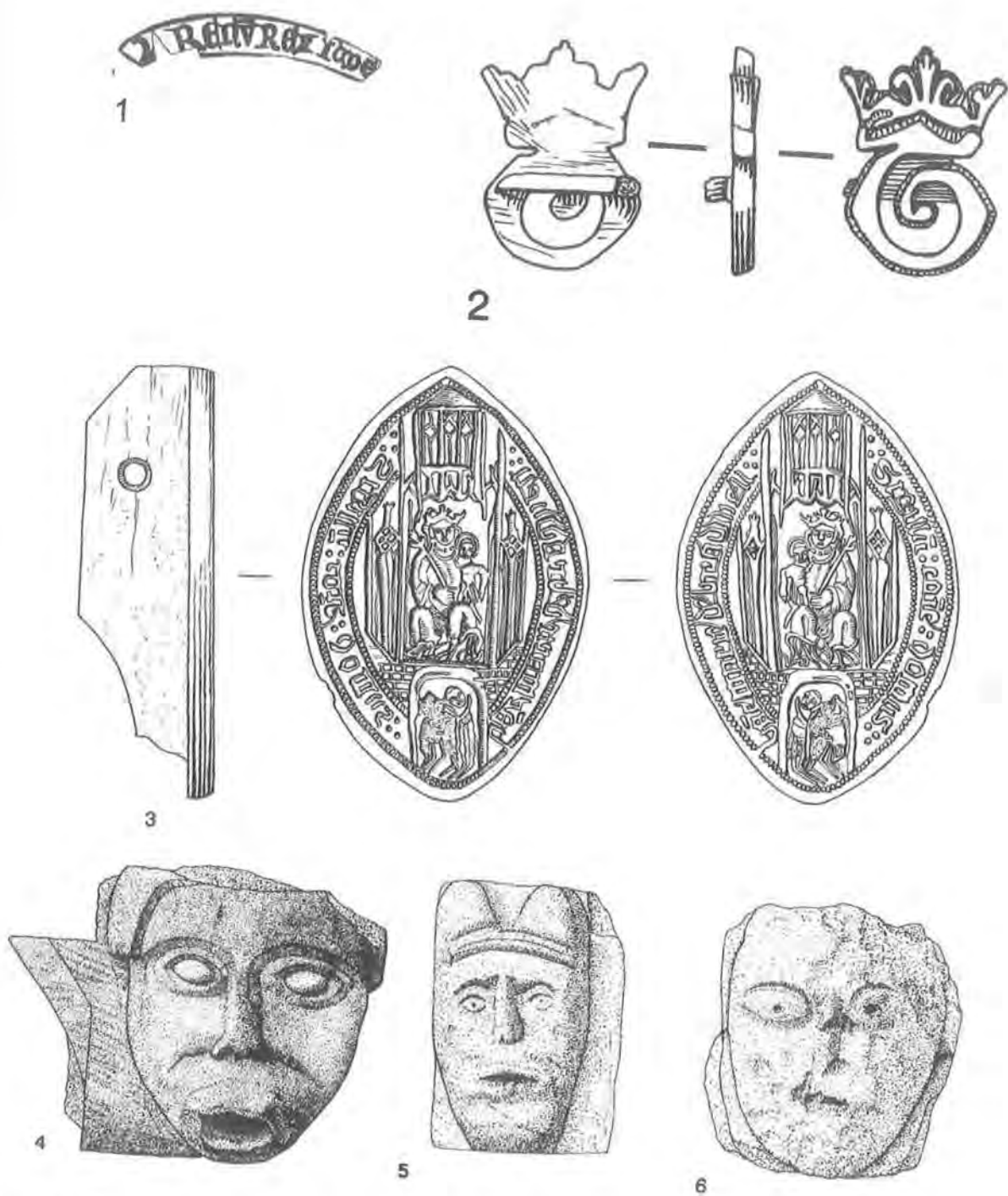


Fig. 19 1. The window glass, scale 1:2; 2. pilgrims' badge, scale 1:1; 3. The Seal of the Priory, scale 1:1; 4-6. Architectural stonework, scale 1:4.

of the exposed remains. Such expenditure was beyond the limits of the Unit's budget, which was provided solely for the excavation of sites that would be destroyed during the construction of the city.

These were still early days in the growth of the city and there were few wealthy industrial sponsors that might have financed this work. In addition the demands on the Archaeology Unit were such that had funds been available it would not have been able to provide staff to direct and supervise the work.

The Abbey excavation had been an interesting exercise involving local schoolchildren, who had all gained much from it, but it was not the way in which the rest of the Abbey site should be excavated. In these circumstances the Unit decided not to carry out any more work at Bradwell until such time as adequate resources, both financial and human, were available.

THE FINDS

The finds from the 1972 excavations which have been fully published (Mynard 1974, 48–63) consisted mainly of debris from the Priory buildings, including roof tile fragments, medieval floor tiles, window glass (both painted and unpainted), window lead and ironwork. Medieval and later pottery was also found.

The finds from the 1981 and 1982 excavations are not published in detail. They consisted of similar material to that from the earlier excavations but did include a few interesting items. Of particular importance was a leaded panel of painted glass from a medieval window, which has been reconstructed and published (Croft and Mynard 1986). A quantity of painted window glass sherds were also found but these added little to those from the earlier excavation apart from several sherds which joined together to form part of an inscription.

Another find of particular interest was a 16 mm-long, silver gilt medieval pilgrim's badge in the form of a crowned lombardic 'T' for St Thomas of Canterbury. This was discovered in the backfilling of the 1969 trial trench in the centre of the nave. Numerous fragments of worked stone were also

found, in particular a finely carved semi-grotesque head of fourteenth-century style and fragments of window mouldings.

THE WINDOW GLASS *Fig. 19, 1*

Two sherds of pale green glass with part of a red painted inscription Z-RENU REX JUDE. This is presumably part of a Latin inscription *Jesu Nazarenus Rex Judeorum* which translates as Jesus of Nazareth King of The Jews.

THE PILGRIM'S BADGE *Fig. 19, 2*

Brian Spencer

Pilgrim badge, silver gilt, in the form of a crowned Lombardic T, the initial of St Thomas of Canterbury. A horizontal pin or clip is cast in one piece with the back of the badge. Height 18 mm.

The bulk of the souvenirs available to the medieval pilgrim were made of a tin-lead alloy with a low melting-point. Commemorative badges and other devotional trinkets were therefore relatively easy and cheap to produce by multiple casting. At the major shrines, however, there was often a goldsmith at hand ready to fulfil individual requirements of well-to-do pilgrims. Unlike the base metal badges, the intrinsically valuable products have rarely survived the melting pot. The Bradwell Abbey badge is a rare, and an unpretentious, example of the kind of pilgrim souvenir that a fourteenth-century nobleman might have commissioned for his retinue of household staff. Several silver pilgrim badges have survived from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, but these were made by a new means of mass-production, involving the die-striking of badges on relatively inexpensive flans of brass or silver foil.

The Lombardic T (for St Thomas) was a motif frequently used by the badge makers at Canterbury as either the substance or the framework of a badge. The T sometimes surrounded the hieratic figure of St Thomas (Smith 1846, 205) or a representation of the famous jewelled reliquary that contained a portion of Becket's skull (Spencer 1968, pl. vi, 8; 1990, fig. 32). Alternatively, this shapely letter was itself often the central feature of a Canterbury badge and was either set in decorative, brooch-like surrounds or, like the Bradwell Abbey find, was

depicted with little further adornment (Spencer, forthcoming). A badge similar to this latter, but cast in the more usual tin-lead alloy, was recovered from a deposit dating from the second half of the fourteenth century on the site of the Billingsgate Market lorry park, Lower Thames Street, London (BWB83 [306] (713); *loc. cit.*)

One type of Canterbury badge places St Thomas's initial at the centre of a four-leaf clover (Spencer 1990, fig. 36), in keeping with the notion of reinforcement, whereby a traditional and secular good luck symbol was reinforced by the talismanic use of the saint's initial. The crown added to the top of the Bradwell Abbey badge is similarly an example of iconographic reinforcement, aimed at increasing the badge's luckiness.

THE SEAL MATRIX Fig. 19, 3.

The seal matrix was purchased in 1990 from the finder who had discovered it at Old Wolverton not far from the site of the house of Sir John Longville, patron of the Priory, who surrendered the Priory to Wolsey at the time of the suppression in 1524. The matrix of fourteenth-century date, is of bronze and of the standard almond shape 80 mm in length and 60 mm wide. The design depicting the Coronation of the Virgin is also a common feature of this type of seal. The Virgin who holds a sceptre in her left hand is seated beneath an elaborate canopy and there is architectural detail on either side. Standing on her right knee is the Infant Jesus with his left arm on his mother's shoulder. Beneath (under a stone arch, the impression of stonework is depicted on either side), one or possibly two figures appear to be kneeling in prayer.

The inscription in Latin, within beaded borders reads SIGILLU : COIE : DOMUS : BEA : MARIE : DE : BRADWELL : this can be translated as THE SEAL OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE HOUSE OF THE BLESSED MARY OF BRADWELL.

The seal and the inscription is very similar to an example from Tickford Abbey (Bull, 1900, 81)

ARCHITECTURAL STONEWORK Fig. 19, 4–6.

Paul Woodfield

Two stone heads (4 and 6) came from the exca-

vation, being found in the destruction rubble on the north side of the church. Another stone head (5) was found on a rockery at Bradwell Abbey some years ago.

4. Poorly developed oolite limestone of the Lincolnshire limestone series, probably of regional and fairly local origin. Unweathered. Depth of head estimated at 200 mm. This piece displays a wide grotesque mask with protuberant lozenge eyes, not drilled, and protruding lips around a partially open mouth. It is probably male, with an undefined bob hair style.

On its dexter side is the beginning of a wall arcade arch springing from a simple corbel bracket against the right cheek; there is no equivalent bracket on the left side. The whole mask and corbel project from a wall face by approximately 53 mm. The work is boldly carved and adequately finished but lacks fine detail, suggesting that it was intended to be seen from a distance.

The lack of weathering indicates that it was placed internally to a building. The existence of a shallow wall arch on one side, and not on the other, indicated it is the final element in arcading which stood proud of the main architecture, perhaps a hood moulding terminal for a sedilia or a triforium arcade as at Exeter cathedral.

The style of the head and eyes is of the mid to late thirteenth century.

5. Undeveloped oolitic limestone with banding of comminuted shell, of local origin from the South Northamptonshire/North Buckinghamshire area. Weathered.

It is a building block set into a wall by 130mm, on the end of which is carved a head, which, inclusive of headdress, measures 170 mm high. The top is sloped back into the wall, presumably to provide the next course above with a better mechanical purchase. One side of the head only has a narrow flange of 20 mm.

This corbel displays a facing head in low relief with low almond-shaped protruding eyes and drilled pupils, whilst the mouth is represented by a

cut slit. The figure wears a headdress consisting of a double band across the forehead from which rise two lumpy triangular protuberances. It is not clear what was intended, perhaps a crown, but more probably a symbolic representation of an episcopal mitre, even though the mitre is worn with the division across the head. The figure is thus probably the head of a bishop. It is so simply carved that the portraiture was clearly not intended.

The character of this piece suggests that it is part of a corbel table, the sloping back of the top indicating that it is to be placed near the head of a wall.

Figured corbel tables begin in Britain with the Romanesque, e.g. St. John, Preston, Gloucestershire and Durham Castle Chapel, of the early twelfth century, and continue through the thirteenth century, although later figures tend to have more expression and there is greater interest in portraying drapery and poses. This piece appears to be very late or post-Romanesque and thus probably dates from the early to mid thirteenth century. Precise dating on stylistic grounds is not possible on such a simply carved piece. The portrayal of bishops in such a position is commonplace. It probably relates to the Abbey church.

6. Fine-grained poorly developed limestone from the Lincolnshire Limestone series, with large rounded nodules of fine grained calcarious material. Local origin.

The surviving depth of the head is 170 mm but the top has been broken and eroded. It appears to have projected at least 200 mm from a wall face. The back is covered with a cement using an ash and clinker aggregate showing it was reset in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is severely weathered, but whether this was in its original or secondary positions is not clear.

This is the broken end of a corbel-like feature bearing a three-dimensional carved head inclined to face downwards. It has almond shaped eyes with drilled pupils and a small slightly open mouth. In this example alone the eyebrows are represented by a raised band. The head has a representation of a bob hair style, cut off at about ear level, although the ears are not represented. The degree of erosion has obscured any further detail.

This piece is again a corbel, and differs by facing slightly downwards. It may, as the last, be a member of a corbel table, but bolder and different in character from the last or, if internal, the supporting corbel of an arcade respond capital. Externally, and if the pronounced weathering took place while it was in its original position, it may be an independent corbel such as one supporting a lead rainwater chute.

The character of the carving is of the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

Burials

The various excavations located eleven human burials (B1–B11) none of which were excavated or removed. Their positions were recorded and their excavation left until such time as the Priory burial ground can be dealt with *in toto*.

B1–B3

These had been buried into NW11, the old soil level on the north side of the chapel. B3 was certainly buried after the erection of the Chapel, since the skeleton was tight up against the wall footings and had not been disturbed.

B4–B6

These three graves appeared after the second trowelling of destruction level SW5. B6 was covered by a reused Purbeck marble coffin lid.

B7

A feature, 450 × 180 mm, had been cut through the mortar floor in the north-west corner of the north aisle. It could represent an infant burial and was tentatively recorded as such.

B8

This was located in Trench 2 (1968) in an old soil level beneath the mortar floor of the church (Fig. 15, Section 1). The skeleton was partly in the side of the trench, so measurements of the total length were not obtained. The skull was 430 mm east from the west wall of the church, the upper arm was 200 mm long, from the bottom of the vertebrae to the bottom of the pelvis measured 190 mm, the width of the pelvis was 270 mm, only 280 mm of each leg was visible, and from the top of the skull to

the lowest exposed part of the legs measured 1.2 m.

B9-B11

These burials were located during the 1969 trial trenching (Fig. 14, C1). Only parts of them were seen, and only their distance east of the west wall of the church, and depth below the 1969 ground surface, were recorded.

B9 – a leg 5.2 m from church wall and 1.3 m deep.

B10 – a skull 7.7 m from church wall and 1.2 m deep.

B11 – ribs and long bone, 10 m from church wall and 1.6 m deep.

B12? – a humerus found in the ditch located north of the Chapel during the 1969 trenching (Fig. 14, C3) suggested a nearby disturbed burial.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations:

- Bodleian* Bodleian Library, Oxford.
BL British Library.
BAS Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.
BuCRO Buckinghamshire County Records Office.
BRS Buckinghamshire Records Society.
LRS Lincoln Record Society.
PRO Public Record Office.

Publications:

- Alcock, N.W. and Barley, M.W., 1972. *Medieval roofs with Base Crucks and Short Principals*. *Antiq. J.* 52, 132–168.
Bull, F.W., 1900. *A History of Newport Pagnell*. (Kettering)
Cahusac, J. A., 1846. *Bradwell Priory in Berkshire (sic)*. *Archaeologia* 31, 479–481.
Cordingley, R.A., 1961. *British Historical Roof Types and Their Members, A Classification*. Trans Ancient Monuments Soc., New Series 9, 73–130.
Croft, R.A. and Mynard, D.C., 1986. *A Late 13th-Century Grisaille Window Panel from Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes, Bucks*. *Medieval Archaeol.* 30, 106–112.
Croft, R.A. and Mynard, D.C., 1993. *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. 5 (Aylesbury).
Day, L.F., 1900. *Windows: A Book about stained and painted glass*. (London). Dictionary of National Biography.
Eames, S.E., 1974. 'The medieval floor tiles' in Mynard 1974, 57–63.
Eames, S.E., 1980. *Catalogue of medieval lead-glazed earthenware tiles*. Brit. Mus. Pub. (London).
Fletcher, J., 1981. *Vernacular Architecture* 12.
Gillow, J., *Biographical Dictionary of English Catholics*. 6 Vols.
Hamilton Thompson, A., 1911. 'Register of John Gynewell, Bishop of Lincoln' in *Archaeol. J.* 68, 301–360.
Heneage Cocks, A., 1897. *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*. (London).
Hohler, C., 1942. 'Medieval paving tiles in Buckinghamshire'. *Rev. Buckinghamshire* 14, 1–49 and 99–132.
Lewis, E.A., and Conway Davies, J., 1954. 'Records of the Court of Augmentations relating to Wales and Monmouth' in Board of Celtic Studies, History and Law Series, 13.
Leveson-Gower, J., 1992. 'Gaming piece' in Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 167–8.
Lipscomb, G., 1847. *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*. (London).
Lysons, D. and S., 1806. *Magna Britannia* Vol. 1. (London).
Morris, R.K., 1978. *The Development of Later Gothic Mouldings in England, c. 1250–1400*. Part I. *Architectural Hist.* 21, 22–23.
Mynard D.C., 1974. 'Excavations at Bradwell Priory 1968–1973'. *Milton Keynes J. Archaeol. Hist.* 3, 31–66.
Mynard, D.C., 1975. 'The Little Brickhill tile kilns and their products'. *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.* 38, 55–80.
Mynard, D.C. and Zeepvat, R.J., 1992. *Great Linford, Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. 3* (Aylesbury).
Mynard, D.C., 1994. *Medieval village excavations in Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. 6 (Aylesbury).
Newton, P.A., 1979. *C.V.M.A.G.B.* Vol. 1. (London).
Newton, P.A., 1974. *Stained and Painted Glass* in Pevsner and Sherwood 1974.
Pevsner, N. and Sherwood, J., 1974. *The Buildings of Oxfordshire* (London).
RCHM, 1914. *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Buckinghamshire*, volume 2. (London).
Rigold, S.E., and Woodfield, P. 1974. 'Bradwell Priory Chapel' in Mynard, 1974, 63–65.
Rouse, E.C., 1973. 'Bradwell Abbey and the Chapel of St. Mary'. *Milton Keynes J. Archaeol. Hist.* 2, 34–38.
Smith, C.R., 1846. 'On pilgrim signs and leaden tokens' in *Journ. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.* 1, 200–12.
Spencer, B., 1968. 'Medieval pilgrim badges' in J.G.N. Renaud (ed.) *Rotterdam papers: a contribution to medieval archaeology* (Rotterdam), 137–53.
Spencer, B., 1990. *Pilgrim souvenirs and secular badges* (Salisbury Museum Medieval Catalogue, part 2).
Spencer, B., 1992. 'Objects Associated with Religion', in Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 200 and fig. 106. 376.
Spencer, B., 1994. 'Objects Associated with Religion', in Mynard 1994, 38 and fig. 20.
Spencer, B. forthcoming: *Pilgrim Souvenirs: Medieval finds from excavations in London*.
VCH, 1905. *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Buckingham*, Vol. 1. (London).
VCH, 1927. *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Buckingham*, Vol. 4. (London).
Westlake, N.H.J., 1881. *A History of Design in Painted Glass*, (London).
Willis, B., 1719. *The History of Abbies*, (London).
Woodfield, P.W., 1986. *A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Milton Keynes*, Milton Keynes Development Corporation (Milton Keynes).