RK277(1-3)

AN EXCAVATION OF THE 'MOATED' SITE AT NEWBOLD VERDON

INTERIM REPORT 1

During 1981 the Newbold Verdon and District Local History and Archaeology Group have been investigating, by excavation, a possible fourth side to a 'moat' like feature at Newbold Verdon. The site is at the western end of the village adjacent to the present Hall house (SK 4415 0375), which is dated to the late 17th or early 18th century. The house is built on a raised platform, and is to the north of the 'moated' area.

The extant parts of the 'moat' form three sides of a square approximately 80 metres X 80 metres and being on average 10 metres across, still partially filled with water although silted up and overgrown in places. Around the 'moat' but only on the western and southern sides, is an avenue of yew trees; there is a gap in the southern side from which two parallel rows of yew trees continue to the edge of the spinney which bounds the 'moat' on the western and southern sides. Beyond the spinney are two fields totalling 2½ acres called 'the old piece' and 'lake meadow' which contain many earthworks, linear banks and ditches, fishponds and a dam. (These features were surveyed by the group during 1980.) It is not certain what some of these earthworks represent, but the whole area may be landscape gardening and the 'moat' may be an ornamental feature below the Hall, the avenue of trees bounding the private drive to the house. On the other hand, documentary references and a local tradition that there is a lot of stone under what would be the island of the moat, tend to suggest that we could be dealing with a medieval, moated manorial site. It was to try and resolve this question that it was decided to excavate a section across the assumed fourth side of the 'moat'.

Excavation at weekends and evenings has so far not proved conclusively that a fourth side existed, but indications do tend to support the theory. The various infilling levels are beginning to show as 'ditch' shaped and sherds of green glazed ridge tile and perforated roof slates are suggestive of a medieval manor house.

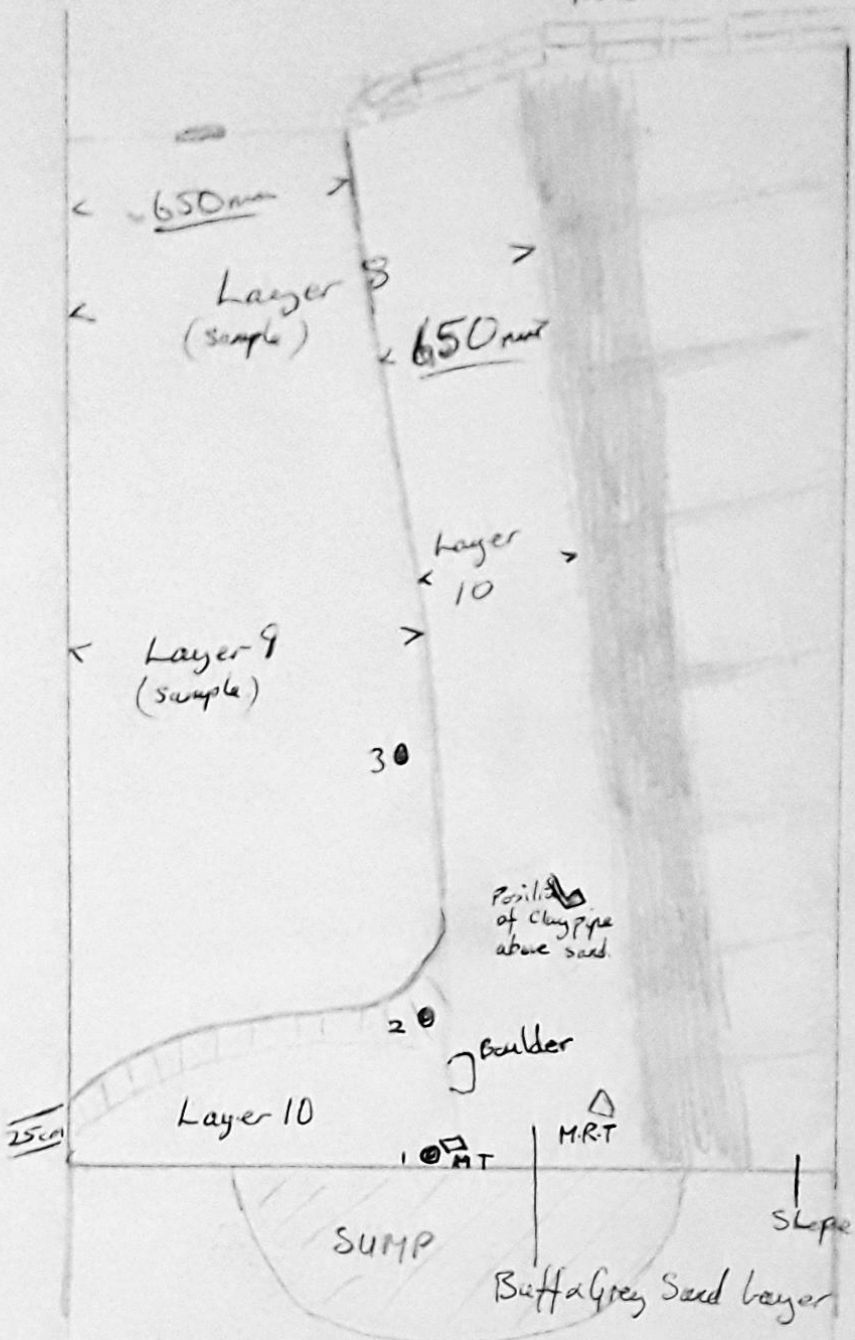
An unexpected discovery was of a brick drain fronted by what could be a retaining wall at the northern end of the section. The drain is of a similar brick bonding to the Hall house and is approximately 1 metre square in section; it runs out from under the Hall cellar steps, turns through 90°, then goes parrallel to the edge of the house platform and into the western arm of the existing 'moat' feature. The drain has a top of concrete slabs which have been put in place during the present century, but not during the present owners time(i.e. since 1948;he did not know the drain existed). There is another similar drain, which has a vaulted roof and runs under the present farmyard; one would suggest that the concrete slabs have been used to re-roof the newly discovered drain when it's vaulting collapsed. The side walls of the drain are double thickness brick, neatly bonded and finished on the inside but the 'header' bricks are roughly broken on the outside. In front of the drain and towards the middle of the moat ditch is a single thickness brick wall running almost parallel to the drain. At present this is being interpreted as a retaining wall holding back the house platform. This suggests that, if the drain is contemporary with the house(and from the similarity of the brick bonding one would assume this) there was still a ditched feature in front of the Hall, on the alignment of the fourth side of the moat, when the Hall was built, either dry or being water filled.

Work during 1982 should help to prove the moat as a medieval feature, the relationship of the wall, drain and house and may indicate when the fourth side was finally filled in.

RK277 (2-3)



N V Marked Sketch
RK277 (3-3)
Beach Road



covered both 9 & 10 (?)
is a smelly black ditch type fill.
topped tightly with Lt Brown Sterile soil covering L.8 (similar)
in Layer 8 was in this soil immediately above L.10