

EXCAVATION AT CAMPSEA ASH PRIORY,

1970

by DAVID SHERLOCK

In 1969 the demolition of a stable at Campsea Ash Priory revealed walls, floor tiles and the base of a pier. Accordingly in 1970 a small excavation was undertaken to discover in what part of the former priory these remains lay. This is a brief account of the excavation and of what is now known from other sources about the priory. To attempt a fuller description and interpretation of the relatively few remains both up-standing and so far excavated would be premature while so much more of the priory lies unexcavated.¹

Campsea Ash Priory is situated on low ground near the Deben about a mile and a third south-east of Wickham Market. It was founded in 1195 by Theobald de Valoines for twenty-one Augustinian nuns and further endowed by his descendants by marriage, the family of Ufford, Earls of Suffolk, several of whom were buried in the priory during the 14th century. In 1347 at the death of her second husband Ralph, Maud de Ufford entered the priory as a nun and endowed a wealthy chantry of five chaplains to pray for the souls of herself, her late husbands and relatives. This chantry was removed to Bruisyard five miles away in 1354 but in 1390 Sir Roger de Boys and others added three chaplains to the surviving two, who were to pray for the Uffords in the chapel of St. Nicholas in the conventual church. The convent was to build and maintain a suitable house for them with its own dormitory and refectory 'within the close near to the chapel'. The priory seems generally to have flourished and its numbers remained more or less the same until its suppression, which was in 1536 although its total annual income was over £200. The contents of the church and of the domestic rooms, kitchens, brewhouse, etc., are listed in the inventory² made at the Dissolution, when the priory was granted to Sir William Willoughby who sold it to a Mr. John Lane of Loudham.

¹ A note of the finds was published in 'Archaeology in Suffolk, 1970', above p. 94. The excavation was done mostly by Mrs. Dunnett, who supplied information on the circumstances of the earlier finds, and the writer who recorded the work mainly at weekends throughout the summer. The glass, pottery, bricks and a selection of the tiles the owners have kindly loaned to Ipswich Museum. The Purbeck tomb is to be repaired as much as possible and preserved at Ashe Abbey with the rest of the finds. The excavated area was back-filled with soil at the end of the year. The site has since been scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Acts.

² Transcribed by Francis Hazlewood, *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, VIII (1894), pp. 113-116. For further historical details see V.C.H., *Suffolk* II, pp. 112-115.

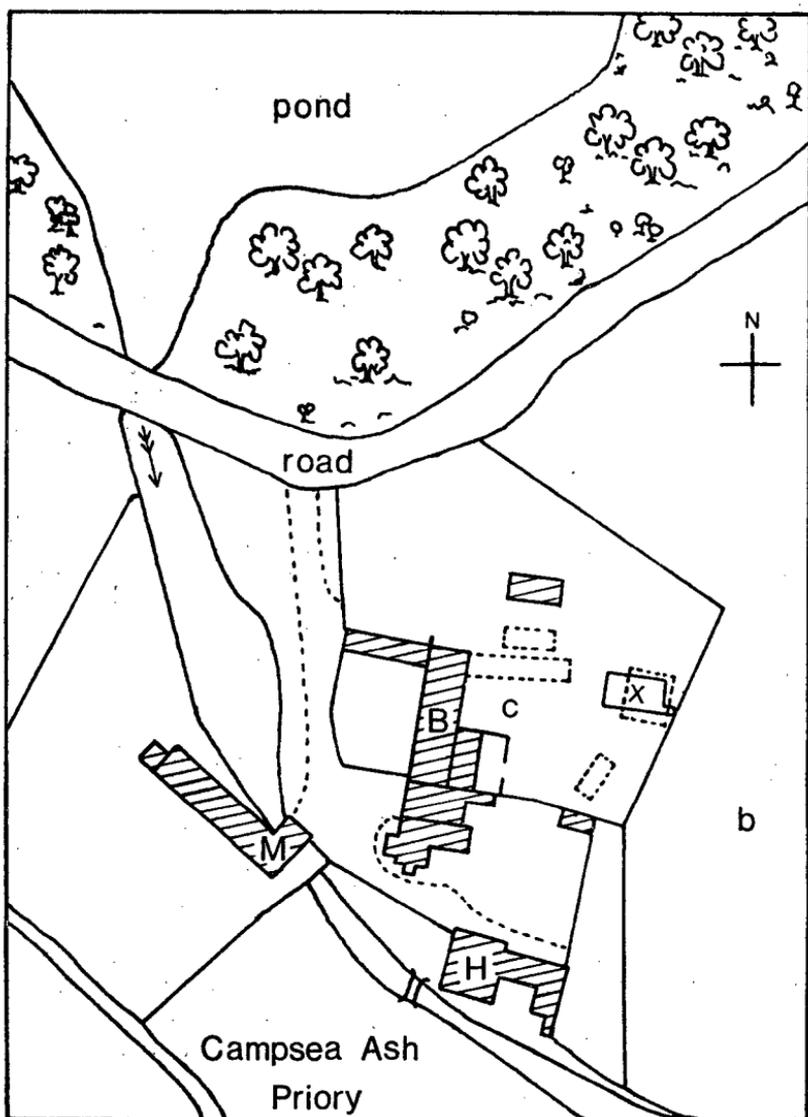
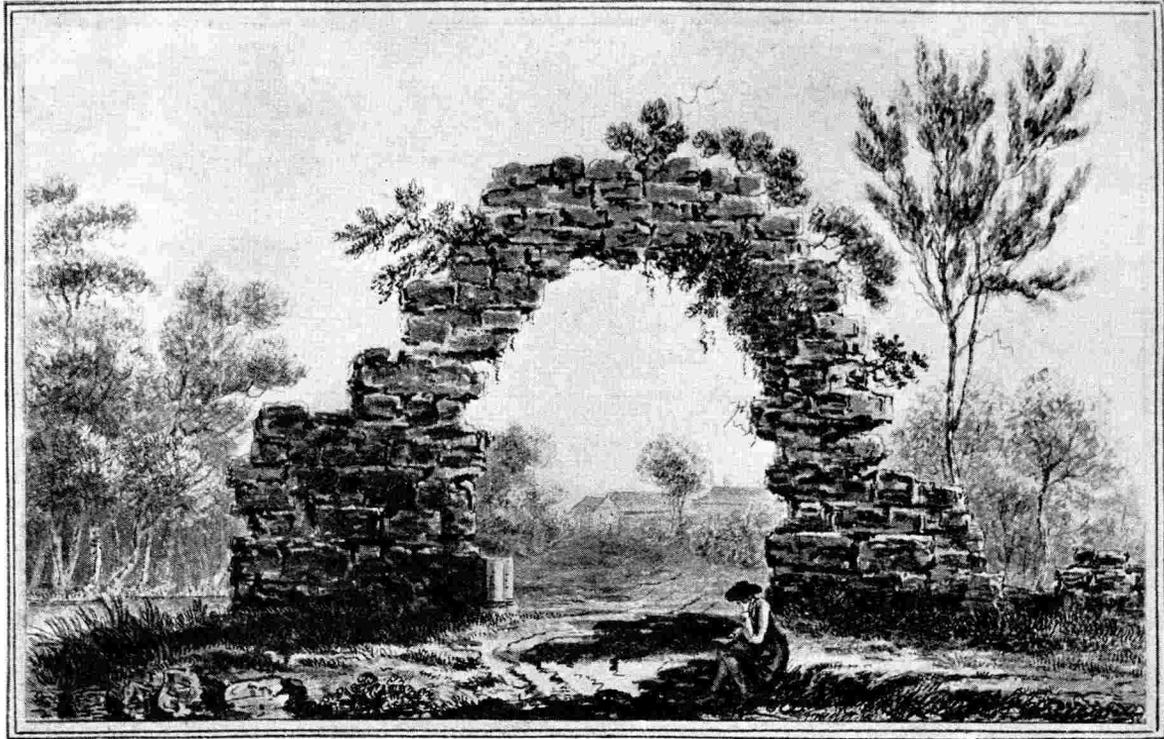


FIG. 31.—Campsea Ash Priory 1970. B: Barn; H: Ashe Abbey House; M: Mill; b: burials discovered 1969; c: stone coffins found 1843; x: area of 1970 excavation. Buildings on the 1904 O.S. map but no longer standing are represented in dotted outline.



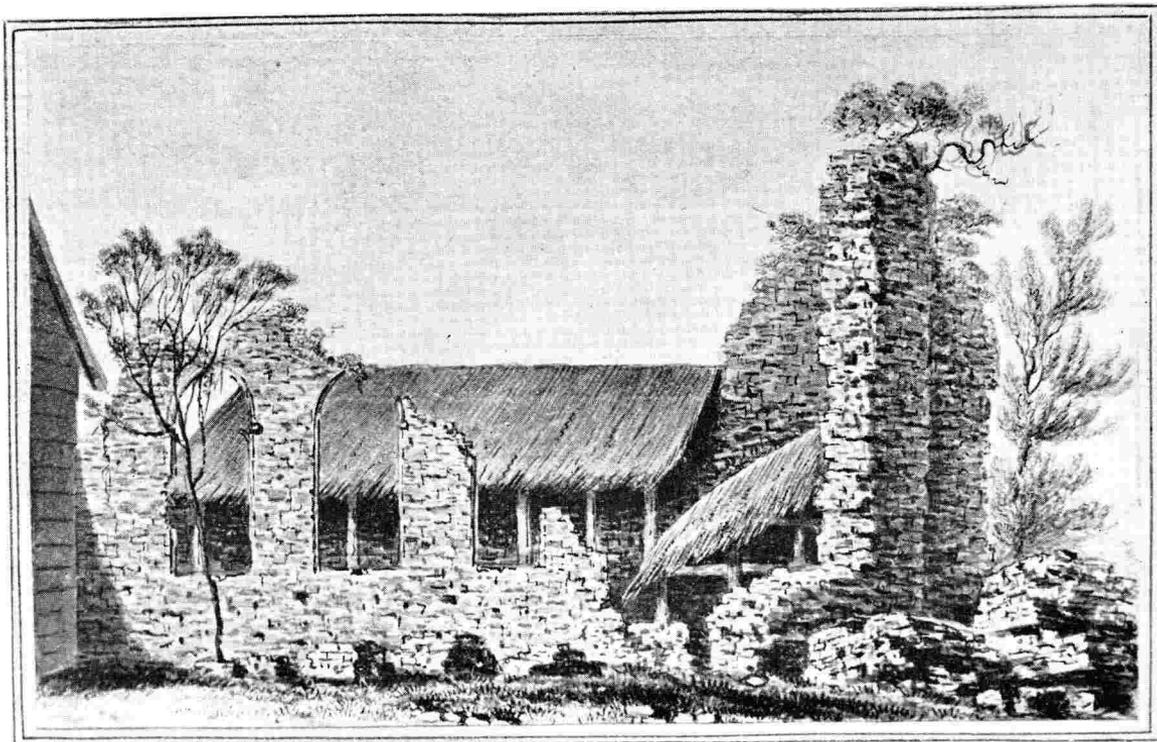
Campsea Ash Priory, barn (formerly part of west range) from north-east.

PLATE XVI



'Entrance into Campsea Ash Abbey as it stood in 1766', by Isaac Johnson.

PLATE XVII



'Campsea Ash Abbey Chapel, as it appeared in 1784', by Isaac Johnson.

Nothing is known of its subsequent history. Evidently most of the buildings were demolished or adapted for farm purposes.

The standing remains of the priory (Fig. 31) are mainly incorporated into 'Ashe Abbey', the house of the present owners, the mill, and a large barn which until recently formed one side of a farm-yard. Re-used medieval stonework can be seen in most of the other walls and out-buildings. The house itself, which was modernised in 1964, contains a fine 14th-century roof, consisting of a quasi-aisled structure raised upon a tie beam (not a normal queen strut) which supports an upper tie and crown-post.³ Machinery in the watermill, which was grinding corn until 1950, looks relatively modern, but the building itself appears to be medieval, with an arched embattled tie-beam at the south-east end and a clasped purlin roof. Both house and mill merit a full architectural study which it is hoped to publish in a future issue of these *Proceedings*. The barn which was re-thatched in 1970 has undergone many repairs in stone, flint and brick down to modern times. On its west side very little medieval masonry is visible but the east wall (Plate XV) has a small blocked 13th-century doorway at the north end and a stone moulding along most of its length, presumably marking the line of a penticed roof. In the north wall at first-floor level are remains of a rib-vaulted entrance and the west wall projects beyond the north end about 2.80 m. to a single block of ashlar surviving at ground level which looks like one jamb of a doorway. It is suggested that the barn originally formed the greater length of the west range of the conventual cloister. The small door could then have led into a slype and the first floor entrance could have led from the prioress's lodge or guest hall into the church.

Two drawings by the Woodbridge topographer, Isaac Johnson, entitled 'Entrance into Campsea Ash Abbey as it stood in 1766' and 'Campsea Ash Abbey Chapel, as it appeared in 1784' are here published for the first time (Plates XVI and XVII).⁴ The former shows a breached and ruinous wall, presumably a gateway, with remains of a four-shafted column in the left side and buildings in the background. The water on the left of the picture may be where the present decoy pond is. The latter shows various walls in uncertain perspective, one with three or four windows, with label stops. They are possibly ruins of the frater in the south range.

A plan, with some measurements but not to scale, was published

³ See D. G. Penrose and P. J. Hill, *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxx (1966), p. 265. Mr. Penrose has suggested to me that this is the roof of the dwelling house founded for the five chaplains in 1390. See further note 26, below.

⁴ Fitch Collection, Borough Central Library, Northgate St., Ipswich.

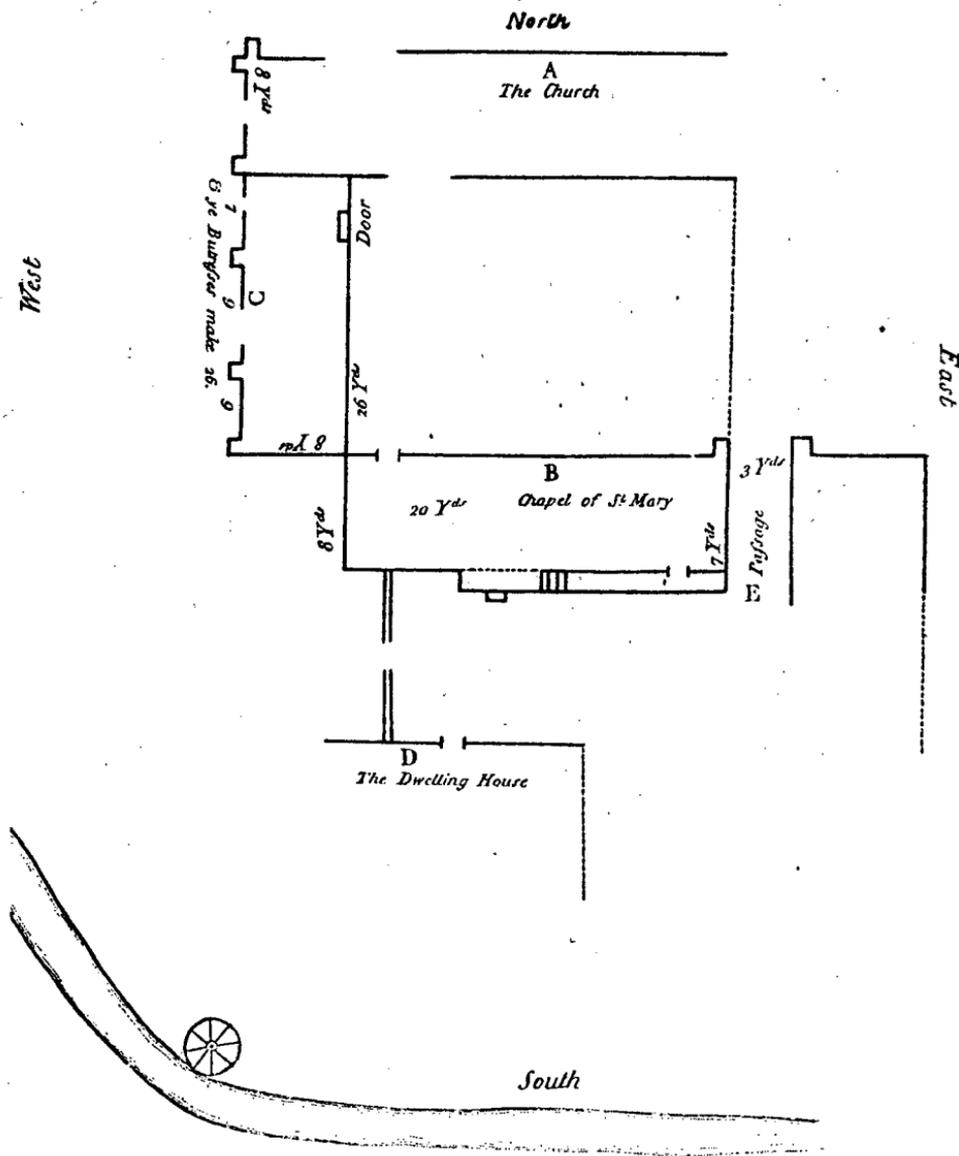


FIG. 32.—Plan of the Priory published in 1790.

in 1790 by John Nichols in *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*⁵ and is reproduced in Fig 32. It purports to show the site of *A* 'the church, now all in ruins except the west end, where the walls are three feet thick'; *B* 'the chapel of St. Mary'; *C* 'refectory or dormitory'; *D* 'the dwelling-house, built with stone and brick, and supported with prodigious balks of timber, etc. A principal beam in the hall measures 14 ins. square' etc.; *E* a passage with unidentified building to its east; and a wheel on a bend in the river, obviously that of the watermill. The south-east corner of *A* is approximately where the 1970 excavation took place; *B* was presumably the frater, with steps indicated leading up to the pulpitum; the walls of *B* and *E* are now obscured by post-conventual building; *C* is to be identified with the thatched barn (now without the buttresses shown on its west side) and *D* with the house. The measurements where checkable are accurate to within a foot.

Although there is no record of previous excavation there have been a number of chance finds from the site, but their whereabouts cannot now be traced. 'Some years ago (i.e. before c. 1790) a leaden coffin was taken up by the men in the yard'⁶ and in 1842 'six stone coffins were dug up near the house'.⁷ Other human bones were dug up when a 4-in. water pipe was laid across the field to the east of the farm in 1969.⁸ Many small finds including a 15th-century 'French derivative' jetton and an iron signet ring engraved with a *chi-rho* monogram are said to have been dug up by workmen either in ploughing or during the conversion of the priory remains into farm buildings.⁹ Inscribed stones, stained glass and heraldic devices on stone, wood and glass are also recorded.¹⁰

Several books which belonged to the nunnery are recorded and some are extant. A psalter of c. 1300 was in Shipdham Church library (sold in 1951), and the British Museum has a late 12th-century psalter bound with an early 13th-century hymnal inscribed 'cest liure est a couvent de Campisse' and a 15th-century book of verse presented by a sub-prioress. A prayerbook (now untraced) was in the Harleian library sale of 1744.¹¹

⁵ Vol. V, No. 52. Some of the same material was also published in Richard Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments* (London, John Nichols, 1796), I, 1, p. 143 and II, 1, p. cclv.

⁶ Davy, B.M. Add. MS. 19096, f. 71.

⁷ John Kirby, *Suffolk Traveller* (1855), p. 352; *c* on fig. 31.

⁸ *Ex. inf.* Mrs. Gascoigne. O. S. field 351; *b* on fig. 31.

⁹ V. B. Redstone, *Annals of Wickham Market* (1896), p. 76, with illustration of jetton (not a Nuremberg token as stated) and ring (which could be Roman or Renaissance). I am grateful to Miss Elsie Redstone of Woodbridge for searching for the finds mentioned in her father's book.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.* in n. 5, p. 25 and illus. opp. p. 24; Davy, B.M. Add. MS. 19096, f. 71,

¹¹ *Norfolk Arch.*, x (1888), p. 390; B.M. Arundel 396, Add. MS. 40675; N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (1964), p. 238.

Campsea Ash
Priory Excavation
1970

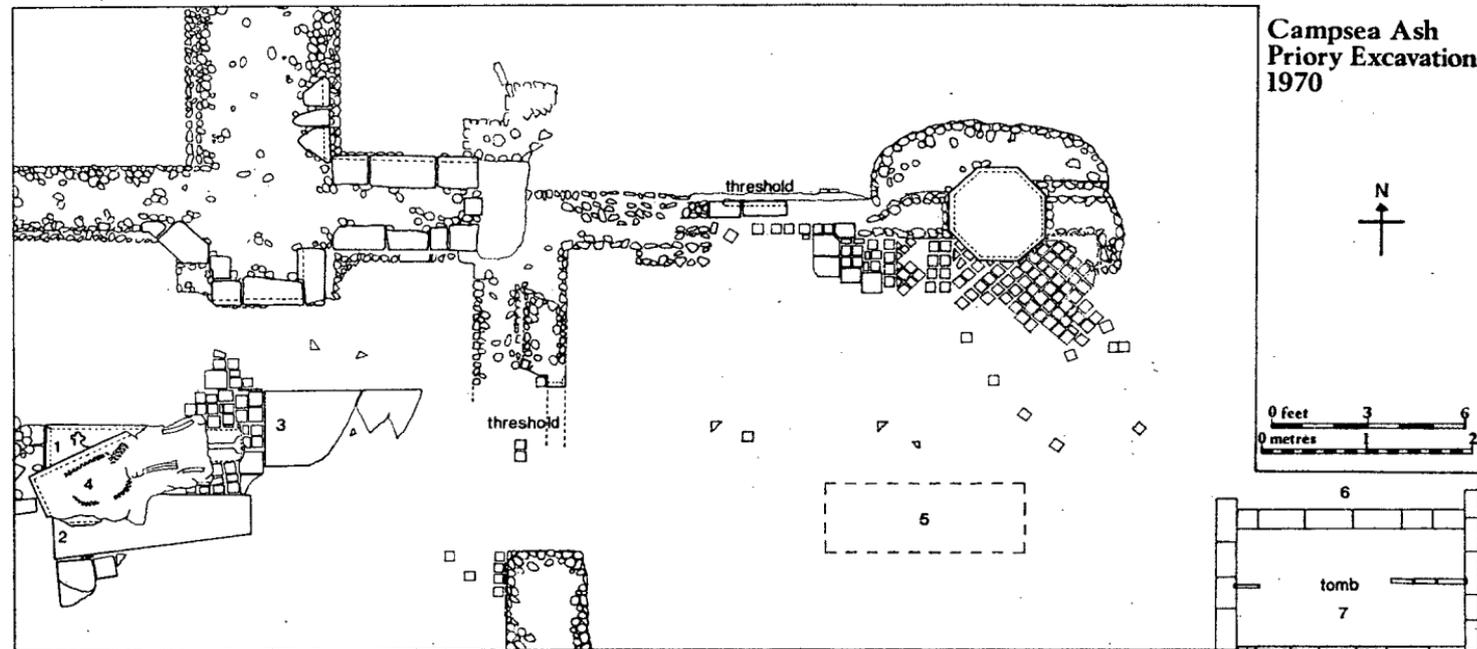


FIG. 33.—Plan of area excavated. (Numbers refer to burials.)

THE EXCAVATION

A rectangular trench 6.50 x 12 m. was marked out on a base line parallel with the east wall of the barn and 26.90 m. (approx. 88 ft.) from it to include the remains partly exposed in 1969 (Fig. 33).

The structural remains in this area were found to consist of a north wall, 1.53 m. (5 ft.) thick including offsets, bonded into an east-west wall 75 cm. (2 ft. 6 ins.) thick including a southern offset west of the north wall. East of the north wall it was 93 cm. (3 ft.) thick and masonry survived in one course above the flints and mortar for about 1.50 m. eastwards. On the south side of the intersection of these two walls there is a buttress-like projection with two, possibly original, chamfered stones surviving and re-used stones either side. Two worn stones cross the south-west angle of this intersection. There is then a gap in the east-west wall, possibly the result of destruction, with only vestigial foundations of flint. Further east two stones on hard foundations mark the threshold of an entrance whose maximum width is about a metre. An octagonal pier base on a large flint foundation lies to the east again, with flint and hard mortar walls abutting and partly overlapping the pier chamfer. This mortar, which was greyer and more like cement than the rest of the flint mortar turns southwards near the edge of the pier foundation. From the east-west wall another wall projects southwards for about 1.35 m. (4 ft. 6 ins.) to the jamb of another threshold or doorway the width of which was traceable for at least 60 cm. along the edge of the mortar bedding for the floor tiles. The total width of this wall at foundation level was 94 cm. (about 3 ft.) but it was only half that thickness at the level of the threshold where it had remains of white plaster adhering to both sides. Beyond this threshold and slightly to the east was another flint wall approximately 82 cm. (2 ft. 8 ins.) thick. There was wall plaster on the west side of this wall.

The top of most of the walls and the pier was at modern ground level. Consequently the walls were worn and showed signs of continuous use until the 1969 demolition. The remainder of the area contained building debris packed hard as a result of farm traffic in reddish soil beneath the thin turf. This was excavated until the uneven level of a tile and mortar floor, bedded generally on yellow sand but occasionally on roughly-laid flints, was reached at a maximum of about 35 cm. below ground level. Immediately south of the pier base a number of very worn tiles survived set diagonally and probably *in situ*. Design no. 6, the cross engrailed (see below p. 133), was just visible on one or two. West of these, as far as the threshold, were similar tiles roughly set at right angles to the wall with a few large, plain and broken tiles, probably all re-set. The other main area of tiles, also presumed to have been

re-set because of the mixture of different sizes and fragments, lay between tombs 1 and 3. Some of these overlapped the chamfer of no. 1 and it is possible that stones 1-3 were all lowered from approximately knee height to their present level with the tiles at the post-Dissolution conversion so that they should continue to protect the actual burials. Fragments of loose tiles, both plain and decorated (mainly no. 6 design), and mortar were found scattered over the whole of the area south of the east-west wall. Relatively few pieces of tile or mortar were recovered from the same level north of the threshold in this wall, although this was the place where many of the decorated examples were found in 1969. Practically no tiles were found in the north-west corner.

The Burials

Evidence was discovered for at least six burials. They were all left *in situ* with minimal disturbance and re-buried with soil.

Nos. 1-3 (see numbers on plan) are Purbeck marble tombstones up to 1.90 m. (6 ft. 3 ins.) long set, or possibly re-set, at floor level. Their thickness was not ascertained. No. 1 had a cross in relief partly visible on top and a hollow chamfer. A fourth fragment of Purbeck marble lay to the south of no. 2 and may come from another tomb. Stylistically they may be dated to the 13th century.¹² No. 4, which partly overlay nos. 1 and 2, was a pale grey calcareous slab, possible Burwell stone.¹³ Because it lay partly at modern ground level it was in a very fractured condition. The hollow-chamfered sides of the base were painted red and only survived to give minimum dimensions of 72 x 180 cm. The top of the stone bore fragments crushed into the slab of carved drapery and chain armour, which must be the remains of an effigy of a recumbent knight of the earlier part of the 13th century. It is unlikely to have been moved far because of its weight so probably comes from a burial just outside the area investigated.

No stone marked no. 5 burial which was located and dug by Mrs. Dunnett in an area where floor-tile mortar was absent. A skeleton was found about 80 cm. below floor level in clean yellow sand with no sign of iron-work or coffin.

A further slab of Purbeck, found just protruding from the section in the south-east corner of the area originally laid out, was exposed

¹² Cf. two Purbeck tombstones now at the back of Orford Church and said to have come from priests' graves. One has a cross similar to no. 1.

¹³ I am grateful to Dr. F. W. Anderson for identifying this and several other types of stone (see below p. 131).

by extending the area 2 m. eastward in this corner. Many small Purbeck fragments had already been found nearby. It proved to be one fragmented side of a monumental tomb, and part of one end of it was found overlying this side at the further end (Plate XIII). The pieces were lifted and re-assembled in the barn where they are now (1972) being restored.

The rest of the extended area was dug in the writer's absence by Mr. Martin Gascoigne who found the other Purbeck side lying in a more worn, but less fractured, condition beneath the first and in a stone-lined burial chamber, measuring internally at the top 2.16 x 1.17 m. (about 7 x 4 ft.). This was excavated to a depth of about 75 cm. below floor level. At this point a skeleton (7), was found with remains of heavy iron coffin nails, brackets and rings lying in the southern half of the chamber, which was divided by a brick partition set between grooves roughly gouged just off-centre at either end. The sandy soil overburden and filling contained about a dozen well-cut blocks of ashlar matching the stone lining and chamber, fragments of tiles (design no. 6), a fragment of blind arcading (Fig. 34, 13) and a small fragment apparently carved with drapery folds, both of white limestone, and fragments of 17th-century pottery (Fig. 35, 2). The bottom of the chamber was not fully explored but appeared to rest on dark soil. The north side of the chamber was not a wall but a low arch with a brick blocking, just beyond which Mr. Gascoigne found a second skeleton (6). There was less stone in the infilling of this area and a patch of darker soil was observed along the north side of the arch, going down to about the depth of the skeletons. Fragments of a cooking pot (Fig. 35, 1) were recovered from this area which was probably the construction trench for the stone chamber, therefore built after burial 6. For the 17th-century pot to have entered the chamber, burial 7 must have been disturbed after the Dissolution, but burial 6 may be undisturbed.

THE FINDS

Purbeck Marble Tomb

Full publication of the tomb is not possible while its remains are still being repaired. However, enough of the monument survives for the following interim description to be made. Each long side, measuring 207 x 81 cm., has seven whole panels with half-panels either end which join with other half-panels on the sides of the adjacent end pieces to make nine panels along each side. The only surviving piece of one end, 86 cm. long and 16.5 cm. thick, has two complete panels and remains of a third, not counting its half-panel.

Each panel has a half-pedestal, an iron hook for holding weepers and a canopy decorated with foliate crockets. There are recessed triangular areas between the canopies for shields. The tops of the shafts supporting the canopies are decorated alternately with heads and animals (squirrels etc.).

The length of the Purbeck closely coincides with that of the stone chamber in which it was found but because its total width is unknown it is not absolutely certain whether the Purbeck was designed for the stone chamber. If it was only wide enough for one person then it must have belonged to an adjacent burial (possibly outside the excavated area).

Stylistically it dates to the latter part of the 14th century when a number of Uffords were buried at the Priory. Ralph de Ufford was buried there in 1347; Robert, the first Earl who died in 1369, asked to be buried 'desoultz l'arche parentre la chapelle St. Nicholas et le haut altier'; Edmund, his brother, who died *c.* 1375 asked to be buried near his wife in the Lady Chapel; William, the second Earl, whose will was proved in 1381 asked to be buried 'dereare la tombe en quele mes tres honorés piere et miere gisent' and asked to have a marble tomb made for himself; and Isabel, his widow, who died in 1416 a nun of the Priory, asked to be buried next to him.¹⁴ Unfortunately there is insufficient evidence to link any of these people with either the burials excavated or the Purbeck tomb itself, at least while the rest of the church is unexcavated, but the mention of a marble tomb must for the time being make William de Ufford the likeliest recipient of the Purbeck. As only one skeleton was found in the chamber his wife, who died thirty-five years later, was presumably buried elsewhere. Mr. John Harvey *F.S.A.* has kindly commented on photographs as follows: 'I would say that this tomb pretty well has to be that of the first or second (Earl) . . . Stylistically, the gap is not long enough to feel sure, especially as this is a Purbeck work. In principle all marble tombs were worked by Purbeck marblers at the quarries, even if to designs sent by leading masters from elsewhere. The intractable nature of the material means that mouldings etc. are not identical with work made, for example, in the shops of a master such as Yeveley . . . In my opinion the workmanship is very high class, and what one would expect for an Earl and K.G. The design looks close to the Court "school", and though I see no obvious sign of Yeveley's touch, it might quite well (have been) inspired by William Wynford: the cusping is close to the "feel" of his work. He is more likely to have been linked with Purbeck tombs than Yeveley was.'¹⁵

¹⁴ Quotations from *op. cit.* in n. 5; see also N. H. Nicholas, *Testamenta Vetusta* 1 (1826).

¹⁵ For Yeveley and Wynford see John Harvey, *English Medieval Architects* (1954).

Stone

A considerable quantity of medieval building material was found lying about the farm yard area as well as during the 1969 demolition and 1970 excavation. Most of the dressed stone was good-quality white limestone from the Caen area of Normandy but a fine-grained greyish greensand was also used and some shelly Lincolnshire limestone. Septaria from the Thames basin, Norfolk Carstone and local Coralline or red crag are also to be found both lying about the site and built into the barn but it is not certain to which building periods any of these materials belonged. The commonest material was flint and mortar as one would expect in this part of the country, with dressed stone used for quoins and architectural detail.

A selection of mouldings is illustrated in Fig. 34.¹⁶ All are in limestone and were found in 1970 unless otherwise stated. No. 1, assignable to about the date of the foundation of the Priory, is from the base for a shaft 10 cm. in diameter. No. 2, of the earlier 13th-century, is from an octagonal pier base 87 cm. in diameter with reddish brown paint surviving in the hollow and a slot cut in the centre of one side, presumably for holding a partition. Both were found in 1969 or earlier. Nos. 3 (greensand) and 4 are internal angle shafts of doorways from *c.* 1200.¹⁷ No. 5 is a small corbel of about the same date, possibly later. It was found before 1969 and is identical with a corbel reset in the wall of a shed opposite the house. Nos. 6 and 7 (bluish greensand) are roll-and-fillet mouldings from door arches and no. 8 is a hood mould: all first half or middle of the 13th century. No. 9 is a hood or label found in 1969. No. 10 is from a string course not earlier than the 14th century. Nos. 11 and 12 (shelly limestone) are wave-mouldings of the second quarter or middle of the 14th century. No. 13 was found in the infilling of the tomb and is a fragment of blind arcading, possibly from a quatrefoil panel in the side of an altar-tomb. It dates from the later 14th century. Other dressed stones (not illustrated) are from windows, tracery, rib vaulting etc., of the 13th and 14th centuries. The absence of mouldings of later dates agrees with the absence of records for any building of note after *c.* 1390.

A number of small fragments of decorative stonework such as leaf crockets in whitish sandstone were found in the 1970 rubble and may be compared with part of a pinnacled canopy dug up several years ago and now in the house. A small fragment of soft chalky limestone with traces of gilding and vermilion undercoat was also found, worn and broken off above one end; it is probably incidental sculpture from another canopy.

¹⁶ I am grateful to Mr. R. Gilyard-Beer for advice on the dates of these mouldings.

¹⁷ There is no sign of tooling, either diagonal or vertical, to allow closer dating.

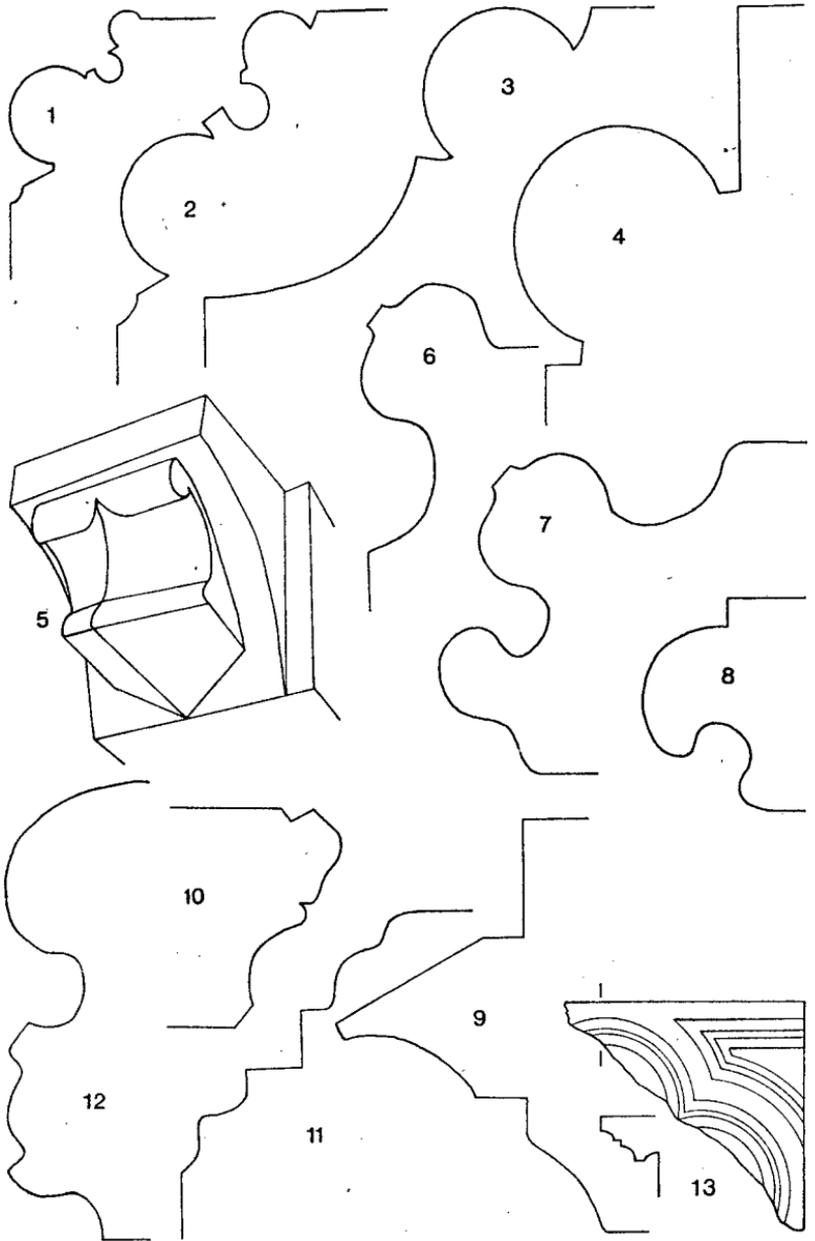


FIG. 34.—Stone mouldings etc., scale $\frac{1}{2}$, except no. 5, $\frac{1}{2}$.

Bricks

A number of bricks set in crumbling yellowish mortar were recovered from the double tomb in the south-east corner and must be of roughly the same date. Those from the partition measured 24 x 11.5 x 4.5 cm. approx. (roughly $9\frac{1}{2}$ x $4\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{3}{4}$ ins.). One was wedge-shaped, from 4.5—3.8 cms. ($1\frac{3}{4}$ ins. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins.) thick. Those from the blocking under the arch were the same size, but less regular; some were slightly curved. All were bright pinkish red and bore sharp impressions of the straw on which they were dried. Very similar bricks have been found at Snape Priory, five miles away.¹⁸

Floor Tiles

The tiles are published by Laurence Keen in the article immediately following. The commonest design (Fig. 38, no. 6), displays a cross engrailed with a crudely designed fleur-de-lis in the first quarter and the initials *BM* in two corners. These arms are undoubtedly for Ufford while a fleur-de-lis is the cadency mark of a sixth son. The initials must be for *Beata Maria*, the patron saint of the Priory. The arms are also to be found on the seal of the Priory and (on a chequy background) on a spandril above the west door of the neighbouring parish church of Blaxhall as well as a number of other tile designs in East Suffolk. Another design (Fig. 39, no. 9) bears a plain cross, which may be compared with the arms on stained glass once in the 'parlour window' of the house which Davy noted as Or, a plain cross Gules,¹⁹ the arms of de Burgh.

The heraldry of these two designs can be understood in the light of the history of the Priory's benefactors. Maud de Ufford founded in 1347 a chantry of priests in the Lady Chapel to pray for the souls of her first and second husbands, William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, and Ralph de Ufford (see above, p. 121). If the fleur-de-lis can be identified with Edmund de Ufford, who was the sixth son of Robert, and Ralph's brother, then possibly the tiles show he was a benefactor to his sister-in-law's foundation.²⁰ They would then date from between 1348 and 1354, the year in which the chantry moved to Bruisyard, and have been on the floor of the Lady Chapel near

¹⁸ *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxxi (1969), p. 325, no. 71. Both lots were presumably made in a local brickworks such as still exists at Aldeburgh.

¹⁹ B.M. Add. MS. 19096, f. 71.

²⁰ I am grateful to Miss Joan Corder for this suggestion and for the following reference from *Topographer and Genealogist*, II (1853), p. 271: in Frenze Church (Norfolk), 'the arms of Robert Earl of Suffolk; of Robert his eldest son, charged with a label; of Sir Ralph (Maud's husband), charged with an amulet argent (for 5th son); and of Sir Edmund, charged with a fleur-de-lis (for 6th son),—his brothers'.

his brother's and parents' tombs. But they are most likely to date from *c.* 1375 when he himself was buried in the Lady Chapel. They might also date from either Roger de Boys' first endowment of 1383 or his 1390 foundation of the St. Nicolas chantry.

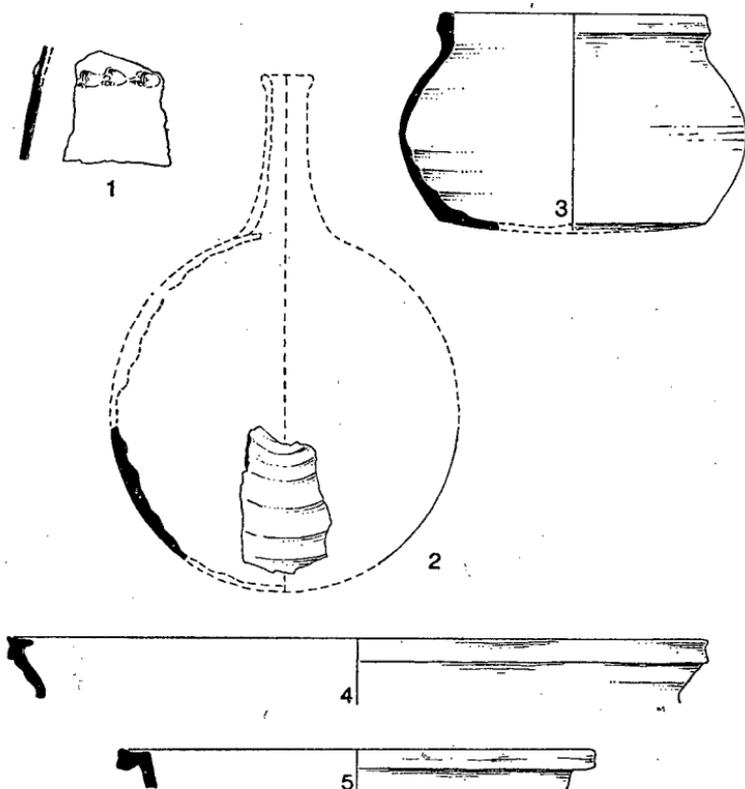


FIG. 35.—Pottery, scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

Pottery, by Stephen Moorhouse

The pottery recovered from the excavation can be divided into that which is associated with the construction of the stone-lined tomb (*c.* 1369-1381) and that which is associated with the Dissolution phase or shortly after.

Pottery associated with the Tomb

Fig. 35, 1. One of four sherds from the same large vessel in a very fine sandy fabric with light grey core and darker surfaces, all sherds being heavily reduced and fire-blackened internally, possibly suggesting that they came from a curfew or fire cover. The decor-

ation has been formed by creating a slight raised cordon while throwing and then thumbing horizontally. All sherds are from the suggested construction trench of the stone-lined tomb.

Pottery associated with the Dissolution or after

Fig. 35, 2. Four large sherds from the body of a globular type-3 flask in a very hard earthenware fabric with purple brown core and surfaces; purple margins beneath the surfaces, the inner surface being slightly pinker, the external rougher. The piece illustrated has pieces of white clay inclusions giving the impression of *aggate* ware found in the infilling of the stone-lined tomb. These flasks are usually found in contexts of the 17th century although their true date range is not yet known and their source is as yet undefined. It is likely that they came from northern France or northern Italy.²¹

Fig. 35, 3. Five large sherds forming the complete profile of a small squat cooking pot in a hard sandy, light pinky brown fabric with a light grey core, sooted externally towards and under the base. Glazed internally only on the base in a shiny olive green with soots etc. under the base. Coming from rubble layers on the west of the site above the church floor, as a cooking pot it is unlikely to have been used in the church while the site was in use so it is more likely it can be dated to the partial dismantling of the site immediately after the Dissolution.

Fig. 35, 4. Cooking pot rim in a fine sandy hard-fired fabric; core and inner surface pinkish brown, with dark grey sooting externally, partially internally. From rubble layer between burials 1-4 and east-west wall.

Fig. 35, 5. Bowl rim in a fine sandy dull brick red fabric having on the inside a dull shiny orange glaze with purple speckling caused by iron concentrations in the glaze. Found beneath hard packed flint rubble in the north-west corner.

Leaden Bulla

A leaden bulla (Fig. 36) was recovered from the rubble and after treatment by Ipswich Museum laboratory its obverse can be read as *Clemens P(ater) P(atriae) VI*, Pope Clement VI, 1342-1352 (not Gregory XI as reported above, p. 94). The reverse bears the usual portraits headed *S(anctus) Pa(ulus)* and *S(anctus) Pe(trus)*.²²

²¹ See J. G. Hurst, 'Imported Flasks' in 'Kirkstall Abbey Excavations 1960-1964', *Pub. Thoresby Soc.*, LI (1966), pp. 54-59.

²² Papal bullae were often buried with their recipients and if this one came from an Ufford tomb it is tempting to identify it with one of many indults granted by Clement VI to the Uffords. See e.g. Bliss and Johnson, *Calender of Papal Registers*, III: indults to Robert, John and Alice, and Ralph de Ufford to choose confessors; to John, Ralph and Matilda to have portable altars; to Ralph and Matilda that their confessor may allow religious to eat meat at their table on lawful days; to Matilda to enter nunneries accompanied by six matrons.



FIG. 36.—Bulla of Clement VI, scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

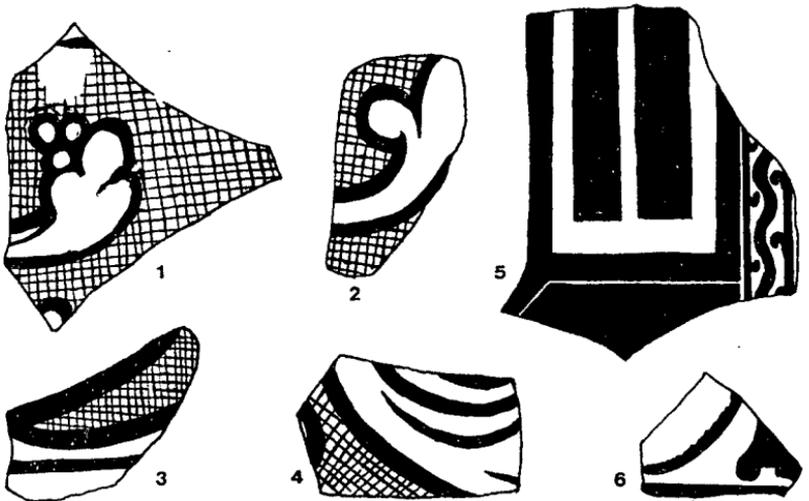


FIG. 37.—Window glass, scale $\frac{2}{3}$.

Window Glass

About twenty small fragments of window glass were recovered from the rubble overburden, mainly in the south-west part of the area. They were all in a poor state of preservation. Those illustrated (Fig. 37) have paint now maroon-coloured and are 4-5 mm. thick. Nos. 1-4 have a lattice pattern and floral decoration which may be compared with the mid-13th-century grisaille glass in the neighbouring church of Pettistree, some of the earliest surviving window glass in Suffolk.²³ No. 5 seems to depict part of the base of one side of a buttressed canopy. Two other fragments were stained through-out, one deep blue, the other green. The remainder were either plain or too decomposed for any decoration to be made out.

Miscellaneous

Fragment from side of large shelly limestone mortar with splayed rib down outside. Internal diam. at top about 35 cm.; surviving height 21 cm.; 8 cm. thick. Found before 1970. Medieval.

Thin bronze disc stamped with eight-foil pattern and pierced at three points for mounting. Diam. 1.7 cm. Found north of east-west wall below level of tiled floor.

About three dozen rusted iron nails were recovered in roughly equal quantities from the rubble overburden and can be divided into three rough groups; 6.5 cm. long with round heads; 5 cm. long with small square heads and tapering shafts; and 4.5 cm. long with round heads.

Fragments of white, unpainted wall-plaster, found loose and adhering to some of the walls, notably the south wall either side of the threshold.

An L-shaped fragment of iron, approx. 10 cm. long and 1 cm. square, set in lead, 2.5 x 2 cm. and 4 cm. deep, found immediately above one of the fallen sides of the Purbeck tomb. Presumably part of a dowel or clamp for holding stonework together.

Small pieces of lead totalling about 2 lb. in weight were recovered from the infilling of the tomb and the rubble layers. Some pieces were in flat strips; others were fragments of window comes with grooves 3-4 mm. thick. Others had evidently been melted down. The quantity of lead and the absence of roof tiles from the excavation (except for a few which were obviously post-medieval) may suggest that the roof of the building was of lead.²⁴

²³ Cf. contemporary glass in the same style in C. Woodforde, *English Stained and Painted Glass* (1954), Pl. 3, r. (Stanton Harcourt) and S. E. Rigold, 'Eynsford Castle', *Arch. Cant.* LXXXV (1971), fig. 11. I am grateful to Mr. Rigold for much help here and elsewhere in my article. Cf. also glass from Waltham Abbey, *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, II (1970), fig. 18.

²⁴ Cf. excavation at Butley Priory, *Arch. Jour.*, xc (1933), pp. 209 and 211, n.5.

A small quantity of domestic rubbish, some of it also found in 1969, including oyster shells and bones of small birds and animals (chicken, rabbit etc.).

CONCLUSIONS

All the evidence suggests that the area excavated lay somewhere in or near the south aisle of the church choir. It is where one could expect to find the Priory's most important burials. The pier base presumably lies between the aisle and choir. With the virtually certain identification of the most easterly burials with some of the Uffords, the pier is likely to have carried one of the arches 'parentre la chapelle St. Nicholas et le haut altier' (above p. 130). The Ufford floor tiles also support this and suggest that the Lady Chapel was nearby. The wall to the west of the pier is on a straight line with, and the same width as, the wall that can be seen to have once projected from the north-east corner of the barn. All this is consistent with the 1790 plan of the church. There is however too little of the plan at present known to allow close comparison with other priories, though the situation of burials and tiled floors at Butley, the wealthiest priory in East Suffolk, may be noted as similar.²⁵

The Purbeck marble tomb is by far the most important discovery and bears comparison with, for example, the tomb in the chancel of St. Mary's, Warwick, of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and his wife. He died in 1369 and the tomb was completed in 1391. In this connection it is interesting that their daughter was Isabel, the wife of William de Ufford the second Earl of Suffolk. The local bricks and Ufford tiles are also noteworthy for the fairly close dates which may confidently be assigned to them.

What is so far known about Campsea Ash Priory from history and archaeology suggests that further work in both these fields would be rewarding. This report may appropriately end by suggesting some lines for further research with particular reference to what remains to be examined in the 1970 area of excavation.

The detailed documentation discovered by Dr. J. N. L. Myres for Butley, still the only priory in Suffolk to have been fully researched hints at what may remain to be discovered about Campsea Ash. Any references to burials in the 13th century might help identify the burials found in the western half of the area. A re-excavation of the area or its eastern extension ought to include a specialist examination of the human remains with regard to age at death, sex etc. and ought still to be able to show archaeologically the sequence of burials with the special hope that the Purbeck tomb can be definitely assigned to a particular Ufford or Uffords. The

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Plate X, plan facing p. 280.

rest of this tomb including its top may still be just outside the excavated area. Further documentary research would also shed light on the building history and as a result it might be possible to date more of the moulded stonework. The most interesting feature which might emerge from large-scale excavation of the priory would be the situation of the priests' college founded in 1390 with its own chapel and communal rooms, in relation to the rest of the nunnery buildings.²⁶

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²⁶ If 'Ash Abbey' itself was the building for the priests, cf. the priests' college at Wingfield with the same type of timber framing, built 28 years earlier.