GRIFF MANOR HOUSE (SUDELEY CASTLE),
WARWICKSHIRE

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SUMMARY

The site of the moated enclosure known as Sudeley Castle lies just south of Nuneaton and west of the A444 from Nuneaton to Coventry. In August 1966 the site was excavated prior to the development of the area for open coal mining and the construction of the proposed Nuneaton by-pass. The excavation was conducted by the writer on behalf of the Ministry of Works and Public Buildings.

The period of occupation of the site seems to have been confined to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with the construction of a small, but massive, stone house at the eastern end of the moated enclosure, with additional buildings of a much lighter nature to the north and west. Although close dating of the pottery recovered from the site is not possible and no coins or datable objects were recovered, it can be said that the ceramic evidence is compatible with the period of occupation of the site as indicated by the documentary evidence.

INTRODUCTION

Sudeley Castle is situated at Griff, within the Municipal Boundary of Nuneaton, 300 yards north of Griff House (Fig. 1), the home of the celebrated nineteenth-century novelist, George Eliot. (Nat. Grid. Ref. SP/35789; 6 in. O.S. Warks., SP/38 NE.) The site lies on gently sloping land draining to the north, on heavy boulder clay overlying middle coal measures, some 320 ft. above sea level. A coal seam running north-south outcrops immediately west of the site and is known to have been worked in the early eighteenth century; in fact small open pits were dug inside the moated enclosure itself as was shown by the excavation.

The word 'Castle' as applied to this site is a complete misnomer and appears to be of fairly recent usage. Certainly the site was connected with the de Sudeley family whose main seat was at Sudeley Castle near Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, but in no respect could this manor-house be termed a 'Castle'. The surrounding moat is in itself not formidable and would have presented little obstacle to determined intruders. At least until the fourteenth century it was known as the 'Manor of Griff' in the records and the present name has simply arisen because of connections with the family seat.

THE SITE

The moated enclosure occupies the southern end of a four and a half acre field and the outer edges of the south, east, and west sides of the moat.

Warwickshire Feet of Fines, II, 1644.
are in fact the modern hedge lines. The south-west corner of the moat is wet and a modern ditch recutting the old line of the moat on the south and east sides drains this pond away to the north east, joining other field drainage systems, eventually to empty into the Griff arm of the Coventry canal.

The north side of the moat and the general contours were visible as considerable undulations in the ground surface at the time of the excavation but had been considerably blurred by ploughing; in fact the western edge, in parts, had been completely levelled. The moat is rhomboidal, some 170 ft. wide on the east side. The north and south measured 240 ft. and 216 ft. respectively. No evidence of an internal bank was found and the platform
was not raised above the level of the surrounding land. There was no
evidence of associated enclosures of fishponds or of any ancient trackways
leading to this now isolated moat. Excavation showed that the stone build-
ings had been thoroughly robbed in antiquity; the farm buildings of Griff
House appear to contain many reused stones, it seems most likely that the
moat was the source of supply. The moat enclosed an area of two acres.

Excavation

An examination of the ploughed surface of the enclosure showed a
heavy concentration of building debris at the eastern and narrowest end
and accordingly attention was focused there initially. The stone built
foundations of a substantial building were revealed (the Main Building,
fig. 2), subsequently the whole of the area of the main building was in fact
stripped. Further trenching in the area of this building defined an area of
buildings of a much slighter nature, heavily damaged by stone robbing
and ploughing, to the north. The rest of the enclosed area of the moat was
extensively trenched, revealing only some light buildings in the north-west
corner. Portions of cobbled areas remained in parts of the enclosure and
there was some evidence to suggest that the clay dug out of the moat had
in fact been spread over the interior, although this had not raised the level
appreciably. A modern entrance in the middle of the south side may well
represent the site of the original entry, but the whole of that area had
undergone considerable denudation and modification so that the point
could not be proved. The stumps of the wall footings were found in places
to be only inches below the ground surface and in the case of the main
building it was only necessary to remove the fallen rubble to reveal the
plan. In the areas of the lighter buildings, however, the closeness to the
surface proved to be disastrous as in most cases a recent, determined
ploughing of the area had largely destroyed the lighter wall footings, while
bouncing over those of the massive structure of the main building.

The Buildings

A. The Main Building

There was no evidence for an earlier house on the site of the main build-
ing, or elsewhere in the enclosure. Unfortunately, quarrying for stone had
reduced this building in most places, to the level of the foundations and in
some parts the foundations themselves had been entirely removed. In most
cases where this had happened, however, the robber trenches showed up
quite distinctly, enabling the plan of the building to be recovered. The most
significant portions of the wall footings, the junctions of adjoining rooms,
were well preserved, enabling the distinction of two building phases.

Phase 1. This consisted of a Hall 30 ft. long and 20 ft. wide, with two
pillar bases on the central line, thus dividing the hall into three bays,
aligned on an east–west axis. A small, square, external room (Room ‘A’),
6 ft. by 6 ft. lay behind the central portion of the east wall, but with no
sign of an entrance. A long, narrow room (Room ‘C’) at least 24 ft. long
but only 8 ft. wide adjoined the south-west corner of the Hall and ran away
to the south-east. Only one wall of this room remained, the stone robbing
at the southern extremity of the building had obliterated even the outline
of the robber trenches. The west wall of this room was traced as a robber trench to its point of contact with the south-west corner of the Hall. There were traces of a cross wall at 24 ft. from the Hall and further possible buildings beyond that, but the remains were so scanty as to defy interpretation. The Hall and the projecting Room 'a' were bonded together and therefore of the same building stage. The junctions of the footings of Room 'c' with the Hall had been too thoroughly robbed to prove their contemporaneity, but the foundations of all these rooms were of the same heavy nature, based on large unshaped boulders, often 2 ft. across and packed with smaller stones set in mortar. Whereas the similarity of construction of the wall footings does not prove their contemporaneity, it does indicate that possibility, especially as the footings of Phase 2 are so different. A small squared projection in the centre of the south side of the Hall was faced on the outside with cut and dressed blocks and measuring 5 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. In the absence of a drain from this feature it may well have been the base of a chimney. Unfortunately the stone-robbing in this region had removed all connections with the main foundations so making it impossible to say whether or not it was an addition to the main structure.

Still remaining at one section on the inner face of the east wall, above the foundation plinth, were two courses of dressed limestone blocks neatly laid with occasional vertical and horizontal slate spacers to level up the courses. (These and all other dressed stones are shaded black on the plan.) In the north-east corner of the Hall, in the north wall, there had been a door or possibly a stair in Phase 1, which was subsequently blocked off. The blocking was found to be still partly in position and the doorway was marked by dressed stone corners, which were still plastered. That this was a stair rather than a doorway is supported by the fact that the penetration did not pierce the wall, at least on the same level on the outside as the sill on the inside, but as none of the higher level courses remained at this point, the interpretation of this feature remains obscure. At the west end of the north wall of the Hall a further dressed limestone block was found in situ and from its position suggests another opening at that point, corresponding to that just described at the east end. Half-way along the inside of the north wall there was found an area of burning, 5 ft. across and backed against the wall. A quantity of melted, fused lead was recovered from the ashes, suggesting salvage operations after the abandonment of the building.

Phase 2. The second phase is marked by the addition of a large chamber, measuring 24 ft. by 14 ft., with angled buttresses at the northern corners and adjoining the northern side of the Hall. The modifications to the supposed stairway in the north-east corner of the Hall would probably be associated with the addition of this chamber, together with a further small room, 6 ft. square at the same corner (Room 'b'). That this rectangular 'north chamber' is an addition to the main structure is shown by the butt joints of the chamber and Room 'b' to the main walls of the Hall. Furthermore, the foundations of these two added rooms were constructed of much smaller stones of a more regular size than the foundations of Phase 1, indicating a change of building method. In the east wall of this chamber, two dressed, angled stones marked the base of a recess, probably that of a window, the floor of which had been roughly covered with flat tiles. The
only evidence for an entrance was in the south-east corner, leading into
the square room to the east, which in turn had a narrow door to the out-
side, but as with the main block of Phase 1, stone robbing had reduced
the walls to the level of the foundations in most places, so destroying any
evidence of an entrance into the Hall, which must have been a feature of
this addition.

Also probably belonging to Phase 1 is the Drain (Drain 1) which
cuts through the walls of Room ‘c’ to the south of the Hall. A reused
block was so found in the wall of this drain, which was floored, in part,
with slate. A second branch of this drain ran along the east wall of
Room ‘c’.

The whole area of the Main Building was choked with rubble, largely
mortar, small stones, and fragments of slate and tiles. It would appear that
the roof had been tiled with diamond-shaped split slate tiles and the ridges
capped with green or brown glazed ridge tiles, often with raised finials at
each end. Encaustic tile fragments were found in the rubble layer filling
the area of the Main Building suggesting that the Hall and the chamber
to the north had been so tiled but that these had been entirely stripped out
in antiquity. Occasional architectural fragments including a portion of
window tracery and sections of octagonal chimneys also occurred in the
rubble layer.

The building had the appearance of having been abandoned and
that systematic stripping of everything useful had taken place, and
that finally after the collapse of the roof and walls, intensive quarrying
for stone even below ground level had completed the destruction of the
building.

2. SECONDARY BUILDING

To the north-west of the Main Building, but apparently unattached to
it were found the remains of a slighter and much mutilated building. All
that can be confidently reconstructed of this building is a large, almost
square room, measuring 25 ft. east-west and 22 ft. north-south. This room
was seen to be at the north end of what appeared to be a range of buildings
running away to the south. A drain (Drain 2), apparently contemporary
with this structure originated somewhere in the vicinity of the south-east
corner, crossed the wall at a very acute angle to drain into the north-east
corner of the moat, some 50 ft. away. The foundations of this room were
trench built, 2 ft. thick and of fair-sized stones. Although not so massive as
some of the material of Phase 1 of the Main Building, the character of the
construction strongly recalled that of Phase 1. A small open pit for coal
had destroyed the south-west corner of this building and beyond this, to
the south, all that remained were irregular patches of rubble and a few short
stretches of wall foundations. Ploughing and stone robbing had completely
removed so much material from this area as to make it impossible to
recover an intelligible plan. It was from this area, however, that the only
complete encaustic tile was recovered, unhappily from the rubble layer
and not from an undisturbed portion of a floor making positive association
with this building a probability but not a certainty. The tile itself is with-
out known parallel and represents a knight on horseback apparently
wearing a long surcoat and blowing a curved horn.
C. BUILDINGS IN THE NORTH-WEST CORNER

On the inner lip of the north-west angle of the moat lightly constructed stone foundations indicated a range of outbuildings, very much disturbed, running in a north-south direction. The width of the building range was 12 ft., the length traced for some 54 ft. along the western edge of the moat. In two places fragments of reused dressed stone indicate a 'late' date for this building. At the northern end, in the angle of the moat a pile of rubble partly covered a heap of water pipes, many of which had originally been deposited there in a whole condition.

THE OPEN AREA

Extensive trenching and stripping over the rest of the enclosed area revealed (Fig. 3, 6) slight traces of a building midway between Building 2 and the north-west corner, but only portions of a slightly curving wall could be traced. Several areas of the rest of the enclosure had patches of cobbled remaining, but to a large extent this had apparently been ploughed away. A cinder and gravel trackway, some 7 ft. wide, traversed the site from the present entrance in the middle of the southern side to cross the moat near the north-west corner. Fragments of a clay pipe and pottery from the make-up of the track indicate an eighteenth-century date. Three coal working pits were found in a north-south alignment along the western edge of the Main Building, the northernmost on the inner lip of the moat; the middle pit destroying the south-west corner of Building 2, as already noted and the southernmost opposite the western end of the Hall. No positive dating evidence was recovered from these pits, neither do they appear to be those shown on the estate map of 1689 or Henry Brighton's Map of Warwickshire, 1722. They may well be purely exploratory.

THE MOAT

Two sections were cut across the line of the moat in the western and northern sides. The moat was seen to be shallow, flat bottomed, and with gently sloping sides, approximately 22 ft. wide although ploughing had eroded the actual outline. The moat was not deep, and owing to the slope of the land, was 5 ft. deep on the western side and only 3 ft. deep on the north. Even in its original state the moat could not have presented a very great deterrent, or indeed, a very impressive feature for a building which must have been rather fine as a manor-house. In the western section much of the filling consisted of a thick wedge of very dense, consolidated coal dust and waste which may represent a deliberate dumping of material from the pits to the west and was responsible for the obliteration of much of the western section.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

By the time of Domesday Book, Griff was already incorporated in Chilvers Coton, and was held amongst other lands by Harold, grandson of Dreux, Count of Vexin, who had married Godgifu, sister of Edward the Confessor. Harold was therefore of part-French, part-Anglo-Saxon descent. His grandmother Godgifu, after the death of her first husband Dreux in
1935, married Eustace, Count of Boulogne, one of William the Conqueror’s chief supporters. This must have helped to make Harold acceptable to the Normans, for in 1086 he is shown as holding his father’s lands in Sudeley and Toddington (Gloucester) and at Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire.¹

His son John, took the name ‘de Sudcley’ from the Gloucestershire seat, where he is said to have resided.² Ralph, son and heir of John, divided the manor at Chilvers Coton into three, one part for the founding of Arbury Priory,³ another to the Knights Templars,⁴ the third part (including Griff) being kept in his own hands. He died in 1191, leaving two sons, Otwell the elder and Ralph.⁵

¹ A. R. Wagner, English Genealogy (Oxford, 1860), pp. 34, 35.
³ Ibid., p. 1074.
⁵ G. E. C., Complete Peerage, 411 ff.
It would follow naturally that Otwell would inherit the estates, and presumably inhabit the main family seat at Sudeley. Otwell died in 1198, when Ralph succeeded him. Both Dugdale and the Victoria County History state that it was in the lifetime of this Ralph that Griff became the seat of the Sudeley family, without giving warrant for the assertion. It is a possible hypothesis that Ralph built a house at Griff for his own residence before Otwell’s death, but no proof can be adduced. He died before February 1221/2, leaving another Ralph as his son and heir.

It was this Ralph who can be shown to have resided at Griff manor-house at some time. There is extant a deed in which Hugh the prior, and the convent of Arbury, grant to Ralph de Sudeley ‘our patron’ the right to have Mass celebrated in his chapel of Griff by his own private chaplain. The Priory of Arbury and the Vicar of Chilvers Coton are not to be obliged to celebrate Mass there, nor to give material assistance in the way of candles, books, or vessels. It is to be celebrated only when Ralph, or his heirs or their wives are present in person, but not at the main feast days of the year—Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints, and the Purification of the Virgin—except by special indulgence, or unless the mothers of the heirs are unable through bodily weakness to attend the parish church. In the latter case the prior will give licence if it is sought. The priest who celebrates in this chapel is to take oath that he will restore to the Vicar of Chilvers Coton all offerings he receives in the chapel. He shall exact no tithes of any sort, and on feast days shall receive no parson’s share of the mother church in the chapel. Ralph de Sudeley promises that he will keep the mother church of Chilvers Coton safe from loss or harm through the use of this chapel.

This deed can be dated to within the ten years or so between 1231 or 1232, and 1242, for amongst the witnesses is Master Richard de Gloucester, Treasurer of Lichfield who took up the treasurership in 1231 or 1232, and the Ralph de Sudeley in question died on or before 19 March 1242. As the next Sudeley heir is called Bartholomew and lived till about 1280, there is no question of a later Ralph being implicated.

The deed does not preclude an earlier building date for the manor-house. It could have its origin in the declining health of Ralph, or his wife, or his mother. His mother, Isabella, was still alive in the year of his death, and his wife Isabella survived him certainly till 1247. The wording of the deed suggests periodical visits to Griff rather than continuous residence. It is worth noting that the name ‘Sudeley Castle’ is not used in this document. As has been said, Ralph’s heir was Bartholomew who in 1267 was granted free warren, that is, the right to hunt small game on his demesne lands of Sudeley and Chilvers Coton, which suggests residence shared between the two seats. He died in or before 1280.

His son, John, was created Baron by writ in 1299. He had a son called Bartholomew after his father, but Bartholomew appears to have died

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1 Complete Peerage, pp. 411, 412. 2 Warwickshire, p. 1072. 3 Warr. vol. IV, p. 179. 4 Complete Peerage, loc. cit. 5 Warwick County Record Office, Newdigate Collection, CR 136, Deed Box C 10, undated deed, without reference number except old figure 85 on back of seal tag. 6 Staffordshire Record Society, Collections for a History of Staffordshire, 3rd series (1939), 6, 7. 7 Complete Peerage, p. 444. 8 Ibid. 9 Ibid. 10 Ibid. 11 Complete Peerage.
young; the date of his death is not known, but he did not succeed to his father, though he lived long enough to leave a son, another John. In 1326 John the first Baron, described as John the elder, granted to his grandson John, and Eleanor de Scales his wife, the manors of Griff and Sudeley, but John the elder did not die for another ten years, that is, in or before 1336. Yet another John, son of John and Eleanor de Scales, succeeded his father in 1340, and with his death in 1367, the male line of the Sudeleys died out.

The succession now follows through the female line, that is, through Joan and Margery, sisters of the last John Sudeley. Joan his elder sister, was now dead, but had left a twelve-year-old son, Thomas, by her husband, William le Botiller, knight. This boy was co-heir with his aunt, Margery, Joan's younger sister; she received Griff as part of her share and later married, but died in 1380 without issue. The Botillers (Butlers) were now sole heirs, and as their family seat was at Wem in Shropshire, it is possible that they were not greatly interested in the manor house at Griff, and let it fall into decay, particularly as Thomas's son, Ralph, attained to the high position of Lord Treasurer of England, and served as Governor of Calais for some years, besides holding offices such as Chamberlain to Henry VI, and Steward of the Royal Household, dying in 1479.

An admittedly limited search has revealed no historical evidence whatsoever for the name Sudeley Castle being applied to the Griff Manor House. The only 'Sudeley Castle' document listed amongst the Newdigate Collection refers to the Gloucester manor, whereas Griff Manor House is simply included under the term 'manor of Griff' in the records.

COAL WORKINGS

Coal was worked in Chilvers Coton on the Templars' manor as early as 1308. An estate map of 1689 shows where coal pits had just been given up, two fields away from the 'Sudeley Castle' site, and Henry Bighton's map of Warwickshire (surveyed 1722–5) shows a line of pits running through Chilvers Coton passing close to the Griff Manor House.

CONCLUSION

The Manor of Griff, otherwise known as 'Sudeley Castle', originally formed part of the larger estate which the records have shown was divided into three by 1191. From then on the third part remained in the hands of the de Sudeley family until 1380 when the inheritance passed to the

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1 Ibid.
3 Complete Peerage.
5 V.C.H., Warwickshire, vol. IV, p. 175, and Dugdale, p. 1074.  
6 Warwickshire Feet of Fines, II, 1846.  
7 Warwickshire County Records, CR 126, C 19/1002.  
8 Warwickshire, p. 1074.  
9 e.g. Warwickshire Feet of Fines, II (844).  
10 P.R.O. E 346/19, Rot. 41.  
11 Warwickshire County Record Office, C.R. 196, M 95/6.  
12 Henry Bighton, in Map of Warwickshire, surveyed (2nd edition 1790).
Botillers. The documentary evidence shows that some importance attached to the site as a special licence was obtained in respect of religious services in the private chapel of the Manor, between c. 1231 and 1242. As the division of the estate occurred before this, it seems probable that the site of the Manor of Griff remained the same thereafter, i.e. the moated enclosure known as 'Sudeley Castle'. In spite of the documentary evidence, however, the archaeological examination of the site revealed a stone house of two phases with ruinous buildings to the west (Building 2), which were undatable and destroyed beyond the recovery of a plan. In both areas of building pottery of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was recovered. No pottery or other evidence was found which gave any indication of an earlier date than c. 1280–1300. There was no indication of earlier timber buildings on the site which might bridge the gap, although extensive stripping was undertaken. The strength of the foundations of the Main Building and the entrance to a stairway in the north-east corner of the Hall supposes an upper floor, at least to this part of the Main Building.

No certain indication was found of the Chapel as mentioned in the documents. The documentary and archaeological evidence does, however, make more sense for the end of the effective occupation at the end of the fourteenth century. Beyond that date the documents remain silent and the archaeology shows systematic destruction.

NOTE ON THE PLAN OF THE BUILDINGS

By S. E. Rigold, F.S.A.

The footings indicate a building with all the principal rooms on the upper floor, of a size and form that, even at its fullest extent, might in other circumstances have served as the chamber-block of a ground-floor hall, for which in this case there is neither space nor any indication. To interpret the main chamber or 'Hall' as itself a ground-floor hall is a most improbable solution: the span could be covered by a simple tie-beam, and a primitive ridge-post construction would be absurdly incongruous in what was evidently a highly finished stone building of, at very earliest, a late twelfth-century, more probably a later thirteenth-century date. The pair of stylobates is a clear indication of the usual method of carrying floor-joists from this date onwards, on a heavy longitudinal beam, supported on timber posts, usually with a short spreader on the heads of the posts, which would also cover any necessary scarfing.

The building marked 'Hall' could then be regarded as a minor case of a 'first-floor hall', or alternatively as a chamber not requiring a hall, and, in either case, indicative of a specialized type of house, not commensurate with the residence of a lordly household, but suitable for short visits (including hunting?), or for specialized functionaries. In fact, this type of building is usually found in an ecclesiastical context. At Netley Abbey a comparable plan, of Great Chamber, with Inner Chamber and Oratory
projecting is repeated on each floor of one building. Here, though the North, or Inner Chamber, was rebuilt, as the diagonal buttresses indicate, hardly before the early fourteenth century, it may have had a predecessor, and there seems to be an indication of a communication between first floor and undercroft at this point.

The problems of interpretation lie mainly in the smaller projections. Room ‘c’, at the opposite end from the more intimate adjuncts, must surely have contained the stair, and perhaps a vestibule, to the Hall or Great Chamber—in fact a forebuilding. Room ‘b’, off the Inner Chamber, with its small clearing-door, is equally surely a garde-robe turret. Room ‘a’, not big enough for an earlier inner chamber in itself, though an inner chamber could have been partitioned from the larger one, is centrally placed and properly oriented, and may be the oratory licensed for private masses. If so the original building is nicely dated to c. 1231–42.

FINDS

SMALL FINDS (Fig. 4, nos. 1–9)

1. Head of a small bronze stud. From disturbed area west of the North Chamber.
2. Bronze thimble. Five rows of dots on the lower half. From rubble layer in the Hall.
7. Small iron strap hinge with three iron nails, 6 in. long. North Chamber, Main Building.
8. Iron hinge from Building 2.
9. Iron bar with square section with central loop. Hall.

ROOF TILES (Fig. 5, nos. A–F)

A. Flat, red-fired clay tile, 7\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 12\(\frac{3}{4}\) in., with triangular nib and two small nail holes. Thickness: \(\frac{3}{4}\) in.

Many fragments were recovered from the Main Building and Building 2. Ridge tiles from the rubble in the Main Building were semicircular in section with finials of various types close to each end. These were glazed green or brownish-green in considerable variety and were manufactured at the Chilvers Coton kilns. Fourteenth century.

B. Low open loops.
C. Peaked loops with openings.
D. High peaked loops, without openings.
E. Pointed varieties with deep fingering, in brown glaze.

Many fragments of triangular roof slates were also recovered from the area of the Main Building, roughly chopped into shape and measuring c. 12 in. long and c. 8 in. across the base, with a nail hole, c. \(\frac{3}{4}\) in. across at the apex.
WATER-PIPES. (Fig. 5, F.)

Fragments of clay water-pipes were found on the surface of the enclosure, particularly in the eastern and northern sections, but none were found in situ. In the north-western corner, a pile of broken and complete pipes were found partly covered with rubble and associated with fourteenth-century pottery. The pipes were circular in section, roughly knife trimmed, 23 in. long and having a bore of c. 1½ in. Each pipe had a shouldered joint 2½ in. long at one end and a socket at the other.

THE POTTERY
(Figs. 6–10, nos. 1–65)

The pottery from the Griff Manor House is, in the main, of fourteenth century date, with some earlier material of the late thirteenth century and at the other end of the scale, a few sherds of fifteenth-century cooking pots. The dating evidence suggested by the documents, such as it is, indicates occupation at least in the late twelfth century which is not borne out by the pottery evidence. Concerning the end of the occupation on the site, or at least the end of interest, the documentary evidence can be interpreted to mean that this had come about by the 1380s, when the Manor passed into the hands of the Botillers. Doubtless some occupation continued for a time by stewards, which might account for the small amount of pottery of fifteenth century date. The recent discovery and excavation (1967) of an extensive series of pottery kilns at Heath End Road, Chilvers Coton, has provided an immediate local source for the great majority of wares found at the Griff Manor House, particularly for the finest pottery on the site, namely the green glazed baluster jugs which date to around the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The dating of the pottery sequence at Griff Manor House depends upon the interpretation of this kiln evidence, not yet fully assessed at the time of writing. The discussion of the pottery will therefore be confined to a description of the significant sherds and a general indication of the period, resulting from comparisons made with the excavator. Much of the pottery from the Manor House site was recovered from the rubble fillings in the buildings and is of little value stratigraphically. In no case was there a sealed deposit containing pottery with other dating evidence.

The value of the pottery, therefore, lies in the association of the nearby kilns and in showing that the Main Building dates at least to the end of the thirteenth century.

LATE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY POTTERY

Although pottery from the late twelfth century could have been expected from the site, the earliest sherds seem to date from the late thirteenth.

COARSE UNGLAZED WARE (Fig. 6, nos. 1–11).

1. Cooking-pot rim, angular section, soft grey fabric with fine grits, oxidized surfaces, upper surface of rim has wavy combing. A body sherd, possibly from the same vessel also has a band of wavy combing. From rubble layer in the Hall. Diameter 9 in.

2. Large heavy cooking pot rim, slight internal beading. Hard grey fabric with oxidized surfaces and large soft 'grits'. From beneath rubble and water-pipes in building in the north-west corner of moat. Diameter 14½ in.

Mr. R. Thorne, who generously made the comparisons possible. The dating of the local wares will therefore be better left to his publication of the kiln report.
Fig. 6.
3. Large heavy cooking-pot rim with wavy combing on upper flattened surface. Grey ware with large soft ‘grits’ and oxidized surfaces. From area of cobbled in central portion of the moated enclosure. Diameter 14 in.

4. Large cooking-pot rim. Grey ware with large soft ‘grits’. Red oxidized surface on the outside only. From the open area on north side of moat. Diameter 12½ in.


9. Fragment of large, heavy handle in coarse heavily gritted fabric as for numbers 2, 3, 4. The handle is heavily flanged, having two rows of stab marks made with a circular instrument. Three larger, similar pits occur on the inside of the neck at the junction of the handle. From the late coal pit partly destroying Building 2.


Fig. 7 (nos. 12–20, 22–5)


FINE GLAZED COOKING-POTS


19. Rim in fine, hard buff fabric, very similar to 18, but with vertically applied strip. Large splash of green-brown glaze internally.

GLAZED JUGS

Where profiles could be obtained, the jugs of this period were all of the tall, slender baluster form and were matched exactly with the material from the Chilvers Coton kilns.
20. Portions of the base, body, and neck of a baluster jug in very hard, thin-walled buff fabric with fine grained backing. Pale green glaze with some streaks of brown, evenly applied all over the outer surface. Base edged with horizontal thumbing, the shoulder defined by a series of shallow grooves. A further decoration on the shoulder in the form of an applied strip, curved and ending in a circular blob. As the shoulder area is incomplete, this may have formed part of a more intelligible pattern. Existing height 15 in. Building 2.

21. Large baluster jug in fine, hard, grey fabric with buff surfaces. Base markedly convex, stabilized by flaring edge pulled down and finished off with horizontal thumbing. In the centre of the base there is a bevelled hole, three-eighths of an inch across, apparently made before firing. Handle typical of the Chilvers Coton kilns, with diagonal slashing and three bold lobes at the base. A tooled line demarcates the neck from the shoulder. Body, handle, and parts of the neck covered with a thin green glaze with dark, purple-brown specks. Height 19½ in. From the floor level of the Hall (Fig. 8).

22. Fragments from the base of a baluster jug in very hard, fine, thin-walled grey fabric with a backing of fine grit giving rather a rough texture to the inner surface. Base flared as in number 21 and thumbed horizontally. The whole of the wall of the remaining fragment covered with spaced vertical lines and diagonal jabbed impressions between. The outer surfaces entirely covered with a glassy greeny-brown glaze. From the rubble layer of Room 12 in the Main Building. Diameter of base: 7½ in. A body sherd of a similar vessel was also recovered from this level.


24. Fragment of base and side of baluster jug in fine pale grey fabric, fired almost white. Decorated with spaced vertical lines and applied pellets between. All over coverage of thick, dark-green glaze. Internally glazed but thinner. From rubble layer in Hall.

25. Body sherd in fine grey fabric with pale buff surfaces. Yellowish-green glaze. Applied strips and dots in dark green. Building 2. (Fig. 8, nos. 26–36 and 21.)


27. Body sherd in light buff fabric with fine grit backing. Thin, streaky, greency-brown glaze. Applied ornament in dark-grey clay with brown glaze. The darker effect of the glaze on this example and on nos. 25 and 26 may be simply due to the same glaze being applied over a different clay forming the applied ornament. From the area west of the Main Building.

28. Two body sherds in fine grey, soft fabric with partly oxidized surfaces. Originally glazed externally with brownish-green glaze, now almost entirely disappeared. Both sherds have applied, curved strips with circular terminals in the manner of number 20. From the late coal pit in Building 2.

Fourteenth-Century Pottery
The bulk of the pottery from the site is of this period, again, most of it derived from the Chilvers Coton kilns.

Coarse Wares. Cooking-Pots

29. Hard buff fabric with backing of fine grits. Internal and external oxidized a deep red colour. Although basically an unglazed vessel, a few isolated
splashes of brown glaze occur, probably accidentally. Squat form, sagging base and everted, squared rim. The base appears to have been knife trimmed to obtain the sagged effect. Diameter of the rim 6¼ in. From rubble layer in the Great Hall. By comparison with the Chilvers Coton kilns, probably c. mid-fourteenth century.


UNGLAZED BOWLS

Fourteenth century generally: some given closer dates by comparison with Chilvers Coton kilns.


41. Sandy, red fabric, rim flattened above with internal bead. Building 2.

42. Pale grey fabric, thickened rim, chamfered above. Rubble filling of Hall.


GLAZED BOWLS


51. Deep bowl similar to number 50 in pink, sandy fabric with thin, dark olive green glaze, internally. Diameter 14 in. West of Main Building. Probably not a local product.


54. Pale grey fabric with backing of fine grits. Streaky-green glaze internally similar to that of the baluster jars of the thirteenth century from Chilvers Coton kilns. Hall.

55. Similar bowl to number 54 in same fabric. Dark-green streaky glaze internally to a depth of 1 in. by small holes, % in. apart. Hall.


Fig. 10 (nos. 59–65).


GLAZED JUGS (Fig. 10)


64. Neck and shoulder of globular jug in hard, pink fabric with thick uneven purple glaze. Strap handle with three ridges. From rubble in Hall. Not a local product.

65. Neck and part of circular handle of jug in same fabric as number 64. From Courtyard to west of Main Building.


FLOOR TILES (Fig. 10)

1. Straight-sided tile, 4¾ in. square and 1 in. thick. Impressed design of knight or huntsman on horseback. The overlying thick green glaze covering the
whole of the surface obscures some of the detail of the design inlaid in white. The rider appears to be wearing a long stiff surcoat and blowing a curved horn. A projection on the back may be a scut shield. Stirrups and reins are both shown, but obscured in detail, as are the details of the head and covering. The horse, rather short legged, is shown wearing a cloth and bridle.

The mounted figure of a knight is not unusual, but is normally depicted carrying a sword. No parallels for the type under discussion are known to the writer. The general technique, square sides and details of dress suggest a late thirteenth-century date. South end of Building 2. Not in situ.  

2. Fragment of tile with portions of the body and forelegs of a horse, with no evidence of a rider. Straight-sided fragment, just under 1 in. thick. Brownish-green glaze on all surfaces. Hall.  

3. Diagonally slashed tile, 4¾ in. square; ½ in. thick. Chamfered sides, stamped quatrefoil design, very indistinct and only partly filled with white clay. Top and sides covered with brown glaze. North Chamber, Main Building, rubble layer.  


**Bones**

A scatter of food bones was recovered from the medieval levels on the site, not enough to have any statistical value, but at least, interesting in that no sheep were represented. Two horses were present, one of pony size. The two horse phalanges had both been gnawed, the only bones on the site to show this. The most numerous bones on the site were those of oxen, all of well-grown, if not fully mature, beasts. Red deer were well represented in the quantity of identifiable bones, although possibly not more than three actual individuals are present; one of which was immature. The pig bones were all relatively 'small' animals, with the exception of one very large boar's tusk. Several bones of a very young suckling pig also occurred. All the bones, with the exception of one deer metatarsal, were broken.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the owner of the site, Mr. F. M. H. Fitzroy-Newdigate for permission to excavate; to Mr. R. T. Wiglesworth, Agent to the Arbury Estates; to the Tenant, Mr. J. Frizwell, for his cheerful co-operation in matters agricultural and domestic; to Mrs. E. Gooder for the very considerable efforts that she has made to piece together the limited documentary evidence; to Mr. C. Clarke, the instigator of the excavation; to Mr. R. Thompson for so kindly allowing me to compare the pottery with the Chilvers Coton kiln material and commenting on the dating prior to the publication of his results. To Mr. J. G. Hurst my grateful thanks for his support and advice on all matters and to my assistant, Miss C. Gordon.

The B.A.A. is indebted to the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works for a grant towards the cost of printing this paper.