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BODIAM: RESEARCH PRIOR TO 2010

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Abstract. This chapter reviews and summarises the 'grey literature' and other material relating to research into the history and archaeology of Bodiam in the decades prior to the start of the work of the Southampton/Northwestern team in 2010. It provides a general introduction and background to the landscape, history and archaeology of Bodiam and some of the different ideas and approaches that have been taken to the site.

Introduction

Bodiam Castle is in East Sussex, close to the border with Kent, and now 14 km from the coast (Fig. 2.1). Its initial construction is generally dated to the 1380s, though the building campaign may have lasted into the 1390s; the form of its standing fabric shows relatively little obvious evidence of later alteration and addition. Bodiam is one of the best-known castles in Europe, and arguably the most famous late medieval castle in England. It is certainly one of the most written about medieval sites in the country and indeed internationally. For a domestic structure in the countryside that is not of the highest rank or scale of medieval building, it has generated a vast scholarly literature over more than a century (Clark 1884: 239-47; Thompson 1912: 322-7; Simpson 1931; Hohler 1966; Turner 1986; Coulson 1992; Goodall 1998b and Johnson 2002: 19-33 are a very few examples).

Jacquetta Hawkes (1967: 174) famously wrote that 'every generation gets the Stonehenge it deserves – or desires'. The same is true of Bodiam. The interpretation of Bodiam provides a classic case study in archaeological and historical views of the Middle Ages. Prehistorians argue about the nature and function of Stonehenge, or about the interpretation of the Mousterian. In the process, they articulate their own theoretical ideas and positions; Stonehenge and the Mousterian become vehicles for a wider governing view of prehistory. Successive generations of scholars have seen in Bodiam, not just an assemblage of masonry and earthworks, but also a mirror, a reflection of their particular interests and concerns as archaeologists and historians. Bodiam has been, for scholars of different generations and outlooks, a defence against the French, an old soldier's dream house, a symptom of a desire for status, a complex statement of elite and masculine identity, a symbolic landscape.

All this scholarly attention on Bodiam has resulted in a fascinating body of literature that any student of medieval archaeology and history should familiarise themselves with. However, it has had unintended consequences. Like Stonehenge and the Mousterian, one sometimes gets the feeling that a full understanding of the particular context has been forgotten in the quest for a wider narrative about the nature of late medieval castles. Scholars rarely seem to pause to consider Bodiam

1 This text was put together from specially written contributions and from the 'grey literature' referenced, particularly Johnson *et al.* 2000, by Matthew Johnson, who also drafted the introduction and conclusion. The text was then edited and approved by all the authors. Matthew Johnson thanks all the contributors for their openness and intellectual generosity, and their patience with delays in producing the final text.

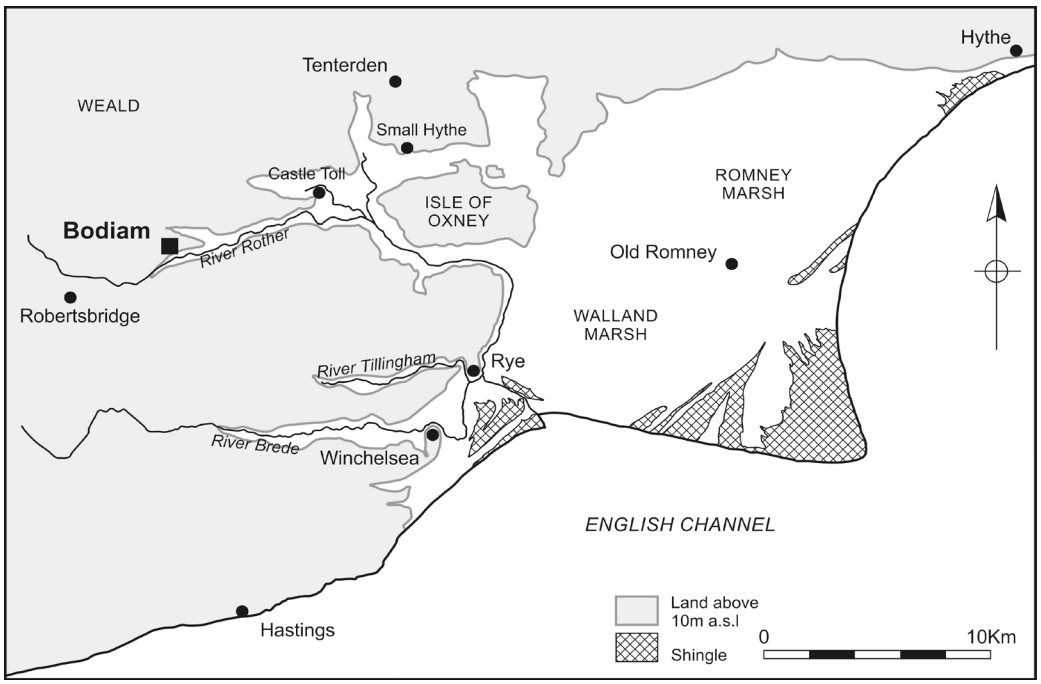


Fig. 2.1: The site of Bodiam, in relation to the floodplain and Romney Marsh.

dispassionately, in its local context. The temptation to immediately enlist particular details in the cause of a wider view -- the position of this gunport (it must be military!) or the siting of that mill pond (it must be aesthetic!) – has been too strong to resist.

One unintended consequence of the 'battle for Bodiam' (an apt phrase taken from the title of Goodall 1998b) has been that the development of different interpretations has outpaced the dissemination of primary research at the site. In what follows, we aim to correct this issue by reporting on a decade of archaeological findings and historical research on the landscape setting of the castle, from 2000 to 2010 (though we make reference to some earlier work also). Subsequent investigations at Bodiam by the University of Southampton and Northwestern University from 2010 onwards, including geophysical and topographical survey and analysis of the interior of the castle, are also reported on in later chapters.

Bodiam and its immediate landscape is a National Trust property with the challenge of c. 200,000 visitors a year and an ongoing programme of management and conservation. The origins of this chapter lie in the observation that while this activity has enhanced archaeological and historical understanding of Bodiam substantially, very little of it has been cited in recent published scholarly discussions. In particular, we draw on work by Johnson, Martin and Whittick (2000), and previous research including documentary work on the mill and mill leat (Whittick 1993) as well as more general work on the landscape of the River Rother and its catchment area (see below and Chapter Five).

The primary and guiding theme of this chapter in presenting the results of work before 2010 is not to argue for one narrow view or interpretation of Bodiam over another, but to present a series of findings that do suggest a more complex, multi-faceted and nuanced understanding of the site and its context. We do want to establish the more general point that there is much more to be said about this place. Oliver Creighton and Robert Liddiard have suggested that it is time to move on from the prominence of Bodiam in castle debates (2008) and Liddiard has added that 'Bodiam may well be 'old hat' to many researchers in the field' (Liddiard 2005b: 7). We understand their position, but respectfully dissent from the implication that Bodiam has been studied to death. A lot of powerful and occasionally intemperate views have been published on the site (cf. Platt 2007), but these tend to go over old ground in terms of the evidence presented rather than present original research incorporating new data.

It could be asserted, instead, that we are still in the process of scratching the surface of this very complex site. Before 2010, survey of the standing fabric using modern survey techniques had yet to be undertaken; much of the documentary record, particularly of Bodiam in the post-medieval period, had not been systematically gathered; and perhaps most surprisingly, a detailed topographical and geophysical survey of the Trust property had not been undertaken until the Southampton/Northwestern work of 2010-2012 (the famous Royal Commission survey [Taylor *et al.* 1990; see Fig. 1.2, this volume] was a hachured, not a contoured plan, and will be reinterpreted in what follows).

Specifically, this chapter will introduce a number of related themes that will be developed in the course of this monograph, at first in relation to Bodiam, and in subsequent chapters to the other sites of Scotney, Knole and Ightham. First, the local and regional context of Bodiam is too little appreciated or understood. As well as being an important monument in terms of national and international castle development, it occupies a place within a distinctive local landscape. That local landscape is an essential element in the understanding of Bodiam.

Second, there is much more to Bodiam than the story of the building of the castle in the 1380s alone. The surrounding landscape of Bodiam, inevitably, contains elements dating from early prehistory onwards. The most obvious of these elements was the preceding manorial site on the hill immediately north of the castle, but this is by far from being the only element; others include a Roman road and settlement on the riverside and earlier field systems. These elements structured the parameters of the site that was transformed in the later 14th century. The castle and its landscape, then, were not created on a *tabula rasa.* At the same time, there is a complex and meaningful history to the site subsequent to the Middle Ages that cannot be ignored.

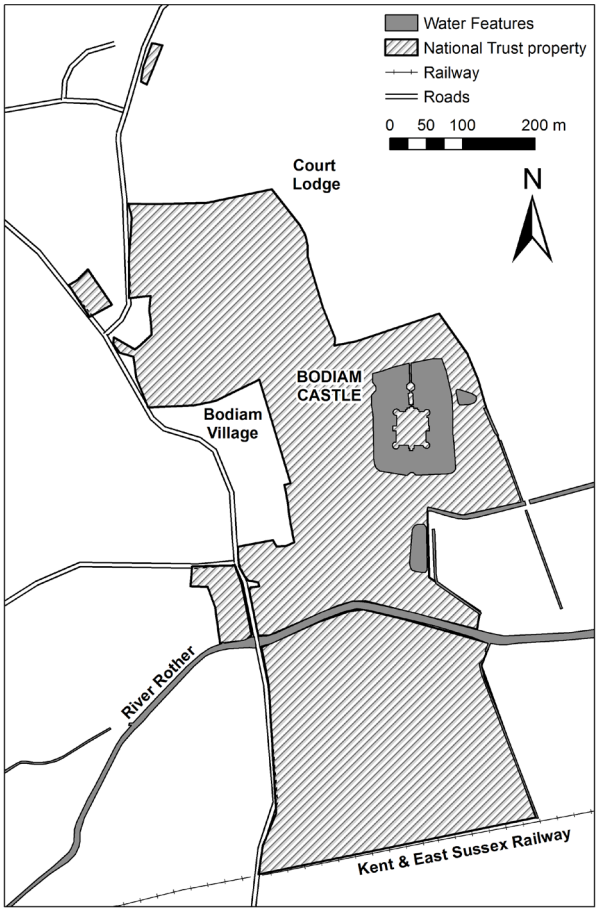


Fig. 2.2: The property as it is today, with boundaries of the Trust property outlined.

No discussion of Bodiam can be innocent of this subsequent history. The most visible element today is the restoration and other work at Bodiam by the retired Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, but this is only one element of many, for example, the landscaping of the site by John 'Mad Jack' Fuller in the early 19th century, discussed further in Chapter Twelve.

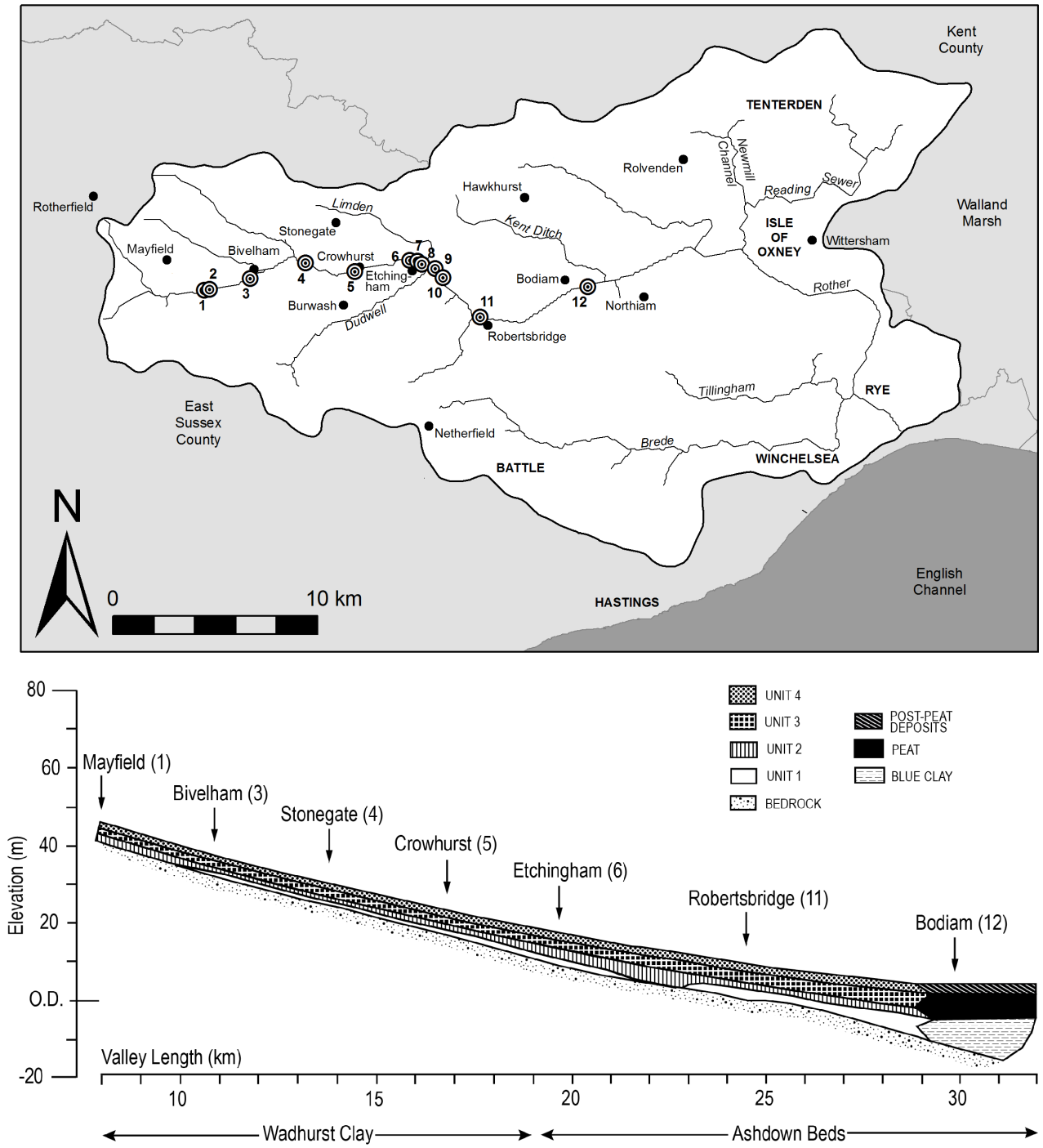
Our hope is that discussion will move beyond some of the rather tired and stale oppositions in some of the recent literature. This chapter, and this book as a whole, does not argue for a position in which Bodiam is either primarily defensive or about social emulation, either symbolic or functional, whether its features and surrounding landscape either are or are not militarily effective, or whether it is or is not a designed landscape. The six different scholars contributing to this chapter have six different viewpoints on how Bodiam should be understood. However, the agreed and guiding principle of this chapter is that Bodiam is a very complex and subtle landscape and monument that must first be considered on its own terms before any attempt can be made to assimilate it into wider arguments in castle studies and medieval archaeology.

We will first consider a variety of evidence for a complex and changing landscape prior to the building of the castle and landscape in the 1380s. LiDAR coverage exists for the land immediately south of the castle, though not for the castle itself, and the whole area of Trust property (indicated on Fig. 2.2) has been the subject of topographical and geophysical survey by the University of Southampton; this work from 2010 onwards, as well as work on the landscape south of the River Rother, is the subject of later chapters.

The Landscape Context: Geology and Palaeoenvironment

The first element we must consider is the long-term geological and palaeoenvironmental record of the site. Bodiam Castle lies just above the floodplain of the middle section of the Rother Valley, half way between Robertsbridge and the Isle of Oxney.

Bodiam is the site of a critical junction between two landscape types, the Weald and the floodplain leading eastwards to the wider Romney Marsh (Fig. 2.1). It is located at a point between the narrow and constricted upper regime of the river Rother with typically short, inorganic sequences, and the lower, deeper largely estuarine and marine sequences of the Romney Marshes. The valley bottom is formed of layers of peat interleaved with sands and silts. These have been



Figs 2.3 and 2.4: Location of Burrin's transects, with long valley profile of the River Rother showing change in gradient and sedimentary regime at Bodiam (after Burrin 1988, fig. 2.7).

observed in different locations including excavations in advance of new sewage works in the Rose Garden (Priestley-Bell & Pope 2009). At Bodiam, then, an extensive palaeoenvironmental sequence, of as yet unknown depth, is preserved, containing an extensive organic component that has already demonstrated the potential to deliver a detailed environmental history for the Holocene of the eastern Weald.

The Rother Valley drains the eastern and central Weald with a catchment area in excess of 700 km^2 (Fig. 2.3). Its floodplain sequences record long environmental histories encompassing tens of thousands of years: late Devensian marine transgressions, early Holocene climatic amelioration, to more recent de-vegetation and increased erosion. This record of de-vegetation and erosion may have its origins in the later Mesolithic period; its later

stages can be associated with agricultural expansion, and may be an indication of Roman and post-Roman industrial expansion associated with the iron industry.

The river drains three distinct topographical zones (Fig. 2.4): Zone 1, an upper course from Rotherfield to Robertsbridge, Zone 2, a middle course from Robertsbridge to Bodiam, and Zone 3, a lower course from Bodiam to Rye. Each zone is characterised by a distinctive configuration of channel profile and provides palaeoenvironmental sequences of varying length, temporal and spatial inference. Bodiam itself sits at the interface between Zones 2 and 3 occupying a floodplain some 80 m wide at some 2.25 m OD (mean sea level). At this point the river valley appears to cross outcrops of the Wadhurst Clay, although it is unknown which of the Jurassic/Cretaceous geological layers comprise the sub-alluvial valley floor.

Prior to 2002, the only detailed profiling of the River Rother was undertaken a generation ago by Paul Burrin (1988); the pollen sequences were studied by Rob Scaife. This work, which incorporated the results of 134 boreholes across 12 separate transects between Rotherfield and Bodiam, provides a broad indication of variation in sedimentation and palaeoenvironmental history for this section of the eastern River Rother. The work has its limitations, notably incomplete sequences for the deeper alluvium indicated downstream from Udiam and including the Bodiam site. In this zone the sheer depth of the sub-alluvium valley bottom resulted in truncated sequences missing the very lowest elements, the key late glacial/early Holocene components. However, the borehole records from this pioneering piece of fieldwork are substantial enough for us to make a clear assessment of palaeoenvironmental potential of the Bodiam site.

Only two of the 12 cross-valley profiles were located in the Middle Zone of the River Rother's long-profile. These were sited at Robertsbridge (R11) and Bodiam (R12) (Figs 2.3 & 2.4), the latter being our area of interest. The R11 profile was superficially very similar to those of the Upper Zone with all four recognisable alluvial units overlying superficial high energy deposits on a flat-bottomed trough-like profile of Wadhurst Clay. At Bodiam, the fall of the river changes from 1:438 to virtually flat, the floodplain opens out to some 80 m in width and exhibits extensive inter-digitation with the valley side colluvial deposits.

The valley fill stratigraphy at Bodiam however is of a quite different character, indicating a palaeoenvironmental history of a different nature. Here the valley profile is neither relatively shallow, nor flat-bottomed. Up to 14 m of alluvium has been recorded at this site but only four of the 11 boreholes set across the profile here, those closest to the valley sides, fully bottomed the channel profile and these showed a trend for a more steeply shelving or even V-shaped profile developing here. The sedimentary sequence is consequently incomplete, preserving only the upper parts. These show a more complex sedimentary history with the lowest recorded sediment body being blue-grey silts similar in nature to the Unit 1 of the Zone 1 sequence but this is itself overlain by extensive (up to 6 m in thickness) peat deposits containing abundant plant macro-fossil remains including fragments of *Corylus*. Above the peat were further superficial alluvial deposits of grey and brown laminated silts and sands. These deposits included both a possible Romano-British occupation horizon and Wealden blast furnace slag, described further below.

No detailed pollen sampling was undertaken at the Bodiam site prior to the work described in Chapter Five. However the cross-valley profile at Robertsbridge was subject to pollen sampling and perhaps can be used to suggest the likely degree of potential at the Bodiam site. The Robertsbridge site 5 km upstream, falling in Zone 2, sits at the intersection between the more mineralgenic, inorganic deposits of the Upper Zone alluvial suite and the Lower, peat-rich deposits of the Rother Middle Zone described above (Scaife in Burrin 1988). While the absence of pollen in the upper reaches of the river matches observation from other Wealden river valleys (Scaife & Burrin 1985), and almost certainly resulted from a combination of sediment oxidisation and rapid accumulation of inorganic alluvium, these conditions do not seem to have pertained within the Middle Zone.

The Robertsbridge sequence showed an abundance of *Corylus* (hazel) throughout. This matches the observations of macro-fossil remains of the plant to suggest it was a locally growing species. *Alnus* (alder) and *Salix* (willow) are also important parts of the local plant community and both might be expected within the floodplain environment. Evidence for the vegetation of the interfluves comes from the dominance of *Tilia* (lime), *Fraxinus* (ash) and *Quercus* (oak). The abundance of these pollen types combined with low observed counts for *Betula* (birch) and *Graminae* (grasses) suggest very little woodland clearance close to the site, but cereal pollen and *Plantago* (plantain) within the pollen sequence suggest agricultural activity within the river catchment.

Between 2009 and 2011 a series of further investigations were carried out by Archaeology South East on the Rose

Table 2.A: Palaeoenvironmental Summary.

Context	Description	Pollen	Hydrology
[002]	Upper Weathered Alluvium	Some woodland regrowth (LPAZ3) followed by later renewed clearance towards top of sequence (LPAZ4)	Marginal, shallow water with periodic drying
[005]	Lower Blue Alluvium	LPAZ2 More open conditions and cereal growth	Clearance of floodplain margins and renewed deeper water flow
[012]	Organic Alluvium	LPAZ1 Tree and shrub dominated environment	Cut-off meander and floodplain margins fringed with woodland

Garden, situated just to the north of the National Trust car park, a position to the south-west of the castle but close to the road-bridge and high street. This location is a particularly important one in the Bodiam landscape, as it might have always represented the upstream limit of large river craft and therefore a water route-land route transfer zone. Three distinct phases of sedimentation were apparent within the sequence in this area, each relating to distinct alluvial depositional environments. These deposits and associated palaeoenvironmental evidence are summarised in Table 2.A.

The change in sedimentary regime seen at the junction between [012] and the subsequent switch to open, relatively deep river flow in [005] of medieval date, cannot at present be explained. It might be related to local channel migration or to a more systematic change in the flow regime of the river, leading to increased erosion, removal of alluvium and the formation of a large open channel. Investigations to date have certainly shown the existence of deep water close to areas of proven medieval occupation on the north side of the river crossing to the west of Bodiam. In the records of the Manor of Ewhurst, the valley as far up the river as Bodiam was stated to be 'under salt water' in 1388-1390, and the river east of the bridge is referred to as 'the salt stream' in 1476 (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 6 and vol. 2, 27).

Renewed woodland growth at the base of the weathered alluvium may relate to the marginalisation of this locale as the channel began to silt and water became shallower. The weathered, oxidised condition of the sediments here certainly indicates much shallower water conditions. The history and changing use of this area is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Bodiam before the 1380s

The palaeoenvironmental record discussed above, and the discovery of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint artefacts from the surrounding valley sides (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 26) indicates that the location of Bodiam, then, has been important since prehistory. In the Roman period, and probably from earlier periods, the river fording marked a critical crossing point between north-south communications and the east-west flow of the Rother Valley. The importance of this intersection continued through the medieval and modern periods.

The first direct archaeological evidence for settlement in the Bodiam area is Late Iron Age or Roman in date, in the form of a cinerary urn found in 1902 during the construction of the Bodiam rectory to the north-west of the castle. The Roman road running from Rochester to Ore (Hastings) crosses the River Rother at Bodiam; it then runs north from the ford/bridge at Bodiam before running north-west through Dokes[2] Field (as revealed by the 2011 geophysical survey; see Chapter Four). The location of the cemetery may be understood as located at the roadside.

As one would expect, the course of the River Rother has shifted during the prehistoric and Roman periods. Traces of Roman settlement have been excavated towards the southern edge of the present floodplain at a time when the river channel may well have been to the south of where it is now. The finds from this settlement included tiles with the *Classis Britannica* stamp, a trait that has been associated by some scholars with the presence of the Roman navy. This has led to the interpretation of this settlement as a port (Cleere & Crossley 1985: 65), probably for the purpose of shipping blooms of iron and/or other iron products out from the Weald (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 27).

The physical appearance and layout of settlement at Bodiam between ADE 400 and 1200 is unclear. No features of definite pre-Conquest date are known in the immediate vicinity of the castle. The earliest reference to a bridge at Bodiam is not until 1210 (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 30). The ladder-like form of the tenement boundaries to the west of the castle, characteristic of high medieval settlement across the country, suggests that they may well predate the castle itself, though by how long (a few years or centuries) is not certain.

2 Dokes Field can be spelled variously as Doke's, Dokes', Doakes Field or Doakes Meadow.

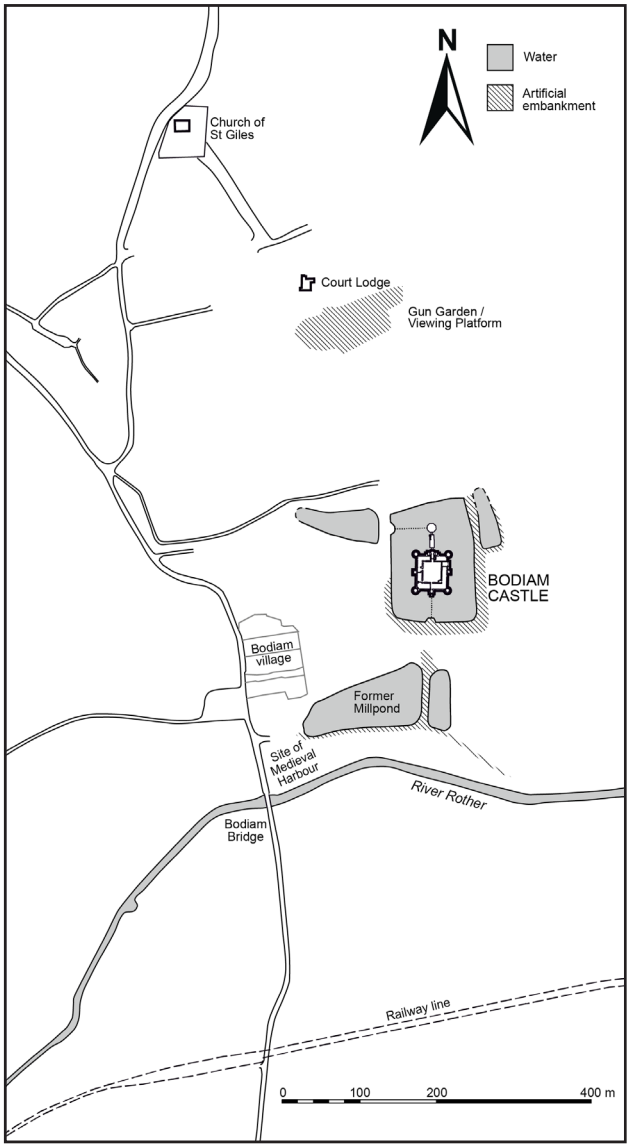


Fig. 2.5: Simplified diagram of the key features of the landscape around Bodiam Castle, as visible today.

The location of the medieval flote or harbour is indicated on Fig. 2.5. The flote probably existed prior to the 1380s, though it is probable that the facilities were further developed at that point as part of Dallingridge's development of the site. A series of archaeological interventions have identified possible evidence for its location, though its scale, form and appearance is not clear, in part because much of the relevant area underlies the modern car park and visitor facilities. The change in sedimentary regime noted above seems to bring the river close to the floodplain margins at the site, allowing for deeper navigable water and making the formation of the flote at this location viable. Occupation evidence from the base of the alluvial sequence recorded during excavations for a sewer trench and as discrete occupation horizons closer to the valley edge in the Rose Garden may all relate to activities taking place around or in the general vicinity of the flote (Priestley-Bell & Pope 2009).

The discovery of a possible revetment of 7th/8th-century date separating deeper alluvial sedimentation from occupation horizons flanking the line of the modern road may relate to river side settlement from the post-Roman period onwards (Priestley-Bell & Pope 2009).

The site of the earlier manor has sometimes been stated to be a moated site 500 m to the north of Bodiam, just south of the Kent Ditch (cf. Taylor *et al.* 1990). This attribution, derived from the account given in the Victoria County History, is unlikely. The site was excavated in 1961 and again in 1970 by the Robertsbridge and District Archaeological Society: it 'contains no periods which predated the late 13th century, whilst Bodiam manor is known to have [existed] before 1086' (Martin 1990: 97-8). The most likely location of the earlier manor is Court Lodge, c. 250 m to the north of the castle, as discussed further below and in Chapter Four.

It is difficult to give a clear chronology for the development of the demesne at Bodiam. It is clear that the demesne of the manor is unusually large for the region. The tenurial history of Bodiam before the 1380s is not as clear as the Victoria County History account suggests. The parish was probably formed in the 12th century (Rushton 1999). The church was extensively rebuilt in the later 14th century, but the location of the church is some centuries earlier, as is usual with medieval parish churches.

A more detailed analysis of the early medieval landscape of Bodiam can be found in the Conservation Management Plan by Drury McPherson Partnership, forthcoming at the time of writing (Drury & Copeman 2016). This thorough account deals in detail with the place of Bodiam within the developing early medieval landscape of Kent and Sussex, and in particular with the continuing importance of the river crossing after the Roman period, patterns of landholding and land division, the status and position of Bodiam as part of the late Saxon manor of Ewhurst, and the probable importance of Court Lodge as a place where local routeways intersect. Drury & Copeman go on to trace the development of Bodiam manor in the 12th century as the principal estate of the de Bodiam family; the emergence of the parish and parish church of Bodiam from its origins as a dependent chapel of Ewhurst; and the lands of Battle Abbey in Bodiam. Finally, Drury & Copeman also compile both LiDAR and documentary evidence for the shifting course of the River Rother across the floodplain prior to the 14th century, evidence for which will also be presented in Chapter Four.

For the purposes of this introductory chapter, it is important simply to stress that whatever the nature of the castle and landscape created in the 1380s, it was not created in a vacuum. The site had been important in terms of transport and communications for millennia. There were direct constraints on the site that was inherited in the 1380s, in terms of its physical topography, the earlier manor site and manorial structure, the medieval tenements to the west of the castle, preceding routeways including the River Rother and the Roman road, and the location of the church. Indeed, if it is the case that the medieval tenements do indeed predate the later 14th century, then the castle can be argued to have been 'squeezed in' to a relatively narrow and constrained space, between the rear of the tenements and the high ground to the west and undrained marshland to the east (Fig. 2.5).

Bodiam in the 1380s

Historical background to the castle

Bodiam Castle is associated with the name of Sir Edward Dallingridge. The manor of Bodiam was not the home of the Dallingridge family; rather, it came to Dallingridge from his wife Elizabeth Wardedieu. They married in 1363, and Sir Edward was in possession by 1378 following the death of Elizabeth's father. There is some evidence to suggest that building at Bodiam was underway in the early 1380s, perhaps following the death of Dallingridge's own father in c. 1380. The licence to crenellate was granted in 1385, but there are other cases where such licences were granted well after construction of a castle had commenced (Coulson 1993; 1994). Building work was going on at Bodiam church in 1382, and the work there shows very close stylistic parallels to the castle. Dallingridge began to sell his wife's midland property in 1381, possibly to fund building operations (Saul 1998: 127). The grant of a market and fair dates to 1383, and the licence to divert the course of the River Rother to power the watermill dates to 1386. However, the fabric of the castle strongly suggests a seven- to ten-year building programme, so it is very possible that building activity went on well into the 1390s.

What was created was a distinctive development of the entire village landscape of Bodiam. The houses and associated tenement boundaries may well have been earlier, as suggested above, or they may have been laid out at this point; the evidence can be argued either way. The end result, however, was a landscape with flote, mill, mill pond and mill leat, and water features: 'a planned, almost model village on the bank of the Rother – moated castle, mill, cottages and market-place' (Whittick 1993: 122).

Bodiam manor was not only distinctive in its form: it was an unusual manor for the Rape of Hastings in terms of the rights of its lord, being unusually 'strong', in respect of the terms and conditions under which land was held. No single tenant within the manor held particularly large areas of land. The overall numbers are not statistically significant, but it is nevertheless of note that only one medieval house has survived within the manor (Ellen Archer's, the northernmost of the tenements). The Rape of Hastings and East Sussex as a whole has an otherwise high rate of survival of medieval houses, and as will be discussed in the concluding chapters, this high survival rate may well relate to the distinctive form, affluence and security of peasant households in this region relative to others in England. In 1443 the manor had 570 acres plus a park, which probably lay to the north and west of the castle respectively.

Landscape context

Discussion of the immediate landscape around Bodiam Castle has been dominated by the results of the 1988 Royal Commission survey (Fig. 1.2; Taylor *et al.* 1990). This survey claimed to establish that:

> *without doubt that the majority of the extensive earthworks around the castle are the remains of elaborate gardens and water features all intended to enhance the visual appearance of the building… [which together formed] an elaborate modification of the whole landscape involving the creation of a number of ponds and sheets of water whose positioning has an ornamental impact… this modification was at least partly connected with the manipulation of visitors around the site to experience views whose components continually change.*
>
> (Taylor *et al.* 1990: 155)

Features that the Royal Commission identified included what they interpreted as a viewing platform to the north, a string of ponds with 'terraced walk-ways on both sides' to the north-west, and successive sheets of water surrounding the castle to the south and east. Paul Everson (1996) went on to suggest that the main approach to Bodiam was by means of a processional causeway that wound its way to the south and east of the mill pond, ascended the moat bank, and proceeded circuitously around the moat to south, east and north before entering the castle via the bridge, octagon and barbican (Fig. 2.6).

It is important to note that this interpretation was based on a hachured plan in the classic Royal Commission tradition of analytical fieldwork, based on

close observation and interpretation of the humps and bumps on the ground, but without a full topographical survey or geophysical work. The interpretation was compromised by the presence of material dredged from the moat dumped in the 1970s, as well as known disturbance in several areas, particularly the area south of the postern bridge.

More recent work (in particular the 2000 report of Johnson, Martin and Whittick, confirmed by Drury & Copeman 2016) has raised issues with the specific interpretation of several of these elements. It suggested modifications to the Commission interpretation in three main respects: first, 'the manipulation of a principal access route from the south'; and second, 'the presence of a garden or pleasance at Court Lodge'. Third, across the site as a whole, Johnson *et al.* also drew attention to a number of later landscape changes that complicate interpretation.

Postulated access route from the south

The evidence for a manipulated access route from the south (Fig. 2.6) is not at all clear. First, the area to the south-west of the castle has been heavily altered and the ground level changed, most obviously in association with the modern car park. Second, the postulated causeway is held in the Commission account to have run east-west along the southern edge of the mill pond and then turned sharply north, between the mill pond to its west and a second pond to its east. However, there was probably no such eastern pond. The area immediately to the east of the mill pond dam has been variously and incorrectly interpreted as a harbour and/or water feature, following attributions given in Lord Curzon's account. In fact, this area became a pond/water feature only after Curzon's interventions, when he raised the level of the foreland to the south, thus cutting it off from the river (Curzon 1926). The bank on the eastern edge of this area may be a flood protection dam for the watercourse from the mill, though the precise position of the mill itself remains uncertain (see Chapter Four). Any visitor, having reached this point east of the mill pond, would have faced a steep 45 degree climb up the moat embankment. There is no evidence on the ground (or in the subsequent geophysical survey) for any causeway, stairway or other feature to facilitate such a climb at this point.

A more likely principal approach to the castle is from the north-west, along a route immediately to the south of the pond in this area. Again, the area has been subject to later alterations, but such a route would take a more direct course from the main north-south road and the

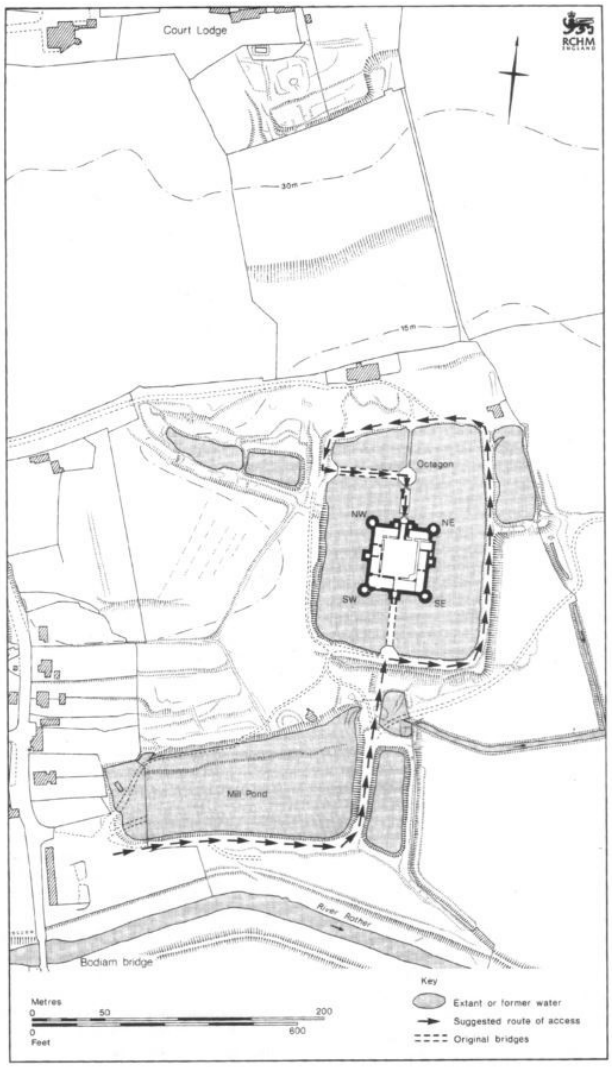


Fig. 2.6: The postulated access route from the south (after Everson 1996, fig. 1). © Crown copyright. Historic England Archive.

Wealden landscape beyond and lead directly down to the bridge abutment on the western side of the moat. The form of the series of ponds to the north-west of the castle, and the two ponds to the east of the moat, have again all been affected by the dumping of building waste and silt/vegetation from the moat during the 20th century; 20th-century material has also been dumped against the World War Two pillbox and at the west end of the mill pond (Johnson *et al.* 2000: 10).

It is, of course, entirely probable that there was more than one access route to the castle; even if the north-western route was the 'principal' one, it is still possible to argue in more general terms that the landscape to the south of the castle was carefully designed to maximise the number and visibility of water features and to delimit movement between them. It is also worth noting that the north-west access route is itself careful to present the castle to advantage, the descent

of the slope being framed by the pond to the north of the routeway along with the appearance of the impressive northern façade with its angled entrance across the moat, barbican and main northern gate. The bridge abutment, timber bridge to the octagon, and causeway between octagon, barbican and north gate were all excavated by Curzon and re-excavated in 1970 (Martin 1973) and were all elaborate constructions; the causeway between barbican and north gate was modified shortly after initial construction.

The 'Gun Garden'/'Viewing Platform'

This earthwork, c. 250 m to the north of the castle and c. 30 m above it (Fig. 2.5), has been the subject of changing interpretations over the years. The area, outside the Trust property, is known as the 'Gun Garden', on the tradition that it is a Civil War gun emplacement. However, no Civil War activity in the area is known from documentary sources.

The Royal Commission survey suggested that the wide, curving southern edge of the earthwork was part of the designed landscape, functioning as a 'viewing platform' overlooking the castle to the south. It is certainly the case that the view of the castle from this earthwork is, today, an extraordinarily powerful and arresting one (Fig. 2.7). There are also parallels for 'pleasaunces' or other features deliberately placed some distance away from the main site, to afford spectacular views of other castles or medieval houses (Creighton 2009; see Liddiard & Williamson 2008 for a more sceptical view).

The broad, curving earthwork probably has a different significance, however. It does not stand in isolation; it marks and forms the apron for the southern edge of a complex set of earthworks. Small-scale excavations (Darrell Hill 1960-61) produced quantities of early 14th-century pottery and no later material. Given the date of the pottery, and the place-name Court Lodge, it is likely that these earthworks mark the site of the earlier manorial centre of Bodiam, the predecessor to the castle. This does not preclude their use as some kind of viewing feature in the 1380s, but it is at least equally possible that the Court Lodge complex continued as the centre of the manor's administrative and agricultural activities. In 1443

> *from the inquest on the death of John Dallingridge's widow Alice … Bodiam Castle was identified separately from the site of the manor, implying that a viable manorial curia still existed on the site of the present Court Lodge.*

(Johnson *et al*. 2000: 32; TNA C139/111 no. 52)

The interpretation of the area, including evidence for the presence of a 17th-century garden, is discussed further in Chapter Four.

If the gun garden/viewing platform formed an element of a site which continued to have important manorial functions in the 1380s and after, then our view of the Bodiam landscape is radically changed. One of the puzzling features of Bodiam is its apparent lack of a lower or base court. However, it could be suggested that

Fig. 2.7: View of Bodiam Castle from the 'Gun Garden'/'Viewing Platform'.

Bodiam can be understood as a double-courtyard house, with the two courts separated and the functions of the lower court, as well as the functions of the manor, being carried out at Court Lodge. Such a wide separation (of c. 250 m) has no known parallels. However, seeing the Bodiam complex as two related courtyards, or at least two related complexes of buildings, would go some way to explain the northern aspect of the main gatehouse. There is an ongoing debate over whether later medieval houses generally possessed lower or base courts, with the West Country house of Dartington Hall, also built at the end of the 14th century, being the classic case study (Currie & Rushton 2004; Emery 2007). Contemporary and nearby structures of similar size and social standing generally have more than one court (Scotney, Westenhanger, and Cooling are definite examples; Iden and Ightham are likely).

The watermill, leat and wider landscape

An important element of the Bodiam landscape that has received little attention is the watermill. Dallingridge obtained a licence to divert the course of the River Rother to power a watermill in 1386. Whittick (1993) has traced the course of the leat for the mill through a combination of documentary and field observation. The leat was diverted some miles upriver from the lands of Robertsbridge Abbey, where there is a sharp break in alignment in the river as it crosses the floodplain. The leat ran to the north of the river before eventually feeding into the mill pond (misleadingly termed the Tiltyard by Curzon). The precise location of the mill is not certain; it is discussed further in Chapter Four.

The landscape beyond the immediate context of the castle has also received too little attention. As we have seen, the nature of the demesne and of the manor at Bodiam is distinctive. There was a hunting park in the parish, but it was not directly adjacent to the castle, as recorded in 1443 when the manor had 570 acres plus a park (Johnson *et al*. 2000: 32).

Afterlife

Relatively little documentary evidence survives of the castle between the 1380s and the end of the Middle Ages, and the occupation history and date of its eventual abandonment is uncertain. Treads on the stairs in the castle are heavily worn, and there are possible modifications and rebuilds, particularly in the west range of buildings, though none of these suggest a major rebuilding campaign. The castle passed to the Lewknor family upon the end of the Dallingridge line in the 1470s, when Phillipa Dallingridge married Sir Thomas Lewknor (Mate 1998: 136); after this point, if not before, lords were largely non-resident. It is possible that the castle was definitively abandoned and much of the walls facing the internal courtyard were quarried for building elsewhere, starting in the mid-17th century or even before (Johnson *et al*. 2000); the earliest graffiti inside the castle seems to date from the later 17th century onwards.

The landscape of Bodiam was the subject of extensive work by John 'Mad Jack' Fuller following his purchase of the castle in 1829 (Holland 2011). Fuller's work at Bodiam was part of his wider construction of landscapes, follies and monuments in and around his Brightling estate 12 km to the south-west, such as the 'Sugar Loaf' off the Battle to Heathfield road and the Pyramid in Brightling churchyard. Fuller's accounts remain unpublished, but they may indicate substantial expenditure on the surroundings of the castle in the early 1830s. The precise nature of much of Fuller's work is uncertain; Brittany Holland found it difficult to link his accounts to specific features in the landscape. Much of the present landscape character of Bodiam suggests that it owes some of its character to 19th-century landscaping. However a tree survey by Julia Lewis did not identify planting that could be securely dated to the period of Fuller (Johnson *et al*. 2000, appendix one). Fuller and his successor, George Cubitt (Lord Ashcombe, who purchased the property in 1862), both carried out some restoration work in the castle and its environs.

In the 1860s, Cubitt drained the moat for the first documented time. It is probable that additional undocumented dredging or draining had occurred on a more or less regular basis since the castle's construction in the late 14th century. The site manager until 2016, George Bailey, comments that:

> *Historically the moat has been dredged in the 1920s, and then in the 1970s. That would suggest [that the moat was drained] about every 50 years. However the moat prior to the 1970s was filled with water lilies which decayed to the bottom of the moat. Now they have been removed for aesthetic reasons, the volume of decay falling to the bottom of the moat has been massively depleted and I would assess that the impact would be to increase the time between dredging to at least 100 years.*
>
> (Bailey, pers. comm.)

Draining of the moat for archaeological or renovation work often resulted in spoil heaps that are likely to have been deposited in or around the medieval ponds. The moat was drained again in 1970, and the original bridges and abutments were excavated and re-recorded (Martin

1973). Small-scale work followed in the late 1970s and 80s, including the first geophysical survey of the property. This early survey employed magnetometry and resistivity in the floodplain, and the results were inconclusive.

Lord Curzon's restoration of the castle in 1919-1920, and his associated alterations of the surrounding landscape, is well known, in part from the volume that he wrote and published on the castle (Curzon 1926). Among other activities, Curzon raised the level of the foreshore, attempted unsuccessfully to drain the area of the mill pond to create a cricket pitch, drained and dredged the moat, and recorded the timber footings of the bridges. The work of generations preceding Curzon has been less acknowledged, though in his book Curzon himself made copious reference to the prior work of Cubitt in restoring the castle (Curzon 1926: 82-4). It is worth observing that much of the popularity and plausibility of the interpretation of Bodiam as a landscape designed with aesthetic intent may, in part, be indirectly inspired by Fuller's and Curzon's re-landscaping of the area around the castle, followed by the National Trust's policy of maintaining the area as grassed parkland traversed by gravelled paths offering defined routes for contemporary visitors.

On Curzon's death in 1925, the property passed to the National Trust. The pillbox was constructed to the north-east of the mill pond, just south of the castle, in 1940. It has an aperture for an anti-tank gun commanding a view of Bodiam bridge, a presumed avenue of German attack following an invasion on the coast 20 km to the south. In 2006, the Trust purchased the field to the south of the River Rother, incorporating a portion of the Roman site and bringing the National Trust property at Bodiam to its current size and extent.

Discussion

The following themes emerge from the research of the last 10 years; they serve as a springboard for the rest of the discussion of Bodiam in this book and will be revisited in the chapters which follow.

First, Bodiam must be seen as a multi-phase site with a long-term history. It is a mistake to see it as simply, or only, the personal creation of Dallingridge in the 1380s. The importance of the site stems, in part, from its position at the junction of the Weald and the Rother Valley. The building programmes of the 1380s did not take place in a vacuum; they were directly constrained and influenced by a much older landscape. First, there is the prior location of the manor house which became Court Lodge and, we have suggested here, probably continued to have manorial functions. Second, the tenurial layout of the site suggests that the 1380s programme was heavily constrained; Bodiam was 'fitted into' the interstices of an older landscape. This older landscape has to be understood over the very long term: the complex palaeoenvironmental sequence discussed above highlights how the Weald has changed and developed over the millennia, and the interdependence in terms of human settlement of the ecologies, economies and cultures of the Weald and of the river valley.

The location of Bodiam has been distinctive from later prehistory onwards. It is an important point in terms of communication and transport. Prehistoric zones of movement, and later Roman roads, ran north-south and intersect with the ford, and later a bridge, over the River Rother at this point. The location of Bodiam Castle, then, does face east, along the Rother Valley towards the medieval coastal ports of Rye and Winchelsea; but it also faces west and north, upriver towards Robertsbridge Abbey and Salehurst and west and north towards the heart of the Weald; after all, this is the orientation of the main gatehouse.

It follows that Bodiam should be set in its regional and local context more effectively than many scholars have previously done. If Bodiam should be seen at a series of temporal scales, it should also be seen at a series of spatial scales. Hitherto, Bodiam has been generally discussed at the micro-level (architecture and immediate setting of the castle) and at the national and international scale (defence against French raids; typological comparison with other late medieval English and French castles hundreds of miles away). We suggest that there is an intermediate, regional scale that should be grasped if Bodiam is to be properly understood.

The striking nature of Bodiam as a castle should be understood within the particular and unusual nature of the Wealden landscape in which it sits. Most location maps of Bodiam emphasise its position relative to coastal and urban settlements, most obviously Hastings, Battle, Rye, Winchelsea, and the route of the River Rother. These are all important elements. However, the Wealden landscape is also a highly distinctive form of medieval settlement. As is well known to scholars of medieval landscape, the Weald is not an area of open fields and nucleated villages. Rather, it is a patchwork of often ancient woodland, and isolated churches and farmsteads, with its own particular qualities, but also with features in common with 'bocage' or woodland landscape elsewhere in England and across the Channel (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002; Rippon 2008).

This chapter has argued, then, that a contextual approach needs to be taken to the castle and landscape of Bodiam, The extensive investigations since the 1990s have given us a much more complex and nuanced picture of the site than might be inferred from some recent published discussions. Bodiam continues to harbour surprises and provoke new observations. This local context needs to be understood and interpreted before Bodiam can be assimilated into wider arguments. If every generation gets the Bodiam it deserves, then the Bodiam that will be outlined in Chapters Three to Five will be a complex and local landscape that should be understood on its own terms. Chapter Six onwards will set Bodiam alongside equally fascinating and complex sites at Scotney, Knole and Ightham, as well as other moated sites in the region as a whole.

Addendum: Review of Archaeological Investigations

A range of archaeological projects have taken place within the estate owned by the National Trust at Bodiam since the 1980s. Seventeen are reviewed here with the majority being watching briefs on infrastructure works and repairs. The results of the work are reported in unpublished client reports lodged with the National Trust and the county Historic Environment Record at East Sussex County Council and available at ESRO. All of the work reported on here has been carried out by Archaeology South-East, the field unit of University College London.

Set out below in broadly chronological order are the more significant observations that have been made.

Prehistoric and Roman

A watching brief during stabilisation works on the moat bank found a probable Mesolithic core (in Area 5B). It was found in disturbed deposits in the upper sequence, and may have been imported from elsewhere with make-up material (Stevens 1995: 147).

A watching brief in April – May 1998 during installation of a new sewage plant (15 m x 7 m, with a depth of c. 4.5 m) found a 2 m thick deposit of peat (Context 6), comprising branches and bark/twig fragments set within a dark grey to black organic/fibrous clay matrix. The upper surface of the deposit was c. 2 m below ground level. Two C14 samples gave calibrated dates of 2050-1730 BCE (Beta Analytic No. 121615 – 1.8 m OD) and 2500-2195 BCE (Beta Analytic No. 121616 – 0.74 m OD). This Bronze Age peat formation overlay sterile alluvial deposits, and may represent a low-energy deposition phase associated with quantities of organic material such as driftwood and/or the formation of freshwater carr-type environments seen to be forming during the later prehistoric around the coast and in the valleys and embayments of East Sussex. The peat was overlain by alluvial deposits of medieval date, suggesting that the original deposits relating to later Bronze Age and subsequent activity may have been truncated by the construction of the flote or harbour, thought likely to have been constructed at or before the late 14th century (Barber 1998).

Two further observations of the stratigraphy in the area between the Castle Inn and the former mill pond have been made. They include:

A watching brief in September 2003 during the excavation of 26 m of trenching from the sewage plant into the western end of the car park located a 0.1 m thick peaty deposit at a depth of 0.8 m below the modern ground level. This deposit was located to the west of the footpath (i.e. adjacent to the sewage plant) and was interpreted as the same Bronze Age peat deposit examined in 1998. It would appear to thin out as it extends to the east, although its exact relationship with the earlier recorded sample is hampered by the absence of height/depth levels (Worrall 2003).

A watching brief maintained in January – March 2007 during excavations for drain runs in the car park and across the road in the car park of the Castle Inn. Trench 1 adjacent to the sewage plant located pieces of wood/peat within a medieval deposit below 1.7 m in depth, suggesting the presence of the underlying Bronze Age peat deposit. Trench 6, in the Castle Inn car park, exposed the peat layer at a depth of 2.7 m below the ground surface (1.85 m OD). It was 0.3 m thick and graded into a blue-grey silt clay, from which a sample of wood was retrieved at 1.25 m OD for C14 dating (this was subsequently abandoned on specialist advice). This deposit continued to a depth of at least 3.5 m below ground level but was not bottomed (Barber 2007b).

Archaeological and geoarchaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of a proposed new sewage system in the area of the Rose Garden in April 2009. Three evaluation trenches, two geoarchaeological test pits and one borehole were used. The evaluation confirmed the presence of the Bronze Age peat and underlying alluvium. Pollen and plant macro-fossil assessment showed that the change from peat to alluvial deposition appears to relate to changes in vegetation in the valley itself. The most likely hypothesis is that anthropogenic activity led to wide scale deforestation at this time (Priestley-Bell & Pope 2009).

A watching brief during excavations for a drain run adjacent to the sewage plant produced an unabraded but possibly residual piece of Roman imbrex tile from an otherwise undated layer immediately above the peat deposit (Barber 2007b).

Medieval

A watching brief during repair to the moat banks during stabilisation works (May – November 1995) found evidence of a possible late medieval / early post-medieval raising of the moat bank. Two sherds of 15th-century pottery were found in Areas 9 and 10 in a deposit at a depth of 0.72 m below the modern ground surface, overlying the probable original moat bank. In Area 10 the bank deposits were observed to slope up to the stone bridge abutment, suggesting the abutment was constructed prior to the building up of the bank (Stevens 1995: 147).

A watching brief during the installation of a new sewage plant located a silty clay alluvial deposit (Context 4) overlying a prehistoric peat deposit. The lower 0.6 m of this context produced a sherd of 13th-14th-century pottery together with several animal bones, an oyster shell and a tile fragment. A rough alignment of water-rounded cobbles at 3.15 m OD was interpreted as ship's ballast. The deposit was interpreted as representing alluvial silt associated with the former flote, thought to have been created before the late 14th century, truncating earlier deposits (Barber 1998); subsequent plotting of the location suggests it may be within the western part of the mill pond (Drury & Copeman 2016).

A watching brief in November 2002 during the excavation of footing trenches for a bench on the south-eastern corner of the mill pond dam, thought to be of 14th-century date, located a compacted silty clay deposit sloping down to the east at a depth of 0.42-0.5 m below ground level. Although no dating evidence was recovered, this was interpreted as the medieval embankment, and appears to confirm that the mill pond curved round at this point (Johnson 2002).

A watching brief in February 2007 during the removal of an 11.3 m x 5.75 m strip of damaged turf within the interior of the castle revealed several masonry walls. An east-west wall protruding from, and bonded to, the south side of the north wall of the Great Hall was exposed for 8.5 m. It ran alongside the present north wall, but slightly off-set. It was built of massive roughly-faced unmortared sandstone blocks with smaller pieces of sandstones filling the interstices. It was interpreted as either a foundation for the hall wall, or a foundation for beams supporting a first floor over a putative and now-backfilled cellar, such as exist along the eastern range (Barber 2007a).

A watching brief during drainage runs produced a number of medieval deposits confirming the sequence identified in 1998 (Barber 2007b).

Archaeological and geoarchaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of a proposed new sewage system in the area of the Rose Garden in April 2009. Three evaluation trenches, two geoarchaeological test pits and one borehole were used. The evaluation confirmed the presence of an alluvial sequence above Bronze Age peat and the underlying alluvium. Above the peat and within the overlying alluvium, wood was recorded at a depth of c. 1.80 m below the present ground level. A radiocarbon date on the wood produced a calibrated date in the range ADE 550-660. The overlying alluvial deposits produced pottery and ceramic building material with a date range from c. ADE 1275 to 1600. The remains of a structure related to a 19th-century building known to have existed close to the site were recorded (Priestley-Bell & Pope 2009).

In 2005 David and Barbara Martin, for Archaeology South East, carried out a targeted programme of recording and interpretation of the portcullis and gatehouse stonework surrounding it. The portcullis is made of oak with iron fittings. The structural evidence (absence of splicing or scarf joints, its masonry housing) makes it highly likely the portcullis is original. A radiocarbon date of ADE 1280-1410 with a 95.4% certainty was obtained from the wood (Martin & Martin 2005).

Post-medieval

A watching brief during installation of new sewage plant identified four deposits of post-medieval date, up to 1.4 m thick in total. The lowest (the upper part of Context 4) was an alluvial silt containing numerous sherds of late 15th- early 16th-century pottery, some of which represented an almost complete bowl that had been thrown into water. The deposits are likely to relate to the silting up of the medieval flote, which at its northern end was being encroached upon in the 17th century and appears to have been used for rubbish disposal from at least the early 16th century. This was sealed (at a depth of 0.55 m below ground level) by a deposit containing 18th- early 19th-century pottery, which was itself cut by a drain or soakaway of 19th-century date. The upper deposit was a modern hardcore (Barber 1998).

A watching brief during tree and shrub planting around the new sewage plant in March 1999 involved hand excavation of planting holes to a depth of <0.45 m. Several contexts representing current and former garden soils produced 18th-20th-century pottery (Johnson 1999).

Watching brief during removal of worn turf revealed three walls set at right angles, and butted against the medieval wall located in the area of the Great Hall. These walls were made of reused sandstone blocks, lined with smaller sandstone pieces and roof tile. They were interpreted as a fireplace / chimney breast of post-medieval date, possibly associated with an historically attested 18th-century cottage that formerly occupied this area (Barber 2007a).

A watching brief during drainage runs confirming the presence of the early post-medieval water-lain deposits identified in 1998. Later 18th-19th-century deposits relating to earlier phases of the Castle Inn were observed across the road (Barber 2007b).

No period

A watching brief in July 1995 produced no archaeological deposits or features. Area A was the repair of a footpath and installation of a French drain (80 m^2); Area B was a 12 m long pipe trench (0.3 m wide); Area C was a 76 m long pipe trench (0.3 m wide). Excavated depths did not exceed 0.3 m (Priestley-Bell 1995).

A watching brief in November 1996 during groundworks for five benches and a drainage inspection pit. The benches involved 10 footing excavations 0.3 m x 0.5 m and up to 0.49 m deep. Stratigraphy comprised topsoil overlying brickearth. The pit was 0.92 m x 0.75 m and 1.4 m deep, with a concrete slab associated with the drainage pipe found at this level. The overburden was redeposited silty clay. No archaeological deposits or finds were observed (Speed 1996).

A watching brief during the excavation of a 7 m long drainage run linking the World War Two Type 28A pillbox with the existing drainage system. The drain was dug to a maximum depth of 0.6 m, and encountered no archaeological deposits or finds, being dug largely thorough redeposited clay derived from drainage works in 1992 (James 2001).

A watching brief in October 2004 during the excavation of a 30 m long drainage trench from the foot of the southern moat embankment towards the modern drainage ditch produced no archaeological features or finds. The trench was dug to a depth of 0.95 m, largely through made ground (Riccoboni 2004).

List of Unpublished Reports, 1994-2010

These references to the grey literature will be found in the general bibliography, but for convenience, they are also set out below. Many are available at East Sussex Record Office (ESRO) in the series R/R 36; the full records numbers are given below. PDFs can also be obtained via the East Sussex Historic Environment Record https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/her (accessed 19th April 2016).

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