

poses are conventional, the painting shows the artist's ability to group his sitters easily, and his disinclination to idealise features is reflected in the plain, jowly faces.

The portrait of Henry Purcell of around 1695, is also lost, but a drawing from life (Fig 2), previously attributed to Kneller, gives an impression of the artist's competence as a draughtsman. Other famous men represented here include John Dryden—whose long nose, hooded eyes and unsmiling face show Lely's influence—and Christopher Wren. The portrait of Wren (Fig 3), presented to the Royal Society in 1750 and still in its possession, is characteristic of the painter's earlier work: not adventurous, but dignified, informative and appropriate. Wren's fame as a mathematician is commemorated by the drawing he holds; his architectural achievement by his most famous building. The painting dates from the mid-1690s, while St Paul's was still being built. The parts of the Cathedral which were not complete—the west end, with the towers on either side of the portico, and the dome—differ interestingly from what was eventually executed.

As Closterman's reputation grew he was given commissions for increasingly elaborate portraits, and his talent as an organiser of figures into coherent groups emerged. His portrait *The Children of John Taylor of Bifrons Park, Kent* (Fig 4), another recent acquisition by the National Portrait Gallery, is a fine example of his abilities. The picture presents an ambitious allegory, a play on the Taylor family motto: *Fama candida rosa dulcior* (Fame is sweeter than a white rose). One girl distributes roses, while two of the sisters hold the wreath of fame over the head of the eldest brother, Brook, at the age of 11 when he was already celebrated as a musician (he was later to become a well-known mathematician). The artist avoids pomposity by establishing a sense of contact between spectator and sitters, and shows sensitivity in conveying

the relative status of the children and in the light touch with which the allegory is handled.

In 1698 Closterman set out on a European tour, under the patronage of two young noblemen. One of these was James Stanhope, whose father was English Resident in Madrid, and it was to Spain, then seldom visited from England, that the artist went first. The exhibition includes a striking but stiff and strange portrait of Stanhope senior (lent from the family house, Chevening) which was intended to impress the Spanish Court with Closterman's abilities.

The resulting studies of the King and Queen are, unfortunately, lost. From Madrid Closterman travelled to Rome, where he spent two years, and apart from his study of Italian painting gained experience for his later activities

as an art-dealer. He was back in England by July 1700. The artist's second sponsor on his travels had been the brilliant young politician and philosophical writer Anthony Ashley, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, and it was in this nobleman that he found his most important patron on his return to England. He executed a number of works for Shaftesbury, of which three oil paintings are included in this display. Lady Ashe (Fig 5), the sister of one of Closterman's closest friends, is painted in a grand manner new to the artist: she is presented as Cecilia, patron saint of music, in an acidly-coloured version of the Bolognese style.

The very picture of the Earl and his brother Maurice Ashley (Fig 6) reflects the patron's interest in planning the work. The two young men, both of them classical scholars, are depicted wearing something like Greek dress and standing in something like classical poses, in front of the Temple of Apollo. Intended as a statement of the neo-Platonic doctrine of the relationship between nature and the divine, the picture has a striking landscape background, and it is interesting that in his *Second Characters* Shaftesbury refers to discussions about nature with Closterman in St Giles's woods. All the same, the picture cannot be accounted a total success. Bold it may be, but it is also slightly absurd.

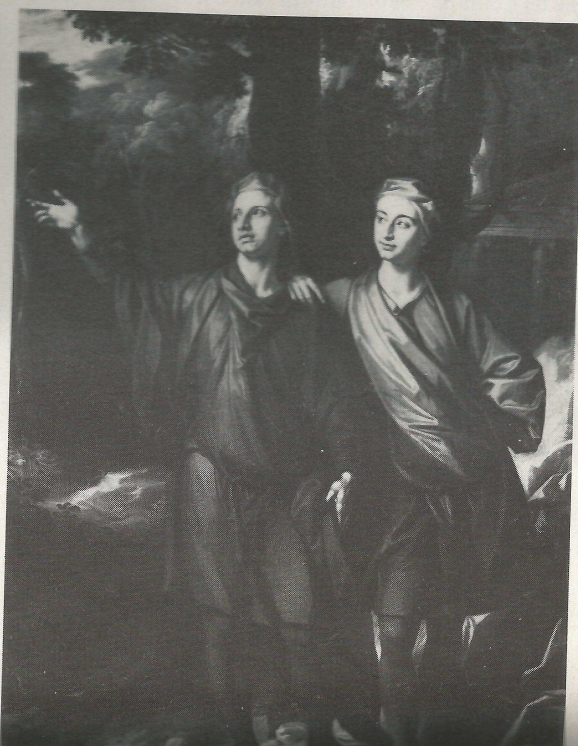
Less is known about Closterman's later years. He achieved great prosperity—though hardly, one feels, from such works as his lumpish portrait of Queen Anne—and died in 1711. Though some of his works are recorded in country houses and public collections, others remain to be rediscovered. This exhibition should encourage further research, and the



4—THE CHILDREN OF JOHN TAYLOR, OF BIFRONS PARK



5—LADY ASHE, THE SISTER OF ONE OF CLOSTERMAN'S CLOSEST FRIENDS. She is presented as Cecilia, patron saint of music



< Painting

The Children of John Taylor of Bifrons Park (1696 ?) John Closterman

The portrait shows eight of the children of John Taylor, a wealthy Kent landowner and his wife Clivia. Second from the left is Brook Taylor (1685-1731), their eldest son, later a celebrated mathematician, the inventor of Taylor's Theorem. According to a memoir of Taylor published by his grandson in 1793, the portrait shows him aged thirteen; that is, on or after 18 August 1698. There are two objections to this. First, Closterman was in Madrid by November of that year, allowing very little time for so ambitious a commission. Secondly, one son, Bridges (1695-1727), would be missing. A date of 1696 for the portrait, when Brook was eleven, fits the circumstances better. The children would then be (left to right): Olive (b.1681), Brook, Margaret (b.1683), Mary (b.1680), Upton (b.1696), Nathaniel (b.1687), John (b.1687) and Bridges (rather than Herbert, b.May 1698).

Closterman is known to have painted two other family groups - The Seymour Children (Syon House) and The Marlborough Family (Blenheim Palace) - but this highly finished group, with its assured, rhythmic composition, sumptuous colouring and Frenchified elegance, is arguably his masterpiece. It is contrived as a play on the motto of the Taylor family, 'Fama candida rosa dulcior' (fame is sweeter than a white rose) (information from Professor J. Douglas Stewart). Olive and Margaret hold the traditional allegorical attributes of Fame: two trumpets and a wreath with which they crown Brook, who was evidently something of a child prodigy and an accomplished musician. The wreath appears to be of orange blossom rather than the more usual bay. Mary, seated at the centre of the group, dispenses from her cornucopia, symbol of the benefits of good fortune, a white rose. It is possible that the exquisite flowers were painted by a specialist flower painter, rather than by Closterman himself.

Provenance: almost certainly painted for John Taylor (1665-1729); by descent to B.M.C. Trench; his sale, Sotheby's, 9 July 1980; bought by the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, London, November 1980. On view in the N.P.G. Collection at Beningbrough Hall, Yorkshire.

See colour reproduction
on table

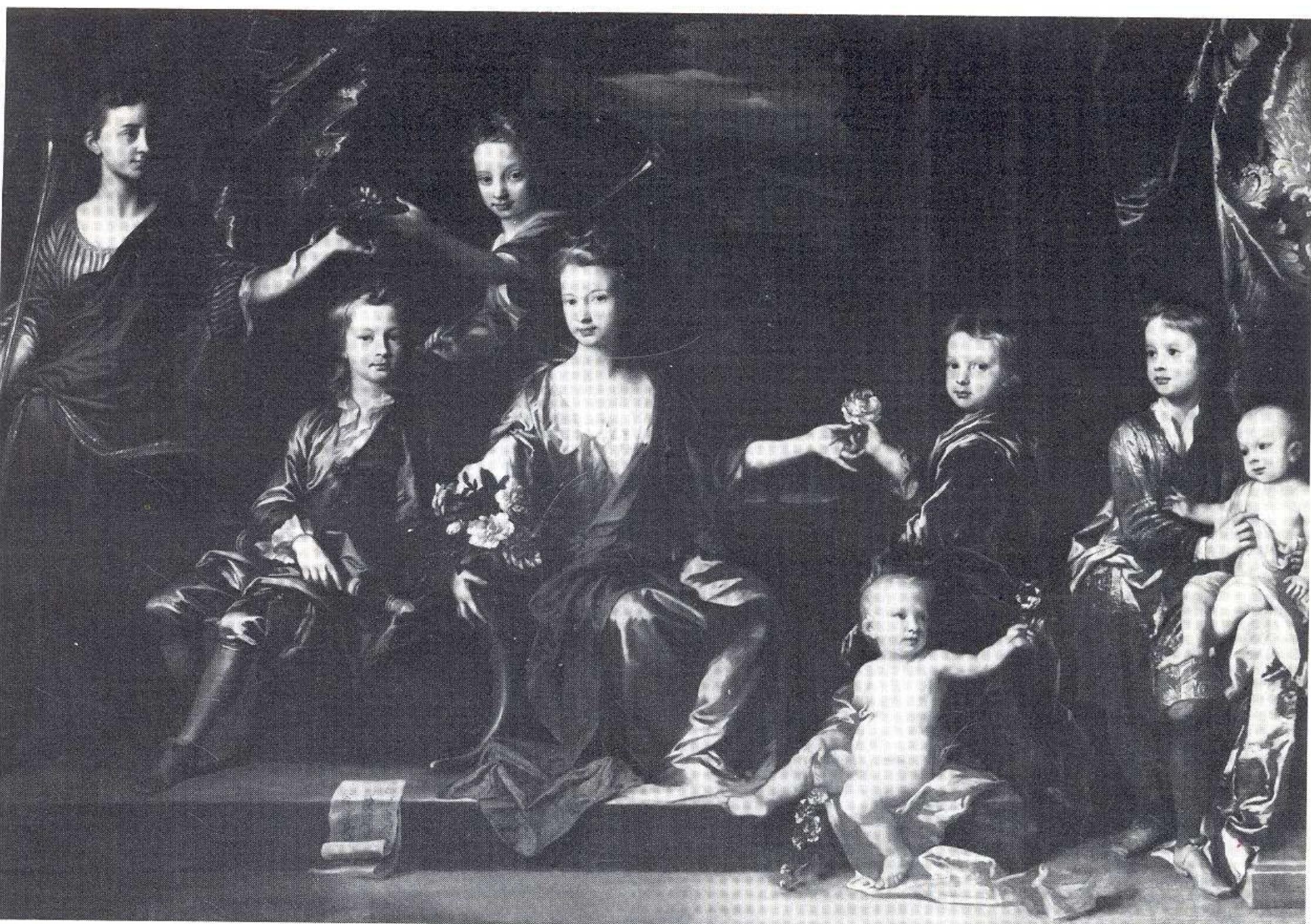


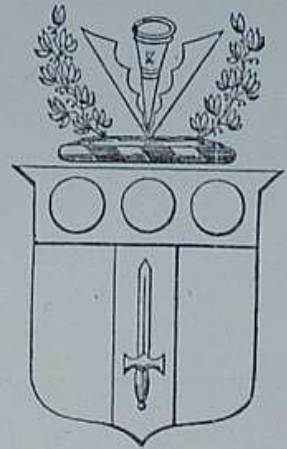


4—THE CHILDREN OF JOHN TAYLOR, OF BIFRONS PARK



Bifrons.





Arms.—Or, on a pale gu. a sword erect ar. pomel and hilt gold, on a chief az. three bezants.
Crest.—On a mount vert, a pheon, point downwards, gu. betw. two branches of laurel, ppr.

JOHN BARGRAVE, of Bridge, co. Kent. = ALICE KENNARD, remar. John Lukyn, of Fordwich, 1584.

Robert Bargrave, of Bridge, aforesaid. = Joannah, daughter of John Gilbert, of Sandwich, married 1568, ob. December, 1598; will proved 1600.

Richard Bargrave. = Alice, bo. 1615. Jane, bo. 1619.

John Bargrave, of Patricksbourne, co. Kent, Esq. built Bifrons.

Jane, da. and co-heir of Giles Crouche, of London.

Robert Bargrave, mar. the widow of ... Wood. Thomas Bargrave, a clergyman.

George Bargrave = Dorcas, daughter of John Martin, Esq. she re-mar. Robert Adney, of Hawkinge, clerk, 1620. Dorcas, only da. and heir, mar. Sir Thomas Hardress, King's Serg. to Chas. II.

Robert Bargrave, of Bifrons, b. 1605.

Elizabeth da. of Sir Sam. Peyton, Bt. born 1617, married, 1635, at Christ Church. Joan, mar. 1st. Raymond, D.D. 2d. Hussey, D.D.

Jane, mar. Lodowick Weemys, D.D. Prebend of Westminster, bo. 1608. Anne, ob. an infant.

Sarah, bo. 1613, mar. Partridge Rigden, of co. Lincoln, Esq. 1635.

John Bargrave, D.D. Prebend of Cant. Vicar of Smarden and Harbledown, ob. 1680, bur. in Christ Church.

Frances, da. of Sir John Wild, Knt. she remar. Osborne, ob. 1686; he died same year, and was bur. in Christ Church.

John Bargrave, ob. 1625.

Edward, ob. young. Jane, ob. 1630.

Isaac, ob. young, 1626. Robert Bargrave, bo. 1628, 2d. son, died at Smyrna, 1661.

Elizabeth, only da. and heir to Robert Turner, of Canterbury, ob. 1703, bur. at Kensington.

Thomas Bargrave, of Eastry-Court, old. son.

Honora, daughter of Estcott, remar. Josh. Roberts, of Canterbury, ob. 1682.

Isaac, ob. young, 1663. Robert, ob. young, bu. 1659.

Elizabeth, mar. Tuckwell, of London, ob. S. P.

Hester, bo. 1657, mar. Francis Turner, of London, bur. at East Malling, Kent.

Thomas, bapt. 1653.

Charles Bargrave, of Eastry-Court, bapt. 1651, ob. 1713.

Elizabeth, da. of Withwick, died 1732.

Elizabeth, married Edward St. Leger, of Deal, Surgeon, 1702.

Martha, mar. Zouch Pilcher, 1714.

Honora, mar. 1st. Charles Knowler, 1660. 2d. Joseph Roberts.

Hester, mar. William Bridges, of Sandwich, 1718.

John Bargrave, sold Bifrons, mar. at Christ Ch. to Frances Turner, of London.

Thomas, ob. S. P.

Isaac.

Elizabeth, mar. John Fullager, of Langley, Kent, 1684.

Jane, ob. S. P.

Robert Bargrave, of Doctors' Commons, gent.

Sarah.

Elizabeth, only da. mar. 1715. = Benjamin Coade, of London, Esq.

Isaac Bargrave 6th son, D. Canterbury, ob. et. 56

Anne, mar. 16 Thomas Cop clerk. 2dly, H. Palmer.

Mary, mar. David Denne.

Isaac Bargrave, of Eastry-Court, ob. 24th May, 1800, S. P.

hilt
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as, daughter of
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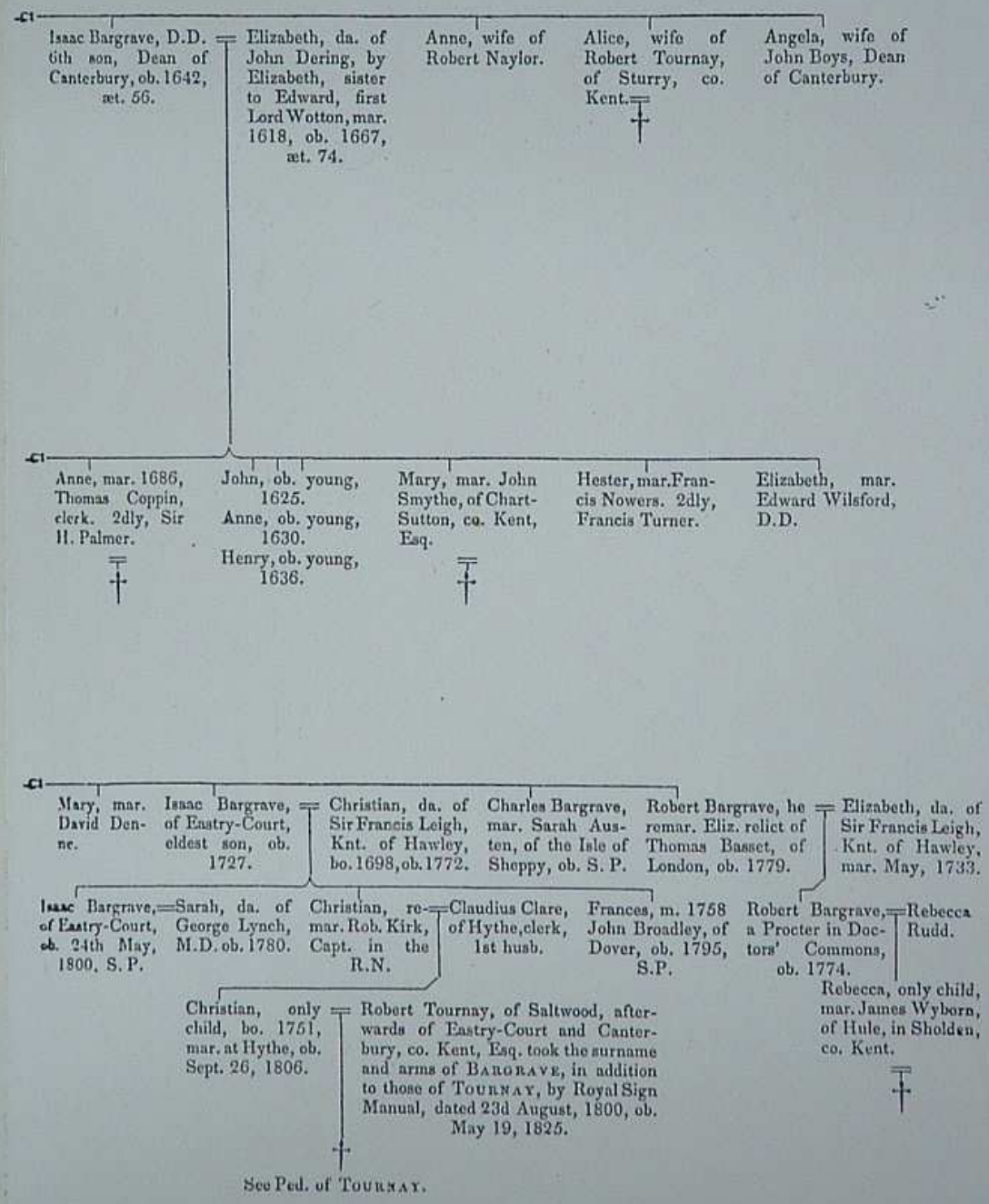
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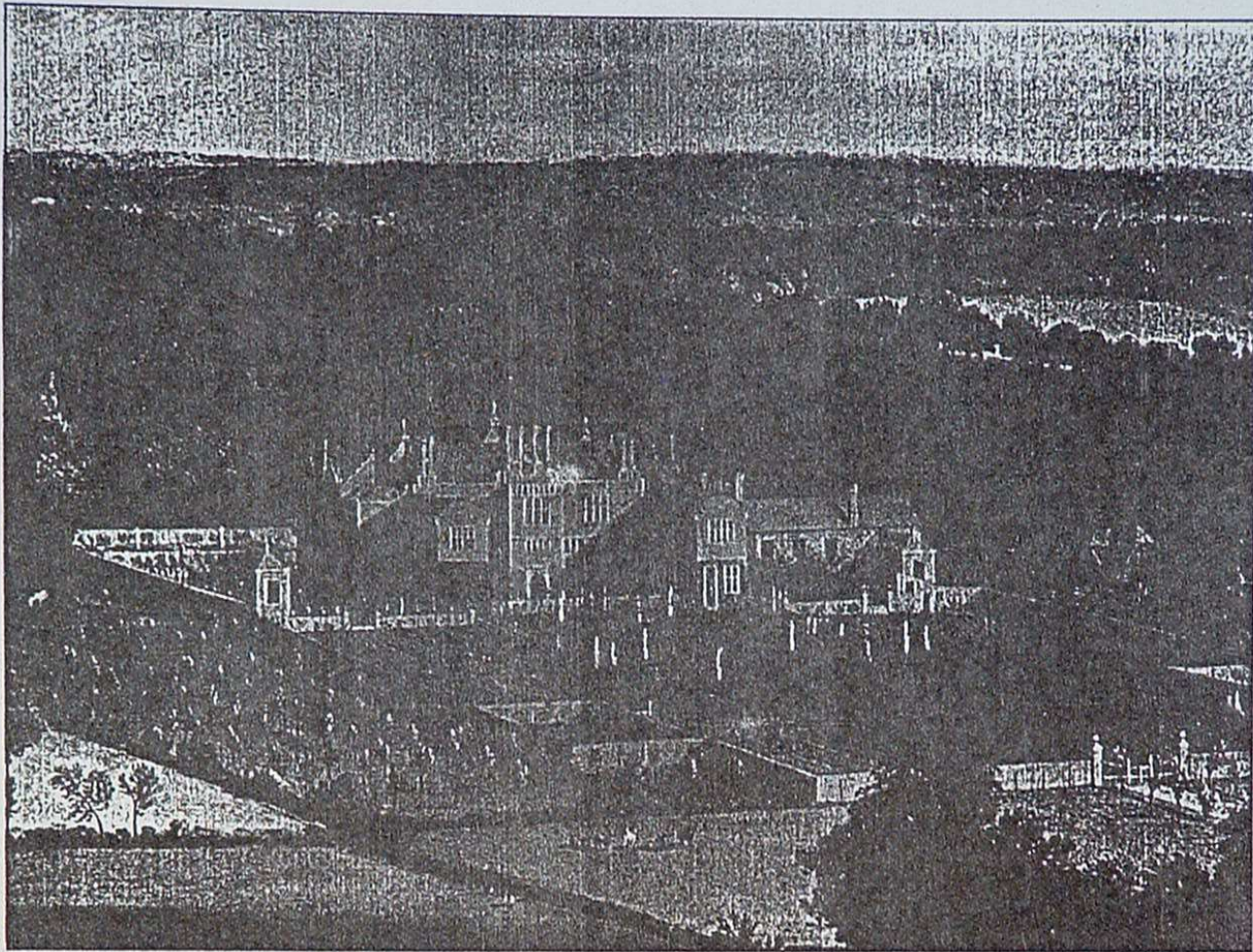
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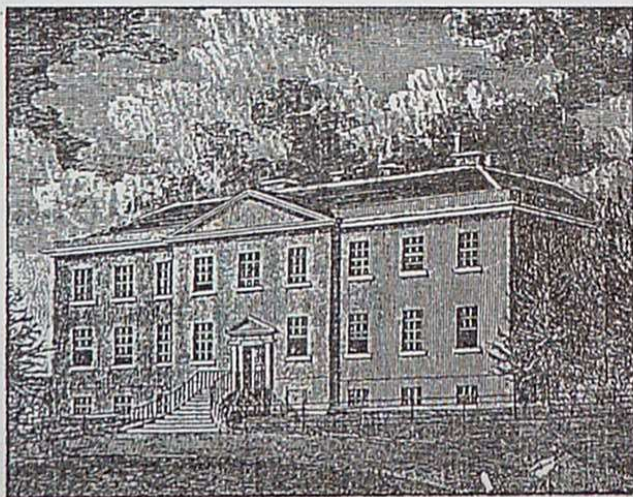
Sarah.

Coade,
Esq.





▲ Detail from a prospect of early Bifrons attributed to Jan Siberechts.



▲ Engraving of the north front of Bifrons, c. 1794

early Georgian style the building, of three floors, is depicted in an engraving of 1794 which also shows a central rising entrance over a semi-basement. The excavations exposed a large part, if not all, of the west wing indicating a rectangular plan for this building which probably had a frontage of about 36 m. Internally, other features of this building were also recorded. These included the remnants of an intricate drainage system, two wells and a cheese or cold storage pit.

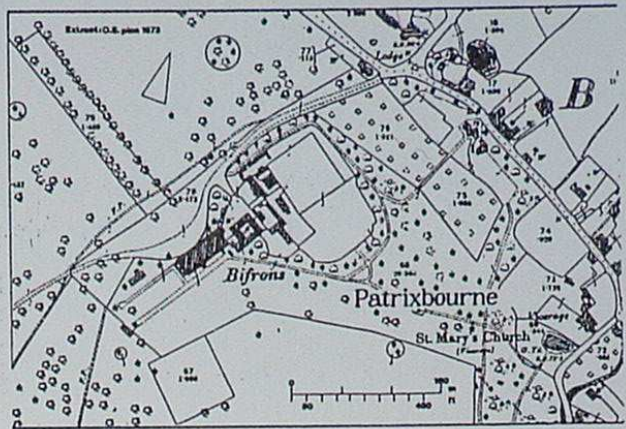
In 1830 the Bifrons estate passed by sale to the Conyngham family. Minor alterations to the house were probably undertaken both before and after its sale. The architect, Thomas Hunt (d. 1831) is known to have given Bifrons its 'Tudor' style and his pupil G.H. Smith is also known to have carried out alterations to the house in 1835. None of these changes, however, were readily identified in the excavations.

The major rebuilding of Bifrons occurred in 1863/64 when the early Georgian house was virtually demolished and the ground level to the north raised 2 m. by extensive dumping of sand. The majority of the structural remains exposed on the excavations date from this period of massive rebuilding. At semi-basement level the Georgian windows and wall foundation of the north elevation appear to have been retained, but were pierced for the insertion of a pair of barrel-vaulted cellars which extended below the main driveway. Another barrel-vaulted cellar was also surveyed immediately to the west of the main central entrance. This may date from c. 1815, being constructed of bricks in a yellow sandy fabric comparable to types used in the Napoleonic period fortifications at the Western Heights, Dover. A wide range of brick forms, sizes and fabrics were, in fact, observed in the various building phases of Bifrons house. Some were obviously early, possibly late sixteenth century or early seventeenth century in date, but it is notoriously difficult to date brick types individually with any degree of certainty. At a large and important building such as Bifrons there are the added complications of re-used earlier material and the use of large numbers of bricks procured at regular intervals from non-local sources. The predominant types used in the 1863/64 rebuilding were the soft red bricks probably from the Faversham brickyards, but use was also made of London Brick Company 'yellows'.

With the exception of the entirely Victorian north portico, the foundations of which were exposed, only the floors and wall partitions of the lower basement survived the demolition of 1948. These comprised

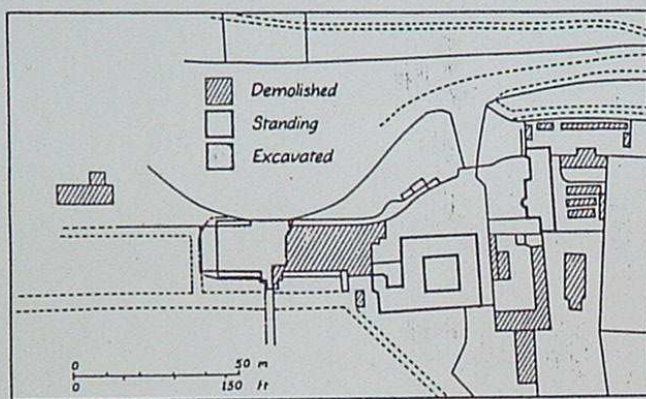
EXCAVATIONS: KENT SITES

a range of rooms leading off a central east-west corridor. The domestic functions of these rooms which included both outside and inside larders, scullery, kitchen, linen room, butler's pantry and brushing room as well as a footman and hallboy's bedroom, reflect something of the way of life of not only aristocratic Victorian England, but also the living and working conditions of the servants necessary to run such large country houses as Bifrons. Much of the complex sewerage, water and heating systems to the house was also recorded, but could not be directly related to individual room function and use. From the demolition deposits which filled these rooms, however, a large number of architectural mouldings together with a range of other building materials provide some indication of the ornate and heavy Victorian internal decoration of the house. The recovery of a small Whitby jet bead and a 'flat' lead toy soldier from the silts of one drain similarly allow a glimpse of the material possessions of the occupants of the building in the nineteenth century.

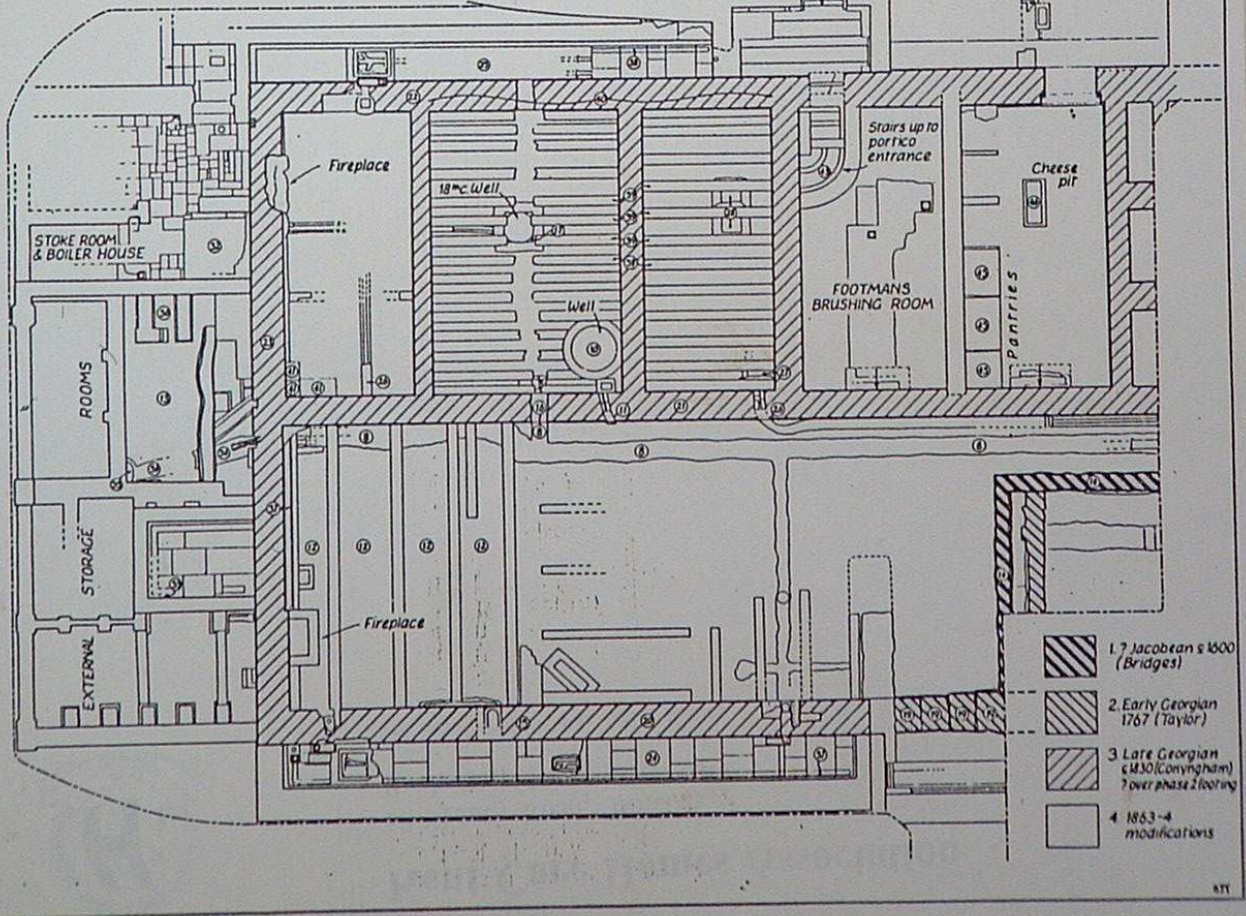


Boiler
House

Fire
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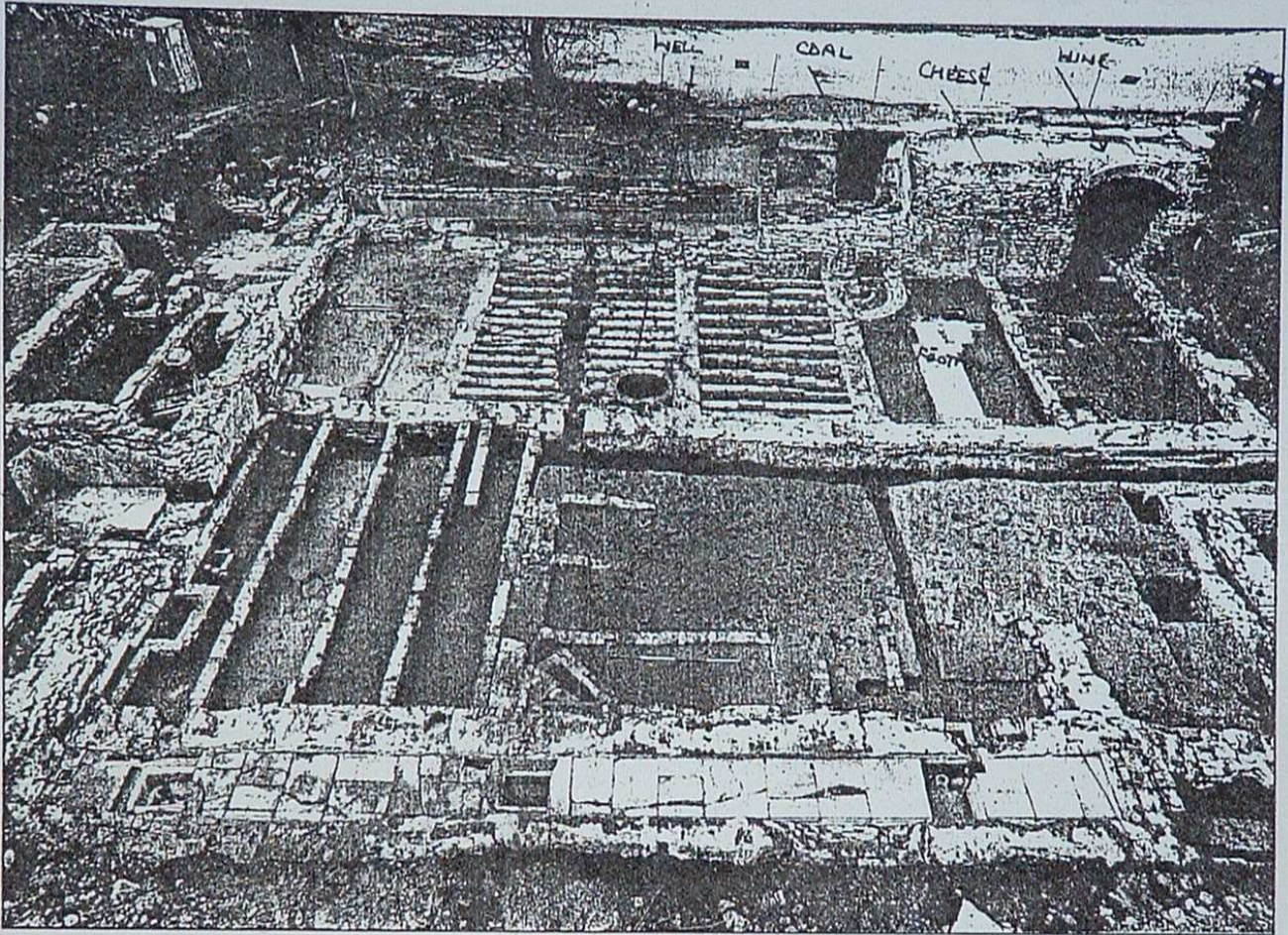
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EXCAVATIONS: KENT SITES

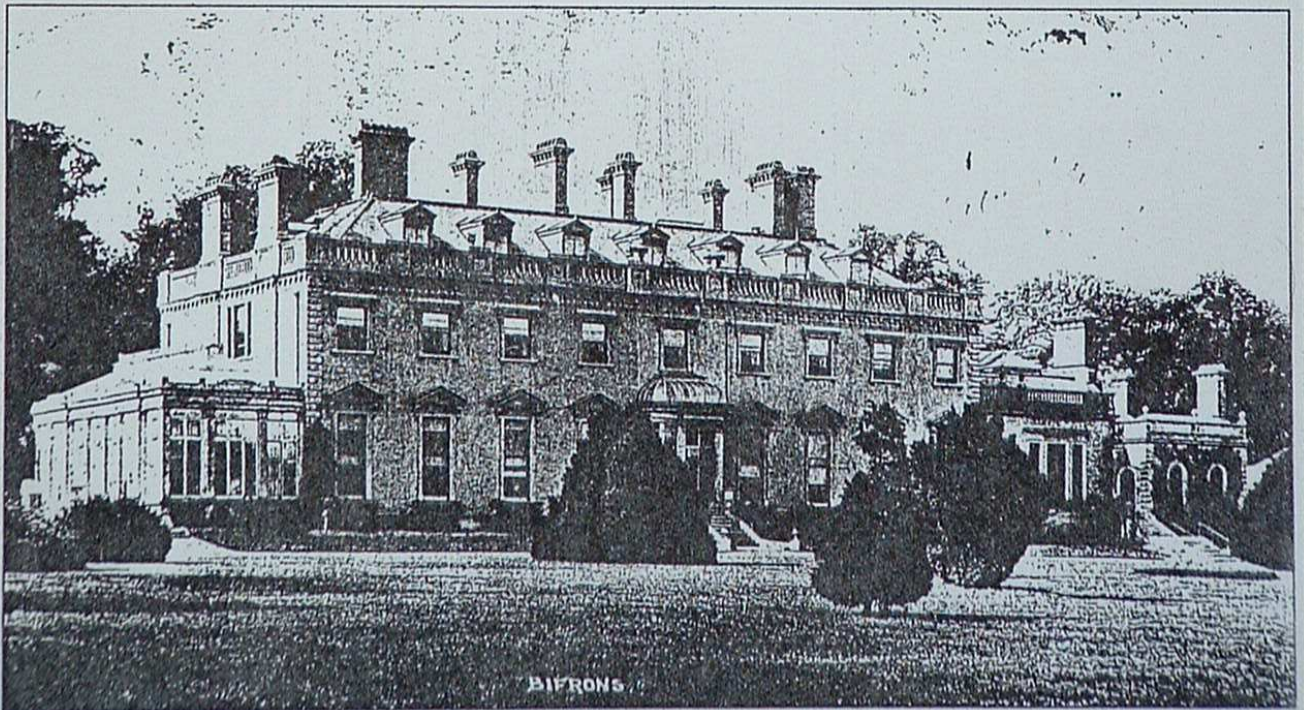
BOILER
HOUSE

FIRE
PLACE



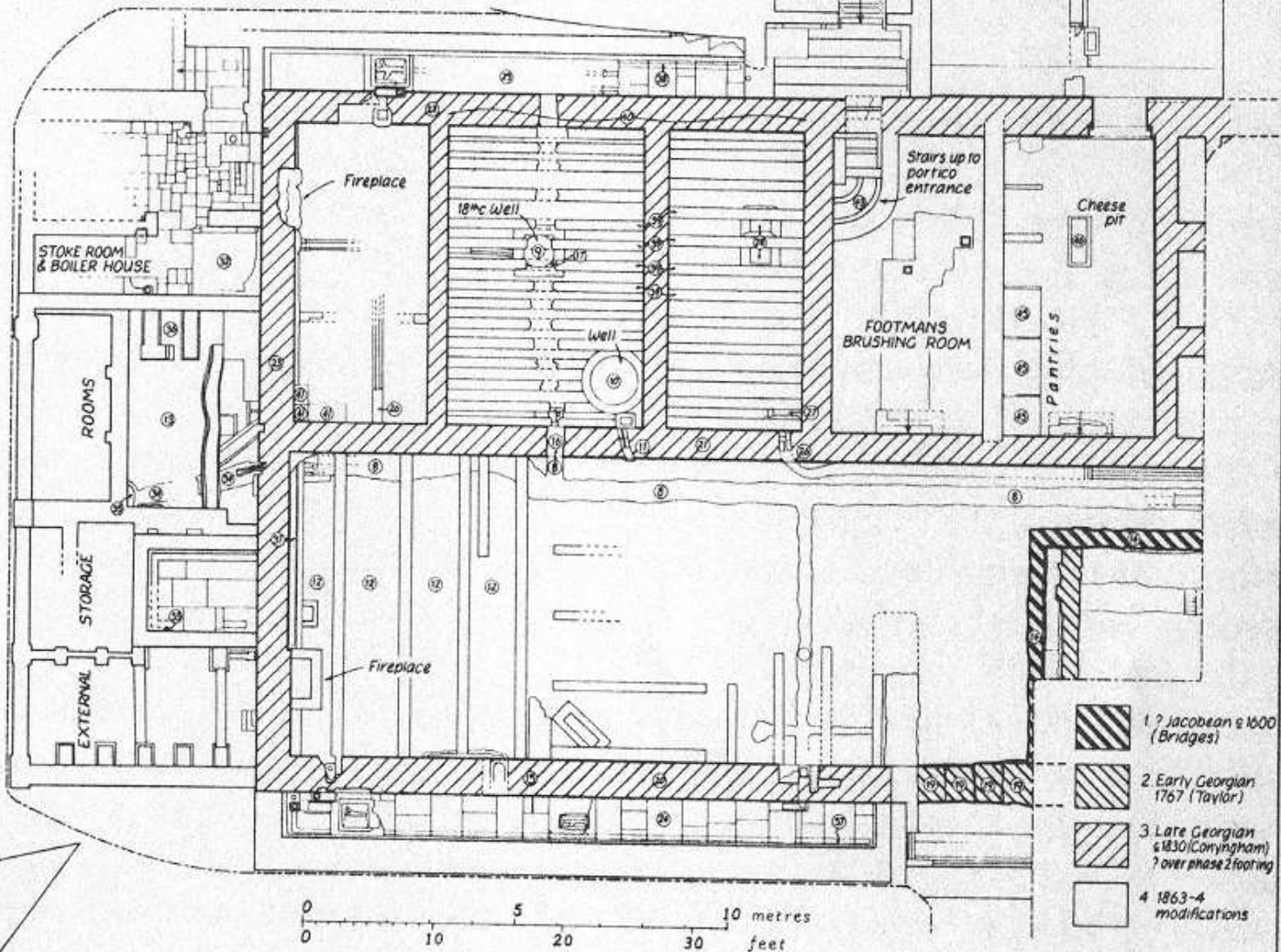
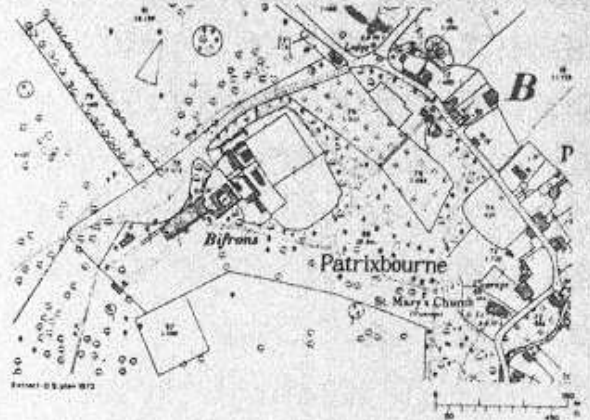
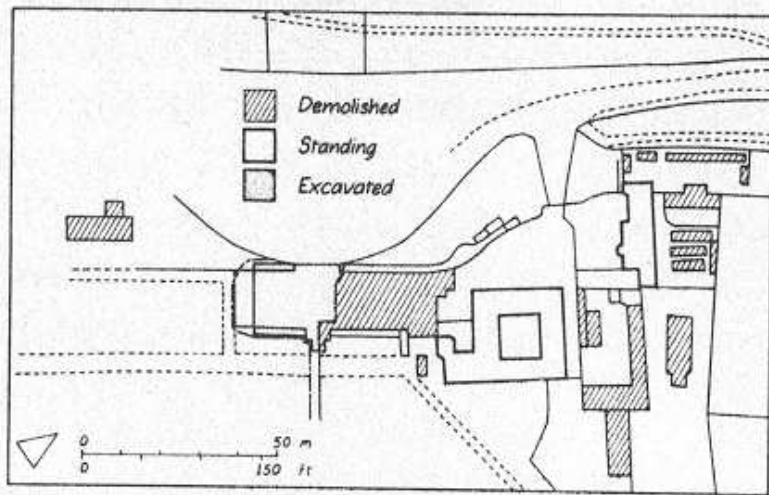
▲ General view of excavation, looking north-west. Scale 2m.

EARLY GEORGIAN



▲ The south front of Bifrons c. 1900.

BIFRONS



- 1 ? Jacobean & 1600 (Bridges)
- 2 Early Georgian 1767 (Taylor)
- 3 Late Georgian & 1830 (Corynham) ? over phase 2 flooring
- 4 1863-4 modifications

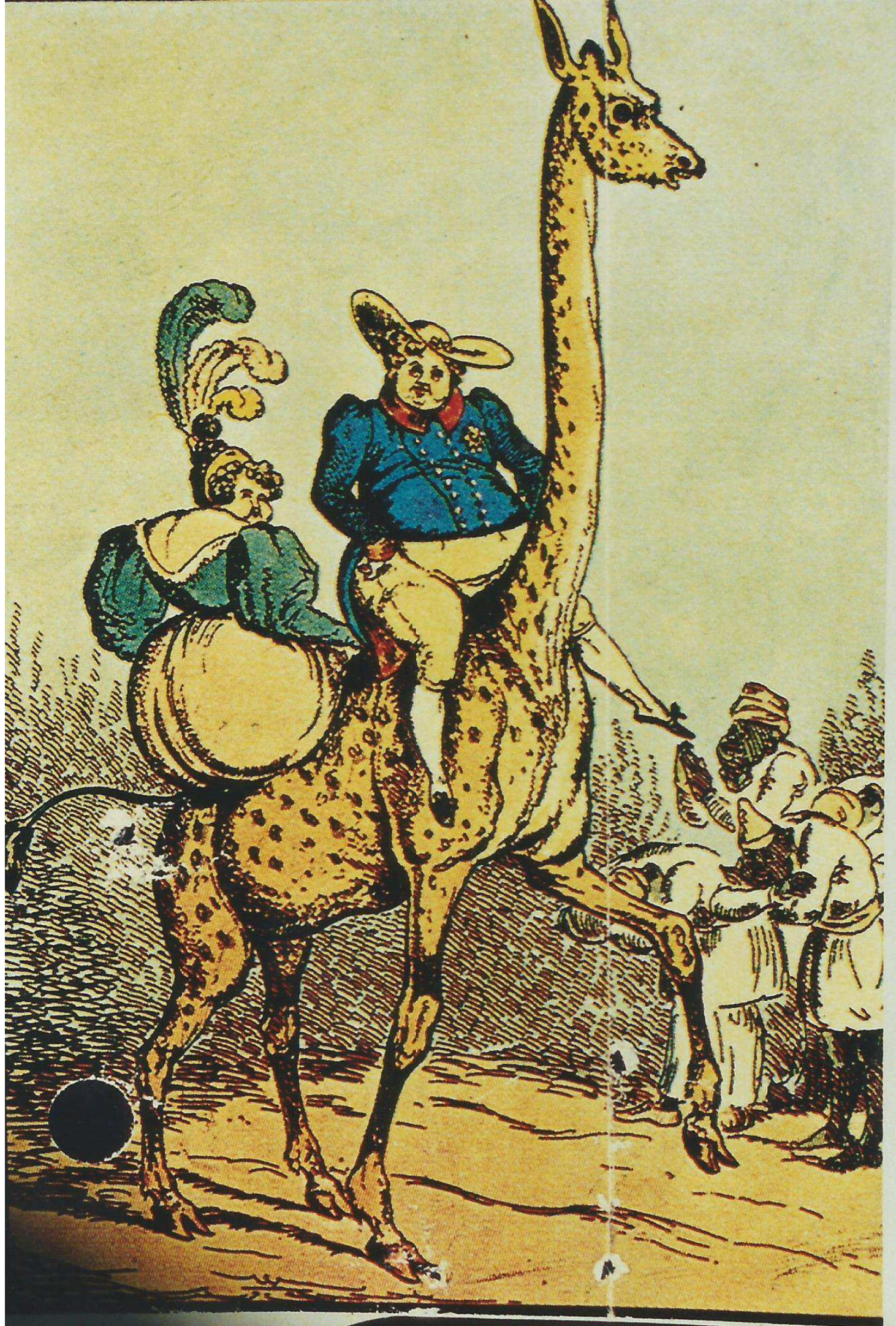
Fig. 16. Bifrons excavation plan.



OS 1873
REF 47.9



Bifrons Gate Lodge.



I says to our Governor says I-
keep your eye on them ere Leaders George



THE GUARD WOT LOOKS ARTER THE
SOVEREIGN

Publ April 24 1880 by W. Wilson & Co. New York





Portrait of General...



1833
A. B. [unclear]
[unclear]

Lad Longyngham —



Richard D. Webb





The drawing was first published in the Illustrated London News, London, 1876. It is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The painting is a reproduction of the original drawing.

YOUR MAJESTY

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN BY J. P. GIBSON, 1876

Printed and Published by J. P. Gibson, 1876







Bifrons Gate Lodge.