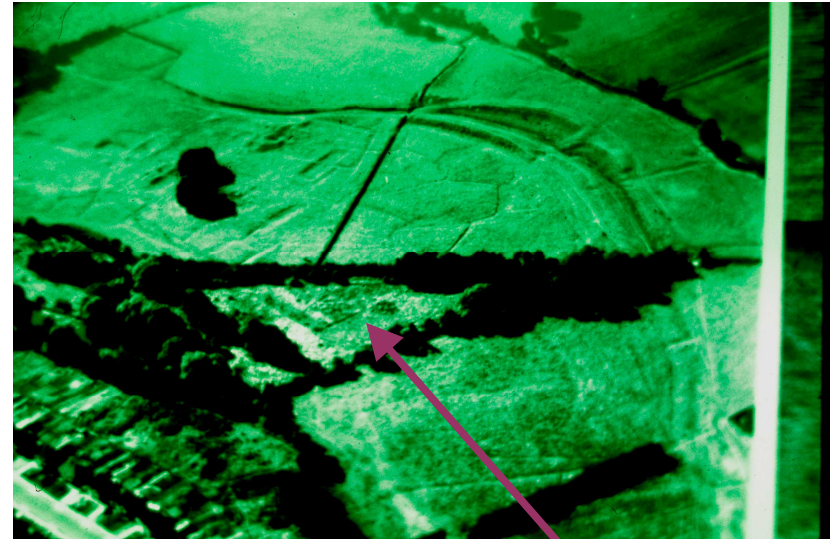
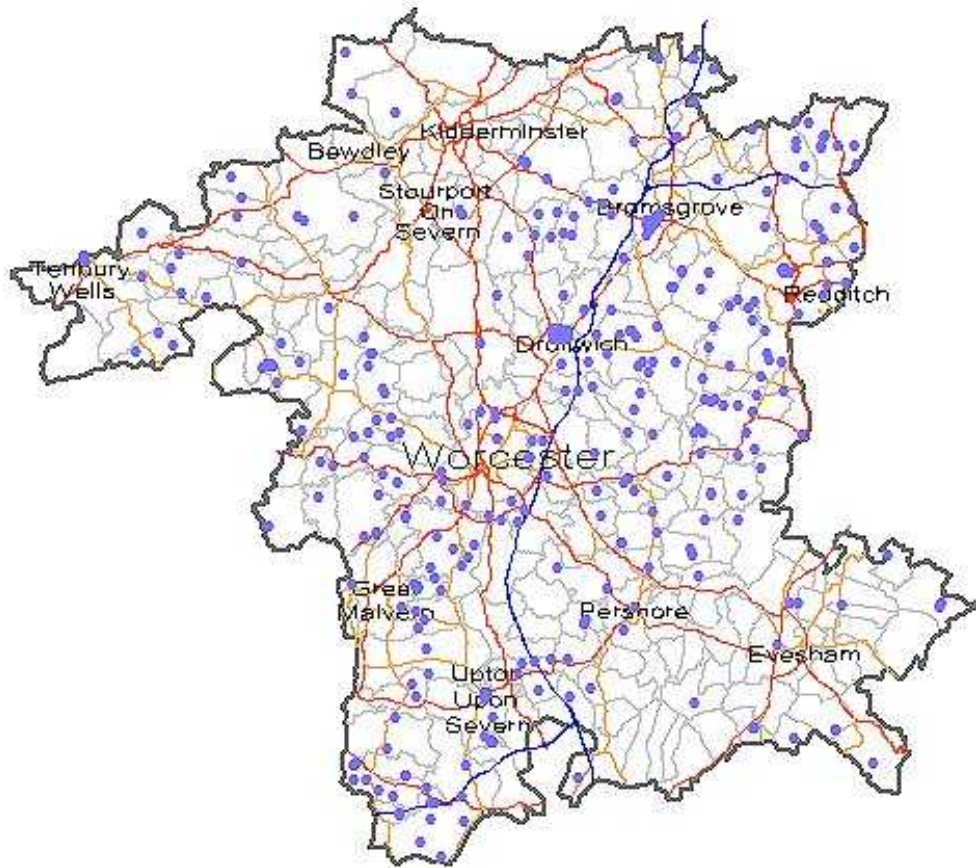


Moated Sites in Worcestershire an Educational Presentation



Worcestershire has many moated sites in all sorts of shapes and sizes.

The blue spots show where all the moats are in Worcestershire – what a lot there are!



Here is an aerial photograph showing where a moat used to be. All you can see now are the ditches

About moated sites

The first moats were made by the Normans in the 11th century but they carried on being built right through medieval times until the 16th century. They were often improved over the years to make them look grander by building attractive gatehouses at the entrance to the site.

Some moats were big enough for a castle, some had just enough space for a small farmhouse and a few other buildings. Moats were most popular in the years 1250 to 1350 when lots of them were built in Worcestershire.

The ditches of the moat were usually between 3m to 6m wide and about 2m deep and were usually full of water. They surrounded a piece of land, which had a house, garden and other buildings on it. This island would have been reached by a causeway (a raised track crossing the moat) or a bridge. The moat helped to protect the site from attackers but it was also to show off how important and wealthy the people were who lived there, because only a rich person could afford to build a moat.

A typical Worcestershire moated site



Imaginative illustration of a typical Worcestershire moated site by Deborah Overton, October 2006

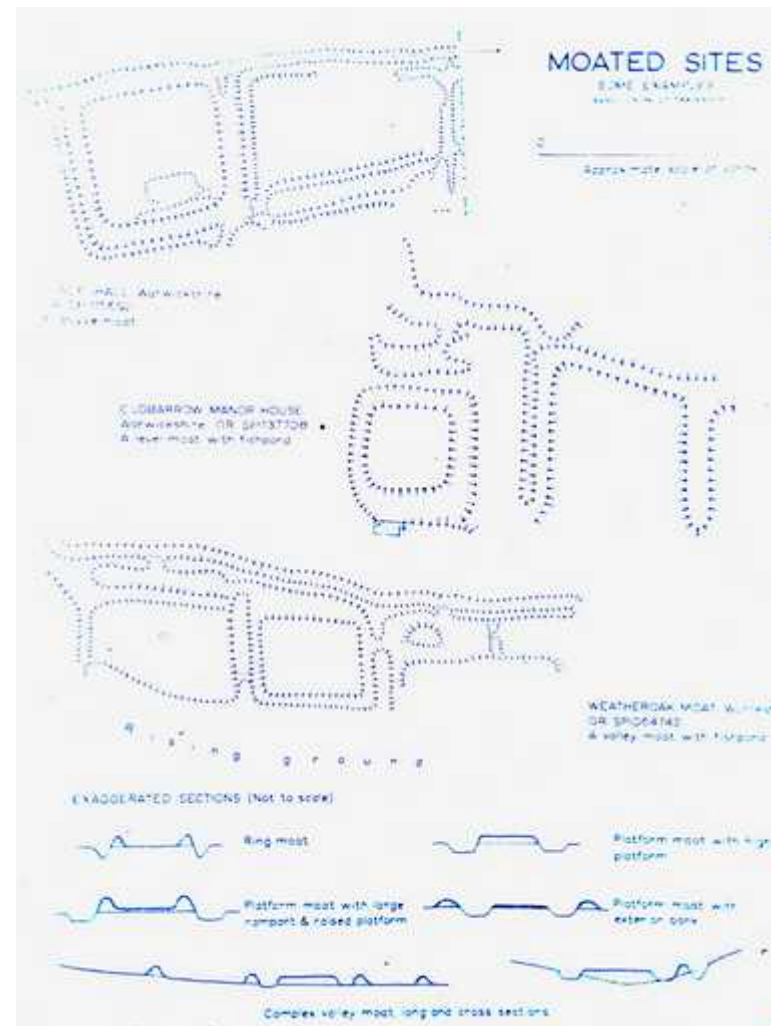
Moated sites are pieces of land surrounded by a big ditch, usually filled with water.



This photograph shows the moat ditch at Bowercourt, Rock.

Moated sites come in all shapes and sizes but mostly they are rectangular or square.

Here are several plans showing some different shaped moats, which have been found in Worcestershire



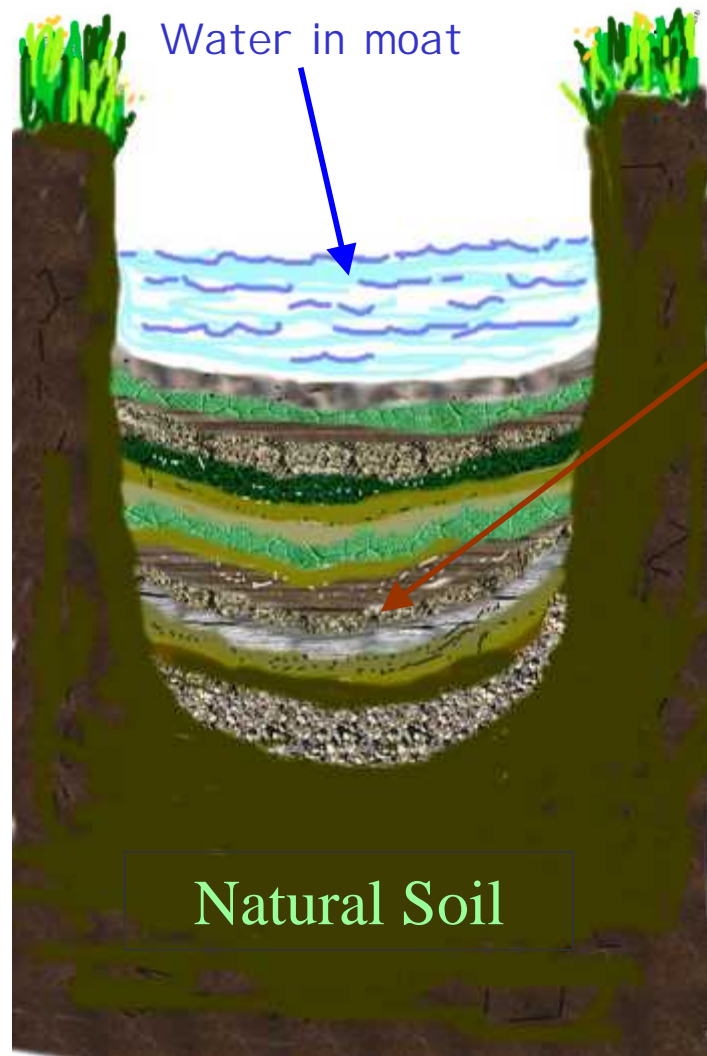
Moats were also useful for washing away all the rubbish from the house and farm buildings. They were often used for keeping fish and sometimes water ran out into bigger fishponds.



These fishponds, at Grimley, have recently been restored. They once belonged to the Prior of Worcester.

The Record Office has documents which mention how much they cost to build and what sort of fish were kept in the ponds.

What can archaeologists find out about moated sites?



The layers are made up of lots of mud, called silt, and the remains of plants, leaves and dead fish, birds and animals (such as rats), snails and insects which have lived or fallen into the moat over hundreds and hundreds of years.

This drawing shows all the different stuff that has fallen into the water to make up the different layers.

How do we know what moats were used for?

Archaeologists can excavate a site to find out how deep and how wide the moat ditch was.



Mud glorious mud!



Environmental Archaeologists can find out what has been in the moat by pushing long hollow tubes, called augers, into the mud that fills up the moat and pulling them out again.

This picture shows four of the auger tubes with their different coloured layers of mud.

Environmental Archaeologists then search through all the layers of mud to find the plants, pollen, bones, snails and insects which are stuck in it.



Looking for pollen in the soil samples using a special scientific machine



Tree pollen



Sorting very small bones, remains of plants and seeds under the microscope



Here are some tiny fish bones magnified so you can see them more easily.

Archaeologists can tell which types of fish these bones once belonged to.



Below are some of the types of fish that were kept in moats and fishponds in medieval times



Bream



Roach



Perch



Tench

How were the fish caught?



A man catching an eel with a special spiked rake.

They were very fond of eels in medieval times!

Nets were used to catch fish and also special traps made of woven branches from willow and hazel trees.

The picture below shows a bottle trap which was used for catching eels. It could have been used in a moat or a fishpond.



What did the buildings on the island inside the moat look like?

The buildings were usually made out of wooden posts with wattle and daub panels in between. These panels were made from thin branches and clay mixed with straw.

The roof could have been thatched with straw or covered with flat clay tiles.

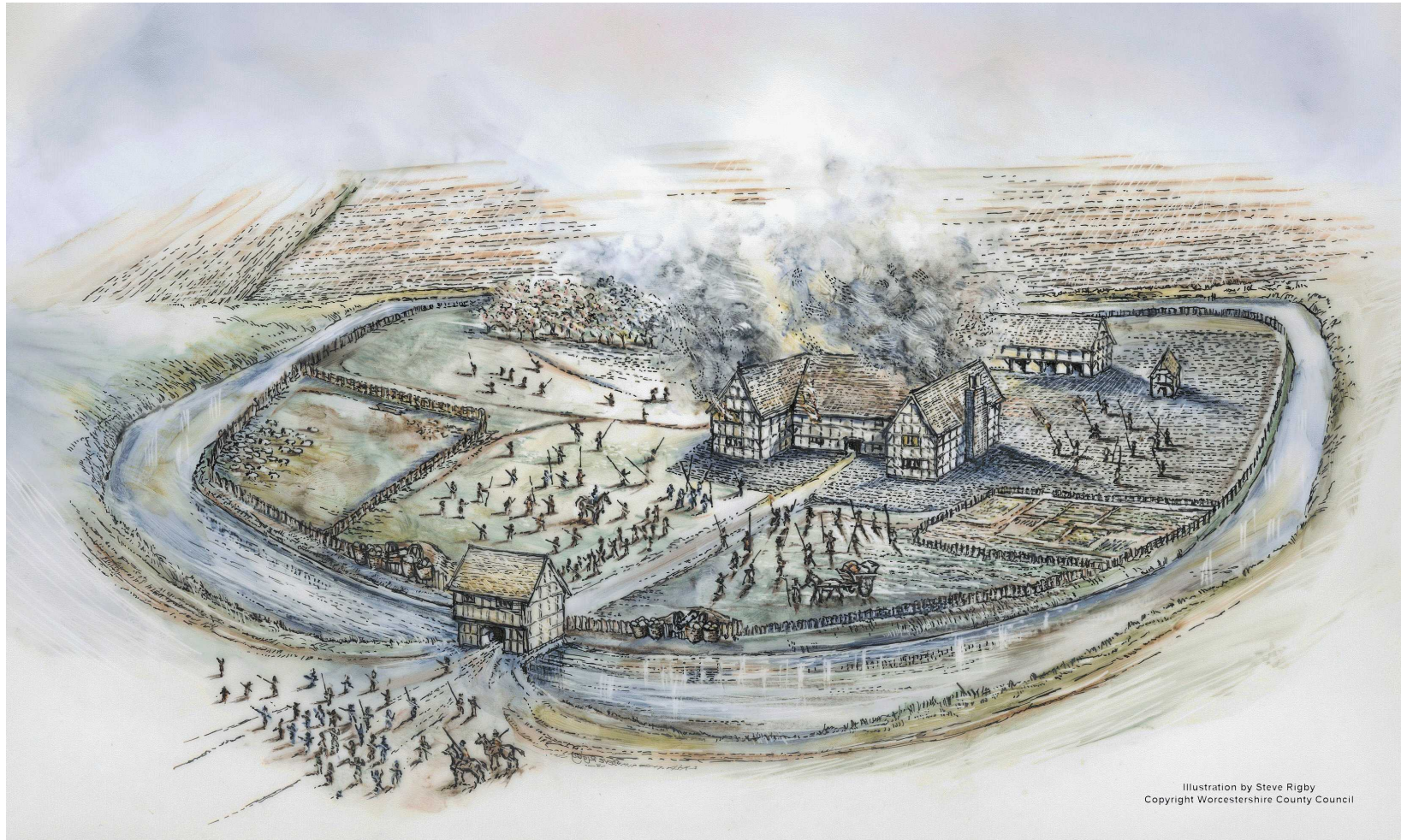


Notice the wattle (woven sticks) showing through the daub (clay mixed with straw).



A timber-framed house would have looked similar to this one. The small photo shows a building which is being repaired.

A moated site near Birmingham which is being attacked by soldiers during the Civil War.



Artist impression of a moated site near Birmingham by Steve Rigby

About Moon's Moat, Redditch

Moon's Moat would have been a special site in medieval times. In about 1300AD the lord of the manor or another important person would have built and lived in the house on the island surrounded by a garden. Archaeologists found lots of broken bits of pottery from cooking pots and a silver Edward II penny, which shows that the site was in use in the 14th century.

At that time the moat was between 7 to 8 metres wide and about 1.5 metres deep. There was a fine stone wall around the inside of the moat to protect the house and garden and there would have been a bridge across the moat to get to the house.

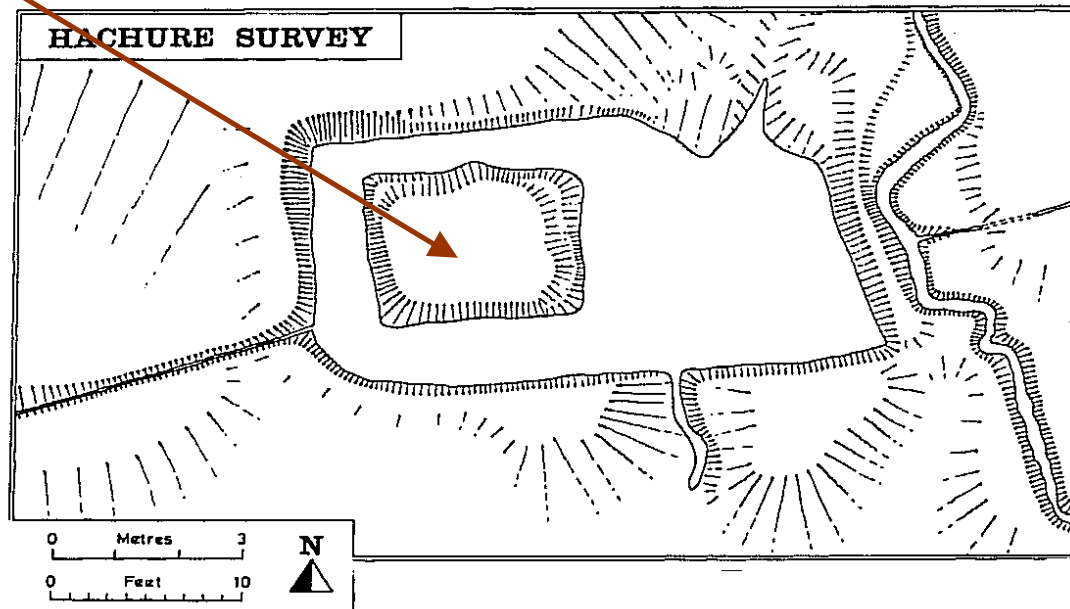
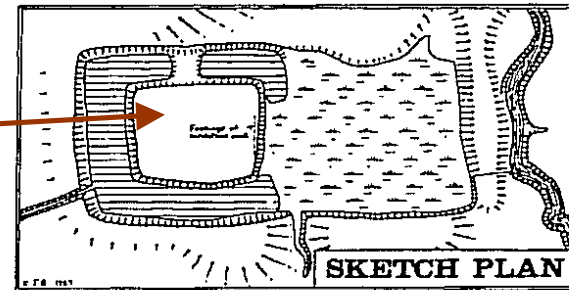
In the 16th century the house and moat were rebuilt and a new bridge was made. The site seems to have been abandoned by the 17th century. By the 19th century the house had fallen or been taken down and the wood from the buildings and much of the stone from the wall was removed to be re-used somewhere else. The site was grazed by farm animals and then finally left to become overgrown with plants and trees.

This is a plan of Moon's Moat in Redditch. This plan was drawn up by an archaeologist. The little dashes and lines are called **hachures**, and they show the shape of the moat's ditches and banks.

The bit in the middle is the island where the house would have been.

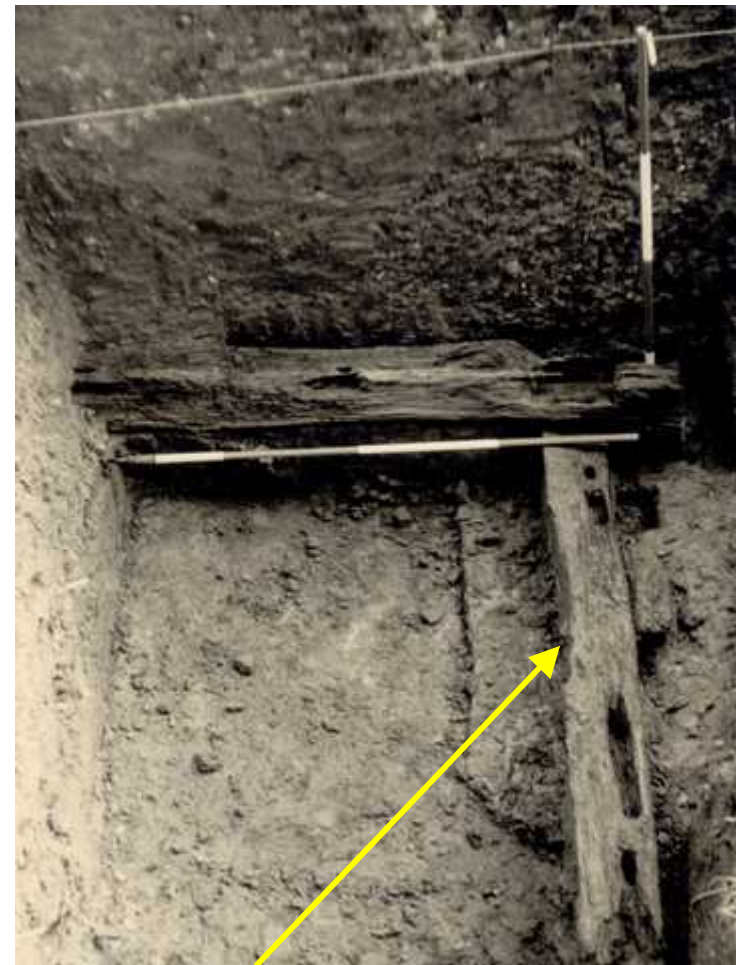
The water of the moat surrounds the island and drains out into a stream.

MOON'S MOAT Beoley, Worcs.



Plans of Moon's Moat sketched by C J Bond

Moon's Moat was excavated in the 1969-1970. Here are some black and white photographs of the dig. Look at the well-cut blocks of stone - these would have been expensive.



Timber with slots for upright planks of wood - possibly part of a building.

This photograph shows an area of stones laid on the thin edge, to form paths and yards outside the walls of the buildings.

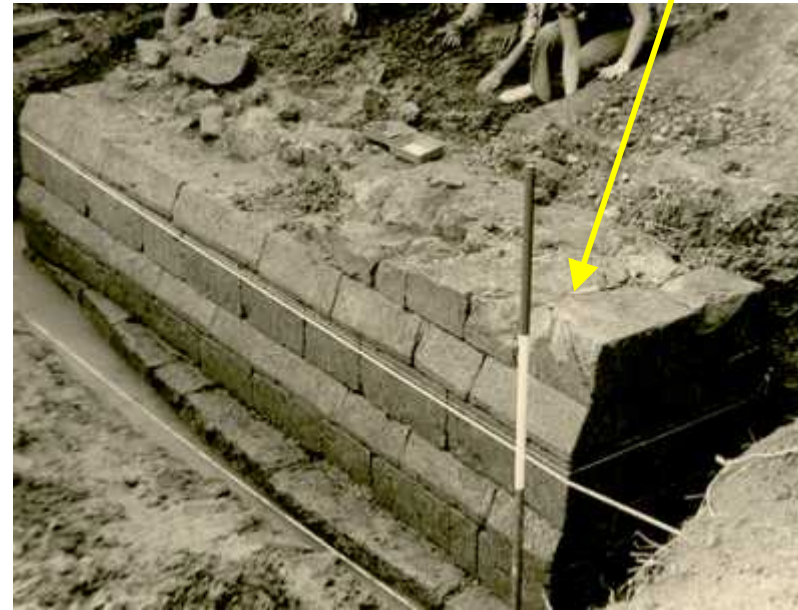


A stone wall was built around the edge of the moat to protect the island and the house. This wall would have made it look very important.



The wall would have looked like this one.

The bridge pier is made of stone because it had to be strong.



The moat would have been crossed by a bridge. This stone bit is called the pier and the wooden part of the bridge would have rested on this. Sometimes the bridge could be raised up to stop people crossing over.

Moon's Moat as it is now in the 21st Century



An attractive natural habitat for wild animals, insects,
amphibians and plants

But what a shame it is also used for
dumping rubbish!



Moon's Moat is a special site



MOONS MOAT

The site of a medieval moated homestead dating from the 14th century. Rebuilding took place in the 16th century and the moat was recut to its present form. The site was finally abandoned in the 17th century.

A SCHEDULED
ANCIENT MONUMENT

Moon's Moat

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Because Moon's Moat is still is a very special site it has been given special protection as a

Scheduled Ancient Monument.

No-one is allowed to do any damage to it now and this means the site will be kept safe for future generations to enjoy.



This Presentation was funded
through the
Moon's Moat Conservation Group by
Redditch Borough Council

THE END

Produced by Worcestershire Historic Environment and
Archaeology Service.

