

# Fishbourne

*John Manley and David Rudkin*

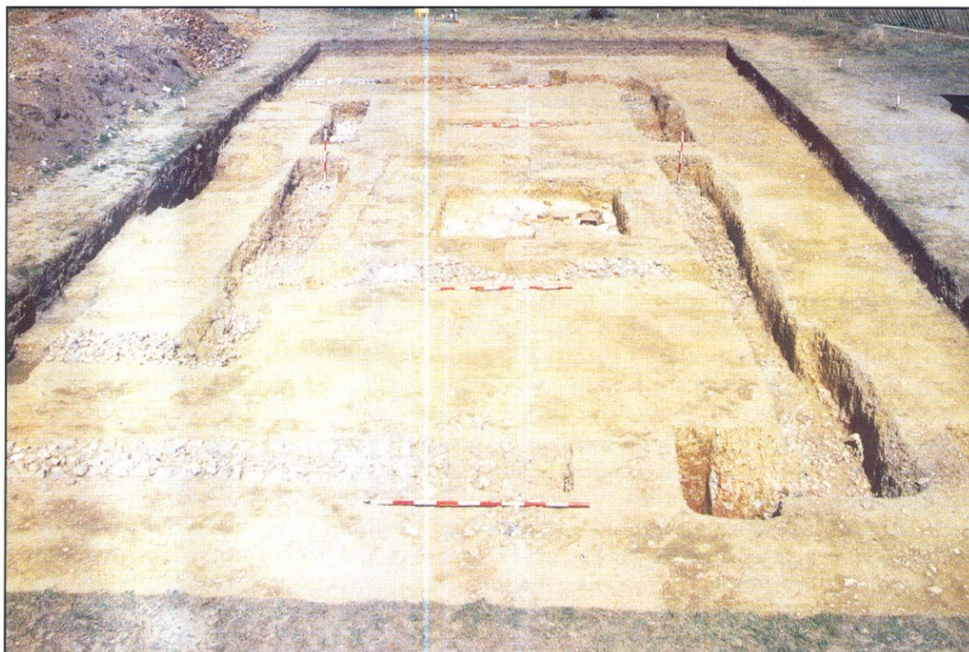
A possible Roman fort - or rather what may or may not be the headquarters building of a Roman fort - has been discovered at Fishbourne. The Roman Palace at Fishbourne was excavated by Barry Cunliffe between 1961 and 1969 and under it he discovered the remains of extensive pre-palace buildings, all swept away when the Palace was built around AD 75. Subsequently, in 1983 Alec Down, who did so much for the archaeology of Chichester, put down some trenches in the field to the east of the Palace, over the other side of a small stream, and located some masonry foundations. These appear to have been demolished around AD 75, presumably to make way for the gardens that we would like to think lay in front of the palace, flanking the approach road from Chichester.

When John Manley was appointed Chief Executive of the Sussex Archaeological Society in 1993, he looked around for a suitable site for the Society to carry out some research excavations. Since the Society owns Fishbourne Palace, this field to the east was



obviously a suitable candidate. So in 1995-6 he (and David Rudkin the Director of the Palace) have been following up Alec Down's excavations and the Society has made some very interesting, if enigmatic discoveries.

Above. Is this the strongroom of a Headquarters Building? This pit, lined with slabs, was found in the middle of the central room, but a sherd of pottery found between the flagstones suggests it may be later.



Left. The eastern wing of the courtyard building showing the stone lined pit in the centre of the central room. If it is indeed a later feature its position is a strange coincidence.