The ‘Castle’ Moated Site

In the woodland in front of you lies a moated site known as ‘The Castle’. This monument consists of a roughly rectangular island measuring 72 m north-south by 48 m east-west with an unusual internal earthwork bank, some 1.5-2 m high, on all four sides. An entrance lies on the southern side. It is surrounded by a now-dry moat, around 10 m wide and 2 m deep, which would have originally been fed by the stream just to the west (Ten Acre Gill).

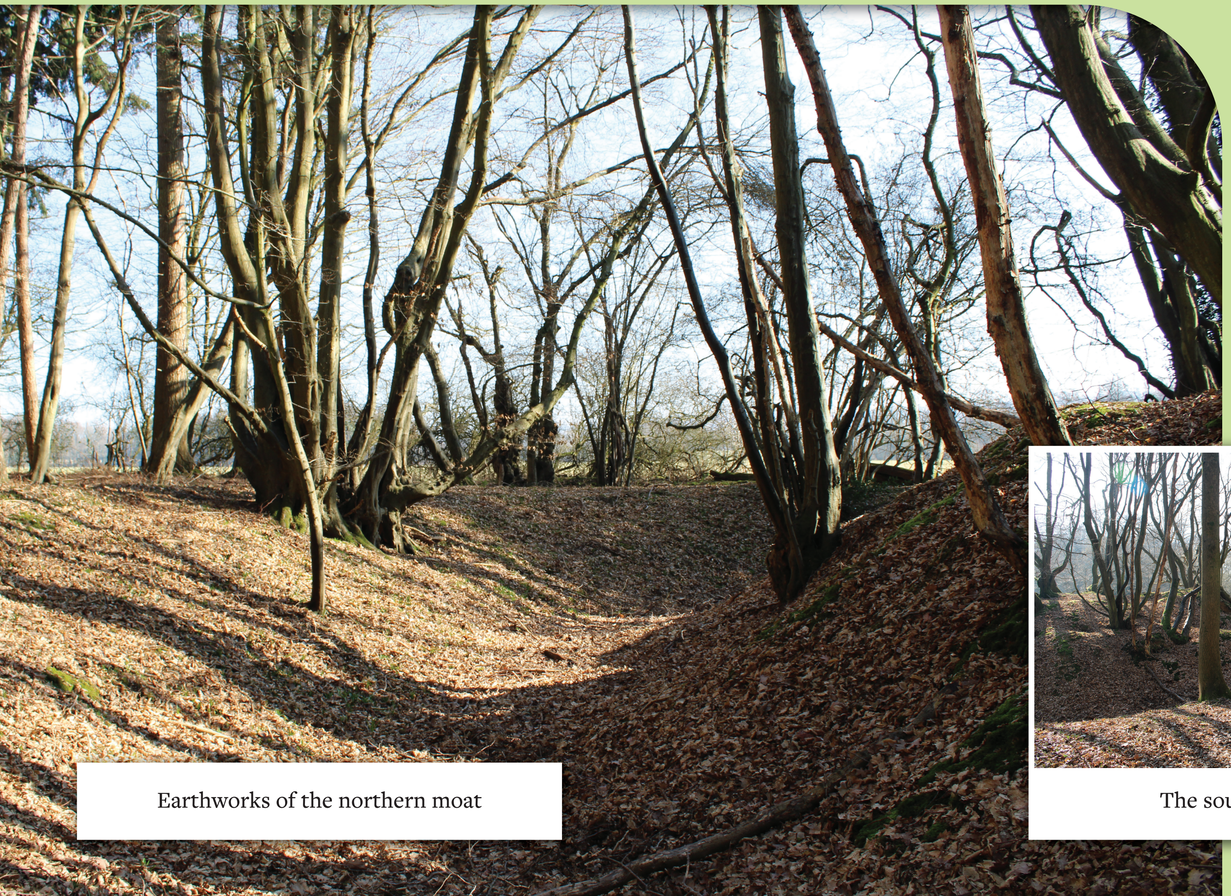
Moated sites are medieval, with most built between 1250 and 1350 AD. They were domestic rather than defensive sites, enabling a house or sometimes larger complexes such as a monastery, to be constructed on drier ground. The size and status of these sites varies, with some the location of a small house, hunting lodge or farmstead and some containing large manor houses and other buildings belonging to wealthy, aristocratic families.

Very little is currently known about ‘The Castle’; while it is unlikely to be the location of a castle, we don’t know what buildings it contained. However, a small farmstead or hunting lodge is perhaps the most likely. In the future archaeological investigations may help us learn more about the history of the site and the medieval landscape.

During the medieval period it is probable that the surrounding area was largely wooded with some small-scale clearance undertaken for agricultural fields (assarting). The woodland to the north and south is recognised as Ancient Woodland due to its age (over 400 years old) and helps us understand something of that earlier landscape. There are several other moated sites in the Horsham area as well as the motte and bailey castle at Chennells Brook to the south which can be visited.

The monument lies on private land and is not publicly accessible. As a scheduled monument it is nationally important and protected under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* from damage or disturbance.





Earthworks of the northern moat



The southern entrance

View towards the moated site (photograph taken before the housing was built)

The inside of the moated site looking towards the west (where the housing is today)