

**An appraisal of the portable finds from
Weoley Castle, Birmingham**



Scan 203

by Quita Mould
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An Archaeological Overview of Weoley Castle, Birmingham

Summary

Weoley Castle is a fortified, medieval manor-house situated four miles to the southwest of Birmingham city centre in the historic county of Worcestershire (National Grid Reference SP 02158275). The site entered into the ownership of Birmingham City Council in c.1930 and thereafter two campaigns of archaeological excavation were undertaken; between 1932 and 1940 and 1955 and 1962. More recently the site has been subject to an ambitious initiative, “*The Weoley Castle Development Project*”, joint funded by Birmingham City Council, The National Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage. The aims of the project were to consolidate the surviving masonry, to increase community understanding of and involvement with the monument and to re-assess the finds collection and surviving archaeological archive. The following reports form the third strand of the initiative, “*An Archaeological Overview of Weoley Castle, Birmingham*”. The project was undertaken by Barbican Research Associates, managed by Stephanie Rátkai and monitored by Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery and was submitted in final form in August 2011, consisting of a series of reports on the archaeological archive, the ceramic finds and the small (portable) finds etc. The reports were presented in PDF format and will be available on-line, hosted by BRA (see www.barbicanra.co.uk for links). Hard and digital copies of the reports will be held by BMAG at selected museum properties. It is intended that the reports will form the basis for a synthesised monograph publication intended to bring knowledge of this important monument and the results of its past excavations to a wider audience.



Contents

An Archaeological Overview of Weoley Castle, Birmingham consists of the following reports; the high-lighted titles indicate which section the reader is currently examining.

Archaeological Archive

Weoley Castle – an appraisal of the surviving Archaeological Archive by Stephen J. Linnane

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 2.0 Pre-war Excavations

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.1 The Trenches

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.2 The Moat

Weoley Castle - the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.3 The Western Interior

Weoley Castle – the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.4 Periods I-III

Weoley Castle - the reduced archive, 3.0 Post-war Excavations, 3.4.7 The Wooden Kitchen

Ceramics

Weoley Castle: A Reappraisal of and Report on the Pottery by Stephanie Rátkai

Appendix 1: Early Cooking Pot Fabrics

Appendix 2: Deritend Ware

Appendix 3: Iron-Poor Wares

Appendix 4: Iron-Poor Fabrics: Whiteware

Appendix 5: Sandy Micaceous and Micaceous wares

Appendix 6: Late Medieval Wares

Appendix 7: Midlands Purple Ware and Later Fabrics

Appendix 8: Cistercian Ware

Appendix 9: Regional Imports

Appendix 10: Continental Imports

Small Finds

An appraisal of the portable finds from Weoley Castle, Birmingham by Quita Mould

Weoley Castle: small finds catalogue by Quita Mould

Structural Finds

Weoley Castle: The Ceramic Building Material by Stephanie Rátkai

Weoley Castle: The loose architectural stones, an assessment by Dr. Richard K. Morris

Weoley Castle: The decorated window glass by Stephen J. Linnane

Weoley Castle: The Medieval Floor Tiles by Stephen J. Linnane

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Methodology

This document has been written following the cataloguing of the portable finds from Weoley Castle in the possession of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The cataloguing was undertaken over five days at the museum stores at Nechells over the winter of 2010 and spring of 2011. The data collected has been correlated with the surviving contextual information. The material is considered by functional category to provide an insight into the activities being undertaken at Weoley Castle during its history. This is accompanied by a basic inventory of all the objects examined. While the general condition of the material has been commented on, consideration of the method of storage of the material was not part of the brief. Some recommendations for further work on selected objects are proposed where appropriate.

Condition of the finds

The metals

The majority of the metalwork, namely the iron, copper alloy and pewter, has been conserved in the past and is in very good condition. As part of the conservation process the iron has had the corrosion products and encrustation removed and appears to have been stripped back to the 'core' so that while some detail has been lost the essential form of the object remains, and remains in good condition, only a small number of items have begun to spall. It is unlikely that, at this stage, X-radiography would reveal any additional features. A small amount of ironwork located in cupboard A346 (WCU15) tray 'iron IV' has not been conserved, it comprises principally of structural ironwork with a possible broken bit link or figure of eight chain link (2000A2.19.76). An additional bag of ironwork (WC1963 2000.A2.136a and b), found amongst bags of pottery, has not been conserved and appears to contain fragments of a broken scythe blade and a possible hearth bottom. These would benefit from X-radiography as not only would it aid identification but it would provide a permanent record of the items should they deteriorate further in storage. A very small quantity of the copper alloy including a broken buckle frame (2000A2.19.113) and an aiglet (lace tag) (2000A2.19.114) have not been treated. The 'structural lead', that is fragments of lead sheet and lead seatings to hold iron masonry cramps and iron window bars, does not appear to have been treated in any way. The metal is in poor condition and likely to deteriorate further so presenting a health and safety problem regarding its safe storage and examination. Examination by a conservator is highly recommended with a view to stabilising this material.

The organic materials

The leather has been conserved in the past and it appears that a Bavon based treatment has been employed. The leather has survived well and is sufficiently robust to be examined and stored. It is, however, brittle and some is 'sticky', the excess Bavon having 'leached' out of the leather with the result that some of the leather pieces are now stuck inside their plastic storage bags. The wooden artefacts were not part of this study, however, a small number of the items were seen by the author. They are black and appear to also have been conserved using Bavon or a similar wax-like treatment. They have survived well.

Provenance

The majority of the finds from Weoley Castle have a museum accession number and/or a unique identifying number beginning with the suffix WC, but a small number (22) have no numbering. Regrettably, the context of the majority of the portable finds is now unknown. Only a small proportion of finds (11%) are physically accompanied by any contextual information either written on the object itself or by way of a label. Sadly no concordance exists between either the unique identifying number (WC number) or the museum accession number and the find context. Surviving paperwork shows that individual 'Small Find' numbers were given to the objects at the time of excavation in the time honoured procedure but few of the finds have the Small Find number allocated at the time of excavation recorded either on any surviving label or accompanying documentation. A single finds register, that for the 1956 excavation, has survived but only one find known to be from the 1956 excavation now has its small find number present allowing it to be related back to the register.

Knowing the year of excavation would be useful when trying to establish the precise location of recovery. A similar proportion, 11% (but a different 11%) of the portable finds on the museum accession list gives the year of excavation of the object, all are from the 1960-61 excavations. Documentation allows a further seventeen objects with WC numbers to be tied to the 1957 excavations (including two coins WC384 and WC389) and another six to be tied to the 1962 excavations. A transcription of an excavation summary from a 'pink sheet' also appears to relate to 1957 excavations of the East Courtyard and includes reference to six objects including the coin WC384 and an iron horse bit WC344 but the location of these two items differs between the two documents (Area B and Area D respectively). The context of recovery of the finds associated with the 'Wooden Building' revealed during the second campaign of excavations appears in the text published by Oswald (Oswald 1964) and where the objects can be related to their illustrations their contexts can be restored. The results of metallurgical analysis carried out on twenty-one metal objects from the site was published by Brownsword, Pitt and Symons (1989) included details on the context of nine of the objects, but no contextual details were known regarding the rest at that time. So that for the unpublished material, the majority of the objects, what is known of the circumstances of their recovery is now severely limited. Marrying details of the surviving documentation and published works has allowed 24% of the portable finds from Weoley Castle to be given some sort of context.

It would seem that in storage only the location of the find, Weoley Castle, has been considered of importance. Very few of the finds are accompanied by a label detailing anything other than an accession number or the 'WC' Weoley Castle number. This would be forgivable, if unadvisable, if a concordance of these numbers and the context of the finds were readily available. The context of the finds, the most important piece of information, had not been considered of any importance and had been divorced from the objects at an early stage. Thus the majority of the finds have been rendered unstratified. While the context details of the objects recovered during the first campaign of excavations have been lost to enemy action that from the second campaign has been lost to 'friendly fire' or what is now popularly termed collateral damage.

That being said the portable finds from Weoley Castle represents a large, well preserved group of material reflecting a wide range of activities undertaken at the site. It compares favourably with assemblages from elsewhere in the country and is of regional and potentially national interest. We can safely say that the majority of the finds had been disposed of in the moat and that part of the remainder came from the vicinity of a wooden building and service corridor connecting to a stone hall, all believed, when excavated, to date to the early 13th century. The details of the stratigraphy of the moat fills that survive suggest that the moat did not undergo regular clearing which no doubt accounts for the quantity of material recovered from it. The moat remained wet into the beginning of the last century and though now dry still becomes waterlogged after periods of heavy rain. The waterlogged burial environment of the majority of the metalwork and organic finds together with the subsequent conservation work that was undertaken has resulted in the quantity and the notable condition of the objects in the collection today.

Previous work undertaken on the portable finds

The finds assemblage associated with the wooden building was reported on by Adrian Oswald (1964) and provides much information that would otherwise be lost to us now. The wooden building was considered to be the kitchen for the stone building in the NE part of the castle, though it went through a change of use for a time during its history.

David Symons arranged for twenty-one of the metal finds from Weoley Castle considered most significant to have their metallurgical composition analysed and this work was published in (Brownsword, Pitt and Symons 1989, 34-43). This provides contextual information for nearly half of the items analysed and aspects of style, date and location of manufacture are discussed. The pewter plates and saucers had been included in a technical study of 13th -16th century pewter flatwares (Brownsword and Pitt 1984) and also appeared, along with the cruet, in a catalogue accompanying an exhibition of British pewterware held in 1969 at Reading Museum and Art Gallery (Brownsword, Pitt and Symons 1989, 43 note 5).

The cruet was subject to lengthy correspondence concerning the subjects depicted on the cast relief decorated panels and its likely date and place of manufacture. This was summarized in the interim report on the Weoley Castle excavations 1955-60 (Oswald 1962) and the correspondence can be seen in the paper archive.

Once again it is clear that the speedy publication of the results of any excavation, even if not the 'last word' on either the site stratigraphy or the finds, is to the advantage of all, as delaying publication, even for the best of reasons, results in the significant loss of information and a disproportionate amount of work is required to retrieve it, if indeed it is possible to do so. Brownsword, Pitt and Symons are to be commended for bringing a significant part of the finds assemblage from Weoley Castle to the attention of the wider public some twenty years after the last excavations on the site had finished.

The range of portable finds recovered from Weoley Castle

286 objects were examined for this project a further 19 are recorded in museum documentation or publications and are included in the discussion presented here though they were not available for examination for this study. The portable finds are considered by functional category in order to show the range of activities that were undertaken on the site during its occupation.

Weapons and artillery

Arrowheads

Eleven **arrowheads** were found. Two hunting arrowheads with large barbs of are of Type H3 of Jessop's classification (Jessop 1996, 192-205) and date to the mid 13th century while a further three, also barbed, are of a type that may have been used for both hunting and warfare (Jessop type MP8) and of the same date. Four were armour -piercing military arrowheads of slender 'bodkin' type (Jessop types M7 or M8). A further two appear to be compact military arrowheads with barbs of Jessop's type M4 dating to the 14th century.

Two of the arrowheads were recovered from the excavations of the wooden building. One a hunting arrowhead of Type H3 from Floor 6, the other an armour-piercing type (Jessop M7) came from outside levels corresponding to floors 4, 5 and 6, both of which Oswald attributed to c. 1230-1270 (Oswald 1964 fig 51, nos. 18 and 17 respectively). A third arrowhead of MP8 and also of mid 13th century date came from PB 1/2. Arrowheads are also recorded as coming from the western courtyard in Area D the granary in period VI.

Material	Name	WC No	Acc No	location	Type
Iron	Arrowhead	WC353	2000A2.19.30		H3
Iron	Arrowhead	WC354	2000A2.19.32		MP8
Iron	Arrowhead	WC355	2000A2.19.33		M4
Iron	Arrowhead	WC356	2000A2.19.34		M4?
Iron	Arrowhead	WC357	2000A2.19.31		MP8
Iron	Arrowhead	WC446	2000A2.19.22		M7/M8
Iron	Arrowhead	WC447	2000A2.19.21		M7/M8
Iron	Arrowhead	WC448	2000A2.19.20		M7
Iron	Arrowhead	WC1120	2000A2.16.68	Wooden blg outside levels Floors 4,5,6	M7
Iron	Arrowhead	WC1121	2000A2.16.62	Wooden blg Floor 6	H3
Iron	Arrowhead		2000A2.19.64	PB 1/2	MP8

Table 1: Weoley Castle arrowheads

Artillery and fire arms

A **cannonball** of chalk and another of sandstone of similar diameter (64-65mm) but differing in weight (chalk 261g, sandstone 373g) were found. The accompanying label says that a third iron example was recovered but this has not been seen to date. A single pistol shot (2000.A2.19.127) of lead was recovered from the site.

Horse equipment

Riding equipment was well represented at Weoley Castle and the quality of some of the equipment indicates it was owned by individuals of high status. Two iron **curb-bits** and an iron **snaffle bit** all three of elaborate and, no doubt, costly design were recovered, along with a broken iron link possibly from a horse bit of simpler design. One curb bit (WC346 2000A2.19.18) has a 'U'-shaped mouthpiece of Ward-Perkins type VI and long angled-armed cheek-pieces originally with several loops for the attachment of a quantity of chains as well as reins. It is suggested that the high 'port' (U-shaped section) of the mouthpiece is a feature of early curb bits (Clark 1995, 44-5). The mouthpiece of the other (WC344 2000A2.19.38) is

a variant of a type IV and can be paralleled on a snaffle bit from London dating to 1270-1350 (Clark 1995, 47-8 and fig 31). Its cheek-pieces have a ring at the top and a small pierced ring in the stem and a large terminal ring below, again suggesting the use of double reins. The snaffle bit (WC345 2000A2.19.27) has large, outward-curving cheek-pieces of type E, the double-linked mouthpiece of type II has a series of three small rotating cylinders or rollers on each link (or cannon). These bits were used to exert the extreme control over the mounts that would be required by knights on the battlefield or in tournament.

A horse bit of fifteenth century date is recorded in Oswald's first interim report as being found during the 1957 excavations in the Western Courtyard Area D the granary, found in a massive building with a tiled roof along with fifteenth century pottery and a very worn coin of Richard II. The horse bit would appear to be the curb bit WC344. Other documentation, a transcript of an excavation summary on pink paper, believed to refer to the 1957 excavations states that bit WC344 came from Area B.

A worn circular **iron ring or link** (WC1108 2006.0140.6) found from the wooden building levels allocated to either period I or II and dated c. 1200-1230 was said by Oswald to have traces of silvering on the exterior (Oswald 1964, 130 and fig. 51 no 9). This may well have been tinning suggesting it to be a link from a horse bit or other piece of harness or a simple ring handle from an item of furniture.

Other items of harness include three **iron harness buckles** (WC332 2000A2.19.24, WC333 2000A2.19.37, WC343 2000A2.19.16) and a large **gilded copper alloy harness mount** (WC351 2000A2.19.90) decorated with an incised trefoil pattern on the domed head. The mount being gilded is also a costly item. One iron buckle has a D-shaped frame (WC363 2000.A2.19.16). The other two have trapezoidal frames (WC333 2000A2.19.37, WC322 2000A2.19.24), the later has a roller, characteristic of harness buckles. The buckles are of a size to take straps 44mm wide, 25mm wide and 18mm wide respectively.

Rumbler bells, also known as 'pellet' or crotal bells, were hung from the harness of horses pulling carts to warn other travelers of oncoming traffic and on the collars of hunting dogs and other pets. A highly decorative cast copper alloy example (2000A2.19.103) is decorated with a 'fish scale' motif and still has remains of the iron pea within. Its weight might suggest it was worn on harness. Another, smaller, example is of cheaper manufacture of copper alloy sheet. Small rumbler bells were once worn on clothing not only by jesters and tumblers but in the late 14th and early 15th century bells became fashionable dress accessories dangling from girdles, collars or wide sashes (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 336-7).

Six **spurs** were found at Weoley Castle, four of iron and a two of copper alloy. Two of the iron spurs are badly broken (WC350 2000.A2.19.25, WC454 2000.A2.19.43) with few diagnostic features remaining but one (2000A2.19.43 WC454) found in the Moat near the SE buttress has a long neck 70mm in length surviving suggesting a 15th century date. Two other iron spurs have gently curved arms lacking their terminals but their rowel boxes survive, one (WC349 2000A2.19.40) on a short neck, the other (2000A2.19.29 WC477) having no neck at all. The latter (2000A2.19.29 WC477) has traces of a white metal plating surviving likely to be of tin. Iron spurs were commonly tinned to prevent rusting and give the appearance of

silver and it is likely that all the iron spurs had been similarly plated. It is difficult to date incomplete spurs with accuracy but rowel spurs had all but replaced prick spurs by the second quarter of the fourteenth century (Ellis in Clark 1995, 129).

The two beautifully preserved copper alloy rowel spurs appear to be a pair (WC347 2000.A2.19.88, WC348 1950A41). The possibility of their representing a pair was not commented on when they were subjected to analysis previously. The spurs were found to be made of almost pure copper whilst thirty other examples subject to analysis by Lancaster Polytechnic (Coventry) were of latten (a copper alloy). No trace of gilding was detected though it was both expected and looked for. At the time of analysis the spurs were considered to be of early 15th century date (Brownsword et al 1989, 38 and fig 3 WC348 here shown upside down). The strongly curved arms with ‘figure-of-eight’ terminals, crest, large rowel box and 24 pointed star rowel all suggest a late 14th century date c. 1340-1390 (Ellis in Clark 1995, 140). One (WC348 1950A41) has a double-hooked fitting present to attach a spur leather. They were found in pre-war excavations but no other details of their contexts remain.

Material	Name	WC No	Acc No	Location
Copper alloy	Spur, rowel	WC347	2000A2.19.88	
Copper alloy	Spur, rowel	WC348	1950A41	
Iron	Spur, rowel	WC349	2000A2.19.40	
Iron	Spur	WC350	2000A2.19.25	
Iron	Spur	WC454	2000A2.19.43	Moat SE buttress
Iron	Spur, rowel	WC477	2000A2.19.39	

Table 2: Weoley Castle spurs

A single **spur buckle** of copper alloy (WC340 2000A2.19.91) was found being differentiated from other buckles for harness or clothing by its integral buckle plate ending in a small hooked terminal to attach a spur leather. The buckle is decorated with a roundel with a cruciform design creating four cells that are likely to have contained enamel originally.

Horseshoes

The remains of nine iron **horseshoes** were recovered. Four with a wavy outer edge created by the countersinking around the rectangular nail holes are of Clark’s type 2B (Clark 1995, 86-7). Type 2 horseshoes are dated to the mid 11th through to the 13th century (Clark 1995, 95-6), the type 2B examples with rectangular nail holes first appearing in the second half of the 12th century and becoming increasingly common thereafter. Two of these horseshoes were found during the excavations of the wooden building, one on Floor 3, the other from outside levels corresponding to floors 4, 5 and 6 (Oswald 1964 fig 51 no 14 and 13 respectively) and dated by Oswald c. 1230-1270. The other broken horseshoes are of late medieval type (Type 4) and likely to date to the 14th-15th century (Clark 1995, 96-7). One of these late medieval horseshoes was recovered from 3 Ext PB1 WC P8 2/3

The horse equipment would certainly warrant examination by specialists to gain the maximum information. John Clark (ex curator at the Museum of London) I am sure would

be most interested to see the horse bits and Blanche Ellis the spurs and both would be able to offer more specific dating.

Tools

A relatively large collection of craft tools have been recovered from Weoley Castle resulting from the construction and maintenance of the fabric of the buildings and the range of activities being undertaken in the vicinity. The context from which they came is known in some cases. A group of tools were recovered during the 1957 excavations from the north east corner of the moat. They include an axe head (WC364 2000A2.147), two chisels (WC432 2000A2.19.56 and WC433 2000A2.19.57) and a punch (WC375 2000A2.112). Could it be that these tools were dropped into the moat by builders in the course of their work and could not be retrieved? A hammer head (WC361A 2000A2.106.1) with remains of the wooden handle remaining within the eye was found along with a mason's pick or heavy punch (WC361B) also during the 1957 excavations in the Tower at portcullis level. The head of a pick axe (WC1104 2000A2.16.60) also with remains of its birch wood handle surviving was found on Floor 1 of the wooden building dated by Oswald to c. 1200-1230 (1964, fig 51 no 5).

Tools that were used by blacksmiths or farriers, stone masons, and woodworkers were all represented. Woodworking tools included three **axes**, **drill bits** and **chisels**. Three axes for cutting and splitting timber were recovered. Two axes (WC362 2000A2.115 and WC363 1950A39) were of similar size and length but had flaring blades of differing widths (104mm and 70mm respectively). The third axe (WC364 2000A2.147) had a long, slender neck and a flaring blade (85mm wide). A large drill bit (WC373 2000A2.111) and a similar tool with a broken point (2000A2.19.71) that might be a second example, or possibly a broken auger, were used to make mortise and tenon joints. The two chisels were also designed for differing carpentry jobs, one (WC433) with a long strap-like shouldered blade was intended for heavier work than the other (WC432 2000A2.19.56) with a long round-sectioned stem and a small blade 20mm wide.

A pair of slender **blacksmith's tongs** (WC366 2000A2.105) have long square-sectioned handles and narrow grips just 10mm wide. The blacksmith would be making and repairing weapons and tools while tongs would also be required by the farrier when making horseshoes. A heavy **punch** might have been used by the blacksmith to make holes in metal or may have been used as a pick by the mason when working stone. Two examples were found, one (WC361B 2000A2.106) was found together with a hammer head (WC361A 2000A2.106) with which it may have been hit. A second punch (WC375) was also recovered; both now lack their heads which would give some indication of the force with which they had been hit when in use. A **mason's maul of granite** (WC497 2000A2.120) was also found but was not seen during this review.

The **hammer head** and **pick axe** may be considered more general purpose tools being used by workmen when undertaking a variety of jobs. The cross pane hammer (WC361a 2000A2.106.1) has an oval face at one end and a narrow, rectangular face at the other. A **tanged tool** set into a wooden handle is broken and insufficient remains for its original use to be easily indentified (WC455 2000A2.19.73).

A piece of folded lead sheet pierced for suspension in one corner may be a simple **plumb bob** used by mason or carpenter when straight vertical line was required (WC369).

Material	Name	WC No	Acc No	location
Iron	Axe	WC362	2000A2.115	
Iron	Axe	WC363	1950A39	
Iron	Axe	WC364	2000A2.147	1957 Moat NE corner
Iron	Chisel	WC432	2000A2.19.56	1957 Moat NE corner
Iron	Chisel	WC433	2000A2.19.57	1957 Moat NE corner
Iron	Drill bit	WC373	2000A2.111	
Iron	Drill bit		2000A2.19.71	
Iron	Hammer head	WC361a	2000A2.106.1	1957 Tower portcullis level
Iron	Pick head	WC1104	2000A2.16.60	
Iron	Punch	WC361b	2000A2.106.2	1957 Tower portcullis level
Iron	Punch	WC375	2000A2.112	1957 Moat NE corner
Iron	Tongs	WC366	2000A2.105	

Table 3: Weoley Castle craft tools

Agricultural tools

A large iron **billhook** (WC367 1951A164) has a rectangular sectioned open socket and a thick back ending in a spike. It is a hefty tool used for laying hedges and trimming branches, indeed, if hafted on a long handle it might be known as a ‘slasher’ or slashing hook and was sufficiently robust that it could be called into use as a weapon if necessary. A curving blade with a central socket (WC365 2000A2.107) has a gently curved profile. The shape indicates it might have been used as a peat knife, a **turf cutting implement** or a weeding tool. An **iron tine** (tooth) comes from a **large rake** (WC450 2006.0140.2) originally with a wooden head and handle. Other implements are represented by broken fragments only. A long pointed tine (WC374 2000A2.109) may also be broken from a large **rake or a pitch fork**. Fragments broken from a long, curving blade are likely to come from a **scythe** (WC1963 2000A2.136A).

Whetstones were needed to keep the edge sharp on both agricultural implements and blades used in the kitchen and when dining. The long, slender, square-sectioned whetstone (WC498 2000A2.64) has a pointed end with an eye encased in an iron fitting at the opposite end whereby it was suspended from a belt. This was carried about on the person by its owner and so appears to have been in regular use perhaps sharpening his own knife and craft tools. The iron fitting for the eye is an unusual feature suggesting it was a relatively expensive item. The slender shape suggests it was used by one of the earlier inhabitants of the castle. It was recovered during the 1956 excavations of the moat in trench 3A. A heavily worn whetstone of grey sandstone is of rectangular section now worn down into a triangular shape suggesting it was used to sharpen general purpose and agricultural bladed tools (WC370 2000A2.101). Similarly a piece broken from a whetstone (WC488 2000A2.136a), probably of Norwegian

schist, with a rectangular section has one face that is extremely dished as a result of heavy wear. The whetstone (WC370 2000A2.101) was found during the 1962 excavations in the wooden building in Area E square A1. It appears to be the item identified as a ‘fine textured, somewhat micaceous sandstone..... that might come from the Lower Coal Measures of the Pennine coalfields’ (unsigned and undated manuscript in archive).

Craft production, textile processing

Several objects relate to the processing of textiles but all reflect domestic activities, albeit of differing social scales, not larger scale production. Spindle whorls from hand spinning wool to produce yarn reflect a craft that was undertaken in every household on a domestic level for the production of cloth for the use of the family. Three **spindle whorls** were found at Weoley Castle, all made of differing materials. Each was of rounded shape with a flat upper and lower face and of Walton Rogers form B which may suggest that they belong to the earliest period of occupation, as stone spindle whorls of this shape recovered from 16-22 Coppergate did not continue in use beyond the middle of the 12th century (Walton Rogers 1997, 1737). The spindle whorls were of similar diameter, those of stone (limestone) (WC330 2000A2.19.6) and of pottery (WC1105 2000A2.19.5) were of similar shape, the lead example (WC331 2000A2.19.117) being flatter and more disc-like and significantly heavier making it useful for plying thread (ibid. 1745). The central holes varied from 9-11mm in diameter. The pottery whorl appears to have been accidentally burnt. A spindle whorl, described as being of a soft slate like stone, was recovered from Floor 2 of the wooden building with a suggested date of c 1200-1230 (Oswald 1964 fig 51 no 6). It is not certain to which whorl this refers, it may be that the burnt pottery whorl was mistaken for slate as the dimensions and shape most closely resemble that in the illustration.

Material	Name	WC No	Acc No	Diameter	Height	Weight
Stone	Spindle whorl	WC330	2000A2.19.6	26mm	18mm	15g
Lead alloy	Spindle whorl	WC331	2000A2.19.11 7	30mm	7mm	44g
Pottery	Spindle whorl	WC1105	2000A2.19.5	28mm	19mm	22g

Table 4: Weoley Castle spindle whorls

A **netting needle of copper alloy wire** (WC1114 2000A2.62) was used when making knotted mesh hairnets of imported silk thread worn by elegant ladies as part of their headdresses. Examples of these hairnets have been found on the waterfront sites in London, the earliest surviving example from there dating to the late 13th century while comparable netting needles occurred in 14th and early 15th century deposits (Crowfoot, Pritchard and Staniland 1992, 145-149). The netting needle comes from the wooden building from a building level dated c. 1200-1230 by Oswald (1964 fig 51, no 31) and as such would be an early example.

A pair of **iron shears decorated with silver inlay** on the blades was found associated with the wooden building coming from one of the building levels dated to periods I and II c. 1200-

1230 (Oswald 1964, 129 and fig 51 no 4). The shears do not appear on the museum accessions list and were not seen during this assessment. The published illustration shows that the decoration comprised a series of roughly 'figure-of-eight' shaped motifs comprising a small circle between two larger circles of inlay. The iron of the blades would have been 'blued' to contrast with the silver decoration. Silver ornamented shears are not common and were prestigious items. Two examples were present in late 13th century contexts at the waterfront at Swan Lane in the city of London (Cowgill et al 1997, 107, no 316, 317), another is described as just coming from London (Ward Perkins 1940, 156 fig 48, no 11). One has been found closer to home, in fill of the construction cut from the curtain wall at Wigmore Castle (Mould in Ratkai and Linnane forthcoming figure 5.7.30) in a context dated to the mid 13th-mid 14th century. The small blades of these shears were suited to the cutting of sewing threads in needlework, or possibly hair cutting and beard trimming. The decoration on each pair of shears differs for the most part, though two shears from London appear to have a similar design occurring on the back of one of their blades, some have linear inlaid patterns others with more curvilinear motifs of overlaid silver wire.

A pair of **iron scissors** (WC328 2000A2.19.29), now lacking their finger loops date no earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century. They were recovered during the 1957 excavations from Area C in the sandstone make-up cut by pillar bases, a context dated c. 1320-1400. Again Wigmore Castle provides a parallel with a finger loop from an early pair of scissors occurring amongst a group of domestic items in a mid fourteenth-fifteen century rubble dump (Mould in Ratkai and Linnane forthcoming).

A complete **brass thimble** (WC327 1950A56) with hand drilled 'pits' is likely to date to 1400-1550 (Holmes 1988, 1 and fig 2) was also found.

Food preparation, cooking and serving

Preparation

An **iron cleaver** (WC1119 2000A2.16.63), is a large heavy blade used to butcher meat. It appears to be illustrated in Oswald (1964 fig 51 no 16) and if so comes from the outside levels of the wooden building corresponding to floors 4, 5 and 6. Six **iron knives** may have been used for food preparation or for dining. Three iron knives with whittle tangs (pointed tangs) once inserted into wooden or bone handles were found (WC420 2000A2.19.61, WC427 2006.0140.5 and WC428 2000A2.19.59). One of these knives (WC420 2000A2.19.61) has two fullered grooves running parallel to the back along one face (the front face) and is likely to date to the first half of the 14th century (Moore 1999, 64). Another knife (WC429b 2000A2.19.55) had a scale tang (a strap handle inserted between two plates of bone or wood) with one of its rolled sheet copper alloy rivets surviving. The broken handles from two other scale tanged knives were also recovered (WC429c 2000A2.19.55 and WC156 2000A2.19.102), one (WC156 2000A2.19.102) with two copper alloy plates held to the iron tang within by seven rivets being SF59 coming from A/5B KR (kitchen rubbish containing a 14-15th century Potterspurgy jug). While the whittle tang knives might have been more general purpose implements, the scale tanged knives will date no earlier than the mid 14th century and are likely to have been personal knives used when dining. Documentation indicates that the knife (WC427) was found in excavations in 1962 in Area F+ on a cobble floor (Floor 2) possibly in the Tower in the curtain wall.

A piece broken from a quernstone (2000A2.87.11) used to grind grain was found in with pottery including Deritend and Potterspury wares from WC 6A R5. Two fragments broken from a quernstone (2000A2.96) were found but were not seen during this review. A fragment broken from the mouth of a **stone mortar** with an angular lug made of a vesicular grey lavastone (WC983 2000A2.19.3) survives to a height of c. 170mm. A second stone mortar fragment (2000A2.97) was found but was not seen during this review. The study of one of the largest collections of mortars recovered during archaeological excavations from Winchester, numbering some fifty-two examples, suggests that medieval stone mortars were introduced in the first half of the thirteenth century with more than a third coming from thirteenth or fourteenth century contexts (Biddle and Smith 1990, 890-1), so that a thirteenth or fourteenth century date may be likely for the Weoley mortar fragment. The mortar itself was only able to be used for a very short period of no more than five years depending on the type of foodstuffs or other materials that were pounded in it and the kind of pestle used. A fragment of ?limestone (oolitic) appears to have been broken from a shallow **bowl** with sides no more than 55mm high (WC499 2000A2.191). This item may be the shenstone fragment identified as possibly for a basal hinge socket for a door or gate made from a highly 'felspartic quartzose gritstone' possibly a glacial erratic of millstone grit from the Pennines (in an undated and unsigned manuscript in archive). A geologist or archaeological stone specialist could easily sort this out.

Cooking and drawing water

A relatively large number of pieces broken from both **cast bronze cooking vessels and vessels of sheet metal** (copper alloy) were recovered. Fragments of rim from four cauldrons of cast bronze (copper alloy) were found along with three legs from a pipkin, posnet or skillet (WC494 2000A2.19.100) and a leg from another vessel (WC423 2000A2.19.92). A fragment from a sheet copper alloy vessel (2000A2.19.112) was also found, iron staining present suggesting that the hollow, rolled rim had been supported with a hoop of iron originally. Fragments of copper alloy sheet found are also likely to come from vessels of this type. A piece broken from a large cooking pot of cast iron (WC416 2000A2.19.54) is of later date, they were commonly used from the 18th century into the early modern period wherever down hearth cooking continued to be practiced.

A cast vessel leg (WC423 2000A2.19.92) and fragments broken from the rim of two cauldrons (WC489 2000A2.19.98 and WC490 2000A2.19.99) were subject to analysis previously. All three were found to be heavily leaded bronzes of similar alloy composition and likely to be of late medieval date (Brownsword et al. 1989, 38 and fig 3 e, g and f). The leg was thought to have been a secondary replacement, cauldron legs were often damaged as they were subject to heavy wear from being dragged across the hearth.

WC No	Acc No	Material	Type	
WC416	2000A2.19.54	Iron	Cast	Rim + horizontal moulding on body
WC489*	2000A2.19.98	Copper alloy	Cast	Rim with incised line on interior
WC490*	2000A2.19.99	Copper alloy	Cast	Rim + turning lines on interior
	2000A2.19.107	Copper alloy	Cast	Rim thickened on outer face only
	2000A2.19.111.1	Copper alloy	Cast	Rim, plain, large vessel
	2000A2.19.112	Copper alloy	Sheet	Rim, rolled
WC423*	2000A2.19.92	Copper alloy	Cast	Leg with simple foot, fragment of body
WC494a-c	2000A2.19.100.1-3	Copper alloy	Cast	3 cast legs from pipkin

Table 5: Weoley Castle metal cooking vessels (*= metal analysed)

A number of **large iron hooks and heavy chains** are associated with the suspension of these large vessels in 'down hearth' cooking or alternatively the drawing of water from the well. They include a large S-shaped hook (WC390 2000A2.19.60) 282mm in length, a pot hook (WC449 2000A2.19.62) 285mm in length and a long hook with a suspension ring terminal (WC435 2000A2.19.58) 390mm in length which had been used to suspend a vessel of significant size. A **wooden stave-built bucket with its iron bindings, handle and chain** survives and **iron fittings from other buckets** were also recovered (WC455 2000A2.19.15, WC344 2000A2.19.26, WC451a & b 2000A2.19.67 and 2000A2.19.133). Three large articulating chain links (2000A2.19.68), each 205mm long, are accompanied by a label on which is written an extract from a letter from Nicholas Thomas dated 14/8/68 which reads 'from memory this may belong to the Weoley Castle bucket on show at Blakesley in medieval room'. The surviving wooden stave-built bucket itself has a chain comprising three figure-of-eight shaped chain links, each c. 127mm long and 40mm wide, attached to a swivel loop that passes through a hole in the flattened centre of the bucket handle. The simple curved handle has shallow outward curving terminals (not hooked terminals) that pass through holes in two opposing staves that project above the mouth of the bucket. The wooden bucket staves are bound by two iron hoops, the staves taper gently in width so that the mouth of the bucket, some 335mm in diameter, is wider than its base. The wooden bucket and its iron fittings have survived in extremely good condition.

An item described as a '**large iron hanging meat hook and chain**' (2000A2.10) is unlikely to have been used to hang large meat carcasses though it might have been used to hang small game. It comprises a well-formed, heavy iron shank with a thickened 'waist' with a pierced ring terminal articulating with a suspension ring (diameter 50mm), the other end of the shank is divided into five hooked arms each ending in four forward curving tines. The object most closely resembles a grappling hook and this use provides a satisfactory alternative use for

such an item. Another hook and chain (WC368 2000A2.151) was found but was not seen as part of this review.

Amongst the long iron 'spikes' recovered from the site and clearly structural ironwork associated with the fabric of the buildings are two that might represent **bars from spits** used to roast meat. Each round-sectioned bar (2000A2.19.74 and 2000A2.19.75) has a pointed tip at one end and a straight end at the other; they measure 249mm and 284mm respectively.

A relatively large number of a distinctive utensil known as a skimmer was recovered. Short handled skimmers of perforated copper alloy sheet were used in the dairy while those with long handles were used in down hearth cooking to skim the meat fat from the top of the large boiling cauldrons. The remains of five **copper alloy skimmers** found have handle sockets to hold long, wooden handles and are clearly implements used when cooking. One skimmer bowl is complete measuring 258mm with a diameter of 185mm, while two complete handle sockets found separately measured 118mm and 87mm in length.

Serving and dining

Two **copper alloy tankards** (sometimes called lidded jugs) (Brownsword et al 1989, fig 3b and c) are complete but have each lost their lids (WC324 1950A73, WC325 1050A74). They were used as drinking vessels. The broken neck from a third example (WC942 2000A2.19.96) was also found. The two well preserved vessels are of the same design differing only in size, one 172mm high (WC324) the other being slightly smaller at 154mm (WC325). They were found in pre-war excavations but no other contextual details had survived when they were subject to metallurgical analysis (Brownsword et al. 1989, 37). They can be paralleled by two others, one from the inner moat at Caerphilly Castle (now in the National Museum of Wales, Lewis 1978, 31 no 37) and another, smaller, example in the British Museum thought to come from Dorset. When analysed all four vessels were found to be of latten rather than bronze, as was a comparable vessel a lipped jug known as the Dunfermline jug (Lawrence 1936, 323-4 and pl. LX). The Dunfermline jug contained a hoard of coins considered to have been deposited c. 1345. On the basis of the coin dates and the metal composition of this group of latten vessels an early 14th century date for the two Weoley Castle tankards has been proposed (Brownsword et al. 1989, 37). Brownsword et al. have suggested that they may have been foreign imports and should be seen alongside the French pottery, Spanish Maiolica and Syrian glass as exotic imports furnishing the high life style of the elite owners of Weoley Castle. When the analysis was undertaken some twenty-five or so years ago the known examples of these copper alloy tankards had a western distribution. Further research would be needed to confirm this now, but one may imagine it unlikely to have changed unduly and, as they pointed out, the vessels may well have been imported through Bristol and transported up the Severn (Brownsword et al 1989, 38). It is possible, however, that it was the metal, the latten, that was imported and the vessels actually cast in England, as they suggested was the case for the armorial steelyard weight ((WC379 1950A70.1). Since this time further work on medieval cast copper alloy vessels may have thrown further light on the situation, some research would reveal whether this is the case.

A **lead alloy vessel** with a small, angular handle made of thin strip (WC310 2000A2.60) appears to be a small **handled tankard or canister**. The remains of a second example were

found (lead unnumbered in G49.7 tray 1) lacking only the strip handle. The better preserved vessel (WC310 2000A2.60) has a flat circular base, 52mm in diameter, and straight walls that tapering to the mouth which is now crushed and broken so that the original diameter is uncertain. The vessel was made from three pieces: a flat circular sheet base, the body of a single sheet with a vertical seam, and a narrow strip handle. When analysed (Brownsword et al. 1989, 36 and fig 2e) it was found to be made **of a lead alloy** with such a low tin content compared with the other pewter vessels found that it was considered to be of lead rather than pewter. Brownsword was able to cite another example from demolition debris at the Dominican Friary at Guildford (finally demolished in 1607) and two further examples in the collections of the Museum of London, sadly neither from 'sound archaeological contexts' (Brownsword et al. 1989, 36 and footnote 5). These lead alloy vessels are rare but this rarity is likely to be the result of their poor survival in the archaeological record, being so easily distorted, crushed, one can imagine that few survive in a recognisable form, many no doubt being melted down when damaged or no longer required. In shape they closely resemble the 'apostles' or powder holders hung from the bandolier of a musketeer, part of the requisites necessary for the typical firearms of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These vessels, however, are significantly larger and heavier than such powder containers.

A shallow, circular, but now much distorted vessel of **lead alloy** (2000A2.19.128) appears to be a **squashed lid** (58mm in diameter) **with a loop handle** from another pewter vessel.

A piece of **narrow copper alloy strip binding** (WC1107 2000A2.16.71) decorated with a triangular motif of punched dots is curved and may have ornamented the rim of a wooden or leather vessel. It was found in a building level in the wooden building ascribed to c. 1200-1230 (Oswald 1964 fig 51 no 8). Similar fragments (2000A2.19.104) were found during the 1956 excavations, two were also flat with a curved profile but three other pieces differed in having a U-shaped profile. Though the surface of the copper alloy is corroded a similar decoration is visible on two of the pieces. These narrow bindings have rivet holes indicating they were riveted to the objects they originally ornamented. A piece of similar flat binding (2000A2.66.5), though apparently undecorated, also has a curved profile and is complete. The strip has a pair of rivet holes at each terminal and appears to have been used to bind a small, wooden, stave built vessel.

Pewter flatware

Nine pieces of **pewter flatware** were recovered from Weoley Castle, seven of which are complete or very nearly complete, presenting a large collection of some interest. These items, called **plates and saucers** according to size, were described in detail by Brownsword et al. (1989, 35-6), their finds spots given (where known) and eight of the nine illustrated (Brownsword et al. 1989, fig 1a-d, fig 2a-d). The metallurgical composition of seven of these items were analysed as part of a wider consideration of English 13th-16th century pewter flatware (Brownsword and Pitt 1984) and this information, along with their form, was used to suggest their date. Of the nine pieces found five were available for examination for this review (WC303, WC305, WC306, WC307 and WC309).

The saucer (WC305 2000A2.19.132), of which only the flange and rim survive, has a simple straight-sided rim running along the upper edge and a touch mark, the letter Gothic P lying on

its side, on the upper flange. The high quality alloy composition of the metal, the size, rim shape and mark can be paralleled by a similar saucer found in a late 13th century context at Cuckoo Lane, Southampton (Michaelis in Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975, 250 and fig 239). Indeed the possibility of a common origin for the two saucers was suggested. The Southampton saucer, dated to c.1290, is one of the earliest items of domestic pewter to be found in this country (Hornsby et al. 1989, 33).

Plates (WC301 and WC307 2000A2.19.120) have a similar rim and flange to saucer WC305 2000A2.19.132 but are larger in size with a deeper 'bowl' with a domed base (also called a central boss) with an incised groove. They are also made of high quality alloy and a 14th century date for them was suggested.

Two saucers (WC306 2000A2.19.115 and WC309) are also comparable to WC305 with the addition of a groove demarcating the simple rim on the upper face. They differ in being made of a poor quality pewter with more than 20% lead in the alloy. Brownsword et al. (1989, 35) suggested that they are of provincial manufacture probably of late 15th or early 16th century date when pewter casting was being undertaken in provincial towns but had not come under the quality control of the London Pewterers' Company searchers.

Three similar plates (WC302, WC303 2000A2.19.119 and WC308) with shallow 'bowls' and flat flanges and a simple bead rim running along the edge on the underside were found together in 1956 in the SE corner of the moat. All were of high quality alloy. One (WC303 2000A2.19.119) had a touch mark letter B on the underside of the rim (though this was not easily visible on recent examination). Two (WC302 and WC303) were found together along with sherds of 'Hispano-Moresque' ware (Oswald 1962, 81). Brownsword et al (1989, 35) suggested a 15th century date for these plates.

Plate (WC304), found in 1957 in the NE corner of the moat where kitchen refuse was also present (Oswald 1962, 64), has a wider flange with a simple bead rim running around the lower edge and a domed base with an incised ring on the interior. A touch mark with the letters HB is struck on the underside of the flange. The plate dates to the late 15th or early 16th century and is again of a high quality alloy with a relatively high copper content which Brownsword et al (1989, 36) suggests may point to a pre-Tudor date (late 15th century).

WC No	Acc No	Type	Diameter	Rim type*	Exc. date and Location
WC301		Plate		Type a	Pre-war
WC302		Plate		Type e	1956 SE corner of moat
WC303	2000A2.19.119	Plate	160mm	Type e	1956 SE corner of moat
WC304		Plate		Type e	1957 NE corner of moat
WC305	2000A2.19.132	Saucer	129mm	Type a	Pre-war
WC306	2000A2.19.115	Saucer	124mm	Type b	Pre-war
WC307	2000A2.19.120	Plate	186mm	Type a	1970 N bank of moat
WC308		Plate		Type e	1956 SE corner of moat
WC309		Saucer	127mm	Type b	Pre-war

Table 6: Weoley Castle pewter flatware (*rim type Brownsword and Pitt 1984, 244, figure 1)

The saucer (WC305 2000A2.19.132) dating to the very end of the 13th century is an early example of pewter in domestic use and a prestigious item. The examples of 14th century date (WC301 and WC305) may also be similarly considered early examples of such flatware. The use of pewter flatware increased in elite and then middle class residencies as time went on and we have pieces from a number of dining sets of differing quality and date present at Weoley Castle. These items of flatware had a value, were easily portable and if damaged or no longer wanted could easily be carried from the site for resale or melting down and recasting elsewhere. At Weoley Castle the resale value of pewter does not appear to have been an issue for their owners. It is unlikely that the value of the metal would be overlooked by those who visited the site in subsequent years, however, making it most likely that the flatware all came from the moat where they had lain unseen. It is tempting to picture some of these plates and saucers being deliberately tossed into the moat during particularly lively bouts of feasting and drinking.

Cutlery

The iron knives may well have been used as ‘table knives’ when dining as were the **pewter spoons**. The table knives have been discussed with knives used in food preparation above. A pewter spoon with a flat, fig-shaped bowl and acorn knob (WC311 2000A2.19.131A) was found during the 1959 excavations in Area A, an area on the platform that covered the northern end of the stone hall at the eastern end of the site (Brownsword et al 1989, fig 2). The spoon was found to be of very poor grade pewter and subsequently thought to have been made by an itinerant metalworker in the 15th century (Brownsword et al 1989, 36). A second spoon (WC311 2000A2.19.131B) with a broken bowl and the stem snapped off is now included under the WC311 number and so one must assume that it was found in the same context. The bowl of the second spoon is heavily dished and differs in shape with no ‘rat-tail’ at the junction of the handle and bowl suggesting a slightly later date than the other. A third spoon (2000A2.19.129) with a distorted but oval shaped bowl was also found and appears to date slightly later still, probably to the later 16th-17th century.

Locks and keys

The security of possessions was considered of high importance at Weoley Castle. A small **barrel padlock case of iron** (WC422 2000A2.19.17) and a bolt from a much larger iron padlock (WC1102 2000A2.19.80) were found. The **double-spined padlock bolt** (WC1102 2000A2.19.80) with copper brazing still surviving in places, came from the wooden building in building levels ascribed to c. 1200-1230 (Oswald 1964, fig 51 no 2). Part of a **barrel padlock case of copper alloy** with three spines surviving (WC1098 2006.0140.8) also came from the wooden building from a level considered earlier than the building itself (Oswald 1964, fig 51 no 1). A broken disc of copper alloy (WC431d 2000A2.19.84d) may come from a large circular lock plate, while a piece of right-angled copper alloy sheet (WC61 2000A2.88) with a series of small slots around the edge may be broken from the case of a small mounted lock.

WC No	Acc No	Type	Bow	Stem	Length (mm)
WC417	2000A2.19.35	Padlock	Scrolled terminal	H-shaped bit	81
WC312	2000A2.149	Rotary	Circular	Piped	99
WC313	2000A2.148	Rotary	Lozenge-shaped	Piped	119
WC314	2000A2.113	Rotary	Oval	piped	86
WC316	2000A2.19.41	Rotary	Kidney-shaped	piped	154
WC317	2000A2.150	Rotary	Circular	Pinned	94 (bent)
WC318	2000A2.114	Rotary	Kidney-shaped	Pinned	143
WC319	2000A2.19.36	Rotary	Oval	Pinned	154 decorated
WC320	2000A2.19.23	Rotary	Oval	Unknown	121+ decorated
WC321	2000A2.19.19	Rotary	D-shaped	Pinned	144
WC322	200A2.19.42	Rotary	Unknown	Pinned	123+
WC323	1950A44	Not seen			
WC418	2000A2.19.44	Rotary	Unknown	Pinned	105+
WC496	2000A2.19.45	Rotary	Kidney-shaped	Solid	115+

Table 7: Weoley Castle iron keys

A large number of **keys** were recovered, all of iron. A single **padlock key** was found (WC417 2000A2.19.35) with a further twelve examples of **rotary locks**, some with piped (hollow) stems from locks on cupboards and chests, others with pinned stems projecting below their bits from door locks that could be operated from both sides. Two of the keys had decorative mouldings, one with a moulding below the bow at the neck (WC320 2000A2.19.23), the other (WC319 2000A2.19.36) with three sets of double mouldings along the stem (handle). One key (WC323 1950A44) was not seen during this review and its attributes are unknown.

Miscellaneous household items

A **copper alloy drape ring** (WC336 2000A2.19.109) used to hang tapestries and curtains hints at the interior decoration of the buildings inhabited by the family. A similar ring of

slightly smaller diameter (WC337 2000A2.19.89) may be a second example or simple ring handle for furniture or a link.

A range of **iron handles** were recovered some, such as (2000A2.19.69), broken from a now unidentifiable household item, others coming from furniture. Two came from the wooden building, a large simple, angular, handle from a chest (WC1115 2000A2.16.69) was found on Floor 3 dated c. 1230-1270 (Oswald 1964 fig 51 no 11), the other, part of a curved handle with traces of white metal, likely to be tinning, surviving on one face (WC1099 2000A2.16.70), came from a level considered earlier than the building (Oswald 1964 fig 5151 no 3). A well made iron U-shaped staple (WC1106 2006.0140.7) may well come from the staple fastening from a box or chest, similarly the iron ring (WC1108 2006.0140.6), mentioned above, may also be a furniture fitting.

Weights and measures and record keeping

A cast circular copper alloy **armorial steelyard weight** (WC379 1950A70.1), filled with lead, with a pierced suspension lug was found in 1938 in the passage close to the Octagonal tower just below the surface of the lower level (Brownsword et al., 1989, 36-7). The weight (presently Wt 759g) has armorial decoration of three shields cast in relief. One shield with three leopards in pale represents the arms of England, the second with a lion rampant, the arms of Poitou and the third, with a double-headed eagle displayed representing the arms of the Hanseatic League. The Weoley Castle weight featured in research by Dru Drury on this type of weight (Dru Drury 1943). He associated the Poitou arms with Richard, Earl of Cornwall and Count of Poitou, the brother of Henry III on who's behalf these official weights were issued. Differing interpretations have been put forward as to the significance of the double-headed eagle but it being associated with the merchants of the Hansa to whom Richard had granted protection around 1260 for their trading activities in London was the idea most favoured (Brownsword et al. 1989, 37). Those weights bearing the double-headed eagle may be dated after 1257 (Ward Perkins 1940, 172). Later Brownsword and Pitt (1983, 83-8) continued the work of Dru Drury and analysed the composition of these armorial weights. Their work concluded that the Weoley Castle example fell into their Type B made of a leaded bronze, probably dating from c 1300 and of English manufacture.

A disc-shaped object of iron (WC826 2000A2.19.63) with slightly tapering sides, 49mm in diameter and 21mm thick, may be a pan weight (also known as a lay weight) though no markings are now visible on either face. It was found during the 1962 excavations 5 ½ inches from the top of the baulk in layer 2 (WC WM6- SF1, G 8ft 2ins, E 9ft 5 ½ ins).

There is some debate about the precise use of the **parchment pricker** (WC410 2000A2.19.139) though its association with the written word is clear. This implement with a turned bone handle and an iron point was used to mark out the pages on parchment when preparing manuscripts and is frequently found in ecclesiastic contexts. They are also found in a range of secular contexts such as here, more suited to the writing of documents but not specifically book production. The occurrence of an example from Weoley Castle might therefore be considered further evidence for their use as a stylus for writing on wax tablets or

a simple ink dipping pen rather than an implement only dedicated to the production of manuscripts.

A 'slate' **pencil**, a slender stone rod used to write on 'slates' when keeping simple records and more recently when learning in the school room was found but has no information of any kind accompanying it.

Amongst the documentation is a hand written note, undated and signed with the initials PBC, mentioning the impression of a seal that may be connected with Weoley Castle. It was said that may have been '(?) found on the site prior to the start of any excavations. It was in the possession of Mr Ledoam but presumably it has been lost'. A seal matrix was noted in one of the boxes containing material from Weoley Castle but was labelled as coming from a different site.

Items of clothing and dress accessories

Leather shoes of medieval date were recovered from Weoley Castle. Oswald stated that 'fragments of nine shoes were found' from the wooden building and two of these that had parts of their shoe uppers remaining were illustrated (Oswald 1964, fig 52 no 1-2) and date of c 1220 was attributed to them. The surviving leather shoe parts examined for this review represent a minimum of twelve individual shoes. The shoes illustrated in Oswald (1964, fig 52, 1-2), however, are a little difficult to reconcile with the shoe parts as they are numbered and stored at present. Much of the shoe illustrated as fig 52 no 1 appears to be WC467 2000A2.146 though the current interpretation of the parts present vary from those shown and the sole has no repair stitching though such stitching is clearly shown in the illustration. The sole in the illustration closely resembles that now numbered 2000A2.80A. The shoe illustrated in fig 52 no 2 appears to be WC1130 2000A2.16.55, however the piece of wood illustrated with it is WC462F. It should be noted that, contrary to what is suggested in the text (Oswald 1964, 132) the piece of wood illustrated has no relationship with the shoe sole other than having been found lying directly on top of it.

The shoe leather present now in the collection comes from shoes of randed turnshoe construction. The soles have short, pointed or oval toes and relatively wide but distinct waists compatible with the dating suggested by Oswald. These include the two illustrated soles, one of which (fig 52 no. 1) is said to come from Floor 1 of the wooden building which is a cobbled surface that pre-dates the building. A single shoe sole (2000A2.19.142) has a longer pointed toe and a narrow waist and is likely to date a little later to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. A seat from a two-part sole was noted (WC467A). All the shoes are of adult size. The shoe uppers are in poor condition and no complete examples remain so that closer dating is not possible. The best preserved shoe upper, however, comes from the left side of a one-piece upper (WC1130 2000A2.16.55C), and other fragments also appear to be broken from one-piece uppers: a cutting pattern popular during the medieval period. All the shoe uppers are of bovine leathers. A single leather lace (WC478 2000A2.16.73) with a square tab end indicates that at least one shoe fastened with a lace. Several of the shoe soles were heavily worn and had been repaired, and four repair patches (known as clumps) for soles were also recovered. Other soles, (at least five notably 2000A2.19.142), had not been repaired before

being thrown away. Several shoe parts, including sole seams, had been deliberately cut away from the rest of the shoe before being discarded and represent waste from cobbling (WC469A, WC462E, WC470A, WC470B, WC1130A, and WC1130C). A piece of secondary waste cattle hide (WC474 2000A2.16.82) produced when cutting out pattern pieces during the manufacture or repair of leather goods was also present. It is clear that some of the leather shoes had been heavily worn, repaired and then cut up to recycle any reusable leather before being thrown away. As such, they may have passed through several owners before eventually being discarded, in the case of those from the wooden building presumably being thrown onto a midden in the vicinity of the kitchen.

Other items of leather clothing or possibly harness were also found. A length cut from a narrow strap of bovine leather 10mm wide decorated with paired circular cut-outs was found on Floor 5 of the wooden building (Oswald 1964 fig 51 no 19). It appears to be a piece cut from a **narrow girdle**, the punched circles with which it is decorated may well have made too fragile for use as a stirrup leather.

Documentation also mentions leather being recovered during the 1956 excavations (SF20, SF70 and SF73). One of these items (SF20) appears to be a fragment of **girdle, stirrup leather or harness with a copper alloy mount**. It is described as a 'fragment of leather with a bronze boss', SF 20 was found in 6A during the 1956 excavations, but was not seen during the present review.

The majority of leathers present were bovine, that is cattle hide or calfskin, but a very small amount of pigskin was also noted. The use of pigskin is uncommon, as it is not a direct by-product of animal butchery, and may possibly be another reflection of the wealth of the owners of the property.

Four **buckles of copper alloy** and another of **pewter** are dress accessories. A cast copper alloy annular buckle with a central pin bar around which a sheet buckle plate passes (WC339 2000A2.19.93) was once attached to a leather strap no more than 39mm wide. The buckle is too large to be a late medieval shoe buckle with which it is comparable and the presence of the buckle plate confirms its use on a belt or similar item. A cast copper alloy 'spectacle' buckle (double oval frame with a central pin bar)(WC338 1950A54) and its sheet buckle plate were once attached to a leather strap 23mm wide, and part of the strap survives 'sandwiched' between the two buckle plates. The remains of a broken copper alloy angular buckle frame (2000A2.19.113) came from the moat in C3. A copper alloy shoe buckle with a rectangular frame with a separate spindle (WC335 2000A2.19.108) is of Georgian date and may have dropped from the costume of a visitor to the site.

An angular asymmetrical **buckle frame** (WC334 2000A2.19.130) with a separate bar and a pin bar with an integral pin is, unusually, roughly cast in **pewter**. The pin bar and the end of the sides that project slightly from the frame have lattice decoration. While exact parallels are difficult to find it most closely resembles examples of copper alloy dated to 1350-1450 (Whitehead 1996, 88 no 550-1) but is nearly double the size. This buckle found during the 1959 excavations in Area A was included in the metallurgical analysis of objects by Brownsword et al. (1989, 36 and Fig 2g).

A sheet copper alloy **strap end** of plain design comprising two plates with lobed ends (WC342 2000A2.19.110) and a more decorative example (WC341 2000A2.19.101) with a trilobite finial separated from the cast plate by a collared neck were found. The cast example is dark in colour suggesting it may have a decorative surface treatment. A third strap end (2006.0140.4 WC444) is made by a differing method. It is made from a single sheet folded to produce a looped finial possibly for suspension, the sides of the wider front section being flanged to run along the sides of the strap within. The terminal and straight mouth are defined by decorative notches in the sides of the front. A pair of rivets held the strap into the strap end at the mouth and a further rivet hole is present in the centre. Strap ends made by this same method found in the city of London are not directly comparable and the Weoley Castle example (WC444) more closely resembles the upper part of a two-piece strap end with a hinged plate and loop from late 14th and early 15th century deposits in that city for which a possible use as a **book fastener** has been suggested (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 155). The Weoley Castle example is labelled as coming from F+ FL.W, which refers to the Bakehouse on the eastern side of the moat platform.

A **copper alloy lace chape** (2000A2.19.114) known as an **aiglet** may have dropped off an item of clothing of late medieval or early post medieval date that fastened with laces. It was found during the 1956 excavations (WC56 SM1A/1C SF 53 above puddle clay (within the moat).

A **livery button** (WC476 2000A2.19.94) of **gilt copper alloy** back stamped 'warranted best quality' may well be one of the latest items recovered from Weoley Castle. The size of the button suggests it cannot date prior to the early nineteenth century (Blair 2001, 43). Research on the arms depicted, a fleur de lys between laurel fronds with a banner wreath mounted, may well identify the family concerned.

The broken teeth are all that remain of a **bone comb** (WC419 2000A2.19.138) recovered from the moat. It is mentioned in a transcription of an excavation summary believed to refer to the East Courtyard in the Area A sequence occurring with a pewter plate WC304 and Maiolica (WC992, and WC993a-c).

Pastimes

A **jet die** (commonly known in its plural form as a 'dice' today) (WC411 2000A2.19.4) has the regular numbering system, Type A (Brown in Biddle 1990, 692-3), in use from the Roman period to the present day. The numbers are depicted by incised ring and dot motifs, inlaid with a white metal. Two jet dice found at Winchester thought to be of medieval date but occurring residually in later fills, also had white metal inlay which when analysed were found to be of tin (Brown in Biddle 1990, 694). Dice were used when playing games of chance and may have been used in religious houses to decide which virtue should be practiced on a particular day (Brown in Biddle 1990, 698). The choice of jet as the material to make the piece is of interest as it had some significance during the medieval period being highly valued for its amuletic properties. Jet was made into devotional pieces such as crucifixes, rosary beads, and seal matrices often with religious inscriptions (Cherry forthcoming in St John's Coventry BA1776 for Birmingham Archaeology). Here at Weoley the jet die is most likely to have been used for gaming.

A stylised **chess piece** (WC409 2000A2.19.140) depicting a knight (horseman) is carved from antler in the Arabic style as an abstract horse (Chapman 2005, 2). The piece has a protruding triangle depicting the animal's head and is decorated with linear and ring and dot motifs both popular decorative devices on gaming pieces of this type. It would be difficult to better Andy Chapman's summary of chess as played during the medieval period 'it rose rapidly as the war-game of the educated; it would have been played in every manor house' (Chapman 2005, 1). The Weoley Castle piece is comparable with an example made of cattle bone recovered from the potter's workshop at the deserted medieval village of Lyveden in Northamptonshire (Chapman 2005, 3 fig 2 no 11), a finds spot that suggests that the game was also being played slightly lower down the social scale. Few pieces have been found in securely dated contexts but those that were range from the 11th through to the 14th centuries (Chapman 2005, 6).

The **wooden pipe of a musical instrument** (WC408 1950A49), possibly the drone of a bagpipe or a shawm or tabor pipe, is an uncommon find of some interest and would benefit from examination by a specialist in the field such as Dr G. Lawson (Cambridge University) or Dr Angela Wardle (MoLAS). A shawm pipe and tabor pipes were recovered from the Mary Rose (Forster in Gardiner with Allen 2005, 233-242).

Religion

Tin cruet

Vessels called cruets were used to contain wine and water used in religious ceremony when wine mixed with water was drunk by the priest during the celebration of the mass. A cast metal **cruet** (WC1000 2000A2.19.13) found to be made of **nearly pure tin** was found at Weoley Castle in the summer of 1955 in a layer within the moat outside the kitchen dated to after c. 1380 (Oswald 1962). The hexagonal sides of the vessel are decorated with panels cast in relief and their manufacture and iconography have been described and much discussed in the past (Oswald in a letter to the Illustrated London News of 5th December 1955; Oswald 1962, 70-1 and pl.8-10). The Weoley Castle vessel is directly comparable with an example found in the moat at Ludlow Castle (and now in the British Museum) and both cruets are of very similar metallurgical composition. Their composition suggested to Brownsword et al. that they were not made in London, earlier Oswald had favoured an English source of manufacture possibly close to home in the West Midlands but Oman had suggested a Spanish origin (Brownsword et al. 1989, 36). The 14th century dating suggested by several specialists varied between AD1300-1350. Initially thought to have been cast in a two-part mould, close examination by the conservation department at the Birmingham Museum and Art gallery has revealed that the cruet had been made of individual cast panels that were then soldered together. It may well be that more recent work has been undertaken on the place of manufacture of 14th century cruets and a small amount of research would establish this. It is of interest that a much cruder ceramic cruet was also recovered from Weoley Castle.

A heavy cast copper alloy **bell** (WC326 1950A72) has been repaired with a large cast suspension ring added crudely to the top of the well cast bell. It is double the size of the only complete clapper bell found at Winchester and slightly larger than the largest bell fragment found there (Biddle and Hinton 1990, 726 no 2270, 2270C). It would appear to be the size of a handbell carried before the priest when communion was taken to the sick, used during

funerary processions or carried by lepers, but rather larger than those rung during the mass ((Biddle and Hinton 1990, 725).

Structural fittings

Structural ironwork

Large **iron strap hinges** from substantial heavy doors were recovered. Some (WC377 2000A2.67 and WC415 2000A2.19.84) were ornamented with decorative scrollwork, one (WC377 2000A2.67) also had linear grooved decoration, indicating they were both decorative and functional and used on large doors of major buildings. Two arms from a hinge (WC542 2000A2.19.47) were said to come from NTN (probably indicating the moat to the north of the North Tower) and another hinge of a gate (WC378 2000A2.104) came from the Moat in the North East corner. Two lengths of nailed binding strap (2000A2.19.66) came from Floor 2 layer 1 (presumably from the timber building). A large **iron sliding bolt** (2000A2.19.65) to secure a door was also found.

WC No	Acc No	type	decorated	Length	Max strap width
WC377	2000A2.67	Hinge strap	Scrolls, grooves	615+mm	51mm
WC378	2000A2.104	Hinge strap, ring terminal	Scrolled end	374mm	36mm
WC415	2000A2.19.48	Hinge strap terminal	scrolls		22mm
WC452a	2000A2.19.47	Hinge strap, ring terminal		180+mm	28mm
WC452b	2000A2.19.47	Hinge strap		150+mm	28mm
	2000A2.19.70	Hinge strap		70+mm	40mm
	2000A2.19.83	Hinge strap		119+mm	26mm

Table 8: Weoley Castle large door hinges of iron

The inner door of the chamber in Period V of the wooden building had a wooden washer with a piece of leather in the hole to enable the door to swing (Oswald 1964, 119). Two crudely cut circular **leather washers** from Floor 4 of the wooden building are illustrated by Oswald (1964, fig 51, no 20a and b) and may possibly be the leather referred to but this is not stated in the text and they were not seen as part of this survey.

Two other circular **leather washers** present may have served that purpose: one with a 'keyhole' shape cut from the centre (diameter 26mm) and a smaller example (diameter 23mm) with a small central hole, 4mm in diameter, and an angular notch in one side. Each was crudely cut by hand, neither had been cut with the guidance of a compass. An illustration accompanying these washers shows pieces of leather, though of differing shapes to these examples, and wooden beams with pivot holes and how these pieces of leather 'helped to raise the door in the threshold beam'.

Other structural ironwork included a large **iron wallhook** (2000A2.19.81) and several heavy **iron spikes**. Four **lead seatings** to secure ironwork into masonry were also present, one coming from the south Tower. A small number of **large iron nails**, the longest 162mm in length, were also recovered that had been used on substantial timbers, while Oswald (1964, fig 51, no 23-30) illustrated a range of medium sized nails found associated with the wooden building. **Iron window grille fragments** (WC481 1990A315 and WC483 2000A2.116.1-3) were found but none were seen during this review.

Structural lead

A relatively small amount of lead was found, including comes, sheet offcuts and runnels, and it is tempting to associate the lead with the fabric of the chapel, though, of course, it may have come from another prestigious building within the castle precincts. A small amount of lead window comes were found comprising pieces of broken come (151g) and triangular-sectioned trimmings (115g) resulting from the trimming away of the casting flashes of the sides of the comes during their manufacture. The dimensions and profile of the comes indicates that they are of medieval date, 'hand-made' in a two part mould and fall into type C of Knight's classification (Knight 1983). The lead had held not only lozenge-shaped (diamond-shaped) glass quarries but other decorative shapes, but as the comes are much broken the shapes cannot now be easily indentified. The presence of the trimmings along with the comes indicates that the window comes were manufactured on site when the windows were being made or repaired, as was usually the case.

A **spout** (2000A2.11.2) made of **lead sheet** 3mm thick had directed rain water through the mouth of a stone gargoyle.

A small number of **offcuts and trimmings of lead sheet** were recovered, including five pieces with nail holes present, that are very likely to be derived from roofing lead and its repair. One piece, from the lower levels of the North Tower, east side (NTE), has two 'raised ribs' running along its surface suggesting it to be a piece that covered the join between two adjacent sheets of roofing lead. In all 1.7kg of sheet lead was seen, ranging between 2-3mm in thickness. In the transcript of a 1424 survey of Weoley Castle and Northfield the chapel is said to be covered with lead (Symons 1984, 46) and it is tempting to regard these lead sheeting offcuts as coming from the chapel roof. Similarly the stone gargoyle with the lead water spout is likely to come from the chapel. It is known that 471g of the lead sheet came from the 1956 excavations, a further piece c. 300g in weight came from Tower A and another of 282g from a disturbed area WC Area F.

A small amount (2kg) of solidified **runnels** of lead were recovered and while it is always possible that it came from the melting of lead when casting comes or repairing roofing lead, it may as easily resulted from accidental fire.

Miscellaneous items

A decorated riveted copper alloy flanged strip or sheet (WC1056A 2006.0140.1) is broken from an unknown object. The decorated upper surface is deteriorated and the unusual state of preservation suggests it may well have had a decorative surface treatment originally. The

surface is ornamented with incised decoration in a scrolled floral motif with 'stabbed' infilling. The decoration is comparable with that seen a range of later medieval items including leatherwork. The object was illustrated along with pottery with which it was found in a moat layer, a context attributed to Period VII/VIII dated to post 1450 (Oswald 1962, fig 13 no 56a). The pottery included a 'maiolica' plate now indentified as Early Valencian Lustreware dating to 1375-1425 but representing a prestigious item likely to have been highly valued and potentially having an extended 'lifespan'.

A decorative, triangular lead plaque (WC352 1950A111) is an unusual item and its original purpose and date is uncertain. It may possibly have been associated with the roofing lead or lead guttering. The small, flat-backed, cast lead plaque has a large, circular, four-petalled motif cast in relief, not dissimilar to a cobweb, with three small, incised circles above.

A hollow tube of copper alloy sheet (WC441 2000A2.19.97) has a decorative collar at each end and one in the centre, the central collar presumably masking a join between two separate lengths of sheeting. The tube is 198mm long and narrow, being just 7mm in diameter, the collars 10mm in diameter. The collars each comprise two mouldings with incised linear decoration and the tubing also has incised decoration along its length. The degree of decoration indicates it was from an item of some merit but its original use is unknown. While a possible medical use might be considered, the collars make this most unlikely and comparison with known inventories of medical equipment compiled in the 16th century list nothing similar (Castle and Derham in Gardiner with Allen 2005, 208-211).

A fragment broken from a small worked bone object (2000A2.85.2) was found in with the pottery from the granary (east side of the platform) PB 1957 Sq 1(4) some of which dates to the late 17th and 18th centuries. What remains of the small, hollow item has part of a straight end or mouth present at the narrower end and an internal, apparently machine cut, screw thread present at the wider, broken end. It would appear to be amongst the latest dating items from Weoley Castle.

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