

Excavation of Medieval Burgage Plots to the Rear of 130-136 Stricklandgate, Kendal

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This article summarises the results of excavation to the rear of 130-136 Stricklandgate, Kendal, and contributes fabric descriptions and illustrates vessel forms covering the transition from medieval to post-medieval ceramic traditions in the area, which represents a primary research aim in the study of medieval ceramics. Excavation revealed both medieval and post-medieval activity at the site, which has seen occupation since at least the late twelfth or thirteenth century and, despite being at the far north end of the town, the site was evidently not on the periphery of the medieval core as might be assumed.

Circumstances of the project

FOLLOWING the completion of a desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation which identified a number of medieval and post-medieval features and structures at 130-136 Stricklandgate, Kendal (SD 5154 9305),¹ a brief for an archaeological excavation was issued by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service. The excavation took place between July and August 2008.²

Historical background

The settlement of Kirkland, at the southern end of the medieval town, is recorded in the Domesday Book³ and became the centre of a Norman barony in the later eleventh century. Richard I granted a Saturday market in 1189 and sometime between 1222 and 1246 William III of Lancaster, the lord of the manor, confirmed borough status to a settlement to the north of Kirkland.⁴ Documents dating to 1310 and 1390 suggest there were around 144 tofts in this town, each wide enough to allow further subdivision laterally.⁵ Kendal Castle, to the east of the River Kent, has earthworks and masonry dating to the thirteenth century onwards.⁶

The woollen industry came to dominate the town's economy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and remained the town's major source of wealth for some time.⁷ John Speed's map of 1611 suggests that there was some deliberate town planning; there is a notable contrast between the winding course of Kirkland, round the church, and the long straight streets of Highgate, Stricklandgate, and Stramongate, which converge on the market place with narrow burgage plots extending away from the street.⁸

The town's prosperity declined during the early seventeenth century due to a contraction in the woollen cloth trades in the 1620s, as well as plague and famine in 1597 and 1623,⁹ but during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the population expanded rapidly and settlement became considerably more dense within the town centre, when many of the older burgage plots were built over.¹⁰ This gradually led to the development of the present yard system,¹¹ which evidently occurred to the rear of 130-136 Stricklandgate.

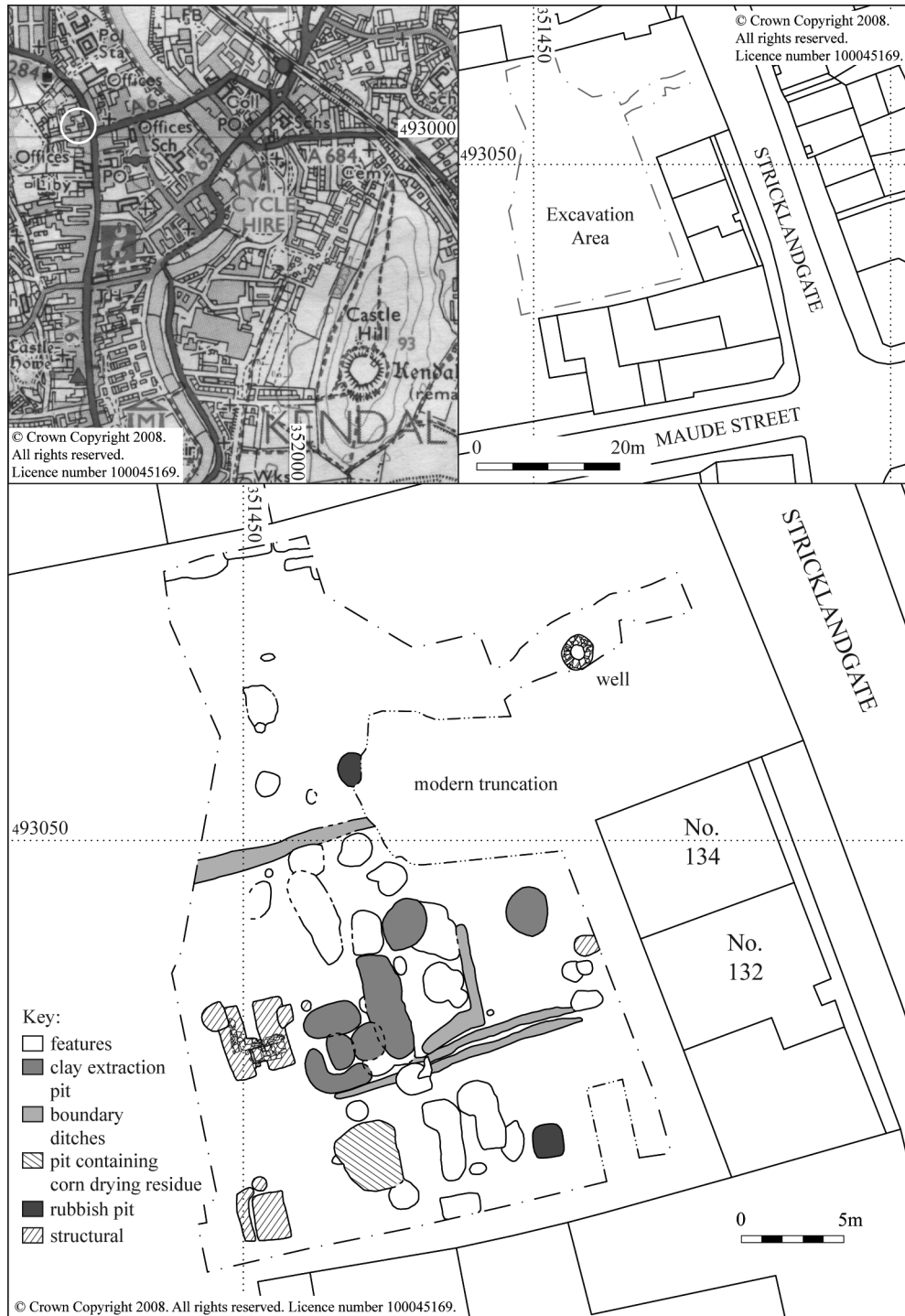


FIG. 1. Site location and schematic plan of significant features.

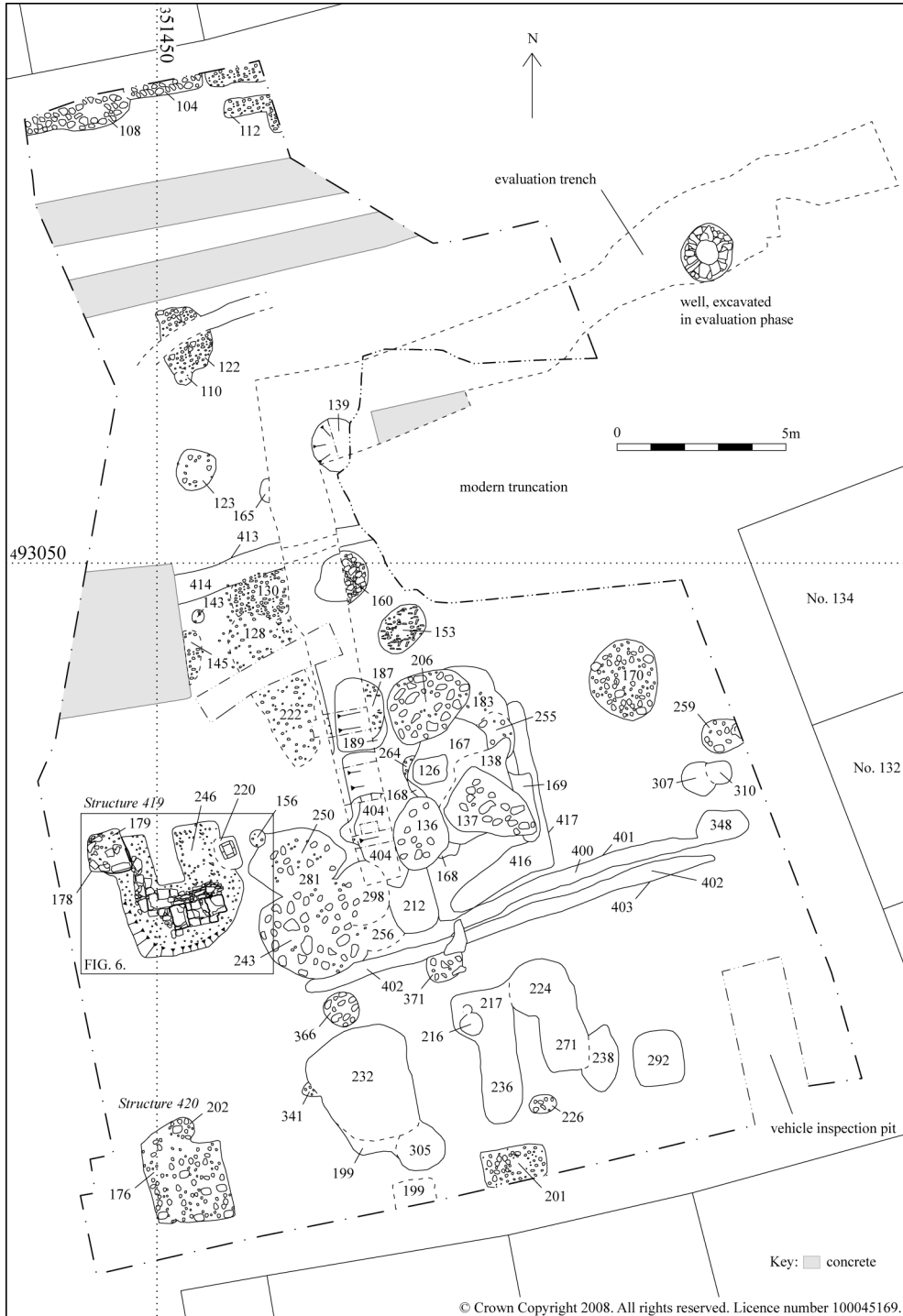


FIG. 2. Pre-excitation site plan.

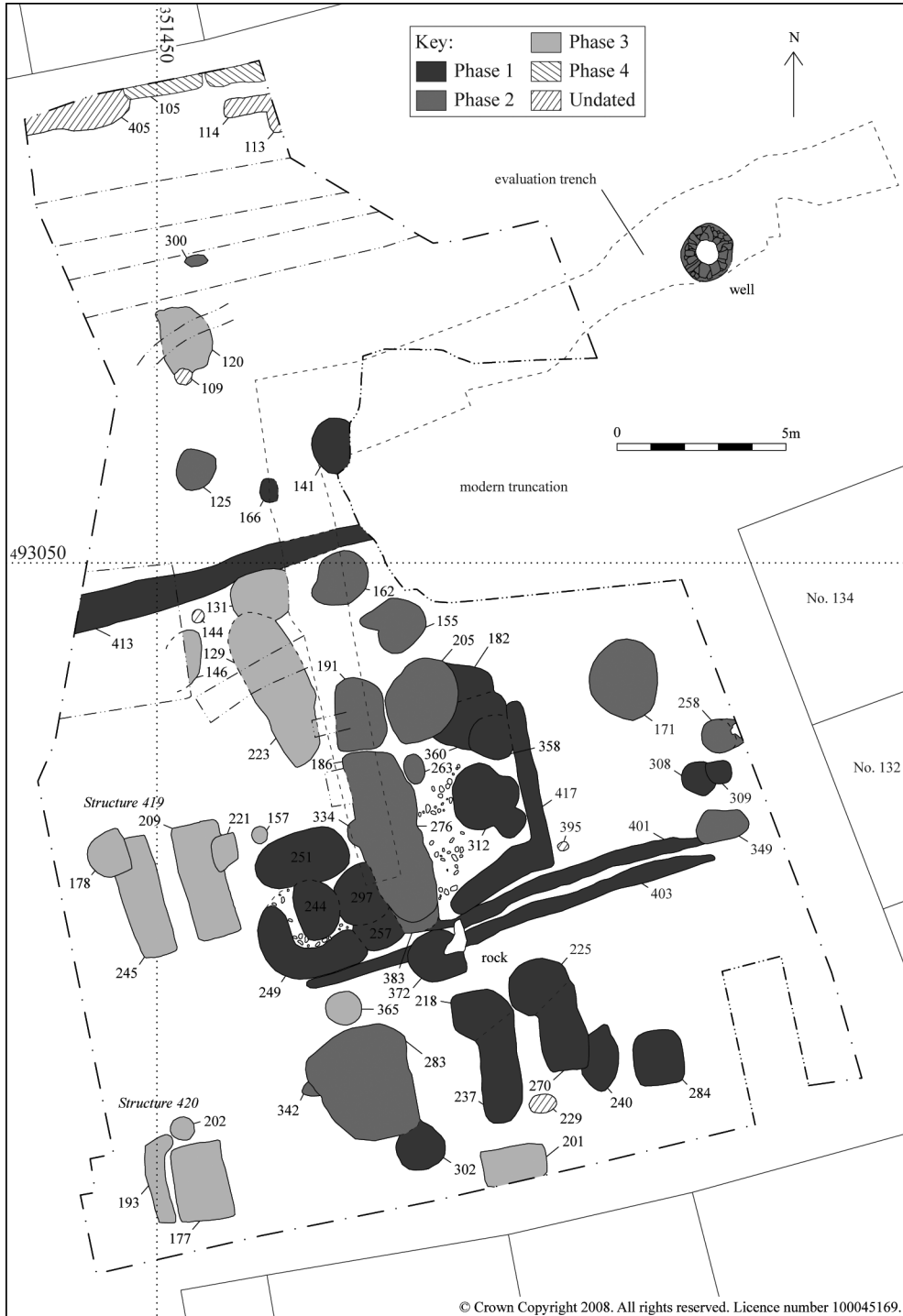


FIG. 4. Phase plan.

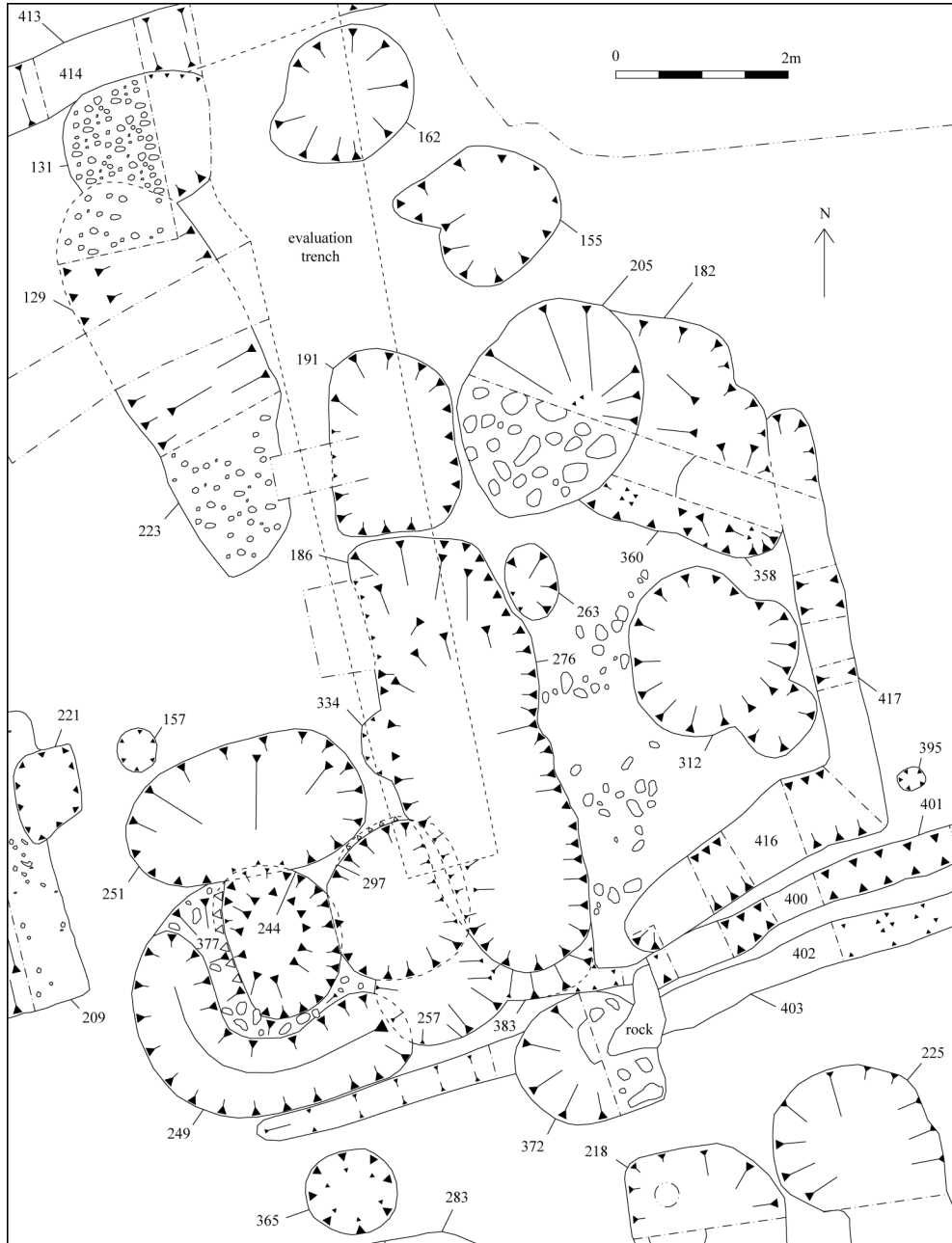


FIG. 5. Detail of features in central plot.

The excavated features

The site covers an area of approximately 0.3ha and fronts Stricklandgate to the west and Maude Street to the south (Figs. 1-3). Maude Street is located at the north end of Stricklandgate, which is part of the main north/south thoroughfare through Kendal.¹² The excavation revealed a fairly typical arrangement of features for medieval burgage plots, initially incorporating plot boundary ditches, clay extraction pits, and refuse pits. There were built structures in the area during the late medieval period, including a well, which was partially excavated during the evaluation phase,¹³ and there was an increase in light industrial activity in the vicinity at this time.

The burgage plots remained largely undeveloped until the post-medieval period, when buildings were first located to the west side of the site; widespread infilling of earlier features with limestone rubble consolidated the ground and facilitated new building on the site and cottage industry developed from the early or mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. These buildings remained on the site until they were built over by a garage in the early-twentieth century. Four phases of activity were identified based on the ceramic sequence and stratigraphic relationships (see Fig. 4):

Phase 1 (twelfth – fourteenth century): the two east/west ditches, 401 and 413, appear to be the earliest features, having late-twelfth- or early-thirteenth-century origins, and effectively divide the site into three plots which probably related to properties along Stricklandgate. The third ditch, 417, is 'L'-shaped and appears to subdivide the central plot laterally. This ditch contained a charred pea, which is a relatively unusual discovery and suggests a more varied agrarian economy than was otherwise evident at the site.

The form and interconnectedness of pits 244, 249, 251, and 297, at the western end of the plot boundary ditches (Figs. 3 and 5), suggests that these pits may have had an intermediary function between the extraction of clay and their backfilling with domestic waste. The pits may have been used for the levigation of clay (i.e. the process of purifying clay by sedimentation),¹⁴ but it is difficult to find excavated examples of this process despite the fact that it must have been widespread in the production of clay to make pots and for use in building. The quantity of stone available to cap many of the Phase 1 pits and to backfill the Phase 2 pits might further suggest that clay was being extracted and processed at the site and that the stones were being dumped in the empty extraction pits. Pit 249 was shallow but deepened gradually as it curved northwards and at its north end it was only separated from the deeper rounded pit 244 by a redeposited clay baulk studded with cobbles (377). This baulk prevented liquid draining from 249 into 244 and could presumably have been removed and reconstructed as often as necessary. Pit 244 contained a carefully placed or built dome of re-deposited clay in its base, which had not simply been tipped in from one side, and this helped form a circular channel in the pit's base. Pit 251 at the north of this group was large, shallow and oval-shape of a similar depth to 249 and had the appearance of a tank. Pit 297 was a deep, circular pit with very steep sides and its base was covered by many fine clay laminations suggesting that it was open and waterlogged for some time.

The two most convincing refuse pits are features *141* and *284*, which between them contained 60 sherds of sandy and gritty wares. These suggest a thirteenth- to mid-fourteenth-century date, which is potentially slightly later than the two main plot boundaries. Layers within these pits contained pottery and bone consistent with domestic activity, which suggests that the street frontage was occupied by this time. There were 11 further pits from this phase which represented the clearance of vegetation and boulders from the site; a number of these were partially backfilled with domestic refuse.

Phase 2 (fifteenth – seventeenth century): clay extraction continued in this phase (pits *171* and *205*) and evidence for other industrial activity in the vicinity occurred in the backfills of earlier extraction pits and pits relating to land clearance, including lead and iron working, the processing of cereal crops, and wool and leather production. The substantial posthole *258* against the centre of the eastern limit of excavation indicates occupancy of the street frontage and further evidence for building work and dwellings in the area was provided by fragments of roof slates, daub, iron nails, brick fragments, burnt peat and mortar in the backfill of pits relating to this phase (most notably pits *276* and *283*). Preserved bracken, which may have been used for insulation and roofing, and burnt limestone, which was probably used in the production of mortar or plaster, was also recovered from these features, and a well of this date, which had been backfilled with heavy roof slates, was partially excavated during the evaluation.

Given the location of the large tank-like trench, pit *276*, it is possible that it may have related to the Phase 1 extraction pits, and therefore might also have been linked to the processes of levigation. The pit was orientated roughly north/south and was over 5m long, 1.80m wide and typically 0.75m deep. The sides of the pit were very steep and reasonably regular given the overall size of the feature, although there was a slight slope from north to south and a noticeable step near the north end where it incorporated part of pit *186*. It is possible that it developed from a series of individual pits as the base had undulations and concavities typical of separate pit bases; however, it was evidently all open at one point as there were three distinct fills common throughout its length. Deposits close to its base contained abundant, extremely well-preserved organic remains, including waterlogged remains of the seeds of nettles, rushes, chickweed and buttercups and the presence of preserved bracken and holly leaves were observed during its excavation, suggesting that the surrounding ground was damp and uncultivated when it was backfilled. Also of note was a probable millet seed, recovered from an upper fill of the same feature, again a relatively rare discovery in terms of the local agricultural practices.

Feature *283*, which was a large sub-rounded depression on the south side of the site, contained deposits that were likely derived from a corn drying kiln. The size and shape of the feature itself are not typical of such a kiln and it lacked a flue or structural remains, but it is similar to a feature identified as a corn drying kiln at Rickerby, which also lacked a stone or daub super-structure.¹⁵ The pit measured 3.40m north/south by 2.80m east/west, and had a maximum depth of 0.50m. Its sides were short, concave and moderately steep before easing to a flattish base. It contained two fills separated by a charcoal lens some 20 to 30mm thick, which contained oat grain and rare quantities

of bread/club wheat and barley. The presence of many grains still contained within their hulls, together with spikelet and *culm* (straw) fragments and charcoal indicates cereal processing. In addition, the upper fill contained small quantities of charred oat and barley species.

Posthole 258 was circular in plan with a diameter of 1m and contained a well arranged series of edge set packing stones that formed a neat socket for the post whose original diameter would have been 0.35m. The steep sides led to a flat base 0.70m below the ground surface. The heartwood of the oak post survived in remarkably good condition, but unfortunately the degraded peat-like remains of the sapwood made accurate dendrochronological analysis of the post impossible. This posthole probably represents the south-western corner of a building the rest of which might be preserved beneath the current buildings that front on to Stricklandgate.

Phase 3 (eighteenth – nineteenth century): this phase was represented by structural features and evidence for light industrial activity at the site; structure 419 provides an interesting example of a back plot cottage industry. Another significant feature of this phase is the widespread infilling of earlier features with limestone rubble, most notably pits 171 and 205. It appears that a major change in land use occurred in this phase and widespread ground consolidation was undertaken to facilitate new building on the site which is evident on Todd's map of 1787.¹⁶

Pits and postholes from this date were also recorded, along with an area which, when excavated, contained four main layers that ran in an uninterrupted sequence back to the late-medieval period. These layers largely comprised burnt matter, suggesting that the area continued to be used for dumping after the possible levigation pits had gone out of use. One layer in particular, which was ascribed a late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century date, appeared to represent the imported remains of a fire-damaged building and contained fire reddened clay and charcoal. These layers respect the plot division 417, suggesting that this boundary was still in use well into the post-medieval period. This subdivision also corresponds with the front of a secondary row of houses shown on Todd's map of 1787 at which time the layers were sealed beneath a floor.¹⁷ In fact the majority of features from this phase were located towards the west side of the site, some 25m from the street frontage, which seems to confirm that land closer to the street had been built over by this time. Interestingly, two features from this period contained sawn cattle and sheep horn cores and horse bones indicating slaughtering, horn working, and possibly tanning in the vicinity.

Structure 419 (Fig. 6.) appears to be a small metalworking building and seems to have been in operation from the early or mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth and was extant until the early-twentieth century. It comprised foundation trenches 245 and 209, walling 146 and 151, flooring 148 and 149, quenching tanks 178 and 221, and posthole 157. The earliest date for its construction has been narrowed down to between 1700 and 1730 by the dating of a ceramic clay pipe bowl recovered from the backfill (152) of foundation trench 209. This building represents the only direct evidence of light industrial activity at the site, although there are indications that copper and possibly iron working were happening at the site beforehand as evidenced

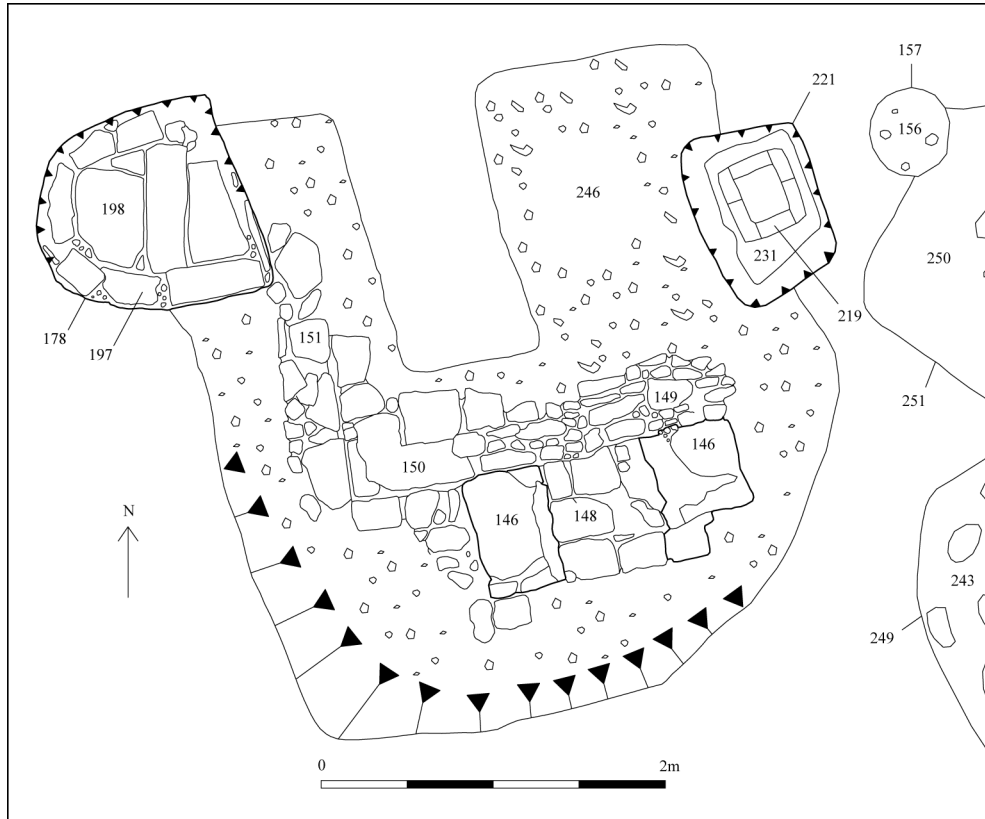


Fig. 6. Plan of structure 419

by the fills of the foundation trenches; copper alloy buttons, pins, tacks and tokens and possibly basic iron goods seem to have been produced or repaired in this building. The foundation trenches also included sawn sheep horn core, cattle horn cores and two horse scapula suggesting butchery and tanning in the vicinity. A similar assemblage was also recovered from pit 201.

Structure 420 (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3) is located in the south-west corner of the site and comprised pit 177, linear cut 193 and pit/posthole 202. A similarly sized structure is evident in this location on Todd's map¹⁸ and artefactual evidence suggests that the structure pre-dates the mid-eighteenth century. Cartographic evidence suggests that it was replaced by a larger building between 1833 and 1853 but the exact function of these structures is unknown. The stony backfill contained cockle shell fragments thought to have been derived from mortar, which may have been part of the original structure.

Phase 4 (nineteenth century – twentieth century): this phase comprised nineteenth-century foundation trenches for buildings that probably stood well into the twentieth century before they were replaced by the construction of a garage. A floor with a hearth and chimney base was recorded from this phase during the evaluation.

The Excavated Pottery

Pottery accounted for 1195 of the 1387 hand-collected artefacts (Table 1). The medieval and late-medieval wares are well-known from other sites in the region¹⁹ and comprised two main types: Northern Gritty ware (Fabrics 1 and 1a) and reduced green-glazed ware (Fabrics 5, 5a and 5b). A very small amount of other, more unusual wares was also recovered including Cistercian ware (Fabric 6) and yellow ware (Fabric 7). In broad terms the earlier material, comprising the gritty (Fabrics 1 and 1a), lightly gritted/sandy (Fabrics 2–3) and partially reduced wares (Fabric 4), largely comprised small and abraded rim sherds and bases (see Fig. 7. and 8), which is indicative of some post-depositional disturbance. In contrast many large sherds of the reduced green-glazed ware (especially Fabrics 5 and 5a) were recovered, which often allowed vessel forms to be reconstructed (see Fig. 9-12). The more unusual wares, particularly the Cistercian ware, are rare in Kendal, but these too are generally in good condition, even refitting (Fig. 13), suggesting that they were from their original contexts. The incidence of yellow ware was very low; it occurred in a limited number of contexts and included many re-fitting fragments from the same vessel (Fig. 13.76). The post-medieval assemblage represented the typical ware-types that might be found on such a site, including brown- and black-glazed red earthenwares, tin-glazed earthenwares, and pearlwares. The coarsewares were almost certainly locally manufactured.

TABLE 1: Constituents of the pottery assemblage by sherd count.

Fabric Number	Ware	Total
1 and 1a	Gritty ware	246
2, 2a and 3	Lightly gritted / sandy ware	97
4	Partially reduced grey ware	22
5	'Silverdale' ware	81
5a and 5b	Reduced green-glazed ware (excluding 'Silverdale' ware)	126
6	Cistercian ware	34
7	Yellow ware	9
	Other post-medieval fabrics	580

The Fabrics

Northern Gritty wares (twelfth – mid-thirteenth century)

Fabric 1

This is a hard, gritty fabric with abundant moderate to large inclusions, including frequent large sub-angular quartz. The core ranges from reduced dark grey to an oxidised buff colour, and surfaces vary from off-white to buff to pinkish-orange. The glaze is predominantly light green, although some sherds have a brownish or olive-brown glaze. There is little evidence of decoration. Rims tend to be everted and clubbed or collared (Fig. 7.1-7, Fig. 7.9-19). Vessel forms would appear to be narrow jars or jugs (Fig. 7.1-7, Fig. 7.9-19), with flat, obtuse-angled bases (Fig. 8.20-22). Some of this fabric is similar to material thought to have been manufactured in kilns

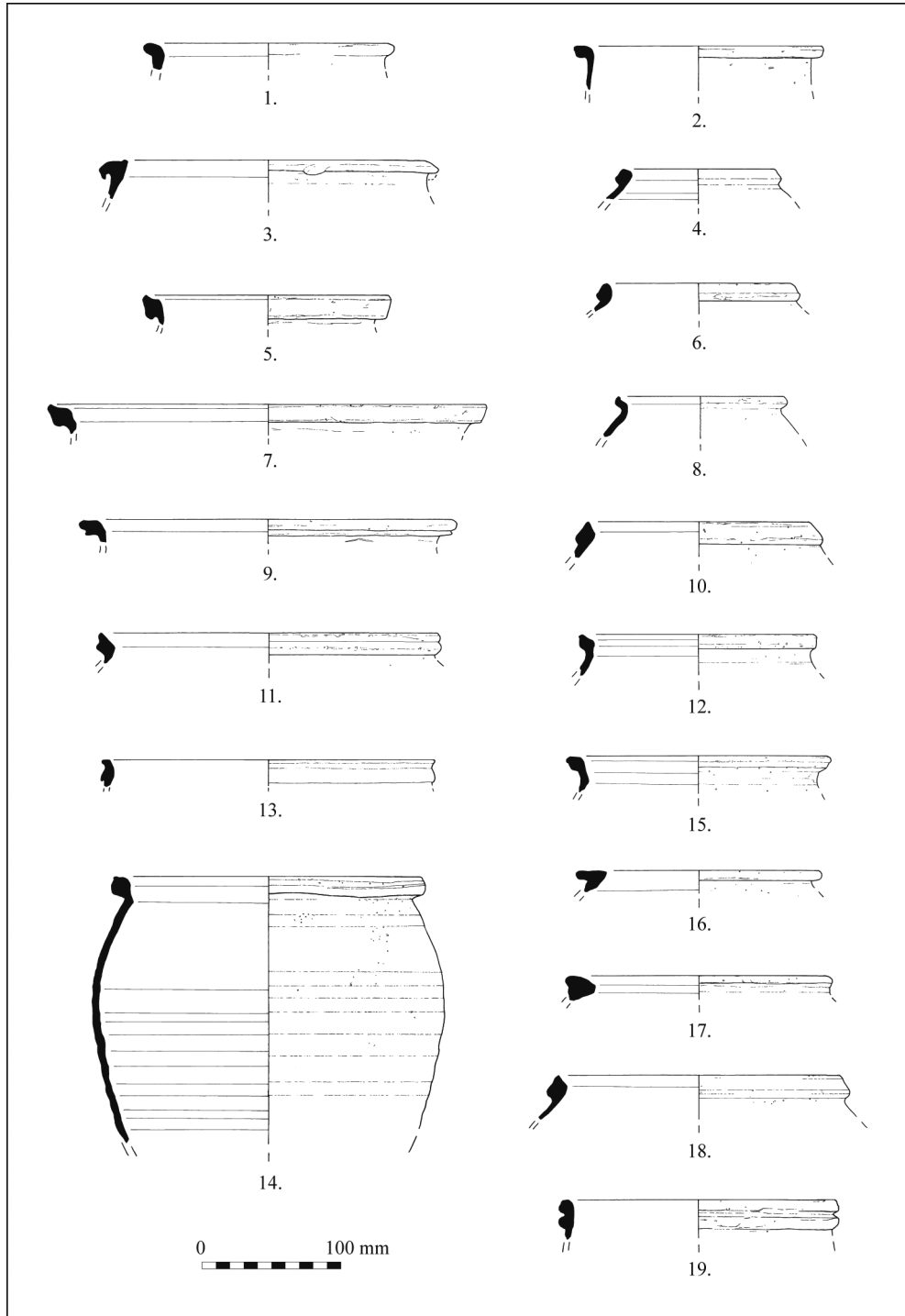


FIG. 7. Northern Gritty wares Fabric 1 (1-7,9-19) and 1a (8).

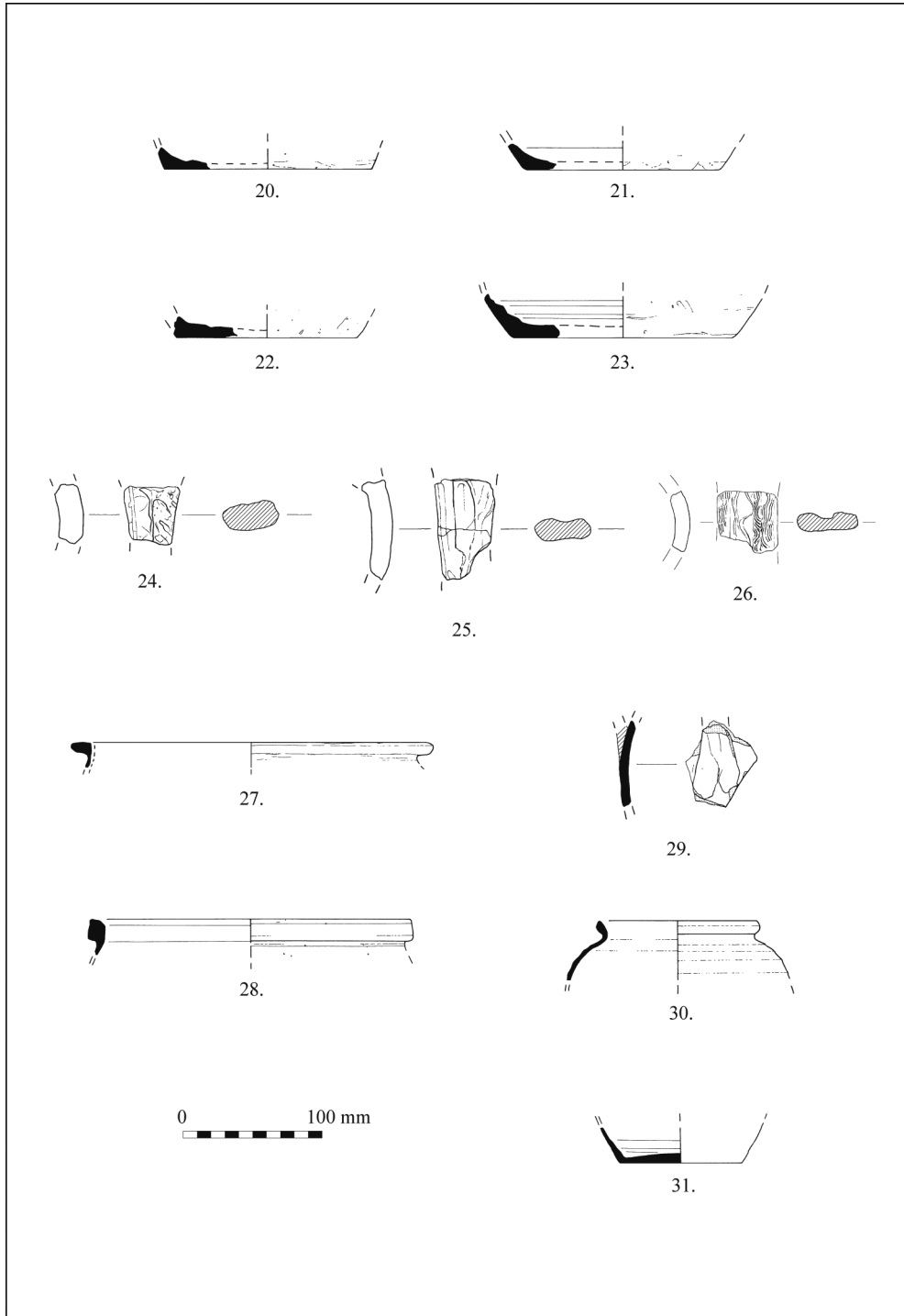


FIG. 8. Gritty and lightly gritted / sandy wares Fabric 1 (20-22), 1a (23-25), 2 (28-29), 2a (26-27) and 3 (30-31).

at Docker Moor and Ellel, both in North Lancashire, although neither of these has been studied in detail.²⁰

Fabric 1a

This fabric was similar to Fabric 1, but with a slightly finer, sandier body and a better glaze. Vessel forms are similar to those recovered for Fabric 1 (Fig. 7.8), with flat, obtuse-angled bases (Fig. 8.23). Handles appear to be of the strap type, with an undulating outer surface (Fig. 8.24-25).

Lightly gritted/sandy wares (thirteenth – early fourteenth century)

Fabric 2

This fabric is generally fairly smooth and sandy, fairly densely constructed, with occasional small to medium sub-rounded to sub-angular quartz. The core is often buff coloured, although this is reduced to a light grey on some larger sherds. Surface colours tend to be buff to pinkish-buff. Glaze is not present on all sherds, but where it occurs it is mostly olive-green in colour and present on exterior surfaces only. Although the diagnostic rim sherds are highly abraded, vessel forms appear to be narrow jars or jugs (Fig. 8.28) and the thumbled terminus of a strap handle was also recovered (Fig. 8.29). This fabric has a similar description to Buff Sandy ware from excavations at Penrith.²¹

Fabric 2a

This fabric is a lightly gritted variation of Fabric 2 which, although fairly densely constructed, had more frequent inclusions, with moderate pieces of quartz. The core tended to be a medium to dark grey colour although this is sometimes more fully oxidised to a buff colour and the surface colours range from light buff to orange-red. Glaze is not present on all sherds, but when it is, it is usually light green to olive green in colour and present on the exterior surface or the outside curve of handles. Vessel forms are mostly jars and jugs with upright and simple rims, with a rounded profile, although one sherd is collared in form and another is everted and straight edged. This latter rim sherd is also decorated with incised 'dimples' at regular intervals around the top. Two decorated strap handle sherds with 'wave pattern' lines combed along the length of the exterior were also recovered (Fig. 8.26). An everted, clubbed, rounded rim was recovered during the evaluation phase (Fig. 8.27).

Fabric 3

This fabric is smooth and powdery, with a very fine and dense matrix with occasional moderate inclusions of quartz. It is reduced to a light grey colour at its core, although some sherds are fully oxidised to a buff colour, and it has a buff interior surface. The exterior surface is black, although it is unclear whether this results from its manufacture or is due to sooting and staining through use. There are irregular splashes of a light green glaze on the exterior surface.²² Only two diagnostic sherds were recovered: the rim sherd is everted, slightly thickened and rounded (Fig. 8.30), while the base is flat, with an obtuse angle to the wall of the vessel (Fig. 8.31).

*Partially Reduced Grey wares (late thirteenth – late fourteenth century)**Fabric 4*

This is a fairly smooth, sandy fabric, with a fairly fine construction with occasional quartz inclusions. The outer margin and core of the fabric is a light grey colour and the inner margin and inner surface are oxidised to an orange colour. The glaze is olive-brown to dark green and often flaky, on the exterior surface only, although it is fairly uniform and smooth.²³ Only relatively small sherds of this fabric were found and vessel forms could not be identified.

*Reduced Green-glazed wares (late fourteenth – seventeenth century)**Fabric 5*

This is a fine fabric, rarely containing any significant, observable inclusions, but there are occasional voids within the fabric. The fabric is predominantly reduced and has a light to dark grey colour core, occasionally with lighter grey margins, sometimes with small spots of light reddish-brown or orange oxidation usually beneath areas of thin glaze. The glaze is often light to mid olive-green to olive-brown, with some small thinner brown patches over oxidised fabric. Similar fabrics have been described from Kendal and other sites in Cumbria and North Lancashire, including 'Silverdale' green-glazed pottery²⁴ and late-medieval Reduced Grey ware 1 in Penrith.²⁵ This variation accounts for 39 per cent of the reduced green-glazed ware. The main vessel forms include plain, narrow jars and jugs with side strap handles (Fig. 9.32, 34, 36-37, Fig. 10.38, Fig. 12.56, Fig. 13.70), although decorated vessels are also present (Fig. 9.33, 35, Fig. 12.55, 57, 60, 64). Decoration is mostly in the form of applied and thumbed strips on the external surface just below the rim (Fig. 9.33, 35, Fig. 12.57); some also appear to have stabbed decoration, with groups of three to five 'dimples' near the rim (Fig. 12.55). Incised 'trident' or 'arrow' marks (possible maker's mark?) were present on some body sherds (Fig. 12.60, 64) and a bunghole cistern was also recovered (Fig. 11.48).

Fabric 5a

This is a slightly harder variation of Fabric 5. The main vessel forms include narrow jars and jugs (Fig. 10.39-43, Fig. 11.49-54, Fig. 12.58-59, 61-63, 65) and bunghole cisterns with squared and sometimes thumbed decoration around the bunghole itself (Fig. 11.44-47). Handles tend to be side strap (Fig. 10.40-41, 43, Fig. 13.66-69) or rod handles (Fig. 10.39). Rims tend to be everted. One hollow base was recovered (Fig. 11.50) but the majority were flat (Fig. 11.44-47, 49, 51-54), sometimes splayed, but most often right-angled to the vessel walls, with some obtuse-angled examples present. The external walls of some vessels appear to have been flattened or shaved with a knife or similar implement towards the bottom. Decoration is in the form of applied pad and thumbed strips on the exterior surface (Fig. 12.58-59, Fig. 12.63, 65), with one or two instances of an incised 'trident' or 'arrow' mark (possible maker's mark?) on body sherds (Fig. 12.61-62).

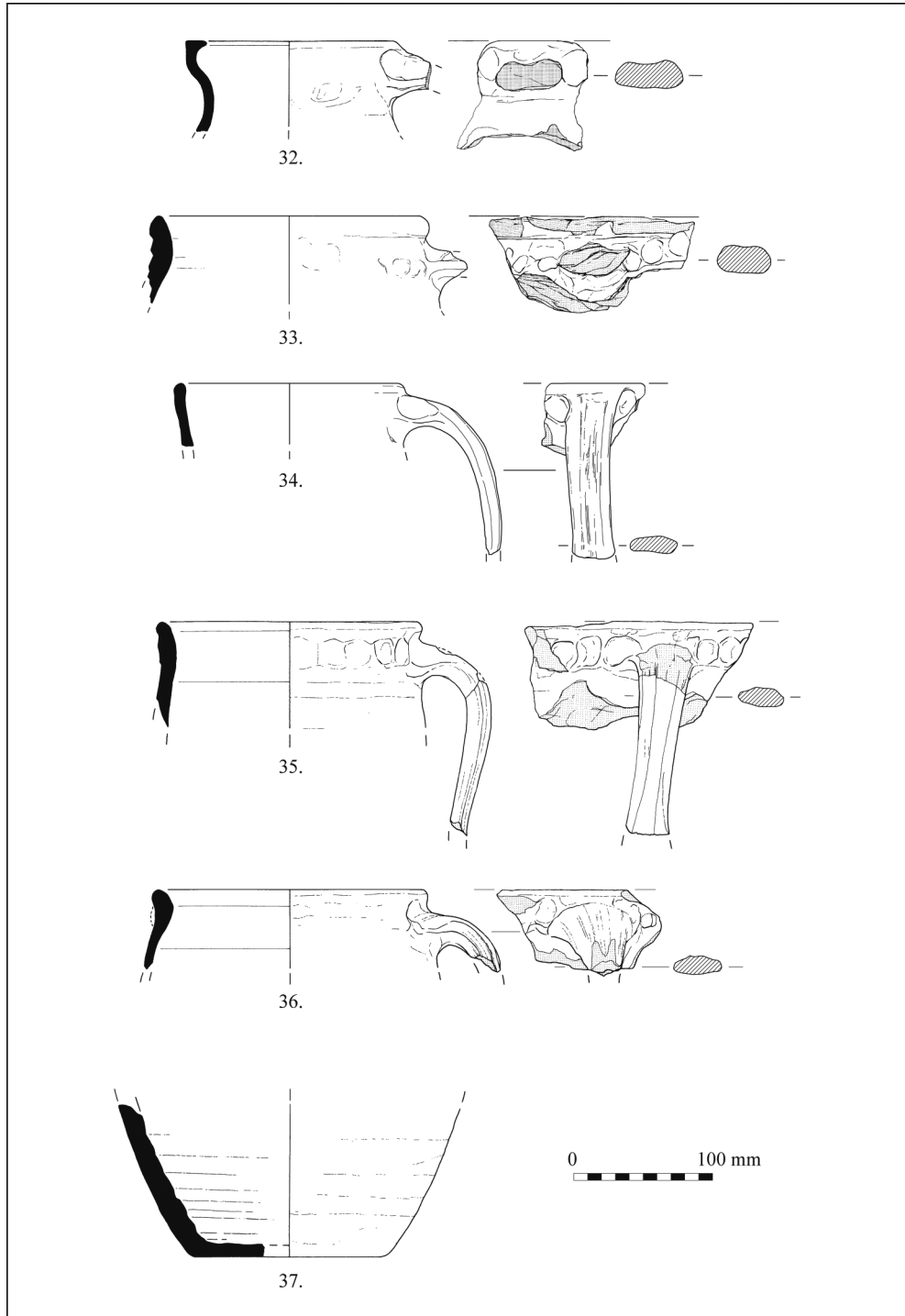


FIG. 9. Reduced green-glazed ware Fabric 5: 'Silverdale' ware.

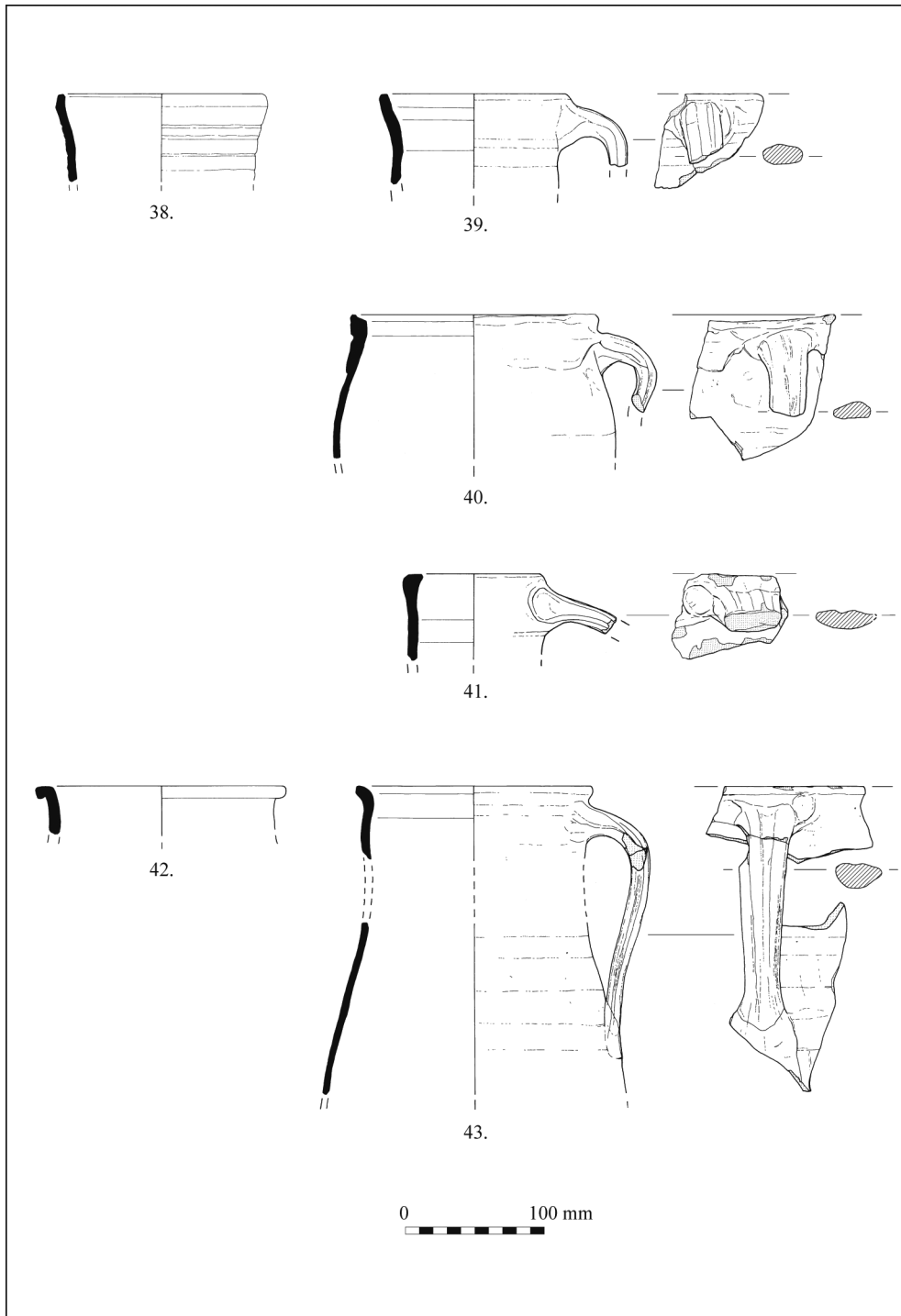


FIG. 10. Reduced green-glazed ware Fabric 5 (38) and 5a (39-43): handles and rims.

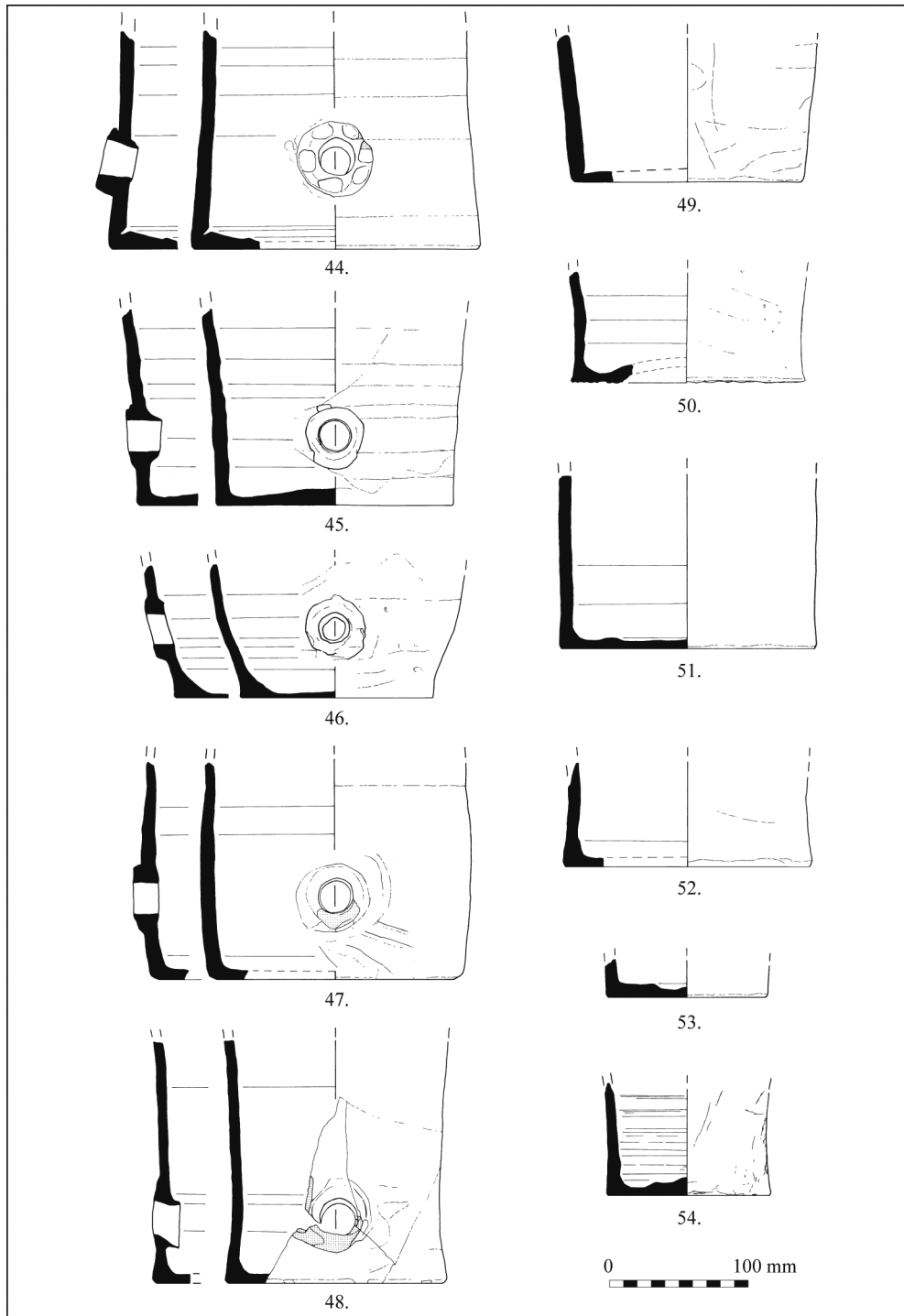


FIG. 11. Reduced green-glazed ware Fabric 5 (48) and 5a (44-47,49-54): bunnghole cisterns and bases.

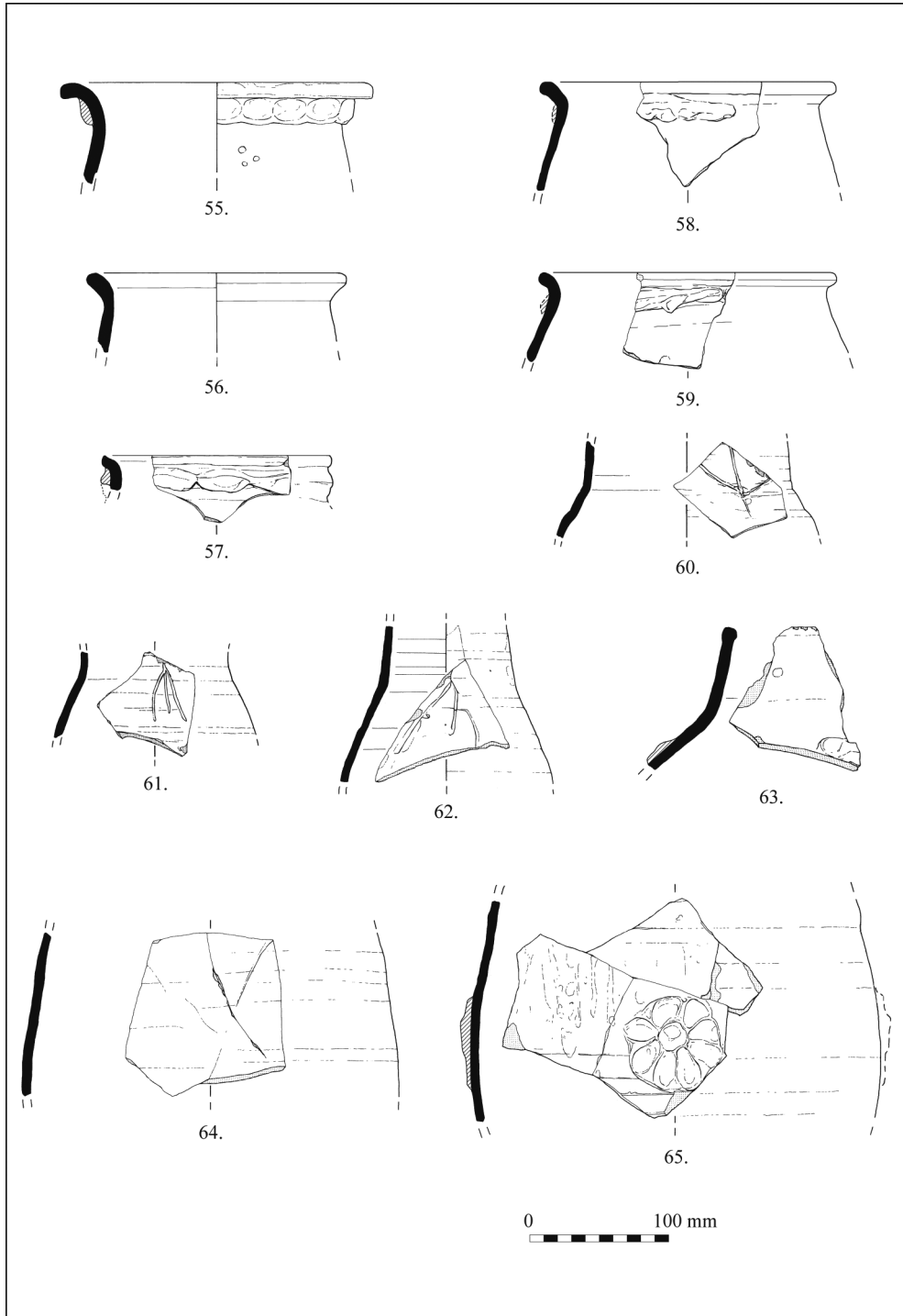


FIG. 12. Reduced green-glazed ware Fabric 5 (55-57,60,64) and 5a (58-59,61-63,65): rims and decorated sherds.

Fabric 5b

This variation of Fabric 5 has a darker, rich galena glaze. No diagnostic sherds were recovered for this fabric.

*Cistercian ware (mid fifteenth – mid seventeenth century)**Fabric 6*

The core colour of this fine fabric varies from orange to dark red/brown or grey and is usually coated inside and out with a brown, black or purplish glaze. The glaze commonly contains metallic patches, or an overall metallic sheen. It can be distinguished most easily from later, broadly similar, fabrics, such as blackware, by its diagnostic forms. The sherds are generally plain apart from one body sherd which has some applied slip stripe decoration (Fig. 13.71).²⁶ Plain vessels include possible Type 4 (two handled cups) (Fig. 13.73-74),²⁷ Type 1 or Type 4 (Fig. 13.72), and Type 1 (Fig. 13.75).

*Yellow ware (late sixteenth – seventeenth century)**Fabric 7*

The core of this hard fabric is cream coloured and has relatively sparse, very fine inclusions. A uniform thin lead glaze has been applied to both the internal and external surface which fires to a yellow colour in an oxidising atmosphere. There is no evidence of a surface slip being used below the glaze. Vessel forms include medium bowls (Fig. 13.76) and side strap handles are represented.

Dating

Gritty wares (Fabric 1 and 1a) were the dominant type in circulation throughout the North of England during the twelfth century, and, in broad terms, appear to have continued until the mid-thirteenth century.²⁸ These Gritty wares were also quite often found in conjunction with the closely related sandy fabrics (Fabrics 2-3), which dominate late-thirteenth and fourteenth-century assemblages in the region.²⁹

The incidence of partially-reduced grey ware (Fabric 4) was very low and it was typically found in association with more fully-reduced green-glazed wares (Fabric 5, 5a and 5b). The reduced green-glazed tradition was introduced in Carlisle during the fourteenth century and became the dominant ware throughout the region during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.³⁰

Both the partially reduced and more fully-reduced green-glazed fabrics were also found in association with yellow ware (Fabric 7), which dates from the late sixteenth to the seventeenth century.³¹ Interestingly, the re-fitting yellow ware vessel (Fig. 13.76) was found in association with large and sometimes re-fitting fragments of partially reduced grey ware and reduced green-glazed ware, including the base of a cistern (Fig. 11.51); however, it is possible that these re-fitting fragments of yellow ware derived from the overlying subsoil which was left high in this area. The more heavily abraded fragments are probably residual and were recovered along with later fabrics including red and white earthenware, as well as fragments of glass, industrial residue, and a slate pencil.

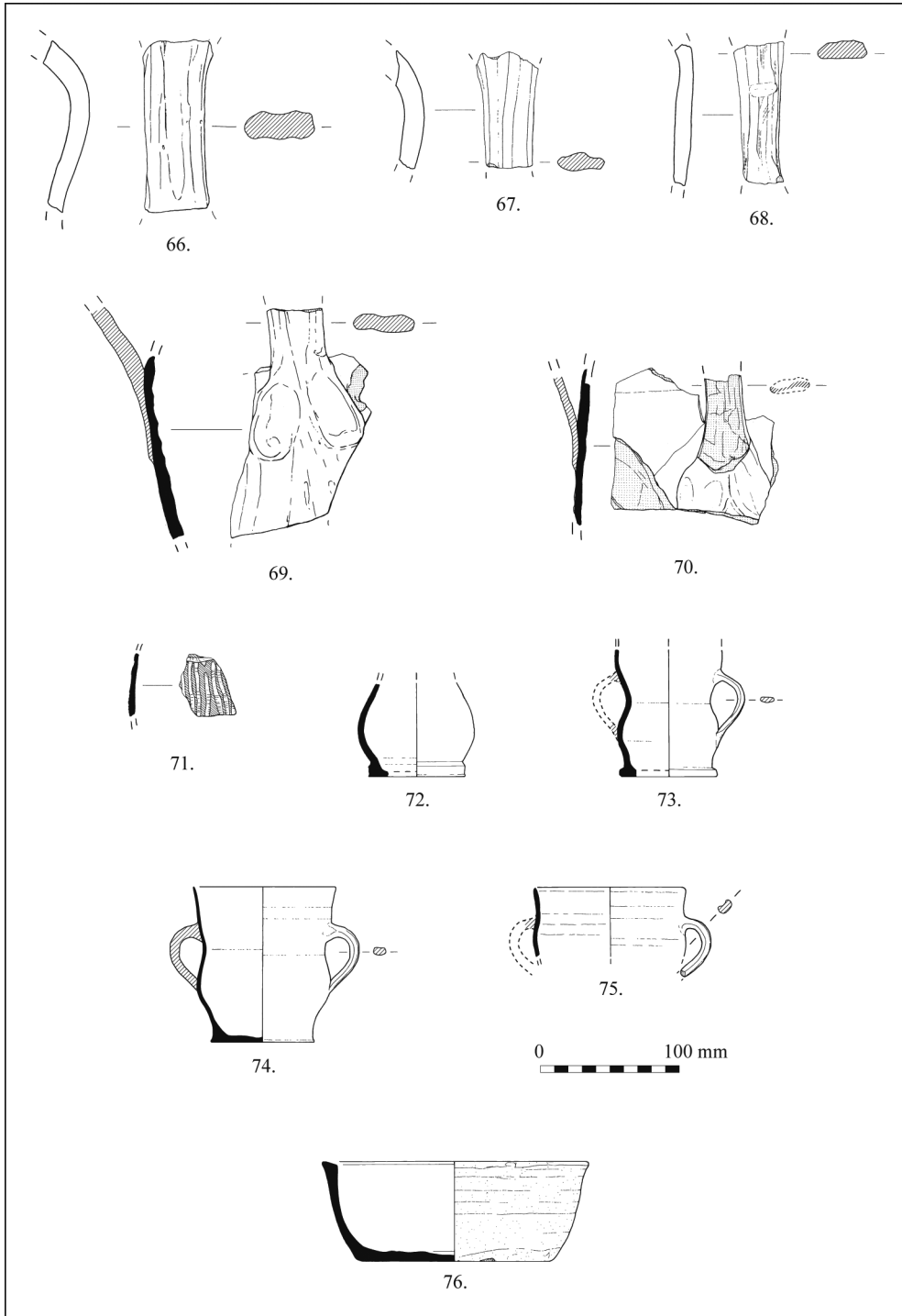


FIG. 13. Reduced green-glazed ware Fabric 5 (70) and 5a (66-69), Cistercian ware (71-75) and yellow ware (76).

A small quantity of reduced green-glazed fabric was also found in association with Cistercian ware (Fabric 6), which was introduced in the late fifteenth century and continued into the seventeenth.³² Within this assemblage the Cistercian ware was often found with no other fabrics, although occasionally it was present in mixed assemblages including residual rim and base sherds of the Northern Gritty and sandy wares. Elsewhere Cistercian ware was also associated with re-fitting sherds of a reduced green-glazed bunghole cistern (Fig. 11.46), which is consistent with a mid-fifteenth to seventeenth-century date. Apart from a few instances of small residual finds of the reduced green-glazed wares in deposits with mixed pottery assemblages dated to the eighteenth century, including tin-glazed earthenware and porcelain, the reduced green-glazed wares were not present in contexts thought to be later than the seventeenth century. More abraded sherds of Cistercian ware were also found in association with post-medieval pottery recovered from the early eighteenth century fill of a foundation trench where it was found along with salt-glazed stonewares, tin-glazed earthenwares, creamwares, mottled wares, and brown-glazed earthenwares; clay pipe from this fill has also been dated from 1690 to 1730, but, unfortunately, the relative lack of finewares reduced the usefulness of the post-medieval assemblage in terms of dating.

Discussion

As might be expected, the earlier material had a restricted range of forms dominated by utilitarian wares, especially large jars and jugs. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the harder-wearing rim sherds and base fragments of the Northern Gritty wares and lightly gritted/sandy fabrics were often residual in later contexts. It is likely that wooden vessels from this early period, which would probably have included platters and drinking vessels, would have survived relatively less well than those made from ceramic.³³ Similarly, the small yellow ware bowl and Cistercian ware cups probably had wooden precursors which have probably not survived.

While work in Carlisle and Penrith shows that the multiplicity of wares was disappearing in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and that Partially Reduced Grey ware jugs were the dominant type,³⁴ partially-reduced grey ware did not come to dominate the assemblage at Stricklandgate as it had elsewhere in the region; substantially more of the reduced green-glazed fabric was recovered, often in refitting pieces. The reason why this is the case is unclear; it could be a consequence of many social or economic factors, variation in production, differential consumption, or chance, and it is hoped that the publication of the results of other work carried out in the town will help to assess the significance of these findings.

There was a wider range of forms present amongst the reduced green-glazed vessels when the use of ceramic materials became more commonplace; however, accurately dating these coarser fabrics is notoriously difficult – the use of the fabric for cisterns and narrow jars and jugs was seemingly less subject to changes of fashion than the hollowware and tableware of the post-medieval period. While there is certainly overlap between the reduced green-glazed fabric and the Cistercian ware and yellow ware traditions, which were introduced in the mid fifteenth and late sixteenth centuries

respectively, the broad 'greenware' tradition does not appear to persist beyond the seventeenth century, when it was perhaps replaced by brown or black-glazed red earthenware vessels, which were being put to the same purpose.

It is noticeable that the fabrics which are comparable to material from known kiln sites are most similar to sources in North Lancashire (e.g., Ellel, Docker Moor, and Silverdale). This seems to contradict, to some extent at least, the earlier suggestion that Kendal's medieval pottery belonged to a more central Lake District tradition,³⁵ but until further kiln sites are identified in Cumbria, and those in North Lancashire are more thoroughly explored, any consideration of the source or sources of such material will be premature.

The Site in Context

The earliest material from the site strongly suggests that the plots at the north end of Stricklandgate were developed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, which fits extremely well with the probable date that burgage tenure was introduced, probably sometime between the granting of a market in 1189 and the date of the borough charter between 1222 and 1246. Furthermore, the north/south thoroughfare was probably subject to early town planning and interestingly the results of archaeological work carried out in the Highgate area of the town suggest a similar date for the development of burgage plots further to the south.³⁶

The rear end of the burgage plots remained largely undeveloped until the post-medieval period and the build up of around half a metre of subsoil in some parts of the site during the earlier phases suggests that the plots had a horticultural bias. Speed's map of 1611 seems to bear this out, although it may be somewhat simplified.³⁷ The fronts of the plots at 130-136 Stricklandgate were certainly built over during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and industrial residues from Phase 2 indicate a varied economy at this time. It is during this period that Kendal's woollen industry burgeoned³⁸ and elevation of the town to the status of an incorporated borough during the reign of Elizabeth I points to local prosperity at the end of the medieval period.³⁹ This was largely facilitated by resurgence in the textile industry, although the considerable concentration of tan yards, skin houses and bark houses close to the River Kent, which are recorded in 1769, indicate that leather working was an important industry, along with farming.⁴⁰ Population increase concomitant with industrialisation was particularly evident in Kendal in the 50 years after 1730 when the population rose from 2500 to 8000.⁴¹ By 1787 the more familiar yard arrangement was in existence and a secondary row of dwellings can be seen on Todd's map of that date, as well as outbuildings further back from the street frontage.⁴²

Conclusion

Much of the pottery recovered from 130-136 Stricklandgate came from stratified deposits and sealed contexts spanning the twelfth to seventeenth centuries and as such the assemblage is considered to be of regional significance; the scarcity of good medieval pottery assemblages from excavations in the north-west of England has been

highlighted by McCarthy and Brooks⁴³ and more recently by Newman⁴⁴ and although recent excavations in Kendal and elsewhere in the region have begun to redress this situation much of this material awaits formal publication. This article summarises the results of the excavation and provides fabric descriptions for the medieval pottery assemblage as well as illustrating the main vessel forms represented. At the time of writing, similar collections have yet to be published for Kendal.

The physical evidence from the site reflects the town's history and development as well as trends common on a regional scale from the medieval period through to the industrial age. Excavation revealed evidence for land improvement beginning at the site in the late twelfth or thirteenth century and the results of this work demonstrate the relatively large size of medieval Kendal which would have made it comparable in size to other towns in the region⁴⁵ and points to its importance in the county at that time.

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Catalogue

The fabric and context number is recorded in brackets following the description of each sherd. The prefix 'CH' has been used to identify those sherds which were recovered during the archaeological evaluation, ahead of the excavation phase.

- 1 Everted, simple, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 189)
- 2 Upright, clubbed, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 246)
- 3 Collared, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 298)
- 4 Clubbed and collared, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 292)
- 5 Upright, collared and flanged, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 373)
- 6 Clubbed and collared, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 350)
- 7 Upright, collared and flanged, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 291)
- 8 Upright, flanged, rounded rim (Fabric 1a, context 291)
- 9 Upright, collared, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 139)
- 10 Slightly everted, collared, internal-bevelled rim (Fabric 1, context 243)
- 11 Everted, collared, internal-bevelled rim (Fabric 1, context 350)
- 12 Everted, clubbed, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 350)
- 13 Everted, collared rim (Fabric 1, context CH419)
- 14 Narrow, rounded jar with an upright, clubbed rim (Fabric 1, context 287)
- 15 Everted, clubbed, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 373)
- 16 Clubbed, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 132)
- 17 Hammerhead, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 132)
- 18 Slightly everted, collared, internal-bevelled rim (Fabric 1, context 256)
- 19 Upright, rounded rim (Fabric 1, context 127)
- 20 Plain flat, obtuse-angled base (Fabric 1, context 256)
- 21 Plain flat, obtuse-angled base (Fabric 1, context 243)
- 22 Plain flat, obtuse-angled base (Fabric 1, context 248)
- 23 Plain flat, obtuse-angled base (Fabric 1a, context 373)
- 24 Strap handle with undulating outer surface and diagonal slashing (Fabric 1a, context 185)
- 25 Strap handle with undulating outer surface (Fabric 1a, context 364)
- 26 Strap handle with undulating outer surface and combed 'wave pattern' decoration (Fabric 2a, context 243)
- 27 Everted, clubbed, rounded rim (Fabric 2a, context CH592)
- 28 Everted, collared, almost straight-edged rim (Fabric 2, context 256)
- 29 Thumbed terminus of strap handle (Fabric 2, context 341)
- 30 Narrow, rounded jar with an everted, thickened, rounded rim (Fabric 3, context 337)
- 31 Flat, obtuse-angled base (Fabric 3, refitting, context 337 and context 287)
- 32 Narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with inturned, hooked rim and side strap handle (Fabric 5, context CH413)
- 33 Narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with an everted, thickened, rounded rim with side strap handle (Fabric 5, context CH410)
- 34 Upright, simple, rounded rim of a narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with side strap handle (Fabric 5, context 311)
- 35 Narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with side strap handle and applied strip with thumbed decoration below the everted, simple, rounded rim (Fabric 5, context 212)
- 36 Narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with an everted, thickened, rounded rim with side strap handle (Fabric 5, context 232)
- 37 Flat base of 'Silverdale' ware jug or jar with obtuse-angled sides (Fabric 5, context CH421)
- 38 Inturned, simple, slightly ribbed rim of a narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug (Fabric 5, context 232)
- 39 Narrow jug with a slightly everted, simple, rounded rim and side rod handle (Fabric 5a, context 124)
- 40 Narrow, rounded jug with a slightly everted, collared and flanged rim and side rod handle (Fabric 5a, context 216)
- 41 Narrow jug with a slightly inturned, thickened, rounded rim and side strap handle (Fabric 5a, context 299)
- 42 Everted, squared rim of a narrow jug or jar (Fabric 5a, context 216)

- 43 Pear-shaped jug with an everted, simple, rounded rim and loop side strap handle (Fabric 5a, context 212)
- 44 Cistern, with rounded, thumbled bunghole (Fabric 5a, context 212)
- 45 Cistern with squared bunghole (Fabric 5a, context 232)
- 46 Cistern with squared bunghole (Fabric 5a, context 331)
- 47 Cistern with squared bunghole (Fabric 5a, context 347)
- 48 'Silverdale' ware bunghole cistern (Fabric 5, context 199)
- 49 Slightly obtuse-angled, flat base (Fabric 5a, context CH419)
- 50 Frilled, concave base with near vertical sides (Fabric 5a, context 216)
- 51 Plain flat base with right-angled sides (Fabric 5a, context 217)
- 52 Flat, slightly splayed base (Fabric 5a, context 298)
- 53 Flat, right-angled base (Fabric 5a, context 199)
- 54 Plain flat base (Fabric 5a, context CH580)
- 55 Everted, squared rim, possibly of a narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with applied strip with thumbled decoration below the rim, and stabbed decoration on the body (Fabric 5, context 153)
- 56 Everted, thickened, rounded rim possibly of a narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug (Fabric 5, context 212)
- 57 Rim sherd possibly from a narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug with applied strip and thumbled decoration applied below the everted, simple, internal-bevelled rim (Fabric 5, context CH410)
- 58 Everted, simple, rounded rim with applied strip with thumbled decoration (Fabric 5a, context 232)
- 59 Everted, simple, rounded rim with applied strip with thumbled decoration (Fabric 5a, context 402)
- 60 Slashed decoration on neck of narrow 'Silverdale' ware jug (Fabric 5, context CH471)
- 61 Slashed decoration on shoulder of vessel (Fabric 5a, context CH303)
- 62 Slashed decoration on neck of vessel (Fabric 5a, context 335)
- 63 Applied pad with thumbled decoration on the shoulder of vessel with an upright, clubbed, rounded rim (Fabric 5a, context 243)
- 64 Incised decoration on body sherd of 'Silverdale' ware (Fabric 5, context 212)
- 65 Applied pad with thumbled or fingered 'petal' decoration on refitting body sherds (Fabric 5a, context 212)
- 66 Strap handle with undulating outer surface (Fabric 5a, context 224)
- 67 Strap handle with undulating outer surface (Fabric 5a, context 238)
- 68 Strap handle with undulating outer surface (Fabric 5a, context 243)
- 69 Thumbled terminus of a strap handle with undulating outer surface (Fabric 5a, context 324)
- 70 Thumbled terminus of a 'Silverdale' ware strap handle with undulating outer surface (Fabric 5, context 212)
- 71 Decorated body sherd with applied vertical and horizontal strips which have been impressed; appears on posset pots (Type 1) and tall cups and jugs (Type 3) (Fabric 6, context 190)
- 72 Flat, splayed base, possibly from a posset pot (Type 1) or two-handled cup (Type 4) (Fabric 6, context 256)
- 73 Probably two-handled cup (Type 4) with high waist and flat, splayed base and loop side strap handles (Fabric 6, context 190)
- 74 Two-handled cup (Type 4) with high waist and side strap handles, splayed base, and everted, simple, rounded rim (Fabric 6, context 390)
- 75 Two-handled cup (Type 4) or posset pot (Type 1) with near upright, everted, simple, rounded rim and side strap handle(s) (Fabric 6, context CH412)
- 76 Medium, rounded bowl with upright, simple, internal-bevelled rim (Fabric 7, context 217)

